

Xenophobia in Africa: origins and manifestations

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Abstract

The issue of xenophobia is fast becoming a negative uprising on the African continent with the recent cases of Zambia and South Africa. This xenophobic tendency in Africa is based on prejudice and hatred directed towards foreign nationals, specifically fellow black Africans. Foreign nationals are deemed by the natives as persistent threats to employment security, accommodation and resource distribution, to mention a few. This alien attitude towards fellow humans, and especially fellow Africans, is against the ethic-theological attitude of *live and let live*, embedded in African communal worldview. Africans are said to be notoriously religious, though African religious consciousness was originally derived from African Traditional Religion, while Islam and Christianity have given further impetus to this consciousness. With African Traditional Religion, God is at the apex of the ontology, and He expects humans to thrive in a mutual complementary fashion with all other beings within the environment. This gives the background to the ethic-theological spirit of *live and let live*, where Africans are to put the interest of the community above their individual interest. However, with the recent xenophobic uprising on African soil, there is a need for a critical study on the new wave of individualism taken sway on African soil and natives. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to expose the ethic-theological implications of xenophobia for the twenty-first-century humanity in Africa.

Key words: xenophobia, Africa, ethics, religion, humanity.

1. Introduction

The term *xenophobia* results from two Greek words: *xenos* and *phobos*, which mean strange or foreign and fear, respectively (Mabera 2017). Therefore, xenophobia can be defined as the hatred or fear of foreigners. It is exemplified in discriminatory behaviours and attitudes which often culminates in abuses, violence, as well as exhibitions of hatred (Ejoke, Ani, 2017). R. Sundstrom (2013) defines *xenophobia* as the strong dislike, fear or hatred of others, who are foreign. He further argues that *xenophobia* often incorporates some cultural and ethno-linguistic identifiers that form the base of suspicion and distrust of the “other”. J. Peters (1991) also sees *xenophobia* as the illogical distrust or fear of strangers and foreigners. In the South African milieu, xenophobia is noticeable in negative perceptions and attitudes together with conveying acts of violence, hostility or discrimination against non-nationals. From B. Harris’ (2002) perspective, the term, *xenophobia* should be reframed to include manifestations, acts or practices of physical abuse or violence which usually accompany to *fear* or *dislike* of foreigners.

It is important to note that though xenophobic violence typically targets foreign nationals, it can also target *nationals* who are seen as being “foreign” or are perceived to be from another country, even though incorrectly. For this work, the broadest possible connotation of *xenophobia* is acknowledged. This includes attitudes of fear, jealousy, hatred, negative perceptions, distrust, and manifestation through acts of violence or discrimination.

Also worth noting is that *xenophobia* and *racism* are two closely connected words and at times, mutually supportive forms of coercion. The two conceptions are, however, distinct in that, that while xenophobia typically targets foreigners, racism expresses itself in fixed prejudices and socially constructed notions of physical differences, which are singled out as ethically significant, thus emphasising the superiority of one race over another. In both phenomena, the “foreigner” or the “other” is viewed as a threat, discriminated against and excluded because of certain innate features, e.g. race or origin. In both phenomena, certain policies, for instance, enactment of measures by countries to tighten immigration controls, are likely outcomes. However, J. Peters (1991) avers that *xenophobia* differs from *racism* in that that the latter is

the conviction that one race is superior to another, while, as explained above, xenophobia is hatred of foreigners inspired by their foreignness and it is always based on fear. It is important to note that though xenophobic violence typically targets foreign nationals, it can also target “nationals” who are seen as being “foreign” or are perceived to be from another country, although incorrectly. For this work, the broadest possible connotation of *xenophobia* is acknowledged. This includes attitudes of fear, jealousy, hatred, negative perceptions, distrust, and manifestation through acts of violence or discrimination.

Also worth noting is that *xenophobia* and *racism* are two closely connected words and at times, mutually supportive forms of coercion. The two conceptions are, however, distinct in that while xenophobia typically targets foreigners, racism expresses itself in fixed prejudices and socially constructed notions of physical differences, which are singled out as ethically significant, thus emphasising the superiority of one race over another. In both phenomena, the *foreigner* or *the other* is viewed as a threat, discriminated against and excluded because of certain innate features, e.g. race or origin. In both phenomena, certain policies, for instance, enactment of measures by countries to tighten immigration controls, are likely outcomes. However, J. Peters (1991) avers that *xenophobia* differs from *racism* in that the latter is the conviction that one race is superior to another, while, as explained above, xenophobia is hatred of foreigners inspired by their foreignness and it is always based on fear. Instances of xenophobia and its manifestations through attacks, harassment and discrimination of foreign nationals have been acknowledged on the African continent, in Egypt, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa.

In Egypt, for instance, the main targets of xenophobia and racist violence were asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants from Sub-Saharan African countries (Human Rights First, 2011). In Kenya, migrants and natives from Somali were exposed to xenophobic discrimination and other human rights abuses due to pirates and high levels of terrorism prevalent in their country. In this regard, Somali citizens in Kenya are often perceived as pirates and terrorists (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

Xenophobia in Ghana raised its ugly head when Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown as Ghanaian president. The new administration of Kofi Busia then came up

with the shameful and infamous *Aliens Compliance Order*, which saw the brutal and compulsory expulsion of 'aliens' mostly from Burkina Faso and Nigeria out of the country. This was followed by revenge on the part of Nigeria, where hundreds of Ghanaians were burnt alive to flush them out of the country; this era is known as the *Ghana must go* era of early 1980 (Ucham 2014). In South Africa foreign nationals were attacked, displaced, killed or deprived of their property because some of the natives saw them as threats to their jobs and other economic prosperity. The recent xenophobic attack in South Africa took place in 2019 (Misago 2019).

Amid the late 20th century, many social issues facing the African continent, e.g. colonialism and apartheid, have often provoked an 'integrative approach' as a means of solving them. However, xenophobic attacks on fellow Africans are currently provoking disintegrative effects among African states as most of them have demonstrated dissatisfaction as regards to how the crisis is handled within the affected countries. For instance, many African countries have pointed on how they collectively participated against the apartheid system in a bid to liberate South Africa from its colonial master. They point to how their labour force has been recruited into the country as a supplementary workforce in the various important sectors, e.g. agriculture, mining, as well as manufacturing, and yet those immigrants now face violent and inhumane treatment in the country of which many of them have now considered home. A greater problem with xenophobic violence in Africa is that it leads to other ends, i.e. refugee problem, rampant and ever-increasing gang-related atrocities and human rights violations within the affected areas. Today, the decline social values in the affected countries and communities are of great concern to many scholars as some see it as an act against human rights while others, e.g. B. Bush (2018), try to speculate on the root reasons of the problem.

Many African communitarians have argued that Africans are deeply religious, which implies that it is perhaps sacrilegious to isolate the African moral values from her religious values as the latter values are fundamental and triggers the moral values (Basseyy, Bubu 2019). In Africa, religious or spiritual element characterizes human relationship with the divine, with God, lesser gods, the ancestors, fellow human beings and other lesser being (plant, animals). It is also an undeniable fact that this

sense of religion promotes moral excellence, it endows the African with respect for human dignity and human life. However, with xenophobic violence upraising on the African continent, there is no doubt that the problem poses both ethical and religious problems with its consequences. There is currently little or no literature which investigates the ethic-theological implication of xenophobia on African societies. This study hopes to bridge the knowledge gap in which studies relating to xenophobia discourse have created.

2. An overview of xenophobia on African soil

Most African countries, at one level, have similar world views, common history, culture and tradition that transcends national borders and these include pre-colonial warfare, colonialism associated with the subjugation of native blacks by invading white settlers and so on. The existing sporting platforms that are held at different levels as a means to achieve coherent interaction and cooperation, e.g. the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) for both sexual groups can also be appreciated. Unfortunately, xenophobic attacks impede such coherent and perpetual relations. To this N. Mlambo (2019: 55) avers that “the manifestation of xenophobia undermines social cohesion, peaceful co-existence, and good governance as well as constituting a violation of human rights”. Xenophobic attacks on African soil are deemed by many as a new phenomenon, hence still shrouded in mystery. Discrimination and inhuman treatment of foreigners exhibit utter disrespect of human rights which entails fair treatment of one on the basis that they are humans.

L. Jooste (2012) avers that the resentment towards foreigners began in South Africa in 1910. Also it was noted that “the first group of people to fall victim to restraining immigration policies of the South African government were the Indians” (Ramaswamy 2010: 37). As such, segregation laws including the likes of the Urban Areas Act of 1923 were enacted hence introducing residential segregation and people were discriminated based on their national origin, race, class and gender.

However, A. Dick (2005) noted that xenophobic attacks in Africa can be traced back to as far back as 1914 as he points out the stories of peasant Afrikaners who looted British owned shops, being, therefore, indeed startling precursors of the country's contemporary attacks. Presumably, the attacks could have been based on the distribution of the national cake, therefore, the poor Afrikaners resorted to looting British owned shops as a means to express their discontentment in the manner in which resources were being distributed among various social groups.

For C. Mcconnell (2015) the violent episodes are not necessarily sporadic but rather a representation of long-simmering anti-migrant sentiments that had been increasing in the country since the early 1990s. For instance, with the collapse of apartheid, South African borders were opened to foreign migration as such, many within the country ended up blaming the foreigners, rather than the whites, or the government for democracy's failed promises embodying high unemployment and scarce resources. They had found new scapegoats for their dissatisfaction. In this case, therefore, the episodes in May 2008 which claimed the lives of 62 foreigners and displaced thousands, as well as those in April 2015 which were sparked by the remarks made by Goodwill Zwelithini, the king of Zulus, that all foreigners should pack their bags and go back to their countries are resultant of the scapegoating culture the natives have nurtured since then (Arndt 2018). D. Everatt (2011) notes that the native South Africans dusted off their freedom songs because instead of them condemning apartheid, they condemned foreigners for the jobs, houses, and women they were stealing. Regardless of periodisation, South Africans authorities aver that citizenship and identity is a major aspect of the xenophobic attacks.

According to A. Klotz (2016), the studies that have been done over the issue of xenophobia in Africa have attributed the hatred of foreigners to several causes and J. Pillay (2017: 33) has mentioned them to include "the fear of loss of social status and identity, a threat perceived or real, to citizens' economic success, a way of reassuring the national self and its boundaries in times of national crises, a feeling of superiority and poor intercultural information".

E. Coetzee (2012) attributes the phenomenon to three factors, which are cultural factors which include identity and nationality, interactive factors related to the number of exposure inhabitants have to strangers, and material and economic factors related to employment opportunities and available resources. The South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) avers that the crisis is a result of a series of government's policy failures which essentially contributed to the creation of the perfect storm of lawlessness, poverty and also unfulfilled expectations which erupted into violence (Pringle 1973).

A. Dick (2005: 6) is of the view that "xenophobia basically derives from the sense that non-citizens pose some sort of a threat to the recipients' identity or their individual rights and is also closely connected with the concepts of nationalism: the sense in each individual of membership in the political nation as an essential ingredient in his or her sense of identity". M. Hlatshwayo (2011: 170) comments on how South Africans of every colour were socialised to draw and follow boundaries around identity as racial divisions were forged into almost every element of their lives that is "from the hospital one was born in, to the jobs he could acquire, to the cemetery where he would be buried". As such, apartheid did not end with these divisions but rather it merely displaced them. For F. Maberera (2017: 30), "the similarities between the violent policing of citizenship during and after apartheid are particularly stark". All this supports the notion that the attacks are a demonstrative reaction that we belong here and you (foreigners) do not. For B. Harris (2002) xenophobia has something to do with superiority but it is also part of a "scapegoating" process where unfulfilled expectations of the new democracy resulted in the foreigner coming to embody the failures of unemployment, poverty and deprivation.

One major problem documented is that most, if not every, time xenophobic attacks break out in South Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states, in turn, prefer to take a backseat as they expect the national government to deal with the problem which is contrary to the experience where they used to intervene and pool resources to collectively deliberate on feasible solutions to mitigate the prevalent crises. It is also documented that Bot-

swana's President, Ian Khama, had mouthed off to Zimbabwe's President, Robert Mugabe, that if he solved his problems back home, there would not need to drag everyone to summits to deal with the attacks in South Africa (Ojedokun 2015). Therefore the tendency of reluctance and inaction by other African countries and people to mitigate the xenophobic attacks on fellow member states is a source of concern for many scholars.

3. The effects of xenophobia in Africa

3.1. Political

Since the phenomenon has multi-faceted implications, in political terms J. Crush et al. (2017: 50) declare that "to allow citizens of one member state to think and act in xenophobic ways about citizens of another is ultimately and extremely destructive of regional cooperation and harmony". Amongst other prominent gospels preached on the African continent, those concerning regional cooperation and integration prevail over the rest since the essence is that African countries are politically weak and vulnerable, therefore they should strive to achieve a unity of purpose, especially in security terms, if they are to survive in the hostile and brutal world system. Henceforth the inception and perpetuation of a vast array of integrative platforms that is the African Union (AU), Southern African Development Community - Troika (SADC-Troika), East African Community (EAC), just to mention these few, should be appreciate. Since the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is a security effort put up to fight terrorism, so are the former examples as they exist to mitigate certain specific prevalent African contingencies.

Nevertheless, xenophobic tendencies, therefore, pose a limitation to the much needed integrative approach to problem solving. Authorities have noted a rather handful occasions where the South African government has received responses of discontentment and dissatisfaction from other governments within the region and the world over. Chinese, Zimbabwean and Nigerian governments are part of the list, as well as Somalia, as noted when the Somali president Sheik Mohammed demanded action and response from his South African counterpart

Jacob Zuma after a graphic video of a Somali man being brutally stoned to death went viral. Various organisations have also expressed their loss of trust in the South African government to deal with the prevalent crisis hence the rule of law has completely been overrun as the general public has established rhetoric where they can freely take to the streets without any apparent persecution. The Somali Association of South Africa's (SASA) spokesperson, Ismaeel Abdi Adan, commented that the South African government has completely failed to arrest the crisis since every time the violence erupted, nothing is ever done (Ojedokun 2015).

3.2. Economic

In this platform, integration would be considered as a process in which barriers to the exchange of goods and services, as well as capital and people are reduced or eliminated between member-states. As an ongoing procession of stages, it usually begins with a preferential trade area and then graduates to a free trade geographical location to a customs union with common markets which end up with economic and political unions. Such examples are that of the European Union (EU) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) as well as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), just to mention these few. However, xenophobic attacks have resulted in divergent economic efforts, especially in the SADC region. The proposed intentions were to achieve free trade or customs union but instead, following a series of xenophobic eruptions in South Africa, the Zimbabwean government found it feasible to implement Statutory Instrument 64 of 2016, which ban South African imports (Crush et al., 2017). Possibly, if there were sound underlying relations, then maybe such barriers would not be put up amongst African neighbouring countries who depend on each other if development is to be realised.

On a local level, xenophobia does impact on the country's economics. The vandalism and looting of foreign-owned businesses could be a huge blow, as noted by J. Pillay (2017), therefore there is a great need to realise that immigrants are beneficial for the development of any country, as their vast numbers have po-

tential to contribute to the economics of the day. Authorities appreciate the era of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland to have ushered in extensive development with a huge pool of manpower being received from neighbouring Zambia and Malawi (the then Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, respectively).

Foreign-owned businesses also tend to create employment opportunities for the less and unskilled locals, which is a considerable investment effort. In turn, the heinous and inhuman attacks do lead, to some extent, to the instability of the micro-economy hence resulting in high prices on basic commodities as some elements of competition are obliterated. It also tends to scare away foreign investment from the country, as is noted by J. Pillay (2017: 53) that, “the Durban xenophobia gave many foreign investors pause, giving serious consideration to the stability”. At one point, the Protea Group founder and chair, Otto Stehlik, pointed out that, “South Africa was taking a knock, not just from a tourism or travel perspective but also from an economic perspective” (Klotz 2016: 43). The economy was not doing well already and the eruption of xenophobic violence exacerbates the situation. Therefore, this serves to illustrate the negative economic implications of xenophobia.

3.3. Socio-cultural

Most African countries, at one level, have a common history, culture and tradition that transcends national borders and these include pre-colonial warfare, colonialism associated with the subjugation of native blacks by invading white settlers and so on. Integration in the socio-cultural terms is an important form of developmental cooperation that facilitates interaction and exchange between different societies through communication and mutual understanding of diversity on the continent.

4. African religion, ethics and worldview

The presence of ethics and religion is widespread and is one of the longest standing phenomena known to humankind (Ogar, Ogar, 2018). It can be argued that religion and ethics have featured prominently in human history and that in

nearly all societies, they have also played a portentous and stupendous role in human life since the antiquity. Consequently, they have featured in literature related to social relations, conflict resolution, human identity, etc. It is also evident that religion institutes an indissoluble part of African societies. As such, socio-economic and political activities in traditional African societies are often flavoured with religious expressions and rituals. Due to this reason, many authors argued that colonialism thrived in Africa because it came along with religious flavours.

Christian missionaries came almost the same time as the colonial masters. These missionaries helped spread the message and principles of love, peace, tolerant and gentleness while on the earth. The missionaries proclaimed that holding on to these principles will guarantee a bliss in the afterlife despite what they are facing with the colonialist. These religious teachings held sway on Africans and this is evident in the number of years colonialism thrived in African, as well as the growth of Christianity within a few years of missions in Africa. However, before the coming of the missionaries, Africans have their religious experience which guilds their thinking and undertakings in African Traditional Religion.

J. Parratt (1977), sees African Traditional Religion (ATR) as those institutionalised practices and beliefs of the indigenous religion of Africa, which are rooted, from time immemorial and practices that were transmitted through oral tradition, sacred space, sacred specialists' persons, objects and symbols. Africans hold that there is no clear cut divergence between the material and the sacred. To this, J. Mbiti (1980) explains that, for Africans, religion is an ontological phenomenon: it concerns the question of existence or being. He also argues that "in traditional African communities, life is religion and religion is life. All aspects, whether inanimate or animate, are considered to be interwoven" (Mbiti 1980: 818). G. Tangwa (2007: 820) echoes the same sentiment when he avers that African attitude towards nature and the rest of creation is that of "respectful co-existence, conciliation, and containment, there are frequently offerings of sacrifices to God, to the divine spirits, both benevolent and malevolent, to the departed ancestors and the sundry invisible and inscrutable forces of nature".

This belief system could explain why Africans are curious in their dealings towards everything including non-human beings since everything originates from God and God resides in all things, hence mutual respect is expected (Bassey 2019). What this implies is that traditional Africans see life as one big whole and religion pervades all aspects of life. In relation of this philosophy, it is the whole that brings about the unification of the parts. That is, there is no dichotomisation when it comes to human existence; there is no division between matter and spirit, soul and body, and religious practice and daily life. This religious value is a way of being African; it is all-incorporating and it expresses values, attitudes and actions that are uniquely African (Koenane 2013). Due to this belief system, each person within African society is expected to treat others with compassion, dignity, respect and expects being treated similarly by others. This is the source of African ethics. D. Olowu (1988: 216) avers that "Our own view is that morality is basically the fruit of religion and that, to begin with, it was dependent upon it. Man's concept of deity has everything to do with what is taken to be the norm of morality". More precisely D. Olowu (1988: 217) further avers that "The sense of right and wrong, by the decree of God, has always been part of human nature".

Traditional Africans do not believe in an anthropocentric universe; rather they have always assumed that humanity is surrounded by a realm of spirits in which God is thought to preside over a pantheon of sub-divinities and ancestral spirits (Green 1983). The African worldview recognizes the centrality of the spiritual feature of all elements of life. Spirituality, in the African context, is taken to mean the transcendent or invisible substance which connects the entire universe. As T. Metz and J. Gaie (2010) argue, all African life is a vital life force in dynamic participation. Africans have a certain emotive sensitivity, an effective rapport with the forces and forms of the universe, direct and immediate contact with the other.

As results from the above, African traditional religion (ATR) hold the belief that humans do not live in this world alone; there is a sense of human beings' close relationship with every other thing that exists. Even within human social relations, in an activity, e.g. family gathering, funeral, fishing, child-naming and trading, there is religious adherence. K. Gyekye (1998: 4) explains this religion's deep pres-

ence in African life when he argues that to “be born into African society is to be born into a culture that is intensely and pervasively religious and that means, and requires, participating in the religious beliefs and rituals of the community”. This understanding of the inescapable impact of religion from cradle to the grave and the African awareness of the divine is captured in a Ghanaian Akan proverb, which states that “no one teaches the child to know God”; the consciousness of God is said to be inherent in the child from birth.

For most black Africans, the life of the individual is understood as the involvement in the sacred life; that is, the individual taking part in all aspects of life in the community. It is that vital union or bond of life with its interconnectedness that ensures unity among members of the same family or clan and prompting how one conducts himself/herself in that community (Bassey, Mendie, 2019). The point being made here is that the communal nature of most African societies with their strong network of relationships plays an influential role in the individual’s life; (s)he is very much shaped and formed by the socio-cultural and religious context of the community.

In a traditional African society, the neediest members of a community are often given support through spiritual bonding. The latter among Africans disposes them to help one another. The individual within African society is thus not complete without others. This indicates that the African religious worldview has a solid ethical dimension. At the heart of African religion is the quest for harmony: among humans, human beings and nature; between the human being and the community; between the human being and the living spirits of ancestors; between the living and the dead; between the visible and the invisible worlds; and, most importantly, harmony between human beings and God. This makes up of the African ontology (Ikegbu, Bassey, 2019).

However, despite the diversity among indigenous cultures in Africa, G. Ayittey (2006) summarised the following common themes in African life:

- (1) everything in the cosmos are part of a whole; there is no sharp distinction between the sacred and the non-sacred;

- (2) in most African traditions, there is a Supreme Being – creator, sustainer, provider, and controller of all creation;
- (3) serving with the creator are a variety of lesser gods and guardian spirits; lesser gods are continually involved in human affairs; people communicate with these gods;
- (4) the human condition is and always will be imperfect; suffering, sickness and death are all essential parts of life; suffering is caused by misdeeds and sins that offend the gods and ancestors or by being out of harmony with society;
- (5) ritual actions may relieve the problems and suffering of human life, either by satisfying the offended gods or by resolving social conflicts; rituals help to restore people to traditional values and renew their commitment to spiritual life;
- (6) human society is communal; ancestors, the living, the living dead and those yet to be born, they all form an important part of the community; the associations between the worldly and the otherworldly help to balance and guide the lives of the community. People need to interact with the spirit world which is all around them.

From the foregoing, it can be argued that Africans have their conception of ethics and religion before the coming of the Europeans. Hence, as J. Mbiti (1980) argues, the Christian missionaries did not bring God to Africa but God brought them to Africa. Some authors also argued that Westerners, over years, have tried by all means to destroy African values of togetherness enshrined in the African Traditional Religion in an attempt to erode the African identity. The new Christian missionaries converts were often made to believe that salvation could only be complete if they did away with their old cultural life and superstitious religious. It is important to note that the Western missionaries might not have planned these damaging results of their actions, nonetheless led to social disruption as tensions, and sometimes resulted in violence within communities in Africa. Reacting to this, G. Williamson (1974: 56) observed that the result “was to bring under suspicion every aspect of traditional life and, worse, to develop in the convert an attitude of

shame and condemnation towards his traditional past and those who continued to share it”.

The above situation is explained by C. Achebe (2018) in his novel: *Things Fall Apart*. He noted that there were some indications of social and religious disintegration as a result of the impact of European culture and Christianity on the African indigenous worldview, those cultural and traditional religious threads that bound the people together were detached. Yet, C. Achebe recognised some of the positive changes that Christianity and European colonial rule brought to Africa, especially, through the establishment of education and prospects of material progress. However, he further claimed that the plea of Western culture and its material promise is still very strong, especially among the younger generation of Africans, who, regrettably, embrace everything Western to the neglect of their cultural practice and values.

It is important to note that, the African traditional cultural, religious beliefs and expressions had some of the negative elements that dehumanised humans, e.g. human sacrifice and killing of twins, especially before the advent of Christianity and European colonisation, however, this research points to some positive aspect of cultural values, e.g. the solution to xenophobic mindset and attitude.

5. Xenophobia and its implications on humanity in Africa

As it is indicated above, in traditional African societies a shared morality is the foundation of society. In this context, K. Gyekye (1978) avers that traditional African moral ideals or virtues exhibit the following: compassion, kindness, concern for others benevolence, in short, any behaviour or action that is beneficial to the elevation of the well-being of others. M. Motlhabi (1986) also maintains that, like the Ten Commandments, which prohibits stealing, adultery, murder, deceive or lies telling, they are enshrined in the African Traditional Religion concept of a virtuous life. M. Gelfand (1987) agrees with M. Motlhabi (1986) by stating that the most important virtues in African societies are: respect, compassion, truth, kindness, love, generosity, humility, rectitude, forgiveness, self-discipline, mercy, sufficiency, pity, repentance, trust, strength, giving, patience, hard work, courage, unselfishness and

the willingness to share whatever one has, notwithstanding how little it may be. M. Gelfand (1987) further claimed that African moral values reject: abuse, stealing, adultery, lying, deceit, violence, pride, quarrelling, jealousy, hatred, covetousness, anger, ingratitude, negligence, assault, weakness, selfishness and provocation. However, the problem of xenophobic violence on the African continent contradicts these African values and worldview which now poses some serious implications on the continent.

In a study on morality in Africa, M. Letseka (2013) concludes that the present situation contrasts sharply with the previous due to modernity. B. Bush (2018) likens the present African as someone stuck between two worlds: the old and the new ones. However, in a limbo between these two worlds, a contradiction pervades his moral behaviour. From the above argument, one can argue that the problem of xenophobia has eroded the ethic-theological spirit of *live and let live* where Africans are known to put the interest of the common good above their individual interest and this have serious implication for humanity in Africa.

First of all, no African ought to ever feel like a foreigner in Africa. The problem of xenophobia has led to reprisals elsewhere in Africa, which if not taken care of will further cause division and hatred among fellow Africans and member states. For instance, Zambia, due to the xenophobic attack on foreigners cancelled a supposedly friendly match against South Africa in its capital Lusaka which was due in September 2019. Madagascar had pulled swiftly in to replace Zambia but later pull out from the feature over similar concern. The response in Zambia continued with student protesters marching in streets and making shopping centres to close in the capital. A popular local radio station in the country, Hot FM, also announced that it will stop playing the music of South African origin and artists until further notice (Mkhize 2019). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, protesters in Lubumbashi smashed the windows of South Africa's consulate and sacked South African-owned shops (Mkhize 2019).

Nigeria's response to the xenophobic attack in South Africa was more brutal, as Nigeria's foreign minister, Geoffrey Onyeama, conveyed a deep emotional statement stating that "Enough is enough", "We will address this once and for all this

time” (Durokifa, Ijeoma, 2017: 3299). In response to this, the Nigerian government pulled out of the World Economic Forum on Africa which was held in South African port city of Cape Town latter the year, 2019. Nigerian high commissioner to South Africa was recalled from there. Influential Nigerian artists and Afrobeats star, Tiwa Savage, withdrew from a concert in South Africa. The Nigerian national chairman of the ruling All Progressives Congress, Adams Oshiomhole, also called on the government to nationalise some South African-owned businesses, which includes the Mobile Telephone Network (MTN), he also called for a boycott of South African goods and services. He further demanded that the landing rights of South African Airways be withdrawn until xenophobic attacked in South Africa is stopped. Lastly, he avers “Nigeria needs to show that we are not chicken to be molested” (Durokifa, Ijeoma, 2017: 3299). In response to this, angry Nigerian protesters rode in the streets of Lagos, Abuja and a few other cities across the country to forced South African-owned telecommunications giant MTN and Shoprite to suspend operations for weeks.

Also unemployment in the xenophobic area will tend to increase. For instance, some foreign-owned businesses were destroyed during the xenophobic attacks as a reprisal, while some shut down to avoid been destroyed. The implication of this is that those working in these companies were displaced of their jobs leading to the increase in the unemployment rate, aside from this reason, many foreigners in South Africa have decided to go back home, and this will further increase the unemployment rate in this countries.

Xenophobia is an international crime against humanity and crimes against humanity are mass crimes committed against a civilian population (McKinnon 2017). Crimes against humanity have been perpetrated against innocent civilian groups since the dawn of time. Despite the long duration of execution of the evil, it was not only about hundred years ago when the international community acknowledged such crimes as morally reprehensible and unacceptable with the introduction of the Hague Convention IV of 1907. Crimes against humanity are violations under some international tribunals, e.g. the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Article 7 of the latter names crimes against humanity to include: murder, extermination and other cruel acts (Gauin 2015). Thus, this author declares that xenophobic attacks are crimes against humanity committed under international criminal law because they are systematic attacks and widespread executed on a large scale against civilian groups. Furthermore, Africans need to come together to do more to arrest the situation.

6. Conclusion

This article concludes that indeed xenophobia and the related violence that comes with it is a societal problem that still haunts the African community. This crisis is a result of anti-migrant sentiments expressed by natives of a country who perceive foreigners to be threats to their entitlements. However, this is against the ethic-theological spirit of *live and lets live* where Africans are to tolerate each other by putting the interest of the community above their individual interest. Africans have a long history of apartheid, and together they have galvanised themselves to unite under solidarity for the liberation of sister countries within the continent. As this work reflects on these deeds of selflessness from the entire black race, it is no misnomer that Africans allow division on the continent. It was pointed out in this article that xenophobia is a prevalent phenomenon, i.e. threatening the relations between Africans, especially those in the Southern African region. Currently, it undermines the intended peaceful co-existence and social cohesion through violations of human rights which are consequently impeding good governance. Therefore, there is a great need to do away with this societal problem if cordial relations are to be perpetuated as the worst-case scenario will be the ultimate and extreme devastation of regional harmony and cooperation. Since the problem is not a prevalent one on the continent, government, agencies, and citizens need to re-orientate themselves on the ethic-theological *live and let live* attitude enshrined in African communalism. Africans need to stand together to help put to an end this crime to humanity. It is only an enemy of humanity that will result in killing and destroying his fellow African for selfish sake, being inconsistent with the traditional African values.

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