

**XENOPHOBIA AS BOGEYMAN:
THE POST-APARTHEID STATE
IN SOUTH AFRICA AND CHALLENGES
OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL
ENGAGEMENT FOR NIGERIA**

N. Oluwafemi 'Femi' Mimiko, PhD, mni

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PREFACE

I am pleased to introduce the NPSA Monograph to our members and the general public. This first edition is titled: *Xenophobia as Bogeyman: The Post-Apartheid State in South Africa and Challenges of Development and Regional Engagement for Nigeria* written by Professor N. Olufemi Mimiko, former Vice-Chancellor of the Michael Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba in Ondo State. In this paper, he has beamed his searchlight on the phenomenon of xenophobia that has defined South Africa in recent times, especially in its relations with fellow African countries, notably Nigeria. The citizens of Nigeria who live in the country together with citizens of Ghana, Mali, Zambia, Zimbabwe and other African nations have had a raw deal in the hands of black South Africans who have held them responsible for their level of material deprivations and other sundry accusations bordering on social vices. They have therefore become easy targets of incessant attacks that have led to indiscriminate arrest by security agencies, destruction of valuable assets and deaths in South Africa.

Professor Mimiko has situated the ugly development in unmet expectations that find expression in the failure of the South African State to rapidly empower black South Africans who had hoped for better economic opportunities after the end of Apartheid in 1994. If anything, the economic climate of the country has remained skewed against the blacks some decades after the end of the obnoxious regime. This naturally has fed the feeling of holding other African nationals who are doing well in

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

South Africa, in their own estimation, responsible for their poor economic outlook. The author, while agreeing that the national economy has created little opportunity for black South Africans, believes that the politicians through their utterances and body language have played a role in giving endorsement to frequent xenophobic attacks being experienced in South Africa. He contends that it is an escapist route being followed to cover up glaring governance deficits on the part of the ruling party-ANC that has increasingly been faced with formidable opposition to its political dominance in South Africa.

The frequent attacks against other African citizens who live in the country have occasionally jolted relations with other African countries whose citizens have been at the receiving end of the violent eruptions in South Africa. Nigeria is undoubtedly one of such countries whose citizens have become an easy target of incessant attacks in South Africa. Basing his findings on the 2019 edition of the resentment against other African nationals, Professor Mimiko has no cheering news for both official and citizens' reactions to that year's xenophobic attacks on Nigerians who live in South Africa. In his view, Nigeria and its citizens ought to have done better in handling the matter. He therefore calls on the Nigerian State to urgently take steps to calibrate the country's foreign policy for a better delivery level.

It is the hope of our Association that through the publication of this monograph, important lessons will be

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

learnt by all the critical stakeholders who are involved in the conduct of Nigerian foreign policy on the linkage that exists between foreign policy and the domestic environment that propels it.

Professor Hassan A. Saliu, *fNPSA*
President, NPSA.
28th October, 2021.

About the author

Femi Mimiko, mni, holds a PhD in International Relations; and is currently Professor of Political Science, at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. A Fulbright Scholar, Mimiko was Visiting Professor at the United States Military Academy (USMA), West Point, New York, USA. He served as the fourth Vice Chancellor of Adekunle Ajasin University from 2010 to 2015; and was African and African-American Studies Associate, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA, 2016-2017. Two of his more recent works are: "Getting Our Universities Back On Track: Reflections and Governance Paradigms From My Vice-Chancellorship," Austin, TX: Pan-African University Press, 2017; and "Democratization: Essays on Nigeria's Limited Democracy," Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2017. A Delegate to the 2014 National Conference, Mimiko is a member of Nigeria's foremost think-tank, the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru. He chairs the Alumni Association of the National Institute's (AANI) Education, Science and Technology Committee (AANI-ESTC). He holds the traditional title of Gbóbanfíyì of Ondo Kingdom.

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Abstract

The commitment of the post-apartheid South African state to minimal disruption of the productive orientation of the apartheid economy it inherited, constraints its ability to meet the 'revolution of rising expectations' consequent upon liberation in 1994. Official acquiescence to the characterization of the attendant pains and frustrations on the part of a preponderance of members of the South African black community as a function of the economic activities of migrants from other sub-Saharan African states reproduces xenophobia. It also allows the ANC government deflect growing mass anger against the state structure it is committed to sustaining. Even so, deft management of the fallouts of the wave of xenophobic attacks on African migrants in South Africa mid-2019 underscores the firm commitment to strong bilateral relations between South Africa and Nigeria – the two largest economies on the continent – in spite of historical conflictual currents.

Keywords: popular diplomacy, populism, nationalism, new nationalism, xenophobia.

THE CONTEXT

The first recorded mob attacks on non-South-African Africans (NSAA) in South Africa took place from December 1994 to January 1995, at Alexandra, outside Johannesburg,

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

in the country's Gauteng Province. This was barely five months after the end of apartheid. A consistent pattern of such attacks has since been established in the country, the most extensive in the recent time being the series of violent street protests against NSAA in August-September 2019. In the process, lives were lost, property destroyed, and whole communities inhabited by NSAA in the country, broken up. Evidence abounds that the Nigerian community in South Africa was among the most affected by these xenophobic attacks. There is as yet no evidence that the street actors (social movements) involved in these xenophobic attacks have had enough, or that the factors propelling them in the first instance have tapered off; indicating that sporadic outbreak of fresh xenophobic attacks on the streets of South Africa cannot be ruled out. What precisely is the nature of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa? What are the forces propelling the 'new nationalism' that xenophobia approximates? Are there social structures challenging the xenophobic narrative and actions, with a view to bringing them under control? If yes, how successful have these been? What are the implications of xenophobia for South Africa's economic development agenda, and foreign (African) policy? What factors defined the response of the state and society in Nigeria to xenophobia violence in South Africa in mid-2019? What does the future portend for Nigeria-South Africa relations? These fundamental questions are the problematic issues of the paper; the central aim of which is to deconstruct the phenomenon of xenophobia in South Africa; and its implications for Nigeria-South Africa relations.

While the investigation is conducted within the general rubric of political economy, which allows the central role

played by the state therein to be highlighted, new nationalism provides the specific theoretical platform for the analysis. The paper is divided into five sections. Following this introductory section is a discussion of the concept of nationalism; and an inquiry into the nature, pattern, and basis of xenophobia in South Africa vis a vis the country's political economy. The section that follows this examines the place of the South African state and society in the xenophobia pressures in the country. Section four interrogates Nigeria's response – official and non-official – to xenophobic attacks on NSAA in South Africa. The final section makes a foray into the future in relation to xenophobia in South Africa, and Nigeria-South Africa relations.

RETHINKING NATIONALISM

A core concept in this discourse is nationalism. It has manifested in, and provided the basis for the explication of political phenomena and change in several parts of the world, for at least two centuries. The underlying motif of nationalism is 'an assertion of the primacy of national identity over the claims of class, religion, or humanity in general' (McLean and McMillan, 2003: 361). The constitutive elements are language, territory, and myth of relatedness (Macmillan, 2003:361-362). Fundamental as these elements may seem, however, they are but shifty themes, making nationalism invariably a socially constructed category. A few trends signpost the fluidity of these supposedly core elements. Language usage is no longer limited by time and space, as many non-English, for example, now speak English as first language. The non-practicality of having a real nation-state, in which the nation is coterminous with the state, is also now almost

palpable. In addition, there are sundry human formations that meet all the criteria of nationality but do not as yet have a territory of their own. Thus, to the extent of the shifty nature of the constitutive elements of nationalism, it remains itself a fluid and constantly mutating idea. It has indeed found expression in different forms over the years, with each variant being dominant at different epochs, depending on the nature of the ends to which it was directed.

In the 19th century, Otto von Bismarck's appeal to nationalism was the platform for knocking the disparate German city states into a single German nation (Umbach, 2002). The same process was replicated in other parts of the world, albeit with varying degrees of success. While the Italian nation emerged from such a process, Shaka Kasenzangakhona was not as successful in his mission of creating a distinct Zulu nation in southern Africa, using a similar model. He was stopped in his track by colonial intrusion (Olomola, 1982).

A different variant of nationalism was deployed in the struggle for decolonization across the colonized world. It spoke to the uniqueness of the local communities, as against the colonizers. While it worked so well in making decolonization compelling, its inherent weakness was demonstrated in the subsequent break-up of the Indian sub-continent into three independent republics – India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh – soon after 1947, on the basis of narrower conceptions of nationalism. Similar outcomes exist in Africa, and indeed in much of what came to be known as the Global South. It was the same pivot on which all the conflicts and wars in the Balkans and the Caucuses, post-Cold War, took place.

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

Agitations for distinct state structures approximating particular nationalities or ethnicities, out of basically heterogeneous social formations, constitute yet another variant of nationalism. It is calibrated in political terms as the principle of self-determination by the Versailles Treaty of 1914. Elsewhere, I conceived self-determination as

the principle that a distinct ethnic-nation within a multi-national State reserves the right of autonomy over its own affairs; or indeed complete independence from the State (Mimiko, 2021).

It differs from secession, which is ‘forceful exit by an ethnic-nation, from a multi-national State; often consequent upon sustained acrimony and inability to manage cohabitation’ (Mimiko, 2021).

While self-determination is recognized by the United Nations (UN) and had been invoked at different times by peoples across the world, ‘secession is regarded as a felony, an act of treason – at least in the estimation of the State from which the break is being effected’ (Mimiko 2021). Self-determination provided the basis for the emergence of new states – Eritrea, Timor-Leste, and South Sudan – in contemporary times. It also is the driver of ongoing struggles for statehood by the Kurd in the Middle East; Tibetan in China; Catalan in Spain; Anglophone West Cameroon (Ambazonia); Igbo (Biafra), and Yoruba (Oduduwa) in Nigeria, among several others. The pervasiveness of this trend now is such that Sachs (2005) aptly characterizes the present age as driven largely by the desire for nationalism and self-determination.

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

The distinctive feature of extant nationalism – new nationalism – however, is the demonization of the ‘other,’ and its perception as some form of existential threat to the ‘self.’ It is often taken in the literature as antithetical to the vision of globalism (Rodrik, 2018; McRae, 1969: 153-165; Stieglitz, 2013; Mimiko, 2012); but even this, is not often delivered with the needed caveat. For, it is the dimension of cultural diversity in globalism that new nationalism frowns at. Thus, while it panders to cultural insularity, it is not necessarily opposed to free trade, especially where such holds the promise of advancing the ‘national’ interest. It conveys a zero-sum image of engagement between the ‘self’ and the ‘other.’ As Korkut (2019: 12) notes, new nationalism ‘rallies support by conjuring an image of an antagonistic *other* in order to construct a cohesive and secure image of *self*.’ It is mostly delivered now as populism – of the right or left. Elsewhere, I had conceptualized populism as:

a political construct that runs on the fulcrum of anti-elitism, rabid nationalism, intense suspicion of globalism, and demonization of identifiable social categories or constituencies as the basis of disadvantage suffered by a lowly class of people whose anger and frustration are often mobilized to the ends of political power acquisition and sustenance by populist leaders. It is the mobilization of mass anger and frustration against privilege, by power entrepreneurs who do not necessarily share a vision of better life for the disadvantaged, which they nevertheless actively seek to approximate

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

for the purpose of acquiring and sustaining political power. It is in this regard that it often carries a good dose of demagoguery (Mimiko, 2019).

Populism is an ideological construct that seeks explanation for shrinking economic opportunities and social inequality in a society. It operates on two poles – right-wing and left-wing populism. As Rodrix (2018) notes, while populism of the left is rooted in apprehending the basis of shrinking economic opportunities and social injustice, right wing populism is hinged upon culture and values – manifesting, among others, in xenophobia. Populism of the left variant is focused on the economic basis of inequality, mass poverty and shrinking opportunities. It demonizes venture capital, foreign direct investment (FDI), transnational corporations (TNCs), as constituting the basis, the very *raison d’etre*, for sundry development crises in particular countries, and the global economy in general, and the attendant social tensions therein. It highlights the variance in economic opportunities available to the top 1% (‘fat cats’), on the one hand, and the larger 99%. Right-wing populism, on the other hand, runs on the fulcrum of cultural exclusivity. It isolates the ‘other,’ ‘outsider’, the immigrant, as the basis of all local developmental challenges, which the disadvantaged segment of the population rails against.

The social construction of enmity is thus one thing the two variants of populism have in common. Both create the image of a bogeyman – one, culturally; the other economically. Even so, by locating the problem in culture and values, focusing on identity, and pinpointing migrants as the culprit, right-wing populism, wittingly or otherwise,

lays the basis for, and indeed promotes xenophobia. McRae (2017: 13, 24) highlights the centrality of migration to populism thus: 'if countries could manage migration more effectively, that would persuade their electorates to give greater support for globalisation more generally.' Pastor and Veronesi (2018; 2019) also note that 'economic insecurity from exposure to global trade and competition of immigrants' is a key element in populism. How all of these cohere with the South African situation is explicated upon in this monograph.

EVOLUTION AND CHARACTER OF THE POST-APARTHEID STATE

As Nzongola-Ntalaja (1987 cited in Shaw, 1991: 191-212) aptly notes, 'No political economy is intelligible without an analysis of the crucial role the state plays in the economy.' To understand this role relationship, it is imperative to construct the patterns of evolution of any state under investigation, itself a critical prerequisite to understanding its character and the nature of the role it is structured to play in the political economy.

A central issue in the nature and operations of the post-colonial African state and society is thus the pattern of its evolution. Virtually all of extant states on the continent are products of colonialism. The structures of a modern state emerged on the heels of decolonization (and liberation from apartheid, for South Africa). Following on the heels of the initial contact of Europe with Africa circa 15th century, which propelled unequal, and later, slave trade. Colonialism had intruded sharply into the African landscape from about the 19th century and destroyed the structures of the rudimentary state emerging across the

continent. Deliberate efforts were made thereafter to develop these new state structures as stand-alone entities by each of the colonial powers – the very basis of the existence of 55 nondescript countries on the continent in contemporary times. In South Africa, even when the British defeated the Boers (Afrikaners) in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902, it went ahead to virtually cede control of the territories to the Boers, whose commitment to intense nationalism and racial segregation was not in doubt. As Falola (2002: 200) aptly noted, the Union of South Africa, which the British established in 1910, less than a decade after the Boers were defeated, ‘was nominally a British dominion, but British influence was not as strong as that of the Afrikaners, ...’ This was the precursor of the formal ascension to power by the Boers, through the victory of their National Party, in the 1948 election, and swift institutionalization of the apartheid system. The Party’s well calibrated strategy of stoking the fear of resurgence and triumph of Black nationalism, and with it, overthrow of the system of white privilege represented by apartheid, was very effective in securing for it, white support (Boer and British, alike).

This served as the linchpin for its domination of the political process, from which the majority African population was totally excluded, up until liberation in 1994. The British colonists did this in the confidence that the emergent philosophy of objectification of the Black African population, which the Boers were committed to doggedly pursuing in the territory, would ultimately be in British interest. Such interests substantially revolved around deployment of fully dehumanized Africans as cheap labour to guarantee stupendous profitability of British mining interests. It was the same reason that

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

London feigned helplessness when renegade colonists, represented by Ian Smith, proclaimed Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) over Rhodesia in 1965. Britain had enough capacity to bring an end to the rebellion, but acquiesced, confident that UDI would facilitate the type of post-colonial order that it desired, but had no courage to institute, in the face of decolonization processes sweeping across the world, after the Second World War. In South Africa, the Boers went ahead to institutionalize racism, a policy of apartheid ('separateness' or formal separation of the races), which lasted for close to a century.

While the economic end to which apartheid, and indeed all forms of racism, are directed is not deniable, the reality is that in all racially stratified societies, racism soon developed a life of its own, severing, as it were, almost all links to its original economic *raison d'être* (Thabo, 1980: 20-26). It begins to run on a self-fulfilling prophesy of internalization of superiority complex on the part of racists. What made apartheid unique, and different from this general trend was that it did not deny the racialist basis of the society it tried to create. Rather, it institutionalized racial discrimination, and thus, had no compunction locating all privileges in the minority white population; and was not under pressure to incorporate more than a minuscule number from the black community. It went beyond the brutality and despoliation that was the lot of colonialism to build formidable apparatuses of repression, and operated without any pretensions to civility. Indeed, suppression (and wanton exploitation) of the black majority became the principal objective of the apartheid state.

Thus, with capital localized in the white population; a near slave labour from the black majority that had been divested of all rights; and intimidation of the less leveraged countries in the southern African sub-region, the apartheid state stood apart from all other countries on the continent. It was thus able to build a highly productive economy, with advanced infrastructure, and the most formidable military capability on the continent. For the white population, it instituted a living standard comparable to the best in the world, while the black community lived in abject poverty. These structures were so entrenched such that more than two decades after apartheid, in 2017, unemployment among the black population in South Africa was still as high as 40%; but negligible among the whites. In this manner, the apartheid state approximated, to all intents and purposes, Frantz Fanon's classical maxim, to wit, 'You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich' (Fanon, 1952: 5).

The Post-Apartheid State

Ultimately, liberation got delivered in South Africa, after decades of armed resistance to apartheid by the black community and its most effective organization – the African National Congress (ANC), albeit through some painstaking negotiations rather than on the battle field. The post-apartheid state that emerged from this relatively benign final pathway to liberation was thus substantially shaped by the realities of the apartheid state and society. For one, the 1994 Constitution actually made copious provisions for guarantees of protection for the white minority. An alternative path to liberation that was more dramatic, violent, and disruptive would have made a

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

completely different social structure, defined by a clean break with the unwanted old order, an inevitability. These realities were complemented by the determination of the post-liberation ANC government to preserve the high productivity orientation of the apartheid economy. This was an ideological position constructed on the assumption that it was only in the context of this type of sustained economic growth that the trickle down process could be obtained. It considered that in the circumstances of 1994, this remained the most viable path to enhancing the quality of life of the majority black population.

The ensuing policy underscored the need to move carefully in relation to economic organization, in a manner that would not scare the white (capitalists), who alone were in a position to make needed investments, and thus create the jobs. In this sense, ANC had latched onto an age long philosophy encapsulated in Edmund Burke (cited in Welle, 2013: 117) thus: 'it was more important to maintain stability than to attempt radical reform.' At any event, the party had way back in the mid-1980s moderated its former radical ideological orientation, as part of the process of validation without which it would not have been able to play the dominant role in negotiating an end to apartheid. The same provided context for the retention by President Nelson Mandela, of his predecessor's, (F. W. de Klerk) as Finance Minister, Derek Lyle Keys, who had been appointed in 1992, and served till September 1994. The same commitment accounted for the virtual ceding of this key department of state responsible for the national economy to a string of white men, to wit, Christo Ferro Liebenberg, September 1994 - April 1996; Trevor Manuel, 1996 – 2009, for the first 15 years of liberation. All these were directed towards maintaining the growth trajectory

of the apartheid economy well into the new post-liberation order.

The same cautious attitude was demonstrated by the post-apartheid state in relation to land reform. The new government was not interested in any radical land redistribution agenda that pandered to the expectations of the black community, in order to avoid the unwanted Zimbabwean effect. At liberation in 1994, the small white farmer community numbering 60,000 had held 86% of all farmland while the remaining 13 million black farmers were left with 'the remaining poor quality land' (Welle, 2013). Two decades after apartheid, in 2007, only 4.2 million hectares (10 million acres) of the country's land, or 10% of government's own target, had been passed on to the black community (Welle, 2013.). This ideological predisposition continues to be a point of serious divergence within the black South African society. A growing number of people from this constituency, and their organizations, insist on a more revolutionary approach to post-apartheid social reconstruction such as would make South Africa better able to quickly deliver on the promise of liberation.

To put the emergent tension between state and society in context, it is apposite to underscore the centrality of land in particular, and improvement in the economic life of the black community in general, to the entire liberation struggle. To be sure, the promise of a much better, equitable, and dignified life was the critical lynchpin for the mobilization of the black population against apartheid. It was in essence a recap of the high hopes that underlined the anti-colonial struggles elsewhere in Africa, captured in Nigeria's Obafemi Awolowo's maxim, 'seek ye first political independence, and all other things shall be added onto

you.’ It is the reality of the ‘revolution of rising expectation’ (McElroy, 2016; Shank, 2013; www.encyclopedia.com, 2021; Blanksten, 1963) attendant upon decolonization, which the new South Africa was not able to deliver upon. Thus, two decades after liberation, in 2015, access to economic opportunities was still so skewed that just 10% of the population held onto 71% of net wealth, while the bottom 60% had access to only 7% (Dahir, 2019). In the manner that apartheid had organized the state, such division had broadly represented the skewed pattern of wealth distribution between the different racial groups (Mimiko, 2017: 51-52).

The challenges were compounded by strains in the South African economy, which began to manifest soon after an initial boom that was spurred by boost in primary product pricing. Accounting for the weakening economic profile were a number of factors. The type of stranglehold – domination, intimidation, and exploitation – which the apartheid state maintained over the southern African sub-region, was no longer possible post-liberation. The relative weakness of each of the countries in the region had been buoyed up with the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) (later, Southern African Development Commission), which had become a fait accompli of sort to Pretoria, and a framework within which relations with its neighbours had to be calibrated. The contraction of the global economy, emblemized by dwindling earnings from primary products, including solid minerals, which South Africa has in abundance, manifested also in the country as economic contraction. These were compounded by corruption, a critical factor in undermining the capacity of the African state. There are indications that a good chunk of the transparency

milestone accomplished under the Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki presidencies was lost under the Jacob Zuma government. Thus, by 2017, unemployment had spiraled rapidly to 40% and with it, a spike in violent crime. The problem was thus that the type of boost in the economy that could support the wide-ranging promise of a post-apartheid era was not forthcoming. Rather, as the economy began to shrink, the tokenism of the apartheid era began to disappear. What all of these meant in practical terms, was that rather than providing access to economic opportunities that were denied the black community under apartheid, the passable (tokenistic) social benefits, which these citizens had taken for granted under the unwanted old order, began to close up against them. This is the paradox of the post-apartheid state in South Africa. Associated with this reality was mass anger, which began to grow in the same dimension, and rapidly feeding into right wing populist narrative on supposed disruptive proclivities of migrants in the country.

Nationhood and South African Exceptionalism

The fact that the Berlin Conference had parceled out African peoples without regard to the patterns of formations of ethnic nationalities had ensured that the same ethnic and cultural stock emerged on two sides of virtually all physical boundaries drawn by the colonial powers. Thus, nowhere on the continent, except Somalia, was the nation coterminous with the state, saddling the newly emergent states with a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural outlook that was a critical factor for post-colonial reconstruction. This posed some challenges for the evolution of the post-colonial state, including South Africa's, across the continent (Mimiko, 2006: 189-202).

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

Two patterns emerged as response to these realities. The first, herein referred to as the Houphouet-Boigny model, after the first President of Cote d'Ivoire, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, readily incorporated same ethnic nationalities across all the borders without much regard to the nuances of officialdom that came with the creation of the artificial state structures. This worked so well for Cote d'Ivoire until the demise of the country's immediate post-independence leader, and the failure of his successors to sustain the model. Rather, they wasted no time in moving onto the alternative model that sought to use the modern state as a platform for defining the boundaries of nationality. They, in the process, substituted for the liberal orientation of their predecessor a deliberate programme of demonization of members of same ethnic nationalities whom colonialism had placed on the other side of every one of their country's colonial boundaries. This was packaged as *Ivoirite*, under which citizenship was redefined as consisting only of birth by two Ivorian parents (Mimiko, 2006).

Earlier variants of this were the Alien Compliance Order in Ghana in the early 1960s under Kofi Busia; and the expulsion of illegal (mostly West African) aliens from Nigeria in 1983 and 1984 – under two different regimes, one civil, the other martial, led by President Shehu Shagari and General Muhammadu Buhari respectively. Yet, another was the expulsion of Asian-Ugandans from Uganda in the 1970s by the maverick Field Marshal Idi Amin Dada; or yet still, the harrying out of Zimbabwe of white farmers by the Robert Mugabe-led Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) government in the 1990s. Whereas the Houphouet-Boigny model equated a period of peace, rapid economic

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

development and regional stability, the alternative nation-building model of restrictive nationalism, canalized as *Ivoirite*, became synonymous with conflict, instability, economic atrophy and regional tension (Mimiko, 2006).

A different conception of nationalism other than *Ivoirite* could not have berthed in South Africa in 1994, for a number of reasons. First, is South Africa's own unique experience with colonization as apartheid, including the attendant brutalization and complete divestment of the black population of all (economic) rights. Second, is the lateness with which liberation was delivered, and in the context of incipient economic crises (collapse) in much of the former Frontline States (FLS), following the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), and the political crisis attendant upon land redistribution in Zimbabwe in particular. This made South Africa a destination of choice for sundry Africans in flight from economic hardship in their own countries. Third, there was the slow but sustained economic strain that followed liberation in South Africa itself, making the country's black community, that bore the brunt of this, increasingly frustrated and angry. Fourth, SADCC had been created and nurtured as a bulwark against apartheid South Africa, thereby conferring unwittingly on the country's citizens a sense of exclusion that endured post-liberation. SADCC had unwittingly accorded South Africa a distinct identity different from those of other countries in the sub-region, including even the FLS, with which South Africa is contiguous.

The farther away from the country's physical boundaries other African peoples were, the more difficult it became to accept them into a global South African and indeed,

African nationhood. At any rate, the apartheid system had made deliberate efforts, as part of its sustenance instinct, to make a distinction and encourage a sense of exclusion between black South Africans and Africans from other parts of the continent.

These realities meshed with the fact of South Africa as the most advanced state – militarily, industrially and economically – on the continent, to solidify this sense of exceptionalism on the part of South Africans. Until the Nigerian economy was rebased in the mid-2000s, South Africa had the largest GDP. In per capita income terms, the economic situation in South Africa would be deemed to be much better than was the case for virtually all of the other African countries. Although the fact of wealth concentration (in white hands), and income inequality, post-liberation, belie this assumption, it was one perception held onto by not a few South African citizens, which arguably made it stronger than reality.

Thus, at independence in 1994 and the years that followed, it was not practicable to incorporate other Africans into a global South African black nationhood, unlike what the former colonies on the continent that first got independence – Egypt under Abdel Nasser, Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire under Houphouet-Boigny, etc., – actively encouraged. The one positive externality of sort in all of these was that as these factors were coalescing, and the processes playing out, a common nationality was being forged from among the disparate ethnic nations in South Africa. A 'we feeling' was emerging in which NSAA had come to be seen as the unwanted 'other' whose interest was at variance with that of the 'self' – the black population of South Africa.

This equates some form of progress by contradiction, which may feed well into the agenda of nation-building. How deeply and enduring this sense of togetherness and commonality among the distinct ethnic nations constituting South Africa is, and therefore, its ultimate value, are for now conjectural. It is also doubtful whether whatever benefits that may be attendant upon such progress by contradiction in one out of Africa's 55 states, is worth the damage done to the long-standing spirit of Pan-Africanism across the continent via xenophobia.

False Premises of Xenophobia

As it is the case in most places where it had thrived in history, xenophobia in South Africa is constructed on a false premise. The impression of those who seek out and attack NSAA is that these represent the basis of the shrinking economic opportunities for South Africans and should be harried out of the country. A 2008 study indicated that 62% of black South Africa saw immigrants as the basis of the challenge their country's economy had with jobs; and 61% felt non-South Africans were responsible for the bulk of crimes in the country (Dahir, 2019).

A similar narrative was put in place by Uganda under Idi Amin, to justify the expulsion of Asian-Ugandans who had been brought into the country by the colonialists from as long as the British set foot on the territory. When Idi Amin found need to expel them, the official narrative changed. The Asians became no more an engine of growth to the Ugandan economy, but the basis of the hardship Ugandans had begun to pass through. Making bogeymen of the Asian-Ugandans became a disingenuous (clever) way of

explaining away the failure of the Ugandan state to administer development.

Having failed in its avowed commitment to broadcast the public good beyond what apartheid made possible, the ANC government was placid vis a vis the xenophobic narrative. Pretoria would seem to have encouraged xenophobia to thrive, before the latter busted out as violence against African immigrants. The Deputy Minister of Police had been quoted in 2019 thus, 'We fought for this land ... we cannot surrender it to the foreign nationals' (CNN, Sept. 14 2019). Other public figures like Thabo Mbeki and indeed President Ramaphosa himself, actually made dog-whistle comments that practically meant some sort of endorsement for xenophobia. The critical question is; why did black South Africans single out NSAA in these attacks?

Why the Attacks on Non-South-African Africans (NSAA)?

A term, 'afrophobic,' would be inappropriate for the phenomenon that has unnerved the African continent vis-a-vis South Africa. It amounts to contradiction in terms to suggest that Africans, as the perpetrators of xenophobic attacks in South Africa are, would have phobia for other African peoples. What has continued to play out in the country remains xenophobia – fear of, and dislike for foreigners, the defining element of the moment being that the dislike and anger is felt towards foreigners that happen to be fellow Africans from other countries. It is the sense of being a foreigner that underpins the concept, xenophobia, not of being African. A number of factors make such targeting of black Africans from outside of South Africa intelligible.

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

First, NSAA by dint of the reality of their emigrant life, tend to be better focused and more aggressive than the South African population (who have a range of formal social safety programmes to benefit from), and had been mentally brutalized by apartheid. These NSAA readily deployed their survival instinct to begin to expand their presence in the non-formal sectors of the South African economy. This was to the disenchantment of the mass of black South Africans, who began to see in these fellow Africans the basis of the dwindling economic opportunities available to them.

Second, the nature of the economic opportunities NSAA could take advantage of, and the aspects of the economy where they could easily invest in, are the ones in which South African street demonstrators had desired to have some foothold post-apartheid. To their chagrin, they see the more competitive NSAA muzzle South African blacks out of those sectors. Thus, in a way, the NSAA to the black South Africans invariably became the faces of offensive migration, and 'legitimate' objects of attack in a move against immigrants.

Third, Fanon (1952; 2017) had theorized that whenever oppression deepens to a point, the oppressed tend to turn on each other, rather than on the oppressor, whom they may at any event not be able to reach. This also is the sense in which nationalism for Karl Marx is but false consciousness, which befuddles the victim, and precludes them from appreciating the dimensions of the benefits they may exact under a more progressive social order. The African migrants are more readily accessible to the angry, frustrated, and violent street players than the mandarins of the South African economy, who are mostly whites and

whose grip on the economy has not so much as to loosen up since the end of apartheid.

Four, there is arguably, still the reverence towards the whites on the part of the average black South African, which serves as enough bulwark against the former from the latter. Not much of integration has taken place across the racial divides promoted by apartheid; and so, contact with/access to the super wealthy, the proverbial one per cent, is not easily guaranteed for the disadvantaged and angry 99 per cent. On the other hand, fellow Africans are the people South African blacks readily interact with on the streets, night clubs, bars, markets and other places. They are the ones they see as relatively more successful and, therefore, the poster boys of immigrant negativity.

Fifth, the thinly veiled vitriol of leading state officials, including President Ramaphosa, is directed at NSAA as ‘the people who came to take all our jobs!’ The loud social life of the average Nigerian migrant, and their much talked about proclivity to crime in foreign lands, which berthed quickly in post-apartheid South Africa, is a factor in the attempt by xenophobes in the country to focus on Nigerian migrants as central objects of attack. A dimension of this is the no less important ‘Nigerian men take our girls’ narrative.

Significantly, that xenophobia current flows so strongly across the South African society at a time when African governments are striving to consolidate the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) emblemizes the nature of the dissonance between state and society on the continent.

Xenophobia as Populism

As noted heretofore, in contention in South Africa are the two ideological outposts of populism. Even where these may not have fully evolved, the currents are nevertheless unmistakable, and with different implications for South African state and society. I had noted the tacit support provided for the xenophobic outlook of the poor, frustrated, and angry black South Africans by the ANC government. This serves as bulwark, a defense mechanism as it were, against widespread perception of the government's failure to build a South Africa that is rapid in growth, inclusive in dispensing the public good, and generally more equitable than the best apartheid had on offer. Seeking to identify with the 'people' in this regard, and tacitly acquiescing in their holding up NSAA as the scapegoat, is a form of populism, albeit of the right variant. This runs on the fulcrum of cultural exclusivity, as it isolates migrants as the basis of all local developmental challenges these poor segment of the South African population rail against.

Left wing populism, on the other hand, is represented by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), led by the radical Julius Malema, former head of the ANC youth wing, which is conducting an insurgent campaign against the ruling party. It is significant that the profile of EFF continues to rise in South Africa, buoyed by its growing presence in parliament. The EFF was formed in July 2013, a little after Malema exited the ANC. It did not make much impact in the 2014 national elections; but did very well in that of May 2019, where it won 44 seats in the 400-seat parliament. In all, it garnered 1.8 million votes, or 10. 7%

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

of the total votes cast. This indicated that its electoral support was up across the country by a humungous 70%.

Undoubtedly, Malema is getting better engaged with the South African society, as he continues to speak to the critical developmental issues in the manner the black population loves. This is a constituency that is increasingly disenchanted with the ANC approach to post-apartheid reconstruction, which is obviously not delivering on its promise; and of course, with growing evidence of corruption in government. Malema is, however, getting increasingly incendiary, fingering the white population as the pivot of South Africa's problem, and by so doing, straddling both the cultural and economic, in his populist appeal. There is a dangerous dimension to this though, as the EFF leader continues to stoke and mainstream once again the racial exclusivity that was the essence of apartheid. This is by all means some form of inverted racism; and a different form of xenophobia.

Yet, the lesson of history, including contemporary history, that has seen the rise to positions of influence and power of sundry populist tendencies in the Global North with ongoing immigration challenge, is clear. It is that demagoguery thrives in conditions of difficulty, fear, and social crisis. In the circumstances, it is predictable that if the South African economy does not perform better, and be better able to democratize the public good, Malema and his EFF may, by the next presidential election in South Africa, have become the most popular tendency in the dynamic political environment of the country.

It is debatable whether this portends good for South African state and society given what seems to be the

extreme positions of the EFF, especially on land redistribution. My thesis is that the pressure to push back on the narrative of ANC failure, which Malema is determined to mainstream, is one of the reasons driving the tacit endorsement of xenophobia against NSAA by a once radical and undoubtedly progressive ANC.

NIGERIA'S RESPONSE TO XENOPHOBIA: CONFLICTUAL AND COOPERATIVE THEMES IN RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA

The leadership role of Nigeria in the decolonization struggles in Africa – from the westernmost part of the continent – Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde – to the southern tip of the continent, has been well documented in the literature. This has also been an object of criticism, from a broad range of perspectives (Garba, 1987; Mimiko, 2017: 5-116). While the lack of attention to *quid pro quo* is one critical weakness of Nigeria's foreign policy, the truth is that in relation to a fundamental issue like decolonization and the anti-apartheid campaign, Nigeria could not have made the elicitation of a promise of payback, the basis of its decision to work for these ennobling values. Colonialism, and institutionalization of racial discrimination go to the roots of the humanism of all Africans, and it would be most banal to hold back support to credible forces struggling to put an end to that.

The concept of national interest in International Relations recognizes that some categories of interests – the values a country seeks to obtain or advance in the global arena – are so fundamental that going to war in defense of such would not be taken as being out of place. Thus, while some modicum of transactional orientation requires to be

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

engineered into the foreign policy architecture of Nigeria, the different governments that went headlong into supporting the campaigns against apartheid and colonialism, with everything Nigeria had, acquainted themselves creditably.

Nigeria and indeed, South Africa have also done fairly well in managing their bilateral relations over the years. By 1994 when South Africa became free, it was evident that it had a natural rival in Nigeria. Both hold sub-imperialist proclivities in their different sub-regions of the African continent; but it is not unimaginable that they also may have conflicting continent-wide aspirations, being the two most accomplished countries on the continent, south of the Sahara. The UN Security Council veto vote, which both countries covet is a case in point.

While the propriety of this desire on the part of Nigeria is beyond the scope of this paper, it is a matter of fact that virtually all Nigerian governments have expressed the desire, and actually worked to accomplish this. As well, it must be recognized that Nigeria's preferred party in the South Africa operation was Pan-African Congress (PAC). It was PAC rather than ANC that was the focal point of Nigeria's support for the anti-apartheid struggle, with the country shifting in the direction of ANC only when it became frustrated with the internal bickering that compromised PAC's effectiveness. To the extent that Nigeria and South Africa have managed to predicate their relations on collaboration rather than overt rivalry in spite of this bouquet of latently conflictual themes, is remarkable and evidence of leadership on both sides. This story is however different at the level of citizens to citizens' relations.

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

It would, therefore, mean that it is the perception of the Nigerian as a criminal that accounts for the singling out of Nigerian migrants for incessant attacks on the streets of South Africa. This is banal; for even if all Nigerians in South Africa were to be criminals, this would still not have justified their being made an object of xenophobic attacks. This, no doubt, points in the direction that Nigeria of today lacks the requisite goodwill and respect that would have staved off the type of opprobrium its citizens are subjected to, not just in South Africa, but indeed across the world.

The power capability of a nation as perceived by friends and enemies alike is a key factor in the way its citizens are treated abroad. For sundry reasons, Nigeria has lost the exalted position it occupied, when its words were virtually law on the African continent. This validates the hegemony stability theory, which avers that when the power capability of a hegemon begins to wane, its influence peters out gradually, and the high pedestal it once occupied in the comity of nations in its region or elsewhere begins to be coveted by other nations, which seek to subvert and replace it. For as long as Nigeria does not get its acts together, for so long shall Nigerians abroad be disrespected, and its citizens the object of opprobrium, nay antagonism everywhere.

This in itself is a paradox of sort, for here we speak of a Nigerian emigrant population that is noted for its vibrancy and very competitive spirit, coming out of a country that seems incapable of providing a conducive environment to the blossoming of their creativity. All of these raise the question of what Nigeria should have done in response to the xenophobic attacks on its citizens in South Africa.

Pathways to Rational Response

Timing is a critical element in foreign relations. Nations earn respect by acting timeously in all situations. It is my conjecture that one reason for the tardiness of Nigeria in the instant case of the 2019 xenophobic attacks in South Africa, is the existence of the new Nigerian in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), whose duties significantly overlap that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The latter is historically the pivot of the country's foreign policy; but as things are, the Commission would seem, in its struggle for relevance, to have become adept at contesting the foreign policy space with the Ministry.

This is a misnomer and should be corrected forthwith to ensure that the MFA remains the bedrock of the nation's foreign policy. If the Commission must exist, it must report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Otherwise the tradition of frictions between them will linger.

Nigeria must also begin to show evidence that it appreciates that it has a duty to provide consular services for its citizens abroad, no matter what the charges against them are. A situation where government rushes to condemn any Nigerian arrested abroad for one infraction or the other does not suggest that the country's foreign policy leadership is sensitive enough to its brief.

By and large, it was a good diplomatic move that President Muhammadu Buhari dispatched a special envoy to lay Nigeria's protest with the South African President. As it turned out, President Buhari's envoy was reportedly very well treated. The South African President also immediately dispatched an envoy of his own to deliver the apologies of

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

his government to Nigeria. However, there was a noticeable eagerness on the part of Nigeria to accept anything that looked like an apology on the part of Pretoria.

This is akin to what Nigeria did vis a vis Cameroon in the early 1980s, after its gendarmes killed some Nigerian soldiers in the disputed Bakassi peninsula. It was, however, much unlike the resolve that Nigeria demonstrated in 1983, when Chadian troops attacked a Nigerian Army Rifle Company, in Kainasara, on the Lake Chad – killing nine soldiers, and taking 19 others as prisoners of war (POW). In the latter case, Nigeria responded expeditiously and forcefully, not only repelling the attackers, but also pursuing them deep into Chadian territory. In 2012, Nigeria moved swiftly against South Africa when it denied entry to some 100 Nigerians for not being in possession of the vaccination (yellow) card. About the same number of South Africans were deported; and entry was subsequently denied to citizens of the country at Nigeria's ports of entry. It was South Africa's lot to seek for rapprochement with Nigeria after the incident.

Nigeria's dwindling clout can only be the reason President Buhari readily accepted the apology of the envoy from his South African counterpart. It may in addition be a recognition of the fact that Nigeria indeed had no serious leverage on South Africa that it could call upon in the event of escalation in tension. Reports that no Nigerian life was lost in the 2019 xenophobic attacks in South Africa, may also be an object in consideration.

Also noticeable was the seeming confusion in Nigeria's policy arena on how to respond when it was confirmed

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

that a new wave of xenophobic attacks had been launched in August 2019. It did, only upon intense campaign in the media for commensurate reaction from Nigeria. The popular pressure mounted that Nigeria take immediate action, epitomize citizen diplomacy, which deserves to be accorded a stronger space in the nation's foreign policy arena. Private citizens and civil society, acting independently of government, mounted pressures on the latter to withdraw from the World Economic Forum Summit holding in South Africa.

One private airline, Air Peace, offered to evacuate Nigerians willing to leave South Africa *pro bono*; and there was intense lobby to divest South Africa of the right to host an international academic medical conference. Nigeria should also have worked closely with other African countries, and by so doing, isolate South Africa, and make the need to move quickly and effectively against any evidence of xenophobia by the country, going forward, quite urgent.

The attacks on supposed South Africa's interests in Nigeria were ill-advised, and should not have been allowed to happen by the security forces. Nevertheless, what the rash of attacks signal is that a good percentage of Nigerian youths are hurting. They needed the simplest of trigger factors to do what they did to facilities with presumed South African interest. However, many of those actions were carried out in the mistaken belief that those enterprises were owned by South Africans. There is evidence that many of the brand names operate in Nigeria on franchise basis; they being heavily invested in by Nigerians. In addition, such attacks constitute avoidable

political risks to business, which naturally turn foreign direct investment (FDI) away from any country.

Also of import here is the decision of President Muhammadu Buhari to proceed on a state visit to South Africa first week of October 2019, barely one month after the xenophobic imbroglio. This visit was ill-advised. There were no indications that South Africa had done anything of significance other than sending an envoy to Nigeria to tender an apology – and that was only after the Nigerian President had sent his own to the country – to warrant Buhari’s trip. The President’s trip should have been temporarily halted; and whatever urgent bilateral issues that had been in the works prior to the attacks, passed over to lower level officials to keep working upon. These steps would have been quite symbolic, and take the message home to Pretoria that Nigeria was indeed serious about this issue; after all, symbolism is as important, if not more important than substance, in diplomacy.

On the long run, the objective of Nigeria should be to see that a reoccurrence of the xenophobic attacks against its citizens does not take place – in South Africa and indeed, everywhere. In pursuing this, the need for Nigeria to reinvent, become more stable and develop, cannot be overemphasized, given that foreign policy is but internal realities writ large. A country that lacks internal cohesion, treats its citizens with little or no regard, is weighed down by corruption, and of limited capacity and effectiveness, cannot expect to be respected abroad, and its citizens accorded much respect and dignity.

CONCLUSION

To recap, the concept of nationalism as a determinant and shaper of state structures dates back to several centuries though mutating variously, depending on prevailing circumstances. Its manifestation as new nationalism is, however, of more recent vintage, predicated upon a binary conception of identity in terms of 'self' and 'others,' which provides justification for social exclusion. Such construction or reconstruction of identity reproduces populism. While populism of the left excludes people on the basis of economics, populism of the right is culture-driven, demonizing identified culturally distinct people.

The lacklustre delivery on the promise of liberation by a post-apartheid state reluctant to dismantle the very productive economic structures of apartheid, notwithstanding the latter's heavily skewed reward/distributive system, provides the critical backdrop for the widespread demonization of African immigrants as the *raison d'être* for shrinking economic opportunities among the black South African community. This is the manner in which the string of xenophobic violence against other Africans from across much of the continent got constructed in South Africa. For a post-apartheid state failing in its avowed commitment to bettering the economic condition of the black community beyond what was allowable under apartheid, subtle acquiescence to this anti-immigrant narrative of reality becomes quite convenient.

Even so, while the Nigerian immigrant community in South Africa continues to be the most targeted in the gale of anti-immigrant violence in the latter, the two countries

NPSA Monograph Number 1, November 2021

have, by and large, been able to keep bilateral relations on a stable, cooperative keel. It is however noteworthy that this official warmth has not found expression at the level of citizens to citizens' relations where mutual suspicion is still evident. Notwithstanding, the warm relations at the official level in spite of historical conflictual currents between the two leading economies on the African continent is a testament to the resilience of their mutual commitment to productive engagement.

Yet, the need for Nigeria to be more proactive and hone its capacity for rapid response to foreign policy issues of interest to it cannot be overemphasized. It is also imperative to imbue the country's entire foreign policy architecture with a clearer transactional orientation and the country itself put on a firmer platform for national cohesion, political stability and inclusive growth requisite for credible engagement in the international system as well as broader respectability for Nigerians in the Diaspora.

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