# Implications of Xenophobia on Nigeria-South Africa Relations (2012-2022)

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**Abstract**

Xenophobia has been defined as contemptuous of which is foreign, especially of strangers or of people from different countries or cultures. South Africa has been battling recurrent xenophobic attacks since the attainment of democratic rule in 1994 with major incidences in 2008, 2015 and 2017. This study is an attempt to establish a link between xenophobia and the trade and economic relations between Nigeria and South Africa. The objective of the study was to examine the causes and implications of xenophobia on Nigeria-South Africa trade relations within 2011-2021. The study is underpinned by the Realist Theory and Scapegoat Theory. Secondary sources of data were obtained from relevant books, journals, articles, newspapers, and blogs. Findings from this study revealed that no fewer than 287 Nigerians were extra-judicially killed in South Africa within 2012-2022, and over 5 buildings occupied by Nigerian business were burnt with unprecedented looting. However, the causes of the xenophobic attack on Nigerians in South-Africa were found to be poverty which has its roots in apartheid. But, contrary to popular perception, Nigerians were said to have exaggerated the effect of violence on their citizens, probably because Nigeria has a better organised, tech-savvy, and loud diaspora population in South Africa. It is then recommended that the government of the South Africa should work towards fulfilling its constitutional and international obligation of protecting the lives, properties, and rights of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the country, irrespective of their race or sex, creed or colour as articulated in various international agreements in which the country is signatory to.

**Keywords:  International relations, Nigeria, South Africa, Xenophobia, Realist Theory**

## Introduction

In Africa, xenophobia is growing more prevalent. Prejudice against non-nationals, particularly fellow Africans, is on the rise from Kenya to the Maghreb and across Southern Africa. Bounded notions of citizenship have persisted in Africa for over two centuries, and xenophobia is one of the most recent manifestations of this trait. South Africa has a very high rate of attacks on foreign nationals. Despite a lack of precisely comparable evidence, xenophobia is thought to have developed dramatically in South Africa following the establishment of a democratic government in 1994 (Fayomi, Chidozie & Ayo, 2015).

As described by Konanani and Odeku (2013), the issue of xenophobic relations in contemporary South Africa is entrenched in and conditioned by the nature of its apartheid economy. The apartheid economy was unified in the sense that it used all societal forces at its disposal to advance the interests of the apartheid South African state. Since gold was the primary productive force in apartheid South Africa's economy, and the concomitant social relations of the mining process were mostly black labor force, the industry attracted a large migrant labour from Southern African regions particularly Malawians, Mozambicans, and Zimbabweans, to the fast-thriving industry. As a result, as the foreign labor force began to gain social mobility in the gold industry and black South Africans were continually subjected to apartheid's repressive policies, social tensions rose in the state's political economy and have since remained a dominant component of social relations of the post-apartheid South African state (Chidozie, 2014).

As a result, this paradox in apartheid's social connections, which results in limited prospects for blacks in South Africa, feeds fear and suspicion among many of them, particularly foreigners. The rising poverty and unemployment rates among South African blacks in post-apartheid South Africa have prompted successive governments to implement economic measures to reverse the trend. Even though policies such as the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Programme (GEAR) and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) were heavily criticised, particularly by South Africa's white minority, they portrayed the government's genuine intervention to address racial misrepresentation in the country's political economy (Edigheji, 2012). However, as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported in 2003, the Human Development Index has deteriorated,and the government's efforts remain insufficient.

It is vital to note that the victims of xenophobic attacks are not foreigners in the sense of being of a different nationality but everyone not belonging to the dominant ethnic groups in the cities attacked (South African History Online 2015). Ojedokun (2015) reports that members of minority ethnic groups in South Africa are considered as aliens by South Africans of other ethnic groups. However, in the context of xenophobic violence, white individuals were not regarded as dangers.

However, the substantial economic gap in the post-apartheid South becomes more evident when the increased influx of "other foreigners," particularly Nigerians, and their active engagement in South Africa's economy is examined. In effect, recent xenophobic attacks against Nigerians living in South Africa highlight the predominance of the Nigerian business community in the post-apartheid South African economy. The attacks, which killed many people and displaced hundreds, prompted the Nigerian government to intervene diplomatically.

Nigeria and South Africa have a long history of diplomatic ties (Ojukwu, Mbah & Osuchukwu, 2019). Kwaghe and Okoli (2020) in affirmation stated that the Shapeville massacre on March 21, 1960, provided Nigeria with the first opportunity to pursue her anti-colonialist foreign policy. The incident, which occurred before Nigeria's independence, marked the beginning of Nigeria's conflict with South Africa's discriminatory white administration. Given the dynamism that has characterised the nations' economic and diplomatic ties in recent times, this study investigates the effects of xenophobia on Nigeria-South Africa relations.

**Problem Statement**

Africans have traditionally prided themselves on being friendly to visitors. South Africa, on the other hand, has recently shown discriminatory tendencies toward foreign people residing in the country. Their antipathy for outsiders is rather telling. The country is plagued by anti-foreigner feelings and hate. These resentments and sentiments are becoming more violent, causing diplomatic challenges for South Africa as a whole (Ayoola, 2020). One of the key factors influencing Nigeria-South Africa economic ties is xenophobic violence. In post-apartheid South Africa, it is becoming more widespread.

Regardless of the lack of centralised and consistent recording methods, xenophobic violence has increased in townships and informal settlements throughout South Africa and this time in cities like Cape Town, Pretoria, and Johannesburg. South Africa's society has been hostile to non-nationals, especially illegal migrants, and as a result, most communities have an underlying culture of impunity that favours mob justice. South Africa has become one of Africa's most dangerous places to live in due to its antagonistic attitude toward non-nationals. Nigeria has suffered greatly because of this anti-foreigner mentality. In 2017, about 116 Nigerian nationals were killed in South Africa through extrajudicial means, with the police killing 63% of them. South Africa in 2017 deported 67 Nigerians (Olaode, 2017). The government's approach to immigration has been called into question, particularly how it handles visa applications, legal processes, and unlawful detentions of foreign nationals. Contrarily, Misago (2017) reported that xenophobia has killed 62 people, injured 670, raped hundreds, displaced over 150,000 people, and caused property worth millions of rands to be plundered, destroyed, or appropriated by

residents. The issue with xenophobia is that it is a crime that contradicts the ethos of Ubuntu cherished by Africans (Amusan and Mchunu, 2017). According to Rukema and Khan (2013), some African states expressed their concern with the violence conducted against their citizens in the aftermath of the xenophobic attacks. As the Nigerian government recalled its envoys from Pretoria, the South African government also closed its consulate in Nigeria for a few days after Nigerians protested xenophobic attacks in South Africa (Ngcukana, 2015; Essa & Patel 2015). This depicts the strained relationship between the two countries because of the attacks (Tirivangasi & Nyahunda, 2020).

**Objectives of the Study**

This study is an attempt to establish a link between the attack on Nigerians in South Africa and the diplomatic and economic relations between Nigeria and South Africa as well as the patronage of South African multinational companies in Nigeria within the period under study. Specifically, the study's objectives are to:

1. Determine the causes of xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa within 2012-2022
2. Examine the implications of xenophobia on diplomatic relations between Nigeria and South Africa within 2012-2022
3. Find out the effects of the xenophobic on trade and economic relations between Nigerian and South Africa within 2012-2022

**Literature Review**

**Xenophobia: A Conceptual Overview**

The conception of xenophobia varies according to a scholar's ideological bias and/or inclination. It is not just vague, but also contentious. Although xenophobia is a broad phrase, it derives from two Greek words: "xenos" (stranger, alien, or foreign) and "phobos" (fear or freight) (Fatoki, 2014). Xenophobia literally means "fear of a foreigner," but there is more to it than that (Mills, 2018). The phenomenon denotes aversion to unfamiliar people or situations.

Xenophobia can be defined as attitudes, opinions, and behaviour that reject, exclude, and frequently demonise others because they are perceived to be outsiders or foreigners to the community, culture, or national identity. Adeleke (2020) defines xenophobia as a fear and hatred of foreigners that can lead to violence, loss of belongings, and death. According to Adedeji, Adeyemi, and Olufemi (2019), xenophobia is an overflow of negative collective beliefs, societal stereotypes, and prejudices sometimes masked as the phenomenon of nationalism.

It should be underlined that xenophobia is defined in these categories not only as having a regional or racial focus; rather, s Someone is despised if they are from another country. Xenophobia is manifested in prejudiced attitudes and behaviour. These usually end in violence, various sorts of abuse, and displays of hatred. As argued by several authors, xenophobia stems from the perception that non-citizens pose a threat to the receivers' identity or individual rights. While some early researchers (Harris, 2001; Harris, 2002) give the impression that xenophobia is a homogeneous phenomenon, others identify different types of xenophobia such as ethnic and racial phobia, religious phobia, and phobia toward groups of people based on social, cultural, physical, or natural characteristics. The latter includes fears of migrants, individuals with disabilities, misogyny, and so forth (Yakuhko, 2009; Dichek, 2014).

Xenophobia according to Harris (2001) comprises not just a sense of superiority, but it may also be part of the 'scapegoating' process in which unfulfilled promises of a new democracy led to the foreigner being a symbol of unemployment, poverty, and misery. Racism, chauvinism, and prejudice against people of different countries or races are on the rise globally. This study defines xenophobia as the mixture of numerous South African racial and tribal components fighting against Nigerians in South Africa.

**Xenophobic Attacks and Nigeria-South Africa Relations**
Xenophobic experiences in Nigeria and South Africa revealed distinct patterns in the West and Southern African countries, respectively. The political economy of Nigeria's oil boom from the early 1970s to the early 1980s, and the wealth that followed, was a major element that drew other nationals into the country, mainly Ghanaians who took up menial positions and worked in the small and medium business sector. Again, the poorly managed and inherent contradictions of the 1980s oil glut, as well as the attendant economic disarticulation, resulted in job losses and inadvertently precipitated Nigeria's xenophobic attitudes toward her neighbouring immigrants, particularly Ghanaians, to reduce scarcity of resources (Oni & Okunade, 2018).

Researchers and experts have expressed their worries about the impact of xenophobic violence on innocent black immigrants perpetrated mostly by some aggressive youths in South Africa, which has typically resulted in a diplomatic cold war between Nigeria and South Africa. Knowing this, the two African countries with the largest economy stand to lose the most if the scenario persists. Experts have interpreted the violent attacks on Nigerians as an ungrateful reciprocation from South Africa, because the former actively participated in rescuing the latter from the shackles of colonialism during the apartheid administration (Dutse & Bello, 2017).

However, since the abolition of apartheid in South Africa, which improved socio - economic and political employment options for black South Africans, the issue of xenophobic attacks has resurfaced, and the vulnerable individuals continue to be foreigners from fellow black countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria (Ismail & Sakariyau, 2017). In the Nigerian context, the crisis not only jeopardises the cordial and bilateral relationship between Nigeria and South Africa, but it also calls into question Afrocentrism as a fundamental pillar of Nigerian foreign policy.Though Nigeria is a major regional force in Africa, xenophobia may pose a new danger to its hegemony, which has suffered significant setbacks because of action and inaction by neighbouring African countries. In respect of this, the ramifications of xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa can be divided into two categories: diplomatic or political implications and bilateral economic implications (Amao & Okeke-Uzodike, 2015).

**Nigeria-South Africa Relations in the Pre and Post-Apartheid Era**
Nigeria and South Africa have the largest economies in the African region (Seteolu & Okuneye, 2017). These countries can be regarded to as forerunners of continental development and regional diplomatic links in West Africa and Southern Africa, respectively, due to their economic antecedents. The recurring xenophobic attacks in South Africa against Nigerians and other African peers is a concerning phenomenon that has had numerous detrimental ramifications for Nigeria-South Africa ties (Ojukwu, Mbah & Osuchukwu, 2019). According to Ogunseye and Olojede (2020), Nigeria developed a foreign strategy centred on Africa after achieving independence on October 1st, 1960. Kwaghe and Okoli (2020) in affirmation stated that the Shapeville massacre on March 21, 1960, provided Nigeria with the first opportunity to pursue her anti-colonialist foreign policy. This incident, which occurred before Nigeria's independence, marked the beginning of Nigeria's conflict with South Africa's discriminatory white administration.

The administration of the First Republic (1960-1966), led by Tafawa Balewa, faced enormous domestic and international pressure to put measures in place to curb South Africa's repulsive apartheid rule. In response, Nigeria imposed an embargo on South African imports and advocated for harsh political and economic penalties against the apartheid system. Balewa used the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London in March 1961 to campaign for South Africa's expulsion from the Commonwealth. By 1962, Nigeria had practically terminated all benefits and privileges associated with Commonwealth membership in relation to South Africa (Kwaghe & Okoli, 2020).

Nigeria's anti-apartheid stance endured until the First Republic was overthrown on January 15, 1966, by a military revolution. The coup resulted in the establishment of Aguiyi Ironsi's administration. Ironsi's term saw

no serious policy activism against South Africa's apartheid system. This was due to the country's volatile security environment following the military takeover. Following another revolution that deposed Ironsi's administration on July 29, 1966, Nigeria's attitude toward South Africa was slightly modified by the successor state led by Yakubu Gowon. The new approach was predicated on a direct diplomatic confrontation with South Africa's white supremacist administration. This was exemplified by the ban on South African immigrants in Nigeria.The Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) exacerbated the deterioration of Nigeria-South Africa relations. This was against the backdrop of South Africa's putative meddling in the War, which was regarded as damaging Nigeria's efforts in that context.

The architecture of Nigeria-South African relations changed as events identified cooperation and competition as the dominant features of Nigeria-South African interactions. For example, in mid-April 2003, approximately 55 South African commercial organisations were conducting business in Nigeria. MTN is the single largest investor. It entered the Nigerian market through the first telecommunications sale process in Africa in January 2001, when it awarded one of Nigeria's Global System Mobile Licences for a sum of US$28 million12. Between 2005 and 2009, DSTV, a key player in the television industry, accounted for 90% of all satellite TV viewers in Nigeria. As a result, DSTV has risen to become the sixth largest firm listed on the Lagos Stock Exchange. Similarly, the Dangote Group of Companies, headquartered in Nigeria, has a nearly $400 million investment portfolio in South African cement production, and Nigeria's Oando Oil Company is listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Oil accounts for more than 95 percent of Nigeria's exports to South Africa (Ogunseye & Olojede, 2020).

Adedeji, Adeyemi and Olufemi (2019) asserts that, despite the advances made over the years by Nigeria and South Africa, the undisputed leaders of Africa in terms of economy, politics, geography, and other aspects of national power, xenophobia is a huge negative to this partnership. Following the September 2019 incident, Nigeria boycotted the World Economic Forum conference in Cape Town, recalled its ambassador, and even evacuated astute Nigerians from South Africa. Some South African enterprises in Nigeria were also targeted by hoodlums, despite the Nigerian government's efforts to protect the businesses. Many experts have praised the Nigerian government's handling of the crisis in the face of criticism from groups and prominent actors in Nigeria, but it appears that these attacks put the relationship between South Africa and Nigeria one step forward and two steps back.

According to Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Nigeria's former Senior Special Adviser on Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, the country lost around 116 people between 2016 and 2017 because of unlawful acts perpetrated by some hoodlums in the host country (Salau, 2017). This is still a severe setback that threatens Nigeria's and South Africa's external relations. The President of the Nigerian Community in South Africa verified the attacks and stealing of products belonging to Nigerian businesses and women in a report provided by the News Agency of Nigeria. From the reports, over five buildings occupied by Nigerian businesses were burned down with exquisite theft. The costs of the most recent 2019 xenophobic attacks against Nigerians have yet to be determined (Akuki, 2017).

Socio-culturally, the violence against Nigerians in South Africa has had a significant impact on people-to-people ties, which are the foundation of inter-state relations. The repatriation of almost 300 Nigerians is regrettable, as several Nigerians have left their families behind. These Nigerians will undoubtedly continue to protest South Africa for years to come until justice and adequate recompense are served. The loss of life and property has undoubtedly had an economic impact on both countries. This type of violence hinders foreign direct investment since no investor wants to invest in a hostile atmosphere. It is commendable that both governments responded effectively to the present issue, but there must be a permanent framework in place to discuss and identify long-term solutions to the crisis (Adedeji, Adeyemi & Olufemi, 2019).

**Review of Empirical Studies**

Akinrinde, Babalola and Tar (2021) investigated the Nigeria-South Africa relations and the politics of xenophobia in post-apartheid South Africa. The study is offered as a potential contribution to the ongoing efforts geared at addressing the politics of xenophobia in Africa with a view to improving the strategic relations and partnership between Nigeria and South Africa given their strategic importance to the continent. To achieve this, both qualitative and case-study methodological techniques were adopted in carrying out the study. Data were therefore scooped from both primary and secondary sources which, among others, included the South African High Commission and the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Findings reveal, however, that the motivation for the xenophobic politics is chiefly economic and driven by competition over limited scarce socioeconomic resources. The study recommends that government must be particularly interested in addressing the disempowering socioeconomic conditions of the black South African community and endeavor to bridge the widening socioeconomic gaps between the rich white South African community and the poor black South African community to arrest further possible deterioration of diplomatic and citizens' relations between the two states.

Big-Alabo and Alex-Achinulo (2020) assessed Nigeria-South Africa relations from apartheid to post-apartheid. The study examined the relations between Nigeria and South Africa from the period of Apartheid to Post-Apartheid. The study was guided by realist conflict theory by Donald Campbell. The study adopted ex-post research design while data was collected through secondary source such as textbooks, journal articles, newspapers, magazines and internet materials, the data generated was analysed through content analysis. The findings of the study showed that there were some relations that existed between Nigeria and South Africa during the period of Apartheid which includes bilateral political relations and bilateral economic relations. In a likely manner there have been breaches in relations between Nigeria and South Africa during the post-apartheid era which now has negative impacts in the areas of political and diplomatic, socio-cultural, and economic. Based on the findings the study recommended among others; that there should be high level diplomatic engagement between Nigeria and South Africa as a way out of mending their unbecoming relation that had existed between the two countries and the government of South Africa should assist individuals from Nigeria that have incurred losses to rebuild their businesses that had resulted from the attacks.

Ojukwu, Mbah and Osuchukwu (2019) studied the myth and realities of xenophobia and Nigeria-South Africa relations in post-apartheid era. The study contributes to the existing literature on xenophobia by studying its effect on Nigeria-South Africa relations in the post-apartheid era. The findings include, that xenophobic attacks have become big threat to the political, diplomatic, socio-cultural, and economic integration between Nigeria and South Africa since the end of apartheid in South Africa. The study therefore recommended that the South African government and people should imbibe the spirit of African brotherhood and work assiduously towards peaceful co-existence with citizens of other African countries to strengthen African integration. On the other hand, Nigeria and South Africa should enter into diplomatic agreement on protection of each other's citizens in their territories. This should be backed by sanctions against any defaulting party.

Oni and Okunade (2018) examined the context of xenophobic attitudes in Nigeria and South Africa and noted that both countries presented contrasting dynamics of the manifestation of the phenomenon. The study observed that xenophobia in Nigeria was mild, subtle, non-violent, and driven by the ruling class and politically motivated. Xenophobic attitude in Nigeria was occasioned by state's response to the prevailing economic situation at that period. The study concluded that xenophobic attitudes in Nigeria are distinct from what is experienced in South Africa. The phenomenon was state-driven in Nigeria on both occasions it occurred in 1983 and 1985 through 'immigration order' but the situation in South African is often citizens-driven with deep expression of aggression and recommended that African people and governments need to rethink the basis of their relations and come to the realisation that the phenomenon can negatively impact their politics, economy, and society.

Bello and Sakariyau (2017) investigated the implication of xenophobic violence on Nigeria-South Africa relations. The study noted in this study, the latest scenario in Pretoria has resulted in the loss of innocent lives and valuable properties destroyed by some militant youths in South Africa. According to Nigeria's Foreign Affairs and Diaspora Advisor, Abike Dabiri-Erewa, the country has lost about 116 nationals due to the unlawful acts of some hoodlums in South Africa. This remains a significant setback and which poses a threat to the external relations of Nigeria and South Africa. The research relies on secondary data. The findings show that the ugly trend of xenophobic attack has resulted in a cold war between Nigeria and South Africa in their socio-economic and political relationships. However, the study infers those adequate actions are required to be taken to restore and guarantee peace for the immigrants residing in South Africa. Failure to curb the menace of xenophobic violence in South Africa might degenerate into regional conflict which invariably will affect the relationship between both nations in all ramifications.

Chukwu (2021) assessed Nigeria-South Africa relations in the post-apartheid era (1993-2019). The study acknowledged the Nigeria-South Africa relations as far back to the era of Nigeria's independence. According to this analysis, Nigeria made it plain in her Independence Day speech that Africa is the focal point of her foreign policy, and that the removal of apartheid in South Africa is her greatest issue. That was an affront to the then-South African leadership, who considered Nigeria as a threat and an adversary. This icy friendship lasted until 1992, when President DeKlerk and his entourage invaded Nigeria to hug one other. As a result, bilateral connections were formed that may benefit both countries based on their national interests. This relationship and diplomatic strategies were jeopardized under the administrations of Nelson Mandela and Nigeria's dictator, General Sani Abacha, but normalcy was restored during the regimes of Mbeki and Obasanjo. However, the eras of Zuma and Jonathan have been fraught with diplomatic difficulties. Their policies and interactions are sometimes warm, and sometimes chilly. The two nations' relationship worsened because of a series of xenophobic assaults against Nigerians residing in South Africa in 2017, followed by another in September 2019. This study addresses the basic themes of racial intolerance and hate for foreigners, with a focus on the Nigeria-South Africa relationship in the post-apartheid era.

Seteolu and Okuneye (2017) examined Nigeria-South Africa relations with emphasis on political, trade and economic engagements. The research aims into the consistency and changing patterns in Nigeria-South Africa relations, which are linked to Nigeria's failure to diversify its economy and South Africa's refusal to offer an enabling environment for Nigerians in its economic sector. It contends that Nigeria and South Africa have de-emphasized the main objectives of leading economic growth and development in Africa in favor of a competitive quest of regional hegemony. The research discusses growing regional cooperation and the promotion of bi-relations based on independent state institutions rather than the personalities of the ruling class. To explore facets of Nigeria-South Africa relations, the study focuses on secondary sources of material such as journal articles, newspapers, and policy briefs. The study suggests that Nigeria and South Africa should transition from competitive to amicable ties to lead Africa's anticipated economic growth, economic development, and political rebirth.

Odubajo and Akinboye (2017) examined the collaboration or competition between Nigeria and South Africa. The dynamics of the relationship between Nigeria and South Africa, probably the two most powerful governments on the African continent, are the subject of this research. Each of the two republics is still attempting to expand its dominion outside its sub-region to emerge as Africa's leading power. These activities are not undertaken in isolation but have an impact on bilateral relations and are linked to the guiding principles of national interest. We examine the trajectory of Nigeria-South Africa ties, from strongly political disputed to the strongest of friendly connections, using data acquired from secondary sources. In the end, the study discovered that collaboration and competition are important factors in inter-state interactions. Nigeria and South Africa currently have a historic chance to interact to advance the African continent's overall interest in the international system. Will the pursuit of their different national interests foster or undermine this role?

**Theoretical Framework**

There are several theories which can be adopted to buttress the discussion of this study. However, the researchers based this study on the realist theory of international relations and scapegoat theory to probe xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa.

The competitive and conflictive characteristics of international politics are emphasised by realism theory. The theory opposes idealism and liberalism, both of which favour world peace and cooperation. The primary actors in the international system, according to realists, are states, which are frequently concerned with their national security and must act in pursuit of their own national interests. Realists, in fact, consider all aspects of international affairs as a struggle for dominance (Wright, 1978; Okoro, 2000). The drawback of the realism perspective, according to Akinboye (1999), is an overemphasis on power and self-interest. Whereas idealists believe in the harmonisation of interests in global relations, realists are suspicious of such a situation. Instead, they believe in an international system marked by competing interests and, indeed, conflicting relationships (Kwaghe & Okoli, 2020).

In this study, the realism view sees international relations as a dynamic process including power struggles and competitive advantage among nations. When applied to the framework of the current discourse, the ideology of Nigeria-South African ties, particularly in the post-apartheid era, exemplify the inherent and unavoidable paradoxes of international relations. The unity and conflicts of Nigeria-South Africa, which have been further exacerbated by the xenophobic enigma, are best conjectured within this theoretical framework.

The scapegoat theoretical framework is commonly utilised in the field of sociology and psychology. Numerous researchers utilise it to explain a wide range of social problems such as prejudice, discrimination, and xenophobia (Allport, 1954; Tshitereke, 1999). The scapegoat theory contends that in times of national crisis, people naturally seek other groups (outsiders) to blame for their misfortunes (Marrus, 1982). That is, during times of great national trauma, the host population tends to blame minorities (mostly foreigners) for its misfortunes.

Foreign national hostility is described in terms of insufficient socioeconomic resources such as housing, education, healthcare, and employment (Tirivangasi & Nyahunda 2020). The scapegoating theory, in general, explains xenophobia in terms of broad socioeconomic issues. It's proposed in terms of relative deprivation and frustration. The perceived level of rivalry for limited socioeconomic resources is high. This helps to explain why foreign nationals may be used as scapegoats for South Africa's growing poverty and unemployment, as immigrants are viewed as opportunists only in the country for socioeconomic benefits (Adetiba, 2021).

The scapegoat theory provides the required framework for understanding the various processes by which South African communities aim their rage at people perceived as "foreign" to them. More importantly, the theory investigates the process of "stereotyping," which is commonly associated with the problem of xenophobia. The scapegoat theory was employed in this study to investigate the interaction (intersection) of disillusionment and displacement (of anger or frustration) that led to the various attacks. Furthermore, the theory offered new perspectives for evaluating how government respond to instances of popular disillusionment.

**Methodology**

This study adopts the descriptive research design. Descriptive research design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing the result. Descriptive research attempts to unveil the essential elements and characteristics of any phenomenon. This study provides a discussion of how xenophobia affects Nigeria-South Africa relations. The study relied on available materials (textbooks, articles, newspapers, and magazines) for its investigation. This strategy entails the "use of secondary data," or data obtained earlier by other researchers (Ohaja, 2003, p23). This research approach was chosen

because it can quickly provide data in the literature from other researchers' conclusions about this study, allowing the difficulties raised to be discussed explicitly. As previously said, textbooks, journals, newspapers, and magazines serve as reference materials for this inquiry.

**Discussion**
The results of this study will be discussed in accordance with the key themes and objectives that emerged from the analysis.

**Causes of xenophobia attacks on Nigerians living in South Africa**
In 2015, there were outbreaks of violence against non-South Africans, particularly in Durban and Johannesburg, prompting the army to be sent to quell additional unrest. The number of violent incidents increased in 2008 and then again in 2015. Data for 2019 (until late September) suggest that the number of attacks is already reaching 2015 levels. In an October 2018 statement, South Africa's largest opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, condemned the ruling ANC party for a "scourge of xenophobic violence" (BBC, 2019). The causes are poverty and apartheid," says Ekambaram (2019) who directs Lawyers for Human Rights' refugee and migrant rights program.

While many people attribute the growth of Xenophobia in South Africa to the post-apartheid era, the truth is that it began decades before that. It has been alleged, for example, that in the early twentieth century, South Africa passed various measures intended to keep out immigrants, such as the Immigrants Regulation Act of 1913, which permitted for the expulsion of "undesirables," a group of individuals that included Indians. This virtually curtailed Indian immigration. There was also the Township Franchise Ordinance of 1924, which was meant to "deprive Indians of municipal franchise" (Mills, 2018; Chukwu, 2021).

Adepegba (2019) citing Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Nigeria's senior special adviser on foreign affairs and diaspora, the country lost around 118 Nigerians between as of 2016 and additional 88 have lost their life as of 2019. This is still a severe setback that threatens Nigeria's and South Africa's external relations. The President of the Nigerian Community in South Africa verified the attacks and stealing of products belonging to Nigerian businesses and women in a report provided by the News Agency of Nigeria. According to the allegation, over five buildings occupied by Nigerian businesses were burned down with extraordinary theft (Salau, n.d). This action is contrary to immigration law and violates the core human rights premise. The heinous pattern of xenophobic violence against Africans in South Africa is not a new issue in the country. However, recent attacks have heightened tensions both within and beyond the African continent (Babalola, 2017).

**Implications of the xenophobia Nigeria-South Africa Relations**
All concerned stakeholders, both government and private, have continued to express concern about the consequences of xenophobic violence on innocent black foreigners perpetrated primarily by some aggressive youths in South Africa, which has invariably resulted in a diplomatic cold war between Nigeria and South Africa. Given this, the two African countries with the largest economy stand to lose the most if the scenario persists. Experts have interpreted the violent attacks on Nigerians as an ungrateful reciprocation from South Africa, because the former actively participated in rescuing the latter from the shackles of colonialism during the apartheid administration (Olofinbiyi, 2020).

Though Nigeria is a major regional force in Africa, xenophobia may pose a new danger to its hegemony, which has suffered significant setbacks because of action and inaction by neighboring African countries. In lieu of this, the ramifications of xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa can be divided into two categories: diplomatic or political implications and bilateral economic implications.
1. **Political and Diplomatic Impact**

Politically, the onslaught of xenophobic attacks against Nigerians in South Africa has far-reaching consequences if the two governments fail to gather sufficient political resolve to address this heinous situation. It has the potential to sever connections between the two countries. In diplomatic circles, when there is a severe disagreement between countries, the next option is to recall ambassadors, and whenever there is a breakdown in relationship between countries, it usually takes time for such to be restored, and given Nigeria and South Africa's positions on the African continent, it will also be detrimental to the progress of other African countries. Following the April 2015 xenophobic attack in South Africa, the United Nations Security Council was quick to condemn the attacks, as did her neighbors, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Malawi, which followed suit in rejecting and criticizing these atrocities (Dickson, 2020). Nigeria, on the other hand, took a step farther by recalling her South African diplomats. The xenophobic attacks thus heightened tensions between the two nations, with the Nigerian government believing that the South African government was not doing enough to safeguard her residents in South Africa, whom she believed were the major target of the attacks. Another aspect of this is the possibility of a loss of African solidarity. Because Africans usually regard each other as brothers and speak with one voice in the international arena, it is reasoned that a break in relations between Nigeria and South Africa will lead to a divided Africa, limiting their chances of making a mark in international politics (Akinrinde, Babalola & Tar, 2021).

Nigeria and South Africa have been seeking to repair their diplomatic relationship after the 2008 anti-foreigner riots. Nigeria and South Africa signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2013 to strengthen diplomatic ties and prevent future xenophobic assaults (Babalola, 2017). Despite this, attacks against Nigerians have continued. Following the xenophobic attacks in Durban and Johannesburg in April 2015, Nigeria's Acting High Commissioner to South Africa, Martin Cobham, and the Consul-General, Uche Ajulu-Okeke, were 'invited' for consultation (rather than 'recalled,' as several media outlets wrongly stated). Though Nigeria's conduct did not result in a break in relations with South Africa, the South African Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation viewed it as an "unfortunate and regrettable decision" (Brock & Dludla, n.d).

## 2. Economic Impact

Following a wave of xenophobic attacks on Nigerians living in South Africa, as well as looting of their shops and establishments, a retaliatory attack was launched on a South African-owned corporation doing business in Nigeria. On February 23, 2017, the telecoms company, MTN, had its flagship office in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, ransacked and office equipment vandalized. Apart from MTN, there are over 100 South African companies (previously only four) operating in Nigeria's telecommunications, manufacturing, aviation, construction, banking, hospitality, entertainment, and oil and gas industries - Power Giant, Eskom Nigeria, South African Airways, South African Breweries (SAB miller), Stanbic IBTC Bank, MultiChoice Africa (operating DStv/GOtv), Umgeni Water, and Shoprite, to name a few (Copley, n.d). As stated by Nwabunze, Njoku & Ngene (2020), the prospect of a smooth relationship between Nigeria and South Africa seems to be bleak as there is lack of political will from the South African government to stem the tide of xenophobia in South Africa fueled by an unhealthy resentment from its citizens for foreigners (especially Nigerians).

Some South Africans were targeted because they did not support the movement, while others were incorrectly labeled as foreigners. In terms of investment, most foreign investors have lost faith in the police and the judiciary, which have failed to safeguard them. Most foreign investors are concerned about community security. Foreign businessmen have been obliged to rely almost entirely on approved institutions of justice, and they are hampered by a lack of trust and faith in the police and courts, which is exacerbated by cultural and linguistic hurdles. Foreign investors are typically singled out in police and prosecutor statements. Regarding the lengthy justice process and the victims of crime who are foreign investors, it is frequently noticed that prosecutors and police also struggled to communicate with and keep them engaged during court proceedings. According to studies, foreign investors were afraid of various types of violence during xenophobic attacks, which included murder, attempted murder, robbery, theft, and assault (Yusuf & Umar, 2021).

### 3. Social and Psychological Impact

Xenophobic attacks in post-apartheid South Africa have instilled fear in the minds of Nigerians over the years. For fear of being attacked, if not killed, a good number of them in South Africa no longer interact freely with the locals as fellow African brothers and sisters with a common history, values, traditions, and so on. It should come as no surprise that some of the living Nigerian victims of anti-foreigner violence are now suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Many Nigerians are reconsidering their plans to travel to South Africa for tourism, shopping, business, first degree/postgraduate education, and other purposes after hearing/reading on print and electronic media the horrifying news about the killings of Nigerians residing in South Africa (Lanre-Abass & Oguh*, 2016;* Ismail & Sakariyau, *2017)*.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigeria and South Africa have maintained a strong bilateral and multilateral connection. Because of their strategic positions as the two African countries with distinctive traits (Nigeria being the most populous and South Africa being the most developed), other African countries look up to them to push continental leadership and development. Nigeria was in the forefront of the global campaign for the abolition of apartheid policy during the era of white minority rule known as apartheid policy. In fact, not long after the restoration of black majority rule in the South, the relationship between the two countries faced different tensions and drawbacks, generally devolving from collaboration to unhealthy competition, and even confrontation.

Although Nigeria played a critical role in liberating South Africa from the shackles of the apartheid regime, much of South Africa's goodwill toward Nigerians for supporting its liberation struggle during the apartheid era has vanished because of the country's rising waves of organised crime. Nigerian organised crime syndicates, primarily involved in illegal drug trafficking, have expanded in South Africa over the years. Furthermore, increased hegemonic contestations between the two countries, particularly for competitive positions in multilateral institutions, have led to the deterioration of the relationship.

Nigerian-South African relations have witnessed the good, the bad, and the ugly in diplomatic, trade, military, and socio-cultural interactions over the years due to the killings. The use of Nigerians as scapegoats in South African targeted attacks on African immigrants has sparked both local and international concerns. This has a severe impact on the long-standing diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Despite the dynamics of its continuities and changes that have occurred, Nigeria-South Africa relations have retained a high prospect of bilateral and multilateral solidarity that could be pivotal towards advancing the cause of African continental transformation in accordance with Pan-Africanism aspiration.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made to improve the issue of xenophobic attacks and their impact on external relations in South Africa.

1. The leadership of both countries should put measures in place towards restoring amiable relationship through strategic consultations, functional bilateral engagements, and diplomatic dialogue.
2. South Africans should be prevented from engaging in heinous anti-foreigner violence and extra-judicial killings of immigrants.
3. The South African government should not seize to arrest, prosecute, and convict the perpetrators; and strengthen existing international laws by enacting policies that will prevent the occurrence of such attacks in the future.
4. The South African government should work to meet its constitutional and international obligations to protect the lives, properties, and rights of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in their country, regardless of race, gender, creed, or colour, 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 (ACHPR).

5. The Nigerian government through her embassy in South Africa should address the citizens on the need to execute good behaviour in foreign countries. This can also clarify to them measure to be taken in avoiding troubles with the citizens of the host country.

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