

Understanding Xenophobia in South Africa and Some Other African Countries from the Victims' Lens

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Abstract

This study sought to assess the victims' experience of the causes and extent of xenophobic attacks in some African countries. The study used desktop research that reviewed literature from internet sources, various books, journals, theses, dissertations and published articles. The data collected was then analysed, organised, and discussed in themes using thematic analysis. The available published articles were reviewed to argue, debate, and discuss the immediate causes and extent of xenophobic attacks in South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, and Zambia, as well as to arrive at conclusions and make recommendations. The study's findings show that the causes of xenophobic attacks include interactive factors related to the number of exposures inhabitants have to strangers; cultural factors, which include identity and nationalism; material or economic factors related to employment opportunities; and available resources. The experience of xenophobic violence of many foreign nationals has been sad because many lives have been lost, damage and injuries have been sustained, and a huge number of properties of foreign nationals have been destroyed during incidents. The study concludes that unless the limitations are addressed and governments provide favourable employment opportunities, quality education, training programmes

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and service delivery to citizens, foreigners in some African countries will continue to experience xenophobic violence. The study recommends that the government make every effort to ensure that effective workable plans, programmes and policies are implemented to improve the lives of citizens in communities. This study has significant benefits for the country as a whole, which could boost the economy, government and stakeholders, as it will confirm the impediments and make recommendations on the best way to handle the causes and extent of xenophobic violence in African countries.

Keywords: Economic factors; foreign nationals; local citizens; victims' experience; xenophobic violence; xenophobia

Introduction

Many African countries have been seen as peaceful, tolerant, loving, kind, accommodating and respectful of each other. In contrast, countries such as South Africa have been noted as being places where xenophobic violence is rampant. Xenophobia has been observed to be one of the weapons used by locals to show their anger and antagonism towards foreign nationals in African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and, frequently, South Africa. Some sources (Bonga, 2021; Human Rights Watch, 2022) claim that the South African nation is dominated by unending violence that also targets foreigners, including their businesses. In addition, an effective policy to curb xenophobia seems to be lacking.

Oyelana (2016) has emphasised that the government has not done enough to ensure that the lives and property of foreign nationals are safe and protected. In addition, no compensation is awarded or given to the victims who have lost everything. A plethora of researchers (Akerle and Adebayo, 2021; Bello and Tunde, 2017; Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi, 2019) have confirmed that Nigerian returnees have suffered huge losses from xenophobic attacks. This includes life, property, and businesses, and it has negative psychosocial and economic effects on those returning to their home countries. Alfa-Shaban and Mumbere (2019) noted in the xenophobic violence and attacks of September 2019 that many foreign nationals were killed. Three Ghanaians were injured, another five were arrested, over 500 Mozambican homes were

destroyed and more than 600 Nigerians decided to return home voluntarily.

This study intends to develop a better understanding of the victims' experience regarding the causes and extent of xenophobic attacks in some African countries. The study aims to assess the causes and extent of xenophobic attacks and looks into the effects on the victims, taking into consideration the fear and catastrophes that have occurred for South Africans, Nigerians, Zimbabweans, Ghanaians and others. The study also seeks to provide answers as to what causes xenophobic attacks and the extent of this violence in some African countries. In addition, the study seeks to understand the victims' experience and analyses better how they view the causes and extent of xenophobia.

Methods

The study used desktop research that involved the review of literature from Internet sources, various books, journals, theses, dissertations and published articles (Oyelana, 2016). In addition, the researchers reviewed articles published in peer-reviewed journals that covered developed and underdeveloped countries. The researchers also used their scientific knowledge of Public Management and Leadership (PML) with government publications to discuss and debate issues concerning the victims' experiences of the causes and extent of xenophobic attacks in South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana and some other African countries. Combining this analytical tool with conflict theory as a framework invigorates the study's discussions, results and recommendations. The data was then analysed, organised, and discussed in themes using thematic analysis. In order to carry out this review of the literature, the study employed a hermeneutic framework. This aimed to search for existing literature, incorporate the analysis and interpret the results obtained (Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014).

In chronologically conducting this review, the researchers carefully ensured that the review was well-planned and effectively executed, analysed the results based on the chosen framework. The researchers critically searched for the relevant existing literature,

incorporated the analysis and interpreted the results obtained to argue and discuss the findings.

A methodological investigation was carried out between 18 February 2022 and 16 April 2022. Information on issues pertaining to the victims' experience of the causes and extent of xenophobic attacks in South Africa and some other African countries was obtained from numerous databases, namely Scopus, Science Direct, and Google Scholar. Additional information was also obtained from other databases from various websites and disciplines, including the Applied Social Online Index and Abstracts, Africa Journal Online, European and Asia Journal Online, a News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) report, Al Jazeera, Business Standard reports, and a Human Rights Watch. Some of the keywords and terms used when searching for relevant articles or research papers were "Economic factors", "foreign nationals", "local citizens", "victims' experience", "xenophobic violence", and "xenophobia". More importantly, in this study, key phrases such as "xenophobic attacks in Africa," "causes of xenophobic attacks in South Africa" and "xenophobic violence on locals and foreign nationals in Africa" were utilised. The general themes were ascertained and extracted to develop insights into scenarios of xenophobic violence.

History of Xenophobic Attacks in Africa

It is imperative to mention that the first xenophobic attacks in South Africa broke out in 2008 in Alexandra township in Johannesburg, in which 62 people died (Ngcamu and Mantzaris 2021d, 3). Thousands of people were injured and there was excessive damage to property (Chiumbu and Moyo, 2018; Matunhu, 2011). In addition, Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi (2019) confirm from the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference that there was a total of 42 fatalities recorded, 16,000 displaced and 400 people arrested during attacks against foreign nationals in 2008.

On 30 March 2015, another report noted that the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality was experiencing xenophobic violence between foreign nationals and locals (Ngcamu and Mantzaris, 2021b). Ngcamu and Mantzaris (2021b, 139) assert that many foreign nationals such as those from Somalia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Malawi, Congo and Zimbabwe were attacked during the incident.

Sadly, it must be mentioned that during this calamity, the protesters (locals) also targeted South African citizens who were leasing buildings to foreigners in the country. Similarly, Ngcamu and Mantzaris (2021b) note that in KwaZulu-Natal, the 2015 xenophobic violence that broke out among black Africans was motivated and fuelled by social media platforms, specifically those controlled and owned by white industrialists. Also in these attacks, many foreign nationals were attacked by locals. Several businesses and properties of foreign nationals were destroyed, many lives were lost, shops were looted, and a number of female foreign nationals were raped and displaced (Ngcamu and Mantzaris, 2021b; 2021d). Equally, Bello and Tunde (2017) note that on 22 February 2017, similar xenophobic violence against Nigerians and other foreign nationals occurred in Pretoria, resulting in many valuable assets being demolished by South African militant youths. The lives of several innocent foreign nationals were lost.

Salau (2017) argues that roughly 116 Nigerians were killed between 2016 and 2017 owing to illegitimate acts and xenophobic attitudes championed by some South African mobsters. According to a report released by NAN (2017), over five Nigerians' business buildings were looted, destroyed and burnt. Bello and Tunde (2017) emphasise that these attitudes exhibited by some locals towards their foreign counterparts residing in the country are unlawful, act against immigration laws and are not in line with the principles of human rights.

Notably, on Sunday, 1 September 2019, NAN (2019) reported that another fresh xenophobic attack had taken place in areas such as Jeppestown in Johannesburg, and Germiston, Rosettenville and Turfontein in Pretoria. Over 50 foreigners' shops were looted, and business centres and properties were burnt to ashes by mobs. During this period of xenophobia, a foreign national was hospitalised after inhaling smoke, and three were killed (NAN 2019). Although Agu and Mbaeze (2022) argue that over 50 South African companies have been established in Nigeria and are doing exceedingly well, not many Nigerian companies are given the go-ahead to be established in South Africa.

The violence in South Africa has resulted in retaliation in some other African countries such as Nigeria. For example, in Lagos and

Ibadan, citizens demanded that South African businesses like Shoprite, MTN and others be closed (Peterside, Ibietan and Deinde-Adedeji, 2020). In addition, shops, the South African Consulate and other South African-owned businesses were attacked in the DRC (Al Jazeera, 2019b; Business Standard, 2019; News24, 2019a). Alfa-Shaban and Mumbere (2019) also note that in Zambia, three South African shopping centres were shut down and featuring football matches were cancelled. Some African countries such as Tanzania, halted all flights to South Africa, and Madagascar called off their cordial relationship with South Africa. The citizens and governments of countries such as Botswana, Mozambique, Ghana, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Zambia, and the Somali community in South Africa rejected the violence. They reacted by saying that this kind of attitude and behaviour is unacceptable and should be condemned (Alfa-Shaban and Mumbere, 2019).

Various Xenophobic Violence in South Africa

Realistically, xenophobic violence against foreign nationals has been ongoing in South Africa for many years; it has been noted that police are not doing enough to arrest the perpetrators (Oyelana, 2016). The rights and voices of foreign nationals have not been heard by the government, either during the attacks or in the aftermath (Oyelana, 2016). Dodson (2002, 1) notes that achieving a democratic, rights-based migration policy in South Africa is extraordinarily difficult. South Africa is regarded as being a highly xenophobic society and, out of fear of foreigners, does not naturally value the human rights of non-nationals. Nationally, 48% of South Africans feel that foreigners pose a criminal threat (Crush and Williams, 2003). In Johannesburg, the country's "crime capital," Legget (2003, 52) reported that 63% of inner-city Johannesburg residents mentioned "foreigners" as the group committing most of the crime in their area. Similarly, 70% of Johannesburg residents who thought crime had increased in recent years identified immigrants as the primary cause (Landau and Jacobsen, 2004, 45).

Choane, Shulika and Mthombeni (2011, 129) note that in 2008 and 2009, xenophobic attacks were seen as an area of urgent concern following the arrival of many foreign nationals in South Africa. Several factors can account for the xenophobic attacks in the country,

especially the widespread attacks in 2008 committed by South Africans against both African immigrants and locals (Choane, et al., 2011, p 129). In summary, Nell (2009, 234) alludes to the fact that the reasons or causes for xenophobic attacks frequently include the following factors: "(a) interactive factors related to the number of exposures inhabitants have to strangers, (b) cultural factors which include identity and nationalism, (c) material or economic factors related to employment opportunities, and (d) available resources."

The impact of xenophobia on foreign nationals in South Africa has not been adequately addressed. In fact, it has not been palatable to many foreign nationals at all, as many lives and property have been lost during a number of attacks, which has also had adverse effects on the economy. Immigrant entrepreneurs' undoubtedly face problems and endure considerable xenophobic hostility directed at them and their businesses (Kalitanyi and Visser 2010, p 382).

Despite the difficult local conditions in which they operate, most immigrant entrepreneurs express optimism and look for possibilities to expand their business enterprises elsewhere in South Africa (Kalitanyi and Visser, 2010). Surviving these conditions proves that immigrants possess the entrepreneurial quality of perseverance (Kalitanyi and Visser, 2010, p 382). Charman and Piper (2012) emphasise that there have been several violent attacks against immigrant entrepreneurs both in cities and towns in South Africa for quite some time. Bseiso (2006) and Ndenze (2006) have pointed out that there has been an increase in the number of immigrant entrepreneurs killed since 2006. In addition to this, Bseiso (2006) and Ndenze (2006) note that about 28 Somalians were killed in the Western Cape province of South Africa in 2006 because of xenophobic attacks.

The media plays an important role in disseminating information about foreigners to the South African public and also offers a platform for the public to comment about foreigners through letters to the editor, talk shows and television debates (Harris, 2001). This study is informed by the different perspectives advanced above; however, both the victims and perpetrators will be thoroughly assessed through the review of literature in an attempt to understand their perceptions regarding crime and xenophobic violence.

Conceptual Framework

The Concept of Xenophobia

Xenophobia, or the fear of strangers, is a broad term that can be described as a fear of or prejudice against someone who is of a different nationality. Hostility towards outsiders is often a reaction to fear, according to Fritscher (2021). Bello and Tunde (2017) have observed xenophobia as an irrational hatred towards foreigners. Most of the countries that have experienced xenophobia may have observed it as bad feelings or thoughts towards immigrants residing in their country. Oyelana (2016) regards xenophobia as an evil attack on foreign nationals. “It is an act where hatred and unfriendly attitudes are displayed towards foreigners or strangers by members of host communities”, says Bello and Tunde (2017, 118). Also, xenophobia is recognised as a painful reaction to other people’s norms and culture. According to the *Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries*, xenophobia is a fear of people from other nations (*Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries*, 2022). It is an extreme dislike of other people’s culture, values, or religion (Bello and Tunde, 2017). Oyelana (2016) likewise asserts that xenophobia is an evil attack, an inhuman syndrome and hostility created against other black Africans residing in a host country. Ngcamu and Mantzaris (2019, 1; 2021b, 2) maintain that “xenophobic attacks are characterised by looting and criminal acts in selected locations that were susceptible to such barbaric acts.”

Mlilo and Misago (2019) and Tarisayi and Manik (2020) attest that xenophobic brutality in general alludes to any demonstration of viciousness aimed at foreign nationals or “pariahs” (in view of their being aliens or outsiders). Xenophobic tendencies depend on bias and dislike directed towards black Africans considered by local groups to be constant threats to their entitlements “like occupation, security, housing, resource dissemination and other innumerable opportunities within the economic, political, socio-cultural and technological premises” (Saya 2017, p i).

According to Solomon and Kosaka (2013), as quoted in Peterside, Ibietan and Deinde-Adedeji (2020, 49), “xenophobia is not new in literature; it has existed alongside the existence of man.” It evidently became manifest in an ancient Greek city where nationals saw foreigners as inferior to the Greeks and referred to them as

“barbarians.” Similarly, Peterside, Ibietan and Deinde-Adedeji (2020) confirm that any attempt made by local citizens to attack any other African nationals is known as Afrophobia. Tarisayi and Manik (2020) confirm that Afrophobia involves the labeling of and disgust towards aliens who are of other African nationalities, describing them as lawbreakers. Among many member states, these foreigners’ relationships and experiences of xenophobic violence in South Africa have been devastating and demoralising (Mahuni, Taru and Bonga, 2020).

It is very important to stress that xenophobia intimidates and frightens many asylum seekers, economic migrants and refugees, negatively affecting their lives and assets or other means of survival (Misago, Freemantle and Landau, 2015). Choane, Shulika and Mthombeni (2011) have noted that, as South Africa gained independence from the apartheid government, moving to democratic rule (which was recognised worldwide), there arose questions as to why there should be xenophobia in the country after the unacceptable behaviours of the apartheid regime.

Theoretical Framework

Xenophobia in the Scapegoat Theory

The word “Xenophobia” was used in the scapegoat theory to describe several negative behaviours and violent actions of local citizens towards foreign nationals (such as immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants) residing in the country (Hook and Eagle, 2002, p. 171). Gomo (2010, 32) also emphasised that “African immigrants are highly associated with criminality and other social ills.” In addition, the uses of xenophobia in some academic research in this context had brought about the development of assumptions like scapegoat and isolation theory concerning the relationship between foreign nationals and South Africans. Xenophobia has been observed as a social occurrence used in various theoretical frameworks, broad of scapegoating theory and social learning. This paper used the scapegoating theory of xenophobia to explain some of the rationale for the lingering crisis and the different factors that gave rise to xenophobia.

In one of the psychological theories, “prejudice and discrimination” are channels used by many people in expressing that hostility occurred as a result of a rise in frustration (Hook and Eagle, (2002, p. 171; Mothibi, Roelofse, Tshivhase, 2015). Similarly, Marger (1991, 94) established that this is also called scapegoating. Hook and Eagle (2002, 171) also noted that xenophobia in the scapegoat hypothesis becomes well-known through sociological assumption. It observed xenophobia from the angle of social development and change. It explained antagonism towards foreign nationals with regard to inadequate resources, which include housing, employment, services and healthcare, coupled with high demand for a better standard of living during the transition. “In the post-apartheid epoch, while people’s expectations have been heightened, a realisation that delivery is not immediate has meant that discontent and indignation are at their peak” (Bond, Ngwane and Amisi, 2010, p. 34). Many South African citizens are aware that they were been denied their rights to better services and opportunities for many years. “This is the ideal situation for a phenomenon like xenophobia to take root and flourish” (Bond et al., 2010, p. 34). More importantly, this theory also pointed out some of the reasons for xenophobia in South Africa. The theory noted that the new transition in the South African political system to a democratic system has revealed disparate wealth and resource distribution in the country. As a result of this, many South Africans have seen that they are being maltreated and cheated.

Hence, based on some of these abovementioned reasons, the scapegoat theory suggests that foreign nationals are referred to as scapegoats because they are usually targeted and blamed for their high unemployment and poverty rate in the country. In addition, foreign nationals are observed as a threat to housing, as mentioned above, health care and other social service benefits in the country.

Results

Causes of xenophobic attacks in South Africa

The xenophobic attacks in South Africa are caused by a multiplicity of factors that academic scholars in South Africa have not thoroughly and deeply researched. For instance, a common view shared by commentators on the 2008 attacks was that these were caused by

local businesses and led to attacks on migrant shopkeepers in Cape Town. Meanwhile, The violence in Durban in 2015 was believed to be triggered by a labour dispute in one of the supermarkets in Isipingo, south of Durban. These attacks (which led to numerous injuries, seven fatalities and foreigners' shops being vandalised and looted) had the lowest death rate but multiple causalities, which scholars, the media, government agencies and interested key stakeholders have failed to pinpoint. The 2019 attacks in Johannesburg were caused by the death of a minibus taxi driver who was allegedly killed by a drug dealer who was a migrant.

Among various contributing factors to these xenophobic attacks, Akerele and Adebayo (2021) assert that the prevailing causes of xenophobic violence in South Africa include the government's pronouncements, laws and policies; envy and discrimination; crime; and South African nationals' frustrations. Human Rights Watch (2022) affirms that most of the xenophobic violence that has taken place in South Africa was caused by "black South Africans who are angry at the economic and living conditions they are experiencing - poverty and inequality, chronically high unemployment, high crime rates, and poor public services."

Ngcamu and Mantzaris (2021b, 139) strongly emphasise that the cause of one of the xenophobic incidents was due to a "labour dispute over the dismissal of South African employees in favour of foreign nationals at Jeena's store in the south of Durban." Moreso, Goddey (2017), Mamabolo (2015) and Ngcamu and Mantzaris (2021b) maintain that the causes of xenophobic violence are of economic competition and limited employment opportunities. Furthermore, Khosa and Kalatanyi (2014) and Tsheola and Segage (2015) have established that several business owners in South Africa prefer hiring foreign citizens because they are regarded as cheap labour. Tshishonga (2015) has noted that local women have been observed as being pursued by foreign nationals. Often, customers patronise foreign businesses such as spaza shops owned by foreigners due to the lower cost of consumable goods and other items (Charman and Piper, 2012). Ngcamu and Mantzaris (2019; 2021a; 2021b; 2021c) highlight the following as some of the pressing causes that have spread xenophobic violence in KwaZulu-Natal: "Violent competition among immigrants themselves and between foreigners

and local business people; unholy alliances with the police; government cover-ups of incompetence; corruption; and minimal intelligence-driven policing, risk reduction analyses and planning.”

South Africans are angry because they believe other African and Asian foreigners in the country are taking advantage of citizens' socio-economic resources such as jobs and livelihoods. In the same vein, a review of the study conducted by Ngcamu and Mantzaris (2019) affirms that a huge improvement and betterment in political and socio-economic development as a nation prompted many Africans from other countries to flock to South Africa. Certainly, intense anger, tension and hatred developed among South African citizens when they noticed that a huge number of foreign nationals entered the country to take advantage of the freedoms and jobs that were more prevalent (Ngcamu and Mantzaris, 2019).

It is important to mention that a review of the study conducted by Oatway and Skuy (2021) revealed that, in 2008, numerous xenophobic attacks were caused by loathing, which led to damage and destruction by locals, the death of over 62 people and 1 700 sustained injuries. A total of 10,000 people relocated out of South Africa as a result. The brutality commenced after a local meeting was held in Alexandra, Johannesburg, at which foreign nationals were accused of stealing jobs and committing many crimes. Based on this, within a very short space of time, the violence had escalated around the country. Oatway and Skuy (2021) note that in another case, violence broke out in Durban in April 2015 and quickly spread to Johannesburg. It is important to note that the comments of a public figure at the time had influence. The Zulu king was accused of fuelling the violence, saying: “Let us pop our head lice. We must remove ticks and place them outside in the sun. We ask foreign nationals to pack their belongings and be sent back” (Oatway and Skuy, 2021). During this period alone, over eight foreign nationals were killed, and hundreds fled.

Xenophobic Violence on Locals and Foreign Nationals in South Africa

Attacks that target foreign nationals diminish the human dignity of both locals and citizens from other African countries. In addition, these attacks violate both groups' human rights and socio-economic

rights. This is evident before, during and in the aftermath of xenophobic attacks in South Africa, resulting in fatalities among the warring factions and the displacement of thousands of immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Akerele and Adebayo (2021) note that in South Africa, xenophobic attacks are an unavoidable status quo for national relations with foreign nationals. These attacks have had serious negative repercussions on foreign citizens, most especially refugees from various other countries who now reside in South Africa.

The attacks directed at foreign nationals from African countries go against the principles of ubuntu, which is central to social justice and democracy in this country (Amusan and Mchunu, 2017; Ngcamu and Mantzaris, 2021b). Furthermore, government agencies, the perpetrators of the xenophobic attacks and the victims have been found to have transgressed the supreme Constitution of South Africa before, during and after the xenophobia (Ngcamu and Mantzaris, 2021b).

Therefore, the researchers of this article were curious to search and review the available literature on the causes of xenophobic attacks in African countries. Oatway and Skuy (2021) reveal that in 2008, the xenophobic violence was frightening – to the extent that many foreign nationals from Zimbabwe crossed under the fence back to their home country with their children for safety. Many Zimbabweans were beaten, stabbed, or covered with a blanket and set alight, while others fled their homes, gathering in community centres and police stations for safety until they could find an alternative place to live and their protection was assured.

A review of the study conducted by Human Rights Watch (2022) reveals that during xenophobic violence, a Congolese businessman named “Jean” was attacked by locals in 2008, and the same in 2019 in his shop in Johannesburg. He spoke about his sad experience, stating that he was not happy even though he was alive. Similarly, Human Rights Watch (2022) revealed that a Bangladeshi businessman named “Syed” said mobs destroyed his shops in the same xenophobic violence that broke out in September 2019. It was noted that during these incidents, more than 1,000 Bangladeshi businesses were looted by local citizens of roughly 300–500 people.

All attempts made timeously to reach the South African Police Service (SAPS) for help and protection proved abortive.

Sadly, in Cape Town, a Grade 10 learner named “Nathalie,” who arrived from the DRC in South Africa in 2009 with her family, was brutally beaten by her classmates at a public school in August 2019, simply because she was a foreign national and was selected as a class monitor. Yet the Department of Basic Education did not take any action against the students who committed the crime, believing that further punishing the offenders would aggravate tensions. Human Rights Watch (2022) notes that this learner was very traumatised and afraid of returning to school because she feared she would be attacked again.

As established by Thomas (2021, 2), some successful foreign business owners are targeted and murdered in cold blood in South Africa, secretly and silently. The lives and livelihoods of immigrants seem not to matter, to the extent that most foreign nationals are fearful and scared to associate with locals in the country (Human Rights Watch 2020; Misago et al., 2015). It was revealed that, towards mid-December 2021, a renowned and successful Nigerian businessman named “Olusola Solarin” was robbed and killed by gunmen outside one of his stores in Thembisa, in Johannesburg. All efforts made by SAPS to arrest the perpetrators proved fruitless (Okon, 2022). It is very sad but important to note that, since 2019, the deaths of Nigerian citizens in South Africa have increased to more than 127 (Okon, 2022). Equally, on 3 January 2022, another Nigerian was shot and killed in his car in Kempton Park in Pretoria. Fortunately, in this case, one of the suspects was shot and two others were arrested by SAPS almost immediately (Naijainza Reporter, 2022).

Xenophobic Attacks in Nigeria

The first xenophobic attacks in Nigeria were between Nigerian and Ghanaian citizens, which occurred between 1983 and 1985 (Akinola, 2020). Some of the essential causes of the xenophobic attacks were a result of many Ghanaians arriving in the country and allegedly taking the jobs of some Nigerian citizens (Oyelana, 2016). It was noted then that almost half of the population in Ghana rushed to Nigeria, thereby making lives uncomfortable for citizens. It is

unfortunate and saddening that what transpired as a result of xenophobic violence between Nigerians and Ghanaians many years ago is happening again, this time between South Africans and Nigerians. It must be emphasised that the citizens of Nigeria at home were very sad to hear the news that South Africans were attacking Nigerians. In retaliation to the violence in South Africa, Nigerians came out in large numbers to shut down South African service centres and trading companies, which included Shoprite, MultiChoice, Telecom and MTN (Haffajee and Cronje, 2019; Oluocha, 2019; Reuters, 2022). In addition to this retaliation, one Nigerian artist, named “Tiwa,” who was expected to appear in one of the South African shows during the xenophobic violence, cancelled her trip to South Africa (BBC News Africa, 2019).

More importantly, these xenophobic attacks caused confusion and unhappiness between the leadership of the two countries, to the extent that in retaliation to the violence, Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari cancelled his visit to South Africa. He had been scheduled to participate in the African Economic Forum in Cape Town (Al Jazeera, 2019a; The State House, 2019). In addition to this, the Nigerian Embassy in South Africa was closed over security concerns (News24, 2019b). Notably, in retaliation to the violence in South Africa, the ruling party in Nigeria, known as the All Progressives Congress (APC), encouraged the nationalisation of South African businesses (Alake, 2019). Furthermore, based on retaliation threats in Nigeria, the offices of the South African Diplomatic Missions were completely closed in both Lagos and Abuja (Oluocha, 2019; Reuters, 2022).

Xenophobic Violence in Ghana

Oyelana (2016) refers to “xenophobia” as an inhuman act and evil attack on other fellow humans or among other black Africans. It has been noted from the literature reviewed that the circumstances behind any xenophobic attack in any African country include socioeconomic hardship. Chibuzor, Onyedikachi and Chukwuma (2017), Monkhe (2012) and Oyelana (2016) affirm the issue of xenophobia not being a foreign concept in African countries including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Ghana. It has been further confirmed that these countries have previously experienced

xenophobic attacks, resulting in some foreign nationals leaving the country concerned (Chibuzor et al., 2017; Gwaradzimba and Shumba, 2010; Monkhe, 2012).

Oyelana (2016) asserts that Nigeria and Ghana especially had in the past experienced xenophobic, chauvinistic violence, and this discriminatory act resulted in retaliation. Oyelana (2016) further indicates that the tension between the two countries was very high, to the extent that fear and unrest were the order of the day during the incidents. Monkhe (2012) and Osiki (2015, as cited in Oyelana, 2016, 283) factually confirm that “Ghana was one of the first African countries to raise xenophobic attacks against Nigerians residing in Ghana.” The most important reason for repatriating Nigerian citizens to their country of origin then was due to high unemployment rate in Ghana (Oyelana, 2016). Most Ghanaian citizens were jobless and their standard of living was very poor. In 1983 and 1984, the president of Nigeria, retaliating to the Ghanaian president’s action against Nigerian citizens residing in Ghana, ordered all Ghanaians residing in Nigeria to leave the country (Oyelana, 2016).

Accordingly, it must be noted that all African countries currently experiencing xenophobic violence must be aware that the outcome of violence usually leads to scarce skills and economic depression. International relations among African countries are very important and aim to promote unity among countries and citizens (African Union Commission 2015; Government of South Africa 2022). At this juncture, the role of international relations should not be neglected in order to promote security, peace and goodwill and provide a favourable living environment to any citizen, irrespective of the country of origin they come from (African Union Commission 2022; Government of South Africa 2022).

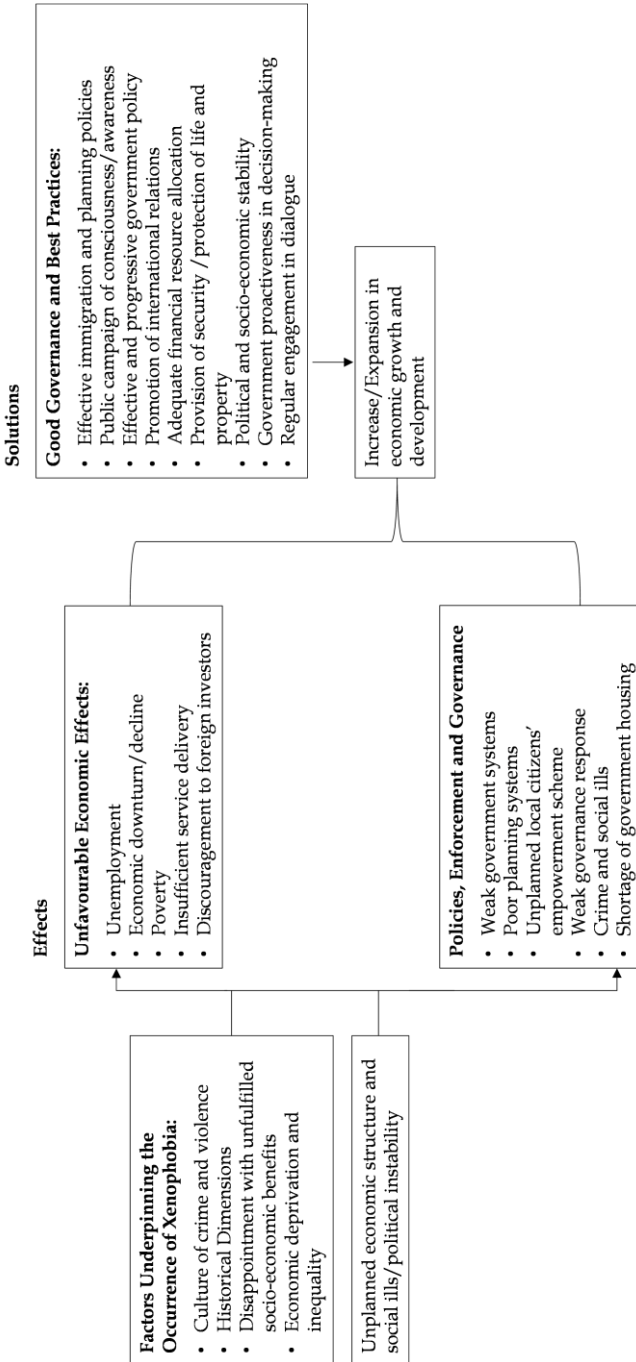
Xenophobic Violence in Zambia and Botswana

In reality, hatred and anger among African countries have caused havoc in moving nations forward, with some countries’ socio-economic activities being negatively affected. It is interesting to mention that Zambia seems to be one of the most peaceful countries, with no record of xenophobic violence. Yet, Akinola (2018, 23) asserts that “although there have been few incidents of xenophobia

in Zambia, the country's image as a haven for refugees and other immigrants has been dented." Furthermore, Akinola (2018) and Sikhakhane (2021) note that in 2016, Rwandan refugees were brutally involved in killings and ritual activities in Lusaka. As a result, a persistent increase in criminal activities prompted Zambian citizens to embark on xenophobic violence, which resulted in 60 shops of Rwandans being looted, and two deaths.

Akinola (2017) has established that this damaging nature is a cause of anxiety among political leaders and other stakeholders as it relates to African security, peace and project development. It is sad to admit that "from Ghana to Nigeria and Zambia to South Africa, hostility has been directed against 'the others' and non-nationals of African descent" (Akinola, 2017, 1). The review of the findings (Maphosa and Ntau, 2021) of Akinola's (2018) study reveals that in Botswana, there has been an ongoing increase in hatred and anger towards foreigners residing in the country. Akinola (2018) and Sechele (2019) affirm that the pattern of attacks on foreigners (for example, Rwandans in Zambia) was similar to Botswanans attacking Zimbabweans. The cause of xenophobic attacks in the two countries came about as a result of several crimes and other societal mischiefs committed by foreigners (Maphosa and Ntau, 2021), in which foreigners benefited from the limited socio-economic resources and opportunities in these countries. However, service delivery remains poor, thereby worsening social tensions and exacerbating xenophobia in southern African countries (Akinola, 2018).

Benyera (2017) has proclaimed that all forms of xenophobic violence occurring in African countries were inherited from the apartheid government or colonial masters. This author further states that violence which includes sexism, tribalism, or racism, are commonly observable and reoccurring features or attributes of xenophobic violence in African countries (Benyera, 2017). Consequently, it is on this note that Biney (2018) suggests that to restore peace and end all forms of xenophobic violence, all African countries would need to see themselves as brothers and sisters.



Source: Authors

Figure 1: Causes and Dimensions of Xenophobia in Africa

Solutions to the causes and dimensions of xenophobia in Africa

Xenophobia frequently occurs because of unpleasant circumstances or frustrations or social and economic hardship confronting a country's citizens (e.g. poor economic conditions, social ills and political instability), most especially in South Africa, where the violence is most prominent. To end or stop all forms of xenophobic violence in African countries, many scholars have provided various solutions.

According to Afrobarometer (2010), effective immigration and planning policies – if fully and efficiently implemented and strict measures are taken – will ensure that all foreigners entering a country are properly documented. If immigration laws were to be reviewed as and when required, the allocation of resources by the government would be adequately or evenly distributed. The government's proactiveness in decision-making and effective and progressive government policy were noticed by Oni and Okunade (2018) as another solution to curb xenophobic violence in African countries.

These two authors further argue that the re-occurrence of xenophobia, such as in South Africa, could be linked to the apartheid regime (Oni and Okunade, 2018, 48). As a result, they reveal that “these policy actions must include the revision of the history and civic education curriculum of South Africa to accommodate the various human and material contributions of fellow African countries toward the liberation of the country from the clutches of the apartheid regime.” In a similar scenario, Misago, Freemantle and Landau (2014), cited in Misago, Freemantle and Landau (2015, 102), confirm that in offering a solution to xenophobic violence in any African country, the first step is to ensure that the atmosphere or environment creates spaces and room for tolerance, through public awareness campaigns and human rights education.

Another solution is the promotion of international relations (Misago, Freemantle, and Landau, 2015). For example, in South Africa, Misago, Freemantle, and Landau, (2015, 40) note that collaboration and partnership with government institutions such as the Department of International Relations and Cooperation and the Department of Home Affairs could create a platform for engaging in

dialogue with stakeholders to address issues and offer lasting solutions to the violence. Various consultations with SAPS and other security agencies to encourage the provision of safety and ensure swift responses to emergencies could also be a solution to xenophobic violence (Misago et al., 2015). In one of its mandates, the policy of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) provides solutions that address xenophobic violence against all refugees, calling on the government and consulting with civil society and other stakeholders to provide adequate security for safety and the provision of humanitarian support to the affected victims (Deschamp and Lohse, 2013). In addition, as part of the mandate of UNHCR and through the UN–World Bank partnership framework, adequate financial resources must be made available to support emergency response actions and respond to crises (Deschamp and Lohse, 2013).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of the victim's experience of the causes and extent of xenophobic attacks in some African countries. The study concludes that the causes of xenophobic violence varied from country to country in Africa. For instance, in South Africa, it was due to economic competition and employment opportunities. Also, business owners hiring a significant number of foreign citizens because of cheap labour was seen as another cause. In addition, the following were noted in South Africa as triggers: "violent competition among immigrants themselves and between foreigners and local business people; unholy alliances with the police; government cover-ups of incompetence; corruption; and minimal intelligence-driven policing, risk reduction analyses and planning" (Ngcamu and Mantzaris, 2021b).

Meanwhile, in Zambia, the causes of xenophobic violence were because of a persistent increase in criminal activities, such as brutal killings and ritual activities in Lusaka by Rwandan refugees. Similarly, in Botswana, there was hostility and anger exhibited towards Zimbabweans as a result of several crimes and other societal harm committed by foreigners.

During xenophobic violence, the security of lives and property of foreigners in some African countries, most especially in South Africa, has not been adequately dealt with by the government and other security agencies. This has created a lot of fear among foreign nationals and has extended to foreign investors. It was also noted that intervention by the government during xenophobic violence has been too slow. Evidence from reviewed literature has shown that, realistically, xenophobic attacks do occur in African countries such as Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, to mention but a few. However, the xenophobic violence in South Africa has been more pronounced and it has brought about retaliation in countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and the Republic of Congo, where many South African businesses were destroyed, with others being forced to close. Several incidents of lawlessness were also observed during the attacks and yet police brutality during the xenophobic violence has always been mostly aimed at foreigners. This is something that needs to be urgently addressed.

At this juncture, it is noted that most of the xenophobic attacks in any country, most especially among African countries, were usually a result of government failures to provide essential social and economic services to citizens adequately. Many governments across the continents have failed, disappointed and denied citizens their fundamental right to service and the provision of a quality standard of living. The study noted that unless all these limitations are resolved and governments provide employment opportunities, effective education, training programmes, social amenities and effective service delivery to citizens, foreigners in a number of African countries will continue to experience xenophobic violence.

Recommendations

To address all the issues of xenophobia holistically, a country's government must exploit all the opportunities brought into the country by those foreign nationals, such as skills acquisition and transfer. Governments must try as much as possible to ensure that effective and workable plans, programmes and policies are in place and are implemented to improve the lives of people in communities. The governments of each country should make every effort to create adequate job opportunities for their citizens. More importantly, to

boost economic growth and development in each country, the government should create a welcoming environment for investors and business people, encouraging them to invest in the country. This would create more job opportunities, and boost international relations and unity among African countries.

Just as a tree cannot make a forest, countries need to embrace each other, work together in brotherly love and operate under an agreed mutual investment that would be best for the individual nations. Security issues such as the protection of lives and property of both citizens and foreign nationals should be a serious concern among all African countries to encourage foreign investment. Political and socio-economic stability is very important and should be adequately maintained by African leaders in each country. Security measures should always be in place, something that needs to be proactive. There needs to be a readiness to respond promptly to violence to prevent further loss through burning, looting, and destruction.

Regular engagement regarding investment opportunities between the South African Government and their counterparts in other countries should be encouraged to promote economic development in the country. In addition, the governments of South Africa and other African countries must be vigilant and proactive in their decision-making to halt xenophobic violence in their countries – this would prevent additional loss of property and lives in the future. In South Africa in particular, the government needs to engage with locals in the hotspot areas of Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, educating people about the harm that results from hostility towards foreign nationals and the economic development damage that follows. The governments of African countries such as Zambia, Botswana, Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa need to tackle xenophobic violence through new, approachable and reactive policies and strict rules, and ensure that all those criminals involved in xenophobic attacks are arrested and brought to book.

Finally, it must be mentioned that in order to eradicate xenophobic violence in South Africa and other African countries, it is crucial to embark on a public campaign of consciousness regarding the major role played by all African countries in supporting each other in the fight for freedom. Xenophobic violence

has tarnished the image and international relations of numerous African countries, including South Africa. As a direct result, some countries are reluctant to invest or have any business relationships with the country. Accordingly, a public awareness campaign should be run, making known to citizens how organisations such as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the UN, among others, have fought hard to ensure that minority rule and the apartheid government came to be a thing of the past.

This study is limited to documentary analysis only. It does not involve both interviews and questionnaires where primary information could be obtained from participants and respondents in face-to-face interviews.

Further Research

Future studies could be conducted on the causes and extent of xenophobic violence in South Africa, using both a qualitative research approach that involves personal interviews and a quantitative research approach.

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