

## XENOPHOBIAISM IN SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

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### ABSTRACT

This paper examines the ongoing development in which xenophobic and particularly afrophobic attacks have evoked mixed feelings and reactions from the many Africans who thought that for some time in a long while, Africa is progressing; and that the continent is emerging as one of the fastest growing regions in the world. The specific objectives of this study are therefore: to unravel the factors that reinforce xenophobia in South Africa; to examine its effects on the country's economy, foreign policy and by implications of these attacks on sustainable development in Africa. Anchored on the social exclusion theory and trend analytical technique, the paper argues that xenophobic attacks in South stand out as a threat to Africa's integration and sustainable development efforts. We therefore recommend that the South Africa State should live up to its constitutional responsibility for security of all people in its territory including foreign nationals. The media and religious institutions should step up mass reorientation and reconscientization of South Africa on common values of Africa brotherhood one and hospitality while the Authority of Heads of State of the African Union and its parliament should act decisively to save the continent from the scourge of xenophobia.

**KEYWORDS:** xenophobia. Afrophobia, Africa integration, social exclusion, sustainable development

### INTRODUCTION

Following the dismantling of apartheid and enthronement of majority rule in South Africa in 1994, it was expected that the horrendous experiences, racial discrimination and organized violence meted on black South Africa by the whites would usher in a new era of human freedom in the country. On the contrary, xenophobia in South Africa is perceived to have significantly increased even after the installation of a democratic regime in 1994 (Neocosmos, 2010).

Essentially South Africa is one of Africa's most culturally diverse nations with 11 official language and 5 racial groups, which include black African, white, coloured. Indian and Asian the country is also home to nationals from 53 African countries giving it a wide range of ethnic variety than the rest of the continent (NEPAD Business Foundation, 2012). Without doubt, the fact that Africa countries untied to fight against the apartheid regime and that it was through their support that South Africa attained its liberation remain unchanged, African harbours and airports were closed to the South African government. Neighboring nations, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malaw,

Botswana, Tanzania and Namibia supported South Africa's liberation movements as they hosted South African exiles and the country owes much of its freedom to the support provided by other African nations during this period (Chen, 2012).

Having said that, it becomes pertinent to note that the spread of xenophobia and Afrophobia is not a new phenomenon; instead, it is the extension of other forms of violence and intolerance directed at non-South Africans by South Africans (Akinola, 2014). It is also impossible to dismiss the impact of push and pull forces from the other African nations as contributors in fuelling the psychological and physical abuses on non-South Africans domiciled in South African. Ramphele (2008) argues that many African countries though politically free continue to suffer from inadequate economic reforms that are further aggravated by autocratic governance systems. These systems have become notorious for displacing African citizens through civil wars that dislocate nationals from their land-of-birth and sources of livelihoods. Following from the above, post-1994 South Africa saw the influx of immigrants, including those displaced due to political instability as well as economic hardships. Thus, the scramble for scarce resources and job opportunities between South Africans and non-South Africans did not only fuel tensions but it ultimately led to xenophobia and in particular resulted to widespread attacks and bodily harm. It is against this background that this article explores the reinforcing factors accounting for xenophobia in South Africa and in so doing examine its implications on Africa's integration efforts and sustainable development.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

The salient concepts and issues associated with the subject matter shall be reviewed under these sub-themes:

- Conceptual Review
- Conceptualizing Xenophobia

In the social sciences in general and political sciences in particular, xenophobia phenomenon has overtime come to occupy a central place in mainstream scholarly discourses. Similar to the pogroms in Poland against Jews, xenophobia in South Africa left fatal scars, not only amongst Africans and non-Africans but has dented the country's image continentally and internationally (Tshishonga, 2015). As a socio-psychological anomaly, xenophobia is often attached to extreme dislike or hatred directed to those who are not citizens of a country; that is the dislike or hatred of one's nationality by the other (Ramphele 2008; Sichone, 2008; Akinola, 2014). From a human rights perspective, this deep dislike of non-nationals by nationals of a recipient state, including its manifestation, is abusive violation that is unconstitutional (South African Human Rights Commission, 1998).

Meanwhile, the word xenophobia has its roots from Greek - Xeno meaning foreign and phobos which connotes fear, (Petkou, 2005). While xenophobia is hatred towards foreigners, Afrophobia is Afro-centred mainly directed at immigrants of African nationalities. In the context of South Africa, Moosa (2008) aptly notes that xenophobia invariably manifests itself through tribalism and ethnic superiority, racism and sexism pathologies. Similarly, Musuva (2008) maintains that xenophobia takes place within the context of crime, poverty, inequality and unemployment. The apartheid system of divide and rule has through the years planted seeds of hatred within and between tribal groups which has now reached maturation through xenophobia. This phenomenon can also be identified elsewhere hence Tadjjo (2008) draws the comparison between the xenophobic violence in South Africa and the rise of the concept of Ivoirite in Cote d'ivoire. This was reconceptualized from

colonialism by the Ivorian elites in order to define national legitimacy by stigmatizing foreigners. From the foregoing, the present development whereby most cities in South Africa such as Alexandra, Johannesburg and Durban have witnessed gory sights of xenophobic/Afrophobic induced attacks on foreign nationals mainly Nigerians, Somalis, Malawians, Mozambicans, Ethiopians and Congolese invoke unresolved question (Tshishonga, 2015). In addition, those who suffer from xenophobia are crippled with enormous fear or hatred of a stranger or foreigner, described in derogatory term "Makwerekwere". This term Makwerekwere is commonly used by South African nationals to describe those who cannot speak local languages or dialects (Oucho, 2006).

In the post-apartheid era, attempts to reconstruct and develop South Africa find expression through the notion of "rainbow nation" as advocated by Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the late President Nelson Mandela (Mashele and Qobo, 2014).

A "rainbow nation" has become a measure to evaluate how well do people jell together in forging a united and democratic society. For this clarion call of a rainbow nation to be a uniting force, it should transcend racial and ethnic divisions to engender unity in diversity. The acts of xenophobia and Afrophobia in particular makes a mockery of the notion of Africa for Africans.

#### • SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The concept of sustainable development is one that has attracted a galaxy of definitional dimensions. Thus, it has no strait - Jacket definition. As a concept, sustainable development has permeated mainstream thinking over the past two decades especially after the 1992 Earth Summit where 178 governments adopted Agenda 21. Ten years later, the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development made it clear that sustainable development had become a widely held social and political goals (UNSD, 2006). Other scholars have similarly shed more light on the concept of sustainable development. The IPCC (2001) defined sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. The foregoing explanations inform why the NRC (1999) noted that the strength of sustainable development lies in reconciling real and perceived conflict between the economy and the environment and between the present and future.

As a multidimensional subject matter, sustainable development could be economic, ecological and social dimensions, all standing as the fundamental pillars of sustainable development. In economic sense, sustainable development aims at improving human welfare such as real income devoid of future generational jeopardy. The ecological dimension seeks to portend the integrity and resilience of ecological systems, and the social dimension focuses on enriching human relationship and attaining individual and group aspirations as well as addressing concerns related to social justice and promotion of greater societal awareness of environmental issues (Robinson and Herbert, 2001; Munasinghe and Swart, 2000; O' Riordan 2004). Having said this, it is imperative to note as illustrated by the institute for Global Environmental Strategies (GES, 2005) that implementation of sustainable development remains problematic. There is broad international agreement that development should foster transitions to paths that is in line with earth's life - support systems and alleviating hunger and poverty by integrating these three dimensions (economic, ecological and human/social) of sustainable development.

## • EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Since the 1990s, studies consistently document and show strong negative sentiment, hostility and by extension xenophobic disposition towards foreigners by South African nationals.

This is further reflected in various statistics produced at both national and local levels. The 1998 survey for instance found out that 87% of South Africans felt that the country was letting in too many foreigners; 25% of South Africans nationally favour a total ban on immigration and migration considerably more than in other countries in the region and 20% of South Africans felt that everyone from neighbouring countries living in South Africa legally or not should be sent home (Crush, 2000). Similarly, in 2004, a Wits university survey of residents in inner city of Johannesburg found that 64.8% of South Africans thought it would be a positive thing if most of African refugees and immigrants left the country. By contrast, few see ridding the country of its white population as a priority (Mtsago et al,+ 2015).

A 2011 survey by the Institute for Democracy in Southern Africa (IDASA) confirms that negative attitudes towards foreign nationals and particularly migrants from other African countries are still as strong and pervasive as they have always been. According to the survey, South Africans who are opposed to immigrants exhibit various forms of xenophobia citing that immigrants weaken society and threaten the health of the nation. Foreign nationals from moving into their neighbourhood, 36% from sitting in class with their children and 31% from becoming co-workers (IDASA, 2011).

This comes in the hands of citizens; government officials, the police and private organizations contracted to manage and provide services, promote urban development or manage detention or deportation processes. In lieu of this, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) increasingly recognizes that xenophobia's various manifestations represent protection threats to its persons of concern (PoC): refugees, stateless persons, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons. With the recognition that even after a wave of xenophobic attacks of a hitherto unprecedented scale and geographic reach in mid - 2008, the government lacked a comprehension and effective response. In its statistics of 2013, the UNHCR Regional Office of South Africa reported that in 2011 there were 154 reported incidents of xenophobic attacks; 99 deaths, 100 serious injuries and 1000 displaced people. In 2012, it reported 238 incidents, 120 deaths; 154 serious injuries and 7,500 displaced people. In 2013, UNCHR ROSA reported 250 attacks; 88 deaths, 170 serious injuries and 7000 displaced people (UNHCR ROSA, 2013). In a 2004 study published by the Southern Africa Migration Project (SAMP) based on a citizen survey across member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), it was found that South Africans expressed the harshest anti- foreigners sentiment.

A field research carried out by Human Rights Watch in 1998 mentioned that South Africa has become xenophobic in recent years with a large percentage of South Africans perceiving foreigners especially almost exclusively, black foreigners - as a direct threat to their future economic wellbeing and as responsible for the troubling rise in violent crime in South Africa (Human Rights Watch, 2008).

**Table 1: Cases of xenophobic attacks on foreign national domiciled in South Africa.**

Year	Location of attacks and casualties
1997	Foreign hawkers were serially attacked in Johannesburg
1998	Two (2) Senegalese and Mozambicans were thrown out from a moving train travelling from Pretoria to Johannesburg
2000	A Sudanese refugee was thrown out from a moving train travelling from Pretoria to Johannesburg
January, 2006	At least four (4) people including two Zimbabweans died in the Olievenhoutbosch settlement after foreigners were blamed for the death of a local man.
August, 2006	Somali refugees appealed for protections alter twenty one (21) Somali traders were killed.
January, 2008	Two (2) Somali shop owners were murdered in the Eastern Cape towns of Jeffrey Bay and East London.
March, 2008	Seven (7) people were killed including Zimbabweans and Pakistanis after their shops and shacks were set alight in Atteridgeville near Pretoria.
April-May, 2008	Sixty (60) people were killed, one hundred thousand (100,000) people were displaced, seven hundred (700) were wounded and properties were lost in a most devastating attacks on foreigners mainly black foreign nationals in Alexandra. Johannesburg, cape Town and Durban.
2010	Two (2) Somali - owned business were attacked in the Gauteng townships of Diepslout, Orange farm and Sedibery.
2011	A group from Alexandra in Johannesburg gave an ultimatum to foreigners to vacate RDP houses within seven days.
2012	More than five hundred (500) foreign nationals were attacked in Botshabelo in (he free stale.
February, 2017	Senior Special Assistant to President Muhammadu Buhari on foreign affairs and Diaspora, Abike Dabiri Erewa confirmed that a total of one hundred and sixteen (116) "Nigerians have been killed in South Africa in the past two years.
August, 2017	A Nigerian man - Kingsley Ikeri was killed in Kwazulu Natal Province.
October, 2017	Two (2) Nigerians - Ibrahim Badmus and Jelini Omoyele were shot dead at Vaal Vrening and Doornfontein near Johannesburg respectively:

Sources:

1. Loren, L.B. 2010.
2. Valji, 2008,
3. Baner, N. 2013.
4. [www.vanguardngr.com/2017.09/killings-Nigerians-South-Africa-one-death-many-fg/](http://www.vanguardngr.com/2017.09/killings-Nigerians-South-Africa-one-death-many-fg/)

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theory that will be used for the explanation of this study is the social exclusion theory. The proponent of the theory include: Pacione (1997), Lee et al (1950), Black et al (1997) Randolph et al (1999) Somerville (1998) Kabeer (2000), Percy (2000), Silver et al (1994). The theory argued that individuals or groups could be cut off from the full participation or involvement in the wider society by denying those opportunities that are open to the majority of other population. These opportunities include access to jobs, health services, social security, police or judiciary services, political positions, education, material resources, culture, land, transportation and other discriminatory practices that expose them to humiliations and different deprivations.

From the foregoing, the social exclusion theory is apt for the study because it not only graphically captures the essence and focus of the study but exposes the complexity and dynamics of systemic deprivation, alienation, frustration, violence and blame game syndrome between South Africa citizens and their government on one hand and between same citizens against foreign nationals domiciled in South Africa on the other hand. Thus, Musuva (2008) for instance avers that xenophobia takes forms such as discriminatory attitudes towards foreigners and takes place within the context of crime, poverty, inequality and unemployment. Scrambling for limited economic resources has therefore contributed to the wide-spread xenophobic attacks. The hatred and anger against foreign nationals by locals are captured in such expressions as "they are taking our businesses", "they are taking our jobs"; "they are taking our women", "their businesses are successful because they are involved in drugs" (Tshishonga, 2015). Social exclusion and marginalization of migrants are also orchestrated by locals as well as government by denying the existence of xenophobia. This is further manifested through the adoption of immigration policies and other restrictive policies regulating the movement of foreign nationals.

### **METHODOLOGY:**

The study adopted qualitative research method and sourced its data from secondary sources. We used time series research design and employed trend analytical technique for data analysis. The choice of this method was basically due to the fact (that this study has enough data in qualitative form and they were accessible and available for use. Investigation was carried out to unravel the factors that reinforce xenophobia in South Africa. We focused on why government has failed to address the situation and interrogated the implications of this failure on African integration and sustainable development.

### **Fundamental Factors Reinforcing Xenophobia in South Africa**

#### **• Psycho-Social Effects of Apartheid**

Accordingly, Tshishonga (2015) aptly notes that the apartheid system of divide and rule has through the years planted seeds of hatred within and between tribal groups which has now reached maturation through xenophobia. In South Africa xenophobia invariably manifests itself through tribalism and ethnic superiority, racism and sexism pathologies. This takes forms such as discriminatory attitudes towards non-nationals. In addition, those who suffer from xenophobia are crippled with enormous fear or hatred of a stranger or foreigner described in derogatory term as "Makwerekwere".

Indeed, the socio-psychological dimension of xenophobia has a historical cleavage in South Africa traceable to apartheid era. Apartheid was based on racial and ethnic discrimination and division, and as such, South Africans were not only divided according to their different races but also partitioned along ethnic and religious lines. The institutionalization of the apartheid system according to Van der Zee (2007) engendered the sense of alienation and marginalization that ultimately led to social conflict. In the prevalence of severe poverty, locals therefore become vulnerable that they are capable of doing anything to survive including justification to kill or cause body harm to other people irrespective of whether one is a foreigner or fellow South African.

#### **• Economic Frustration**

Economics dominate most of the discussions pertaining to xenophobia taking place in South Africa.

As the strongest economy in the continent, South Africa is faced with its own challenge especially in accommodating non-South Africans faced by socio-economic and political hardships and oppression (Ramphela, 2008). In view of this, foreign nationals are repeatedly accused by locals for competing with them for jobs, housing and other resources which the locals feel they are entitled to. These articulations thus underlie unhealthy competition between the locals and non-Smith Africans. The research conducted by Human sciences Research Conned (2012) shares similar findings that in most cases, the resistance stage by locals against immigrants is perpetuated due to competition on local economic citations do not only sustain xenophobic or Afrophobic attacks, they have also fuelled the suspicion that most of the business run by non-South Africans especially black Africans are shoddy and are funded through drug dealing.

#### • **Cut-Throat Immigration Policies**

According to Nugent (2012) South African immigration policies were blamed for perpetuated violent attacks on foreigners, hence the naming of immigrants as "bogus refugees" "economic migrants" or "aliens", Xenophobia attacks are therefore sustained through mob-psychology where national thinking about the real causes of the anger and hatred dissipated. Instead, most of the foreigners were chased around Durban regardless of their immigration status, Tshishonga (2015) noted that the failure by the department of Home Affairs and other law enforcement agencies to effectively handle immigration policies paved way for locals and foreigners to embark on criminal activities. I7oreign nationals in this case became the scapegoat for the socio-economic plight and deprivation. The attacks were not only xenophobic but they also had criminal elements. Most victims accuse government of orchestrating alienation and marginalization of foreigners by applying draconian measures aimed at controlling refugees and asylum seekers, hence Akinola (2014) accuses the South African State of hatred towards non-nationals. In this regard Ramphela (2008) points out that with the persistent weakness in Home Affairs, South Africa runs the risks of being labelled as a violator of the human rights of the many refugees and as such failing to protect foreign nationals in terms of obligations under United Nations treaties.

#### • **Political Complicity**

Evidence has shown that politicians, officials and local leaders covertly abate xenophobic attacks while publicly denying xenophobia but blame attacks on criminal elements. Tshishonga (2015) observed that the utterances by Zulu king Goodwill Zwelethini was largely responsible for mass incitement that triggered xenophobic attacks in Durban and its surrounding townships. It is also reported that community leadership is potentially lucrative for unemployed people and that such leaders, organize the attacks; and enhance their authority by reinforcing resentment towards foreigners. For instance, several political parties blamed each other for the recurrent attacks. On the other hand, leader of the official opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA) pointed instead of crowds of rioters singing "Umshmi Wami", Jacob Zuma's campaign Zulu sung meaning "Bring me my machine Gun".

#### **Xenophobia as a Threat to Africa's Sustainable Development Efforts**

Xenophobia in South African has largely questioned South Africa's role as a leading economy in Africa to provide leadership and governance role in sustaining the drive for poverty eradication through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There is no country, no economy that can develop in isolation. Money, profit and economic sustainability known no boundaries, it's globalised

(Orovwuje, 2017). The issue of xenophobia in contemporary South Africa is a profound psychosomatic carryovers arising from the negative experiences of the apartheid regime that cannot be wished away from the collective consciousness of the people South African.

While xenophobic violence is not a new phenomenon in post - apartheid South Africa, the sudden explosion of violence has been attributed to a combination of factors such as local political pressures, increases in prices of basic goods, high levels of unemployment estimated at 25 percent and growing concerns and frustrations at inability of the South African government under incumbent President Jacob Zuma to provide essential services to poor people. The resultant effect becomes the current xenophobic nightmare which poses grave threat to sustainable development both within South Africa and across the continent.

Furthermore, the case for economic integration in Africa has been made for a long time now before independence under colonial administrations and after by Africa's political leaders. Programmes for economic integration have included co-operation in major sectors such as agriculture, transport, energy and education aimed for the establishment of free trade areas, customers unions, economic union and in a few cases for political federations, it is generally felt that progress made on the programmes are generally disappointing. Regional integration has long been a key economic and political ambition in Africa.

Including the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action, the 1991 Abuja Treaty, the 2001 New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The 2003 Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the 2008 Action Plan for Accelerated Industrial Development in Africa (AIDA), the 2007 Minimum Integration Programme and the 2010 Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) (UNECA, 2015; AU, 2014; Agenda 2063,2013). The lofty road maps notwithstanding, the hope of attaining them become questionable following xenophobia in Africa's leading economy - South Africa. Indeed, sustainable development is only attainable when the fifty four fragmented economies in the continent press for one robust; diversified and resilient economy; supported by a first class transboundary. The scattered conglomerates of South African investments across the continent are at risk which further jeopardizes both parent economy and host economics.

### **Findings**

In the course of this study, the following findings were made:

- i. Xenophobia in South Africa among other causes is traceable to the negative psychosomatic effects of the apartheid era characterized by institutionalized discrimination, hatred, violence and scapegoating.
- ii. South African government and its security paraphelia such as the police and immigration have contributed indirectly in fuelling xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals by often denying its existence and rather blaming attacks on criminal dementers.
- iii. The prevalence of socio economic deprivations and hardship as a result of government's inability to meet these needs has made locals to channel their aggression on comparatively prosperous foreign businesses.
- iv. Mere criticism and condemnations on xenophobic attacks by the governments of affected African nationals in South Africa have not yielded any strong result as the phenomenon has continued



unabated.

v. Africa faces one of the greatest threats to its integration, security, prosperity and sustainable development on account of the existence of xenophobia in a country that ranks as its largest economy.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this article, the notion of xenophobia or Afrophobia and its impact on Africa's quest for regional integration, prosperity, common security and sustainable development was interrogated. The series of xenophobic attacks in South Africa saw non-South Africans under siege; with many harmed, killed or facing deportation threats.

The study has to a large extent placed xenophobia side by side with the psychosomatic aftermath experiences of apartheid whereby locals have now turned to foreign nationals as scapegoats for their socio-economic woes. In all, we conclude that political complicity has indicted authorities in South Africa coupled with draconian immigration policies as against providing guaranteed security of lives and property of both citizens and foreign nationals. It therefore behoves on South African leadership to reverse the trend to avert continental escalation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- i. African States whose nationals are consistently attacked and killed in South Africa should not dwell much on merely criticizing xenophobia but rather exert their diplomatic powers to engage the South African regime squarely on the issue.
- ii. The challenge of xenophobic attacks in South Africa is a wakeup call for the governments of various African countries to organize their domestic affairs by improving living conditions and strengthen democratic peace as well as foreign policy objectives.
- iii. Media institutions and religious bodies should live up to the role of altitude reorientation and reconscientization of South Africans towards appreciating the values of African brotherhood and solidarity.
- iv. The African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) should act decisively on the xenophobia issue and pass resolutions at high level talks with a view to forestall the menace
- v. Owners of South African giant multinational companies operating in other African countries such as MTN, Multi choice, DSTV and Shoprite should use their economic influence to prevail on the government of South Africa to address xenophobia as failure to do this may jeopardize their investments.
- vi. While it is not possible to eliminate social tensions in any country, it is expedient on the part of the South African government and its nationals to respect universal and regional treaties, declarations, norms, protocols and conventions such as the 1948 universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination.

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