IMPLICATIONS OF XENOPHOBIA ON AFRICAN UNITY

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ABSTRACT

At the end of apartheid regime, South African Economy became robust, thereby making her a cynosure of other nations especially African Nations. South Africa started to command sphere of influence and became a rallying point in terms of trade, tourism, education, telecommunication and sport for African countries. As a result, nationals of other countries especially Africa, immigrated into South Africa for jobs, entrepreneurship, education, trade among others. This helped to improve the South African economy the more, while immigrants from other countries equally excel in their various endeavours. Consequent to this, South African nationals developed fear and outright dislike for the immigrant nationals, resulting in apparent xenophobic aggression. The paper, therefore, examines the xenophobic aggression in South Africa and its implications for interrelations in Africa. The paper is a qualitative one that relied on secondary sources of information and was anchored on system theory as its theoretical framework of analysis. The paper believes that the xenophobic aggression in South Africa is caused by governance failure. The paper is also of the opinion that the xenophobic aggression will alter the inter-relational order and the unity in the African region. This can further mar the quest for regional integration. The paper therefore recommends, among other things, that xenophobic aggression should be controlled through regional policies via the African Union. Also, the South African government should initiate policies that will discourage its citizens from xenophobic aggressions by providing good governance that would help it come out of economic recession.

Introduction

Xenophobia is mostly seen as fear, dislike and a hostile attitude towards foreigners or foreign nationals outside one's own nation or country. South Africa in the heydays of the apartheid regime was not attractive to other African countries for migration as interrelations with other nations was relatively poor. South Africa was noted to have suffered hatred towards the blacks by other nationals, especially the white before and during the apartheid regime. At the end of apartheid regime, South African nationals had developed deep hatred towards foreign nationals living in South Africa. Their hatred towards foreigners went beyond the whites and pervaded to fellow Africans. However, governmental relations of South Africa and other countries especially African countries blossomed and her economy became attractive to the global communities and migration into South Africa increased. This did not only help to improve her economy but also positively increased her relationships with other African Countries and the World at large. South African therefore became cynosure to other nations especially African countries in terms of trade, tourism, education, entertainment and telecommunication. This made her to stand taller among the comity of nations which enabled her commands sphere of influence in the African region. She became a rallying point in Africa putting the entire inter -relations in African region at the peak. As a result, migration of other nationals especially from sister African countries into South Africa for jobs, businesses and education, continues to increase.

However, the nationals from other nations living in South Africa continued to excel in length and were bound to the jealousy of South African nationals. This is supposed to be a welcomed development as it has helped South African economy to grow; rather it degenerated to dislike, fear, hostile attitude and hatred of nationals living in South Africa by South Africans which is xenophobia. It is on this background that some interrogative questions needed to be addressed such as, what are the causes of xenophobia in South Africa? What are the effects of xenophobia on inter-African relations? This paper seeks to close the above gap and therefore examined the xenophobia aggression in South Africa and its implications on the inter- relations on Africa. The paper adopted quantitative design and anchored on secondary source of information making use of system theory as its frame work of analysis.

Xenophobia

The term xenophobia has attracted several definitions by different scholars at different times. The word xenophobia comes from the Greek words, xenos, meaning the stranger, guest or foreign and phobos meaning fear. So the combination of xenos and phobos gives xenophobia Smellser and Baltes (2001) stated that Xenophobia represents fear of the strangers but usually the term is used or taken to mean hatred of strangers. The concept of xenophobia has no one agreed definition as many scholars has defined it severally from different

perspectives. Some scholars see it from the psychological perspective while, others see it from the anthropological and cultural point of view. The English Dictionary simply defined xenophobia as the fear and distrust of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange. Xenophobia is discrimination against and hatred of foreigners, targeting outsiders and strangers or more often those who are in effect part of one's own society but perceived as greatly different from the majority population. Guido (2003) opined that xenophobia is an unethical exaltation of another culture in which a culture is ascribed an unreal, stereotypes and exotic quality. The above is merely cultural perspective that seems to undermind other perspectives and it appears parochial to be accepted for generalisation. It is important to note that xenophobia transits beyond cultural boundary. What may trigger xenophobia in one nation could differ from that of another nation. Xenophobia can manifest itself in several forms such as fear of losing identity, suspicion of its activities, aggression and desire to eliminate its pressure to secure a presumed purity (Guido, 2003).

According to Wimmer (1997) xenophobia is an element of a political struggle about who has the right to be cared for by the state and society, a fight for collective goods of the modern state. In other words xenophobia arises when people feel that their rights to benefit from the government are being subverted by other people's right. The above position is only from political perspective and that is not enough to describe xenophobia which manifests in other forms. Simply put also is that xenophobia connotes strong and unreasonable dislike or fear of people from other countries. Xenophobia is grounded in the discriminatory attitudes and behavior towards non-citizens which may result in violence, abuse and killings of human life.

The term xenophobia is most time confused and interchangeably used with racism. According to Handmaster and Parsley (2001) xenophobia is a form of discrimination closely related to racism and is liable to affect anyone or group of people who are considered non-indigene. A thin line of distinction could be drawn between racism and xenophobia through their manifestations. Xenophobia could arguably be seen from its opposition to foreign culture, while racism manifests mainly on issues that patterns to race which is more or less colour of the skin and some times the geographical or historical origin of a person. It therefore simply mean that xenophobia is different from racism in the sense that racism refers mainly to fears or distrust of people because of the colours of their skin while xenophobia is fear or distrust based mainly on nationality or foreign. Wallace (1999) noted that the different between Xenophobia and racism is that xenophobia is a reaction against foreigners whereas racism is a reaction against a generic group. (Harris, 2002) opined that xenophobia and. racism can be seen as an attitude of mid set. He therefore believe that it depends on who is looking at the concepts and his state of mind. The above position is unstable to rely on as it is not definitive.

Mogekwu (2005) opined that xenophobia is now a global problem which could be defined as the fear and dislike of foreigners as a result of poor intercultural communication on which members of a national culture do not understand, appreciate and accommodate members of another national culture among them. Mogekwu's position that xenophobia is a global issue is not arguable because xenophobia attacks is not limited to a particular country in the world.

From the above several definitions, it could be noted that hatred, fear or discrimination is common to them. Xenophobia could simply be defined as the fear and total dislike of nationals of a particular country over immigrants or nationals of other countries residing in the country of the former. It is more or less a discriminatory behaviour towards non-citizens that could result in outright violence, abusive communications, killing of human beings and blatant looting of properties.

Evolution of Xenophobia

Xenophobia behaviours could be traced to earlier history. According to Harrison, (2002) an early example of xenophobia sentiments in Western culture is the Ancient Greek denigration of foreigners as Barbarians, the belief that the Greek people and culture were superior to all others and the subsequent conclusion that Barbarians were naturally meant to be enslaved. Isaac (2006) noted that the Ancient Romans also held notions of superiority over all other peoples, such as in a speech attributed to Manius Acillius. There were Macedonians and Thracians and Illyrians, all most Warlike nations, Syrians and Asiatic Greeks, the most worthless peoples among mankind and born for slavery. The above position of Issac (2006) could better be seen as racism rather than xenophobia because it is a display of superiority of one race over others and not mere hatred of the people. Xenophobia is clearly a manifestation of hatred of one nationals against the other for either cultural, social or economic reasons. The superiority claim of the Aryan race by Germans over the Jews and other races in the world before the secomd world war couldn't be seen as xenophobia. It is therefore arguable that xenophobia has not been limited to a particular part of the globe rather; it could be notice in almost everywhere. According to Noyes (2010) xenophobia is pervasive throughout many areas of the world, including Europe and North America, with the influence of migrants from Northern Africa and Latin America.

Xenophobia could sometimes assume different types. Dumani (2015) categorized Xenophobia into three main types which could also be referred to as hypothesis of xenophobia. These are scapegoat hypothesis, isolation hypothesis and Bio-cultural hypothesis.

Scapegoat Hypothesis believes that xenophobia occurs when a group of indigenous people turn their anger as a resulting hardship they are experiencing against foreigners, perceiving foreigners as the cause of their problems. The isolation hypothesis takes the dimension of a nation

or group of people being isolated from participating in what other nations are doing for a long time. The Bio-cultural hypothesis manifests when age is physical and cultural apperances differences of foreigners against nationals. The three hypotheses as categorised above could better be described as types of xenophobia rather than hypothesis because they may not be proofed in other countries as it is used in South Africa

Harris (2001) stated that the consequences of South African isolation from world politics resulted into the various xenophobia attitudes exhibited by South Africans. In corroboration to the above, Moris (1998) opined that there is no doubt that the brutal environment created by apartheid regime with its enormous emphasis on boundary maintenance, has impacted on people's ability to be tolerant of difference. Harris (2001) explained that xenophobia operates through levels of physical and cultural appearance is regarded as the Bio-cultural hypothesis. According to him, the bio-cultural hypothesis places xenophobia at the level of differences exhibited by African foreigners in the country such as physical appearance and the inability to speak one of the indigenous languages.

Causes of Xenophobia

Over the years, scholars around the world have investigated the causes of xenophobia and various reasons has been adduced as the causes of xenophobia. It is important to note that the causes of xenophobia varies from one nation to the other. In otherwords, what could cause xenophobia in Germany may not be the cause of xenophobia in South Africa. The centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria (2009) stated that xenophobia is cause by perceptions of foreigner as threats to physical, security, political scapegoats, racism isolation and nationalism. In most cases xenophobia in one country are caused by not a single factor but a combination of many factors. The causes of xenophobia could be traced to the following.

I. **Abuse of laws of a country by immigrants;** There is a saying that when there is law, opinion does not exist. It therefore means that at any point in time when immigrants undermines the existing law of the land, the nationals will be aggrieved and distrust and hatred creeps into them. For example, when foreigners embark on flagrant destruction of farm lands and properties of nationals, xenophobic attacks erupt. A 2004 study by the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (SCUR) of attitudes among police officers in the Johannesburg area found that 87% of respondents believed that most undocumented immigrants in Johannesburg are involved in crime, despite there being no statistical evidence to substantiate the perception. Such views combine vulnerability of illegal aliens to

abuse, including violence and extortion.

II. **Illegal drug trading:** This is closely linked to the abuse of laws of a country. Most countries through their laws specified or abolish trading on illicit drugs which the nationals abstains from in obedience to the law. When immigrant undermines the existence of the law and perpetuate on the sales of illegal drug, xenophobia attitudes could be developed.

III. **Illegal businesses**: When immigrant engages themselves in illegal business such as illegal mining activities xenophobia attitudes could be developed among the nationals who will feel cheated by the immigrants on their own lands.

IV. **Abuse of employees by foreigners:** Some immigrants acquires wealth to become employers of labour in a foreign land, whereby they employs nationals of the countries. When there are disputes that makes them to abuse their employees xenophobia attitudes could easily be developed.

V. **Killing by some extremist migrants:** A situation where extremist migrants engages in the killing of nationals for whatever reason, religious or otherwise, xenophobic attitude could manifest.

VI. **Involvement in politics by foreigners in elections and other national issues**; In some extreme cases, immigrants involve themselves in politics to the disadvantages of the nationals. This can make them envious and thereby develop the spirit of xenophobia.

VII. **Employment deficit:** A situation where foreigners get plumb jobs at the detriment of the nationals amidst strong competition, xenophobic attitudes could arise. In other words relative deprivation of the nationals of getting jobs whereas the immigrants are accessing plumb jobs as well as social amenities, xenophobic attitudes is bound to occur. The nationals cannot be patient enough to watch immigrants taking jobs thereby making them, the nationals jobless. In September 1998, a Mozambican and two Senegalese were thrown out were thrown out of a train. The assault was carried out by a group of South Africans returning from a rally that blamed foreigners for unemployment, crime and spreading of AIDS.

VIII. **Inciting of citizens of a country against the foreigners by religions, tradition or political leaders;** Young nationals could be incited by leaders to hate immigrants because they may be getting better jobs opportunities or even

elected position. Zulu king Goodwill Zweilithini Kabhekuzulku remarked that migrants should pack and leave South Africa

IX. **Feeling of superiority in relation to other nationals;** sometimes immigrants displays elements of superiority over the nationals of a country which could result in xenophobia attacks. Tshidi (2017) noted that protesters accused immigrants of taking jobs from South African causing crimes. It could be argued that the xenophobia in South Africa erupted not necessarily as a result of the immigrants taking their jobs but as a result of hatred of foreigners. This is because most of the jobs taken by foreigners are lesser paid jobs rejected by South Africans. The law of every nations protect some highly paid jobs for the nationals who are willing to take the jobs.

Xenophobia in South Africa

Many scholars have traced the rise of xenophobia in South Africa to the post apartheid era, but it could better be traced to the pre-apartheid era. It other words xenophobia in South Africa did not start now but longer than the period before apartheid regime. It is on record that there were series of hostities between the British and Boers which led to rebellion by poor Afrikaners who looted British owned shops (Herman, 2003). It could be correct to say that xenophobia has started before the aparthaid regime but it is important to note that not all hostilities could be regarded as xenophobia attacks.

Also there was evidence through the various instruments that South African government used to manage the situation such as the 1913 immigrant regulation act which provided for the exclusion of undesirable group of people that included Indians. This manifested the hatred of Indians immigrants, the township Franchise Ordinance of 1924 which was intended to deprive Indians of municipal Franchise (Giliomee, 2003). However, the above evidence of regulations couldn't have been restricted to only migrants from one nation because xenophobia is usually targetted to many nationals in the country and not people of a particular nationals.

In 1994 and 1995, gangs of armed youth destroys the homes of foreign nationals living in Johannesburg demanding that police work to repatriate them to their home countries. In 2008, a widely documented spate of xenophobia attacks occurred in Johannesburg. (The New York Times, 2008). Idehen and Osaghae (2015) posit that 2008 witnessed an increased level of xenophobia related attacks in the country. Monson and Aria (2011) noted that in one incident, 62 people were left dead with over

670 injured and 1300 detained. Kerr and Durrheim (2013) also noted that in 2009, foreign nationals of Zimbabwe were forcefully chased from their settlements in Western Cape leading to displacement of 300 Zimbabwe.

In 2015 another widely documented series of xenophobia attacks occurs in South Africa mostly against migrants from Zimbabwe. In both cases, properties, lives and businesses of the immigrants were destroyed. According to Dodson (2002) South Africa is a high xenophobia society which out of fear of foreigners, does not naturally value human rights of non-nationals. The manifestation of apparent xenophobia attacks in South Africa has given a vivid definition of what xenophobia in South Africa means. The civil society and South African Human Rights commission defines xenophobia in South Africa as a deep dislike of non nationals by national of the recipient nation. (South African Human Rights Commission, 1999). According to Harris (2001) the above definition is not even enough in South African context as the definition is limited and misleading because xenophobia is South Africa is not just an attitude, but an activity. It is violence that damages and harm the body (Harris, 2002).

Dumani (2015) argued that xenophobia in South Africa was triggered by hatred of foreigners and the failure of the government in supporting its people to escape poverty by providing resources and employment opportunity. According to Gumede (2015) South Africa is more unequal today than in 1994 as about 60% to 70% of the population live in squalor condition hidden spaces. A lot of the violence that is taking place now is happening to migrants in those spaces on a daily basis.

Implications of Xenophobia on African Unity

Evidence abound in literature that African nations has been relating very well in various forms. The African Union (AU) has been one of the central rallying points that bind African nations together. The smaller nations leans more on the bigger nations for different things. The cooperation and relationship among the African nations has been in the areas of economy, trade, tourism, education, exchange of military training, peace keeping operations among others.

Africa has noted and accepted the dichotomy between the North and South and has been clamouring for economic reordering. Africans has been working in collaboration on how to harness the opportunity created by globalization. They have realized that Africa has common problems of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, crisis, war, diseases and poor standard of living. South Africa has been the most developed nation in Africa since the end of apartheid. Other African nations and the entire world look up to South Africa to help solve African problems. This is the reason why other African nationals migrate to South Africa.

Africans all over the world has organized themselves with one identity to

fight and liberate Africans from the shackles of colonization, imperialism and poverty. With the same unity, they have joined other developing nations from South America and Asia to speak of the economic imbalances and dichotomy between the developed world and the developing or undeveloped world. Pan Africanism has helped Africans in their fight for reordering the economic imbalances in the globe. However, the above is not to say that African nations do not have areas where they do not collaborate well. Africa has not united to find a solution to the various froms of insecurity and corruption ravaging Africa.

Xenophobia attacks in South African have punctured the much-cherished unity that existed among African nations. The diplomatic relationship between South African and other African nations has been poor as a result of xenophobic attacks in South Africa. In 2019, as a result of xenophobia attacks in South Africa on foreign nationals, Zambia cancelled a schedule friendly football match against South Africa, Madagascar also withdrew from similar fixtures, protesters of DR Congo attacked South African Embassy in Lumumbashi. Nigeria pulled out of World economic forum held between 4-6 of September 2019. Judging from the above, it could be argued that xenophobic attack in South Africa has resulted to poor relationship and mistrust among African nations.

Xenophobia attack in South Africa has introduced hostile relationship between Nigeria, other African countries and South Africa. The World Economic forum on African 2019 was essentially organized to foster cordial relationship among African countries in the areas of free trade, open borders and strong economic collaborations. Some policies has been initiated like free movement of persons protocol in Africa 2018 which seek to foster cordial relationship among all African countries by ensuring the rights of all AU members to enter, stay and move freely and exit the territory of another member's state in accordance with the laws and regulations. The African continental free trade agreement of March 2018 which seeks to allow African goods to be traded without restraints throughout the continent, cannot be a success as entering into South Africa for business purpose is not guaranteed especially if Abuja and Pretoria are not cooperating well.

Attendance to international conferences and gatherings in South Africa by other African countries can no longer be effective as a result of the fear of insecurity. This is a forum where Africans gathers to discuss way forward to African issues. Participants and delegates will not be interested because of the fear of being attacked by xenophobia aggressors. This will widen the gap of disunity in Africa continent. Most African countries that look up to South Africa as a dependable and shield cover, will change their focus and anchored on countries of other continent. In other words, xenophobia in South Africa will heighten African's dependency on Europe and America manufactured goods.

Xenophobia in South Africa will lead to the withdrawal of diplomatic corps of African nations from South Africa. This will develop mistrus, reduce, trade volume in Africa and led to contraction of the economy. This will further lead to re-emergence of imperialism in Africa continent.

The binding force and pillar which holds African unity together, the AU, a regional international organization is becoming fragile and precarious. It may not be able to issue statements that will be obeyed any longer. Most African countries whose citizens in South Africa were affected by xenophobia will not be interested in continuing a cordial relationship with South Africa. Nigeria and South Africa has been at logger heads over xenophobia attacks in South African on Nigeria citizens.

Most countries issued travel warnings to their nationals dissuading them from travelling to South Africa over xenophobia attacks. Also, there is fear of spillover effects of xenophobia attacks. Most countries embarked on the disruption of South African businesses outside South African such as MTN, DSTV and Shoprite. Most companies were asked to close operations while expatriates were requested to go back to their countries. The quest for regional integration cannot be achieve with disunity caused by xenophobia. The implications of xenophobia in South Africa is systemic as what affects one nation in Africa, affects the entire Africa.

Conclusion

This paper examined the concept of xenophobia, its forms, and implications for inter African unity. The paper discovered that many scholars has given several definitions of xenophobia but not a single definition could be widely accepted as the only definition of xenophobia. However, the paper defines xenophobia as the fear and total dislike of nationals of a particular country over immigrants or nationals of other countries residing in the country of the former. It is the form of discrimination towards non-citizens which usually leads to voilence, killing of human beings and looting of properties. The paper further discovered that the causes of xenophobia in South Africa centres around abuse of law of the country by immigrants, illegal trading on drugs, illegal businesses, abuse of employees by foreigners, among others.

The paper used system theory as its framework of analysis. African continent is seen as a system which has the various African countries as sub-units. The system needs the sub units which is the countries to work collectively but independently for the system to exist. When there is any problem affecting any of the units, it will affect the entire system. The theoritical implications of xenophobia in South Africa is that what affects South Africa or any other nation in Africa as a result of xenophobia attacks, affects the entire continent of Africa. Xenophobia in South Africa will therefore affect the relationship of South Africa with other African nations. It also examined the causes of xenophobia and its prevalence in

South African at various times. The paper posits that the xenophobia attacks in South Africa has tremendous effects on the unity of African nation and has left the much talked about regional integration in a precarious stage. The paper foresees possible spillover effects which will affect the unity of African nations and concluded that disunity among African states as a result of xenophobia attacks, could rejuvenate imperialism in Africa as most African nations will turn their backs on Africa to do business.

Recommendations

i. South African government should tread the route of good governance, that can provide adequate employment for the citizens.

ii. Immigrants law of African countries should be well specified and implemented accordingly to reduce influx of illegal and irregular migrants, who causes problems as they enter into a country to live.

iii. African countries should find a way of reaching an agreement that will help to reduce the economic and social burden of host country that will anger their nationals to hate immigrants.

iv. Good immigration law should be put in place across Africa to protect the lives and properties of legal immigrants against attack by hoodlums who ordinarily are jobless but capitalizes on weak immigration laws of their country.

v. Laws should be put in place and allowed to take its full course to punish offenders who attacks immigrants on infinitesimal reasons.

vi. Religions, political and traditional leaders should join hands across Africa to encourage and accommodate foreigners to live among them.

vii. Various international organizations such as UN, AU and others should invoke their laws on any country that does not punish their citizens who are involved on xenophobic attacks on other nationals.

viii. Good enlightenment programmes should be organized by international organizations and NGOs to educate the citizens especially the youths and leaders of various capacities on the effects of xenophobia.

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