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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY: A PERSPECTIVE ON THE DIPLOMATIC FACE- OFF BETWEEN NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA OVER THE RISE OF XENOPHOBIA

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ABSTRCT

This paper examines the impact of xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa beginning from 1996 and how both countries have managed that conflict in relation to their diplomatic ties. It became topical in the context of the dynamics of the subtle age- long struggle for supremacy between Nigeria and South Africa, Africa's largest economies for continental dominance and leadership. It also investigates the responses of the Nigerian government and other stakeholders to the xenophobic attacks. The methodology deployed was mixed method- qualitative and quantitative. It focused on the descriptive analytical approach in data collection and analysis, the data obtained was discussed and interpreted using content analysis where some useful themes were established and analyzed critically to arrive at the findings.The conclusion and findings shows that Nigerians resident in South Africa are victimized and prosecuted as a result of xenophobic resentment, and more fundamentally Nigerians with professional skills are discouraged and deterred from moving to South Africa as a result of it or leave out of frustration. The paper adopted the theories of *realism* and *rational choice* as the premise for its submissions. The study recommends among others that the Nigerian government should work amicably in a *non-adversarial approach* with the South African government to fulfill its international obligations of protecting the rights of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers in their country, irrespective of their race or sex as articulated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and, the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).

Keywords: Conflict Management, International Diplomacy, Xenophobia

Introduction

Nigeria had long played a big brother role to South Africa in the liberation struggle against apartheid before South Africa gained black majority rule in 1994. Nigeria and South Africa are two countries on the continent of Africa that have gained global attention and reckoning for different reasons. While for instance, Nigeria with an estimated population of over 200 million, is globally regarded as the most populous black country in the world, and South Africa, with over 60 million people (Adebisi, 2017), has gained recognition as the conscience of racial parity on the world stage, having passed through and survived the throes of apartheid for decades before its eventual liberation, partly through global help and internal political struggle. Though located respectively in West and Southern Africa, Nigeria and South Africa, have been involved in each other's different spheres of life – social, political and economic (Adebisi, 2017). It became clear that with the dismantling of the apartheid regime and the emergence of constitutional democracy in 1994, immigration inflow into South Africa witnessed a sharp increase particularly from neighboring African countries (Adebayo & Landsberg, 2003). As at 2011, the figures of foreign-born people in the country had risen to 2.2 million according to the 2011 South Africa Census (Heleta, 2018). Paradoxically, in resource-rich South Africa, there is poverty and a high unemployment rate which the locals believes the immigrants are the reason for the increase in unemployment and underemployment among the natives (Abdi,2013). The natives had a perception and grievance against immigrants, who they call 'Amakwerekwere' (a derogatory South African word for foreign visitors to a township (Akinboye, 2005) are to blame for the economic, plus societal challenges – drug trafficking and rising crime rate, bedeviling the rainbow nation. Hence, foreign nationals, mostly African immigrants in South Africa have occasionally been an object of xenophobic attacks in May 2008, April 2015, March 2019 to mention a few. These infrequent attacks have had a negative impact on the Republic of South Africa's relations with its immediate sneighboring countries (Abdi, 2013).
In the wake of xenophobic attacks in South Africa, this paper historically takes a look at the big picture of Nigeria-South Africa relations and how xenophobic attacks in South Africa has impacted the diplomatic relations between the two sub-regional powers over the years.

Statement of the Problem

Xenophobia is as old as humanity itself. It dates back to the early centuries and has been traced to the migration of people from one location to another in search of better opportunities and conditions of life. Xenophobia is not peculiar to South Africa but a common phenomenon that has global dimensions such as the rise of anti-foreigner sentiments in France and Germany after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1991 by twelve European Nations as the Soviet Union disintegrated (Sara, D.M & Michael, K.L, 2023). The National Front in France and other extreme right parties in Germany such as the German *Republikaner* advocated for the rise of nationalism which created violence and hatred for non-French and non- Germans respectively (Sara, D.M & Michael, K.L, 2023). However, the South African case has become alarming since the demise of the apartheid regime in the country in April 1994. Since then, there has been an increased migration of foreign nationals from across Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asian countries as a result of the obvious availability of economic opportunities especially in the informal sector (Konani & Odeku, 2013).
Nigeria's GDP of $477 billion crowns it as the largest economy in Africa. The nation's rapid growth in the financial sector and its leadership in petroleum exports fuel its economic might (Fraser, 2023). Though Nigeria is ranked top on GDP, South Africa is a far more developed country than Nigeria, with good infrastructure and banks, and a diverse and sophisticated economy. The two countries have rallied other countries to restore peace and stability in other African countries that were in crisis (Smith, 2023).

Nigeria and South Africa enjoyed respective regional dominance in their regions. Nigeria spearheaded the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) while South Africa led the formation of South African Development Commission (SADC). Nigeria and South Africa are the two leading countries in terms of offering aid, developmental assistance, peace keeping and their

contribution towards the establishment of organizations like OAU/AU, NEPAD, ECOWAS and SADC. Their major challenges are internal constraints such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, political challenges and other socioeconomic conditions in the respective countries. The two countries also faced envy from other African countries in their regions and the influence of external powers in Africa which curtailed their efforts or capability to extend their regional dominance beyond the continent. Nigeria claims the highest GDP ahead of South Africa but the South African multinational corporations more than 150 of them penetrated the Nigerian economy which is the basis for their strength in foreign policy in the continent. The lack of conflict resolution measures at the local level in South Africa also has a part to play (since violence often occurs by many unemployed South Africans who have become frustrated by a lack of action by local officials in resolving issues that arise from the feeling that Nigerians were taking over). In addition, another important contributing factor is a culture of impunity prevalent in the country in which people do not fear the consequences of their actions (Fraser, 2023).

In the light of the economic and development disparity between both countries as pointed out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 2016 Human Development Index (HDI), which grouped South Africa in the medium human development category, while Nigeria falls among the low development group implying that there are more greener pastures in South Africa than Nigeria despite their relative comparative balance in terms of economic strength (UNDR, 2016). This explains why many Nigerians troop to South Africa in search of greener pastures..

One major problem that arises out of this competition and disparity is a strenuous relationship between Nigeria-South Africa partnerships over years. Beyond this strenuous relationship is the lack of mutual diplomatic and tactful reciprocity on the part of the South Africa government and the country's non-state actors over the strategic role Nigeria played in the struggle against apartheid. This paper identified the contradictions and the complexities in the Nigeria- South Africa relationship where on one side of the coin they see each as friends and on the other side as enemies as an issue of interest worth investigating further. It is therefore pertinent to assess the pitfalls or effects of xenophobic attacks had on Nigeria- South Africa diplomatic relations; and the imperative to explore the diplomatic crisis emanating from it as it concerns the relations between Nigeria and South Africa, two of Africa's leading powerhouses.

Aims of the Paper

The paper aimed to examine the implications of xenophobic attacks on the diplomatic relations between Nigeria- South Africa and how it affects their bilateral relations, and .investigate the responses of the Nigerian government and non-state actors to the xenophobic attacks. Others are to assess the implications of xenophobic violence on Nigeria – South African bilateral relations and to evaluate the effect of foreign policy in conflict management between the two nations.

Conceptual Clarifications

Xenophobia

The word "xenophobia" is derived from the Greek words "xenos" and "phobos" which mean "strange" or "foreign" and or fear, respectively (Claasen, 2017). The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines the term "xenophobia" as fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign. Roosevelt, Idehen & Osaghae (2015) captures the definition of xenophobia in the South African context, by describing it as the intense dislike, hatred or fear of others, who are foreign. Continuing, they argue that xenophobia often encompasses some ethno linguistic and cultural identifiers that form the basis of distrust and suspicion of the other. Oyelana (2015) simply defines xenophobia as the irrational fear or distrust of foreigners or strangers. In the South African context, xenophobia is manifest in negative attitudes and perceptions together with accompanying acts of hostility, violence or discrimination against foreigners. In the country, xenophobia presents certain distinct elements, including, a demonstrated fear or hatred of

foreigners, accompanying violent actions and resultant loss of life and property. Hickel (2014) argues that the term xenophobia, must be reframed to incorporate acts, manifestations or practices such as violence or physical abuse which normally accompany "dislike" or "fear" of foreigners. , He stressed further that, xenophobia broadly describes negative social perceptions of immigrants, refugees and migrants and the resultant violent actions against them. Although xenophobic violence mostly targets foreign nationals, it can also target nationals who are seen as being "foreign" to the area or are perceived, albeit incorrectly, to be from another country. Xenophobia has over the years gained the status of a global phenomenon.

It is not a one-continent affair as it has been practically experienced in one form or the other across different continents of the world. Literature is replete on the concept of xenophobia (Abdi, 2013). Harris, (2002) stressed however; there are no adequate works on its dynamism, nature and divergent manifestations in Africa. While, Salau (2017) defines it as a form of attitudinal, affective, and behavioral prejudice toward immigrants and those perceived as foreigners. Reynolds and Vine (1987) maintain that xenophobia is a psychological state of hostility or fear towards outsiders. Observably, xenophobia is intricately tied to notions of nationalism and ethno-centrism, both of which are characterized by belief in the superiority of one's nationstate over others (Schirmer 1998). Wimmer (1997) hypothesize that xenophobia is a "discriminatory potential", which is activated when ideology such as ethnocentrism is connected to a sense of threat on a personal or group level. For instance, there is a cultural perception that foreigners are snatching jobs meant for local workers. Ige, K.M (2018) further suggested that this prejudice produces political xenophobia, which results in the desire to create and apply public policies that actively discriminate against foreign individuals. Similarly, Radkiewicz (2003) postulated that xenophobia is related to an ethnocentric "syndrome" with two separate dimensions: beliefs about national superiority, and hostile, reluctant attitudes toward the representatives of other countries. In the opinion of this paper, xenophobia represents an unhealthy fear and suspicion by indigenes of foreigners who have better education, skills and proven capacity than the locals in a competitive economic environment and labour market, which if not properly managed could have far reaching negative effects on diplomatic relations between nations and could also lead to violence and conflict.

Conflict Management

A conflict is a struggle and a clash of interest, opinion, or even principles. Conflict will always be found in society; as the basis of conflict may vary to be personal, racial, class, caste, political and international. (Kerry, P & Joseph, G. 2022). According to Crush & Frane (2007) conflict refers to some form of friction, disagreement, or discord arising between individuals or within a group when the beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group are either resisted by or unacceptable to one or more members of another group. Conflict pertains to the opposing ideas and actions of different entities, thus resulting in an antagonistic state. Conflict is complex, because at minimum it involves the interaction of cognitive, psychological, physiological, and contextual dynamics. Most conflict theories take only a psychological and/or an economic approach to understanding and managing conflict. The purpose of the following theories is to reduce or resolve a conflict between individuals and group. Conflict is also an expression of hostility, antagonism and an understanding between members (Barry, K.W, 2019)..

Conflict management is planning measures to avoid conflict when possible and taking rapid and effective measures when it is made. According to the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI), used by human resource (HR) professionals around the world, there are five major styles of conflict management—collaborating, competing, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising (Thomas- Kilmann, 2017). According to Proksch, the power-play is the dominant conflict management strategy for those who seek autonomy and is best suited for idealogical disputes. Bargaining, the third technique, contains elements that overlap collaboration and power-play. (Stephan, P., 2022). Therefore, on the basis of the various contributions on conflict and its management strategies, this paper will also boldly declare that conflict is

inevitable in human society as competing interests and goals between groups and individuals will always lead to push and shove, but what is also fundamental is that to avoid mutual annihilation it is important that that time-tested strategies and mechanisms for managing conflict must be emplaced to ensure societal equilibrium and survival.

International Diplomacy

The history of Xenophobia in Africa revealed that it did not started in South Africa even though, the seeds of South Africa's one has been sown long ago during colonization and Apartheid. In the post-colonial Africa, Ghana started a policy called Aliens' Compliance Order of 1969 (Charman & Piper, 2012) which is perceived as Xenophobic in nature. This was followed by Nigeria's anti-immigration acts in the 1980s and 1990s,(Ajala, 1993). The economic realities and social segregation due to poor policies in South Africa in the early 2000 propelled 290 Nigerian Forum, March, 2020 anti-migrant's sentiments and hatred coupled with increasing violence in Zimbabwe, Somalia, Mozambique and Sub-Saharan African countries which led to mass migration into South Africa. The native found it easy to blame their economic and social woes to the foreigners and this has been the foundation for the incessant attacks which keep on increasing in number in terms of loss of lives and the quantity of resources or wealth that are destroyed by the attackers. The country is perceived as is losing its diplomatic prowess and its cordial relationship with many African countries including the giant one such as Nigeria. Foreign investments and hosting of international cultural, economic and political events are becoming difficult for the country because it is stereotype as violent, insecure, hostile and a country that is not safer for the visitors and foreigners. By implication, South Africa may lose billions of dollars in tourism and foreign investment in the years to come and it will lose its image among its African peers which by extension will create disunity among the African Union members (Classen, C. 2017). In the case of Nigeria, the recent retaliatory attacks on some South African outlets such as MTN communication offices, DSTV, Shoprite and Stanbic IBTC will affect the country's external revenue turnover in billions of dollars (Adebajo, 2018). The effects of Xenophobia on other African countries that have migrants in South Africa are relatively on the loss of economic ventures and lives of the nationals that are staying there. The frequency of attacks on migrants' businesses disclosed that the numbers of the attacks are persistently increasing since pre-2005 as indicated in the table below:

Table 1: Frequency of Xenophobic Attacks on Migrants' Businesses from pre-2005 to 2014

Year	Number of Attacks
Pre-2005	9
2005	4
2006	9
2007	9
2008	19
2009	17
2010	46
2011	22
2012	25
2013	36
2014	32

Source: Conflict and Conflict Management in Organisations (Berkovitch, 2017)

Brief History of Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa

Xenophobia is a dislike and/or fear of that which is unknown or different from one. It comes from the Greek words (xenos), meaning "stranger," "foreigner" and (Phobos), and meaning "fear." The term is typically used to describe a fear or dislike foreigners or of people significantly different from oneself, usually in the context of visibly differentiated minorities (Charman & Piper, 2012).

According to a 1998 Human Rights Watch Report (cited in Claasen, 2017), immigrants from Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique living in the Alexandra Township near Johannesburg were physically assaulted over a period of several weeks in 1995, as armed gangs identified suspected migrants and marched them to the police station in an attempt to "clean the township of foreigners." The campaigners, known as "Buyelekhaya" (go back home), blamed foreigners for crime, unemployment and sexual attacks.

One celebrated case of disrespect was the treatment of Africa's first Nobel winner, Prof. Wole Soyinka. In 2005, Soyinka was denied entry into South Africa. It took the last-minute intervention of Mandela's wife, Graca Machel, to admit the Nobel Laureate into the country. Soyinka's trip to South Africa which was in response to an invitation to deliver a lecture in honor of Mandela drew national and international focus to the country, both because of Mandela, whose birthday it was and Soyinka who was the guest speaker (Salau, 2017).

The South African government has also indirectly promoted and encouraged its citizens into believing that immigrants are responsible for unemployment and crimes. For example, South Africa's borders have been remilitarized. Salau, (2017), this shared state-corporate project of building up a 'fortress South Africa' also reveals a deeply entrenched seam of xenophobia, in which undocumented migrants and refugees from African countries are painted as a security risk akin to terrorism and organized crime. Parliamentary discussions on border security are rife with claims that foreign nationals are attempting to drain social grants and economic opportunities from citizens. The packaging of illegal immigration as a national security threat, which often relies on unsubstantiated claims about the inherent criminality of foreign nationals, provides an official gloss on deeply entrenched governmental xenophobia, in which African immigrants are targets for regular harassment, rounding up and extortion by the police. This normalization of immigrants as figures of resentment may also fuel outbreaks of xenophobic violence'' (Konani & Odeku, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

This paper sought to explain the dynamics in the context of both *the Rational Choice theory* and the theory of *realism*, the rivalry between foreign migrants and locals for scarce resources leads to xenophobia (Wimmer, 1997). Xenophobia, not only in South Africa but also in other countries, is commonly justified on the grounds of economic necessity. The dominant school of thought in political science in the late 20th century was rational choice theory. For rational choice theorists, history and culture are irrelevant to understanding political behaviour; instead, it is sufficient to know the actors' interests and to assume that they pursue them rationally. Whereas the earlier decision-making approach sought to explain the decisions of elite groups (mostly in matters of foreign policy), rational choice theorists attempted to apply their far more formal theory (which sometimes involved the use of mathematical notation) to all facets of political

life. Many believed they had found the key that would at last make political science truly scientific. In *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), an early work in rational choice theory, Anthony Downs claimed that significant elements of political life could be explained in terms of voter self-interest. Downs showed that in democracies the aggregate distribution of political opinion forms a bell-shaped curve, with most voters possessing moderate opinions; he argued that this fact forces political parties in democracies to adopt centrist positions. The founder of rational choice theory was William Riker, who applied economic and game-theoretic approaches to develop increasingly complex mathematical models of politics. In *The Theory of Political Coalitions* (1962), Riker demonstrated by mathematical reasoning why and how politicians form alliances. Riker and his followers applied this version of rational choice theory—which they variously called rational choice, public choice, social choice, formal modeling, or positive political theory—to explain almost everything, including voting, legislation, wars, and bureaucracy (Barry, 2023)

According to Baylis, J, Wirtz, J. Cohen, E. and Gray, C, (2002), *realism* sees the economy conceptualized as a finite lump: the assumption then is that access to resources is a zero-sum game and this breeds conflict. Relating this to foreigners, Baylis et al (2002) explains that successful foreigners are perceived to prosper by benefiting unrightfully from national resources that belong to South Africans. Consequently, seeing foreigners prosper without any assistance from the state upsets one's conception of one's own relation to the state and what one's sentiments are (Hickel, 2014). South Africans perceive foreigners as competing with them for jobs, housing and other resources to which they themselves feel entitled to (Hickel. 2014). This is played out against a background of poverty, high unemployment and high-income inequality between the rich and the poor. Fears of perceived foreign domination in the job market create conflict and make people feel that labor immigration should be limited and that the government is not doing enough to reduce the number of foreign migrants. The perceived competition for economic opportunities is associated with unskilled and casual jobs in the domestic sphere, on farms, construction sites, in the hospitality and informal sectors. It is believed that migrants undercut citizens in these sectors where they are willing to work for less pay and for longer hours. In so doing, they also encourage employers to get away with unfair labor practices. Rational choice theory and realism are widely perceived as an explanation for xenophobia in South Africa both at the individual and collective levels. This is supported by the results of a 2009 survey conducted by the Gauteng City-Region Observatory (2009) in Konanai & Odeku, (2013). The survey, which investigated satisfaction and quality of life among 6,636 Gauteng residents and those of selected areas in neighboring provinces, uncovered xenophobic attitudes that cut across race, class and sex. A total of 69% of the respondents were in agreement that foreigners are taking benefits that are meant for South Africans. However, the relationship between xenophobia and a drop-in wages or rising unemployment - both economic indicators of intensive competition in the labor market has not been scientifically tested in South Africa. Therefore, rational choice theory is not based on indicators of intensive competition in the economy but on perceptions of illegitimate competition, which has led to resentment of Nigerians and other migrants. While the rational choice theory has laid into explaining the hostile treatment unleashed by South Africans towards non-nationals and the purported institutionalized xenophobia in South Africa, it does not yet explain the conditions which gave rise to the negative perception of migrants given that other countries welcome migrants into their societies because of the positive contributions they make to the economy. This gap is explained by the realism theory that views it as zero-sum game in a competitive struggle for dominance and power. Therefore, on the basis of the premises by the authors of both theories, this paper is of the view that both protagonists- Nigeria and South Africa seek to advance their competing interests and policies rationally, but the zero- sum game approach in the realist perspective drives both sides to conflict ridden relations.

Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature and uses a descriptive analytical approach with secondary sources of data collection which include: books, academic journals, magazines, newspapers and online sources. The study makes use of a theory of international relations specifically political realism and the rational choice theory as revised from available literatures to analyze the relationships between the independent and dependent variables.

Population of the Study

In this study, the population research consists of 1.6million Nigerians at the 2006 Federal Capital Territory (FCT) census but due to the fact that the researcher cannot reach all the population, we decided to use two hundred (200) people for the study in explaining the information gathered through distribution of the questionnaires. The sample base for the study is focused on the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) mainly public servants, academics, diplomats form Abuja based embassies,, military, CSOs, students and other stakeholders

Sampling Technique

For this research, the population of the sample will be randomly selected from two hundred (200) Nigerians using purposive sampling technique. These randomly and purposively selected Nigerians were made up of 130 Males and 140 Females each from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), but only 200 questionnaires were returned representing a return rate of 74.07 %.

Findings

The research was conducted with a population set at approximately 1.6million. Data was collected using a closed-ended questionnaire which was designed in line with the objectives of the study. A purposive random sampling was employed to recruit respondents. The random sampling involves partitioning the target population into strata and randomly selecting respondents from each stratum to make up a single sample.

Table 1: Respondent Profile by Profession and Gender

Professions	Male (%)	Female (%)
Diplomats	4	2
Academics	90	91

41

Students	1.11	3
Civil Society	4	3.21
Military	0.89	0.79

Source: Researcher's Survey, 2023

Table 2: Cross-tabulation of awareness by professions and gender

Your possible response in that	**Definitely**	**Probably**	**Probably**	**Definitely**	**Don't**

Situation	not	not	yes	yes	know
Are you familiar with the recent attack of Nigerians in South Africa?	33.6	24.4	10,5	12.3	19.2
Would you ask foreigners to leave?	41.5	31.6	8.2	4.2	11.3
Would you mock a foreigner for not speaking your local language?	73.1	16.5	3.3	0.5	3.1
Would you loot a foreign owned plaza shop?	69.5	14.8	2.7	1.5	7.5
Would you call a foreigner a derogatory tarsus?	59.6	17.4	12.2	4.0	0.5

Source: Researcher's Survey, 2023

Table 3: Perceptions of Reasons by Nigerians Why Foreign Nationals Come to South Africa

Reason	N	%
To look for work	46	23.0
They come to commit crime	5	2.5
They come to do business	20	10.0
They come to have a better life	19.2	9.6
Running away from poverty	15.6	7.8
Other	13	6.5
They come to make money/They want to make money	11.4	5.7
They are here to deal in drugs	3.2	1.6
Come to escape war in their countries	9.4	4.7
They come to take our jobs from us	9.2	4.6
They are hungry/No food in their Country	9	4.5
Our economy is strong	9	4.5
Don't know	8	4.0
They come here to study	5.2	2.6
To destroy our country	5	2.5
To corrupt our country	4.2	2.1
They are here for citizenship	3	1.5
They want to stay here	2.4	1.2

They come to earn a living	2.2	1.1
Totals	200	100

Source: Researcher's Survey, 202

Table 4: What are the impacts of xenophobia on Nigerians in South Africa?

S/No	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TS	NO R	M X	MC	R
1.	Nigerians are wrong fully arrested in South Africa?	-	5	3	-	8	25	3.1	2.5	Agree
2.	Nigerians are relocating back to Nigeria as a result of xenophobic resentment towards them?	-	6	2	-	8	25	3.1	2.5	Agree
3.	The quality of education offered by South African universities has reduced since xenophobia reared its ugly head?	-	6	3	-	9	25	3.0	2.5	Agree
4.	Are Nigerians abused and discriminated by government officials?	-	6	1	-	7	25	3.6	2.5	Agree

Source: Researcher's Survey, 2023

Table 5: Showing the educational implications of xenophobia on Nigerian students residing in South Africa?

S/No	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TS	NO R	M X	MC	R
1.	Can the Nigerian student resident in	-	7	3	-	9	25	3.0	2.5	Agree

	South African allowed to attended classes?									
2.	Are Nigerian students victimized by teachers in South Africa schools?	-	6	2	-	8	25	3.1	2.5	Agree
3.	Are Nigerian Students in South Africa battling with feelings of loneliness and alienation?	-	5	3	-	8	25	3.1	2.5	Agree
4.	Can there really any benefits in Higher Education studies in South Africa?	-	6	1	-	7	25	3.6	2.5	Agree

Source: Researcher's Survey, 2022

Table 6: What is the public perception on causes of xenophobia?

S/NO	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TS	NoR	MX	MC	R
1.	In your opinion, do you think unemployment causes xenophobia?	8	-	-	1	9	25	3.0	2.5	Agree
2.	In your opinion, do you think poor border control contribute to the increase of xenophobic resentments towards foreigners?	2	-	-	6	8	25	3.1	2.5	Agree
3.	In your opinion, do Think you illiteracy has fueled xenophobia in South	3	-	-	5	8	25	3.1	2.5	Agree

	Africa?									
4.	In your opinion, do you feel the state of the economy has encouraged xenophobia in South Africa?	4	-	-	3	7	25	3.6	2.5	Agree

Table 7: Nigerian Attitudes to Enforcement Policies on Xenophobia policies

	Strongly Support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Deport all foreign nationals including those living legally in Nigeria	17	30	14	22	18
Deport those not contributing to Nigerian Economy	42	32	9	10	3
Deport those who have committed serious criminal offences	67	19	3	6	4
Legalize status of undocumented migrants	10	16	8	19	46
Deport those who are HIV positive or have AIDS	40	21	15	15	9
Give asylum or protection to those escaping war and persecution	11	36	17	22	8
Grant permanent residence to refugees in Nigeria for five Years	4	17	14	32	32

Source: Researcher's Survey, 2023

Findings

The findings from the study revealed that Nigerians are greatly affected by xenophobic resentment in South Africa. The results show that Nigerians are victimized and prosecuted as a result of xenophobic resentment, and Nigerian students also face performance challenges. The result also established that Nigerians with professional skills are deterred from coming as a result of xenophobia. The respondents also revealed the emotional stress faced by them as a result of rising xenophobic resentments. From this it can be deduced from the answers of the respondents that insecurity, scarce economic opportunities, illiteracy, and porous borders as issues fueling the spread of xenophobia in South Africa.

In summary, negative attitudes and accompanying support for harsh and punitive policy measures against foreign nationals are not confined to a fringe group in South Africa, they are widespread across the population, the majority of South Africans still display all the hostility and intolerance that they did back in 1999 and this leads us to the issue of rights for foreign nationals.

Earlier surveys began with a general comparative question in Table 8, compared to citizens of Nigeria, South Africans are the least open to outsiders and want the greatest restrictions on immigration. The data indicates a hardening of attitudes between 2006 and 2021 with the proportion of people wanting strict limits or a total prohibition on immigration rising from 65% to 78% and the proportion of those favoring immigration if there were jobs available falling from 29% to 12%. Two changes are evident since 2006 the proportion of people who are willing to consider employed-related immigration rose from 12% to 23% by 2006, in part, this reflects a policy shift by the government which promoted a new skills-based immigration policy. At the same time, the proportion of those wanting a total ban on immigration increased from 25% in 2006 to 35% in 2021, Some 84% feel that South Africa is allowing "too many" foreign nationals into the country.

Conclusion

Nigeria and South Africa have experienced the good, bad and ugly in their diplomatic, trade, defense and socio-cultural relations over the years. Currently, as it was in recent past, the scapegoating of Nigerians in targeted attacks on African immigrants in South Africa has had a negative impact on the long-standing relations between both countries. The study found that there is a need for a policy change by the South African government to instill measures that will avert xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in the future. In the light of the findings, this paper, concludes by suggesting that both countries must recalibrate their foreign policy and diplomatic actions that would ensure unrestricted access, protection of life and property and the provision of immediate consular services and alternative conflict resolution measures to resolve issues as they occur.

Recommendations

Nigeria should provide deterrent diplomatic measures like limiting visas for South Africans and declining further operational licenses for South African business franchises in Nigeria as part of measures to protect Nigerian nationals in South Africa. Political leaders, public office holders, public figures and traditional rulers should refrain from igniting and fueling xenophobic attacks in South Africa with unguarded, inflammatory and discriminatory remarks like those being made by the divisive South African politician Julius Malema of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) political party who sees all foreigners as parasites (business insider.com, 2023). Economic and political policies and conditions that create unemployment, underemployment, poor economy and career uncertainties that drive Nigerians to search for greener pastures offshore out of despair should be addressed by Nigeria to stem the tide of migration. Appropriate government agencies of Nigeria and South Africa should from time-to-time sensitize its nationals, especially the locals on immigrants, and other stakeholders through open diplomatic channels for constant rapprochement to deflect tensions and address grievances before they blow out into violence and conflicts.

The Nigerian government should work with the South African government in a *non- adversarial and confidence building process* to fulfill its international obligation of protecting the rights of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers in their country, irrespective of their race or sex as articulated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and, the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). The government of South Africa should compensate Nigerians and other foreign nationals that have lost assets, goods and properties owing to the reoccurring xenophobic attacks in the country.

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