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Away from Xenophobia: Nigeria in View

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Abstract:

The narratives on the reasons for xenophobia varies depending on the circumstance and the perspective from which the issue is addressed. It is mostly exhibited in developing nations with a large influx of foreign nationals. In recent times, Nigerians in the diaspora are the targets for xenophobia. For instance, the September, 2019 killings and looting of foreign shops in Johannesburg, South Africa were mainly targeted at Nigerians. Earlier in 2017, four Nigerians were assaulted by a large group of people at Greater Noida, India. Yet, in relation to racism, the concept of xenophobia is still not fully understood. What then is xenophobia? This paper will answer the question. It will reveal the reasons for the increased xenophobia against Nigerians and suggest the way forward.

Keywords: Globalisation, Nigeria, racism, recession, xenophobia

1. Introduction

The ease of international migration arising from globalisation expose people to different forms of discrimination. According to historical literature and contemporary data, globalization, which is the swiftness in the global movement of goods, information, services, peoples and cultures, does not only coexist quite readily with xenophobia, they also intensify each another. Xenophobia is a broad concept with a variety of meanings. Etymologically, it is the fear of foreigners (Amodu, 2019). Politically, it is the struggle for scarce resources. In this regard, the results of a poll conducted by Pew Research in 2018, indicates that 62% of South Africans believe that immigrants constitute a burden to South Africa as they take up most jobs and enjoy social benefits. Earlier in 2006, the South African Migration Project (SAMP) survey concluded that South Africans are the most opposed to immigration in the world. This explains South Africans attacks on immigrants including Nigerians over the years. However, it does not explain why Nigerians are increasingly being the target of these attacks. In June, 2019, Nigerian Elizabeth Obianuju Ndubuisi-Chukwu, the Deputy Director-General, Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria, was killed by strangulation in her hotel room at Emperor Palace Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa. In the state of Goa, India, which is regarded as a popular tourist destination for both foreigners and natives, the situation is similar to that of the South African apartheid as signs set up by Panchayats (village councils) and shop owners there bear 'say no to Nigerians, say no to drugs' (Biswas, 2019, p. 2748). This trend of xenophobic attacks against Nigerians raise questions about their nature, reasons, and the way forward. Using South African and Indian xenophobia against Nigerians where appropriate, this paper will throw light on the meaning of xenophobia by differentiating it from racism which it is often mistaken for; bare the reasons for xenophobia against Nigerians; and then proffer the way forward away from xenophobia.

2. What Is Xenophobia?

Records of xenophobia date as far back as ancient Greek denigration of those who did not speak their language or follow their culture as barbarians. Yet, it is still not fully understood. The meaning of xenophobia is emerging in a way that there seems to be no clear-cut difference between it and racism. Oftentimes, xenophobia and racism are erroneously used interchangeably. One of the regional preparatory meetings for the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held by the Asia-Pacific NGO in Teheran, Iran in February 2001 suggested that xenophobia describes attitudes, prejudices and behaviours that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity while racism is an ideological construct that assigns a certain race and or ethnic group to a position of power over others on the basis of physical and cultural attributes, as well as economic wealth, involving hierarchical relations where the superior race exercises domination and control over others (A discussion paper prepared by the International Labour Office (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in consultation with the Office of the UNHCR, 2001, p. 2).

The above definitions highlight the difficulty in drawing a clear distinction between both concepts. By the definitions, xenophobia is the rejection of foreigners while racism is the belief in the superiority of one race or ethnic group over the other. Yet, depending on the circumstance, foreigners used in the definition of xenophobia may be people of a different race or ethnic group, as it is with the definition of racism. This shows that both concepts overlap largely. First, the definitions indicate that both xenophobia and racism can be perpetrated against people of different ethnic groups and races. Race here means people who share similar physical genetic traits which are inheritable and passed from generation

to generation like the curly hair of dark-skinned Africans. On the other hand, ethnic group are people with similar culture, which are learnt like the primogeniture custom of the Bini people of Nigeria. Defining racism beyond racial hierarchical hegemony to include ethnic and economic dominance, as it is in the above definition, makes the distinction between both concepts vague and particularly difficult to draw. For a clearer distinction, racism should be tied to racial difference while xenophobia should go with cultural difference. Second, the definition of both xenophobia and racism involve discriminatory actions which are largely influenced by the traits of victims. This is because the difference in the physical and cultural traits of victims motivate the belief that they are either foreigners or inferior or both. In other words, the physical appearance or behaviour of people expose them to racism or xenophobia or both. This makes it difficult to know whether an act is xenophobic or racist. Given this difficulty, identifying the reason for a discriminatory behaviour is key in determining whether it is xenophobic or racist. So, if the discrimination stems from the belief in the superiority of the physical traits of a race over another, it is racism. On the other hand, if the discrimination is about the fear and rejection of different or undesirable cultural traits of an ethnic group for being foreign to a community or a nation, then, it is xenophobia.

This is in line with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) definition of xenophobia as the fear and rejection of the cultural traits of another ethnic group believed to be averse to a culture or a nation. On the other hand, Steve Garner defines racism as the belief that each race has traits distinct from those of other races, and that races are arranged in a hierarchical order of superiority, justifying a political ideology of differential distribution of rights and privileges. According to him, the three elements of racism are an ideology about racial differences, hierarchical power relationship between races, and discriminatory actions. Unlike the earlier definitions, these definitions draw a clear line of difference between the two concepts. While racism is the belief in the superiority of one race over another, xenophobia is the fear and rejection of averse foreign ethnic groups. This description of xenophobia subsumes its etymological and political meanings. Yet, while these explanations seem quite straight forward, in practice, the difference between both concepts is unclear. This is because as stated before, both concepts are motivated by traits. Also, xenophobic rejection of people based on their cultural traits occurs between ethnic groups within the same race (as it is with the South African-Nigerian xenophobia) and between ethnic groups of different races (as it is with the Indian-Nigerian xenophobia). Thus, xenophobia can occur between ethnic groups within a race and between ethnic groups of different races – making it appear as racism even when it is not.

Now, the question whether the recent attacks on Nigerians in South Africa, India and elsewhere are xenophobic or racist will depend on the circumstance. Until recently, the struggle for scarce resources was the main reason for attacks by South Africans on foreigners. However, the new trends of attacks garnished with slur names like 'arrogant Nigerians', 'corrupt Nigerians', 'criminal Nigerians' 'Nigerian drug-dealers' and the likes targeted at Nigerians in diaspora raise questions about their nature. One of such questions is whether the attacks are xenophobic or racist. Vocabulary has been and is still being used as a tool for perpetrating racism. For instance, during and long after the slave trade, African Americans in the United States of America, were tagged slur names like negroes, niggers, and blacks to reinforce the feeling of inferiority in them (Smith, 1992). Yet, like racism, xenophobia is accompanied with words meant to humiliate, denigrate, and debase victims. The ancient Greek denigration of foreigners as barbarians in the belief that the Greeks and their culture were superior to all others with the subsequent conclusion that barbarians were naturally meant to be enslaved is an early example of xenophobia (Chua & Rubenfeld, 2014) and (Harrison, 2002). Increased attacks and slur names specifically targeted at Nigerians indicates the rejection of the particular ethnic group rather than the entire race. For instance, news reports have it that the September, 2019 South African attacks specifically targeted at Nigerians started in reaction to the death of Jabu Baloyi, a South African driver, who attempted to stop a drug transaction between an alleged drug dealer and a teenager in Pretoria (Police monitor taxi drivers as they gather in the Pretoria city centre, 2019).

3. South-African and Indian Xenophobia

The isolation, scapegoating and bio-cultural theories have been enunciated by scholars in a bid to explain the South African xenophobia (Harris, 2002) and (Tella, 2016). While none of them is mutually exclusive, to an average South African, dark-skinned people are different from light-skinned people. This belief is manifest in the way that they treat dark-skinned foreigners. Vahed and Desai alluded to this when they observed that the recurrent attacks by South Africans on dark-skinned African foreigners sparked at any moment are increasingly becoming a staple feature of South African life (Vahed & Desai, 2013). This too can be said of the way Indians treat dark-skinned foreigners. South Africa and India are both products of British colonialism. In both nations, segregation of the dark-skinned natives was a tool of control used by the colonialists. In the case of South Africa, segregation was created by the British administrators from the scratch, while in India, the British administrators leveraged and later tightened the flexible subtle caste system which had existed for centuries before their arrival. Quite unlike Nigeria, whose liberation struggles were spearheaded by a few leaders, South Africans and Indians were involved in their liberation struggles which were violent in some situations (Switzer, 2000), (Gibson, Alexander, & Mngxitama, 2008), and (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). The segregation and violent attacks of the colonial eras in both nations correlate with the xenophobic behaviours their nationals now exhibit.

The South African apartheid regime was part of British scramble for Africa in the mid-nineteenth century colonialism in the name of civilizing primitive people. The discovery of diamond in 1867 and gold in 1886 further deepened British interest in South Africa. In this period, the segregation and discrimination against South African natives was low-keyed. It was not until 1948 when the National Party was elected into power that they were legalised, and openly practiced (Nigel, 1994). The Nationalist government strengthened the racial segregation begun under the Dutch and British colonial rule using the Canadian Indian Act, 1876 as a framework. It classified all South African natives into groups and

developed rights and limitations for each. The less than 20% white-skinned minority controlled the vastly larger dark-skinned majority (Beinart, 2001). Dark-skinned African immigrants were not spared. Alice Wamundiya writes that like the apartheid laws, the pre-1990s anti-immigration policies favoured white-skinned labour immigrants while it discriminated dark-skinned labour immigrants at the same time. According to her, Mozambican and Lesotho immigrant workers, especially mine and farm workers of that time bore the brunt of race driven policies, remaining undocumented and unintegrated until the dawn of democracy in 1994. The apartheid regime and the discriminatory policies perpetrated against dark-skinned African immigrants created prejudices in the minds of native South Africans for dark-skinned foreigners. The outcome is South Africans' fear, rejection and hostility towards dark-skinned African foreigners' despite being host to foreigners from all over the globe. The preferential treatment of white skinned foreigners as opposed to dark-skinned foreigners is evident in the way white-skinned Zimbabwean and Kenyan foreigners are received with open arms while the dark-skinned Zimbabwean and Kenyan foreigners are rejected (Moyo & Adewale, 1999).

After the South African transition to democracy in 1994, its borders were opened for the first time in decades. The outcome was increased migration into South Africa, and the consequent visible increase in foreigners within it. Dark-skinned immigrants from other African nations and elsewhere moved into historically black communities, bringing them into close contact with the natives. Given the South African segregation history, the migration of foreigners into local communities proved to be a severe problem. Not only did they have to live with foreigners for the first time, they had to live with the prejudiced dark-skinned African foreigners. Also, there was growing economic inequality, high unemployment rates, high crime rates and other social economic ills allegedly caused by these foreigners. Furthermore, the foreigners became economically more successful compared to the natives. The emerging situation was a bitter reminder of the invasion, settlement, occupation, and imposition of the apartheid regime and the wanton hardship it caused for the native South Africans leading to the distrust, fear, resentment, and rejection of these foreigners.

The rejection was initially manifested through overt xenophobic behaviour targeted at dark-skinned African foreigners expressed through negative stereotypes like denoting them *Amakwerekwere*, allegedly based on the linguistic noises they make in their foreign languages. Between December 1994 and January 1995, the Operation *Buyelekhaya* (go back home) campaign requesting dark-skinned African foreigners to return home was launched in Alexandra township by the natives. In May, 2008 there were violent attacks which left at least sixty people dead and over a thousand people displaced from their homes described as the most violent South African xenophobic attacks till date (Chance, 2018). By April, 2015, Nigerians were the main targets of attacks. This is not far fetched from the situation in India. For instance, in March, 2017, a boy went missing in Delhi, India. Rumour started that the boy had been attacked and eaten by cannibalistic Nigerians. The boy turned up dead of drugs overdose. Yet, rumours spread again that the boy died because Nigerian drug-dealers sold drugs to him. As a follow up to the death of the Indian boy, a mob attacked Endurance Amalawa, a Nigerian student as he made his way through a shopping mall, brutally beating him almost to the point of death (Thekaekara, 2017).

The attacks on Nigerians in India seems racist due to the Indians' deep-seated belief in the superiority of light-skinned people. This belief is often tied to the caste system said to stratify Indians primarily along bio-cultural lines. Although different theories have been used to explain and justify the caste system, research indicates that the system has a long history dating as far back as 1500 BC. Which is why, different Indian faiths, including the Islamic faith which believes largely in the equality of all people, recognise and practice it. This makes the system more of a cultural than a religious Hindu practice. This is more so as the Hindu faith subsists very well without the rigid Indian type caste system in places outside India. As a cultural practice the caste system was flexible in the way that members of a caste could freely and easily move from one caste to the other. The flexibility of the caste system was however frozen by the British. On arrival, the British treated the Indian natives as uncivilized people who needed civilization (Biswas, 2019) as they did in their other colonies including South Africa. They passed laws which were supposed to reform India (The Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850), (The Widow Remarriage Act, 1856) and (The Special Marriage Act, 1872), and arguably, weaken the caste system. However, some scholars have argued that, the measures were taken for administrative purposes and not to end the caste system. (Ram, 1999) In this regard, Ghurye writes that, most of the activities of the British were dictated by prudence of administration and not by the desire to end the caste. For instance, the official definition and documentation of the untouchables in the 1931 Indian census is blamed for the rigidity of the erstwhile flexible caste system. All the untouchable castes, which were listed in the said census were later named the scheduled castes in the Government of India Act, 1935. The list of the scheduled castes was thereafter published under the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order of 1936. The scheduled castes were subsequently listed in the Schedule to the Indian Constitution, 1950 by the post-independence Indian government making it impossible for Indians to move between castes. Although these legislative reforms have been backed up with positive discrimination policies designed to generate income for the training, education and development of the untouchables and other backward castes, they have also emphasised the differences that exist between the castes and by implication fuelled caste conflicts (Ghurye, 1961). This argument is weighty as the documentation of members of the Indian caste in statute books by the British which subsequently led to its inclusion in the Indian Constitution, froze the erstwhile flexible caste system, serving as a constant reminder of the bio-cultural differences that exists between them. The deep-seated belief in the difference between the caste explains the rejection of dark-skinned people including dark-Indians and dark-skinned Africans. While the above links the South African and Indian xenophobia to years of discrimination of dark-skinned people by the British colonialist, it does not explain why Nigerians are now the epicentre of the attacks.

4. Why Nigerians?

Nigerians in diaspora are increasingly being victims of xenophobia. Why this is so begs for answers. In South Africa, nationals from other African nations are not treated equally. White-skinned African foreigners are generally treated preferentially as opposed to dark-skinned African foreigners. According to Crush and Ramachandra, dark-skinned Africans from nations like Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland are treated somewhat better than those from nations like Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi. They also posit that even harsher treatments are directed to nationals outside the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region such as Congolese, Somalis and Nigerians (Crush & Ramachandra, 2014). Yet, Nigerians have never suffered such harsh xenophobic treatment in South Africa as they have faced since 2015. Between 2016 and 2019 alone, over 120 Nigerians are believed to have been violently attacked and killed in South Africa (Onanuga, 2019).

In South Africa, xenophobic attacks were targeted at dark-skinned immigrants from Nigeria, Botswana, Somalia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, and other African countries (Tochukwu, Tochukwu, & Thomas, 2019), albeit in varying degrees. In India, there were varying racist and xenophobic attacks on dark-Indians and dark-skinned Africans including Nigerians. This changed for the worse against Nigerians in the years following 2015. The self-hate syndrome (Dodson, 2010), jobs and women theft (Bayo, 2017), crimes, unemployment, sexual harassments, spread of diseases (Fayomi, Chidozie, & Ayo, 2016), drug dealings, arrogance and other ills have been listed as reasons for South African xenophobia against Nigerians. For India, it is the allegations of drug dealings, cyber-crimes, fraud, forgery of travel documents and other crimes. In 2012, Oyebola Kuku, the then Nigerian High Commissioner in India, said that no less than five hundred Nigerians were held in various jails across India while awaiting criminal trials or upon conviction. In May, 2016, the Goa Chief Minister, Laxmikant Parsekar speaking with IANS stated that they receive foreigners from different nations, however, Goans were annoyed with the behaviour, attitude and way of life of the Nigerians living in the coastal state. Earlier, the state's Tourism Minister, Dilip Parulekar stated that Nigerians create problems not just in the state of Goa, but in the whole of India (Goans annoyed with Nigerians, their way of life: CM Parsekar, 2016). Unah (Unah, 2017) and Bayo argue that the reasons given for xenophobia in South Africa, some of which apply to India, are weak. Also, the reasons do not explain the root cause(s) of the calculated attacks on Nigerians in both nations.

Nigeria has had to grapple with sustained decline of its economy since independence with only a few intermittent economic growths. It is also struggling with growing insecurity for over a decade. The government is unable to curb the insecurity which started in 2009 when Boko Haram, a jihadist group, launched an armed rebellion against the nation due to its declining economy. The Nigerian weak economy together with its security challenge increased the number of its displaced and needy nationals so much so that the 2020 International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) world record, lists Nigeria among the ten countries with over 30 million, representing about 75%, of the total global number of 41.3 million internally displaced people at the end of 2018 (International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 2020, p. 43). Godwin I. Emefiele, the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, explained that the Nigerian 2016 economic decline was due to the global economic shocks between 2014 and 2017 especially the 60% drastic drop in crude oil prices (Emefiele, 2019). According to him, the shocks plunged Nigeria's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth from 6.2% in 2014 to a 1.6% contraction by 2016, officially slipping the nation into technical recession in the second quarter of 2016 and maintaining negative growths in all quarters of that year. The world bank records on the Nigerian economy also shows it reached a record high of US \$568.5 billion in 2014 with a 7% GDP growth rate before it started to decline quite rapidly to US \$494.6 billion in 2015 with a 2.7% GDP growth rate, and US \$404.7 billion in 2016 with a 1.6% contraction in GDP (The World Bank data of Nigeria, 2020).

The recession combined with the insecurity triggered Nigerians' desperation to emigrate for safety and sustenance. The desperation to emigrate is evident from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) records. The NBS 2013 to 2018 migration reports show a sustained desire and increase in Nigerian immigration from 2015. The number of visas issued within and outside Nigeria rose from 964,651 to 1,011,122 and 1,025,027 in 2015 to 2016 and 2017, respectively. Yet, the emigration records for the year 2016 shows a decline in Nigerian immigrations. This is attributable to the dire economic distress of that year as many Nigerians who were desirous of emigrating could not do so for want of finance. This explains the spike in the number of Nigerian land border travels across the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region and irregular migrations from 2016. The NBS records show a sharp increase in the number of ECOWAS Travel Certificate (ETC) issued from 7,369 in 2013, 6,349 in 2014, and 6,314 in 2015 to 18,599 in 2016 and 22,775 in 2017. The year also recorded high numbers of Nigerians refused departure from Nigeria. While, an appreciable number of Nigerians passed by the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) at the point of departure were denied entry by the destination nations for want of adequate travel requirements. For instance, in 2016 alone, as many as 10,981 Nigerians were denied entry into foreign countries as against the earlier records of 1,241, 1,101 and 278 Nigerians for the year 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively. All these indicate a desperation to emigrate to safer and economically stronger nations.

During the recession, South Africa and India were some of Nigerians' main travel destinations as both nations were economically stronger and politically safer than Nigeria. Nigeria's economic weakness can be gleaned from its skewed bilateral relations with both nations. Sifinan writes that there are more than a hundred South African companies doing business in Nigeria, in virtually all sectors of the Nigerian economy as against a handful of Nigerian businesses there. According to the Indian High Commission in Abuja-Nigeria, there are over a hundred and thirty-five companies owned and or operated by Indians in Nigeria. It is estimated that Indian owned or operated companies are the second largest employer of labour in Nigeria after the Nigerian Federal Government. Also, Nigeria imports just US \$514.3 million worth of products from South Africa, while it exports US \$3.83 billion worth of mostly oil and oil products, to South Africa (Kakanda, 2019). Likewise, Nigeria's imports from India for the 2017-2018 period was US \$2.26 billion, while its

exports to India stood at US \$9.50 billion. Presently, India is the largest buyer of Nigerian crude oil and Nigeria's largest global trading partner (High Commission of India, Abuja, Nigeria, 2020).

Before Nigeria's 2015 rapid economic decline, calculated xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa were spars as both nations were of comparable economic strength. In many cases, Nigerians fell victims of these attacks by proxy. This however changed from 2015 when the Nigerian economy grew weaker than that of South Africa. Apart from representing the darkest of the dark-skinned Africans and the linguistic noises they make, Francis Nyamnjoh, an anthropologist based at the University of Cape Town, noted that *Amakwerekweres* is used by South Africans to refer to nationals of nations regarded as economically and culturally weaker than South Africa (Vahed & Desai, 2013, p. 159). Beyond directly influencing xenophobic behaviour towards Nigerians, the economic weakness fuelled the growing insecurity which put pressure on a lot of Nigerians to emigrate or remain in their host nations. The NBS records show that visa applications in Nigerian missions in Africa was highest in South Africa with as many as 6,027 applications in 2016 while India had the highest number of visa applications in Nigerian foreign missions in Asia with as many as 17,937 applications in the same year. For new immigrants, many had to hustle hard and compete for sustenance with the natives of their host nations who considered and treated them as parasites. In this regard, the South African Home Affairs often stresses the view that African immigrants overwhelm South Africa, thus denying a better life for South Africans. Although a number of Nigerians have had to return home during xenophobic attacks, like the return of about 640 Nigerians during the September 2019 South African attacks, many choose to remain in their host nations fearing that returning home may amount to jumping from the frying pan into the fire. Thus, the Nigerian weak economy is directly and indirectly responsible for the rise in xenophobia against its nationals in diaspora.

5. The Way Forward

Xenophobic behaviour against Nigerians has become evident not just in South Africa and India, but in other nations like Libya and Ghana. Yet, there is the dearth of data on the number of Nigerians resident in these foreign nations and the number of Nigerians who fall victims to xenophobia there. As noted in the Migration Issue Brief 8 prepared by Aurelia Segati, South Africa suffers from a scarcity of data, especially monograph and statistics, on its long-term foreign migrants. Even at the home front, there are no available public data on Nigerian migrants and their destinations, what drives their migration, and the number of professional and non-professional migrants from the NIS, NBS, Nigerian Foreign Missions and similar offices. In the September, 2019 South African attacks, the Nigerian government condemned the attacks, boycotted the World Economic Forum (WEF) which was on going in Cape Town, withdrew its High Commissioner to Pretoria and demanded for the compensation of its victims of the attacks which South Africa turned down on the basis that there are no provisions for compensation in its laws (Nwanze, 2019). While suggesting that the nation deploys all available legal options including commencing criminal proceedings against the South African government to get justice for the victims, some Nigerian lawyers noted that proper documentation of the loss of lives and properties of the Nigerian victims is required to make a headway (Onanuga, 2019). Apart from hindering the drive for justice, poor data is responsible for weak media reporting, lack of curiosity amongst researchers and the inability to concretise allegations of Nigerians criminal behaviour and extent of the criminal behaviour. Poor data collection weakens researches on the causes, effects and the solutions to xenophobia against Nigerians. In the rare cases where these data exist, it is usually difficult to access them. Both Nigerian and foreign bodies responsible for dealing with Nigerian migration issues and collecting data must deliver on their responsibility for increased access, awareness, curiosity, quality research and justice.

Xenophobia is not limited to violent attacks by the ordinary people of a nation. Many foreign nationals are subjected to xenophobic comments and attitudes by governments, governmental departments and officials, the media, the police, representatives of traditional institutions, etc. The 1983 expulsion of about one million Ghanaians and other nationals from Nigeria on grounds of religious disturbances is an example of xenophobia by the government. The content of the South African Department of Home Affairs 1999 White Paper which accused migrants and refugees of weakening the nation and its institutions by corrupting officials, fraudulently acquiring documents and undeserved rights, and tarnishing the image of South Africa nationally and internationally represents xenophobia by a governmental department. The same White Paper suggested that native communities should be involved in the detection, apprehension and removal of illegal immigrants by reporting them. However, like Williams forecasted, South African natives have done more than report alleged illegal immigrants. They have taken the laws into their hands and used unlawful xenophobic means to reject immigrants on several occasions. Likewise, the now recurrent calculated xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa first emerged in Kwazulu Natal area in 2015 when Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini condemned the influx of foreigners and called for their deportation to prevent them from inconveniencing the natives. The attacks triggered by his condemnation remains one of the worst since South Africa's independence in 1994. This shows that xenophobia is not limited to violent manifestations by the ordinary people of a nation. In a number of cases, governmental actions, media reports, comments of public office holders and prominent people lead to violent attacks of foreign nationals by the natives of host nations. Confronting and eradicating xenophobia must thus involve governments, the media and people in power. They must not only stop comments that can set xenophobic attacks in motion, they must also continuously educate and make statements denouncing it in any form to stop its recurrent waves.

Over the years, research has consistently shown that a strong driver of xenophobia is the economy of nations. The economy of both the source and host nations of migrants influence xenophobic behaviour. However, the nationals of source nations are mainly at the receiving end. Failing economy of host nations force the natives to blame immigrants for their woes through xenophobic behaviour as it is with South Africa. On the other hand, weak economy hinders the governments of the source nations of migrants from performing their economic, social, cultural and political

responsibilities. In relation to Nigeria, the weak economy makes the government's efforts to cast out insecurity challenging. This has in turn put a lot of pressure on Nigerians to migrate for sustenance. When they do arrive at their anticipated destinations, most often than not, they are met by brick walls as the realities in the host nations are harsher than what they envisaged at the time of their migration. To survive, some of these migrants engage in legitimate businesses, and menial jobs or activities considered criminal by the host nations. Although the vast majority of Nigerians are not involved in crimes, the South African media, for instance, generally portray them as criminals and threats to South Africa's physical and economic security mainly relying on biased state sources rather than other independent sources (Adeogbo & Ogunyemi, 2012). Many also fall victims to police harassment, brutality, extortion, verbal and physical abuse (Adeogbo & Ogunyemi, 2012, p. 6). Nigeria's weak economy discourages a reciprocal influx of migrants from other nations. Admittedly, there are quite a number of South African and Indian businesses in Nigeria. However, this has not significantly increased the numbers of their nationals in Nigeria enough to discourage xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in both nations for fear of reprisals. In the September, 2019 South African attacks, one of the moves by Nigerian youths at home that may have facilitated the quick quelling of the attacks on Nigerians was the threats of reprisal attacks and indeed attacks of some South African businesses in Nigeria. It was the first time Nigerian youths violently reacted to the increasing attacks on Nigerians in South Africa. While the reprisal attacks by some Nigerian youths is condemned, the point here is that beyond being able to cater for its nationals, the Nigerian economy needs to be strong enough to maintain balanced bilateral economic and human relations with other nations to avert xenophobia against its nationals. Therefore, Nigeria needs an economy that encourages the influx of businesses as well as foreign nationals. Balanced bilateral relations between Nigeria and other nations will discourage xenophobia against its nationals in diaspora. To this end, Nigeria must move away from its present mono-economy to a diversified economy. It must diversify its economy away from its over dependence on oil and oil products to the creation of industries in different sectors of the economy like the agricultural, educational, medical, tourism, and entertainment sectors. Only then will it be economically strong enough to cater for the safety and needs of its nationals and gain global admiration and reception.

A striking feature of Nigeria's post-independence foreign policies which has remained till date is the championing of the course of African emancipation and progress. One of the foreign policies of the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) led 1960 government was that Nigeria would maintain friendly relations and closer cooperation with all the nations in Africa particularly those in West Africa. It is thus not surprising that in the recent summit organised in April, 2020 by leaders of the ECOWAS to discuss the challenges of the coronavirus disease 2019 in the sub-region and how best to tackle it, Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari was appointed to champion the course barely six weeks after it was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO). From the 1960 regime of Sir Tafawa Balewa till date, Nigeria has championed the course of several African nations through immense human and material resources (Niworu, 2018). With so much of its resources expended on the political and economic emancipation of these nations, Nigeria, is lagging behind compared to the nations it aided like South Africa. South Africa is often rated as Africa's wealthiest nation both in GDP per capital and in total GDP as it exerts major influence on the total output, trade and investment flows in Africa. In his 2018 research paper, Niworu stated that South Africa was responsible for 40% of all industrial output, nearly 50% of mineral production, and 20% of farm products in Africa (Niworu, 2018). While this position has changed as Nigeria is presently rated the wealthiest African nation as per its total GDP, records of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the United Nations indicate that South Africa is still leading Nigeria as per GDP per capital. Also, Nigeria's present lead in total GDP is rather due to South Africa's economic decline (Naidoo, 2020), than its economic growth, which had its fair share of economic decline in the first quarter of 2020 due to the global coronavirus pandemic. Consequently, Nigeria needs to review its big brother role of expending wanton resources on other African nations while being in economic shambles and immersed in debts. As at September, 2019, Nigeria's total domestic debt stood at N17.94 trillion while its total external debt was N8.27 trillion according to the NBS records. To develop its ailing economy, Nigeria must start its charity at home. It must look inward and wisely expend its resources for the development of its institutions and nationals. This will involve Nigerians selflessly electing the right representatives into political offices and elected representatives reviewing their selfish superfluous lifestyles in order to deliver the dividends of democracy to the teeming nationals.

Lastly, Nigerians must learn to treat one another in good faith and utmost respect. Xenophobia which is borne out of fear and rejection of the culture of foreigners bears the element of disrespect. News abound of Nigerians mistreatment of their compatriots in foreign nations. Some of the Nigerians deported from Libya shared gory stories of how they were deceived and sold into slavery by fellow Nigerians desperate to earn money and the subsequent inhuman treatment they received from their masters (Nigerian Migrants Return from Libya with Tales of Horror, 2017) and (Eze, 2019). The ill-treatment of Nigerians by Nigerians, make them easy targets of xenophobia. Until Nigerians act with integrity and treat one another respectfully, they will not have the moral standing to demand for the respect, acceptance and humane treatment of their nationals by their host nations.

6. Conclusion

Nigerians are increasingly being victims of xenophobia in a number of their host nations including South Africa and India. While different reasons abound on why this is so, this paper maintains that Nigeria's weak economy is the main driver of the growing xenophobia against its nationals in diaspora. Amongst other things, Nigeria must consciously move towards reviving its economy through responsible expenditures and economic diversification. Otherwise, the security of the lives and properties of Nigerians in diaspora will be largely uncertain.

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