

**IMMIGRANT RESPONSES TO XENOPHOBIA IN POST-APARTHEID  
SOUTH AFRICA: FROM VICTIMS TO AGENTS**

**(The Case of Nigeria)**

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Administration**

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WESTERN CAPE**

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## DECLARATION

I, Felicia Lombard, declare that *IMMIGRANT RESPONSES TO XENOPHOBIA IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: FROM VICTIMS TO AGENTS* (The Case of Nigeria) is my work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Felicia L Lombard

Signed:.....*flombard*.....

Date:.....13/11/2023.....

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the black African foreign national population in South Africa, who continue to face threats of xenophobic violence.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing a PhD thesis can be very isolating. However, it can also be enriching, and those "aha" moments when things finally start falling into place bring an unprecedented level of fulfilment and pride. The past seven years working on this thesis have had many moments of tears, self-doubt, and anxiety. My sincere gratitude goes to the following people, without whom the journey would have been so much more difficult:

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## ABSTRACT

This study, titled "Immigrant Responses to Xenophobia in Post-Apartheid South Africa: From Victims to Agents" and sub-titled "The Case of Nigeria," centres on the responses of Nigerian immigrants in South Africa and those in Nigeria to xenophobia in South Africa after 1994. Xenophobia against black African foreign nationals is an unremitting problem in post-apartheid South Africa. A new context with South African companies moving into the rest of Africa has shifted the balance of forces. Studies on xenophobia frequently portray black African foreign nationals as passive victims. This thesis will contest that one-sided characterisation by showing that migrants have actively counter-organised to defend themselves at multiple scales, from local to national to transnational. In doing so, the following questions will serve as the study's compass: How have Nigerian immigrants mobilised in defensive networks as a way of surviving and deflecting xenophobic violence and attitudes towards them in South Africa? What are the multiple geographical scales at which this activity occurs (local, national, and transnational)? What is the response of South African companies in Nigeria to xenophobic counteraction? How do we understand violence of the poor against the poor or "non-revolutionary" violence? From a translocal perspective, what collective power do local and international actors generate, and how does this create a more comprehensive account of xenophobia and migration? What are the limits of transnational power?

The pro-active counter-mobilisation of Nigerian nationals in local, national, and transnational networks is a mechanism for surviving and reducing xenophobic violence in South Africa, but this has been inadequately explored. This in-depth qualitative study combined semi-structured interviews with 22 key local informants in Gauteng and two interviews with key informants vested in the trade relations between South Africa and Nigeria. This study also looks at the political economy of xenophobia – a neglected aspect of the current scholarship. Using document analysis, I provide a typology of the experiences of companies that have invested in Nigeria. I base this on the work of Alejandro Portes (2008) and his co-thinkers, whose studies on global migration highlight the contributions of immigrant organisations, especially those of a transnational character, in the lives of migrants.

## KEYWORDS

Multi-scalar networks; xenophobia; transnational; agency, counteraction, mobilisation;

Nigerian immigrant organisations, business expansion.



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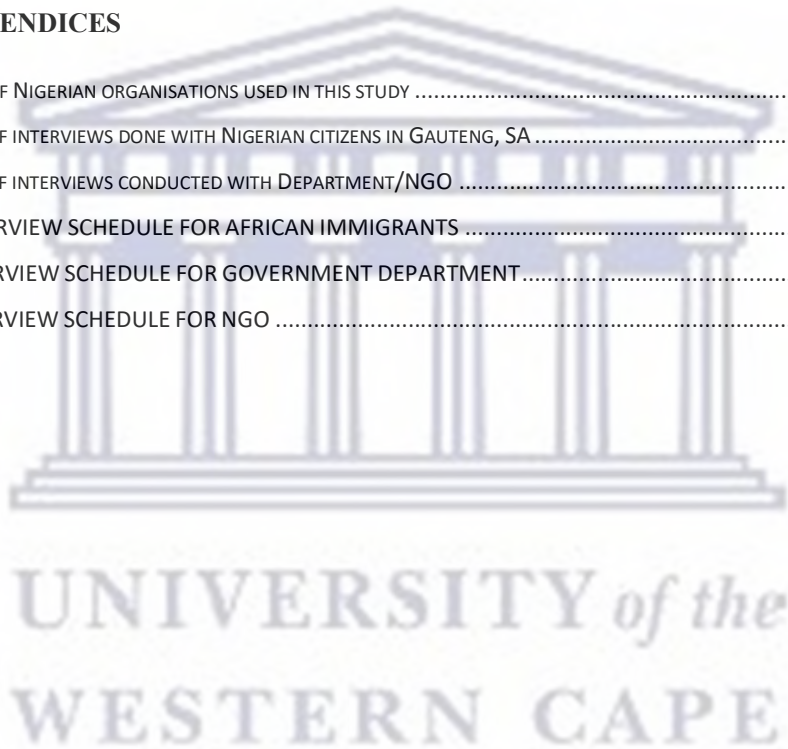
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## ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
AYIDSA	Association of Yorubas in Diaspora South Africa
BNC	Bi-National Commission
CANUK	Central Association of Nigerians in the United Kingdom
CAPEX	Capital Expenditure
CCPC	Competition and Consumer Protection
CSI	Corporate Social Investment
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
DSTV	Digital Satellite Television
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EFN	Engineering Forum of Nigerians
EU	European Union
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
MTN	Mobile telecommunication company
NANS	National Association of Nigerian Students
NANSSA	National Association of Nigerian Students in South Africa
NICASA	Nigerian Citizens Association South Africa
NIDO	Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation
NUSA	Nigerian Union South Africa
NWAS	Nigerian Women's Association South Africa
PACAC	Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption
RCCG	Redeemed Christian Church of God
South Africa	South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAMP	South African Migration Project
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNWISA	United Nigerian Wives in South Africa
USA	United States of America

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## NIGERIA AND XENOPHOBIA

### Introduction and Background

Although migration in South Africa has become a contentious issue, the *New York Times* describes this as a worldwide phenomenon. It is one of the biggest voter concerns in countries of the North is resurgent nationalist concerns about the allegedly large number of "poor" people migrating to their countries and cities, which they view as a threat to territorial sovereignty. It is impossible to overlook the severity of xenophobia against working-class migrants as a social problem and how it has manifested worldwide. The years of Donald Trump's presidency (2017–2021) in the United States of America (USA) were arguably some of the most terrifying for any foreign national who resided there. Trump was outspoken about his opposition to immigration, which included his support for building a wall to keep Mexicans out of the country and his decision to impose a 60-day travel ban on nationals from approximately 13 Muslim-majority countries. In Europe, researchers have noted the resurgence of narrow nationalism, racism, and xenophobia. According to the Italian Coalition for Civil Liberties and Rights (2018), new laws in Italy include actions to limit humanitarian protection.

According to Castles (2016:3), "immigrants are concentrated in developed countries (10-25 per cent of the population of OECD states) and 'global' cities (20-45 per cent)". The problem, as Castles insists, needs to be framed not around "migration itself" but instead on circumstances and contexts and "the conditions of inequality of wealth and power under which most migration takes place," which involve "the exploitation for many migrants" (2008:3).

DeParle (2010) identifies five 'amplified' effects of modern migration. Firstly, the increase in global reach, a vast difference from 19th-century migration, which revolved mainly around the Atlantic trade. Secondly, the money involved, and modern-day remittances that sustain those back home and significantly contribute to national economies. Thirdly, the feminisation of migration in which women constitute a large population of the world's migrants. Fourth, the growth of technology and the subsequent development of transnational migrants can bring

together two people around the globe in mere seconds. Fifthly, the 'expectation that government will control' migration. While these effects are noteworthy, perhaps a neglected area needs to be highlighted: xenophobia. Migration has, around the world, amplified xenophobic attitudes and behaviour towards immigrants.

In Africa, xenophobic tendencies, large-scale exploitation of migrants and violence have also been rearing their ugly heads in major cities in countries such as South Africa (SA), Kenya, Ivory Coast and Mauritania (Mumbere, 2019). South Africa has similar problems but is a peculiar case. South Africa's modern migration history largely revolved around unskilled migrant workers in the mining industry. Foreign workers were expected to return to their home countries at the end of the contracts. However, the noticeable shift in post-1994 migratory patterns in South Africa includes the entry of low-skilled, high-skilled, documented, and undocumented workers, refugees, and asylum seekers from countries such as Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, and Somalia. There is also a creation of new divisions in the national and regional labour market in which many South African companies prefer exploiting vulnerable foreign Africans (Wentzel and Tlabela, 2006).

Landau (2008:105) aptly captures the horror of murderous xenophobia when he writes:

Refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, illegals, border jumpers, displaces, Nigerians, aliens, and *amakwerekwere* have long been on South Africans' minds. For many, they are primarily groups to be feared, disdained, occasionally pitied, often exploited, and seen as a threat to the country's wealth and health. The country's government and much of its civil society have long turned a blind eye to foreigners' systematic marginalisation, mass deportation (close to 300,000 people in 2007), and the ever more rapid and rabid murders at the hands of the country's citizenry.

## **Research Problem**

Scholars leading the debates on xenophobia in South Africa include Harris (2001), Crush (2008), and Neocosmos (2010), who maintain that these attacks should be seen as "xenophobia", while others such as Charman and Piper (2012) label the attacks on foreign nationals as "criminal" violence and not necessarily xenophobia. A common focus has mainly been understanding why South Africans are xenophobic and the reasons behind the continuous violent attacks.



In the literature on xenophobia, there is a general failure to examine the counteraction and agency of "victims" and to link this to South Africa's changing political economy in Africa. In this respect, the Nigerian case is illuminating. Officially, it is estimated that 2 million foreign-born migrants of working age (15–64) were living in SA in 2017; this makes up 5.3% of the South African labour force. Between 2012 and 2017, this increased by 1.4%. Paradoxically, despite mass unemployment among South Africa's black workforce, most undocumented migrants can find jobs in sectors such as construction and services (Crush, 2011).

Most foreign-born migrants remain undocumented and thus "illegal" for many years, and those who are refugees struggle to obtain refugee identity or travel documents. In the case of Nigerians, the number planning to live in South Africa increased dramatically after the African National Congress (ANC) assumed power in 1994, while South Africa's big capitalist corporates decided on an African "renaissance" with a massive expansion into Africa. The arrival of Nigerians in SA, unlike the historical migration of Southern African mine labour, was partly a consequence of the opening of SA and, likewise, the opening of Nigeria to SA capital. Ongoing civil wars, harsh economic policies, and the seizure of political power by military dictators in Nigeria were also important push factors (Mberu and Pongou, 2010).

Mberu and Pongou (2010) believe that around 14 107 Nigerian nationals lived in SA between 1996 and 2005. However, the 2001 South African census placed the number of Nigerian citizens in South Africa at 7 172, with the majority (5 029) living in the Gauteng province (Segatti, Adeaobo and Ogunyemi, 2012) and Durban. Estimates released in a 2012 Migration Brief by Segatti et al. (2012) reported this number to be beyond the 36,000 mark, but the 2016 South African census placed this number at around 30 314. Nigerian nationals, unlike Zimbabweans, only account for a portion of African foreign nationals in SA. There are no accurate statistics on the number of Nigerian citizens in the country. However, they have inordinate visibility in xenophobic discourse. In April 2015 in Durban, "Nigerian nationals on Mahatma Gandhi Road were among 2000 farmed foreign workers and traders who said "they're prepared to fight and will defend themselves, should they come under attack. They won't come back. Forget about what they say, they will not come here. We are ready for them" (Mkhize and Eliseev, 2015).

Since 1994 Nigerians, along with other black African foreign nationals in SA, have received harsh treatment and even violence from South Africans compared to the welcome extended to white and professional immigrants. Since 1994, five waves of violent attacks on black African foreign nationals in South Africa have been documented, and numerous studies have been done on the causes, effects, and implications of these attacks.

MTN Nigeria, chaired by Cyril Ramaphosa since 2002, began Nigerian operations in August 2001. By February 28, 2002, the company had approximately 250,000 subscribers. In a decade or so, it gained control of one-third of the entire continent's cell phone market (Mckune, 2015). The Shoprite company opened its first Nigerian store in the Victoria Island area of Lagos in late 2005. By 2016 Nigeria, the largest economy in Africa, boasted "16 Shoprite supermarkets across eight states in the Federation. Of the supermarket chain's 2 300 employees, 99.5% are Nigerian citizens"(Shoprite Holdings, 2016). In 2019 Shoprite spoke out strongly against attacks on Nigerians in SA.

As a reputable company with deep African roots who employs thousands of African nationals and, most importantly, works tirelessly to bring low prices to 14 countries outside of South Africa, we no doubt have excelled due to our peaceful co-existence and collaboration; hence we would like to see an end to xenophobia across the continent. Shoprite Nigeria appeals to the general public of South Africa and Nigeria to protect the human dignity and safety of every person living in both countries (Sobowale, 2019).

The response of Nigerians in Nigeria has been more than vocal expressions. In Nigeria, a hashtag and Twitter campaign is called "shutdown South Africa". An official from one of Nigeria's most prominent political parties, the All Progressive Congress (APC), Tolu Adesanya, said Nigeria would shut down South African businesses if South Africa did not meet their demands.

We actually handed a letter to the South African embassy yesterday, making them aware that we are not happy with what is going on in South Africa. Should there be any more attacks, we are going to shut down South African businesses in Nigeria. That is, MTN, MultiChoice, Shoprite etc. (eNCA, 2015).

Images and videos of Nigerians storming a Shoprite store in Lekki in September 2019, following attacks against African foreign nationals in South Africa, can be found on the website of the Nigerian newspaper, Vanguard (Sunday, 2019). The article also contains responses by Nigerians on Twitter, vividly stating, "Those leading the charge are those that lost their Families in South Africa. The lady that the Brother was burned swore they will shut down all South African companies in Nigeria" (Sunday, 2019).



Source: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/09/breaking-nigerians-react-to-xenophobic-attack-invade-shoprite-outlet-in-lekki/>

Nigerians in South Africa are typically blamed for some of the most heinous crimes. A general search of Nigerian newspapers brings up stories relating to human trafficking (eNCA, 2017), drug dealers (Mbolekwa, 2017) and prostitution syndicates (Whittles, 2017). Similarly, South African politicians have blamed Nigerians for South Africa's increasing crime statistics (Bornman, 2019).

Though Nigerians are not the only African foreign population in SA to face discrimination and xenophobia, they appear to be more active in their response and counteractions. Police Minister Fikile Mbalula specifically warned Nigerian nationals engaging in crime (Breakfast, 2017). Elsewhere, the former Mayor of Johannesburg, Herman Mashaba, has been accused of inciting violence against African foreign nationals following the attacks on Nigerians in Atteridgeville (Mabena and Bornman, 2017). Foreign nationals, especially Nigerians, are no longer passive victims of xenophobia. Importantly, Nigerian protests against discrimination and xenophobia have occurred not only on South African soil but in Nigeria. Nigerian students have threatened to shut down South African companies operating in Nigeria while the government subtly targets these companies through fines and other bureaucratic delays.

Nigerian migrants in SA and their networks in Nigeria are thus taking on a more active role in responding to xenophobia in SA at multiple scales. There is a need for studies on the multiple scales of mobilisation of African foreign nationals against South Africa's xenophobia.

Migrant networks and Nigerian responses to xenophobia in SA are largely under-researched topics. Very few studies have been conducted on victims becoming agents in the South African context of xenophobia. Therefore, this multi-scalar study focuses on this topic by examining how Nigerian nationals in South Africa and Nigeria respond to xenophobic attacks. My argument is that since 2015 black African foreign nationals have responded to xenophobia in South Africa in a multi-scalar and more organised way, thereby raising the "costs" of attacks on them. Paradoxically the more SA companies expand continentally, the more the costs of xenophobia increase.

### **Aims and objectives of the study**

This study aims to provide a - nuanced and multifaceted understanding of xenophobia in SA by examining how Nigerian migrants have mobilised in migrant networks to fight xenophobic violence in the context of South African capital's expansion into Nigeria and in the context of mass pressure being exerted on these companies. This study is centred on the following questions:

How have Nigerian immigrants mobilised in defensive networks as a way of surviving and deflecting xenophobic violence and attitudes towards them in SA? What are the multiple geographical scales at which this activity occurs (local, national and transnational)? What is the response of South African companies in Nigeria to xenophobic counteraction? How do we understand violence of the poor against the poor or "non-revolutionary" violence? From a translocal perspective, what collective power do local and international actors generate, and how does this create a more comprehensive account of xenophobia and migration? What are the limits of transnational power?

The intended objectives are thus to provide a view from below based on the agency of Nigerians to inform scholarly and political movement debates better. I used a combination of interviews, newspapers and documents about the migration and settlement of Nigerian citizens in Nigeria and SA. The growth of ‘vigilante’ groups like Operation Dudula<sup>1</sup>, which makes no secret of its anti-immigrant and what some term genocidal sentiments towards black African foreign nationals in SA and uses slogans such as “go home or die here!” has created a space in which hostilities are more than just verbal harassment, internet discrimination, or odd random attacks. Investigating how migrants can and should protect themselves against these groups (alongside other South Africans) has never been more significant.

### **Nigeria and Nigerians from a historical perspective**

Nigeria's contemporary political, economic, and social landscapes bear the scars of Britain's colonial divide-and-rule policy. Its current layout is a mash-up of many autonomous kingdoms, each with its own language, culture and identity before establishing the British Protectorate of Nigeria in 1901 (Davis and Kalu-Nwiwu, 2001; Falola and Heaton, 2008). With a population of more than 250 million, this Giant of Africa is well recognised for its abundant oil reserves, diversity of ethnic groups, and vast Nollywood film industry. The country, however, is also well known for its corruption, Islamist insurgent group Boko Haram, and election chaos.

Before British colonialism, Nigeria could be roughly divided into three states with a dominant geopolitical ethnic group - the Hausa Fulani to the North, the Igbo to the West, and the Yoruba to the east (map 1.1). However, the British decentralised governmental structures in several locations to bring them under the British ‘indirect authority’, changing the topography of Nigeria, which is home to more than 250 ethnic groups. According to Davis and Kalu-Nwiwu (2001:1), Nigeria, at independence in 1960, “existed as a political and legal entity, not as an effective and emotive identity”.

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<sup>1</sup> “Operation Dudula is a splinter group from a faction in the Put South Africans First movement, an organisation that first popularised and renewed anti-immigrant campaigns on social media before finding expression on the ground. Labelled by some as “xenophobic and dangerous”, it was founded in Soweto a few months after the July 2021 riots that erupted when former president Jacob Zuma was sentenced to jail for contempt of court. Following the launch of Operation Dudula, several anti-immigrant groups started emerging in working-class communities across the Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal provinces, going by the same name or variations of it such as the Alexandra Dudula Movement”. (Myeni, T. 2022. “What is Operation Dudula, South Africa’s anti-migration vigilante?” in Aljazeera (online). <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/4/8/what-is-operation-dudula-s-african-anti-immigration-vigilante> <Accessed, 9 June 2022>.

Though the British had a variety of influences in Nigeria, its most significant effects were on the country's politics, economy, and social life. In their 2008 discussion on the *history of Nigeria*, Falola and Heaton (2008) mention three ways in which British colonialism altered the political landscape in Nigeria. Firstly, hundreds of self-governing autonomous groups were brought under one administration (Falola and Heaton, 2008). This is an obvious problem prone to cause tensions between the various groups speaking different languages and each having their own line of authority. Davis and Kalu-Nwivu (2001) articulate that the British regional government established under Lugard as administrator exacerbated the idea of separateness by establishing self-governing territories, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria.

Endalcachew Bayeh (2015) argues that colonialists did not care about leaving behind a political legacy that would benefit all, nor the importance of preparing African states to govern themselves. Indigenous institutions which existed before were replaced by administrations unknown to Nigerians, administrations that today are still essentially inherent in Nigeria's democracy. So long as Lugard established a system beneficial to the British, he neither cared about dismantling traditional authorities nor the implication of imposing direct taxes. Falola and Heaton (2008:118) maintain that:

Although Lugard received reports from various colonial officers in Southern Nigeria indicating that direct taxation was not practicable in most areas of Southern Nigeria, he went ahead with his administrative overhaul, imposing direct taxation on Benin in 1914, Oyo in 1916, Abeokuta in 1918, and parts of south-eastern Nigeria by 1926.

The second major shift was the removal of traditional rulers and their replacement by people who had never held such power. According to Falola and Heaton (2008), traditional monarchs frequently lost their 'power' and were replaced by individuals who did not have the legal authority required by tradition. One of these implications would undoubtedly have been the expansion of corrupt behaviour, a legacy that continued in the political structure of the Nigerian state.

Third, English-speaking, European-educated elites in Nigeria had been "elevated" by the British to lower-level government positions (Falola and Heaton, 2008). This is evident in modern-day Nigerian politics, where the prestige of educated elites has supplanted traditional authority. Colonialists left many African states with a legacy of autocracy and brutal administrations that failed to consider public opinion. To Bayeh (2015:90), "Brutality of the

colonialists' system of administration was inculcated in the mind of anti-colonial leaders of the time who later become leaders of the independent African states”.

Further to altering its political landscape, the British influence also profoundly influenced Nigeria's economic structure. The British mainly aimed to exploit African resources for their gain, even though political behaviour substantially impacted economic activity. According to Falola and Heaton (2008), the British approach had two main objectives: expanding Nigeria's commerce by exporting raw materials and importing finished goods from Europe, bringing Nigeria into the cash economy of Europe, and making Nigerians work for this currency. This is evidence of what Portes and Rumbaut (2014:52) speak about when they say, “Labor recruitment worked only when the target population was sufficiently integrated into the capitalist system to apprehend the significance of the inducement offered in relation to their economic condition”.

While stealing its riches for Western advantages, colonial influence forced African states into a capitalist economy. Africans were subjected to direct taxation in addition to being used as cheap labour and having their most valuable resources mined. One of the main goals of the colonial taxation system, according to Rodney (2018:194), was to “provide the necessary cash for managing the colony as a site of exploitation”. Ironically, Africans contributed to the maintenance of their tyranny. Self-sufficient farmers in Nigeria were forced into wage labour by colonisers.

The British ensured the African colonies were always intertwined with the Western world. Rodney (2018:269) articulates, “In no African colony was there economic integration or any provision for making the economy self-sustained and geared to its own local goals”. Thus, while there was a growing import-export sector, the only thing that seemed to be growing was dependency and underdevelopment Rodney (2018). Bayeh (2015:19) maintains that “this compelled African states to import very expensive manufactured goods from outside by what they gain from export of their cheaper primary products”.

Another lasting effect of the British influence in Nigeria is its impact on the social landscape. The expansion of Nigeria's economy to a capitalist society that benefited the British had forced many Nigerians to leave behind their age-old, self-sustaining practices and communities in search of better work opportunities in the urban cities. According to Rodney, (2018), “it was precisely the impact of colonialism which left so many villages deserted and starving because the able-bodied males had gone off to labour elsewhere”. Falola and Heaton

(2008) use the example of the Jos Plateau and its attraction of large influxes of male migrant labourers to the tin-mining.

Receiving a European education through missions allowed many Nigerians to become part of the 'middle class', getting jobs as clerks in the native courts or positions in the colony administration (Falola and Heaton, 2008). Though this education was limited to primary education, the thought of further training at universities had not been much of an option. The influence of European education on behaviour and lifestyle is also highlighted by Falola and Heaton (2008), who state that European tastes and values were incorporated into their indigenous lifestyles.

The North and the South of Nigeria saw different stages of growth due to the British being more drawn to the ports and fertile plains in the South. When the two regions were merged, they were already on distinct paths. Within the Southern protectorate, education and modern social services flourished, whilst in the North, colonial officials severely prohibited using colonial government funds for these purposes (Falola and Heaton, 2008). These functions were to be performed by the native administrators themselves, according to Lugard's rules, as this was not in the British interest.

According to Falola and Heaton (2008:116), the uneven development of Education in the two areas is as much to blame on Governor Lugard's restriction of Christian missionaries, and the extension of European education to the North was based on the view of preserving 'traditional social structures', i.e., the Muslim North largely rejected Christian missionaries. Nevertheless, although education was primarily restricted to primary or industrial training, many Nigerian citizens took advantage of the chance, opening the door to a middle-class career (Falola and Heaton, 2008). This led to a new educated elite in the South who demanded: "accompanying political rights along with their new, frequently elevated status" (Falola and Heaton, 2008:127).

Williams (2019:21) agrees that:

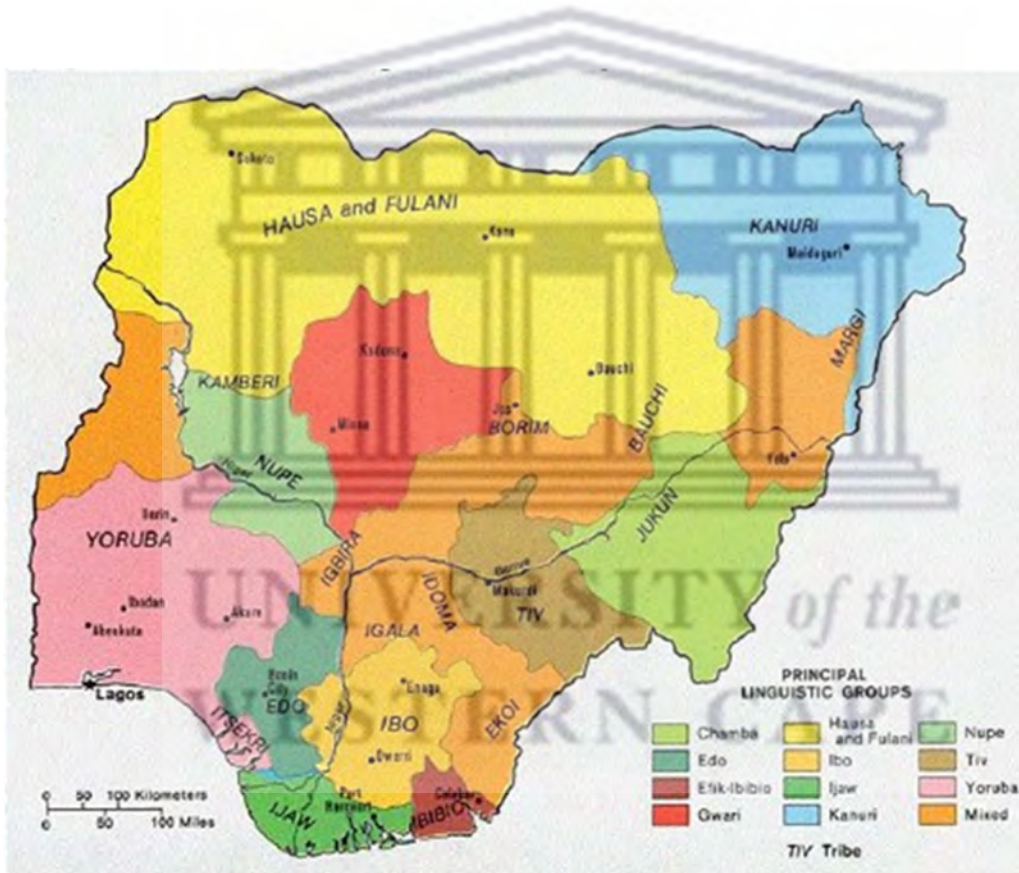
It gave rise to an elite of educated men possessing the skills and knowledge necessary to operate in the world of colonial administrators and thus be able to challenge the position of local rulers through whom the British sought to administer the country. The limitation of education in the emirates forestalled the subversive effects of education on the native authorities but laid the foundation for the bitter and tragic



conflicts between northerners and migrants from other communities over access to positions in the northern states and the federation.

In the race for dominance of the new Nigeria, tensions between the two areas were unavoidable at the time of amalgamation. The North's widespread illiteracy and poverty were exacerbated by their rejection of Western education and the country's entry into the previously described new wage labour system. Because the North was under-resourced and under-invested compared to the South, so there were fewer labour prospects in the North.

Map 1.1: Mapping Nigeria's ethnic groups.



Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Nigeria-Map-showing-the-Ethnic-Groups-Constituents\\_fig1\\_290211693](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Nigeria-Map-showing-the-Ethnic-Groups-Constituents_fig1_290211693)

### **Catalysts for migration during colonialism (1901-1960)**

Not neglecting the 15th-century slave trades and the subsequent transportation of around 12 million Africans, including Nigerians, to the European colonies and America, this study is focused on the “modern” migration of Nigerians. Even though seasonal migration of people searching for new lands and agricultural prospects is not explicitly linked to colonisation. Linked here is the mass migration of people motivated by changing political, economic, and social structures created by colonialism.

Ikwuyatum (2012:2) articulates that “The Colonial era completely altered the motivation and composition of migration of the pre-colonial era, by introducing and enforcing several blends of political and economic structures, imposing tax regimes and establishing territorial boundaries”. For Mberu and Pongou (2010):

The arrival of the British in the mid-19th century provided a framework for large-scale forced migration as the British needed a large labour force for mines, plantations, and public administration. The resulting rural-rural migration moved people to work as either migrant tenant farmers, farm labour, and/or migrant traders.

At the time of writing, Osoba (1969) found labour migration in the era of British colonisation in Nigeria to be a largely neglected area. He, too, admits that “the era of colonial rule in Nigeria coincided with significant changes in the Nigerian socio-economic conditions in general, particularly, in the pattern of the country's demographic” Osoba (1969:515). Osoba (1969) identifies three major trends in internal migration. The first, he says, is the movement of people from areas with less economic activity to those that have more economic activity. The second trend Osoba (1969) identified is the move of migrant peasant farmers across regional frontiers, whether on a seasonal or permanent basis. He states that cocoa-producing areas of Western Nigeria were the largest recipients of such movements, with the “Hausa areas of the North and the land-starved and over-populated Ibo areas of the East contributing the largest share” (Osoba, 1969:518). The third trend identified is the move from rural areas to new urban centres (Osobo, 1969).

Further noticeable was the move of Nigerians to other African countries. Ikwuyatum (2012:3) states that “The pattern of intra-regional mobility is mainly characterised by North-South, inland-coast movement from the Sahel West Africa (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad) to the plantations, mines and cities of coastal West Africa, which include Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, and in the West to Senegal and the Gambia”. Osobo (1969) identifies Ghana as the

only country for which reliable statistic is available, as the number of Nigerians in Ghana stood at around 200 000.

Osoba (1969) discussed the growth of “pan identities”; specifically, he speaks to the development of the Pan-Ibo identity and the importance of hometown identities. Osoba also identifies the migration of Nigerians to Europe and America as a significant trend, albeit this only took significance “since the early 1960s when the ban on travelling to communist countries was lifted” (1969:521). Van Den Bersselaar (2005) highlights the broad spectrum of organisations established by migrants, including sports, entertainment, political parties, and church groups Migration was thus not just a case of migrating but also establishing ties with those in the home village while enhancing hometowns into ‘diasporic spheres’. According to Van Den Bersselaar (2005:59) “Over time, the urban migrants' associations village group or district tended to form connections with the rural 'hometown', effectively creating diasporic public spheres”.

The ‘local diasporic’ groups described by Van Den Bersselaar (2005) coincide with modern diasporic groups that centre around support for new arrivals and social and cultural activities. Van Den Bersselaar (2005:60) provides an example by stating that “Associations for people from larger towns with many migrants, such as the Onitsha, Owerri and Awka unions, had special halls constructed for their meetings, which were also used for parties, dance nights, send-offs and welcome receptions”.

In their tactic of ‘divide and rule’, the British politicised ethnic differences amongst Nigeria’s three main groups, the Hausas, the Igbos and the Yorubas. The British had each group convinced that they were the colonial favourite, “The Hausas because of their feudal traditions, the Ibos because of their success in business and high level of education, and the Yoruba because of their Protestantism and their democratic election of chiefs” (Morrock, 1973:132).

The British shaped the discussions regarding representation in the Central legislature in 1950 at a Constitutional Conference in Ibadan. Falola and Heaton (2008) highlight the Southerners’ fears of the political and cultural dominance of Northerners. The allocation of half the representatives allocated to the North and half divided between the Southwest and Southeast to the House of Representatives is an improvement to its predecessor, the Richards Constitution (Falola and Heaton, 2008).

British colonialism brought about profound and hostile change to Nigeria's political landscape. The struggle for power among Nigeria's once separated 'states' continues to challenge the nation's development. Nigeria struggles with national identity, as displayed by the growing number of states. Minority groups constantly struggle for self-determination, federal recognition, and their share of the (state) resources, especially oil.

The lingering effects of British influence on self-determination and autonomy can be seen in Watts' (1999) work on petro-violence in Southeast Nigeria. Watts (1999) utilises the struggle of the Ogoni people (a small ethnic society occupying a Lilliputian territory in the oil-rich Niger Delta) to showcase how ethnic minorities continue to struggle for "their share of the pie". A typical example is the Niger delta area which he describes as a region of "unimaginable cultural and ethnic complicities" (Watts, 1999:5).

The escalating violence between minority groups such as the Ijaw, Urhobo and the Itseker has led to 100s of deaths (Watts, 2004). Watts describes the area as "the theatre of conflict within Nigerian Politics" (2004:52). He highlights four critical points in the current political economy. 1. The efforts led by Niger Delta states to take control of oil and oil revenues. 2. Minorities' struggle for self-determination and to be included in the federation's constitution. 3. The 'crisis' rule, though, which militant youth movements are rendering state and local government useless. 4. The emergence of South-South Alliances between excluded oil-producing states (Akwa, Ibom) against ethnic majorities.

Challenges to traditional authorities are highlighted by Watts around the area Nembe, the 'ground zero' of oil production where "violence and intense political competition has transformed the governance system" (2004:62). Watts (2004) argues the dynamics of Nembe as a governable space can only be understood by remembering that land lay in the hands of customs authorities because of the indirect colonial rule, which frequently invented chiefly powers of local rule. Economic resources, therefore, reside in the hands of the king and his derivative subordinates, namely the council of chiefs and the executive council.

According to Watts (2004), the failure of the monarch to deal with oil companies lead to the decentralisation of his powers to the Chief of Councils. Youth mobilisation was used to pressure companies such as Shell to grant communities their entitlement and the escalating conflict between the various youth groups. Watts (2004) showcases the development of youth groups such as "the house of lords" in response to the 'opportunity for appropriating company resources". He also highlights the ascendancy of the highly militant Isongoforo,

hired by companies for added protection but colluded with communities to create cases needing protection. The area became a mess of complex complicities between youths, chiefs, and local security forces. It thus highlights the displacement of Chieftaincy rule by civic vigilantism, which Watts (2004;65) states “expanded by overthrowing a territorial system and gerontocratic royal order”.

Watts (2004) charts the relations between oil and violence, but he examines how forms of governable spaces are shaped and recreated out of authoritarian governmentality. He argues that oil changes the dynamic of rule; everyone wants to be in charge. Thus, he focuses on three such spaces, chieftaincy, the space of indigeneity and the nation. For Watts (2004), the contribution of oil to war or authoritarianism builds on pre-existing political dynamics. Commenting on Indigeneity, Watts (2004) highlights the struggles of the Ogoni people under Ken Saro-wiwa and the establishment of the movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). He highlights the drafting of an Ogoni Bill in 1990, calling for the control of Ogoni affairs by the Ogoni people and the fair use of economic resources.

The incapacity of MOSOP to depict itself as a Pan-Ogoni organisation cast doubt on the allegiances of sub-groups (clans), causing tension inside MOSOP itself. This tension resulted in "the movement dramatically unravelled along class, gender, generational, and clan lines" (Watts, 2004:69). Despite their failure, MOSOP's resolve has spawned self-determined indigenous movements asking for resource management and autonomy among Ijaw, Isoko (IVU), Urhobo (UPU), Itsekiri (INP), and Ogbia (MORETO). As a form of governable space, the Ogoni case reveals that oil invaded an already fragmented multi-ethnic space created by colonial exclusion. MOSOP, under Saro-wiwa's leadership, thus created an indigenous subject and an indigenous space (Watts, 2004). Property and territory became a central concern but also exacerbated conflicts and tensions among minority groups. Watts (2004:72) vividly states that “The effects of this multi-ethnic mobilisation was the production of political and civic organisations and new forms of governable spaces, in short, the veritable jigsaw of militant particularism”.

Nigeria's economy is in an ongoing circular decline. Even though Nigeria is one of the largest oil-producing countries in the world, low investment, a high unemployment rate, corruption, nepotism and institutional chaos are but some of the challenges retarding its modern economy. One needs to place this in its historical context to understand these challenges.

Williams (2019:17) supports these ideas by stating:

The initial expansion of colonial rule encouraged competition in the distributive trades. Trading firms advanced credits, primarily to secure themselves a share of the crop rather than to initial cultivations, as was done by the Hausa merchants in the case of groundnuts.

Williams in his discussion of the development of the colonial political economy, says that “the colonial state made possible the development of commodity production by African producers and Traders” (2019:14). This was done through developing harbours and railways, the rationalisation of currency and the use of money.

As in many other colonised countries, forcible and voluntary labour recruitment occurred for state and private purposes. Imperial control was enhanced by extending the jurisdiction of colonial courts to cover mercantile companies and their agents. African traders and Farmers adapted existing social institutions to organise the regulation of access to land, mobilising saving, and credit facilities (Williams, 2019). Although peasant and petty commodity productions were restricted, “Road and rail routes were determined by the military and administrative criteria of linking administrative centres, rather than encouraging trade and production” (Williams, 2019:17). According to Williams (2019:18) “the banks simply served the mercantile firms and denied most African traders’ direct access to bank credit”.

### **Increased post-colonial migration pressures**

Large-scale flows of Nigerians to countries beyond the continent did not occur until after independence, which ushered in new migration patterns. This was highly affected by the fact that the country was plunged into a competition for state resources especially concerning oil revenues, manipulation of voting processes, corruption, and battles for power became the order of the day. All groups feared the domination from their counterparts, which resulted in coups and countercoups, as highlighted by Heerten and Moses (2014:173), who state that “In January 1966, an Igbo-dominated putsch by a group of army officers initiated a series of coups and counter-coups that led to the installation of military rule”. Continuous and repeated outbreaks of violence “drove a stream of more than a million refugees to the Eastern Region, the ‘homeland’ of the Igbos’ diasporic community” (Heerten and Moses, 2014:173). The Nigerian-Biafran war from 1967 and 1970 was a “genuinely global event” (Heerten and

Moses, 2014). The conflict resulted from ethnic and economic competition, extensive intertribal rioting and the WWII conditions of scarcity, inflation and rationing well before the decolonisation of Nigeria (Plotnicov,1971).

Archibong (2018), in her study of the historical origins of persistent disparities in Nigeria, explores the different explanations for the patterns observed. She argues that “persistent ethnic inequality in access to federally administered services is partly driven by historical heterogeneous federal government policy towards different groups in Nigeria” (Archibong, 2018:325). It is thus safe to say that historical inequalities continued well after the decolonisation of Nigeria. While this study can't discuss or explore all the areas in which inequalities of colonial influence persist, my focus will be on the three central regions, ethnicity and religion tensions, education, and the influence of the church. As mentioned earlier, Nigeria has a diverse ethnic population of about 250 language groups. Three main ethnic groups account for most of the population, “The Hausa, located in the northern savannas, account for roughly 21 percent of the population, while the Yoruba, located in the south-western part of the country, make up 20 percent, and the Igbo of the southeast 17 percent” (Falola and Heaton, 2008:4). While English is the official language; Nigerians also have 250 indigenous languages. Adetoye and Omilusi (2015) specifically look at ethnoreligious conflicts as a factor in migration in Nigeria. They believe that the political class has exploited ethnicity and religion as a symbol of mobilisation and instruments of negotiation and patronage, and shares of natural resources.

Poor education resources is another factor. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has ranked Nigeria amongst the top 10 countries with the highest out-of-school rates. Their reports paint a bleak picture of education in Nigeria:

Even though primary education is officially free and compulsory, about 10.5 million of the country's children aged 5-14 years are not in school. Only 61 percent of 6–11-year-olds regularly attend primary school, and only 35.6 percent of children aged 36-59 months receive early childhood education. In the North of the country, the picture is even bleaker, with a net attendance rate of 53 percent. Getting out-of-school children back into education poses a massive challenge. (UNICEF, 2013).

Olibie, Gloria and Enueme (2013) raise similar concerns by attributing the out-of-school rates to several factors, including religious/cultural views in which women are viewed as subordinates who belong only to the family household, limited family resources and general disregard for females. More recently, however, this has also been linked to the targeting and mass abduction of female school children in Nigeria.

Widely known is the abduction of around 200 school girls by Boko Haram in the city of Chibok in 2014, one of many such instances which, according to reports, have led to authorities closing down around 11 000 schools around the country since 2000 (Musa et al., 2022). Disparities can also be divided between areas. Popular views suggest that females in the North have a lower enrolment rate than South females (Olibie et al., 2013).

According to Nigeria's National University Commission (National Universities Commission, 2021), there are 174 Universities in Nigeria, 43 Federal Universities, 52 State Universities and 79 private Institutions. Given the number of challenges in its primary and secondary education system, it is hardly surprising that the tertiary level of education in Nigeria functions on similar challenges. One of the most significant problem areas, though, is gaining access. Like many other countries, Nigeria's tertiary institutions needed a complete overhaul following the reach of independence. Manzuma-Ndaaba, Harada, Romle and Shamsudin (2016:89) states that:

The first indigenous National Policy on Education in Nigeria was launched in 1977 with a clear mandate to correct all the social imbalances created in colonial policies and then transform individuals, society, and the nation at large into morally, socially and scientific institutions geared towards self-realisation and National unity.

Some of the biggest challenges since the advent of democracy in Nigeria, however, have been the government's financial commitments to higher-level education and the struggle to gain access. Aluede, Idogho and Imonikhe (2012:3) argue that "of the number of candidates applying for admission every year in Nigeria, only about 5.2% to 15.3% get admitted every year, meaning that about 84.7% to 94.8% of the candidates seeking admissions every year never get admitted into Nigerian universities". While one must acknowledge the strides made in creating more institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, this is not enough to cover its enormous population. Table 1.2 below provides an overview of Nigerian universities' enrolment from 1960 – 2008, while table two displays the statistics around the demand and



supply. The number of unplaced students is increasing alarmingly, and the government cannot keep up with this.

According to Aluede, Idogho, and Imonikhe (2012), the challenge to access Universities in Nigeria is compounded by the National University Commission’s Policy on the carrying capacity of universities. While capacity is 150 000, they say, demand stretches around 1 million; using the University of Lagos as an example, Alude *et al.* (2012) state that they received 99 195 applications in 2011/12 but had a carrying capacity of 6000.

**TABLE 1.1: ENROLMENT IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES 1960-2008**

Year	Number of universities	Total Enrolment	% Increase
1960/61	2	1395	-
1961/62	5	2406	72.47
1962/63	5	3,761	56.32
1963/64	5	5,106	35.76
1964/65	5	6,707	34.36
1965/66	5	7,709	14.94
1966/67	5	8904	15.50
1967/68	5	7,058	-20.73
1969/70	5	9,695	11.50
1970/71	5	14,468	49.23
1971/72	6	17,093	18.14
1972-78	13	48,698	184.94
1999-88	29	160,174	228.9
1989-99	39	574,723	258.8
2000-05	51	810, 220	40.98
2008	94	1, 096, 312	35. 31

Source: Adopted from Ajayi, K and Adeniji A (2009) Access to University Education in Nigeria Proceeding of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Congress of Nigeria Academy of Education.

**TABLE 1.2: DEMAND AND SUPPLY OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA 2002-2007**

Year	No. of Universities	Application	Admission	% Admitted	Total Unplaced
1998/1999	39	537,226	64,176	11.9%	473,050
2002/2003	53	994,381	51,843	5.2%	942,335
2003/2004	54	1,046,950	105,157	10%	941,793
2004/2005	56	841,878	122,492	14.5%	719,386
2005/2006	75	916,371	NA	-	-
2006/2007	76	806,089	123,626	15.3%	679,846

Ogungbenle and Edogiawerie (2016) specifically look at the budgetary allocations and development of tertiary education in Nigeria from 2000 – 2014 and concludes that inadequate funding deters growth in tertiary institutions. They state, "Unfortunately, the rapid expansion in the number of universities is not matched with qualified lecturers and increased funding, either by federal or state governments" (Ogungbenle and Edogiawerie, 2016:378).

While it is the statutory responsibility of the government to bear the cost of higher learning, “instability in the oil market and the monolithic nature of the Nigerian economy have conspired to make funding universities and other higher education decline sharply (Ogungbenle and Edogiawerie, 2016:380).

Since the colonial period, Nigerian students, artists, and intellectuals have gone beyond the country’s boundaries in search of better education. Given the challenges facing the Nigerian education system, this proves to be a difficult task now. Manzuma-Ndaaba, Harada, Romle, and Shamsudin’s (2016) evaluation of the push-pull factors involved in the move of Nigerian students to international institutions further highlights the sentiments of the scholars mentioned above. They argue, "The country’s ability to stay competitive in a knowledge-driven world depends on the development of the right skills at different levels of human endeavours” (Manzuma-Ndaaba et al., 2016). Manzuma-Ndaaba *et al.* (2016) identify some push factors, including the capacity challenges mentioned earlier; they also refer to the limited programme options and specialisation availability. This is also linked to the unavailability of lecturers, especially those who could guide and supervise post-graduate students.

Manzuma-Ndaaba *et al.* (2016:93) state, "Nigeria students in any part of the world, including Sub-Sahara African countries, maximised the advantage of studying abroad and never dreamed of returning home after studies, " at least not immediately”. They further argue that:

In 2009, around 3.7 million foreign tertiary education students were enrolled outside of their country of origin, up from 3.5 million in 2008 and 3.2 million in 2007. The number of foreign students increased from 2.1 to 3.7 million during the ten years from 2000 to 2009, representing an annual average growth of 6.6 percent per year (Manzuma-Ndaaba *et al.*, 2016:93).

To argue that Nigeria is on the verge of losing valuable resources for national development to internationalisation and brain drain would be an understatement given this worldwide trend and the mindset of Nigerian overseas students.

### **The influence of the church**

Burgess (2009) states that religion has been a highly neglected area in the study of migration which tends primarily to focus on the socio and economic determinants. Religious institutions and networks, he contends, are essential for organising the migration process. Important to note from Burgess' (2009) discussion is the view that African churches as social and religious support networks have been well documented; however, the area less focused on is its civic engagement in the wider society. Burgess (2009:257) maintains that "few studies of migrant religious institutions explore the way theology shapes the everyday lives of believers and informs them about their rights and responsibilities in the communities where they belong". Burgess highlights the shifts in social engagements which the RCCG has coupled with Britain's need for social cohesion, and the British government's recognition of "the potential of 'faith communities' to contribute to social capital and social welfare provision, especially in urban contexts".

He also highlighted the transnational connections used by churches in stating that:

Transnational connections have also influenced the RCCG in Britain, especially developments in Nigeria, where the church's social service arm has expanded in recent years. Pastors in Britain make regular visits to the Nigerian headquarters, and Enoch Adeboye, the General Overseer, travels to Britain to host the bi-annual Festival of Life and the annual ministers' conference. In the survey, 44% of the pastors said they have attended RCCG programmes in Nigeria since coming to Britain, and 99% have attended the Festival of Life (Burgess, 2009:255)

In terms of integration, identity and recognition, Burgess (2009) found that the RCCG has recognised the need to become integrated into British society if it is to have any influence. Of particular concern, Burgess (2009:262) states, "is whether or not it is desirable for migrants to integrate and whether successful integration necessarily involves assimilation". While the RCCG encourages integration, "its function as a social support network for Nigerian migrants, and its strong transnational ties, ensures that ethnic and cultural differences are maintained" (Burgess,2009:262). Worthy to note, however, even though many have sought to become multicultural organisations but have remained mainly Nigerian, many have renounced the stereotypical beliefs attached to African churches.

Burgess (2009) identifies economic deprivation as one of the critical factors hindering integration. He also highlights the ability of Pentecostalism to precipitate socio-economic mobility. Burgess uses the example of the Church for All Nations, which “claims that the recipients of its ‘Community Outreach Ministry’ are over 98% Caucasian and Jubilee House in Romford, the parish with the largest proportion of Caucasian members, was set up in 2002 specifically to cater for worshippers with special needs” (2009:264).

Nigeria is known to have some of the largest mega-churches worldwide and some of the wealthiest Pastors, including Shepherd Bushiri and the late T.B. Josua. Since colonialism's start, Christianity has grown to have a much more extensive influence on Nigerian politics. But this influence is not limited to Nigeria. Around the world, the establishment of Nigerian church denominations has sought to influence the social context of Nigerians abroad and locals. While the contemporary Nigerian state “continues to be entrapped by a ferocious web of identity politics” (Suleiman and Maiangwa, 2017:260), churches such as the Evangelists through its sub-Pentecostalism has been able to mobilise and craft their influence on local politics and abroad. Important to note is the aspect of “plants other”, which means that these churches are highly focused on expanding their nominations worldwide.

### **Outline of the study**

The remainder of this study is outlined as follows:

#### *Chapter 2: Literature Review*

The second chapter of this study provides an analysis of the available literature concerning the concepts of this study. These concepts are not just limited to xenophobia, which is the focus of this study but incorporate elements of migration (both internationally and in South Africa); it looks at the common link between migration and networks. To further elevate these discussions, this chapter also incorporates a discussion on new-generation scholarship on international migrant organisations and fight-back networks.

### *Chapter 3: Research Methodology*

The methodology used for this research is the focus of this chapter. It covers the route taken to show how local, national, and international networks might be used to combat xenophobia in South Africa. This qualitative study uses a case study approach, supplemented by a triangulation of data collection techniques that includes an analysis of the available materials and interviews with different people selected as potential sources of information on the subject. This chapter also discusses the study's scope, constraints, and ethical decisions made while collecting the data.

### *Chapter 4: Nigerians around the world*

Chapter 4 looks at the international directionality of Nigerian migrants. The first part of this chapter briefly examines the components of Nigerians in diaspora, considering the ethnic division among Nigerians in Nigeria. This chapter's second and primary feature looks at the *directionality and adaptation of migrants*, particularly in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK), focussing on the immigrant organisations available to Nigerians in these countries.

### *Chapter 5: Nigeria-South African relations and Nigerians in SA*

This chapter extends the previous one but focuses explicitly on the Nigerian migrant community in South Africa and the availability of Nigerian organisations in South Africa. I start by looking at the relations between Nigeria and South Africa, a brief historical perspective on the role of Nigerian in South Africa's apartheid and the subsequent deterioration of these relations and its impact on Nigerians in SA.

### *Chapter 6: Presentation and discussion of Interview data collected from Nigerian nationals*

This chapter presents the data collected from the 22 interviews with Nigerian citizens in South Africa. Herein I present the experience of Nigerians in South Africa, showcasing their determination to stay in the country despite their negative experiences. This chapter highlights the role of immigrant organisations in both the integration and cross-border engagements of Nigerian citizens in South Africa.

*Chapter 7: Discussions on findings related to documents study*

The discussions in Chapter 6 revolve around the three South African companies identified for this study, MTN, Multichoice and Shoprite. Results from the study of the documents related to these companies are presented and analysed in this chapter, which concerns the political economy of xenophobia and the ‘cost’ of counteraction.

*Chapter 8: Presentation and discussion of Interview data collected from relevant entities*

Chapter eight presents and discusses the data collected from two entities identified as relevant to this study. These entities were identified based on their significant role in the South African-Nigerian trade relations and their ability to shed light on the effects of xenophobia on South African companies in Nigeria.

*Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recommendations*

In its relevant context, this chapter discusses the emergent themes generated by this study’s primary and secondary data collection. In this chapter, I conclude the research and provide critical recommendations on using networks as an alternative measure in fighting against the continued violence faced by foreign nationals in South Africa. These recommendations could be of importance not just to foreign nationals themselves. Still, they could influence policymakers and other relevant stakeholders with a vital interest in curbing xenophobic violence.



## **CHAPTER TWO: INTERNATIONAL AND SOUTH AFRICAN DEBATES ON MIGRATION, NETWORKS, CAPITAL CROSS- BORDER EXPANSION AND ANTI-XENOPHOBIA**

### **Introduction**

This chapter critically explores international and South African views of migration and xenophobia, looking at the formation and use of networks among immigrants in the context of capital's regionalisation. Part one of this chapter examines international literature, emphasising the importance of immigrant organisations and their role in immigrants' multi-scalar activities, which the term "transnationalism" does not adequately convey. Part two of this chapter is focused on South African literature, highlighting that the typical focus has been on large-scale surveys of individuals and their attitudes to foreign nationals in examining xenophobia in South Africa and less on counteraction. Missing here is a focus on the extensive movement of SA capital into the continent and how this has complicated the nature of multi-scalar action in the context of xenophobia.

The conceptual framework, in part distilled from this literature review, plays an integral role in any research project. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the rationale behind this exercise is to force the researcher to be selective and to determine which variables are most important. By doing a conceptual framework, the researcher thus determines meaningful relationships between the ideas and facts and, consequently, "what information should be collected and analysed-at least at the onset" (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 18).

A conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, constructs or variables and the presumed relationship among them. Frameworks can be rudimentary or elaborative, theory-driven, or commonsensical, descriptive or casual (Miles and Huberman, 1994:18). The review of the academic debates on xenophobia in South Africa can be broken up into three waves since the country's democratic transition in 1994. I show the limits of each wave, and I propose an alternative multi-scalar relational conceptual framework drawing on the work of Portes, Escobar and Arana (2008) and others. This provides a better conceptual approach to understanding Nigerians in South Africa and South Africans in Nigeria and shows the relatedness of dimensions involved in

considering counteraction. I also introduce the political economy of transnationalism and xenophobia since this is neglected in the “cultural” and sociological literature. This is covered more substantively in chapter 6. One of the theoretical underpinnings of this chapter is found in the work of Portes and Rumbaut in their 2014 *Portrait of Immigrant America*. Herein Portes and Rumbaut (2014) believe that theories of push-pull and micro-macroeconomics are inadequate to account for the historical aspects of migration. Instead, they suggest the use of world systems and new economic theories, which they argue:

the first accounting for the broad macro-historical context producing major labour and professional flows and, the second, identifying the micro-dynamics that propel specific families in migrant-sending nations to adopt this strategy as a solution to the disruptions of imperfect capitalist development (Portes and Rumbaut, 2014:54).

## **International views of migration, networks and xenophobia**

### **Migration and network formation**

The modern history of international mobility (in the West) is discussed by Massey (1999) (2003), who argues from a political economy perspective that “international migration does not stem from a lack of development, but from development itself (1999:48). By dividing migration into four periods, the mercantile, the industrial, the period of limited migration and the post-industrial period, Massey (1999) shows how development during this time-space ushered in new characteristics of migration.

Primarily propelled by colonialism and economic growth, migration during the mercantile period (1500 to 1800) by Europeans (Massey, 1999) was forced: the compelled movement of around 10 million enslaved Africans to the Americas and Europe for plantation labour changed the racial and ethnic makeup of these two continents and ushered in a new world (dis)order (Cohen, 1995; Massey, 2003). Starting in the 19th century, the Industrial Age was characterised by large-scale white emigration from Europe’s global spread of capitalism and the need for raw materials and markets (Massey, 1999). Forty-eight million emigrants are estimated to have left Europe as “settlers” in the modern USA, Australia, and Africa. Britain, the first nation to experience economic development, had the most extensive European emigration overall.



While migration during the first two periods primarily focused on the exodus of Europeans to places like America and Africa, and the third period saw a dramatic slowdown, and a fourth phase of migration began in the 1960s, namely a global flow of third-world migrants to Europe and USA (Massey, 2003; Castles, 2004; Castles et al., 2013). Massey (2003:3) states that “immigration became truly global in scope, as the number and variety of both sending and receiving countries increased, and the global supply of immigrants shifted from Europe to developing countries of the Third World”. Castles (2004) argues that states became more interested in managing ‘their’ immigrants and emigrants. The focus also shifted to a broader exploration of identities from the viewpoint of hybridity and “transnationalism” due to widespread international migration and the growth of home town network associations inside host countries (Boyd, 1989; Faist, 2000; Portes et al., 2008). The current period arguably requires a new framework embedded in an understanding of the volatile nature of capital and its disruptive technological changes, which have significant implications for workforces and migrants. For example, in SA, Uber, a new service that has disrupted the sector, is staffed mainly by self-employed foreign African drivers.

Castles (2002) notes that twentieth-century approaches to migration had two models. Firstly, the settler model holds that immigrants are progressively absorbed into economic and social relationships, reconnect with their families, or form new ones, and eventually assimilate into the host society. Secondly, temporary migration in which temporary migrant workers maintain ties with their home country. Arguing for new ways of thinking about migratory processes, Castles (2002:1143) states that this is important to “understand new forms of mobility and incorporation, particularly the emergence of transnational communities, multiple identities and multi-layered citizenship”. Tilly highlights the evolving collective migrant processes and the subsequent move from mere assimilation by stating that:

Historians have seen continuous processes of collective transformation involving using old social networks and categories to produce new ones. Rather than individual uprooting, disorganization, and adjustment, collective action, and shared struggle. Rather than person-by-person striving, organized migration networks and labour markets. Rather than wholesale importation (and subsequent degradation) of cultural traits, collective fabrication of new cultures from old materials (Tilly, 1990:83-84)

## **The emergence and limits of transnational migration framework and multi-scalar activities**

The back-and-forth movement of migrants between “host” and “home” countries is a long-standing migration feature. However, the term “transnational” is new and is used to describe allegedly intense “multiple embedded” activities. Transnationalism, according to Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999:219), “are the high intensity of exchanges, the new modes of transacting, and the multiplication of activities that require cross-border travel and contacts on a sustainable basis”. Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (2017) argue that the novelty of transnationalism during the 1990s was the assertion that transnational activities did not constitute tangential aspects of a march towards assimilation but rather an alternative to it. Immigrants were thus bypassing assimilation by constructing a new adaptation model (social and economic) by living and participating in two or more communities in different countries (Portes *et al.*, 2017). The importance of transnationalism lies in the fact that modern immigrants rarely integrate completely into the host nation.

Leading the earlier scholarly debates on the ideas around globalization, limits of methodological nationalism, transnational migrants and “transnational space”, Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton made crucial contributions to the concept of interdependency of social formations, arguing that:

The word immigrant evokes images of permanent rupture, of the uprooted, the abandonment of old patterns and the painful learning of a new language and culture. Now, a new kind of migrating population is emerging, composed of those whose networks, activities and patterns of life encompass both their host and home societies. Their lives cut across national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social field (Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton, 1992:1).

In observing migrants from Haiti, the Eastern Caribbean and the Philippines living in New York, Schiller et al. (1992) found that their monetary contributions and yearly visits to their home countries indicate their trans-migrant status. They suggest that complex cultural and social flows across space produce hybrid citizens.

Whether the transnational activity is sending the barbecue to Haiti, dried fruits and fabric home to Trinidad so these goods can be prepared for a wedding in New York or using the special tax status of Balikbayan boxes to send expensive goods from the United States to families back home in the Philippines, the constant and various flow of such goods and activities have embedded within their relationships between

people. These social relations take meaning within the flow and fabric of daily life, as linkages between different societies are maintained, renewed, and reconstituted in the context of families, institutions, economic investments, business, and finance and political organizations and structures, including nation-states (Schiller et al., 1992: 11).

Yet transnational theory (Portes et al. 1999, 218) forms a “highly fragmented” area of study that “lacks both a well-defined theoretical framework and analytical rigour.” Different spatial analysis units combined with “diverse levels of abstraction” and diverse methodologies make it hard to pin down the theory of transnationalism. Transnational/hybridity literature is primarily anthropological and based on inadequate incorporation of political economy and scalar analysis.

In studying transnational social spaces, Thomas Faist (2006) argues that modern technology and mass communication development creates favourable conditions for transnationalism. However, he also mentions the opposite, the contribution of elements such as the “cultural discrimination and exclusion of migrants in immigration states, and changing emigration state policies which reach out to migrants living abroad for remittances” (Faist, 2006:4). Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt highlight the merit of studies on transnationalism, which is to call attention “to the multiple activities of common people across national borders, seeking to adapt and, if possible, overcome the constraints imposed upon them by an expanding capitalist economy” (2017:1489). Migrant networks or migrant social networks pave the way for migrants to move from their country of origin to the host country. Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouac, Pellegrino and Taylor (1994) and Poros (2011) highlight the interpersonal ties linking migrants to communities, families, friends, and organisations in the country of origin and the destination. Migrant social networks thus exist across the borders of two or more countries. Poros (2011) argues the importance of migrant social networks in affecting the lives of migrants, their families, and communities.

Olutayo (2013) makes the case that kinship networks are crucial for migration, stating that “the nature of these relationships is important since the reference to individuals and groups in the society is by kin linkages, often represented in the family name and other forms of identities, which must be protected”. Liu (2013) on the other hand states that extended-family networks and more importantly, friendship networks are often absent from the analysis. She argues that “networks based on kinship are not necessarily the most efficient or most salient

in shaping migration decisions ...weaker ties or friendship or acquaintance may be equally or more important than kinship ties” (Liu, 2013:1244).

Portes (1998:21-22) states that “social ties can bring about greater control over wayward behaviour and provide privileged access to resources”. Thus, according to Portes (1998), it is preferable to approach these multifold processes as social facts to be studied in all their complexities rather than examples of value.

Transnational migration theory has been seminal and has attracted much academic traction but has also been widely criticized. Portes (2001), for example, argues that earlier work on transnationalism contained both methodological shortcomings, which led to its overestimation and failure to distinguish between the activities conducted by individuals and those undertaken by major institutions. Emphasizing the significant role of immigrant organisations in studying transnationalism, Portes et al. (2017) argue this to be especially effective when the focus shifts to creating immigrant organisations that can influence events in the towns where immigrants originate. Against the assimilation and transnationalism thesis, we also find that resurgent nationalism, the rapid changes in capitalist labour markets, and its preference for flexible workers and xenophobia marginalize immigrants (Kerr and Durrheim 2013). Recently Glick Schiller (2018: 204), in the context of alarm around the “refugee crisis”, noted,

It becomes clear that increasingly the possibilities for migrants to live transnational lives through family visits, reunification, sending remittances, developing media, transnational politics and the formation of many types of non-governmental organisations including hometown organizations is becoming increasingly difficult.

Glick Schiller (2018: 206) notes that there has been a very different context since 2010.

Even those who have obtained citizenship are increasingly at risk for surveillance, harassment and even deportation. Therefore, we need an analysis that speaks more broadly about the conditions and multiscalar actors currently engaging in transformational movements. This means exploring within the same analytical framework anti-refugee, anti-immigrant, racist, Islamophobic, antisemitic, white Christian supremacy movements and anti-fascist/anticapitalist forms of resistance and socio-political organisation and action. Neoliberalism – an agenda to restructure the mechanisms of capital accumulation, eliminates Keynesian mechanisms of distribution and reorganises governance and daily common sense...

Smith and Guarnizo (1998:5) caution against the celebratory tone of transnational literature, arguing that there is a

tendency to conceive of transnationalism as something to celebrate, as an expression of a subversive popular resistance 'from below.' Cultural hybridity, multi-positional identities, border-crossing by marginal "others," and transnational business practices by migrant entrepreneurs are depicted as conscious and successful efforts by ordinary people to escape control and domination "from above" by capital and the state.

Few studies examine the defensive nature of networks. Issue networks are incredibly crucial. Faist (2006) highlights four transnationalism spaces essential for this study, "small groups, particularly kinship systems; issue networks; transnational communities and transnational organisations". These can be interpreted as follows:

**Small Groups** include households and their broader immediate relations, contributing to a common 'household'. The sense of belonging, loyalty, and 'common home' formalize transboundary relations.

**Issue networks-** Transnational issue networks are those between individuals and organisations who share information towards a common goal. Faist (2006:4) highlights that "Linkage patterns may concatenate into advocacy networks, business networks, or scientists' networks", thus creating a common voice for those who may not find satisfaction in individual expression. Speaking about the successes of these networks, Faist (2006) explicitly highlights their contribution to placing issues such as discrimination on the global agenda. This is particularly important in the context of anti-xenophobic counteraction or explicit political campaigns.

**Transnational Communities-** When geographical proximity no longer becomes a criterion for group formation, collective communities can develop anywhere. For Faist (2006:5), these communities "comprise dense and continuous sets of social and symbolic ties, characterised by a high degree of intimacy, emotional depth, moral obligation and sometimes even social cohesion".

***Transnational Organisations-*** Transnational organisations typically evolve from the three spaces mentioned above. The formalization of social ties and the formal coordination of groups, often extending across boundaries, are depicted in transnational organisations. Faist (2006:5) states that “An early type of transnational organisation – interstate non-governmental organisations (INGOs) – developed out of issue networks like the Red Cross, Amnesty International and Greenpeace”. The influence of transnational organisations extends far and wide, and their ability for mass mobilization must be recognised. But as Smith and Guarnizo, (1998:6) argue “transnational practices and discourses can be used for capital accumulation quite as effectively as to contest hegemonic narratives of race, ethnicity, class, and nation”.

In a 2008 study of transnationalism, Portes, Escobar and Arana were motivated by concerns about how migrant organisations, especially those of a transnational character, may “retard or prevent political integration among recent migrants to the United States” (Portes et al. 2008:1056). Portes et al. (2008:1057) state, "Individual immigrants seldom enter .... politics on their account. Instead, they do so collectively in response to mobilizations organized by activists within their own communities or external ones seeking to address wrongs or achieve various goals". The same can be said about any social issues immigrants get involved in; these are not done on their own but as a collective, usually arranged through their local or transnational networks.

Secondly, it is essential to keep in mind, and as noted earlier, not all immigrants are transnationals or “post-nationalists”. Portes et al. (2008:1057) found that those who can be classified as transnationals represent a minority of their respective communities and that they are usually better educated and more established members. The third reason revolves around the idea that “ethnic and transnational politics may not be incompatible but may reinforce each other” (Portes et al., 2008:1058).

Considering that not all immigrants are inherently transnational, a significant number actively participate in migrant organisations/domestic non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These structured networks, as highlighted by Keck and Sikkink (1999), are progressively engaging in international politics. Referring to the importance of also considering social movement theory, they argue that:

social movement theory has increasingly focused on the interaction between social–structural conditions and action, on the social context of mobilization, and on the transformation of meanings among activists and among mass publics that make people believe they can have an impact on an issue (Keck and Sikkink, 1999:91) While Keck and Sikkink (1999) primarily focus on transnational advocacy networks, they underscore the vital contribution of NGOs, or in this case, migrant organisations; asserting that "international and domestic nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) play a central role in most advocacy networks, usually initiating actions and pressuring more powerful actors to take positions. NGOs introduce new ideas, provide information, and lobby for policy changes" (Keck and Sikkink, 1999:92). An essential observation made by these scholars is the perspective that many studies on NGOs have overlooked their interactions with the state and other actors.

Emphasising the significance of networks and organisations, Keck and Sikkink (1999) assert that, for less influential actors, networks offer access, leverage, and information that would be otherwise unavailable to them. They discussed four strategies employed by networks to exert influence. The first involves *information politics*, the rapid dissemination of information by networks. The second pertains to *symbolic politics*, where networks target a distant audience or employ stories and symbols to convey meaning. The third strategy is *leverage politics*, entailing the invocation of more powerful actors, while the fourth is *accountability politics*, compelling more influential actors to adhere to previously endorsed principles.

Based on the above caveats, the theoretical framework for this study is derived from international literature, which has its focus on integration and the formation of transnational networks, which according to the Portes(ian) thinking, should be studied in all their complexities and not necessarily be used as examples of value, a theme sorely lacking in South African literature (Crush and McDonald, 2000). This study avoids Putnam’s framework of social capital (widely used in SA) since his research was found to be “weak and contingent on various individual and contextual factors” (Portes and Vickstrom, 2011:463). Portes and Vickstrom (2011) highlight several problems with the theory of social capital, including Putnam’s dismissal of the existence of causal forces in a study related to the membership in the southern Confederacy, which accounts for the previously observed effect of the black population. Putnam thus does not make provision for changing variables and changing circumstances.

Portes and Vickstrom (2011:469) note Putnam's remarks on these as:

Putnam noted in passing the existence of these causal forces but dismissed them with the comment that "whether patterns of immigration and slavery provide the sole explanation for contemporary differences in levels of social capital is an issue that deserves more concerted attention than I can devote to it here

Portes and Vickstrom (2011:472) further note that:

Putnam and his followers have been raising the alarm of governments about the threat posed by migration-driven diversity. However, as seen above, a substantial number of studies suggest that it is not diversity per se but unequal diversity that makes a difference. According to these studies, when, by reason of spatial propinquity or lessened economic inequality, different ethnic groups come to interact more with one another, indicators of civics or trust do not decline.

They also note the inconsistencies in the studies done by the followers of Putnam's work:

These "nuanced and inconsistent" findings (Sturgis & Smith 2010, p. 4) point to a variety of conceptual and methodological gaps in this research field, including the inconsistent conceptualization and operationalization of the core concepts of social capital, cohesion, and diversity; the multitude of levels of analysis; and the lack of sufficient attention to methodological issues of endogeneity and clustering.

### **International literature on xenophobia and racism**

The literature on transnationalism/post-nationalism does not appear to link with discussions of racism, genocide, rising nationalism and xenophobia. Racist attitudes and the actions that result from these are not a modern phenomenon. Fredrickson (2015), well known for his work on racism and white supremacy, speaks to the historical aspects of racism, explicitly discussing Adolf Hitler's racist theories of "national socialism" used to justify the genocidal treatment of Jewish people (Fredrickson, 2015). Mamdani (2001a) has written extensively about colonial genocide by settlers and "non-revolutionary violence", by which he means a kind of violence in which different groups of more or less equally impoverished and disempowered people are pitted against each other. Fanon (2004) called such people the wretched of the earth. When the wretched of the earth is divided into contending groups that take it out on one another, that violence is non-revolutionary.



Mamdani (2001b:1) states, “When the battle lines are not defined by wealth and poverty, but by a difference that is not economic, such as religion or ethnicity or race, the violence it gives rise to is non-revolutionary”. Drawing parallels between racism and xenophobia, Baker, Cañarte and Day (2018) argue that racism and xenophobia are two distinct social phenomena, but many similarities exist. Highlighting these similarities, Baker, Cañarte and Day (2018:4) assert that:

Like racism, xenophobic beliefs are stereotyped understandings of particular categories of people based on erroneous inference biases, which are used as shortcuts for quickly reading daily interactions. Also, like racism, “essentialism” is a primary tool for implementing exclusion, as beliefs about perceived essential differences provide the foundation for dehumanization and demonization.

While the holocaust, in which 6 million Jewish people were murdered in Europe between 1941 and 1945, could be viewed as the first major xenophobic event, Fredrickson (2015) argues that racism climaxed in the twentieth century with the beginning of what he terms “overtly-racists regimes”. African Americans were reduced to the lowest-caste status in the American South, where segregation laws, impositions on the voting rights of blacks and the racist propaganda which reduced black males to ravening beasts served to justify the practice of lynching (Fredrickson, 2015).

Though the challenges related to racism and xenophobia affect large segments of the world’s population, their realities rarely find their way into mainstream discussions on development (Harcourt, 2009). Cross-border migration has always existed and increased over time in all nations. In recent years, there has been a sharp rise in refugee and asylum-seeking migration and anti-immigrant sentiment. Europe especially has faced a massive refugee crisis, with some 1.3 million asylum applications received in 2015 alone (Connor, 2016). These numbers exclude the thousands of refugees who tried to cross the European border illegally, leading to the deaths of thousands. The United National Refugees have put this number at a staggering 2510 refugees for 2016 compared to the 1855 refugees who died in 2015 (Safdar and Strickland, 2016). A survey done by the Pew Research Centre conducted across 10 EU member-states indicates that most people in these countries have disapproved of how the EU has handled the number of refugees entering Europe, believing that refugees would not only pose a terrorist threat but that they would be an economic burden, that they would take jobs and social benefits (Connor, 2016).

The recent (2021) figures on the number of forcibly displaced people around the world released by The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) place the number of forcibly displaced people at 89.3 million, refugees make up 21.1 million under the mandate of the UNHCR, and 4.6 million of total people are asylum seekers (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2022). Speaking to the displacement of Nigerians, the report indicates that “In Nigeria, fighting continued between government forces and non-state armed groups, with several hundred thousand people newly displaced during 2021” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2022). West and Central Africa remain one of the UNHCR’s top areas of concern since the ongoing conflict displaces millions yearly, with over 10 million people displaced in this region by December 2022.

Immigration-related problems and hostility toward foreigners are not just problems in Europe and Africa. An article by Safdar and Strickland (2016) provides a brief glimpse of the refugee migration scene around the world as follows:

- Image of a drowned Syrian toddler makes headlines around the globe, Balkan route permanently closed, trapping thousands of asylum seekers in Greece
- Kenya announces the closure of Dadaab, the world’s largest refugee camp
- Britain voted to leave the European Union, thanks in large measure to a campaign run by the anti-immigration United Kingdom Independence Party, which stoked fears over incoming refugees
- Refugee children sexually assaulted in Australia's Nauru prison camp
- 100 000 Afghan refugees were deported from Pakistan in September
- EU declaration to deport Afghan refugees from Europe

Safdar and Strickland dubbed 2016 “The year the world stopped caring about refugees” and looking at the above brief; it is evident that refugees and asylum seekers worldwide are facing a crisis. The international turmoil facing refugees continues to be a significant problem. Marine Le Pen seems to have made anti-immigration policies the cornerstone of her political projects in France. Much like the USA, President Donald Trump, like many others, believes that “politically, the right and even the Centre in each country constructs immigration as a blank slate on which to project national anxieties by painting immigrants as threats to national security, burdens on social programs, and polluting cultural identity” (Cleveland, 2018). Militarised border control, detainment, and deportation of immigrants are

well known in the two countries. In Germany, on the other hand, Chancellor Angela Merkel has received severe pressure from German Nationals for her 'soft approach' to immigration policies. It is believed that Merkel especially came under pressure for "Germany's "Willkommenskultur" programme, which welcomed around 1 million migrants and refugees to Germany (McAuley and Noack, 2018).

The African continent also has a history of xenophobic violence alongside attempts at Pan-Africanism. Sebola and Tsheola (2015: iii) state:

Post-colonialism, if it was anything real, was supposed to be preoccupied with the Pan-Africanism vision of revaluation of African cultures, respect for the human rights of all people on the continent, and intensified continental cooperation for sustainable development, peace, security and stability. Instead, Africa has continued to be gripped by internal strife, insecurities and power inequities that manifest along with the existing geopolitical entities defined through the socio-political boundaries. Notwithstanding the rejection of the latter's bordering of the nation-states as artificial, African states have continued to order and re-territorialize sovereignty in ways that have accentuated colonially inspired cultural divides, amounting to "new racism" on the continent.

In his panoramic historical discourse on xenophobia, Osuntokun (2008) provide several examples from the African continent, starting with what could perhaps be viewed as the most extensive genocidal campaign in which the Hutus killed a million Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994. He also refers to the ethnic cleansing by Janjaweed Arab militia, which Khartoum supports, the internal displacement of close to three million people of African descent in Darfur, and the ongoing threat facing Arabs from Niger and Chad. Osuntokun (2008) significantly distinguishes between xenophobia sponsored by the state, using the example of the expulsion of white farmers from their lands in 2000, and xenophobia where the absence of any state presence fueling the situation as is happening in the ongoing civil war in Congo.

Though South Africa has become the poster child for xenophobic violence on the African continent, the view of 'foreigners as a burden on state resources', 'foreigners as criminals', discrimination and the mass deportation of foreigners are long-standing traditions on the African continent. Nigeria is no exception to the rule, having "expelled over 2 million foreigners from the country in 1983" due to declining economic conditions. While more than one million of those expelled hailed from Ghana, the second wave of expulsions occurred in 1985, which saw a further 300 000 Ghanaians deported from Nigeria (Adeola, 2015).

Adeola (2015), on the other hand, highlights the introduction of the Aliens Compliance Order by Ghanaian Prime Minister Kofi Busia in 1969, which sought to expel ‘undocumented aliens’, and the expulsion of thousands of Asians from Uganda in 1972 as a prime example of the history of xenophobia on the African continent.

## **South African literature on migration, networks and xenophobia**

### **The extent and Character of Migration**

Crush (2000) makes a critical comment when he says South Africa’s long history of cross-border migration has faded from public view. His views about public media suffering from historical attention deficit disorder are especially fitting. Notable scholarship on Southern African labour migrations includes Van Onselen (1976), Murray (1981), Jeeves (1985), Crush and James (1991), Coplan (1994), Harries(1994) and Cockerton (1997). The South African public, the Government and the media often create the impression that immigration to South Africa is a new occurrence.

Even though SA has become a settler country, in the past, migrants mainly came as labourers rather than making permanent homes. Before European settlers and colonizers arrived, there was a significant influx of labour into the country, particularly from neighbouring countries like Mozambique, Botswana, and Lesotho. Crush (2002:14) contends that “migrants from present-day Mozambique, Malawi, Lesotho and Zimbabwe came to work in the sugar cane fields of Natal and the diamond mines of Kimberley from the 1840s onwards, long before South Africa itself came into existence”.

The discovery of diamonds and gold in the 1880s and the accompanying industrialisation period lured thousands of migrant workers to the South African mines, greatly enhancing contract mine labour (Wentzel and Tlabela, 2006). Crush highlights how contract mine labour contributed to South Africa's development by stating, “Within 20 years, Johannesburg had grown into a city of more than 200 000 people. Many were temporary residents from areas as far as Central Africa” (2002:14). Thompson (2014) also asserts that:

Johannesburg, in the Witwatersrand, in the Transvaal, drew people from as far north as modern Tanzania and people of European descent from North America, Australia, continental Europe and particularly, Great Britain’, and grew to contain the largest concentration of people in the entire region.

The discovery of diamonds and gold had not only meant an enhancement of the mining workforce, but it also created a need for other elements such as railroads, commercial farms, and constructions of other facilities. Highlighting the relevance of labour migration for current policy developments, Crush, Williams and Peberdy (2005:5) state that “The industrial development of some countries in the region was only made possible by the use of labour from other countries. This fact is not usually acknowledged by governments calling for an end to labour migration”.

According to Wentzel and Tlabela (2006), the total number of Africans working in South African gold mines rose from 14 000 to 97 000 between 1890 and 1899. Crush (2002) states that the number of Mozambicans in SA in 1920 was about 80 000, more than the total number of South Africans. Although this number of migrant workers in SA stood at around 260 000 by 1970, migrant workers were not allowed to take up permanent residency and had to return to their home countries when their contracts expired (Crush, 2000; Crush, Williams and Peberdy, 2005).

The migration history of SA is intertwined with that of the continent and, more significantly, with that of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) nations. In his study on the *underdevelopment and dependence of black Africa*, Samir Amin refers to this region as the “Africa of Labour Reserves” Amin (1972:504). Amin notes that the colonialists, in their quest to obtain cheap exports, could only do so by “exploiting cheap labour and natural resources, by wasting and stealing them” (Amin, 1972: 518). In creating space for vast labour migration, colonialists, according to Amin:

forced the traditional societies to be suppliers of temporary or permanent migrants on a vast scale, thus providing a cheap proletariat for the European mines and farms and later for the manufacturing industries of South Africa, Rhodesia and Kenya

Significant changes in migration patterns may be observed throughout the region in the following decades. According to Crush et al. (2005), the end of South Africa's apartheid, its accession to the SADC, and the new opportunities significantly impacted migratory trends. Enhanced regional integration brought about greater mobility but also more significant challenges. According to Crush et al. (2005), the majority of legal cross-border migrants remain circular migrants, while (Sichone, 2020) also argues that “the desire to leave home has not produced the apocalyptic floods of humanity that alarmist governments and xenophobes around the world complain about”. Regarding this legal migration, Crush et al.

(2005) believe SA shifted from having a pro-active immigration policy only to turn its back on these after 1994.

The decline in labour migration had decreased the number of foreign labourers in South Africa's mines, but attention soon shifted to the large number of undocumented foreign nationals entering the country. SA is not the only one, though; many countries in the region have come to view in-migration as a threat to the job security of locals. Often migrants are viewed as carriers of disease and causes of social ills (Crush et al., 2005).

Estimates of the number of undocumented migrants in SA, however, have often been exaggerated and without basis (Crush et al., 2005; Sichone, 2020). It is said that South Africans believe 25 percent of the population to be foreign, whilst Crush et al. (2005) record this figure to be closer to 3-5 percent. South Africa's Stats SA found that the number of foreign-born people in South Africa at around 2,2 million (4,2%) during the 2011 census and 1,6 million (2,8%) in the 2016 community survey (Stats SA). Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) are another area high on the debate. Forced migration attributed to the civil war, poverty, declining economies, famine, and considerable hardships across many of the region's countries continues to escalate the number of refugees and IDPs. During the early 1990s, Mozambique's civil war, drought and ongoing famine resulted in about 350 000 refugees fleeing to South Africa.

Crush et al. (2005:13) state, "Between 1994 and 2001, 64,000 applications were made for refugee status in SA. Foremost amongst these were applicants from Zaire/DRC (7,700), Angola (6,900), Somalia (5,900), Nigeria (5,300), Senegal (4,500), Ethiopia (3,200) and Burundi (2,000) from Africa and India (6,400), Pakistan (5,300) and Bangladesh (1,300) from Asia". SA thus became a destination not only for those from the African continent but its new-found democratic dispensation, glimmering with hope and new opportunities, allowed it to become a destination for people worldwide. Crush et al. (2005) thus highlighted the importance of migration to the Southern African region, identifying the limited national and regional policies which have impacted migration, the pro-poor policies of the government, the region, and the continent.

## **Shifting the focus – migration and xenophobia, who is to blame?**

One of the most significant challenges related to the mass migration of people worldwide, and in Southern Africa, has been the increasing xenophobic tendencies towards immigrants. Since the start of South Africa's democratic state in 1994, the 'non-racialised' policies adopted by the post-apartheid Government have allowed millions of foreign nationals to enter the country, legally or illegally. Black African foreign nationals, in particular, no longer only hail from labour-sending countries such as Lesotho and Mozambique but include those from all over the African continent. According to Crush and McDonald (2000), these new policies have made the country a new destination for African asylum-seekers, long-distance traders, entrepreneurs, students, and professionals. The most notable shift in post-apartheid SA is thus the volume and diversity of human traffic entering SA (Crush and McDonald, 2000:4). According to Posel (2004), post-apartheid migration research has shifted from labour migrants to immigration and permanent migration.

One of the striking elements of post-apartheid migration literature is its focus on anti-immigrant sentiments, an ironic feature of the post-apartheid 'rainbow nation'. Scholars worldwide and in South Africa have been investigating and monitoring trends of xenophobia in SA since before the large-scale attacks in 2008 (Morris, 1998; Crush, 2000; Danso and McDonald, 2001; Harris, 2001; Landau et al., 2005). However, the magnitude of the attacks in 2008 shifted the questions scholars posed from why South Africans are antagonistic towards immigrants to what the causes are and who is to blame.

Crush and Ramachandran (2014) divide the debates on South Africa's xenophobia into denialism, minimalism, and realism. Denialists of xenophobia, they say, outright deny the role of xenophobia in the violence against African foreign nationals (Crush and Ramachandran, 2014). These views are commonly associated with the South African Government, which blames the violence on acts of criminality. Still, scholars such as Charman and Piper (2012) also hold them, who argue that the violence against African foreign nationals is not necessarily driven by anti-foreigner sentiments but rather the competition for economic resources and criminality.

According to Crush and Ramachandran (2014), Xenophobic minimalists are like denialists in the fact that they shift blame to the state's failure to fulfil its obligations, specifically to guard its borders. Arguing against these views, Crush and Ramachandran (2014:1) state, "The post-apartheid state has intensified border and immigration enforcement and, even at the height of the 2008 violence, officials were deporting displaced victims they claimed had entered South Africa illegally". Xenophobia minimalism, they argue though, has another element in which xenophobia is argued to be a signifier of a more profound social crisis related to things such as competition for jobs, resources, and services, related to the state's inability to redistribute wealth and effect transformation (Crush and Ramachandran, 2014).

They argue that xenophobic realism is the only way to contend this concept in SA fully; Crush and Ramachandran (2014:3) state that "xenophobia is a pervasive phenomenon throughout South African society and that there is a predisposition to resort to violence on the part of a considerable number of South Africans". For this reason, I divide the literature in this section into schools to demonstrate how the topic of xenophobia in SA has developed since 1994. The central argument posed here shares the sentiments of Uwimpuhwe and Ruiters (2018), who argue that earlier literature, before the 2008 xenophobic attacks, primarily focused on individualism, neglecting the areas of collectivity and community. Uwimpuhwe and Ruiters (2018:2) specifically mention that "Crush and McDonald (2002:14–15) explicitly reject a focus on migrant community organisations in favour of a study of households and individuals since, as they argue- the idea of community has little analytical value" and the unit of analysis for South African migration studies is the household". Instead, the latest focus is on International Migrant organisations, immigrant collective agency and the transnationalism and ties that sustain migration. It includes the evolvment of ethnic enclaves, resistance to xenophobia and the contestation of social and economic spaces, as discussed by Pineteh (2018), highlighting that, methodologically, the focus on organisations is a crucial missing element.

### **Blame South Africans as a whole**

One of the main features of the earlier South African literature on xenophobia revolves around the attitudes of South Africans and the state towards foreign nationals. Literature produced since 1994 sought to understand why South Africans have become antagonistic towards foreign nationals, a stark contradiction to South Africa's 'rainbow nation', political ideas and, more importantly, its Constitution. The results of the large-scale surveys of



individuals conducted by the Human Research Council (HSRC) and the South African Migration Project (SAMP) since 1994 became the centre of the debates to explain why South Africans have taken this stance and why they are becoming xenophobic.

Speaking to the surveys conducted by the HSRC, Crush (2001:107) states that:

The first systematic attempt to gauge the temperature of public attitudes in South Africa was in October 1994 when the state-funded Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) included questions on immigration in an Omnibus survey of 2,200 South Africans. Follow-up surveys at regular intervals allowed the HSRC to track changing attitudes and to conclude, for example, that between 1994 and 1995, there was a considerable growth in negative sentiments, in other words, xenophobia, towards illegals/immigrants/aliens.'

Similarly, surveys produced by SAMP sought to highlight the negative perceptions of South Africans towards immigrants. According to these results, in 1998, "South Africans, on the whole, carry strong anti-immigration sentiments, with fully 25% of the population calling for a complete ban on migration into the country and approximately half (45% in 1997 and 53% in 1998) calling for a "strict limit on the number of foreigners allowed into the country" (Danso and McDonald, 2000:4). These results were not attached to any specific racial or class composition in South Africa but were rather held but citizens across the spectrum. Speaking to this widely held perceptions, Mattes Taylor, McDonald, Poore and Richmond (1999), who drew on the 1997 SAMP surveys, found that "All South Africans appear to have the same stereotypical image of Southern Africans, citing job loss, crime and disease as the negative consequences they fear from immigrants living in the country" (Mattes et al., 1999:2). Amongst the attitudinal perspectives of South Africans highlighted in Mattes et al. (1999), is that South Africans favour stricter immigration policies and half of South Africans favour deportation policies. What they ultimately conclude, is these negative perceptions are widespread amongst ALL South Africans.

One of the major theories that sought to explain why South Africans are intolerable of differences between foreign nationals emerged in the Isolation hypothesis (Morris, 1998; Handmaker and Parsley, 2001; Harris, 2002). This is wrapped around the idea that the intolerance displayed by South Africans is a direct result of its seclusion from the international community and the belief that South Africans find the differences between themselves and foreigners, the 'unknown', to be threatening. Handmaker and Parsley

(2001:45) contend that “South Africa’s past exclusion from the international community has resulted in the inability to tolerate and accommodate difference”.

There were also arguments around human rights issues. Landau, Ramjathan-Keogh, and Singh (2005) argue for the consideration of foreign nationals in policy development, stating that “For SA to achieve its promises of human rights, tolerance, and prosperity, it must develop norms, laws, and practices that can capitalise on the contributions of foreigners to the country; promote the country’s reputation abroad; and protect the rights, security, and livelihoods of all of South Africa’s residents” (2005:2). Debates around constitutional and legislative issues regarding foreign nationals often view South Africa’s legislation around immigrants to be exclusionary and evident of a draconian state. Crush (2000) articulates that in SA, there is little support for migrant rights and that there has been no significant change in the legal protection of immigrants. According to Crush (2000:104), “New policy proposals and legislation now under consideration have been criticized by many as entrenching the potential for human rights abuse. In marked contrast to the rights-based focus of much post-apartheid transformation, few in the new government openly support migrant rights”. Shining a spotlight on the struggle for equal migrant rights, Crush (2000:117) states that:

The struggle to articulate a rights-based culture for migrants has pitted NGOs, unions and the South African Human Rights Commission against employers, the Department of Home Affairs and other state organs. The South African Human Rights Commission has received generous publicity and high-level political endorsement for its anti-racism campaign. By contrast, its efforts to counter xenophobia and publicize the poor treatment of migrants by employers, citizens and the state have not met with anything like the same enthusiasm from the government, the media or civil society.

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Amongst the arguments produced is the view that xenophobia should not be seen as a new discourse in SA (Harris, 2002; Valji, 2003). Examining the rise of violent xenophobia argues that xenophobia is but a new discourse of racism centered around creating a ‘new South Africa’ focused on nation-building and new forms of identity in which foreign nationals have no part. Valji (2003:no page number) links violent xenophobia in SA with ‘new forms of identity-based violence’ and states, “The rise of popular sentiments of intolerance amongst all sectors of South African society has occurred over a relatively short time period”. This is also what Harris (2002) argues, that xenophobia should not be classified as a pathology limited to a specific section of South Africans. She argues that emerging along the new discourse in SA

is a reproduction of identity, racism and violence in which foreigners have become the new target (Harris, 2002). The problem with these types of hypotheses though is the fact that these 'intolerances' appear to be directed only towards black African foreign nationals.

In response, theories based on the bio-cultural hypothesis sought to explain why only black African foreign nationals became targeted and its asymmetrical application of xenophobia to black African foreign nationals. According to this view, the features of black African foreign nationals, which are different from those of South Africans and Europeans, have made them easily identifiable (Morris, 1998; Tshetikere, 1999). Other elements include language, accent, and clothing, which are distinguishing features. While this hypothesis can be directly applied to the South African case, this study shares the sentiments of Harris (2002), Neocosmos (2010) and Bekker, Eigelaar-Meets, Eva and Pool (2008) in saying that these explanations are inadequate, that this is not a good enough reason to explain why it is only African foreign nationals who are attacked, and why the attacks are taking place.

### **Blame black South Africans**

Though scholars such as Mattes, Taylor, McDonald, Poore and Richmond (1999) and Crush (2008) contend that xenophobic attitudes are widespread amongst South Africans, a second group of theories sought to explain, in particular, black South African's reactions and role concerning black African foreign nationals as afro-phobia and rooted in black politics and psychology. Morris (1998) describes the antagonism and prejudice experienced by Congolese and Nigerian citizens, particularly at the hands of black South Africans. Valji (2003) also concedes that, despite widespread intolerance, black South Africans have carried out the most violent attacks.

Essentially what emerged amongst scholars such as Tshitereke (1999) and Harris (2002) was the idea that xenophobia should be blamed on unequal development and a failing economy. These material explanations contend that poor, primarily black South Africans living in townships and other deprived areas view foreigners as competitors in the search for jobs, access to housing, healthcare and education, elements to which they feel entitled. Tshitereke (1999) vividly states, "People are more conscious of their deprivation than ever before. The future is uncertain, and a sense of urgency accompanies optimism in redistributing scarce resources. This is the ideal situation for xenophobia to take root and flourish". These suggestions align with the theories of relative deprivation, which suggests that African foreign nationals seem to be succeeding.

Antagonism towards foreign nationals is not limited to verbal utterances and attitudes, though, according to Crush (2001), attacks on foreign nationals became more frequent in several cities during 1996. He states, “These culminated in 1998 with the death of three foreign citizens on a moving train at the hands of a group of South Africans returning from a rally of the unemployed in Pretoria” (Crush, 2001:107). Views shared by Morris (1998), Harris (2001) and Landau, Ramjathan-Keogh and Singh (2005), amongst others, highlights that black African foreign nationals, in particular, came to be viewed as job stealers, disease carriers, and burdens to the state.

### **Blame the media, politicians and state institutions**

The media, black politicians and state institutions became a powerful feature in South Africa’s literature on xenophobia. While the media is not blamed outright for inciting violence, this study agrees with Danso & McDonald (2000, 2001) and Valji (2003) who believe that the negative portrayal of African foreign nationals in the media often adds to the hostility and brutality towards African foreign nationals. In their attempt to show this, Danso and McDonald analysed “a total of 1200 migration-related articles from all English-language newspapers and wire services in South Africa from 1994 to 1998” (Danso and McDonald, 2000:17). Found in their analysis, the stories covered are largely anti-immigrant and unanalytical, arguing that “A large proportion of the articles also reproduce racial and national stereotypes about migrants from other African countries, depicting —for example — Mozambicans as car thieves and Nigerians as drug smugglers” (Danso and McDonald, 2000:1).

I also agree with Harris (2002) who contends that the generalisation and stereotyping of African nationals, primarily as illegals from war-torn, poverty-stricken African countries in mainstream media, fuels hostility. Media, she argues, divorces South Africa from the rest of the continent, specifically the ‘troubled north’ (Harris, 2002). Interestingly, in 2010, Nyamnjoh found that media influence is no longer subjected only to negative stereotyping headlines but implants rather ideas of culture and identity. Speaking to the media’s efforts of tracing and belonging, Nyamnjoh (2010:58) states that “Xenophobia (whether racially or ethnically inspired) is indicative of such problematic and obsessive tendencies and confine belonging and identity in terms of cultural differences, with little regard to the reality of interconnections and ongoing relationships forged across communities by individuals and navigators and negotiators of various identity margins”.

Nyamnjoh's (2010) view that the 'frozen view of identity and cultures' are in no way indicative of real-life experiences can be seen in the work of Sichone (2020) who argues that "one of the conclusions that South Africans who befriend foreigners reach is that they are not so different after all". Studying the encounters between migrants and South Africans, specifically women in Cape Town, Sichone (2020) highlights how migrants can move in and out of different cultural settings while speaking to the importance of local-level cosmopolitanism; she states that "for the dollar a day multitudes ultimate security lies in Ubuntu" (Sichone, 2020:33).

Peberdy (2001) speaks truth to power when she put forth the view that the recreation of SA as an inclusive democracy in 1994 proved to be paradoxical in relation to the development of an exclusionary immigration policy. Black politicians' direct, indirect, and utterances were scrutinised. According to Nyamnjoh (2007:74), the immigration services, the state, the media and the general public have been overly critical of black migrants from the rest of Africa while remaining extremely generous towards white migrants from Europe, often regardless of the potential benefits or burdens of the migrants in question to the host country. This criticism of black immigrants is evident in the rise of anti-immigrant vigilante groups such as Operation Dudula, which often calls for the expulsion of black African foreign nationals from South Africa. Thus, in SA, there is a racialized split of immigrants which ensures that non-African migrants may be accorded a status of respect and admiration. At the same time, Africans are vilified as Makwerekwere (Nyamnjoh, 2007).

Peberdy (2001) argues that the measures undertaken by the 'new democratic government' to shape national identity and the development of immigration policy are indicative of draconian measures, which she argues poses a challenge to the human rights of non-citizens. Similarly, Vale (2002) argues that the security technique of the post-apartheid South African state is but a reinforcement and reinvention of the old, built around the idea that migration to South Africa poses a threat to national security.

Nyamnjoh (2014) argues that South African law facilitates violence against those deemed lawful or official rights bearers. He states that:

Within the framework of hierarchies among nationals as insiders and between nationals and non-South Africans, even where citizenship is granted to mobile outsiders, the emphasis in official documentation on 'original country of birth' means that naturalised citizens are always haunted by the potential inferiority of 'legal

citizenship' to 'citizenship by birth' as claims of authentic belonging as 'sons and daughters' of the soil – autochthons – can always be invoked to exclude those who belong only by force of the law (Nyamjoh, 2014:398).

Specifically speaking to the utterances of politicians, Peberdy highlights the language of exclusion used by politicians as early as 1995:

The [migration situation in South Africa] has been further aggravated by the influx of illegal aliens from the neighbouring countries, particularly where conditions of economic deprivation and depression occur and who are consequently prepared to work for meagre wages. With whatever empathy and understanding one may judge the underlying reasons and motivation why people are compelled to leave their fatherland and to seek refuge here, the interests of the RSA and her citizens and legal residents must be our first and foremost consideration. – (Mangosuthu Buthelezi, South African Minister of Home Affairs, 1995.1- Cited in Peberdy, 2001:15)

Debates on xenophobia intensified following the large-scale xenophobic attacks against black African foreign nationals around May 2008, which propelled SA into the spotlight globally. Isolated incidents starting in Alexandra, Johannesburg, spread to several cities, specifically informal settlements across South Africa, including Cape Town and Durban. According to Misago, Landau and Monson (2009:2), “62 people, including 21 South Africans, were dead; at least 670 wounded; dozens of women raped, and at least 100 000 persons displaced, and property worth of millions of Rand looted, destroyed or seized by local residents and leaders”.

The absence of local leadership and the influence of political leaders in fueling xenophobia became instrumental. Scholars such as Dodson (2010) and Neocosmos (2010), blame nationalist politicians. Dodson (2010:7) critically states, "Rather than a lack of political leadership, this might better be seen as all too strong and influential political leadership, but in quite the opposite direction to that which one might expect of a rights-respecting, democratic state". Statements made by political leaders have been criticized for their effect in fueling xenophobia. According to Neocosmos (2010), some of these statements include the suggestion by political leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi in 1998 that all Nigerians are criminals and a remark made by former Director General of the Department of Home Affairs, Billy Masetla in 2002 who stated that:

Approximately 90 percent of foreign persons who are in RSA with fraudulent documents, i.e., either citizenship or migration documents, are involved in other crimes as well . . . it is quicker to charge these criminals for their false documentation and then to deport them than to pursue the long route in respect of the other crimes that are committed (cited in Neocosmos, 2010:99).

The official cabinet position at the time, under former President Thabo Mbeki's leadership, appeared to be denialism, in which the government referred to these attacks as mere criminalisation (Dodson, 2010; Polzer and Takabvirwa, 2010). This narrative is one that Government officials continue to uphold, with Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa calling these 'acts of criminality' in a July 2010 briefing (Maclennan, 2010) and, more recently, Ministers in the National Assembly (NA) continuing to include xenophobia in the debate of criminality (News24, 2019b).

These sentiments are typical of what Nyamnjoh (2007) discusses in his study "from bound to flexible citizenship: lessons from Africa," which suggests that immigrants, diasporas and ethnic minorities are bound to feel like travelers in 'permanent transit', that the cosmopolitan space created by both the receiving state and its hierarchy of 'privileged' citizens believe in what he refers to as the 'coercive illusion of bounded locations'. These xenophobic tendencies, he states, are ignorant of the historical patterns of migration and its benefits to the state. More importantly, though, he suggests that these ignore the prospects of forging new relationships and more flexible citizenship, "emphasising inclusion, conviviality and the celebration of difference" (Nyamnjoh, 2007:74).

State institutions continue to fail African immigrants. Institutions such as the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the Department of Home Affairs, in particular, have been criticized for their role in enhancing a culture of xenophobia. SAPS officials are believed to apply a skewed targeting to black African foreign nationals whom they often search without cause. According to Steenkamp (2009:441), "In March 2000, the South African Police Service launched 'Operation Crackdown' in Johannesburg where thousands were arrested, immigrants were taken to deportation camps and loot and arms seized. Police officers reportedly stripped foreigners semi-naked on the streets to check whether their vaccination marks 'look South African'" (Steenkamp, 2009).

On the other hand, the Department of Home Affairs is often accused of applying racial stereotypes when dealing with black African foreign nationals, intentionally delaying the documentation processes. The utterance mentioned above by the former Director-General of the Department of Home Affairs is the tip of the iceberg of negative comments made by officials in this department over the years. More recently (September 2022), the Minister of Home Affairs, Aaron Motsoaledi, was criticised for suggesting that SAPS do ‘spot checks’ on the legality of foreign nationals in the country (Thambo, 2022). These statements by officials disregard the dignity of foreign nationals in South Africa and perpetuate the idea of ‘not belonging’, a view held by many South Africans, that foreign nationals do not belong in SA.

In 2007 though, Nyamnjoh (2007) argued that analysts' common focus was almost exclusively on institutional and constitutional arrangements. He, in turn, called for attention to be shifted to the “hierarchies and relationships of inclusion and exclusion informed by race, ethnicity, class, gender and geography that determine accessibility to citizenship in real terms” (Nyamnjoh, 2007:79). Important to note for this study is Nyamnjoh’s (2007:79) arguments that “There has been too much focus on ‘rights talk’ and its ‘emancipatory rhetoric’, and too little attention accorded the contexts, meanings and practices that make citizenship possible for some and a far-fetched dream for most”. The “emphasis should be on the freedom of individuals and communities to negotiate inclusion, opt-out and opt-in with total flexibility of belonging in consonance with their realities as repertoires, melting pots or straddles of various identity margins” (Nyamnjoh, 2007).

Dodson (2010) highlights two emerging debates among scholars, stating that “the ideologically based camps: the one based on political economy and a critique of neoliberal capitalism; the other based on a less materialist, more Foucauldian reading of politics, based on constructions of identity and relations of power”. I too share the views of Dodson (2010:6) who states that “There is also some validity in the idea of immigrants ‘stealing jobs’—not because employment is a zero-sum game, but because immigrants, especially those not legally permitted to work in South Africa, can be employed at lower wages and without the statutory benefits and protections attached to the employment of citizens, and thus compete unfairly with South Africans in certain low-wage sectors of the economy”.



The split labour market and declining unionisation is one of the biggest challenges. The distinct preference by employers for pliable non-unionised foreign labour is critically analysed by the International Labour Office (ILO) and Kerr and Durrheim (2013). Buckley, Zendel, Biggar, Frederiksen and Wells (2016) provide evidence suggesting employers see foreign workers as better skilled and having a ‘better’ work ethic and tend to be non-unionized. Kerr and Durrheim (2013) argue that the anti-xenophobic rhetoric discourse needs to be critically examined, especially when used by NGOs and established white farmers. Kerr and Durrheim (2013) look at the case of De Doorns, where the Zimbabwean migrant labouring community was violently expelled from the informal settlements of De Doorns, critiquing it on two counts:

The way that such discourse in the academy presents the ‘xenophobic’ agents of such violence as morally or psychologically depraved and politically beyond the pale. We argue that such representations are unhelpful for understanding what was actually ‘going on’ in the De Doorns episode...and...the anti-xenophobic discourse that role players employed after the De Doorns violence for the way it largely overlooked the problem that farmers’ pronouncements of anti-xenophobic morality served simultaneously to defend a system which produced some of the very conditions for this violence to occur in the first place. We suggest that FMSP’s report elided this dilemma because of its self-professed commitment to an anti-xenophobic position (Kerr and Durrheim, 2013:577).

### **Why some places and not others with similar socioeconomic characteristics**

One of the most pressing questions that emerged amongst scholars in post-2008 literature is why some places and not others with similar socio-economic conditions. Continuing earlier debates, Pillay, Barolsky, Naidoo, Mohlakoana and Hadland (2008) reinforce the pre-2008 views of relative deprivation. Pillay et al. (2008:44) assert that “the violence which was perpetrated against foreign nationals during the past months has to be seen in the context of a general sentiment of ‘siege’ within impoverished communities in an environment of considerable macro-economic hardship, in particular rising food and fuel prices”. This standard view contends poverty and deprivation are the main drivers behind these attacks.

Similarly, Solomon and Kosaka (2013) continue the debate that black African immigrants are perceived as an economic threat with whom black South Africans constantly compete for scarce resources. Solomon and Kosaka (2013:11) share the view that:

Ordinary South Africans are still trapped in shacks, shanty towns, poverty and uncertainty, struggling with black African immigrants for survival. Hatred and bitterness directed towards black Africans, whose marginal and vulnerable status makes them easy targets, allows South African blacks to ward off the feeling that their long struggle for democracy has not fulfilled expectations and to tell themselves that, at the very least, it allows them to differentiate themselves from backward others.

There was also a shift to case studies of specific conflict sites (the shack-face) and informal settlements and townships) and organized networks and movements in townships. In their comparative study located around seven sites in Gauteng and the Western Cape, Misago, Landau and Monson (2009) find little evidence to support generalizing theories of xenophobia. They specifically assert, "While these factors may have contributed to generalised tensions, they cannot explain the emergence of violence in some places and not others" (Misago, Landau and Monson, 2009:50).

Crush and Ramachandran (2014:22) particularly argue that "whether and where animosity translates into actions depends on community-specific dynamics such as the nature of local leadership, the absence of dispute resolution mechanisms and the character of policing". Misago, Landau and Monson (2009) look explicitly towards the micro-politics of township life. According to these views, "violence against foreigners was organised and led by local groups and individuals as an attempt to appropriate local state authority for localised political and economic interests" (Misago, Landau and Monson, 2009:50). These elements are rooted in the local political economy.

This view is enhanced by Kirshner (2012) in his examination of Khutsong, an area in Johannesburg that did not experience xenophobic violence. Kirshner (2012) speaks explicitly against the hypothesis of deprivation and poverty, highlighting the immense role of community-based organisations and leaders in 'downplaying' ethnic and national divisions. Gathered from Kirshner's (2012) study is the view that there were no instigators of violence in the form of local leaders.

Khutsong residents witnessed the disquieting events on the TV news. As the crisis unfolded, the local community leaders invited members of the community to Khutsong Stadium, as they had done repeatedly from 2005 to 2007. ‘They told us not to be afraid because of what was happening in the townships outside Johannesburg, in Alexandra. They said whatever was happening in Alex would not happen here,’ recalled a Mozambican man who has lived in Khutsong for 9 years (Kirshner, 2012:1314-1315).

Though scholarly literature on xenophobia in SA for the periods 1994-2007 and 2008-present, largely reinforce each other, using social concerns as explanations for South Africa’s xenophobia, the post-2008 literature appears to be more critical of these debates, seeking a much broader perspective on the issues that drives xenophobia in South Africa. While the South African Government continues denying xenophobia in its context, others have made considerable efforts to examine explanations for the violence and plausible solutions. Though arguments around poverty, disparities, lack of leadership, the influence of apartheid policies and antagonistic behaviours towards black African foreign nationals continued to be used as explanations in the post-2008 literature, other avenues for discussion and exploration, such as those brought about by Misago, Landau and Monson (2009), and Kirshner’s (2012) highlights the importance of the local political economy and its role in fueling tensions between black African foreign nationals and locals. The importance of considering immigrant identities as ‘fluid’ and using this in building connections between migrants and citizens is discussed by Nyamnjoh (2010) and Sichone (2020), who generates the idea that forging new relationships is essential for inclusivity and acceptance. This debate is sorely lacking in pre-2008 literature. Sichone (2020) particularly mentions the importance of personal relationships, not just with fellow immigrants but also with the locals, as mechanisms for survival.

### **New Dimensions of (ANTI) Xenophobia in SA**

Notwithstanding the vast amount of research that scholars have produced, think tanks, civil society and independent thinkers on xenophobia in South Africa, their dedication to trying to understand and make sense of the dynamics that drive and influence xenophobia, anti-immigrant sentiments, overall, appears to be on the increase in South Africa.

Attacks against African foreign nationals have become a regular occurrence in SA. Ho (2022) lists significant examples:

- 2008: Large-scale attacks in Johannesburg
- 2015: “An upsurge in xenophobic attacks spreads across SA, starting in Durban after King Goodwill Zwelithini fans tensions by saying that foreigners should “go back to their countries.”
- 2019: “Xenophobic riots targeting African immigrants break out in Durban. About 100 people attack businesses owned by foreign nationals; Three people are killed”. “Riots and looting targeting shops owned by foreign nationals break out in Jeppestown and the Joburg inner city. About 50 businesses predominantly owned by Nigerians are looted. In a nationwide strike, truck drivers protested against the employment of non-South African truckers. Twelve people are killed.”
- March 2020: “Operation Dudula members march on Hillbrow and Orange Grove, targeting foreigners and businesses suspected of employing foreigners. It uses these marches to launch more branches.”<sup>2</sup>.

However, a vast difference between the large-scale attacks of before 2008 and those that followed is that black African foreign nationals, particularly Nigerians, were no longer prepared to be passive victims. In SA, victims of the attacks in and around Durban started taking up arms (Mkhize and Eliseev, 2015). In Nigeria, students began protesting against South African businesses declaring war, “NANS declares war, gives South African Businesses ultimatum” (Olatunji, 2019). In 2017, the Nigerian Government itself intervened. According to Ovuakporie and Agbakwuru (2017), the Nigerian House of Representatives had warned the South African government that these attacks on Nigerians should be the last since the country has the capacity to retaliate.

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<sup>2</sup> Marches by operation Dudula were in full swing during the time of data collection in Johannesburg, which added pressure on the researcher to always ensure the safety of participants.

## **New Generation scholarship on International Migrant Organisations and Fight-back networks**

As previously alluded, South African literature sorely lacks the view of migrant networks and connections across national spaces within changing capital accumulation dynamics and labour markets. But as Uwimpuhwe and Ruiters (2018:2-3) asserts:

the first wave of research focused on individual migrants or households (see Crush and McDonald 2002; Lekogo 2008) rather than organisations...The tendency to undervalue collective organisations among migrants is also evident in later work by Landau and Freemantle (2010, p. 376), who highlight the “fragility and fragmentation of migrant associations... supporting the bias against studying networks and collectives is the idea that migrants are transient, take a short-term view and are too vulnerable to organise protests.... in cases where African migrant networks have been researched, the focus has been with their entrepreneurial skills and networks (Kalitanyi and Visser 2010; Tengeh et al. 2012).

Recent studies which highlight the importance of immigrant organisations were done by Uwimpuhwe (2015), Dinbabo and Carciotto (2015), Uwimpuhwe and Ruiters (2018) and Pineteh (2018). Uwimpuhwe (2015), who looks at xenophobia and the role of immigrant organisations in the City of Cape Town, finds that “Immigrant organisations have a variety of activities and sub-organisations that promote both transnational and local collective action” (2015: iv). Dinbabo and Carciotto has similar findings which state that “the role of national and regional networking groups comprising researchers, NGOs, practitioners, trade unions, civil society organisations and social movements can contribute to advancing migrants’ rights by exercising pressure from the bottom on both states and non-state actors to uphold and enforce international human rights law” (2015:171).

Uwimphuwe and Ruiters (2018) empirically examine the collective responses of foreign African migrants and Refugees in Cape Town with a specific focus on Somalians, Congolese and Rwandan migrants. However, they also focus mainly on the local and less on what happens continentally. They highlight the problem of methodological individualism and the ‘underestimated role of migrant self-organisations’.

The theme of a multi-scalar fightback by immigrants and resilience in SA has yet to receive the attention it deserves. A recent study on Somali immigrants in Cape Town argues that there are

myriad entrepreneurial strategies used by Somali migrants to access and take control of business spaces in Bellville and Khayelitsha. ... they have also helped them to build a resilient Somali community capable of resisting different forms of victimization. In this context, they see themselves as people with “a present life, where they need to survive, to make a livelihood and thus through their actions construct the place where they are physically present. For them, home is not Somalia but South Africa, and they need to confront victimization, resist and protect themselves from xenophobic violence in urban spaces and townships (Pineteh, 2018: 145).

Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi (2019:79) speak to this novel fight-back by stating:

The 2019 xenophobic violence in South Africa is one of the country's deadliest and most destructive violence against African immigrants. Unlike previous years, the reactions that ensued in the Nigerian State were surprisingly different. The evacuation of willing Nigerians from South Africa by a Nigerian businessman, the federal government boycott of the WEF on Africa, Nigerian celebrities cancellation of their appearance at scheduled social events in South Africa and not to forget, and Nigerian youths reprisal attacks on the offices and outlets of several South African owned businesses across the country, goes to show that the people and government of Nigeria have had enough of the intolerance and one too many victimisations of Nigerians in South Africa.

Pineteh (2018) particularly highlights migrant connections and clustering in resistance and fightback against xenophobia in South Africa. Somali migrants in Cape Town, Pineteh (2018:1) vividly state:

Although their business tactics have propelled spatial contestations in which they have become easy targets during xenophobic incursions, the clustering of businesses has also created Somali-dominated localities around Cape Town, facilitating rapid mobilisation to respond to or resist different forms of crime and violence.

Several elements in Pineteh's (2018) study prove valuable to my argument, which develops a multi-scalar analysis of the fightback. Firstly, national business connections are shared among immigrants. A Somali participant in Cape Town stated, “We have a good relationship

with Somalis in Johannesburg, and they supply us with stuff for good prices better than here in Cape Town... When South Africans see that we have businesses in a whole building, they don't like it, but it is because we work together" (Pineteh, 2018:8).

Secondly, the ability of migrants to mobilise rapidly is evident. Pineteh (2018:8) argues, "During xenophobic violence, these buildings become sites to mobilize and respond to mob actions". Thirdly, and specifically highlighting the power and supportive role of migrant networks, Pinteh (2018:11) argue that "As an owner of a spaza shop in Khayelitsha and a clothing boutique in Bellville, this participant attributes his successes to the financial might of Somali networks in Cape Town and Johannesburg". Quoting one participant, he states, "We have learnt that the police are also very xenophobic, so they will not always come to save our lives; we have to do it ourselves, that's why we have a Somali Association in Cape Town. This association is to bring us together so that we can support each other (Pineteh, 2018:17). One key observation highlighted by Pinteh (2018:18) is that "The Somali Association in Cape Town has played a key role not only in enforcing a sense of collective identity and solidarity but also in mobilising Somalis to resist xenophobic violence".

### **Immigrant Organisations**

Modern-day organisations exist across spectrums, taking various forms such as government institutions, Private sector companies, and non-governmental organisations. A group of people typically creates an organisation for a specific purpose. A distinguishing feature between organisations and what they term Meso-level inter-organisational entities are highlighted by Lang, Pott and Shinozaki (2021:2). Organisations become, specifically, social formations. Immigrant organisations, therefore, can be understood as the social formations of immigrants in the host society. According to Lang et al. (2021:3), "In migration studies, the particularities of organisations have been little considered as factors shaping the conditions of migration and migrants' in/exclusion". But researchers like Portes, Escobar and Arana (2008) and Pries and Sezgin (2012) have worked to emphasise the significant role that immigrant organisations play over time.

According to Portes, Escobar and Arana (2008), immigrants seldom enter politics independently; they do so as a mobilized collective. I apply this view to politics and every aspect where individual fulfilment cannot be achieved.

Pries and Sezgin (2012): highlight the immense role played by migrant organisations:

In helping immigrants to adapt to their new surroundings, cushioning the impact of culture shock and offering the opportunity of contact with the institutions and decision-making structures of the countries of arrival.

Migrant organisations, therefore, become a bridge between immigrants and host-society institutions and structures which would otherwise be difficult for them to access individually. Though much of the efforts are directed at creating a conducive environment for their members in the host society by offering structures of social, economic, and political support, Pries and Sezgin also highlight the role of migrant organisations in their country of origin as:

Provide humanitarian and development aid; facilitate funding for public and private investment projects; support certain religious and/or political movements; provide social and financial assistance to their counterparts and cooperation partners in the Cos (Country of origin) (Pries and Sezgin, 2012: 1)

This study acknowledges that organisations are also the bridge between members and home government, its institutions, and actors of influence.

### **Agency**

Agency as a concept is defined or understood by Littlejohn and Foss (2009) “as a capacity to act or cause change”. This definition or understanding was highlighted by communication theorists who believe that “to communicate, an agent must have the capacity, or agency to do so” (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009:27). Whilst several theorists, as pointed out by Emirbayer and Mische, (1998) have applied their meaning to this concept, the understanding highlighted by Littlejohn & Foss (2009) could be viewed as the best description of agency for study.

Like any other concept, varying systems of thought throughout history have varying ideas of the conceptual meaning of the term. Emirbayer and Mische (1998:962) state that: “Variants of action theory, normative theory, and political-institutional analysis have defended, attacked, buried, and resuscitated the concept in often contradictory and overlapping ways”. Perhaps the humanist worldview believed that “instead of being the subjects of God’s will, or powerless against unpredictable forces of fortune, human beings can shape their circumstances and alter events” (Hewson, 2010:13), altering earlier restrictive views of agency as a concept.



Littlejohn et al. (2009) and Emirbayer and Mische (1998) look beyond this by linking contemporary understandings of agency to the era of Enlightenment/ 18th century in which the “debate over whether instrumental rationality or moral and norm-based action is the truest expression of human freedom” (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998:964).

Emirbayer and Mische (1998:963) provide a reconceptualisation of the concept to include “a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented towards the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and towards the present (as the capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)”.

An essential perspective for this study is found in the work of Mills, Durepos and Wiebe (2009:12), who highlight three types of agency as follows:

- Individual Agency: individuals acting on various scales, micro-scale (in private or in locales of co-presence) or the macro-scale (in extensive public activities)
- Proxy agency: Where one person acts on behalf of another; however, the proxy agent may also act on their own behalf, which might not always coincide with the interest of the other.
- Collective agency: a collaboration between individuals who work towards a common goal, creating collective entities such as migrant network organisations discussed in this study.

They further highlight three main bases which gave rise to agency. Intentionality is purposive and goal-orientated; power in which humans wield resources and capabilities; and rationality, using one’s intelligence to guide your actions, reflecting upon circumstances and monitoring ongoing consequences of actions Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe (2009:13). The importance of the perspective highlighted by Mills et al. (2009) thus alerts us to the view that agency may be displayed on various scales and for multiple reasons.

### **Multi-scalar action**

Transnational theory underplays the nation-state level and assumes migrants are hybrid and connected to local networks. This is both romantic and overly simplistic, as Smith and Guarnizo (1998:5) insisted when warning against “the celebratory tone of transnational literature and seeing “transnationalism as something to celebrate, as an expression of a subversive popular resistance “from below.”

Xiang (2013:284) maintains, "multi-scalar ethnography is first concerned with how social phenomena, such as transnational migration, are constituted through actions at different scales". A critical aspect of the concept of multi-scalar is captured in the work of Çağlar and Glick Schiller (2021), who reject the notion of 'fixed hierarchies of bounded territorial units', instead arguing that the concept of multi-scalar to speak of "socio-spatial spheres of practice that are constituted in relationship to each other and within various hierarchies of networks of power" (2021:8). Smith rejects the notion of separating spatial scales and hierarchies, arguing that "different scales are better seen as nested rather than hierarchical" (1992:66). Similarly, Çağlar and Glick Schiller (2021:210) state that "scales are approached as mutually constituted, relational, and interpenetrating territorially referenced entry points for an analysis of globe-spanning interconnected processes".

Drawing our attention to the development and functioning of scales, particularly for social movements such as immigrant organisations, Purcell (2006) views scales as socially constructed strategies produced through struggle. Arguing that scales are contingent, Purcell (2006:1927) states that "the particular qualities of a given scale, such as its extent, its function or its relationships to other scales, are not eternal or ontologically given...they will result from particular struggles among particular actors in particular times and place". Similarly, Jones, Leitner, Marston and Sheppard, (2017:143) argues that "Social movements may deploy scalar strategies to make their voices heard and to expand and secure their political and geographical power". This is an important perceptible for this study, considering how Nigerian immigrant organisations have utilised various scales to address challenges such as xenophobia.

The idea of jumping scales was popularised by Neil Smith, who highlights the use of scales for resistance in his 1992 work on *Contours of a Spatialized Politics*. Smith articulates that "Scale is an active progenitor of specific social processes". A more straightforward explanation for jumping scales is voiced by Jones (1998:25), who states that it is "a political strategy of shifting between spaces of engagement". Jones III, Leitner, Marston, and Sheppard (2017) view scale jumping as a method for overcoming localness, which may turn local movements into regional or national activities through interconnectedness. Highlighting scalar thinking in migration research, Williamson (2015:21) states, "Studying migration as an abstracted flow across national borders tends to dis-embed migrants from their intricate webs of connection across multiple spaces, times and territories". Drawing parallels between scale and agency, Williamson (2015) is of the view that studies on scale expand the notion of

agency and highlight important gaps for political mobilisation, a view of great importance for this study. Williamson (2015:22) argues that:

Such an approach also resonates with Polanyi's notion of 'double movement' to the extent that scale is mobilized for the purposes of both empowerment and containment, providing context- and scale-specific opportunities for both inclusion and exclusion.

Bond and Ruiters, citing Neil Smith, highlight capitalism's role in producing spatial scales, stating that: Capitalism "produces real spatial scales which give uneven development its coherence" (2017:178). They argue that "National borders, passports, xenophobic and racist attacks, and securitised gentrified gated urban "communities" make scale very real, reflecting the various material dimensions of how the bourgeoisie institutionally territorialises and carves up the world" (Bond and Ruiters,2017:178). Their approach to scalar research highlights an important feature to be developed in this research.

### **The political economy of xenophobia: South African context**

There is a growing awareness among critical scholars that neoliberalism and market fundamentalism have reshaped the migration space (Glick Schiller, 2018). One of the most important trends in the unfolding of neoliberalism has been transformed labour markets whereby secure long-term jobs have been supplanted by new employment practices such as sub-contracting, outsourcing, temporary work, and casualization alongside the de-unionisation of workers under highly exploitative conditions. Closely allied to this has been the growth of the informal sector and services.

Recent discussions by trade unions on xenophobia in South Africa have blamed free market neoliberalism. Some have suggested that SA's workers are inflexible and cannot compete against foreign Africans. Akinrinde and Tar (2021) essentially contend that although the South African government has established a free-market economy that is accessible to global investors and businesses, the South African people are unable to benefit from it because they lack education and are socially and materially impoverished. According to them, the many factors driving xenophobia in SA include "social and economic inequalities, corruption, leadership deficit, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and political rhetoric that opportunistically pit indigenous, economically less privileged South Africans against foreign Africans that are in South Africa to eke out a living and carry out their legitimate economic

businesses, underpin the political economy of the xenophobic violence in South Africa”(Akinrinde and Tar, 2021:51).

Interestingly, Misago (2017:42) refers to xenophobia as “politics by other means”. By exploring the political economy of xenophobia from the state, and particularly the local state perspective; Misago (2017:44) argues that instigators of violence “organize the attacks as an attempt to claim or consolidate the authority and power needed to further their political and economic interest”. This is a strategy used not only by local leaders but also top political figures as a means of gaining trust, support and claiming legitimacy even though these very leaders continue to fail South Africans daily, a method to deflect the failures of their own rule. Misago specifically mentions the elite manipulation theory in which “collective violence often results from the manipulation of masses by the elites for their (elites’) economic and political interests” (2017:49). The idea here is that elites create opportunities of crisis to advance their own interest. Shifting the blame to foreign nationals not only provides a defence from their own failures but places these elites in a position of perceived power amongst the masses.

Misago (2017) also argues that instigators of violence, are often those local businesses with something to benefit from. Mobs of violence, according to him, are not faceless or anonymous, but “behind the masses, there are identifiable groups or individuals who act as masterminds or instigators of the violence for specific interests” (Misago, 2017:42) . Using one example, he says “In De Doorns, respondents reported that violent attacks on Zimbabwean farm workers were organized and led by the local ward councillor, ward committee members and local labour brokers to fend off competition from Zimbabwean groups or labour brokers or contractors (Misago, 2017:43). Misago though, neglects the role of large-scale economic interests in agriculture like white farmers (See Kerr and Durrheim’s 2013 view) and other sectors where African migrants exploited. Budlender and Hartman-Pickerill (2014) noted that available data from the labour force survey in the third quarter of 2012 showed that foreign-born workers are distributed across economic sectors, with the largest proportion (30%) working in trade, 12% working in construction and only 3% in mining. Analysis of the same data by industry shows that 9% of the formal construction workforce was foreign-born in 2012, compared with 8% in mining and 7% in agriculture (ibid.).

Similarly, the International Labour Office (ILO) reported that large-scale changes in the construction industry had seen more foreign migrants employed exploitatively by casualisation and labour broking practices.

The flexible employment relationships (whether labour broking or labour subcontracting) have given rise in South Africa, as elsewhere in the world, to a two-tier workforce in the construction industry with a small and diminishing number of 'core' workers employed on a permanent basis and a much larger number of temporary workers employed by labour contractors or brokers on short term contracts. These changes have made it harder for workers and employers to organize themselves. Not only are many of the small companies currently employing workers not registered with the relevant bargaining council, but there has also been quite a dramatic decline in membership of trade unions. Less than 2% of the 700 workers surveyed by the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) (2015) in their recent study of labour and working conditions reported any union activity on their site ( Buckley, Zendel, Biggar, Frederiksen and Wells, 2016: 29-30)

The ILO notes furthermore that,

Flexible employment arrangements have made it easier to absorb foreign workers without the appropriate permits into the construction labour force on a temporary or casual basis (Buckley, Zendel, Biggar, Frederiksen and Wells, 2016:30).

A bizarre neoliberal paradox is that capital comes across as an opponent of xenophobia, at least rhetorically and for the "free movement of labour", while workers appear as xenophobes. Workers on short-term contracts are not allowed to be union members, and day labourers are excluded because they are not considered employed (Bamu and Godfrey 2009). They fall outside the bargaining scope. Generally, capital which is more globally mobile, turns out to be the least nationalistic, and it is not in the interest of transnational capital to play out its national identity. Workers, on the other, are largely tied to place and forced to compete against one another, compared to footloose capital.

## Conclusion

International literature on migration studies has shifted from describing migratory patterns to focusing on the assimilation of migrants into host countries and the development of networks to a more recent focus on transnational networks and hybridity. But the new anti-migration populist movements signal a further shift towards racism and nationalism. What is missing in the merging new wave is a focus on how migrants develop agency and counter-mobilize.

Literature on xenophobia primarily revolves around the reasons behind the violence, policy debates and which parties should take responsibility for the violence. South African literature similarly moved from describing xenophobic attitudes to understanding the causes of Xeno/Afrophobia, but the focus on hybridity and the development of transnational networks has been neglected. This chapter thus identified the lack of South African literature on the immigrants as such and especially how the networks and forms of resistance, both local and transnational.

While xenophobia is not limited to SA, the reality and perplexities of xenophobic violence over the last decade have placed the country under the world's microscope. Across the world, the increase in anti-foreign sentiments has led to the deaths of thousands of refugees trying to flee from war-ridden countries. However, the difference with South Africa is the continuous violent outbreaks against black African foreign nationals.

Since one of the largest outbreaks in 2008, research on the topic has largely revolved around the reasons for xenophobic outbreaks and theories, including scapegoating of foreigners and isolation theories. While agreeing with Neocosmos (2010) that these explanations are inadequate, this study instead moves away from the reasons to evaluate how African foreign nationals have been responding to the violence and the mechanisms used to address this. New dimensions to South Africa's xenophobia have shown that African foreign nationals are no longer passive victims, like before 2008, waiting for state protection. Still, threats of retaliation, especially in Nigeria and self-defence have given a different twist to the issue - a direct threat to South African companies in Nigeria, which has faced closure on numerous occasions.

The following chapter outlines the methodological process employed in this research.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE RESEARCH PROCESS

### Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the methodological approach used to achieve the study's objectives: to explore and understand how Nigerian nationals in South Africa and Nigeria utilise migrant solidarity networks to fight against xenophobic violence in SA. South African literature on xenophobia primarily revolves around studies of reasons for the violence and policy responses. Many of these studies, those produced by the South African Migration Project (SAMP) mainly, relied on large surveys as a data collection method. Owen (2016:366) states that “large events, such as the xenophobic attacks in early 2015 in South Africa, are often scrutinised and analysed by social scientists to the exclusion of the micro, lived realities of men and women that provide a context and history to these larger events”. Scholars such as Pries and Sezin (2012), Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999) and Uwimpuhwe and Ruiters (2018) speak to the lack of data on the role of migrant networks in mobilisation. It especially lacks this focus with xenophobic violence against African foreign nationals in SA.

My research explores the dimensions of local, national, and transnational networks Nigerian nationals utilise to fight against xenophobia in South Africa. It intended to look at the various scales at which these activities occur and the impact of the political economy of xenophobia, specifically Nigeria’s retaliation on South African companies in Nigeria. Baxter and Jack (2008:544) highlight the usefulness of qualitative studies as it “ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood”.

According to Bryman (2016:3), social research involves “drawing on the social sciences for conceptual and theoretical inspiration”. This could be motivated by various changing elements of society, such as “the rise in worries about security” (Bryman, 2016:3) or this case, how the mobilization of Nigerian nationals has been used to retaliate against South Africa’s xenophobia. Social research thus employs “social scientific ideas to shed light on these changes” (Bryman, 2016:3). Bryman (2016) highlights the importance of theory as “a backcloth and justification for the research” that is being constructed. While Bryman (2016:18) notes theory as “a framework within which social phenomenon can be understood,

and research findings can be interpreted”, the theories around xenophobia highlighted in this research are merely used as an explanatory guiding tool to formulate the basis of the research. This study finds itself in inductive reasoning, which Bryman (2016:23) agrees “is especially strong in generating theories out of data”. Inductive reasoning moves in the form of specific observation to the discovery of a pattern that some degree of order among all the given events (Babbie, 2015:23). Inductive reasoning is thus the “logical model in which general principles are developed from specific observation”(Babbie, 2015:23).

## **Research Methodology**

The overall research method employed in this study is qualitative, supported by quantitative tools. Qualitative research is the process of exploring things in their natural setting. Mason (2002:1) argues that qualitative research could be explored through a “wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, the understandings, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses or relationships work, and the significance of the meanings that they generate”. Creswell (2009:4), too, concedes that qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

Qualitative studies can be viewed from various angles or ‘worldviews’, including positivism, pragmatism, advocacy, and constructivism but to mention a few. As Creswell (2009) pointed out, a worldview is a “basic set of beliefs that guide action”. Positivists, for example, “hold a deterministic philosophy in which causes probably determine effects or outcomes” and thus, the problems studied by scholars who hold the positivists' views reflect the need to identify and assess the causes that influence the outcome (Creswell, 2009:7). The advocacy and participatory worldview, on the other hand, calls for an action agenda and ‘holds that research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda’ (Creswell, 2009:9).

The philosophical underpinnings for this study lie in the social constructivist worldview, which holds the assumption that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work (Creswell, 2009:8). Truth depends on perspective, and constructivists “recognize the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning, but doesn’t reject outright some notion of objectivity” (Baxter and Jack, 2008:545). Individuals develop different meanings for their experiences. The constructivist views allow for such meanings to



be explored in all their complexities instead of narrowing them into a few categories or ideas. The goal was to rely as much as possible on the view and experiences of the participants, in this case, Nigerian nationals in their various network categories.

## **Research Design**

### **The Case study:**

This study used a case study approach, based on the view that case study research "allows the researcher to explore individuals or organisations, through complex interventions, relationships, communities or programmes" (Baxter and Jack, 2008: 544). Creswell (2009:13) explains case studies as follows:

Strategies of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bound by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period.

Baxter and Jack (2009:545) assert that a case study should be considered under the following circumstances: "the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study, or the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context". Yin (2009:27) identifies five components for case study research designs, including a study's questions, its propositions (if any), its unit (s) of analysis, the logic linking the data to the proposition and the criteria for interpreting the findings.

The research design and method selected for this study consider the current state of xenophobia in SA, a sensitive topic for locals and foreign African nationals. Researching how Nigerians organise themselves and their attempts to fight xenophobia exposes their plight and leaves them vulnerable. This research also involves South African companies and workers in Nigeria and the threats they face. This research is thus not only a delicate topic for the research participants but also for the researcher who will be given access to such information and must ensure that Nigerian nationals are not left in a position worse than the one they already find themselves in.

This research considers the safety of the researcher and the various categories of respondents. The physical security of all participants in this research is a priority and was always felt. The description of the following research design allowed for flexibility to ensure that respondents remain anonymous, that meetings took place in secure and safe spaces often identified by the respondent, and that companies are not negatively affected by the information shared during this research process.

#### *Advantages and Disadvantages of Case Study design*

The significant advantage of doing a qualitative case study instead of, e.g., surveys, is the provision of viewing the phenomenon through various lenses while maintaining the characteristics of the event. As Yin (2009:11) stated, “the case study’s unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence documents, artefacts, interviews, and observations”. The case study research also assists researchers in maintaining the meaningful characteristics of real-life events such as group behaviour and social processes Yin (2009:4).

One of the most significant concerns with case study research has been the inability of researchers to generalise their findings to the larger population (Yin, 2009; Zainal, 2007). Zainal (2007:5) highlights that case studies frequently lack rigour in that “too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy and has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions”. To overcome this challenge, I have highlighted my position as a researcher and disclosed the possible biases that could have influenced the research process below.

#### *The Case Study in Gauteng*

The research design used for this study was a single case study. The objective of this study is not to generalize its finding to other areas but rather to the area in which the study is taking place. Gauteng province, the economic hub of South Africa, was selected for several reasons. Firstly, Gauteng is home to most Nigerian nationals in South Africa, with an estimated 5029 Nigerian citizens living in the area. Secondly, Nigerian nationals in Gauteng have been the most visible in terms of media attention and actions of retaliation during events of xenophobic violence. Gauteng province has several organisations dedicated to Nigerian nationals, which are most valuable in network organisations. The existence of various categories of Nigerian networks in Gauteng is deemed sufficient in the facilitation of answering my main question and sub-questions.

## MAP: 2.1 AREA MAP OF GAUTENG PROVINCE



Source: <https://www.sa-venues.com/maps/gauteng/physical.php>

### Phases of Data Collection

The goal of qualitative research, according to Creswell (2009:178), is to carefully choose the participants, sites, papers, or visual materials that will best enable the researcher to comprehend the issue and the study question. Using a purposive sampling technique, I recruited Nigerians (identified through Nigerian organisations)<sup>3</sup> who would best help me respond to my research questions for this study's primary data collection from in-depth interviews with Nigerian citizens in Gauteng.

<sup>3</sup> Clearance received from the ethics committee

Two data collection methods were used in this study, collection of primary and secondary data. Sources for collecting primary data involved a purposive sampling of key informants with Nigerian nationals in South Africa and key informants from two entities engaged in the trade relations between South Africa and Nigeria<sup>4</sup>. Secondary data was gathered through a desktop review of documents. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 provide a quick overview of the benefits and restrictions of each data collection technique.

**TABLE 2.1: DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY FOR PRIMARY DATA**

Data Type	Collection	Options Within Type	Advantages of the type	Limitation of the type
Interviews with Nigerian Nationals		Face-to-face, one on one interviews Zoom/Skype interviews	Useful when participants cannot be directly observed Participants can provide historical information Allows researcher control over the line of questioning	Provides indirect information filtered through the views of the interviewees The researcher's presence may bias responses Not all people are equally articulate and perceptive.
Interviews with South African entities		Face-to-face, one on one interviews	Useful when participants cannot be directly observed Participants can provide historical information Allows researcher control over the line of questioning	Provides indirect information filtered through the views of the interviewees The researcher's presence may bias responses Not all people are equally articulate and perceptive.

Source: Table adapted from (Creswell, 2009)

### *Primary Data Collection*

Nigerian citizens in Gauteng served as the study's primary source of data collection. To put the current research into context and offer opinions on the effects of retaliation, a third supplemental analysis using South African businesses, entities and relevant departments is included. Key informant interviews with pre-selected people who met the requirements for each category served as the study's primary method. The predetermined criteria for Category 1 are that respondents must be Nigerian nationals and belong to some form of network. The predetermined criteria for category 2 are that respondents must be familiar with the work of their entity and able to provide context to the experience of South African companies in Nigeria. The interviews took place as face-to-face as possible, with telephone, email or video calls used as an alternative where I could not conduct face-to-face interviews.

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, no South African companies had acceded to the request for Interviews.

### **Unit of Analysis 1: Nigerian nationals in Gauteng:**

This study was directed at Nigerian nationals living in the Gauteng province of South Africa, which is home to the largest number of Nigerian nationals in the country. Most of the interviews for this fieldwork was done face-to-face in March 2022 in various cities around the Gauteng province, and others over the course of the following months via zoom.

Respondents in the unit of analysis were interviewed using in-depth semi-structured interviews. To locate these respondents, I started with an internet search on Nigerian organisations in Gauteng, which showed various categories of groups such as non-profit organisations, churches, academics, etc. Based on this, I was able to establish that Nigerian nationals could largely be assigned to four categories, those involved in non-profit organisations, churches, academics, and groups which are ethnic-specific. This is not to say that no overlap exists between these groups or that one individual cannot belong to all four categories. Considering this, I acknowledge that the experience of these groups could differ somewhat. Portes, Escobar and Arana (2008) specifically mention that the experience of and reception of these groups affects their incorporation despite their common language and country of origin.

Given that I wanted to examine network formation (local, national, and international), my research tracks Nigerian nationals' local and cross-border networks in SA. The semi-structured interviews used in this study allowed me to extract from participants information about:

The family ties they have in SA and their home countries

Friendships they have with both foreign nationals and South Africans

Associations they belong to (Church groups, cultural associations, sports clubs) in SA

The types of support they receive from their different networks

The contribution of organisations to their lives, specifically the fight against xenophobia

### **Interviews**

The 22 participants in this research comprised of 14 males and 8 females with no specific age categories. These participants live in various parts of the Gauteng Province, including areas such as Yeoville, Orange Grove, Sandton, Braamfontein, Hillbrow, Park Town and Brakpan,

amongst others. The importance of highlighting this information is to show that Nigerians are not necessarily situation or condensed to one area but rather occupy various areas around the province.

Regarding employment, twelve out of the twenty-two respondents currently operate businesses ranging from small to large scale, encompassing sectors such as food and retail. This aligns with the common perception that Nigerian immigrants often engage in small to medium-scale trading activities. Notably, some of these businesses also contribute to local employment by offering job opportunities to several South Africans.

In South Africa, Nigerian nationals contribute significantly to the professional workforce. Seven individuals, who were interviewed for this study, belong to this group, and they include qualified professionals such as lecturers, lawyers, dentists, doctors, and nurses. The rest of the participants are students, and one of them also holds a position as a shop assistant in a business owned by Nigerians

Individuals for the study were enlisted through the organisations to which they are affiliated. The initial stage involved reaching out to these organisations to seek interviews with their members. Subsequently, key informants identified during these interviews recommended additional participants, employing the 'snowball sampling' method. This approach proved advantageous as it fostered trust with the initial respondents, who, in turn, felt at ease suggesting others for participation in the study.

The organisations selected for this study include the following: Nigerian Union South Africa (NUSA), Nigerian Citizens Association, South Africa (NICASA), Nigerian Women's Association, National Association of Nigerian Students in South Africa (NANSSA), Ohanaeze Ndigbo, National Association of Yorubas Descendants in Southern Africa (NAYDSA), Association of Yorubas in Diaspora SA (AYDSA).

### **Unit of analysis 2: Interviews with South African entities involved in SA-Nigeria Trade**

Respondents in analysis unit two were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire containing specific predetermined open and closed-ended questions. This allowed for data collection particular to the study while allowing the respondent to respond in their own words.

In this unit of analysis, I identified two South African entities whose work revolves around the SA-Nigeria trade relations as key entities in answering the sub-question of ascertaining the scale of retaliation in Nigeria and the consequences of this on South African companies, and South African trade missions at large.

The analysis unit for this study consisted of two individuals, one male and one female, both holding senior positions in the selected entities. They were recruited through interview requests, to which they willingly agreed. To uphold ethical considerations, the identities of these participants and their respective entities will be kept confidential. The selection of these entities was strategic, given their role as a crucial link between South Africa and Nigeria. Their daily operations centre around South African companies in Nigeria, emphasising the importance of maintaining positive bilateral relation between the two countries. Consequently, any discord between the countries or their citizens could potentially affect these entities.

Interviews with the respondents were pre-scheduled and lasted around 45 minutes to 1 hour. Where respondents provided permission, interviews were recorded using a cellphone recorder, and data was immediately transferred to a safe folder after each interview. The data collected in this study indicate possible directions for further research and are not based on a representative sample. The information is derived from closed-ended and open-ended questions; some closed data will be displayed in table or graph form with a brief commentary.

Data collected from open-ended questions and additional elaborations on closed-ended questions were manually transcribed but coded and grouped using Atlas.ti 22. Data analysis was done manually, and no automated analysis was used. Interview responses were analysed in terms of similarities and differences and then analysed using thematic analysis.

#### *Secondary Data Collection*

Secondary data, in the form of a document review, was collected during the early stages of this research and the fieldwork stage to update information. A document review for this study was especially useful in determining what has already been said about this topic. In chapters 4 and 5, secondary data was used to track the reasons for their migration and adaptability and network formulation of Nigerians globally and in South Africa. Data collected during chapter 5 was also used to identify key informants in this study. In chapter 6, secondary data was used to give context to the experience of South African companies in Nigeria and the possible effects of retaliation on their businesses.

This data was collected from academic books, journals, and media articles. Documentation, in this case, helped provide background information before conducting interviews and was used to stay updated with current events. Stake (1995:68) believes that “documents serve as substitutes for records of activity that the researcher could not observe directly”. Therefore, newspapers were monitored throughout this research process to guide the researcher on developments within the topic.

Stake (1995:68) also argues that “documents such as school improvement plans or an achievement test report can be key repositories or measures for the case”. Documents that were further consulted, where available, were the annual reports, strategic plans and pamphlets found on the website and other social media pages of NGOs since participants had referred me to these pages upon the request for documents.

**TABLE 2.2: DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY FOR SECONDARY DATA**

<b>Data Collection Type</b>	<b>Options Within Type</b>	<b>Advantages of the type</b>	<b>Limitation of the type</b>
Documents	Public documents such as annual reports, strategic reports, letters, minutes and newspapers	<p>Enables the researcher to obtain the language and words of participants</p> <p>Can be accessed at a time convenient to the researcher-an unobstructed source of information</p> <p>Written evidence saves the researcher time and expenses of transcribing</p>	<p>May be protected information unavailable to the public or private access</p> <p>Requires the researcher to search out the information in hard-to-find places.</p> <p>Materials may be incomplete.</p>

Source: Table adapted from Creswell (2009)

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of making sense of the data collected. Creswell (2009:183) states that “it involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data”. In the case of study research, Stake identifies two strategic ways in which researchers reach new meanings about cases, through the direct interpretation of the individual instance and aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class Stake (1995:74). Analysing data for this study followed the guidelines as



suggested by Creswell (2009) but substituting Creswell's 'coding' for a clustering method. Creswell (2009:185) offers five steps in analyzing the data as follows:

1. Organise and prepare- This involves the transcription of interviews, scanning material, typing field notes, and arranging data into the various sources of information.
2. Reading through the data – involves getting a general sense of what the collected information is all about, recognizing emerging patterns, identifying the tone of ideas, and identifying the usefulness of the data collected.
3. Whereas Creswell calls it coding, I call it clustering information – which involves organizing materials into chunks or segments of texts under common ideas, themes, patterns, and stories and labelling each of these.
4. Description/ Themes- provides detailed information on research participants, places, or events for the identified themes. These should “display multiple perspectives from individuals and be supported by diverse quotations and specific evidence” (Creswell, 2009:189).
5. Advancing the description of themes represented in the qualitative narrative provides a detailed discussion of several themes (complete with sub-themes, specific illustrations, multiple perspectives from the various sources used and quotations from individuals) and the conveyance of descriptive information about participants.
6. Interpretation- The final step in analysing the data for this study would be able to answer the questions asked in this study.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Ensuring that the information generated is reliable and valid is essential for a research project. Creswell (2009:190) states, "Qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures". He recommends several procedures to ensure reliability; the most important for this study is to check transcripts to ensure that they do not contain apparent mistakes made during the transcription and that the clustering of various themes is done accurately.

Creswell (2009:191) recommends the use of multiple strategies, including triangulation. Qualitative validity, he states, is “based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account” (Creswell, 2009:191). The use of multiple data sources and primary data collection methods in this study will assist in this regard to ensure that the data collected speak to and validate each other. Another is to clarify the researcher's bias by being honest about the influence of the researcher’s background and views on the findings.

### **Scope and Limitation**

While this study aims to focus on Nigerian citizens in Gauteng, it is impossible to interview all members of every Nigerian organisation in Gauteng; there are too many. To deal with this, I had a list of pre-determined participants and pre-arranged many interviews.

One of the most important aspects to note while collecting primary data in Gauteng was the ongoing presence of and fear created by Operation Dudula. While participants appeared to not show any fear towards Operation Dudula, as the researcher and as a South African, I feared that their participation in the research might place them in a vulnerable position. To overcome this, I ensured that interviews took place in an environment the participants identified, where they feel safe and comfortable since they are more familiar with the Gauteng province than I am. Thankfully, many interviews were done in the private office or homes of participants.

During this period, I was also faced with some other challenges. It was sometimes difficult to arrange a mutually suitable time for meetings. Some interviews had to be done via an online platform such as zoom. Fortunately, participants were eager and willing to participate in this way.

Another critical challenge experienced during this study is the reluctance of companies to grant interviews. Whilst emails and phone calls were made to various employees within Shoprite, MTN and DSTV, I was referred to the company's website for information. Similarly, with the Department of International Relations, no response was received from the department. To account for this loss in data, I interviewed two entities (whose names will not be mentioned here) familiar with the trade relations between SA and Nigeria. I also relied on documents as far as possible while searching for news articles in which these companies and

departments had previously responded to the issue of migrants, xenophobia and the subsequent retaliation of Nigerian citizens.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study acknowledges the rights, needs and values of participants and their associated companies. This study made provision for participants to withdraw their participation at any moment in the research and respects the right of participants to remain anonymous, which all of them have chosen to do.

Black African foreign nationals continue to be victims of physical violence and mental and verbal abuse. As far as possible, this study has tried to ensure that participants are not physically or verbally exposed to or placed in any danger physically or verbally. Participants were informed about the study's intention and aim and allowed to choose where and when interviews occurred. Participant consent was requested before using a tape recorder. All data collected, both recorded and written, were and will continue to be kept on an encrypted drive to which only I have access.

Creswell (2009:7) states that “being objective is essential for competent inquiry; researchers must examine methods and conclusions for bias”. As a South African, it is easy to be influenced by media reports and opinions of fellow South Africans who often view African foreign nationals as burdening state resources, thieves, job stealers etc. As a researcher, who has done previous research on xenophobia in South Africa, I have been vigilant about the effects of such opinions on my research. As a person, I have no interest in enhancing or contributing to the humiliation, fear and violence experienced by black African foreign nationals in South Africa.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This chapter covered the research methodology used in this study. It identified qualitative case study research as the best approach for analysing how Nigerian immigrants mobilise in immigrant networks and its application in the struggle against xenophobia in South Africa. Though the findings of this study may not be used to generalise beyond its context, it does contribute to a broader perspective of and contribute to the literature on immigration networks in South Africa whilst providing for more extensive arguments on xenophobic violence in South Africa. The following chapter explores the migration of Nigerian citizens, specifically to the UK and the USA.

## CHAPTER FOUR: NIGERIANS ORGANISED ACROSS THE GLOBE

### Introduction

While the global distribution of Nigerians is not the primary focus of this study, examining how Nigerians have adapted and engaged in activities facilitating successful integration into communities other than South Africa, offers valuable insights into navigating life outside Nigeria. Diasporic communities often maintain strong transnational networks. Understanding the characteristics of the Nigerian diaspora in the UK and the US can provide insights into how these networks operate, which may influence how Nigerians navigate life in South Africa.

An article in the Financial Times in 2020 describes Nigerians as some of the most successful and resilient diaspora groups worldwide (Jackson-obot, 2020). The lack of opportunities and the dire economic situation in Nigeria is among the reasons driving Nigerians to foreign lands. This chapter explores the complexity of Nigeria as an ex-colonial country and how Nigerians have mobilised in various immigrant organisations around the world, particularly in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK).

Nigeria, a former British colony, is a profoundly divided country often seen as a nation in the process. It is also seen as a geographical expression, not a social reality. According to Akinrinade and Ogen, the diasporic community of Nigeria reflects the diversity and ethnic divisions found in the country, making it fissiparous and devoid of Cohen's 1997 ideal diaspora which is "a homogenous social and ethnic group" (2011:71).

Nigeria, like any other country, has a long history of migration and settlers across the globe. For those interested, Falola and Heaton (2008) provide an interesting perspective which discusses not only the development of the Hausa Diaspora and the Muslim religion in Nigeria but also the development of government-sponsored Christian pilgrimages and the ties with kin that remains throughout these journeys, whether temporary or permanent. Falola and Heaton (2008:248) also discuss the development of the transatlantic diaspora, which dates to the 1500s with the spread of Nigerians to Europe and the Western Hemisphere. Though not voluntary, millions of Nigerians shipped across the Atlantic oceans to America adapted to

their new surroundings without losing key elements of their indigenous cultures (Falola and Heaton, 2008).

Nigerian nationals in modern-day transatlantic environments are no different. Many believe in holding ties with their place of origin. Falola and Heaton (2008: 253) state that “Nigerians who have relocated to Europe and the United States since the early twentieth century have established what can be called *transnational* communities, in which migrants become partially assimilated to their new environments but remain socially and culturally committed to their homelands”. But Nigerians are not always as unified; even abroad, there are signs of ethnically driven politics.

Akinrinade and Ogen's (2011) study on the formation of Nigerian Diasporas found that Nigerian diasporas do not necessarily reflect the “ideal” diaspora in terms of the homogenous social or ethnic groups but rather reflect the diversity and ethnicity that can be found in Nigeria itself. They are also of the view that while poverty and inequality may induce migration, those of higher income, improved education and access to media platforms will give people more opportunities to migrate (Akinrinada and Ogen, 2011:71). They further highlight the critical role that “Nigerian diaspora could play in Nigeria’s rapid socio-economic and political developments” (Akinrinade and Ogen, 2011:71).

In their definition of diaspora, Akinrinade and Ogen (2011) acknowledge that modern-day diaspora typically shares its meaning with concepts such as “immigration, expatriates, refugees, exiles, etc.”. They argue that the expansion and inclusion of these could be linked to the rapid speed of international migration and technological and other advances. This study, however, adopts the view of Zeleza (2005:8) in saying that “Diaspora simultaneously refers to a process, a condition, a space and a discourse: the continuous processes by which a diaspora made, unmade and remade, the changing conditions in which it lives and expresses itself, the places where it is moulded and imagined, and the contentious ways in which it is studied”. In this, we thus say that diasporas are moulded out of experiences and struggles, such as the struggle against xenophobia in South Africa.

The first part of this chapter briefly looks at the essential components of Nigerians in diaspora, considering the ethnic division among Nigerians in Nigeria. The second and primary feature of this chapter looks at the *directionality and adaptation of migrants*, which Portes and Rumbaut (2014) believe have been a neglected area. They argue that “Most contemporary theorizing on international migration has focused neither on its origins nor on

its directionality and stability over time” (Portes and Rumbaut, 2014:59). Directionality, in this case, would thus take a brief look at how Nigerians are scattered around the world and which, if any, networks are available to assist in their adaptation, particularly in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK).

The resilient relationships of Nigerians with their home country and their intricacies are directly related to the idea of transnationalism that dictates the availability of contemporary organisations, networks and umbrella associations that structure Nigerian communities in countries like the UK, USA, and SA (following chapter). Ultimately, this chapter seeks to answer the following:

- Where do Nigerian expats emigrate to?
- What mechanisms do Nigerian nationals employ in their adaptability?
- Which organisations play a role in mobilising Nigerians in the UK and USA?

### **Nigeria’s Diaspora**

The basic components of Nigerians in Diaspora are typical of the new migration network theory in that “Nigerian migrants in the diaspora come together in all sorts of formal and informal associations based on faith, trade, occupation, politics gender, home place and ethnic group” (Akinrinade and Ogen, 2011:75) and as I argue for self-defence. Necessary to realise, though, how these diaspora groups organize themselves and what we mean by “organised”. According to Akinrinade and Ogen (2011:76), “the Nigerian diaspora is as ‘disorganized’ as the Nigerian state, at least ethnically. Apart from the proliferation of groups along the major ethnic lines such as Edo, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Ogoni, Itsekiri, and so”. According to this, Nigerians also organize themselves according to sub-ethnic and hometown associations “Ikale World Congress in the United States, the London based Odoziobodo Club of Ogwashi-Uku and the Zumunta Association, U.S.A”.

According to Lampert (2009), diaspora organisations have the means of exasperating these divisions through their politics of belonging.

While he, too, traces this politicization of ethnic identities back to British colonial rule, he states that:

Since independence in 1960, the continuation of ethicized strategies of divide and rule, a dependency on and centralization of oil revenue and the constitutional enshrinement of group belonging as a key basis for making and realizing claims on the state are widely seen to have perpetuated and deepened the politicization of ethnicity (Lampert, 2009:169)

Consequently, state largesse has thus largely been dispersed on the bases of geo-ethnic identity and not necessarily on the needs of the people. In this way, everyone is thus fighting for their communities. Lampert provides an example of the ANPU London, which “bemoan that such is the marginalization of their ancestral kingdom of Ayege that it struggles to win fair recognition and reward even at the level of government supposedly closest to the people”.

It is thus safe to say that Nigeria’s ethnic divisions transcend national borders. To some extent, the continuation of ethnic divisions and diasporas based on ethnicity fuels divisions back home. Lampert (2009:170) states that many organisations “frame their objectives primarily concerning the interests of a shared, sub-national ancestral ‘homeland’ and its descendants at ‘home’ and ‘abroad’”. These geo-ethnic organisations also seek to make their mark by utilizing friends or acquaintances in government positions, lobbying for the state to give their kingdom a ‘slice of the national cake’ (Lampert, 2009). Interesting would be whether these ethnically divided groups maintained these principles in instances of violence or whether there was some collaboration.

Further interventions or methods of trying to influence the hometown development of their kingdom include “collaborates with, and provides funds to, a ‘home’-based ‘apex’ or ‘parent’ organisation, in this case, the Ayege Progress Committee (APC)” (Lampert, 2009:171). These methods thus encourage Nigerian ethnic groups to direct their loyalty to the sub-national or geo-ethnic formation rather than the state. Very important to note, especially for this paper, is the ability of these organisations to fund not just politically violent groups in their hometown but anywhere.

Lampert (2009:174) deflects that:

Mirroring what has been a growing trend across Nigeria's communities and wider geo-ethnic formations, in 1996 the APC, with specific funding from Omoyege individuals and organizations at 'home' and 'abroad', including ANPU London, established the Ayege Vanguard (AV), an Omoyege vigilante group.

Lampert (2009:175) states, "It is an established custom for the host organisation to invite individuals and organisations identifying with different ancestral heritages, thereby establishing reciprocal inter-ethnic relations of hospitality and mutual benevolence". This, however, does not mean that geo-ethnic diasporas are closed off to nationalities of other ethnic groups or 'outsiders. There are also those organisations that do not define their memberships to geo-ethnic associations. The Development Impact for Nigeria (DIFN), established in London in 1999, states in its objectives that "it is 'for all Nigerians irrespective of faith, tribe, age or gender". The organisation thus targets Nigerians as a whole and not certain ethnic affiliates.

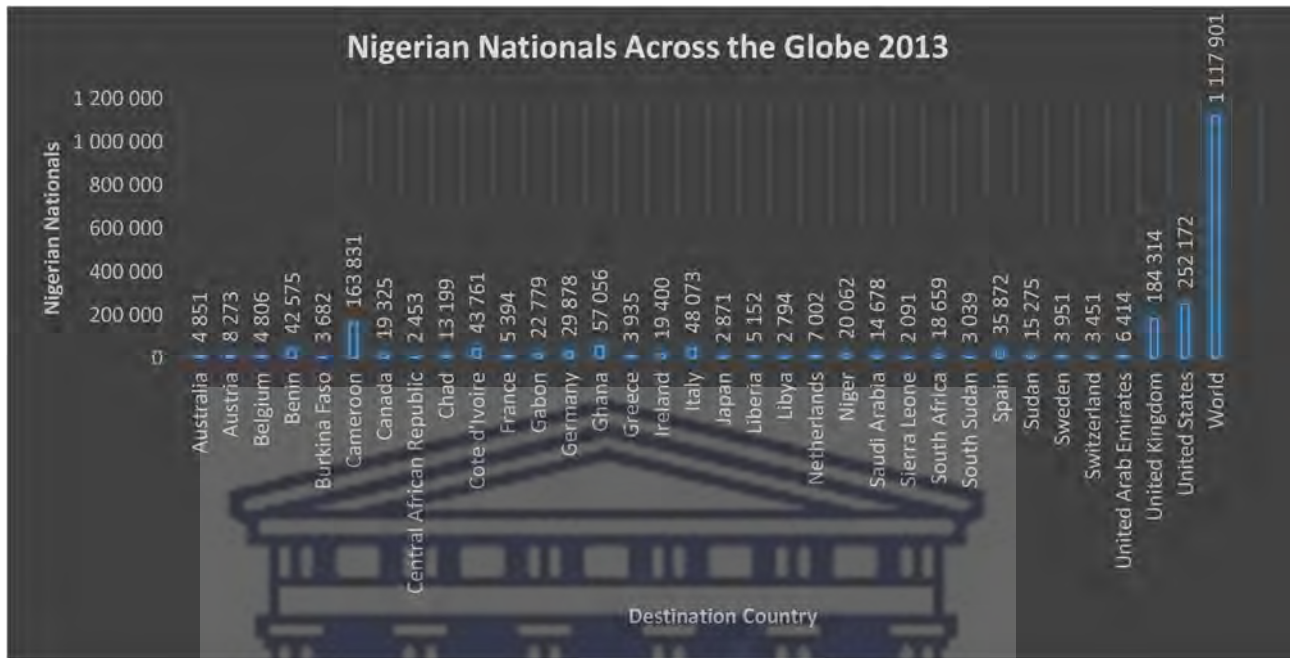
Organisations such as the Engineering Forum of Nigerians (EFN) are grounded in professional identities. Lampert (2009:178) states that "any discrimination based on ethnicity is incompatible not only with the organisation's values but also with the 'code of practice' to which professionals, in general, should adhere". Despite these good intentions, however, it has been found that "the geo-ethnic composition of these organisations generally reflects the fact that the Nigerian diaspora in the UK, like that in the USA, is dominated by people tracing their ancestry to southern Nigeria" (Lampert, 2009:179). This is because local connections within the geo-ethnic regions are difficult to find. In a 2013 paper, Lampert argues that the power of the Diaspora is overstated and that developments in Nigeria can be crucial for its migrants in other countries, as I will show in the South African example.

### **Profiling Nigerians in UK and US**

According to the World Bank, 1 117 901 Nigerian nationals settled globally by 2013 (The World Bank, 2017). By 2017, this number is estimated to have increased by 191 162, as depicted in graphs 4.1 and 4.2 below. Cameroon, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom appear to be the largest receiving countries of Nigerian nationals in 2013 and 2017. Important to note, however, is that there seems to be no consensus statistics on the number of Nigerians worldwide as statistics often vary between different sources.



**GRAPH 4.1: NIGERIAN NATIONALS ACROSS THE GLOBE 2013**



Source: Data drawn from World Bank Bilateral Migration Matrix (2013) - (The World Bank, 2017)

**GRAPH 4.2: NIGERIAN NATIONALS ACROSS THE GLOBE 2017**



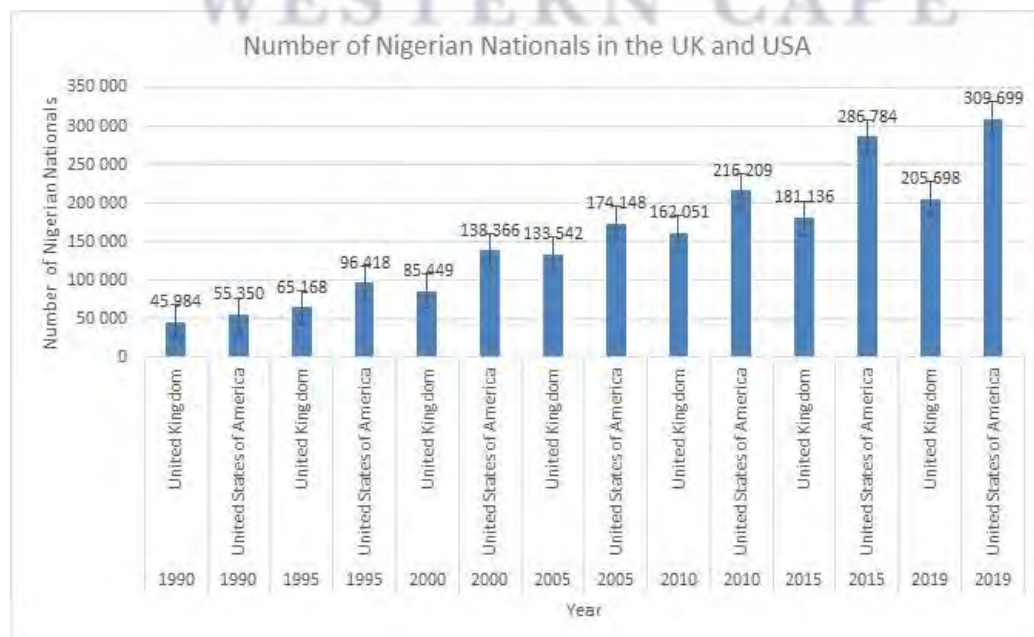
source: Data drawn from World Bank Bilateral Migration Matrix (2018) (World Bank, 2018)

The USA continues to be the top receiver of Nigerian nationals. In 1990, the USA had a total number of 55 350 Nigerian nationals living there, and escalations of these placed the number at 309 699 in 2019. The UK also had a significant increase in Nigerian nationals since 1990, when the number stood at 45 984 and increased to about 205 698 in 2019. Interestingly, the number of females in the USA started exceeding the number of males in 2010 (graph 4.3 below).

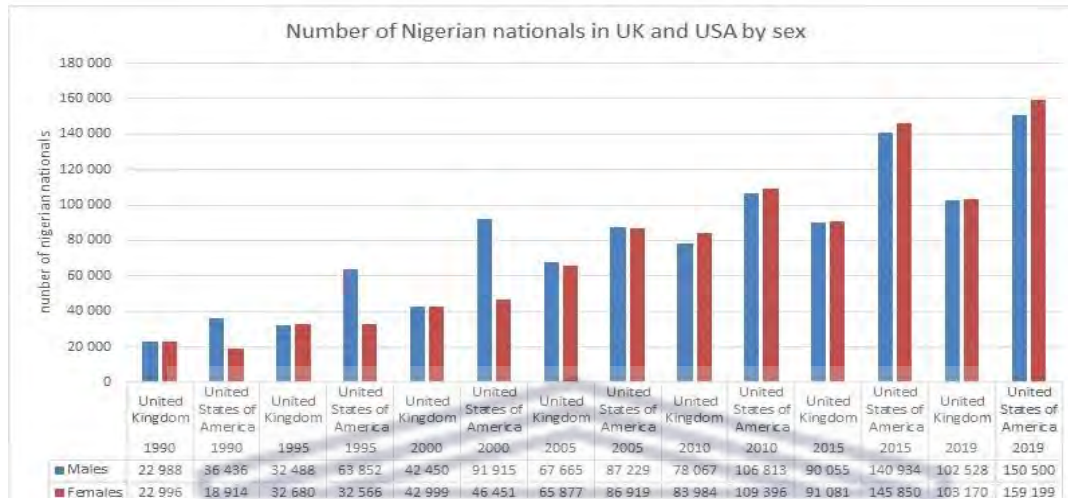
In the UK, the number between males and females since 2010 is either the same or the number of females exceeds the number of males. According to the Migration Data Portal (2021), the large portion of females in these regions is a combination of “the presence of older migrants in the population and the tendency of longer life expectancies of female migrants in comparison with males”. To briefly touch on this, women have become more ambitious, goal-driven and able to seek opportunities outside Nigeria after years of male domination. Omifolaji (2010:23) states, "In Nigerian culture, especially during pre-colonisation, families tended to focus more on male children”. Even with the focus on male children, though, women were always expected to work and provide for the family since, traditionally, men are not expected to provide for the women and children (Omifolaji, 2010).

In her study of *Nigerian women in the diaspora in pursuit of self-actualization: A case study of three women in Britain, the USA and Australia*, Omifolaji highlights that women largely emigrate to get away from the social, political, and economic problems in Nigeria, the lack of government social welfare especially for women remains a constant struggle.

**GRAPH 4.3: NUMBER OF NIGERIAN NATIONALS IN THE UK AND USA**



**GRAPH 4.4: NUMBER OF NIGERIAN NATIONALS IN THE UK AND USA**



Source of graphs 4.3 and 4.4:

<https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/countryprofiles.asp> (Accessed: 19 July 2021)

### Educational migration

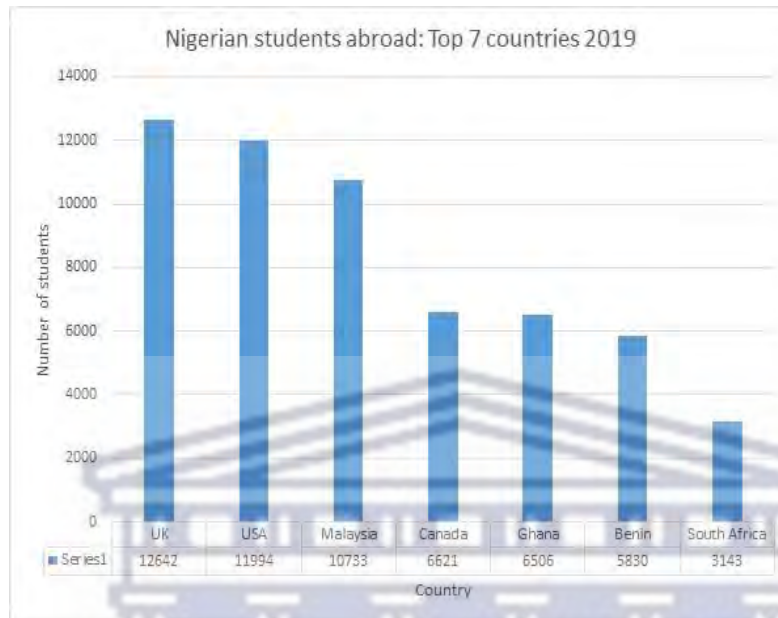
According to The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) global flow of tertiary-level students, the estimated number of Nigerian students abroad in 2019 was 85 251 (Unesco, 2020). The highest number of students can be found in the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA) and Malaysia, with South Africa ranking as the 7th highest destination for Nigerian students at 3 142.

**TABLE 4.1 NUMBER OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS- TOP FIVE COUNTRIES 2013-2017**

Country	2013	Country	2014	Country	2015	Country	2016	Country	2017
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	17 325	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	17 973	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	17 881	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	16 072	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	12 642
United States of America	7 002	Ghana	11 933	Ghana	13 919	Malaysia	14 705	United States of America	11 994
Ghana	6 954	Malaysia	8 407	Malaysia	12 460	Ghana	11 945	Malaysia	11 052
Canada	3 257	United States of America	7 531	United States of America	9 786	United States of America	11 167	Ghana	9 127
South Africa	2 243	Benin	6 978	Benin	7 192	Benin	8 510	Canada	6 621

Source: Unesco, (2020.)-Authors' entries

**GRAPH 4.5: NIGERIAN STUDENTS ABROAD-TOP 7 COUNTRIES**



Source: Information Retrieved from UNESCO, 2020. Author's own graphs

As indicated in graph 4.5, statistics released by UNESCO (2020) reveal that the UK was the top receiving country of Nigerian students in 2019, followed by the USA. Table 4.4 shows the UK has always been a top destination for Nigerian students, while the US, Ghana and Malaysia share second place depending on the year. SA ranked 7th place as a destination country for students, with 3143 students studying in SA in 2019. SA formed part of the top 5 countries only in 2013 with a mere 2243 students compared to the numbers in the UK and USA. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the number of students who left Nigeria between 2000 and 2006 doubled from 10 000 to 22 000 (Afolayan, 2009). This indicates that despite the rapid increase in universities (shown below), many students are still enrolled outside the country.

In light of this, Omifolaji (2010) provides a glimpse into how Nigerian nationals, especially women, have adapted abroad. She highlights the struggles of changing career prospects as those for which they are qualified are not always available to foreign nationals or recognized in the new environment. She also highlights the burden of sending remittances to the families left behind in Nigeria, which is especially difficult for newcomers. But she also speaks to the success these women have achieved through their pursuit and how they can occasionally return to Nigeria to provide services and support.

## **Nigerian Associations in the USA**

In my internet research on Nigerians in the USA, I found several associations for Nigerians living there. While their goals vary, they were all essentially founded to foster a supportive environment for Nigerians who live here. Included among these associations (highlighted in table 4.5) are the following:

The Nigerian American Multi-Service Association (NAMSA), a non-profit organisation based in the city of Boston, is open to all people of Nigerian descent. According to the Nigerian American Multi-Service Association (2022), the association is not affiliated with any specific ethnic, racial or geographical group, nor does it “discriminate based on creed, colour, gender, gender expression, ethnicity, marital status, age or disability”. The organisation aims to provide a supportive environment that will assist new immigrants in navigating American life “through education, networking opportunities and other services that help people adapt and thrive”(Nigerian American Multi-Service Association, 2022). NAMSA offers to its members various programmes such as the Women of Africa Initiative (WAFI), “a program for women in our community that fosters leadership, engagement, activism”. It also offers a platform where Nigerian citizens can unite against issues at home, highlighted in its rallies against home country challenges (“Nigerians in Boston rally to demand girls’ safe return”- Nigerian American Multi-Service Association, 2022).

The Nigerian-American Community Association (USA) is another non-profit organisation not affiliated with any specific group of Nigerian citizens. Dedicated to all Nigerian citizens living in New York and its surroundings, this organisation describes itself as a “non-religious, non-ethnic and non-partisan association” (Nigerian-American Community Association (USA), 2022). According to its website, the association “was born out of the desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the community. Also, to prevent, alleviate, social, economic, and other types of suffering in the community”. Its objectives include serving as a communication channel between its members and the government and providing members with information pertinent and beneficial to their lives. Displayed on its website are many activities that its members get involved in; these include but are not limited to job fairs, celebrations of home country events such as Independence Day, economic empowerment seminars, and rallies and protests identified causes both in the USA and Nigeria.

There are, of course, also ethnically or geographically driven organisations. Although ethnically dedicated to maintaining and enhancing cultural awareness amongst its members, these associations also provide opportunities for education and support, as done by those above. They also offer platforms where their members can unite on issues affecting them in the USA and Nigeria. The Yorubas of Atlanta, for example, were established to promote the Yoruba culture in the USA (YOA, 2022).

The availability of organisations along ethnic lines or geographical expressions, though, should not neglect the fact that these organisations can unite on common ground. Evidence of this is found in the Alliance of Nigerian organisations in Georgia (ANOG), an umbrella body that brings together various organisations. According to its website, “ANOG was established by some indigenes of Nigeria residing in Georgia who came together in 2004 to create a uniform forum of Nigerian Organisations in Georgia, to promote unity and values, and for promoting progress, information sharing, advocacy, and cultural understanding between member organisations and the rest of the society” (ANOG, 2022). Some services offered to its members include education forums and health care, celebrations of home country events, symposiums and meetings to deliberate on issues affecting their neighbourhoods and rallying its members against problems in Nigeria. What is interesting about ANOG is that it brings together various organisations (table 4.5), even those that are ethnic or geographically established. It thus provides for a collaboration of these organisations.

**TABLE 4.2: MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF ANOG.**

Nigerian Women Association of Georgia, Inc.	Obafemi Awolowo University Alumni Association, Georgia Chapter	Zumunta Association Atlanta	Yorubas of Atlanta
Urhobo Association of Georgia (UAG)	Uranran (Itsekiri) GA Iwere	University of Nigeria Alumni and Friends Association (USA) Atlanta Chapter	Umuada Igbo Nigeria USA Atlanta Chapter
Uma G'bae N'Edo club of Atlanta	Tiv-American Foundation Inc in Snellville	The Nubians	Positive Nigeria
Owo United Association	Owerri Family Union (OFU)	Otu Umuokpu Anambra USA Atlanta Chapter	Otu Umunne Cultural Organization
Orlu Regional-Union Atlanta	Onima Institute for Tradition and Development USA, Inc.	Ondo State Association of Georgia	

Source: <https://anogusa.org/members/>

### **Reach and influence beyond the American border**

Although Nigerian organisations in the USA are primarily concerned with the welfare of their members in the area, they are in their influence, involvement, and reach extend beyond American borders. Several examples of this are as follows:

An article published in the Boston Globe on 8 May 2014 emphasises the collective efforts of Boston-based Nigerians to exert pressure on the Nigerian Government to intensify its efforts to combat terrorist groups in Nigeria (Andersen, 2014). This follows the kidnapping of 270 young girls in Chibok. Further highlighting the collective action specifically across ethnic and religious boundaries, one demonstrator stated, “Please don’t allow anybody to use religion to divide you in this cause” (Andersen, 2014). In collaboration with other organisations, the Nigerian American Multi-Service Association (NAMSA) sought to maintain the pressure on the Nigerian government by arranging rallies and vigils to mark the first anniversary of the kidnapped girls (Enwemeka, 2015). Speaking to the collective efforts, Enwemeka (2015, no page number) states that:

Wednesday's vigil is being organized by various groups, including the Nigerian American Multi-Service Association (NAMSA), an umbrella organization for various local Nigerian groups, as well as Nigerian students at Harvard, MIT and Boston University. Organizers hope to keep the pressure on the Nigerian government and international community to take tangible steps to rescue the missing girls.

Nigerian organisations in the US commonly also provide support to their home country. The Yorubas in Atlanta specifically mention its support of the Lagos Disaster Relief Fund and the Bola Ige Memorial Fund in Nigeria (Adefi, 2004). Interestingly, Nigerians in the USA have also established organisations specifically dedicated to addressing issues in Nigeria. The organisation, *Better Nigeria for All*, whose mission includes “To promote awareness of individual responsibilities of all stakeholders in the project Nigeria by elevating the Office of the Citizen” (Better Nigeria for All, 2021), are involved in raising funds for Nigerian youth back home, activating socio-economic resources from the Nigerian diaspora for the development of Nigeria (Better Nigeria for All, 2021).

Serving as a watchdog for political activities in Nigeria, The President of *Better Nigeria for All* was founded by Professor Salewa Olafioye, previously a Federal Cabinet Minister in Nigeria and a health consultant for the United Nations (Better Nigeria for All, 2021). This shows the reach and influence of the organisation's executive authority, which is not limited to the USA but includes international bodies like the United Nations.

## **Nigerian Associations in the UK**

A similar search for Nigerian associations in the UK shows a web presence for the National Association of Nigerian Communities (NANC), the Central Association of Nigerians in the United Kingdom, the Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation UK (NIDO UK) and the Kwara State Association of Nigeria. According to its website, the NANC has existed since the 1970s; its mission is to ‘create a viable and functional socio-welfare organisation and Network that will stand the test of time as we support Nigerians in the UK’. While fostering the welfare and educational needs of its members in the UK, this national association also acts as a link between its members and the host government, its members and the Nigerian government and other organisations in the country (NANC, 2022). Regional branches of this organisation can be found in London, Leeds, Wakefield, Birmingham, and Nicol, amongst other areas around the UK.

The value of Nigerians in diaspora cannot be denied. The Nigerian government has sought to tap into these assets by establishing the Central Association of Nigerians in the United Kingdom (CANUK). This association “was formed by the Nigeria High Commission in the United Kingdom in 2005 in recognition of a clear need to unite the various Nigerian groups under one umbrella organisation”(Central Association of Nigerians in the United Kingdom, 2020). One of the important features of this association is the provision of a platform where all other organisations, irrespective of functions and dedications, may collaborate on common issues. Another vital feature is its vision of generating interest in the socio-economic development of Nigeria, thus providing a multi-scalar platform that would allow Nigerians in the UK to participate in and facilitate development at home.



**TABLE 4.3: NIGERIAN ORGANISATIONS IN THE UK**

Nigerian Community Northern Ireland - Niconi	Bayelsa State Union UK	Medical Association of Nigerians Across Great Britain (MANSAG)	British - Nigeria Law Forum
Cambridge University of Nigeria Society	Council of Igbo Communities UK	Delta State Forum	Edo State Indigenes UK
Engineering Forum of Nigeria	Ibusa Community UK	If Yoruba Contemporary Arts Trust	Ijaw Peoples' Association of Great Britain and Ireland
Itsekiri Congress UK (ICUK)	Kaduna State Union UK	Kwara State Association (KWASANG)	League of Nigerians in Diaspora
London Tari Club	<u>Lagos</u> State Union UK	British Nigerian Aviation Association	Council of Igbo Communities UK

List derived from <https://www.canukonline.com/members>

One of the largest diasporic organisations in the UK is the Nigerians in Diaspora Organisation UK, a chapter of the much larger organisations with branches across various countries, including the US, Australia, Greece, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Russia, etc. An exciting and essentially meaningful aspect of this organisation is the fact that it not only provides a platform for Nigerians in the UK to unite but is centred mainly on contributing to the development of Nigeria. According to its website, “The central vision of NIDO UK south chapter is to bring Nigerians living in the United Kingdom together and to identify those willing to offer their skills (education, information technology, Health, Economics, science, Administration, Law, Political and Corporate Governance, Management etc.) to assist Nigeria's national development” (*Nigerians In Diaspora Organisation UK*, 2020).

NIDO UK website reveals that the organisation aims to achieve, amongst others, “Promote, support and encourage global trade awareness and moral consciousness that promote positive business climate between Nigeria and the United Kingdom, improve the image of Nigeria to reinforce business and investment opportunities and Promote knowledge transfer and information sharing among all Nigerians in the United Kingdom, and the public and private sectors in Nigeria” (*Nigerians In Diaspora Organisation UK*, 2020). This shows that the organisation is not merely focused on supporting Nigerian nationals in the UK but also on business strategies and providing information to those back home.

One example of an association that features geographical expression and representation is the Kwara State Association of Nigeria. According to its website, the Kwara State Association of Nigeria “was formed to recognise a clear need to unite all sons and daughters of Kwara State origin, including all their ethnic and cultural groupings in the United Kingdom” (Kwara State Association of Nigeria 2022). Initially formed in the early 90s and relaunched in 2008, This welfare association aims to ensure that the interest and views of the people of Kwara State are represented and recognised in all aspects (Kwara State Association of Nigeria, 2022). Like CANUK and NIDO, the association is vested in the well-being of its people in the UK. Still, more specifically, it also concerns itself with issues of development of the Kwara State back in Nigeria. According to associations, its members contribute to their communities back home, including sending remittances, collaborating for financial support for students in Kwara State, financial support for those needing medical treatment, etc.

### **Reach and influence beyond the borders of the UK**

Nigerian associations in the UK are not only motivated to provide support and enhance the socio, cultural and economic circumstances of its people in the UK and Nigeria; but often exert their cross-border influence on events happening in Nigeria. Challenges encountered at a national level in Nigeria enhance acts of solidarity amongst the various diasporic groups in the UK, most showcased through protest action.

Nigerians in London, for example, protested alleged police brutality in a united front, regardless of their race or religion, using the hashtag #EndSARS (Vanguard, 2020). An article appearing in the Nigerian newspaper, Vanguard in October 2020 highlights that “Black-clad demonstrators, mostly part of Britain’s large Nigerian diaspora, held signs reading “End Sars, end police brutality” and sang “Buhari is a dead man” as they made their way through the streets of the capital” (Vanguard, 2020:).

There are, however, also area or ethnic-specific dynamics propelling the reactions of certain groups only. One example is a recent protest by the Kogites Diaspora Coalition at the Nigerian High Commission in London against what they believe is a resurgence of insecurities in the Kogi State in Nigeria (Olokor, 2022). Strong support for the view of a multi-scalar approach to dealing with issues is a quote from one of the protestors, which states:

Investigations through families and friends that are on the ground in the state have revealed that certain politicians are beginning to recruit criminal elements who are hellbent on ruining the peace being enjoyed in the state for so long. Of major concern to us are the activities and inflammatory statements of some prominent politicians who seem to trade in instigating violence and bloodshed (Olokor, 2022: no page number)

Interestingly, a recent demonstration by northern Nigerians in the UK under the hashtag #NorthIsBleeding underlines the multi-scalar role played by geographically localised groups and the ongoing split among Nigerians. Evidence of this is highlighted in an article posted in Sahara Reporters (2021:no page number) which articulates that: “Northerners resident in the UK will tomorrow stage a protest on the ongoing massive and unprecedented insecurity in Northern Nigeria .... He urged southern Nigerians in the UK to join their northern counterparts and actively participate in the protest”.

These multi-scalar approaches are not just limited to protests and dialogues between various actors. The reach and influence of UK-based Nigerian organisations include involvement through remittances and material benefits sent to Nigeria. In a recent article published in ThisDay(Ogundare, 2020), the Lagos State Union UK, for example, is celebrated for donating to local orphanages in Lagos.

In both 2017 and 2019, when xenophobic violence flared up against African foreign nationals in South Africa, there was a reaction from Nigerians in the UK. During both protest events, protestors, encompassing Nigerians and other African nationalities, marched to the South African embassies in London to express their displeasure with the killing of foreign residents in South Africa (Nairaland, 2017; Ohaegbu, 2019). Although these reactions have not been very large, they indicate that Nigerians in the UK are not passively watching xenophobic violence unfold in South Africa. Instead, they actively engage in protest xenophobia in SA.

## Concluding remarks

The United States of America and the United Kingdom continue to be top destinations for Nigerian migrants, who have established several organisations that not only offer a platform for addressing welfare issues in these countries but also primarily concern themselves with and actively address challenges in Nigeria as a country.

Though there is a tendency to establish organisations motivated explicitly by ethnic, religious, or geographical expressions, there are also national organisations that require no ethnic or religious affiliation. In cases where solidarity and unity are needed, Nigerians in the US and UK have proved to set aside their differences and pose a united front.

A large motivating factor for Nigerians in diaspora to set aside their differences is the systemic challenges entrenched in the Nigerian society, challenges largely inherited from Nigeria's colonial administrators, and motivators for their migration from Nigeria. The unequal development of the North and the Southern districts of Nigeria and the subsequent unequal development of education amongst Nigerians and the various regions in Nigeria are primary examples of this.

The colonial legacy of corruption, fraud, and ethnic bloodshed persists in the political domain, impeding the country's ability to achieve social cohesion and construct a successful nation-state among its more than 250 ethnic groups and two major religious groupings, the Muslim North, and Christian South.

While migration is often fuelled by factors such as a lack of educational development, ethnic tensions, and the rise of Evangelical churches, Nigerians appear to adapt well in foreign nations where national, ethnic, religious, and geographical associations provide not only welfare but also social, cultural, and economic support. The associations, through which Nigerians speak as one united voice, not only address the challenges they face while in Diaspora but also address issues like xenophobia in South Africa, where their responses to this give way to a multi-scalar approach. The following chapter will examine Nigerian nationals and their networks in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: NIGERIA-SOUTH AFRICAN RELATIONS, NIGERIANS ORGANISATIONS AND MIGRANT STRUGGLES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND GAUTENG**

### **Introduction**

Nigerians were typically not part of the mine labour migrants who came to SA during the last century. Significant numbers of Nigerians only started entering SA after 1994 when the new democratically elected African National Congress (ANC) led government started relaxing the immigration regulations imposed by the apartheid government. Nigerian immigrants, although much fewer than Zimbabweans, have drawn considerable stigma since their arrival and struggle to overcome this. Nigerians have, as early as 1994, been stigmatised as drug dealers, religious zealots, human traffickers, scammers etc. Dramatic accounts of Nigerian conspiracies and criminality have appeared in South African newspapers and internationally, stoking a panic. As reported by the United States Attorney's Office-District of New Jersey (2021):

From at least 2011 through 2021, the Black Axe defendants and other conspirators worked together from Cape Town to engage in widespread internet fraud involving romance scams and advance fee schemes. Many of these fraudulent narratives involved claims that an individual was travelling to South Africa for work and needed money or other items of value following a series of unfortunate and unforeseen events, often involving a construction site or problems with a crane. The conspirators used social media websites, online dating websites, and voice-over-internet protocol phone numbers to find and talk with victims in the United States while using a number of aliases. ... The conspirators used the bank accounts of victims and individuals with U.S.-based financial accounts to transfer the money to South Africa. In addition to their aliases, the conspirators used business entities to conceal and disguise the illegal nature of the funds.

Meanwhile, Nigerian newspapers publish reports depicting Nigerians as the main targets and victims of xenophobia, a sentiment contradicted by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa (Sahara Reporters, 2018). Headlines from the Nigerian Vanguard newspaper in 2018 include:

- “Again 2 Nigerians killed in South Africa, death figure rises to 118” (Vanguard, 2018a)
- “Don’t abandon Nigerians in South Africa” (Vanguard, 2018b)
- “Xenophobic attacks: Efforts to stop killings in S-Africa not working (Vanguard, 2018c).

South Africa’s Minister of International Relations noted that Nigerians and the Nigerian state needed to help South Africa overcome negative perceptions: “I would appreciate them in helping us as well to address the belief our people have and the reality that there are many persons from Nigeria dealing in drugs in our country (Sunday, 2019). There are many views on Nigerians in South Africa and vice versa.

In the first part of this chapter, I briefly examine the political and economic relations between SA and Nigeria to showcase how the relationship has evolved over the years. This is included because, regrettably, the stigmatization of Nigerians in SA manifests itself not only locally and individually but in overt violence. The context is also that the governments of SA and Nigeria appear to be engaged in a covert conflict over control of the African continent, with their rivalry frequently spilling over into the lower echelons of society. For example, a strong belief held by Nigerians articulates that the South African government is deliberately frustrating visa processes to keep Nigerians out of the country (Olufemi, 2022) while making significant profits through MTN in Nigeria.

Despite the deterioration amongst high-level officials and the unfavourable stereotypes attached to Nigerians, they continue settling in South Africa, specifically the Gauteng province, home to the most significant number of Nigerians. In the second part of this chapter, I examine the types of Nigerian organisations in SA. Herein, using secondary data, I identify the geography of settlement and the mode and features of the organisations that have contributed to their adaptation in SA. I also consider secondary accounts of Nigerian experiences of xenophobia and migrant struggles.

Drawing on Portes, Escobar and Arana's (2008) perspective on the importance of immigrant organisations, I argue that Nigerian migrant associations play an important role in settling Nigerian citizens in South Africa. While the significance of these organisations, as discussed by Portes, Escobar and Arana (2008), is discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of this study, I will briefly highlight their significance for collective action/responses again, creating platforms for social fields that straddle national borders; and creating platforms where immigrants are able to use the transnational experiences locally.

## **South-Africa Nigerian relations: A brief history**

### **The role of Nigeria in South Africa's liberation struggle**

Several authors have documented the history of SA-Nigeria relations (Agbu, Okereke, Wapmuk, and Adeniyi, 2013; Games, 2013; Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017), showing how much black South Africans, in particular, “owe” Nigeria (Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi, 2019). Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi (2019:5) suggest that:

The Murtala/Obasanjo junta provided a safe haven and education to many South African students, and political exiles, including Thabo Mbeki ...General Olusegun Obasanjo nationalised British Petroleum (BP) to African Petroleum (AP) in 1979 for supplying oil to apartheid South Africa. He also nationalised British-owned Barclays Bank (now Union Bank) and Standard Bank (now First Bank). Nigeria bankroll (ed) the African National Congress ...

Also speaking to this ‘bankrolling’ of the ANC, Seteolu and Okuneye (2017:60) state that:

Nigeria assisted the ANC with \$32,000 in 1975... and spent over \$61,000,000 million on the struggle against anti-apartheid. It created the Southern African Relief Fund (SARF) in December 1976 to manage deductions from the salaries of Nigerian workers and mandatory contributions of students. The fund offered medical and other supplies to the liberation movements and granted hundreds of scholarships to black South African students in Nigeria's tertiary institutions

Although Nigeria did play a significant role in the liberation of SA, especially after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, which saw Nigeria not only placing a ban on South African imports but specifically expelling it from various institutions such as the South African Dutch reformed church from Nigeria and the Commonwealth of Nations in 1961 (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017); the discussions by Ogunnoiki and Ademyemi (2019), and Seteolu and

Okuneye (2017) may create the impression that Nigeria did these things specifically to the benefit from the ANC. According to Games (2012), this assistance may explain Nigerians' current expectations of reciprocity.

Wilmot (1989) argues that the Southern African Relief fund was to benefit the Southern African continent, not just South Africa, as commonly suggested. He also refers to the failure of this fund by stating that

A southern Africa relief fund was launched and collected over ten million Naira. But to date, no public accounts have been rendered. There have been allegations of fraud and embezzlement. There is little evidence of expenditure on objectives for which the fund was set up, i.e., relief in Southern Africa. Support for students from the region has been minimal (Wilmot, 1959:8).

### **Post-apartheid relations-a case of subtle rivalry**

After 1994, the Government of Nigeria and the leaders of the ANC government developed a positive relationship. According to Games (2013), "The relationship got off to a good start, raising expectations of a strong alliance between these two countries built on the pre-democracy platform in South Africa". However, the fact that the first democratically elected president, Nelson Mandela, had largely disagreed with some of the actions taken by the Nigerian ruler, San Abacha, was the first blow to the relationship. The first intervention was Mandela's call to release Chief MKO Abiola. Causing further outrage is Mandela's intervention in the extra-judicial killings of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni men and South Africa's role in the expulsion of Nigeria from the Commonwealth of Nations (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017). Games (2013:4) asserts that:

Mandela's outraged response alienated him, and South Africa, in Africa where the convention was to maintain African solidarity on issues. Mandela's outspoken criticism of Abacha and unilateral call for Nigeria to be suspended from the Commonwealth over the hangings gave the impression of South Africa being unduly aggressive and out of step with African political norms.

Seteolu and Okuneye (2017:65) stress, "The Nigeria-South Africa relations have been a potpourri of co-operation and conflict; there is hardly consistent peaceful co-existence that would deepen relations". Agreeing that this relationship has often been hostile and competitive, Games (2013) highlights the existence of historic bonds and the economic, political, and military responsibilities shared by these countries on the African continent as



motivators to build and strengthen the relationship. The restoration of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, and the shared vision of Pan-Africanism between former Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo, brought about new hope for the relationship between Nigeria and South Africa. Games (2013:4) highlights this relationship as

The two leaders created a leadership platform that saw the birth of initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African renaissance and the birth of the African Union out of the Organisation of African Unity. The relationship also spawned the South Africa-Nigeria Binational Commission, launched in 1999 to provide a platform for engagement on bilateral issues of importance.

The cordial relations between Mbeki and Obasanjo produced several partnerships and initiatives. One of these is an increase in trade relations, giving way to Nigeria becoming one of South Africa's biggest trading partners (Agbu, Okereke, Wapmuk and Adeniyi, 2013) and highlighting the growth of its trade partnership, Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi (2019:6) state that "From 1999 to 2007, the trade relationship between Nigeria and South Africa registered substantial growth from R181 3578 000 to almost R11 billion in 2007".

Considering this, the strenuous relations that persisted despite the strides made by Mbeki and Obasanjo can be viewed across three interconnection areas, bilateral trade and investment relations, bi-laterals political engagements and multi-lateral relations. The bilateral trade and investment relations between the two countries post-1999 have allowed South Africa to become one of the top investors in the Nigerian economy. The initial blossoming ties in this area have provided a platform for major companies such as MTN, Shoprite, DSTV and Shell to enter the Nigerian market. Today they enjoy some significant benefits in their market dominance. However, problems that would later arise with this market dominance revolve around allegations that SA seeks to take over the Nigerian economy (Games, 2013).

While the bilateral trade and investment relations are discussed in more detail in the following chapter, it is important to mention that the common perspective amongst Nigerians today is that Nigerian companies are not given the same preference in SA. Nigerians are believed to hold some resentment and envy towards the success of South African companies in Nigeria, even though these companies have included Nigerians in running their businesses, allowing for subsidiaries, and annually increasing their investments in Nigeria (Games, 2012).

The 2008 xenophobic attacks have heavily influenced bilateral political engagements between SA and Nigeria. Before the attacks, the former Presidents of these countries, Mbeki and Obasanjo, worked tirelessly to mediate development concerns on the African continent and to advocate for African debt cancellation with the international community. Seteoula and Okuneye (2017:63) state that:

South Africans became suspicious of Nigerians as aiding crimes such as drug trafficking, robbery, and prostitution, among others, in their homelands. This lack of trust was betrayed in 2004 when a Johannesburg radio presenter humorously insulted the Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo, who was in South Africa for Mbeki's inauguration, that he probably carried cocaine in his luggage

Other events that put more strain on the relationship between SA and Nigeria were the deportation of 125 Nigerians from SA in 2012, to which Nigerians retaliated by deporting 131 South Africans, the non-recognition of Nigeria at the funeral of former President Nelson Mandela and the 2014 confiscation of \$5.7 million from a private Nigerian aircraft in South Africa (Seteolu and Okuneye, 2017:64). Considering this, Games (2013:2) contends that "While the leadership and political issues are important, the bigger problem is more fundamental and plays out at a people-to-people level".

### **Images of South Africa through the eyes of top Nigerian Newspapers**

One of the areas most used on a local level to showcase the tensions between SA and Nigeria is the media. Over the last few years, journalists in Nigeria have used this avenue to portray SA negatively. A glance at some of Nigeria's leading newspapers shows not only the negative perception of South Africa but often encourages Nigerians to act against their South African counterparts.

Headlines from the Vanguard newspaper in 2018 include:

- "Again 2 Nigerians killed in South Africa, death figure rises to 118" (Vanguard, 2018a)
- "Don't abandon Nigerians in South Africa" (Vanguard, 2018b)
- "Xenophobic attacks: Efforts to stop killings in S-Africa not working (Vanguard, 2018c).

These headlines relay the messages that South Africans continue to attack Nigerians and that the efforts by a foreign government to stop the violence and killing of Nigerians in SA are futile. Most worrisome is the encouragement of Nigerian nationals in Nigeria to take a stand against this. These articles use sentences such as “While South African companies transfer billions of dollars in profit made from doing business in Nigeria, Nigerians in South Africa are sending body bags of murdered breadwinners back home to Nigeria to dejected families” (Vanguard, 2018a) and “South Africa has a lot of economic interests in Nigeria which we can use to force it to protect our citizens in their country”(Vanguard, 2018b). They also quote influential people for whom Nigerians have much respect, such as the chairman of the Presidential Advisory Committee against Corruption (PACAC), saying, “The government should also close South African establishments here and nationalise them. That may be the only resort to self-help that the South African government will appreciate” (Vanguard, 2018c).

Headlines from the Daily Post show a similar trend. A glance depicts the following:

- “South Africans launch fresh attacks on Nigerians” (Nwachukwu, 2018)
- “Another Nigerian stabbed to death in South Africa” (Nwachukwu, 2019)
- “Xenophobia attack: Again, mob set ablaze another Nigerian in South Africa” (Silas, 2018)

These headlines are specifically maneuvered to create the image that Nigerian nationals specifically are the target of South Africa’s xenophobia, which we have seen, is not necessarily the case. Nigerian newspapers often rally Nigerians to not only take a stand against South Africa’s xenophobia in light of what they believe is the federal government’s failure to protect its citizens but, there appears to be a subtle encouragement and underlying message that one way of this retaliation could be the closure of South African businesses.

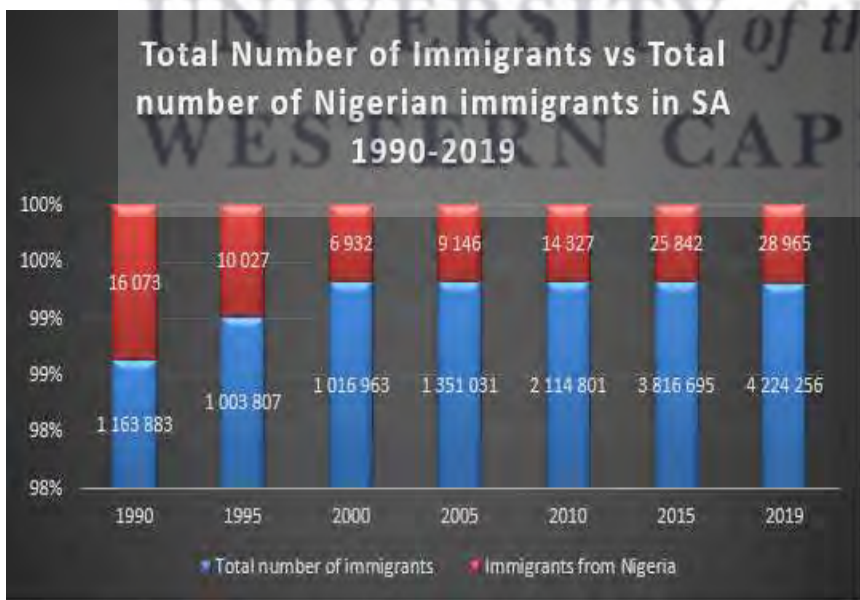
### **Nigerians in South Africa**

Since 1994, SA has remained one of the top destinations for immigrants from the African continent. According to the 2019 United Nations (UN) International Migration Report, it has also ranked among the top ten net immigration countries since 2000 (United Nations-Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2019). The number of foreign-born inhabitants in SA is estimated to be above 4 million, up almost 2 million since 2010 (IOM UN Migration, 2019).

In contrast to those from Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Lesotho, Nigerians in SA do not make up a significant portion of the immigrant population. In fact, there has been much speculation and arguments around the actual numbers of Nigerians in SA. The projected number of 800 000, suggested by the Nigerian Union South Africa (NUSA) spokesperson, Eneka Ezinteje, in 2017, was largely rejected as false. According to an article on AfricaCheck (Vinayak Bhardwaj, 2017), the union is believed to issue each Nigerian living in South Africa an ID card, but it could not confirm the actual number of Nigerians that have been given one.

While the 2016 community survey results released by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) place the number of Nigerians at 30 314, compared to 26 341 in 2011 (Statistics South Africa, 2016), there appears to be no consistent data on these numbers. Data from the United Nations Populations Division (Division, 2019) appear slightly lower in these estimates. However, the consistency in data allows me to showcase (graph 5.1) the percentage of Nigerian citizens relative to all foreigners living in South Africa throughout a 10-year period. For instance, in 1990, only 1.3 percent (16073) of all foreigners living in South Africa were Nigerian nationals. Since 2000, they have only represented 0.6 percent of all migrants in South Africa, totalling 28 965 in 2019.

**GRAPH 5.1: TOTAL NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS V.S TOTAL NUMBER OF NIGERIAN IMMIGRANTS IN SA (1990-2019)**



Authors' own graphs: Data collected from United Nations Population Division migrant stock 2019

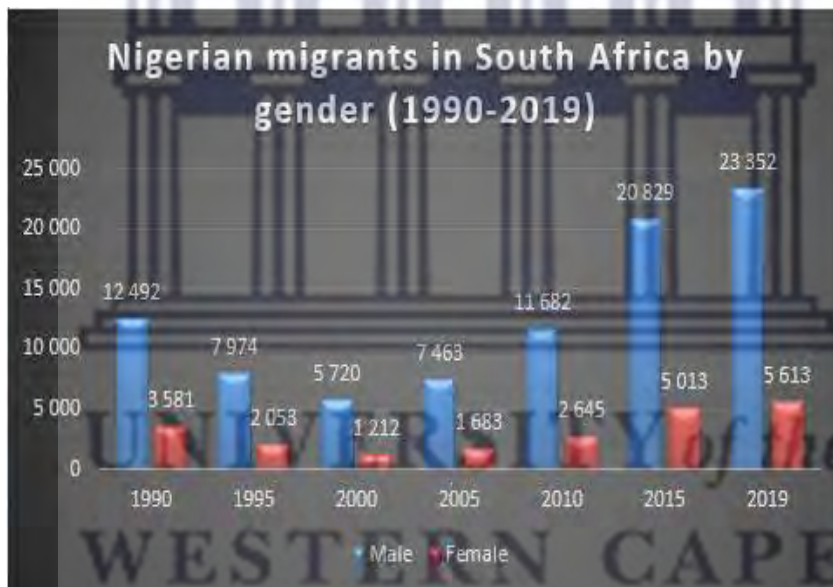
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock>

## Profiling Nigerian immigrants in SA

Although men make up most Nigerian immigrants to SA, the number of Nigerian women relocating here has increased noticeably in recent years (graph 5.2). One of the most significant phenomena in modern migration is the migration of women, who have previously been excluded from these patterns. According to (Adepoju, 2006:no page number),

Anecdotal evidence reveals a striking increase in migration by women, who had traditionally remained at home while men moved around in search of paid work. A significant share of these women is made up of migrants who move independently to fulfil their own economic needs; they are not simply joining a husband or other family members.

**GRAPH 5.2: NIGERIAN MIGRANTS IN SOUTH AFRICA BY GENDER (1990-2019)**



Authors' own graphs: Data collected from United Nations Population Division migrant stock 2019

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock>

In attempting to understand why there are so few women migrants, I looked at the work of Pittin (1984), who suggests that one look at women's traditional roles. Concerning the case of Hausa women in Katsina City, Pittin (1984) argues that seclusion is allowed only for 'associational migration', meaning that they migrated purely to join a husband or family in a nearby town or compound. Pittin (1984:1312) states that:

Hausa women are forced into a very narrow roles, limited still more by the women's lack of education or other which would enable them to seek occupations in the formal sector of the economy. Without socially sanctioned access even to the opportunities

in the informal sector open to their compatriots from other ethnic groups, Hausa play the role traditionally accorded to and expected of them.

While gender relations in Nigeria might not be at a stage where feminists would rejoice, Nigerian women have made significant strides globally; many are no longer confined to the boundaries of compound or country life, focussed on harnessing the traditions of patriarchy.

According to Segatti, Adeagbo and Ogunyemi (2012), Nigerians are primarily comprised small entrepreneurs, highly-medium skilled workers, and students. In their study on Nigerian diasporas in the South, Olatuyi, Awoyinka and Adeniyi (2013) found that approximately 80% of respondents are highly educated, with many having at least an undergraduate degree.

Though many Nigerians who enter SA are students and businesspeople, several asylum seekers also exist. Regarding the Nigerian refugee and asylum population in SA, Segatti et al. (2012) state, "Over the past 10 years, about 1000 to 3000 have applied annually, although the numbers vary greatly by year". They argue that most of these applications are, however, rejected. They argue, "In 2011, Nigerians were rejected in 99.9% of cases, compared with 86% of asylum seekers generally" (Segatti et al., 2012:3).

Most Nigerians settle in the Gauteng Province (Segatti et al., 2012). Table 5.1 shows the number of Nigerians per province according to the 2001 census data providing a comparative perspective on the number of Nigerian citizens compared to Malawians and Mozambicans per province for 2001 (Segatti et al., 2012). While the data is old (2001), it provides a baseline. According to this information, Nigerian citizens are a relatively small fraction compared to other African immigrants.

**TABLE 5.1- PRESENCE OF NIGERIAN, MALAWIAN AND MOZAMBICANS BY PROVINCE: 2001**

	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LIM	MP	NC	NW	WC	South Africa
<b>Nigeria 2001</b>	325	71	5,029	737	177	122	14	131	566	7,172
<b>Malawi 2001</b>	277	257	16,772	2,155	1,070	1,272	101	2,251	935	25,090
<b>Mozambique 2001</b>	284	5,368	121,039	7,063	48,623	52,169	119	34,294	709	269,669

Source: Segatti, et al (2012:4)

Most Nigerians, who typically comprise many small entrepreneurs and highly medium-skilled workers, settle in Gauteng, the economic hub of SA. This is evidence of what Portes and Rumbaut (2014:84) speak about when they state, "Entrepreneurial minorities tend to settle in large urban areas that provide proximity to markets and sources of labour". Whereas the xenophobic attacks at the end of May 2008 tended to happen in townships and shack settlements or near hostels, this largely bypassed Nigerians who tend to live in CBD and former white areas of the city.

They also believe that new immigrants tend to settle where their compatriots have done so in the past, and "the operation of kin and friendship ties is nowhere more effective than in guiding new arrivals toward pre-existing ethnic communities" (Portes and Rumbaut, 2014:83).

### **Nigerian communities in SA**

Though there have been notable studies on Nigerians in SA, few have examined how Nigerians mobilise. Olatuyi, Awoyinka and Adeniyi (2013) specifically compare the Nigerian diasporas in Ghana and SA and how these can be used for national development in Nigeria, while Isike (2015) examines the social ties that connect Nigerians with South Africans in Umhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal.

Documenting the plight of Nigerians in SA, Adesina (2019) highlights the illegal arrests and extra-judicial killing of Nigerians in SA, explicitly mentioning the case of "Obinna Ugbaja, who was killed by the police in Cape Town on 5 January 2013, and Emmanuel Okwu Okafor, who was shot in the head on 11 March 2014, by a 35-year-old South African man inside a restaurant in a shopping complex at the Central Walk Shopping Centre in Pretoria" (Adesina, 2019:120).

Adesina (2019:120) also states that:

On 26 March 2014, the Public Relations Officer of the Nigeria Union South Africa, Emeka Ezinteje Collins, asserted that no fewer than 112 Nigerians were arrested and detained in March 2014 in the Germiston area of Johannesburg (cited in Abodedele 2014). On several occasions, the shops and businesses of Nigerians have been looted, destroyed or burnt by South Africans. For instance, on April 17, 2015, the mechanic workshop of a Nigerian, with 10 cars and all the tools inside was destroyed. In February 2017, Nigerian-owned businesses were looted and burnt in Pretoria West.

In a recent interview with Nigerians on their experience in SA, a female respondent by Plumtre (2019) expressed the opinion that “South Africans blur the lines where immigrants and foreign nationals are involved. They use ‘Nigerians’ as a blanket term”. Asked to explain further, the respondent was quoted as saying:

When I first moved to South Africa, someone said to me, “The Nigerians in Johannesburg speak French,” when I kept insisting, I could only speak English. He was actually referring to Congolese immigrants.

So when you hear people say South Africans say things like: “Oh, we’re tired of the Nigerians in this place,” what they really mean is, they’re tired of Zimbabweans, Malawians, the Congolese and just about all black immigrants in South Africa. Plumtre (2019)

A Nigerian PhD student who lives in Durban featured in an article in the Nigerian newspaper, *the Guardian*, as saying that “Nigerians all over carry a degree of stigma, because some people from our country are involved in crime. So, people, at times, discriminate against us due to this generalisation” (Nwakunor and Nwanne, 2018). This creates the view that ALL Nigerians, irrespective of their immigration status, are discriminated against.

Nwakunor and Nwanne (2018) point out only a portion of the significance that Nigerian organisations play in the lives of Nigerians living in South Africa by stating that:

14 Nigerians living in Rustenburg, South Africa, were arrested for public violence. Investigation revealed that they actually went on a protest against the killing of fellow Nigerians during a xenophobic attack by some disgruntled South Africans. The Nigerian Consulate and the Nigerian Union in South Africa had been collaborating in their efforts to secure the release.

### **Mode and features of Nigerian organisations in SA**

Like their counterparts in the United States and the United Kingdom, Nigerian organisations in SA are frequently organized along ethnic, religious and geographic lines; however, other national organisations are not connected to any ethnic or geographic expression. Nigerian organisations in SA are as well-organised, well-resourced, and well-connected as those in the US and UK. Examining the Nigerian diaspora and the groups or networks they now have in SA and other countries shows considerable organisation and resource mobilisation.



While there is no precise data on the number of Nigerian organisations in South Africa or Gauteng specifically, a google search brought about some 22 organisations, including the Nigerian consulate and the Nigerian High Commissioner. Table 5.1 highlights some of these organisations, their location and spread, and, more importantly, their ties to Nigeria. Some of the organisations used in this study were interviewed and will be discussed in more detail below; a quick overview of Nigerian organisations reveals the following:

There are two national organisations which require no ethnic, religious, professional or geographical affiliation, the Nigerian Citizen's Association South Africa (NICASA) and the Nigerian Union South Africa (NUSA).

At a regional level, numerous South African universities have Nigerian student organisations, including some of the most prestigious, like the University of Cape Town (UCT), Stellenbosch University, The University of Pretoria (UP), and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). These student groups are also a part of the larger umbrella organisation in South Africa, the National Association of Nigerian Students in South Africa (NANSA), which is linked to the group in Nigeria that speaks for all tertiary students in Nigeria, the National Association of Students in Nigeria (NANS).

In my research, I found two women's associations affiliated with Nigerians, the Nigerian Women's Association of South Africa (NWSA) and the United Nigerian Wives in South Africa (UNWISA). What is interesting to note about UNWISA is that Nigerian women did not start this group, but South African women married to Nigerians, tired of the continuous discrimination they face for being married to Nigerian men.

Ethnic Associations include Ohaneze Ndi-Igbo South Africa, the Association of Yorubas in Diaspora (AYIDSA), the National Association of Yoruba Descendants (NAYDSA), the Igbo-Union South Africa, and the Nzuko Ndi-Igbo Community Care South Africa. Religious institutions include the Nigerian Pastors Association South Africa, the Nigerian Christian Association South Africa, Asalatu Nobiyu Muslim Community, and the Ne Na Ozo Ndi Igbo South Africa. Nigerians also typically organize themselves according to hometown/state organisations. Some of these include the Akwa Ibom Indigene Organisation South Africa, the Niger Delta Association and the Abia Indigenes Congress, South Africa

**TABLE 5.2: NIGERIAN ORGANISATIONS IN SA, HEADQUARTERED IN GAUTENG PROVINCE.**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Location and spread</b>	<b>Established in... and links to Nigeria</b>	<b>Membership and Facebook website following</b>
Nigeria Citizens Association South Africa (Nicasa)	National-Community welfare organisation	Headquarters in Gauteng. Spread across SA. NICASA is the apex organ representing the community of Nigerian Citizens resident in the RSA	2018; Links to the Nigerian consulate and High Commission in SA	Membership unknown Following of 1000 on Facebook
Nigerian Union of South Africa (Nusa)	National-Community welfare organisation	Headquarters in Gauteng. Spread across SA. Open to All Nigerians living in South Africa and their legitimate spouses and children.	2008; Links to the Nigerian consulate and High Commission in SA and to Unions in Nigerian and abroad	Membership of 5000 Following of 8900d on Facebook
National Association of Nigerian Students in South Africa (Nanssa)	Student organisation	Headquarters in Pretoria and links to individual student associations around SA tertiary institutions. Association for all Nigerian students studying at the tertiary level. Addresses the well-being of Nigerian students in SA	2009; Links to the Nigerian consulate and High Commission in SA Links to the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) in Nigeria and abroad	Membership of 2000 Following of 783 on Facebook
Annsu Stellenbosch	Student organisation	Located at the University of Stellenbosch. ANSSU is a socio-cultural, academic, non-political and non-profit making Association operating within the University of Stellenbosch and its sister campuses in Tygerberg, Bellville.	Links to Nansa; Links to NANS in Nigeria.	Not applicable
NAIJASOC-UCT	Student organisation	University of Cape Town. The Nigerian Students Society (aka 'NaijaSoc') is for all Nigerian students and friends of Nigeria to "promote unity and community in our society and on campus.	2008; Links to Nansa. Links to NANS in Nigeria	Membership for this year (2022) is around 30. This varies each year. Facebook following of 533

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Location and spread</b>	<b>Established in... and links to Nigeria</b>	<b>Membership and Facebook website following</b>
Nigeria Students University of KwaZulu-Natal (ANSU)	Non-profit Student organisation	The University of KwaZulu-Natal. An association geared towards fostering unity among Nigerian students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.	2017 Links to Nansa Links to NANS in Nigeria	180 Members for 2022 - varies according to the number of students registered. Facebook following of 567
Nigerian Women's Association South Africa	Non-Profit women's organisation	Gauteng, an organisation dedicated to the welfare of Nigerian women in SA	2014; Links to the Nigerian consulate and High Commission in SA	Membership of 120 women
United Nigerian wives in south Africa	Non-Profit women's organisation	Gauteng and Cape Town. An organisation dedicated to the South African spouses of Nigerian citizens in SA.	2013, Links to other organisations	Membership unknown. Facebook following of 2.9 thousand
Ohaezeze-ndigbo South Africa	Non-profit ethnic organisation	Headquartered Gauteng  The branch of the organisation is found in Enugu state Nigeria. Apex Igbo Social Cultural Group	2001; Links to the Nigerian consulate and High Commission in SA	Membership unknown. Facebook following of 869
Association of Yorubas in Diaspora	Non-profit ethnic organisation	Gauteng. Started by a group of like-minded Yoruba academics, professionals, businesspersons and artisans in South Africa	2016; Links to the Nigerian consulate and High Commission in SA	Not applicable
National Association of Yoruba Descendants	Non-profit ethnic organisation	Gauteng spread across Southern Africa. Non-partisan socio-cultural organization of Yoruba Descendants	2008; Links to the Nigerian consulate and High Commission in SA	Membership of 200+

*Organisational focus and interest:*

Nigerian organisations in SA are mainly focused on the welfare of their members through various programmes that could assist in improving their lives in SA and, indirectly, Nigeria. Whilst it is impossible to fully delineate the objectives, aims, involvement and characteristics of each of these organisations, a broad overview of their formal involvement in various issues speaks to what these organisations provide to their members. These are as follows:

*National organisations:*

The national associations, Nigeria Citizens Association South Africa (NICASA) and the Nigerian Union South Africa (NUSA) are open to all Nigerians residing in South Africa, irrespective of their political, ethnic, or geographical affiliation. The main purpose of these associations revolves around the welfare of their members. Described as ‘apex’ associations, their branches are in several provinces across SA, including the Western Cape, Limpopo and Gauteng, where it is headquartered. Crucial to emphasize is that Nigerian citizens are not forced to choose between these two organisations; instead, one person may be a member of both NICASA and NUSA.

Each of these associations has a Board of Trustees and an executive who attends to the daily functions of the association. The day-to-day operations of these organisations not only revolve around creating educational, cultural or information platforms and events for their members, but they often must deal with the vast number of challenges Nigerian citizens face in SA. While the number of members who form part of NICASA, established in 2018, is unknown, its Facebook following has around 1000 members. NUSA, established in 2008, has a national membership of about 5000 and a Facebook following of 8900 members. Essentially, these two associations have a total reach of around 10,000 people.

NICASA and NUSA are known for speaking out against issues that affect Nigerian citizens in SA and are frequently at the forefront of Nigerian nationals' protests. An article on IOL news in 2020 reported a demonstration held by the African Diaspora Forum (ADF) and NICASA against crimes in SA, for which Nigerian citizens are sometimes accused (Mpofu, 2020). According to the NICASA spokesperson, Bartholomew Eziagalo, “Nicasa wished to categorically state that they condemned and stood against human trafficking, gender-based violence, drug dealing and all forms of violent crime” (Mpofu, 2020). In May 2021, NUSA rallied its members to protest against a hike in passport application fees (The Guardian, 2021).

Another example of the involvement of these associations in everyday social issues was recently highlighted in the Guardian (2022). Herein, underscoring the perception that Nigerians are often the victims of extrajudicial killings, the President of NUSA, Mr Collins Mgbo, spoke out against the killing of two of its members at the hands of members of the community at a taxi rank in Vereeniging, near Johannesburg. According to Mr Mgbo, “Nigeria Union condemns unequivocally any form of criminal activity by Nigerians in SA, but calls on the governments, especially the Consul General of Nigeria to South Africa, to intervene in the matter. We do not condone crime, but justice must be served by the court of law should anyone be found guilty of any criminal act” (The Guardian, 2022).

These associations unite Nigerians on issues that affect them in SA and at home. In October 2020, NUSA rallied its support for a peaceful protest at the Nigerian High Commission against police brutality and the disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in Nigeria (IOL, 2020). NUSA president, Adetola Olubajo, said, “A memorandum will be submitted to the Nigerian High Commissioner, Ambassador Kabir Bala. We have been following the protest keenly to see what direction the Nigerian government will follow”. These organisations are also thus the link between ordinary Nigerians in South Africa, and the Nigerian Government, especially those Government representatives in SA like the Consulate General and the High Commissioner.

#### *Student Associations*

Student organisations have always been essential players in the history of African countries. Radical political student organisations have contributed significantly to the fight against oppression, and they still do. Students make up a much more significant portion of society than previously assumed and are growing more restless, vocal, and vehement in their opposition to things with which they disagree.

As I demonstrate the interests of Nigerian students across national boundaries, their focus and influence are no longer limited to Nigerian state affairs but also encompass overseas events that impact them. Their ability to mobilize now goes beyond just the people in their own neighbourhood and crosses international boundaries, as highlighted in the article “COMMUNITY REACTIONS: #EndSARS” (Lucas, 2020). Protesting SA enterprises in Nigeria in response to xenophobic violence in South Africa shows their transnational interest and influence. MTN was temporarily shut down in July 2019 due to the involvement of the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS).

With the rise of globalisation and large-scale Nigerian migration, student societies, like churches, have transcended national borders. Four of South Africa's most prestigious universities, Stellenbosch, the University of Cape Town (UCT), the University of the Western Cape, and the University of Pretoria, all have Nigerian student societies. According to the Stellenbosch website, the Association of Nigerian Students Stellenbosch University (ANSSU) aims to promote “ethnic diversity of Nigeria's cultural values and beliefs”(ANSSU: *Association of Nigerian Students at Stellenbosch University*, 2021). It encourages an active engagement with the Stellenbosch community”. On Facebook, the association has a following of 263 people, and according to this page, the association has also been extended to the Stellenbosch medical campus in Tygerberg. As indicated on their website, the association provides a structure for the Nigerian student community in which they engage on various issues and get together to celebrate Nigerian culture, including days of major events such as the country’s Independence Day.

The University of Cape Town’s Nigerian Students’ Association has the same structure found at Stellenbosch University. The association provides Nigerian students with a platform to network, associate, seek help, live out their culture, learn from each other and share experiences. On Facebook, the association has a following of 466 people on a page created in February 2012. According to this page (*NaijaSoc UCT | Facebook*, 2021):

We are a home away from home! The Nigerian Students Society (aka 'NaijaSoc') is for all Nigerian students and friends of Nigeria. We seek to promote unity and community in our society and on campus. We engage intellectually and socially, providing an outlet to express our Nigerian heritage and culture.

The above-mentioned National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) has a South African affiliate, the National Association of Nigerian Students South Africa (NANSA). It has a Facebook following of 596 people, and the page was launched in 2018. The organisation posts much essential news on this page, including those provided by the Nigerian embassy in Johannesburg, and they interact with students from all nine provinces of South Africa.

### *Women's Associations*

Gender inequality is one of Nigeria's most pressing issues, particularly in the north. As in many other African countries, women in Nigeria are seen as subordinates, housekeepers, and child-bearers. Though female voices and participation have played an essential role in changing Nigeria's political and social landscape, scholars such as Dagunduro and Adenugba (2020) and Orisadare (2019) conclude in their studies that there are insufficient government policies and empowerment programs aimed at empowering women to increase their political and economic participation.

But there have been various notable instances where women have made significant contributions. Orisandare (2019) states that “The evolution in the women's movement articulating women's rights is having implications for national policies, and advocacy work for women has made it possible for the decree on violence against women to be passed in six states in Nigeria”. Worth mentioning for Dagunduro and Adenugba (2020), is “the Niger-Delta region, women fought against discrimination, dehumanization, and injustice being perpetrated by the Oil companies in the South-South Region of the country as a result of oil exploration and other activities”.

Women's organisations in Nigeria may not enjoy the same funding and political or economic freedom as their male counterparts, but they perform an important role. Activists like Aisha Yesufu, a leading figure in the #bringbackourgirls movement, are putting women's problems on the map in Nigeria, giving a voice to many rising female activists and movements.

However, the desire for increased female engagement in Nigeria appears to transcend national boundaries. In SA, I found two associations of women, the Nigerian Women's Association, and the United Nigerian Wives in South Africa (UNWISA). In April 2015, UNWISA joined the Johannesburg protest against xenophobic violence in SA. According to an article published on IOL, these women “say that having Nigerian husbands exposes them to daily discrimination and that they had long predicted the wave of deadly xenophobic violence that has shaken South Africa in recent weeks” (AFP, 2015). The group had only 100 followers when the post was published, but that number has already grown to 2900. The article focuses on the daily realities of South African women and their families, who confront prejudice from the general public and official institutions such as the police, hospitals, and schools. The women's organisation gives a forum for sharing their experiences. Picnics and sporting events are some of the rituals, but they also frequently participate in peaceful

demonstrations to highlight the injustice they face from their families. As a result, this group of women pool their time and resources to establish a safe environment for themselves and their families. Even though they are South Africans, they face discrimination on par with African foreign nationals. In reality, the verdict could be even harsher.

#### *Ethnic and Religious organisations*

In SA, Nigerian ethnic and religious organisations sometimes overlap and are typically sociocultural groups where members can engage according to their traditions, culture, and beliefs. However, these groups also deal with social issues and, like other groups, provide opportunities for membership in commercial or educational programmes.

Though their membership in SA may sometimes be small and limited, ethnic, and religious associations are often linked to much larger networks. The Christian Pentecostal groups, for example, are highly organised as transnational networks and very wealthy and influential. Enoch Adeboye, the general overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) in Ogun state, recently appealed to Nigerians not to retaliate against South Africans living in Nigeria, stating that “The average South African is a decent person; I know that. Those who are causing the trouble are not many. If you have a South African living near you, show them, love, protect them from any harm”(Adebulu, 2019).

Nigerian megachurches and famous pastors such as T.B Joshua have also attracted the attention of South Africans. In 2014, as many as 300 South Africans visited a Pentecostal church in Nigeria, which, during a service, collapsed and killed at least 67 South Africans (Stoddard and Cropley, 2014). In a more recent article, a Nigerian pastor is believed to have mismanaged the funds of one of the megachurches in South Africa (Nigeria Abroad, 2022). Information of the allegations of mismanagement highlights that “Nigerian pastor and founder of the Bethesda Christian Centre (BCC), a megachurch in Pretoria, Mr Clement Ibe, has denied alleged mismanagement of the church’s funds and property...fund was laundered to a fund property project worth R90 million” (Nigeria Abroad, 2022:no page number). The attention these megachurches receive is thus not always positive; there appears to be some controversy around several Nigerian churches.



### *Geographical associations*

Organisations established along geographical lines often focus on providing platforms for promoting the interest of and assisting their members in South Africa. One of their areas of interest includes influencing hometown/state politics. An example of this is the call made by the Akwa Ibom Indigenes Association in SA to the Minister of the Niger Delta area to transform the region (Vanguard, 2019). Speaking on behalf of his association, President Kingsley Ibokete states that “We equally plead with the minister to implement programmes that will tackle poverty, improve education, touch the lives of the elderly and retirees and create employment for the youth in the region” (Vanguard, 2019).

Similarly, the Abia Union had urged its government to improve and develop its area in Nigeria. An article which appeared in the News Express (online) in 2015 states that “The Abia Union in SA on Sunday urged the new administration in the state to rebuild Aba, the commercial nerve centre of the state, in order to regain its old status” (News Express, 2015). The article also highlights the collaboration and involvement of these geographical groups “Nzekwe said the union would partner with the state government in education through the donation of books to secondary and primary schools while providing expertise in specialised areas such as Information Technology” (News Express, 2015).

These organisations also seek to preserve their hometown/state identities, languages and cultures. An article published in the Vanguard (2017) highlights the involvement of the Abia Union (Abia Indigenes Congress SA) president in establishing a school dedicated to preserving the Igbo language in SA. According to the article, President Umealo states, “We resolved to establish an Igbo school in South Africa to affiliate with the one in the U.S. to promote our culture and language” (Vanguard, 2017).

### **Concluding remarks**

Nigerians in SA continue to face some of the harshest criticisms. Despite the contributions made by Nigeria to South Africa’s liberation struggle, the post-apartheid reception of Nigerians in SA has revolved mainly around Nigerians being villainized. Nigerians in SA, many of whom are students and businesspeople, are often called drug dealers, scammers and human traffickers. Nigerians have not denied that several fellow nationals are involved in illegalities. However, the generalisation and stigmatisation of all Nigerians across SA become

a problem when ordinary Nigerians involved in legal businesses are targeted not just by individual South Africans but also by Government institutions such as the South African Police Services.

Nigerians have also had to contend with the repercussions of the top-level rivalry between the South African and Nigerian Governments. Fortunately, many Nigerian citizens in SA have found solace and support in the various Nigerian associations. These associations exist not only for the welfare of their members in SA but also to address multiple social issues, provide a platform for traditional and cultural interactions, and engage in hometown/state or country issues. Some of these organisations also offer a platform for new migrants to SA to move smoothly and adjust by sharing information related to visa and immigration processes. Associations like student associations provide Nigerian students a platform to find academic and social support and share experiences with those from back home. These students, like the females in the Women's associations, often get involved in charitable work, they arrange events that are specific to celebrations in Nigeria, and they have events during which they dress up in their traditional Nigerian attire, eating typical Nigerian cuisines while engaging in topics of various issues.

It's worth noting that National organisations and those with umbrella associations can mobilise enormous crowds of Nigerians to support them. Their reach extends beyond the confines and requirements of any single organisation, as seen by Nigerians' aptitude and readiness to band together in the face of xenophobia in SA. Nigerian nationals' acts of vengeance are only a small part of what they could achieve if they banded together.

The following chapter looks at the political economy of xenophobia, explicitly highlighting the tactics used by Nigerian nationals to pressure South African firms in Nigeria.

## CHAPTER SIX: NIGERIAN-ASSOCIATIONAL LIFE AND AGENCY IN SOUTH AFRICA (2021-22)

### Introduction

In this chapter, I present the data collected during my interviews in 2022 with key informants from different organisations, as well as data on organisational networks, kinds of problems encountered, and levels of support provided. I do this under the following six headings:

1. Waves and Geography
2. Experience
3. Mode of settlement and network formations
4. Addressing xenophobia in South Africa
5. Counter actions
6. The way forward

The data presented here stem from twenty-two face-to-face and online interviews conducted with Nigerian citizens based in Gauteng since March 2022. Important to highlight is the fact that some respondents had not felt comfortable answering specific questions; where this is applicable, the number of people who responded to each question will be indicated. This exercise aimed to answer the main research question and one of the sub-questions, which has been posed as follows:

- How have Nigerian immigrants mobilised in local, national, and transnational migrant associational networks as a way of surviving and reducing xenophobic violence towards them in SA and Gauteng?
  - What are the various geographical scales at which this activity occurs (local, national, and transnational)?

The discussions in this chapter include the dimensions of everyday resistance discussed by Johansson and Vinthagen (2016), who view resistance as an oppositional act involving agency, and how it engages with various actors using different techniques. Specifically important for this study is the definition of acts or patterns of action as “resistance within ongoing processes of negotiation between different agents of resistance (the resisters), between the agents of resistance and the agents of power (the targets), and between the two former parties and different observers” (Johansson and Vinthagen, 2016:418). This study

considers a spectrum of actions, forms, actors, sites, and strategies. Time and space/scale are also crucial in understanding the effectiveness and visibility of counter-action (Johansson and Vinthagen, 2016).

The techniques used by actors (organisations) in this study are presented using a typology of counteractions: rational persuasion, coalition tactics, ingratiating tactics, exchange tactics, inspirational tactics, consultation tactics, and pressure tactics typically found in the study of Yukl and Falbe (1990), who studies the use of influence tactics in organisational behaviour. Yukl and Falbe (1990) found that some tactics are used more than others, depending on the situation. Consultation and inspirational appeals were found to be the most used tactics in organisational behaviour, in both top down and down up approaches. In his study of influence tactics in group decision making and its effect on policy-making decisions, Jensen (2007:219) found that “In group situations, where policy decisions are most often political and ideological, participants may resort to emotional or charismatic appeals aimed at changing others’ minds”. By using a quasi-experimental study to evaluate the use of influence tactics in a public policy decision setting, Jensen (2007:225) finds that “influence tactics can be successfully employed by decision makers to convince other decision participants to change their opinions about policy issues, a finding that should be of interest to decision scholars, public administrators, and politicians alike”. It is my view that these tactics have been employed by Nigerian organisations in their advocacy against xenophobia in South Africa, and that this approach could prove to be quite useful if exercised correctly. As stated by Jensen (2007:226) “influence can be wielded by understanding the particular decision at hand and then choosing the appropriate influence tactic”.

### **Description of the questionnaire and interview data collected from African Immigrants (Nigerian nationals in SA)**

The questionnaire was separated into four components to understand their lives and experiences in various contexts. Section A revolved around *life before coming to South Africa* to understand the reasons behind the respondent’s migration, their expectations and whether South Africa has lived up to them. Questions in Section B look at *life in SA in relation to the ongoing issues of xenophobia*; here, I provide a descriptive view of respondents' attitudes, perceptions and behaviour concerning xenophobia in SA. The third section, Section C, poses questions about *life in SA and the formation of associations and alliances*, whether these alliances are more with locals, or their Nigerian counterparts and the support received from

these alliances. The final section, Section D, looks at how those *alliances are utilised* and their geographical extension and provides a view of how Nigerian nationals think xenophobia should be dealt with.

Data is not necessarily presented per section of the questionnaire but according to the codes grouped during the thematic analysis. Respondents were given pseudonyms to keep their identities hidden.

## **Waves and Geography**

After 1994, there was a discernible rise in Nigerian immigration to SA, which coincided not only with the end of apartheid in South Africa but also with the escalation of Nigeria's social, political, economic, and religious crises.

The rise in female migration is another intriguing development. Females, in this case, Nigerian women, have assumed a more active role in the area, whereas males have generally dominated the narrative of migratory history. The gender breakdown of twenty-two interviews represented 14 men and 8 women, as highlighted in chapter three.

Respondents in this study arrived in SA between 1996 and 2019, four respondents came in 2002 specifically. Interestingly to note during this year and the previous year is that Nigeria faced a significant crisis in tribal and ethnic violence. According to a news article on BBC News (2019), the tribal war in Benue displaced thousands whilst killing more than 200 civilians in 2001. In 2002, some 100 people died during the clashes between the Hausas and the Yorubas in Lagos. Also, in 2002, more than 200 people lost their lives in a protest against the Miss World beauty pageant scheduled to take place in Lagos (BBC News, 2019).

Asked the question, when did you first come to SA to stay, the twenty respondents who answered this question also tended to include the reasons behind their migration. The majority (n=8) of respondents came to SA to pursue educational opportunities; seven (n=7) said they came for better job opportunities or to start their own business; four (n=4) came to be with their families, and one (n=1) stayed after coming here for leisure. The initial reasons appear to be limited in explanation, considering the complex issues brought forward by specifically asking respondents, what in Nigeria made you feel like leaving? Notwithstanding the fact that Nigerians typically migrate for the reasons mentioned here, I believe deeper, more complex issues contribute to their decision, which is discussed below.

The majority of respondents came to South Africa before the first significant attacks in 2008 but persisted in staying despite the severe risk that black African foreign nationals were facing at the time. Thousands of black African foreign nationals from other African nations, including Zimbabweans, left South Africa in 2008 (BBC News- Thousands flee South Africa attacks), yet many Nigerians remained. This demonstrates their desperation and persistence to stay in South Africa.

## **Leaving Nigeria**

### ***Ethnic/Tribal Discrimination, favouritism and gender discrimination***

Nigerians continue to endure some of the most difficult challenges on the African continent. Nigerians experience problems in their own country, including discrimination, tribalism, favouritism, and gender discrimination, which often fuel their reasons to migrate.

In Nigeria, discrimination is perpetuated in various ways. Ethnic and tribal affiliations, for example, frequently contribute to a culture of acceptance and tolerance. Vividly explaining his experience of discrimination, tribalism and what made him leave Nigeria, Chidozie (Interview 8) states that:

Tribalism made me leave Nigeria and political persecution. In Nigeria, we have multi-ethnic nationalities; I happen to come from a Christian area. The majority of us in the South are well educated, while in the North, they don't go to school. But when the opportunity comes, that's when they use the quota system, a system that puts you down no matter how good you are, its mediocrity. In Nigeria, we write the matriculation board exams, I'm from Ibo in the East. Assuming you write 3 subjects, math, English and general knowledge, if the cutoff point for university is 300.... for me to get into university, I need to get 260, but for someone from the North, he can score 2 and go to university.

Chidozie's experience reveals that discrimination based on ethnicity or tribal affiliation is not just a simple construct; it is a deep-rooted issue dictating the lives of Nigerian citizens in Nigeria, i.e. How and where they will access things such as Universities. Enhancing these views are such comments made by Mobo (Interview 17), who says:

Discrimination is based on educational levels, religious aspects, nepotism; it's all politicizing. There is no equal standard of living.

The large majority of respondents have not personally experienced discrimination in Nigeria based on tribalism and ethnicity. Also, individuals who have not personally experienced discrimination in Nigeria do not deny that it exists; instead, they emphasise that it does, but they don't have first-hand experience.

Explaining why perhaps he has been lucky in this instance, Kwento (Interview 22) says:

Myself, no, but as a system, yes and the funny thing about it, it's one in a thousand Nigerians that speaks all the top three languages...In terms of the country, there's a lot of discrimination against people from my area; you might know about the civil war in Nigeria between 1967-1970, where there was a country called Biafra, and that is because of the discrimination of the Northerners towards the Southern people. And my people said no, we want to divide; it's still continuing now but to a lesser extent. In terms of religion and language, there's a lot of discrimination. 5000 dialects and 250 groups.

Speaking about his experience of favouritism and corruption, Azi (Interview 15) contends that: "I've experienced nepotism. I've been denied opportunities because of my ethnic affiliation even within the same country space".

Though her reason for leaving Nigeria was to join her family in SA, Alika (Interview 12) highlights the difficulties experienced by females in particular:

Gender discrimination is the norm in Nigeria. It's like, "what are you complaining about, you are a woman". When I was in Lagos, I stayed there for a bit. There were derogatory terms used to refer to Igbo people, like, would say "Omo Igbo" the context of it is derogatory, and it's like saying 'you bloody foreigner'.

### ***Economic hardships and Institutional challenges***

Nigerian citizens who had come to SA in search of better opportunities often refer to the dire economic situation in Nigeria. For Mobo (Interview 17), the decision to leave Nigeria was two-fold. According to him,

It was a 2-way thing: economic value and academics. Things were not working as expected with my business; Nigeria had some economic troubles and not suitable living standards. I wanted a future for my children. The Nigerian economy is not stable; the business I had collapsed.

Highlighting her struggle, but also those of many others in Nigeria, Ebele (Interview 7) states that:

We were struggling back there to survive; my husband was a pharmacist in another state. I was alone in the house; my children were at boarding school.

One of the areas most affected by its failing economy is its education system, as highlighted in the literature review. One of the detrimental effects of this is the country's inability to provide practical experience. Speaking to this, Abeni (Interview 6), a nursing student, calls attention to:

My field of study is practical; we have the theory but not practical. Here I heard is practical in clinics and hospitals.

## **Destination- South Africa**

### **Receiving Information and Assistance**

Deciding to move is rarely straightforward, especially if you are going somewhere new. While access to information in the 21st century is as simple as pressing a few buttons on a google search, migrants tend to get their news from those who had gone before them (Tilly, 1990).

I asked: Did you come alone or with family or close friend/s? and where did you get information about South Africa and prospects here? These questions aimed to probe the use of migrant networks as a means of obtaining information.

The large majority of respondents said they had travelled independently to SA, and everyone said they either knew someone who had visited before or had been put in touch with someone to meet them in SA. Massey et al.'s (1994) view on interpersonal ties (i.e., someone knows someone) linking migrants to communities, family and friends in the country of origin and destination thus strongly plays itself out here. Chidozie and Kwento's stories (Interviews 8 and 22) of how they were linked to someone are evidence of this; they disclosed that:

One customs official at the airport asked me where am I going, I said to South Africa. He said he has a cousin in Johannesburg, he wrote the guy's number and name on the daily sun newspaper, so I remembered someone gave me that number. I called him and told him a customs official in Lagos told me to call him.

And;



I didn't know anyone here, but somebody I knew in Nigeria knew someone here. He gave me his numbers, and he picked me up at the airport. I spoke to the person before coming and arranged with him to collect me at the airport.

Seven respondents indicated they had travelled to South Africa with family (n=5) or as part of a group (n=2).

The majority of respondents in this study said they learned about South Africa from family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances who had already been in the country or previously visited. These were the same people who had received, welcomed and shown them around in SA. Speaking to one such instance, a friend told her about business opportunities in South Africa. Ebele (Interview 7) asserts:

In Nigeria, we make ching ching-from flour, a biscuit, fried. One of my friends came to me and said, "My friend, if you go to South Africa, the food business, the catering, is moving fast.

Without hesitation, she came to SA seeking a better life. Directly responding to the views shared by Tilly (1990) that immigrants draw information from those who had gone before them, Chuk (Interview 10) highlights that:

I had some friends who stayed in South Africa, and while also reading because coming from the background of marginalization, we started reading about people who came from the same background as us, and South Africa was just one such looking at us, so I got to love the country and the resilience of the people, from reading.

### **Reception in South Africa-Expectations Vs Reality**

One of the important topics raised by many responders was Nigeria's support for South Africa's liberation struggle and the "survival levy" that many Nigerians paid to the ANC despite not being addressed in any of the questions. Participants have been able to avoid thinking much about how they would be treated in South Africa because of this and the post-1994 perception of a democratic SA that is free, just, and open to everyone who lives in it.

Regarding expectations, most respondents indicated that they had no prior expectations other than doing what they came here for, such as studying or working. However, what one picks up from the conversations regarding the survival levy and Nigeria's role in the liberation struggle, is a sense of "you owe us". Chidozie (Interview 8) discloses that:

when we were kids, growing up in crèche and primary school, we were paying a “survival levy”, which they were sending to South Africa during apartheid. Even if you had paid your school fees and not the survival levy, you were not allowed to write exams; that is how strict they were. That was during the military regime; with that, I felt like there should be some kind of reciprocity, being that every child that finished school before 1985 contributed to that levy. Even on the day of the exams, they will ask you where is your receipt for the survival levy; if you don’t have it, you cannot write exams. And that was sent to the ANC and their cadres to maintain them in exile, so when I got here, I realized it was a different ball game.

During the interviews, respondents expressed disappointment with how Nigerians are treated in SA. This specifically relates to the view that Nigerians have a history of loving a country many of them had never been to, an idolisation of South African liberation heroes such as Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, artists such as Brenda Fassie, and the ‘shared pain’ of hearing about the struggles of black South Africans whilst growing up.

Sarauniya (Interview 14), in line with other respondents, shared this story as follows:

In Nigeria, what we know about South Africa, we know Mandela, we know Brenda (eyyy); you know, when Brenda was sick, that time I was in school, they would gather all of us to pray for Brenda to recover. When she died, the whole Nigeria was mourning. The story we know about SA they told us about apartheid, and they showed us videos about how they were killing people our hearts were sore. We always loved without even knowing where SA is. Every child born in Nigeria has this love for SA. Amongst all the African countries, the only country that is so dear to us in Nigeria is SA.

The expectation of job/business possibilities, a positive learning environment, and generally leading a happy life in South Africa has not been fulfilled. Instead, professionals have been met with hostility and dislike by black African foreign nationals in SA. Perpetuated in their daily lives, Azi ((Interview 15), who had come for reasons of studies, vividly highlights this by stating that:

I read history, so I had insight into the xenophobia in SA; it was common knowledge in Nigeria that black South Africans are xenophobic. But we expected that within the academic environment, there would be a higher understanding, and the culture shock I had that was even within the educational institution; we had structural racism and xenophobia (which) is well structured within the academic environment even in the academic residences. It was worse than what we had imagined while in Nigeria; we

knew it was there, but when we got here, we realized that it was deeper than we had thought.

Migrants' perceptions of SA will undoubtedly be impacted by the harsh reality of the country, like those discovered by Azi (Interview 15). In response to the question, *has your view of South Africa changed since you arrived here and how?* all respondents except one indicated that their views have drastically changed for the worse.

Kwento (Interview 22), who first came to SA in 2005, says the following:

I came in as a very innocent young man with no negative views. I wanted to contribute to the development of the world. But that isn't what it was (I don't like talking about them because it makes me emotional). It has changed from that which I envisioned to a very hostile treatment along the way. (I must mention that I've met people who are very good to me, even more than those from my own country). But you know, it remains when you are hurt, especially when you are hurt for no just cause, just because you speak a different language as the other person.

For some respondents in this study, a significant turning point in SA was the first major xenophobic attack in 2008. Enofe (Interview 11), who has been in South Africa since early 2002, articulates that:

The hatred towards African migrants was not like now; when I arrived, when I started working in the Eastern Cape, I enjoyed so many friendships. But things started changing around 2008, around the first large attacks; before then, it was a relatively peaceful coexistence.

In SA, foreign nationals often struggle to find jobs even if qualified. Participants in this study often articulated that they had no other option than to start their own business as no jobs are available in SA. Amobi (Interview 3), who now owns a formal establishment, maintains that:

When I got here, I discovered there are no jobs for foreigners; you have to create your own job.

With this, Abeni (Interview 6), a qualified nurse who also works in a Nigerian-owned restaurant, highlights the frustration of black African foreign nationals and articulates the view that South Africa is not for everyone:

I used to think SA was meant for everyone, but when I got here, I realized it's not. Some people die out of frustration here, some people kill themselves out of just the stress and everything. There's a guy who comes here, and you can see how frustrated he is; he is always stressed because he can't even find food to eat. It's hectic.

Profiling of Nigerians as drug dealers, scammers and human traffickers is the stigma that often confronts participants in this study. While none of the respondents indicated that they had fears before coming to SA, subsequent lived experiences, and the growth of anti-immigrant groups in South Africa changed this. Adaku (Interview 21), who came to SA in 2005 to join her parents, who are missionaries, maintains that:

Things became different when I went to varsity; now you would hear things like you are selling drugs and into fraud. The atmosphere was just different back then.

## **Experiences and Common struggles**

Nigerians confront various challenges like many other black African foreign nationals in SA. One of the main challenges raised by respondents relates to the difficulties experienced in obtaining their immigration documents. This problem has dramatically strained relations between South Africans and immigrants who are frequently thought to be living here illegally. In addition to delays within Home Affairs, respondents in this study also discussed official bribery and the targeted persecution of Nigerians, who are frequently accused of creating false documents. Alika (Interview 12), who came to South Africa for study purposes, maintains that:

You will submit your visa application, and they will leave it there for 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years. No response because the officials in there want you to bribe them, and not with cold drink money. We are talking about R20 000, R30 000 just so they can approve your visas, so you won't be illegal. And when you don't apply for the visas, they want to come and Dudula you. You can't win.

Arguing that this is how the system creates ‘undocumented’ and illegal immigrants, Abeo (Interview 2) states that:

How can the document be incomplete if it’s in your system? This is how they make us to be illegal immigrants. That’s what they are doing to other people, especially Nigerians. When you are legally married in a country, they initially give you a document, then when it’s about to expire, you go for extension, but they reject your paper telling you it is not complete. That is why there are so many people who the classify as “illegal immigrants”. When you go to renew your paper, these are people who issue your complete documents, but the same ones will tell you the documents are not complete.

Some respondents emphasised the view that South African officials are to blame for the problem of illegal immigrants, stating that there are no foreign nationals employed at the borders, South Africa’s immigration control or its embassies which issue visas and passports. Highlighting this, Enofe (Interview 11) argues that:

The criminals are the ones managing the borders and issuing the visas. You go to Lagos; at the South Africa high commission, you will see about 1000 applications. If you see people with skills that want to contribute to South Africa, they don’t easily get a visa. Those ones that are coming that don’t have anything to offer; they are coming to trade in drugs; when they go to the commission and give them money, they give them visas. Now they come here and trade in drugs.

Although African foreign nationals frequently see system delays and bottlenecks as an intentional attempt to frustrate them, specific issues go beyond passports and visas. They include items like certified study documents that impact the visa process. Chuk (Interview 10) articulates that:

Issues of documentation, I didn’t know I had to go to SAQA (The South African Qualifications Authority) to grade my qualification. Even to apply to study, I had to fill in an M30 form; I didn’t know that and documentation with regard to residency.

Kambili (Interview 16), a lecturer at one of South Africa’s leading Universities, states that:

There’s a lack of information amongst not only foreigners but also officials around visa and immigration processes.

Nigerians, of course, are also faced with other issues. Social problems regarding crime, theft and alcohol abuse were also raised as challenges they must face. More prevalent than these issues, though, relate to the problem of 'access', access to jobs, banks, and sometimes institutions such as hospitals or the police. Kwento (Interview 22) brings across these points by stating:

The first major problem is documentation. Secondly is access to work. Thirdly is access to basic amenities and to the financial systems. We cannot access loans if we want to start a business; some banks don't want to open an account for us. And then xenophobia.

Policing matters was another issue high on the agenda. Respondents in this study articulated that South African police protect criminal elements, and many of their complaints and problems are not addressed. Speaking to this, Chetachi (Interview 4) says:

The policing of crime is poor; the police protect the criminals. There was a time here in Jhb South when we reported the drug dealers, and the police went and told them. Luckily, they couldn't harm us.

Also speaking to this, Enofe (Interview 11) says that:

Leadership failures, even when it comes to dealing with these things. About two years ago in Springs, they called me the Yoruba guys there; apparently, there was one of these Nigerian guys who traded drugs, Nyope. The guy was arrested, but you will not believe the same police that arrested this guy released him.

Though several participants indicated that they turn to anyone that can assist, a recurring view is that Nigerians turn to each other for help. This is also evident in response to the question, who do you mostly rely on, where the large majority of participants indicated that they mainly depend on Nigerians for assistance. Contributing to their reliance mainly on each other, perhaps, is the view shared by Chetachi (Interview 4), who states that:

Nigerians in South Africa are too proud; they don't interact with the locals

### **Living in the shadows of South Africa's xenophobia**

Section B of the questionnaire in this study speaks to the social context of Nigerian citizens in South Africa, specifically, their experiences in terms of xenophobia. This is to determine their daily lived experiences, their views on xenophobia, and ultimately, their behaviour and actions/reactions towards the situation in which they currently find themselves. While this

section contains quantitative data elements regarding the Likert scale used for data collection, its results will be analysed qualitatively, as previously mentioned.

Respondents in this study articulated that they are reminded that they do not belong in SA, even if they have the papers to be here legally. One of the things that contribute to them being easily identifiable is their Nigerian attire and how they portray themselves. One respondent, Abeni (Interview 6), specifically mentions that Nigerian men like to be flashy. According to Abeni, she avoids some of these issues by dressing ‘humbly’, stating that:

You can never know I have money; I just dress humbly when in fact, I am very rich back home. If I wanted a car today, I could, but I just choose the humble life as this is the way to grow.

An emerging view is that many would like to go home, but, as twenty-one respondents (n=21) indicated, life in Nigeria is not necessarily better than in SA.

As stated by Kwento (Interview 22):

When I’m treated in that manner, I do not blame those ones who treat me that way anymore; I don’t blame them. I get angry at the leadership of my country, who made it very difficult for over 17 million youths in Nigeria to strive, irrespective of the fact that God has blessed that country immensely in terms of resources to take care of its citizens. But due to corruption, they steal those resources and stash them, and then they are unable to create jobs for their citizens, and in so doing, they force their citizens to flee the country in search of greener pastures.

Regarding whether they have ever been discriminated against in SA, the strong majority of respondents said they had been discriminated against for being Nigerian. Some respondents said they had not experienced discrimination in SA at all. Those who have been discriminated against referred to issues such as being unable to speak any South African languages, discrimination in institutions of higher learning and discrimination against them by state officials. Sarauniya (Interview 14), in her experience, states that:

Whenever I enter a taxi, if I didn’t speak their language, I say after robot, the taxi driver will just drive until someone that uses your language says stop. He would swear at me, asking why I can’t speak Zulu. And I would just keep quiet. It’s very traumatizing.

Adaku (Interview 21) highlights her experience of institutional discrimination as follows:

I once applied for an assistant position in my academic department; when I pitched for the interview, I was told that “they did not know I am a Nigerian”. Usually, we would not apply if the ad specifically stated “for south Africans”, but this one did not. Until today, that position has not been filled.

Bringing attention to the view that insults are often directed at foreigners on the streets for no apparent reason, Chuk (Interview 10) states that:

Without generalizing, I’ve had minor incidents where some persons may take offence because of your accent or behaviours. I’ve heard “Wena Nigerian, or wena you think you are clever” and “no, don’t come here; this is not Nigeria”, but you also meet people who will never say that to you in fact, they complement you. Its mixed

They argued that many South Africans are jealous of the hard work and some of the successes enjoyed by African foreign nationals in SA. However, this jealousy, they say, is not because South Africans cannot afford material things but because they do not know how to manage their business, which sometimes fails due to their exorbitant behaviour. Chetachi (Interview 4) says:

I can afford to have any car, but I drive a small car. I have a Mercedes. I gave it to my wife. But a black South African, I have a friend who just started a business not even three months; he went and got a 4x4. The issue of ego, when they fail in that thing, the aggression is transferred to the immigrant

These arguments relate to the experience of black people during apartheid. According to respondents, black South Africans are not very confident and lack the knowledge to start and run a business. This is in line with what Akinrinde and Tar (2021) attribute to the political economy of xenophobia. Abeo (Interview 2) states that:

You see me buying flashy cars, and you think I’m selling drugs. These people (South Africans) are here for ages; they don’t know what to do to make money. When I was in school, I learnt how to do feasibility studies; it’s what I do before I start a business. A lot of people don’t know that we Nigerians are vast with that, which is why we are very successful. Many here do not know which types of businesses would thrive.



Xenophobic violence against black African foreign nationals in SA is most likely to occur in townships and areas that poverty, service delivery issues and disparities have plagued. Those in certain positions and suburban areas are less likely to have directly been affected by xenophobia. Fifteen respondents (n=15) indicated that they had not been victims of violent xenophobia in South Africa, five (n=5) had been victims, and two (n=2) had not responded to this question. Whilst not being victims of xenophobic violence, nineteen respondents (n=19) indicated that they know people who have been victims of violent xenophobia, including family and friends. Two respondents (n=2) had not answered the questions<sup>5</sup>, and one (n=1) who indicated that he does not know anyone who has been a victim of xenophobia, only arrived in SA just before the Covid-19 lockdown.

Amobi (Interview 3), whilst not having been a victim himself, shares that:

A lot of my friends have been victims of violent xenophobia. Especially with the type of work I do now, I have documented over 1000 victims of Nigerians all over SA.

Highlighting the severity of some of these attacks, Alika (Interview 12) vividly explained that:

I know a handful of people. One person I know is a close family friend. Not sure what exactly happened, but he doesn't have teeth anymore. So, he said that it was during that time that he lost his teeth. More recently, in 2019, someone I know was beaten very badly, almost lost his life during the attacks.

One of the issues highlighted during these discussions is that angry mobs often do not differentiate between those in the country legally and those not. Similarly, there appears to be an unequal application of the law for Nigerians. Kwento (Interview 22) holds the view that:

You find out that a Nigerian got involved with crime-related activities, and police would approach him, and before you know it, he is either shot, or a plastic bag is being put over his head to suffocate him. And that is not how they treat the locals when they get involved in crime.

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<sup>5</sup> Verbal refusal to not answer that question.

Situations like those above result in a shared level of anger amongst Nigerians. Amobi (Interview 3) indicates that he has been invariably affected. Referring to the infamous slogan widely used by South Africa's ruling party and many labour unions such as the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), Amobi states that:

An injury to one is an injury to all.

Asked to rate how bad they think xenophobia is on a scale of 1-5 (1 being very bad, 3 being bad, and 5 being not bad at all), the large majority, thirteen respondents (n=13), placed xenophobia at a rating of 1. Two respondents, Chidozie and Mobo (Interviews 8 and 17), in fact, had articulated the extremity by stating that:

It should be rated 0. If it was something that happens every 10 years or so, it wouldn't be rated as bad, but it is ongoing nowadays; and

I put xenophobia on a scale of 0, it's very, very, very bad. It makes many of us change our minds about staying here. Calling an African a foreigner hurts me (Bit emotionally). There should be a sense of belonging, not 'Strictly for South Africans. Be careful; it becomes an 'us and them'.

While some respondents rated the level of xenophobia at 2, others rated it a 3, indicating that they do not think it is bad.

A widespread belief among respondents is that political influences play a significant role in the discrimination they have experienced and the rise in xenophobic violence against black African foreign nationals. One respondent (Abidugan-Interview 1) asserted that the South African Government uses the term 'crime' to dismiss xenophobia as a social problem. He expresses the opinion that it is no more extended crime when 'criminals' skip South African-owned shops to damage those owned by foreign nationals. Another respondent, Abeo (Interview 2), highlights explicitly in his discussion how African foreign nationals were treated by the former Mayor of Johannesburg (2016-2019), Herman Mashaba.

When Mashaba was mayor, he dealt with our people. We had to prove where we get our money from.

This study's respondents generally believe that the issues around African foreign nationals are used to score political points. This is evident in the political economy of xenophobia highlighted by Misago (2017), discussed in Chapter 6.

Enofe (Interview 11) maintains that:

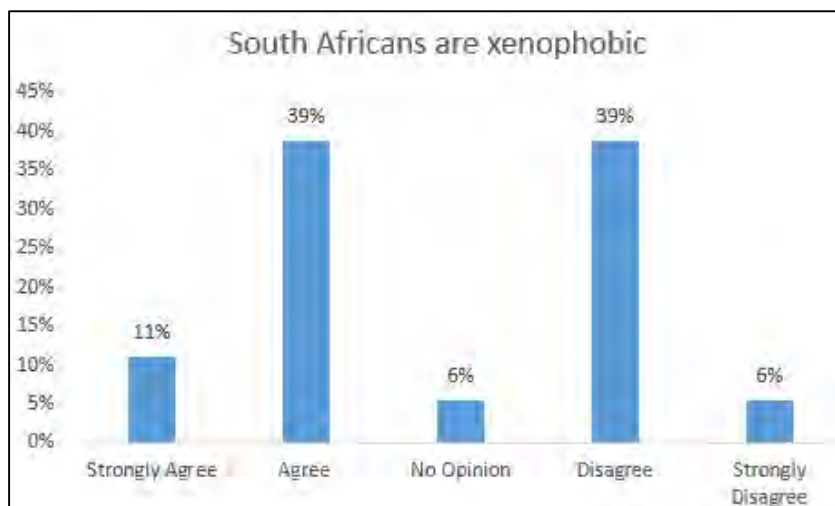
What has happened between that time (2008) and now? You discover that some people see this as an opportunity to score points with unemployed people. They will now go and brainwash them to say that people are taking their jobs. Which jobs are they taking? When I set up this place, it was my business with my funds. When I was interviewed in the Eastern cape in 2003, I was given the job because we were all non-South Africans. Probably if there was a South African there, I would not have gotten the job. When people come up with this idea that foreigners are taking jobs to me, I don't see it as a point.

Like Misago (2017), Enofe (Interview 11) vividly states that there are benefactors of the chaos between South Africans and African Foreign nationals and that the existence of instigators of these tensions should not be overlooked. Using a Nigerian example, he argues that:

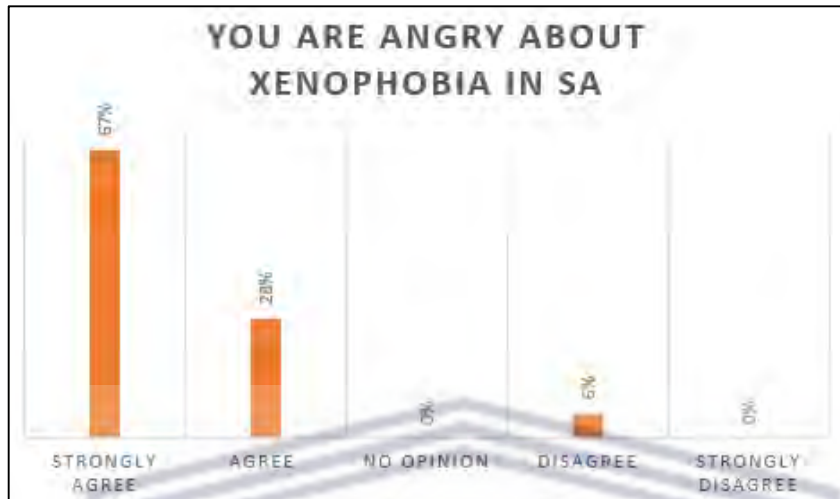
You see, there are different kinds of politics. Even in Nigeria, Boka Haram, you find out some politicians are behind it. Politicians often instigate these things.

Many respondents share the view that (most) South Africans are xenophobic, given the difficulties of daily discrimination, familiarity with victims, and the ongoing threat of xenophobic violence. Shown in graph 6.1 is the fact that 50 percent (n=9) of respondents who answered this question (18 answered), consider (most) South Africans to be xenophobic (a combination of 11 Percent who strongly agree; and 39 percent who agree). An exact description of these views further reveals that 39% (n=7) disagree and say that South Africans are not xenophobic, 6% (n=1) strongly disagree, and 6% (n=1) have no opinion. Four respondents (n=4) had not answered the question.

**GRAPH 6.1: RESPONDENT'S PERCEPTION OF SOUTH AFRICANS.**



**GRAPH 6.2: MEASURING NIGERIAN'S ATTITUDES ABOUT XENOPHOBIA IN SA**



Sources: Authors own graphs drawn from interview data

Even though most respondents had no direct experience of xenophobic violence, they all share a level of anger. To confirm this, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or non-agreement with the statement that “you are angry about xenophobia”. Eighteen of the twenty-two respondents answered this question, the rest verbally refused to answer. As shown in graph 6.2, 12 said that they strongly agree, they are extremely angry about xenophobia in South Africa, and 5 agreed. Only 1 said they are not angry about xenophobia in SA. Four respondents did not answer this question.

### **Modes of Settlement**

How immigrants settle depends significantly on their economic status and treatment in the host nation. For example, do they want to live close to residents of their own countries? Who do they turn to for support? Who do they make friends with? It is my view that the mode of settlement also determines how active they are in transnational activities, are they able to find more comfort with those around them, those at home or even those abroad.

### **Settlement and Alternative Options**

Mentioned in the literature review is the fact that Nigerian citizens primarily settle in the Gauteng Province. This is also true for participants in this study who have settled and built their lives around the Gauteng Province since arriving in SA. These areas include Midrand, Yeoville, Orange Grove, Hillbrow, and other surrounding former white suburbs.

What assisted in their settlement in SA is that everyone had contacts in South Africa when they planned to come and when they arrived in South Africa. Amara (Interview 5) shares that:

I only had that one friend in SA when I got here...she showed me around, and I met a lot of people along the way, especially Nigerian ladies with who I share things

However, the settlement of these respondents in Gauteng does not mean that SA was their only option. In response to the question of which option they had other than coming to South Africa, the large majority of interviewees indicated that they had the option of going to the UK or the USA, which we have previously seen as a top destination for Nigerian citizens. Three respondents mentioned options of Germany, Botswana, Greece, and South Korea, but South Africa remained a top choice for many. For one respondent (Amobi-Interview 3), SA appeared to be a better prospect. He states:

I looked at other countries; at the time, I also applied for a visa to South Korea, so I was in between. I chose SA over South Korea because I thought I would be better received here because it's an African country, it's closer to home. I thought here the relationship between a Nigerian and a South African would be better than Asia.

Staying in Nigeria was also an option for three respondents who indicated that they had merely moved because their immediate families (husband, dad) had been in SA.

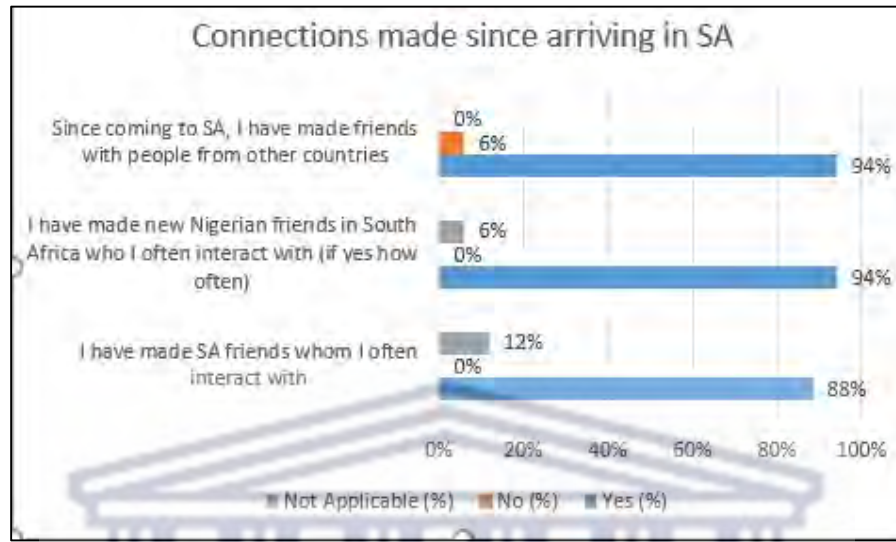
### **Integration/assimilation/ hybridity**

#### *Formation of new alliances-local level*

The formation of friendship plays an integral part in how migrants integrate into a new society. It often presents a state of trust characterized by shared ideas, activities, emotions and opportunities. Respondents were questioned about forming new friendships with Nigerian citizens, South Africans, and other countries since their arrival in SA. Seventeen (n=17) respondents answered this question, and their friendship formations are as follows:

- 94% (n=16) said that they had made friends with people from other countries, 6% (n=1) said no
- 94% (n=16) have made friends with South Africans, and 6% (n=1) said that this is not applicable
- 88% (n=15) have made friends with their fellow Nigerian citizens, 12% (n=2) said this is not applicable

**GRAPH 6.3: NIGERIAN CONNECTIONS MADE SINCE ARRIVING IN SA**



sources: Authors own graphs drawn from interview data.

Easy to conclude from the above data that Nigerian citizens in SA have no problem forming new friendships and building trust and alliances with people from all walks of life. Nneka (Interview 9) showed the close friendship she forged with one South African and one Zimbabwean woman she shared accommodation. Telling her story, she says:

We stayed in one place and ate the same food. That's why I like South African food now; I chew their pap. In my place, we don't chew pap; we swallow. Today if it's my turn to cook, I cook whatever, you cook whatever. Everyone ate everything. We had a mattress, and we all slept together. Three of us. We came from different countries, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and SA.

Those who indicated that they had not made any new friends shared that this is not based on anything cynical but rather that they prefer to be alone or with close family only.

### **Connecting with the locals at an economic and cultural level**

Supportive relationships in the host country are critical to the integration and settlement of immigrants. Whether individually or as part of an organisation, interactions with the locals are essential in how immigrants settle.

One of the ways in which these micro-level connections are built and maintained is through business connections. Twelve respondents (n=12) in this study are involved in the business industry (both formal and informal), and their customers often include South Africans who frequent their restaurants, stalls, or establishments. Numerous respondents have, through

these businesses, established connections, and a sense of trust with those who frequent their businesses. Kwento (Interview 22), an owner of a formal business, employs around 10 South Africans. He argues that:

I work with 10 South Africans; out of those ten people, none of them in their right mind would want to harm me because they know this is the man that provides for their family.

He views these South Africans not only as employees but as people whom he can trust, who would provide him with a level of safety should anything happen.

Naturally, marrying the locals is a highly effective method of integration. In this study, five (n=5) participants mentioned being married to a South African. While Nneka (Interview 9) describes how her marriage to a South African contributed to her being accepted into the local community:

The man was so patient with me, he introduced me to his family .... So, at the end of the day he spoke to my family, we did the traditional things (yoooh, laughing).

Abeo (Interview 2), on the other hand, describes his view that his marriage to a white female South African had brought him a level of protection:

In 2006 I was married to a white lady; I was very angry. If somebody can bequeath this proxy to someone, it's intimidation because he is a foreigner. They became scared when they heard I was married to a white lady, perhaps, so they left.

Participating in local events, speaking a local language, and wearing clothing that makes them fit in have also been used by respondents in this study to integrate and build local connections. All seventeen respondents (n=17) who answered the question on participating in South African events said they do participate. Some, such as Adaku (Interview 21), specifically mention participating in South Africa's Heritage Day. For Adaku (Interview 21), this is also an opportunity to experience South African culture by wearing traditional South African attire.

Of the seventeen respondents (n=17) who answered the question related to clothing, sixteen said they wear clothes that make them fit in. Still, they are also very proud to wear clothes representing their Nigerian heritage (One respondent prefers not to wear Nigerian clothing styles, stating that this is only a preference).

Ifechi (Interview 13) maintains that nothing will stop him from wearing clothes that represent his heritage:

I do wear clothing that represents my heritage; even if you start your xenophobic things here, I will wear my clothes.

Eight respondents indicated that they had learnt a South African language since arriving in the country. However, not everyone learns a new language because they are married to a South African and want to know it. Those such as Alika (Interview 12), who has learnt to speak both Afrikaans and Zulu, view this as a necessity:

I speak Afrikaans and Zulu. You either die or adapt. Here in Johannesburg, whether you are a foreigner or not, the taxi driver will speak to you in Zulu and you better freaking reply. Because you don't want to be a target, you end up being forced. Everyone speaks to you in Zulu, even in shops.

An example of this is the collaborations with traditional leaders of some of South Africa's cultural societies, as highlighted by Abidugan (Interview 1), who states:

As an organisation, we have started a cultural integration programme, we have visited the Zulu kingdom. When the king passed Goodwill Zwelithini, I led a delegation in our regalia with our chief. We went to the palace of the King with a cow; we were received there. We also visited the royal majesty of Harris Smith, Lucas Maloi and stayed there for about two days as part of the cultural cohesion. We are going to Embo kingdom in Mpumalanga soon; they visited Nigeria. We are trying to make some inroads into the community, so if there are things to be done, we can reach out to these people. If we have events, we call them.

Organisations act thus not as a link between ordinary Nigerian citizens in SA and the South African authorities, but they also play a significant role in introducing the Nigerian people to the societies of South Africa.

Even in the face of discrimination and xenophobia, many respondents in this study have still managed to connect and form friendships with local South Africans and those from other countries. Several respondents had also married locals, proving their view that not all South Africans are xenophobic.



*Connecting with each other- local level*

Nigerians are typically described as a close-knit community. Amobi (Interview 3) articulates that Nigerians are easily able to organise themselves, something evident in the existence of numerous organisations. Posed with the statement “it is easy to find Nigerian friends in South Africa”, 53% (n=10) strongly agreed, 26% (n=5) agreed, 11% (n=2) had no opinion, and 11% (n=2) disagreed. Two people did not answer the question. Whilst most respondents agreed that it is easy to find Nigerian friends in SA, what is of interest to me is those who said it is not. Highlighting their views on this area, Abidugan and Kwento (Interviews 1 and 22) state:

It's not easy; you are forced by chance to be friends

And

We have quite a number of Nigerians here with whom we interact on a daily basis.

But friendship is another thing, to be honest with you

The fact that Nigerians in SA have problems even among themselves can be safely inferred from these viewpoints. Enofe (Interview 11), whilst agreeing that it is easy to find Nigerian friends in South Africa, also states that:

Even amongst Nigerians, we have very serious issues. A lot of people don't necessarily have Nigerian friends but colleagues.

Probed whether ethnic affiliation plays a role in these issues, Enofe (Interview 11) honestly expressed:

Very, very well, yes

This supports the earlier views that the ethnic division amongst Nigerians transcends their countries' borders. Whilst it is unclear whether ethnic affiliation played a role in the following, Kwento (Interview 22) vividly describes the issues between two of the largest Nigerian organisations (names will not be mentioned) and the Nigerian Consulate in South Africa, which currently impedes the ability of Nigerians to unite truly. Kwento (Interview 22) states that:

I mostly speak about the Nigerian government. We are their primary responsibility, but they don't do what they are supposed to do. The (Organisation 1) you just spoke about is a creation of the former Consul General; now, how did it come about. It's a divide oh.... In (Year), a Nigerian was killed in (Province 1), (Province 2) and (Province 3). The one in (Province 3) I handled myself; we complained to the Consul

General that they were not doing anything; we were not saying send in soldiers to come and fight, but what we were saying make a statement, say that everyone has the right to live and let the law take its course. Do you know how arrogant leaders are? They said I'm young, and who are you to tell us what to do. I said if you do what you need to, we won't have to tell you. They became arrogant, and I wrote to the leadership in Nigeria; they were called home, and when they came back, they wanted to distance themselves from the organisation. They tried to kill the organisation. That's why they created (Organisation 1) they took the people who lost elections, who are angry and antagonistic, and they made them leaders in the new organisations. So, when we write something, those people will say we are lying, they are doing this and that, so at the end of the day, they can't cope because an organisation is not child's play. They did it for the first few months, and then they were nowhere to be found.

In light of this, respondents in this study have demonstrated, through their participation, the importance of Nigerian organisations as a mechanism for enhancing home-country connections. The organisational membership of respondents in this study is as follows:

- Five respondents (n=5) in this study are members of the Nigerian Union South Africa (NUSA)
- Six respondents (n=6) are part of the Nigerian Citizens Association, South Africa (NICASA)
- Four respondents (n=4) form part of the Nigerian Women's Association
- Two respondents (n=2) are in the National Association of Nigerian Students in South Africa (NANSSA)
- Three respondents (n=3) are part of Ohanaeze Ndigbo
- One respondent (n=1) is part of the National Association of Yorubas Descendants in Southern Africa (NAYDSA)
- One Respondent (n=1) is part of the Association of Yorubas in Diaspora SA (AYDSA)

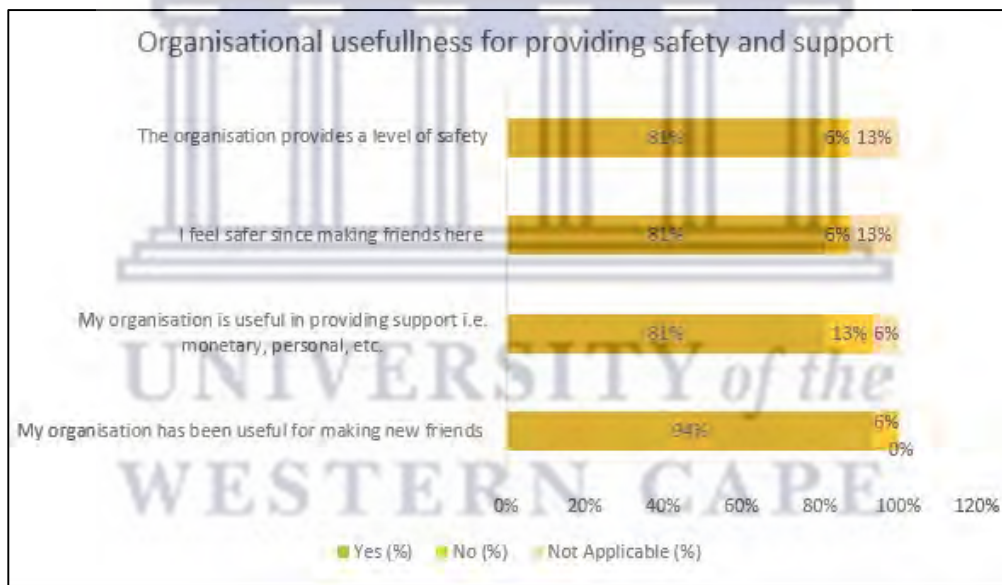
I also found that respondents do not necessarily belong to one organisation exclusively. Two respondents (n=2) who are part of the Nigerian Women's Association are also members of NICASA. Two Respondents who hold leadership positions in Ohanaeze Ndigbo South Africa are also part of NICASA.

To examine their perspective on how useful organisations are to them, respondents were given several statements which speak to this but also highlight the role organisations play. Their options were yes, no, and not applicable.

The provision of local, national, and international levels of safety, support and connections

Firstly, I looked at safety and support issues; and how organisations respond to the needs of their members in these aspects. This data is presented in Graph 6.4. Sixteen interviewees answered this question. The large majority, 81% (n=13) of respondents, said yes, the organisation provide a level of safety; 94% (n=15) said that the organisation is useful for making new friends; 81% (n=13) said that they feel safer in SA since making those friends, and 81% (n=13) said that the organisation is useful in providing support.

**GRAPH 6.4: MEASURING ORGANISATIONAL USEFULNESS FOR PROVIDING SAFETY AND SUPPORT**



sources: Authors own graphs drawn from interview data.

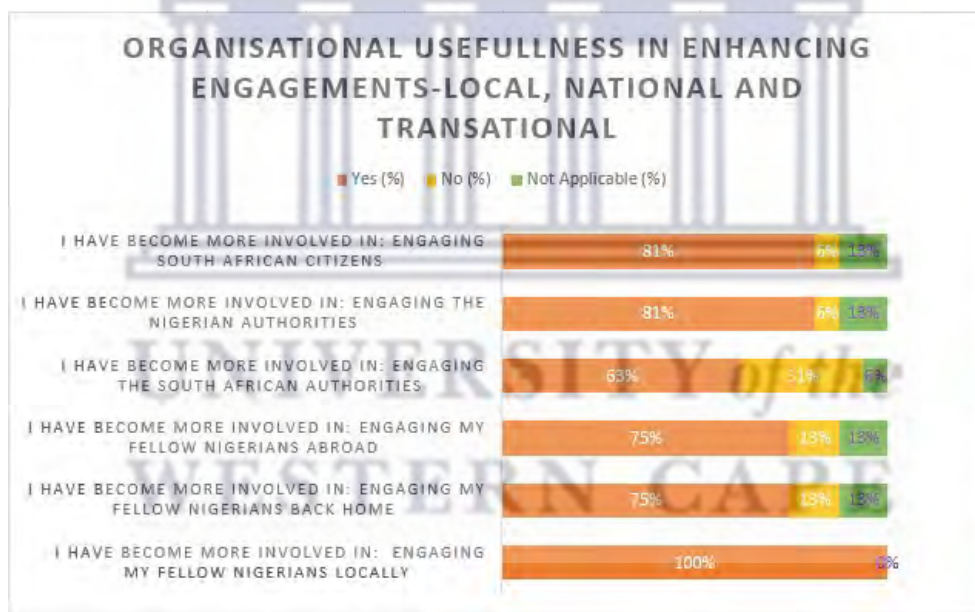
As part of my questionnaire, I explored the influence of organisations on respondents' engagements with various stakeholders, those at a local level, those at home and those abroad. This aimed to establish whether organisations provide a platform for increased engagement.

Found and presented in graph 6.5, the statements on these reveal the following:

- The majority of respondents said they have become more engaged with South African citizens since joining their organisations.

- A large number of participants said that they have become more involved in engaging the South African authorities
- The large majority, eighty-one percent said they have become more involved in engaging the Nigerian authorities
- With regards to engaging their fellow Nigerians, the majority of respondents (12) said that they have become more involved in engaging their fellow Nigerians Abroad
- The majority (12) also said that they have become more involved in engaging their fellow Nigerians back home
- All the respondents who had answered these questions said yes, they have become more active in engaging their fellow Nigerians locally, in South Africa

**GRAPH 6.5: MEASURING ORGANISATIONAL USEFULNESS FOR ENHANCING ENGAGEMENTS**



sources: Authors own graphs drawn from interview data

Sarauniya (Interview 14), who belongs to the Nigerian Women’s Association and various other forums, including the African Diasporas Forum (ADF), states that she gets involved in multiple programmes run by these organisations. These programmes allow for interaction not only with other foreign nationals but also with local South Africans. She states that:

In these organisations, we do different programmes and always come together. We went out to communities to do community awareness, educating other women. Last time we did gender-based violence, and we also got training on these issues.

Describing how his organisation had been involved in a 2018 dialogue discussion on the killing of Nigerians in SA, Enofe (Interview 11) states that:

I told the high commissioner that the organizers should make sure that the political representatives are there, like the ANC and the EFF.

This highlights the role of organisations in creating platforms where ordinary Nigerian citizens may also find expression and engagement bot the Nigerian and South African authorities. Further highlighting the use of these platforms to engage those back home (in Nigeria), Enofe (Interview 11) states that:

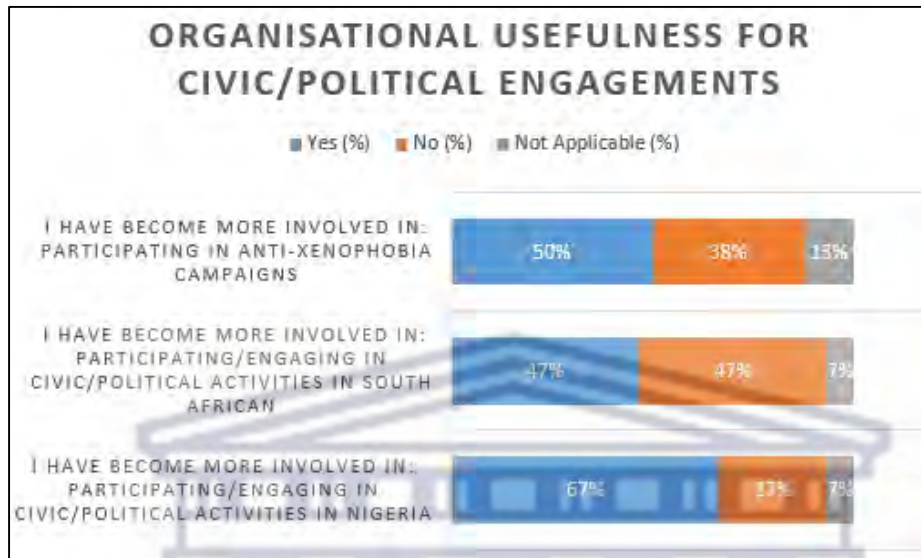
I've granted many interviews back home, and I do tell them listen; it's not that there's no xenophobia, but when you hear that South Africans are killing Nigerians, this is doing your investigation. So, I tell them back home, yes, there is xenophobia, but they are not just killing any Nigerians. So often, if you hear a Nigerian die, they are killing themselves because they are dealing drugs (not meaning suicide).

For now, these engagements appear to be positive between Nigerian citizens in SA and their fellow Nigerian citizens at home and abroad. Some Nigerian citizens in SA are trying to navigate the narrative by saying that the killing of Nigerians is not always caused by xenophobia as often depicted in the Nigerian newspapers.

### **Organisations influence participant's civic/political engagements: Local and cross-border connections**

I further examined how organisations have influenced respondents' participation in civic and political activities in South Africa and Nigeria; to show how collectivism has enhanced their participation in these areas. As indicated in graph 6.6; the large majority of participants agreed they had become more active in anti-xenophobic initiatives since joining their group. Since joining their respective organisations, respondents have also become more active in civic/political activities, both in SA and supporting those in Nigeria. Specific to Nigeria, the large majority said that they are more vested and more active in supporting activities taking place in Nigeria.

**GRAPH 6.6: MEASURING ORGANISATIONAL USEFULNESS FOR CIVIC/POLITICAL ENGAGEMENTS**



sources: Authors own graphs drawn from interview data

Portes et al. (2017) highlight immigrant communities' significant role in their host and home countries. They argue this to be especially effective when the focus shifts to creating immigrant organisations that can influence events in the towns where immigrants originate. Specifically speaking to their cross-border involvement, Alika (Interview 12) states that:

We were actively involved in the End SARS movement in Nigeria; yes, I was active. I was on social media, and we held a lot of protests here and participated in discussions around this.

In 2020 according to a South African newspaper, local protests were being organised against police brutality in Nigeria using Facebook to spread the word (IOL, 2020). According to the Daily Maverick, over 1000 people joined the march against the rogue Nigerian police unit called SARS (Du Plessis, 2020).

### **Organisations provide information and advocacy**

According to respondents, organisations allow members to speak in one voice and allow for the speedy dissemination of information. It especially becomes useful for assisting victims of xenophobia. Other than social media, of course, respondents in this study often get their information from organisations which provide them with warnings on possible attacks, by

assisting each other and discussing issues which affect them. Amara (Interview 5), who highlights some of the information shared in her organisation, states that:

A lot of Nigerians I know have been victims of xenophobia but not me personally. They confuse even mechanics for drug dealers; when you are part of the associations, you hear about all these things and have to assist and talk about it.

Nigerian organisations in SA act as a provider of information not only to their members but also to the Nigerian Government. Several respondents in this study spoke to the role of organisations in compiling reports for the Nigerian Consulate General or the high commissioner on issues affecting Nigerian citizens.

Amobi, Enofe, Adaku and Kwento, and (Interviews 3,11, 21 and 22) all spoke about this role, Enofe (Interview 11) explicitly stating that:

As (position) of community organisations, we have been called several times about shops being looted, cars being burnt, and we often have to compile names to give to the consulate and the high commissioner. I do get informed about these cases, like the Omotso case; I have been involved with many issues that have been happening between Nigerians and South Africans.

The organisation in this study often advocates for those who cannot represent themselves or need support. Its leaders get directly involved in dealing with various issues its members face. As one of the leaders in a student organisation, Adaku (Interview 21) articulates that:

In universities, students often face discrimination. I had to assist a student who was accused of cheating during exams. She had with her a calculator, and a periodic table and the invigilator accused her of cheating. She pointed out that many other students had the same things with them and that they were allowed to have these things, but she still faced disciplinary action. When I went to investigate, I was told that “she is a Nigerian, and she must be lying because she is Nigerian”. The student was expelled for three years.

Organisations also, unfortunately, identify victims. This information is compiled and shared with the Nigerian authorities, including the Consulate and High Commission of Nigeria, who sometimes assist victims. Amobi (Interview 3) shares that:

We try to provide material comfort where it is absolutely necessary with assistance from our government here and in Nigeria.

Organisations are thus often also the link between Nigerian citizens in SA and their Government. As a means of reporting their often-negative experiences, it is interesting to note that the identity of Nigerians is easily traceable through their local state association. Abidugan (Interview 1) says:

It's always good to join organisations; the way we are structured, you identify with your wards in Nigeria...we all belong to a village; if they kill a Nigerian now, we don't take much time to identify which village this person comes from. We call the Chairman, who will call the Kinsman; that's the strength of associations. It's always safer, easier and better to belong to an association. We always encourage it.

Macro-level connections involve interactions with authoritative figures, commonly occurring through organisations. According to my observation and the findings of this study, immigrants rarely interact with Government, its institutions or any other civil society on their own but do so as a collective. Those who would engage these institutions independently are generally top leaders in an organisation.

Nigerians in SA, through their organisations, often engage South African Government institutions on issues that affect them. Kwento (Interview 22), a leader in one of the prominent Nigerian organisations in SA, maintains that:

I've met with home affairs before to speak about the issues of documents and the problems created by home affairs, which makes it difficult to update their documents

Another view, shared by Ifechi (Interview 13), a leader in an ethnic organisation maintains that:

I've run a men's programme in church and brought in home affairs to do some work; I've also brought saps to come to talk to us...

This points to the view that a cross-sectional collaboration exists between organisations and other segments of society, such as churches.



## Connections with home and abroad

Besides their role in creating a settling environment for Nigerians in SA, organisations are often also the link between Nigerian citizens and their government, their counterparts back home and abroad.

Extracted from the information above is the view that organisations have played a significant role in enhancing respondents' engagement with the Nigerian authorities, their fellow Nigerians at home, and their fellow Nigerians abroad.

Highlighting their connection to the Nigerian Government, Ebele (Interview 7), who forms part of the Nigerian Women's Association, states that:

The association is linked with the Nigerian government; if there's a problem we can't deal with, we send the President (of the Association) to the Nigerian consulate and representatives at home.

Speaking to this, Chuk (Interview 10), a leader in Ohaeneze Ndigbo, which has organisational chapters abroad, states that:

Ohaeneze ndi-igbo SA is the apex social, cultural, and political organisation of the Igbo people. We have our headquarters worldwide and in Enugu state in Nigeria, with chapters all over the world. The Igbos constitute almost 80 percent of the migrant population of Nigerians in SA. We do speak to citizens abroad; we would be able to seek assistance from these other chapters.

Similarly, Kwento (Interview 22) states that:

There are other organisations like us across the globe; we can call on them if we find that there are problems we cannot solve alone. There's a Nigerian Union in the US and an extended organisation that involves the leadership of all those organisations.

While most respondents indicated that they do not specifically use organisations to enhance their interactions with people at home or abroad, they believe that organisations have helped increase these connections. An example is that those who have joined Nansa in South Africa are automatically part of the apex body of NANS in Nigeria and can tap into these contacts if need be. NANS played a catalytic role in protest actions against Shoprite in Nigeria.

Highlighting that they can count on these connections for assistance, Adaku (Interview 21) states that:

Yes, we can ask students back home for help

Similarly, Abidugan (Interview 1) states that:

Our Organisation has home-based quarters and has many supporters in Nigeria. They would be there if we had to call on them for support. But we cannot fight against you; you are the host.

Some, especially National organisations, also have connections to large humanitarian organisations, both locally and internationally. According to Kwento (Interview 22), a leader in the Nigerian Union:

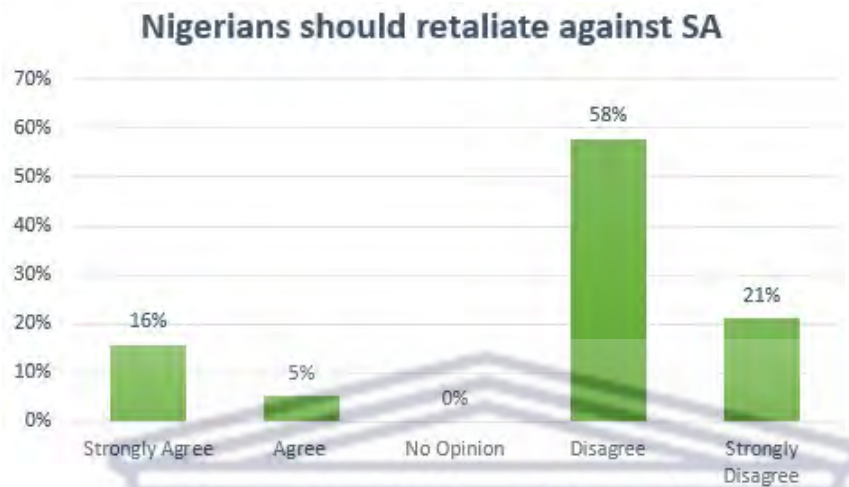
The lawyers for human rights, we work with them and also NPOs who deal with human rights violations in SS. And we do approach some organs of the UN when it gets worse when we feel we are not getting help from the SA government or the Nigerian government.

Evident in discussion with respondents is that several organisations have chapters (branches) that can assist in times of need. These branches are also highlighted in the previous chapter. Whilst several organisations do not have chapters in Nigeria, around SA, or abroad, there is undoubtedly a level of interconnectedness that links Nigerians together, where they can tap into various stakeholders.

### **Nigerians directly addressing xenophobia in South Africa via transnational action**

All the respondents in this study indicated that they are aware of South African companies in Nigeria and action to pressure them. They have further demonstrated their knowledge of the impact of boycotts on such companies, several speaking to the economic implications on both South Africa and Nigeria. One question sought to engage respondents on whether they believe retaliation to be an option. Posed with the statement “Nigerians should retaliate against South Africa”, nineteen interviewees responded to the question. The large majority (58%-n=11) disagreed with this, 21% (n=4) strongly disagreed, 16% (n=3) strongly agreed, and 5% (1) agreed.

**GRAPH 6.7: RESPONDENTS' VIEW ON RETALIATING AGAINST SA**



sources: Authors own graphs drawn from interview data

The large majority respondents in this study disagree that Nigerians should retaliate against SA. However, those who agreed with retaliation as an option (a combination of those who strongly agreed and those who agreed) represent a portion of 21%. In this case, the number of people who think that retaliation is not a viable solution to handle the xenophobic violence against black African foreign nationals in South Africa is relatively high.

However, disregarding retaliation does not mean that they should not do anything. Upon further probing, 89% of respondents (n=17) *disagreed* with the statement posed: Nigerian nationals should not do anything. As indicated in Image 6.1, 5% (n=1) strongly disagreed, and only 5% (n=1) agreed they should not do anything.

**IMAGE 6.1: RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION ON WHETHER NIGERIAN NATIONALS SHOULD NOT DO ANYTHING**

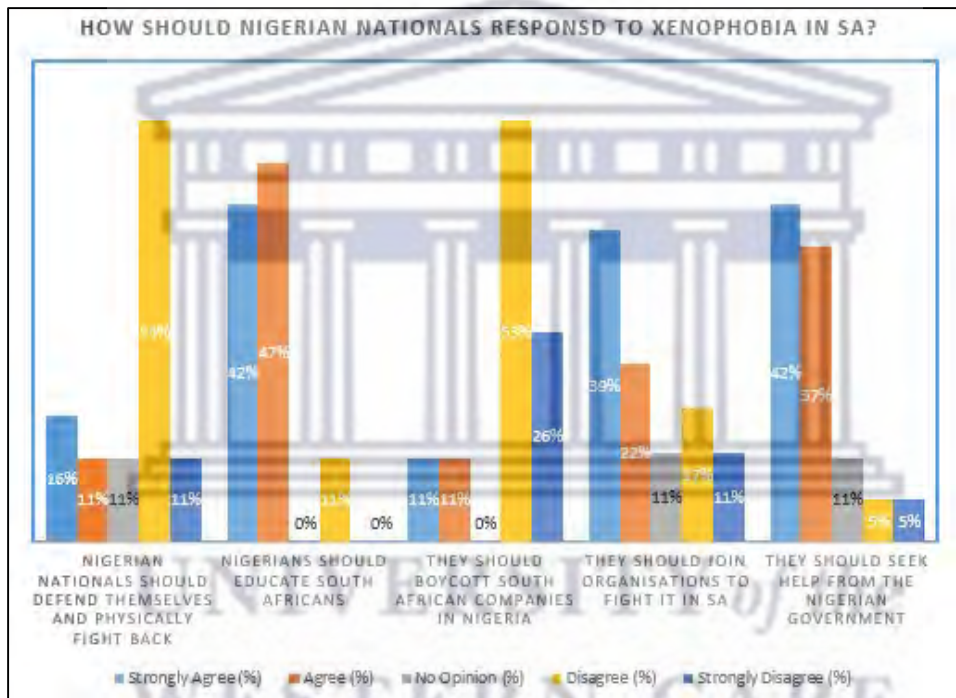
Question	Total	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Total
Nigerian nationals should not do anything	19	0%	5%	0%	89%	5%	100%

sources: Authors own graphs drawn from interview data

Probed and represented with several options on how they think Nigerian nationals should respond to xenophobia in South Africa, the data represents the following:

Below (graph 6.8) is a graphical representation of how respondents think Nigerians should respond to xenophobia in SA. Regarding defending themselves and physically fighting back: the majority (53%) disagreed with this and said that Nigerian citizens should not fight back. In comparison, Sixteen percent (16%) strongly agreed that Nigerians should fight back, and 11% agreed.

**GRAPH 6.8: RESPONDENT'S VIEW ON APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO XENOPHOBIA**



sources: Authors own graphs drawn from interview data

Regarding educating South Africans, the large majority of respondents agreed with the notion that Nigerians should educate South African, viewing this as a viable response to help fight against xenophobia.

Education around distinguishing between various African nationalities was raised as a specific topic of interest. According to respondents, South Africans cannot differentiate between African foreign nationals, and any black African found to be selling drugs is automatically called a Nigerian. According to Enofe (Interview 11):

You don't use an individual criminal to judge everyone. That is where education plays a significant role, but South African politicians are not doing that

Regarding boycotting South African companies, the majority disagreed, and some strongly disagreed. Conversations around this highlighted the economic effects of such boycotts in both South Africa and Nigeria and the negative impact it would have on the bilateral relations between the two countries.<sup>6</sup> Oba (Interview 18) articulates the view that:

Boycotting should be the last resort. I think it could be solved at the government level with the SA government trying to educate its people with humanity to be able to resolve issues without resorting to violence.

Joining organisations is seen as a viable option that brings protection. Nineteen respondents answered this question, of which thirty-nine percent (39%) strongly agreed with joining organisations, and 22% agreed, arguing in line with Abeni (Interview 6), who articulates the view:

I do think that joining an organisation helps; when I'm with them, I feel ok "oh, I am with my people.

Seeking help from the Nigerian Government is another option acceded to by the majority interviewees strongly agreeing to this. While some respondents disagree and strongly disagree with this idea, claiming that the Nigerian Government will be unable to help, opinions like those expressed by Ebele (who Jokingly says they are stupid, they are not even taking care of the ones in their own space, which is a huge problem) point out that Nigerians shouldn't be discouraged by this.

### **Counter-Actions I: a spectrum, a repertoire of tactics: A continuum from soft to hard**

A theme from the data discussed above is the density of associational life and the critical role organisations play in the lives of Nigerian citizens in SA. Organisations not only provide a platform where Nigerian citizens can socialize and interact with their fellow countrymen, but they play a pivotal role in advocating for and linking Nigerian citizens with both the South African and Nigerian Governments. This is an example of the argument made by Keck and Sikkink (1999) in Chapter 2, on the important role of networks in advocating.

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<sup>6</sup> In Malawi in 2015, activists successfully called for Black Fridays which were boycotts of South African owned stores, notably Shoprite. <https://www.nyasatimes.com/malawi-shut-down-south-african-shops-in-tit-for-tat-measures/#>. The Consumers Association of Malawi (CAMA)'s call for consumers to boycott shops with their origins in South Africa.

With this, organisations also provide a platform for counteractions, self-defence and offensive actions and threats. Their ability to mobilise people for various events, such as celebrations of hometown or country events, has been displayed in this chapter. However, they also can mobilise people for protests, seminars, dialogues and self-defence. Understandably the issue of arms could not be directly spoken about in interviews.

But the Nigerian newspaper, Vanguard, reported that in 2017 Nigerians were arming themselves. Kumolu (2017) writes

It's a standoff in Pretoria; Nigerians have refused to hide. South Africans marching is being confronted by Nigerians carrying guns. Nigerians armed themselves and waited for South Africans. The involvement of the Police tamed the rioters and calmed the situation. Before the xenophobic attacks were against black foreigners. But the recent one was targeted at Nigerians specifically. Nigerians were being accused of doing drugs and prostitution more than others. So, they targeted Nigerians.

Nigerian citizens have used a repertoire of formal and informal tactics to engage various actors on various scales to counter xenophobia. For now, these tactics appear to include rational persuasion, coalition tactics, ingratiating tactics, exchange tactics, inspirational appeals, and consolation tactics. Notwithstanding that fact that there were indeed some elements of pressure tactics exercised by both Nigerian Citizens in Nigeria and the Government, which includes the boycotts on South African companies and the decision by the Nigerian Government to not attend the Economic Forum in SA, elaborate retaliation tactics and violence appears not yet to be an option for the large majority of participants in this study.

### **Rational persuasion-A local level response**

Rational persuasion is a tactic commonly brought about by respondents in this study. A common view is that South Africans need to be engaged and educated, especially on their opinions which generalise and stereotype all Nigerians as drug dealers and fraudsters. Ifechi (Interview 13), a leader in one of the ethnic-affiliated organisations, says that:

We have been calling for a meeting...to meditate on these issues. And we have seen so many videos, authorities and statements that have been given by Dudula which talk about drugs and, crimes, illegal immigrants. We felt like, let's come to the table

so we can discuss because you cannot paint all of us as illegal, as everyone as a criminal; it has to be addressed properly.

Rational persuasion, in this instance, is directly used on the actors who are also the perpetrators of xenophobia. The forms of resistance that emerged in my conversations are outlined below.

### **Coalition tactics-a local level response**

Nigerian organisation has entered numerous coalition tactics to address issues deemed to be causes of xenophobia. Evident through their interactions with institutions such as Home Affairs to address issues of documentation, SAPS to address the problems of skewed targeting of Nigerians, and more importantly, perhaps, evident through one organisation's efforts to engage the traditional authorities in SA. Earlier shared in this chapter is a discussion with Chuk (Interview 10), in which he stated:

As an organisation, we have started a cultural integration programme, we have visited the Zulu kingdom...

### **Ingratiating Tactics- a local-level response**

Through their acts of giving, Nigerian citizens attempt to influence citizens' perceptions of them through self-promotion. Tactics of ingratiation are evident in how organisations share and include local South Africans in their events or as part of the initiatives to give back to the community. Kwento (Interview 22) articulates that Nigerian citizens should:

Do things that will help the locals, plough back into the system don't take only. Intermarry, look at everyone as human; there's nothing different between us and South Africans. Let's help each other it will reduce the level of xenophobic tendencies and attitudes.

### **Exchange Tactics- a local-level response**

The promise of rewards of tangible benefits is not a tactic widely used by Nigerian organisations in SA; however, a respondent in this study has suggested it. Azi (Interview 15) maintains that:

Do not imagine to yourself Nigerians are negative, we are the most creative people, and people have Nigerian phobia; Nigerians are very competitive. We should have South Africans learn from this. We should have South Africans learn this trade from

us; let's look to our industry and emulate us. Look at our hard work and emulate us.

They should look at how we got to where we are. They should give us a chance.

The opportunities for South African corporations to continue operating in Nigeria also constitute rewards or benefits to South Africans. South Africans do not receive the rewards or benefits directly as individuals, but rather the country does. But exchange tactics also involve the reminder of a favour that should be reciprocated. Respondents in this study quickly brought up the topic of Nigeria's role in South Africa's liberation struggle and its contributions to the ANC. I believe this is a topic used by individuals and organisations in their engagements with stakeholders.

### **Inspirational appeals- a local and international level response**

Inspiration appeals or emotional requests are often directed at the South African Government for assistance in addressing the challenges faced by black African foreign nationals in South Africa and its citizens.

In the opinion of several respondents, the South African Government needs to address issues of poverty and especially job scarcity in its communities, which are often blamed on foreign nationals. According to Oba (Interview 18):

We have to involve all the stakeholders in, mainly Government and Politicians, and not use foreigners as scapegoats to justify the failure of service delivery in SA.

Nigerians also believe in directing appeals to their own Government, though. Several respondents believe that the Nigerian Government does not take responsibility for its citizens and that its failure to address the challenges in Nigeria impedes Nigerians from returning home.

Adaku (Interview 21) says:

I mostly speak about the Nigerian government. We are their primary responsibility, but they don't do what they are supposed to do.

While Ebele (Interview 7) shares the view:

They are not even taking care of the ones in their own space, which is a very big problem. I would love to go back home now, but I'm thinking of a lot of things, all the killings and looting, you are risking your life.



### **Consultation tactics-local, national, and international response**

Nigerians in SA, through their organisations, have attempted to use consultation tactics by inviting South African engaging citizens on a mutually beneficial way forward. Evident in the participation of several Nigerian organisations in the recent SA-Nigerian dialogues held in Johannesburg and the continued suggestions of engagements and seminars by respondents in this study. Nigerians want to engage South Africans and develop a way to move forward in conjunction with the locals. However, Nigerians also engage their government and international bodies like the UN to address challenges faced in SA.

### **Pressure tactics- local, national, and international response**

The most apparent tactic of vital interest for this study is the pressure tactics used by Nigerian students in Nigeria, most recently. The boycotting of South African companies was used to threaten and intimidate the South African government and its citizens to deal with issues of xenophobia in SA.

Azi (Interview 15) contends that:

The reason the student reacted to boycotting MTN and those is because the government could not convince the people in Nigeria that it was engaging in meaningful conversation by way of extracting restitution. What the people wanted was, we want SA to pay for these damages, and the government kept saying we are talking to them and there will be calm. Sometimes when you don't speak what people want to hear about the level of governance, there will be protests.

The actions exhibited by Nigerian migrant organisations align with the strategies delineated by Keck and Sikkink (1999) in Chapter two of this thesis. In terms of information politics, the swift dissemination of politically relevant information by Nigerians has effectively influenced the pressure exerted by individuals in Nigeria on both the Nigerian Government and South African companies operating in the country. Symbolic politics is evident in the appeals for support made to individuals in Nigeria and abroad, emphasizing national identity and the imperative to stand together as a unified nation. Leverage politics is observable in the calls from Nigerian citizens in South Africa to their own government, urging it to exert pressure on South Africa—a more powerful actor. In this context, the Nigerian Government has demonstrated retaliatory actions against South Africa on multiple occasions, as detailed in this study. Lastly, accountability politics is demonstrated by Nigerian citizens urging the

Nigerian Government to impose sanctions or penalties on the South African Government for its perceived failure to address adequately address xenophobia.

### **The way forward**

Evidence gathered from the respondents in this study shows that Nigerians are extremely angered by the continued discrimination and sporadic xenophobic attacks against African foreign nationals in SA, but do not openly advocate for destructive retaliation. Still, they agree that protecting themselves in various ways and being connected through organisations is imperative.

Although respondents were not expressly asked for their opinions on the way forward, many did so throughout the interviews by suggesting how xenophobia should be addressed and who should play a part in it. The specific question which contributed to this, though, included, what can Nigerians do to fight xenophobia effectively, and what advice would you offer to a Nigerian coming to South Africa? In no specific order of importance, the following methods are believed by respondents as the way forward:

#### *Government interventions*

During the interviews, the role of the government seemed to dominate the conversation. The need for the South African government to solve issues affecting immigrants was brought up throughout the discussion by the respondents; in particular, worries about the backlog in document processing and the rules and regulations affecting immigrants were voiced. They emphasise that the government must pay special attention to the delays and situations that ‘create’ undocumented and illegal immigrants.

Mobo (Interview 17), a lecturer at one of South Africa’s leading Universities, maintains that:

The highest level of xenophobia often takes place at the top. How can you spend five years in SA only for the Minister of Home Affairs to announce overnight that he had cancelled the “waiver” which specifically allows postgraduate students here? It shows you how they deal with us

This also speaks to the utterances made by Government officials themselves. The government, they say, also need to address the negative stereotyping of Nigerians, precisely the narrative of Nigerians as drug dealers. Oba (Interview 18) conveys that:

When we talk about drugs in SA, the issues need to be addressed properly. In 2006 Bret Keble made some 5 million per month because of drugs. Glen Agliotti and Jacky Selebi look at people like that. No Nigerian has been as big as these people and those who came after them. There's misinformation around these issues.

### *Dialogues and engagements*

Participants emphasised that engaging with locals for educational purposes, public awareness, and fostering social cohesion represents a positive path forward. Despite instances like the SA-Nigeria Social Cohesion Dialogue held in Pretoria in March 2022, there is a noticeable absence of follow-up dialogues or sustained communication addressing the issues raised during these events. Typically, these gatherings are one-time occurrences that lack effective intervention strategies. Moreover, there seems to be a lack of political will to view such dialogues and forums as viable options for addressing xenophobia challenges. Neither the Department of International Relations nor Home Affairs, which directly handles foreign issues, has made any noticeable attempts in this direction. Respondents in this study are of the view that the creation of regular and continuous forums where people can discuss issues such as policing matters, educating South Africans on the different types of immigrants and generally just socialising was suggested.

Sharing their views, Amobi and Kambili (Interviews 3 and 16) state that:

Doing workshops with the local hosts to educate and do engage with them. To educate the masses to stop xenophobia, we can't carry arms; we are not soldiers, we can only engage; Have forums where they can meet locally at a community level. Braai together

Engaging the Government was also brought forward as an option. As mentioned earlier, this does not happen individually but as a collective in an organisation. It highlights the organisation's use as a vehicle for engaging the South African government.

Government-to-government dialogue between South Africa and Nigeria was mentioned as essential to the process. Highlighting what is often not visible to the larger public, Mobo (Interview 17) argues that:

A tit-for-tat approach is not good, and this is often what happens when the Nigerian government, in response, puts laws against MTN.

According to respondents, effective government engagement is required to solve xenophobia successfully. If there is a genuine Government determination, they say, this can be done.

### *Integrate*

With the belief that integration lays the basis for effective social cohesion, several respondents considered this an option for addressing xenophobia and moving forward. Kwento thinks Nigerians should plough back into communities and not just take from them. Mutual assistance between them and South Africans contributes to successful integration and reduces xenophobia tendencies and attitudes.

Also speaking to an environment of mutual assistance, Azi (Interview 15) states that:

Nigerians can help black south Africans realise that of the grievances that black south Africans present about the wrongs of foreigners, the bulk of us are not doing it. .... Nigerians are very competitive. We should have South Africans learn from this. We should have South Africans learn this trade from us; let's look to our industry and emulate us. Look at our hard work and emulate us.

While acknowledging the necessity of integration, Oba (Interview 18) makes an intriguing remark. He suggests that the lack of integration within many South African groups is a problem that must be addressed first.

There's a problem with integration in SA. In SA, you have different ethnic groups and races. When we talk about integration, we still have that problem in and with South African themselves. When you go to Soweto, there are specific issues. If we can find ways to address this, it's a start to integrating foreigners.

### *Deracinate criminals*

Nigerian citizens in this study do not deny that some Nigerians in SA are involved in criminal activities, including selling drugs. What they are saying, however, is do not look at everyone as one of these, do not paint everyone with the same brush.

Arguing for Nigerians to get more involved in identifying criminal elements, Adaku (Interview 21) states that:

We need to show South Africans that we also don't support the bad eggs among us; we are the good people in Nigeria. We can help the police by showing them the bad apples.

Speaking about the role of officials, Enofe (Interview 11) argues that criminals are not ghosts and can be identified. He states that:

The Consulate should try and use their power to get the leaders of all these bad guys, they are majorly from the (ethnic group), and they know who they are. It's like guns on the Cape Flats; police can never say they do not know the leaders. It's the same thing. Any criminality anywhere in the world they are not a ghost.

### *Join organisations*

Throughout this chapter, I have highlighted the immense role played by organisations, particularly in developing a Nigerian community that has become more active in its engagements with locals, those at home, and those abroad. I also emphasized how organisations may serve as platforms for more extensive interactions with the governments of Nigeria and SA, as well as with institutions of civil society and the general public.

Respondents say organisations provide a supportive environment where Nigerians can access important information. Thus, it is unsurprising that respondents suggest joining an organisation to move forward. Chuk (Interview 10) states that:

When you are in diaspora, you need that unity to be able to get information on what's going on and survival instinct.

In light of this, there also appears to be a view that there is not enough collaboration between Nigerian organisations. According to Kambili (Interview 16):

There's not enough collaboration between associations; many often only exist for social gatherings. Important Associations can together access important information.

### *Fight-back*

Although most suggestions for overcoming xenophobia and moving forward take a positive stance that is not destructive or violent, there is also an opposing view that suggests fighting back as a way of demonstrating the strength and ensuring that the violence against African

Foreign nationals stops. Chidozie (Interview 8), though also favouring a non-destructive approach to public enlightenment, states that:

Public enlightenment, but I think tit for tat, will send a strong message. If you fight back, they will avoid you; even if you fight and lose, they will know this one fights back.

For Abidugan (Interview 1), retaliation becomes a natural reaction to a problem that is not resolved. He argues that:

Retaliation is something that comes naturally. We are a peaceful nation and peaceful people. Our government was immediate in response to the boycotts in Nigeria. We are not supporting retaliation, but if something is not done, it is unavoidable.

#### *Advice to those coming*

Respondents in this study were asked what advice they would offer a Nigerian wishing to come to South Africa.

Don't come to SA! Dominating throughout these discussions is the advice, "don't come to South Africa". Seven respondents said that they would not advise any Nigerian citizen to come to South Africa for reasons pertaining to a deliberately frustrating system and the view that there's a scarcity of jobs and xenophobia. Chidozie (Interview 8) shares that:

I will advise the person to make an alternative choice of where to go. I will not advise anyone to come here. For reasons of xenophobia, especially problems with documentation. You have to create a job for yourself; there are no jobs here. I don't know what they are talking about us taking jobs, have you ever seen a Nigerian working at the department of education etc.?

Only come if you are skilled! Seven Nigerian citizens in this study, many of whom are highly educated, would strongly advise their fellow Nigerians to only come to SA if they have skills that would enable them to be self-sustaining. What essentially comes out here is the view that education alone may not help; practical skills would be highly advantageous in SA, where there's a major problem related to job scarcity.

Emanuel (Interview 19) shares this opinion by stating:

People don't come as before. You have to know something before coming, maybe a barber or hairdresser. It's hard to find work here. If you want to suffer, then come; it took me four years to learn how to do this thing.

Indirectly speaking, the reason why many people/Nigerians/African Foreign nationals get involved in criminal activities, Kwento (Interview 22) states:

Don't come to SA if you do not have a scarce skill; some of you may not have the patience and discipline to not get involved in crime-related activities. In fact, my family, my brothers and sisters are graduates, they wanted to come to SA, but I advised against it and told them to rather go to Europe. Even if you have those particular skills, it will take you years to be able to get a job, and when you get it, there is that prejudice.

Operate within the limits of the law; Respect and operating within the limits of the law were the views shared by three respondents who feel it necessary to caution those who wish to come to South Africa. While mentioning the fact that South Africa, of course, has its own challenges and the view that some officials partake in corruption, Mobo (Interview 17) strongly advises:

Be careful. Respect the terrain and laws in SA. Come with appropriate documentation!

Azi (Interview 15) articulates that people are often co-authors of their own destruction. He, in fact, says that:

If you want to have a peaceful stay, you have to keep within the lines of legitimacy, abide by the rules of the people and be very skeptical about the things you see and do

Familiarise yourself with the country, get involved: Mentioned earlier in this chapter is a view expressed by Kambili (Interview 16) regarding the lack of knowledge about visa and immigration processes among foreigners and officials. Familiarisation with the country refers not only to laws and regulations but also to the types of support and other institutions available to them. In this case, Nigerian organisations. In light of this, Kwento (Interview 22) articulates that Nigerian citizens should familiarize themselves with South Africa before coming. He inarguably states that:

I would advise the person to know what they want to do here; if they are close to me, I would find out if they are aware of the immigration laws of the country so that they do not find themselves to be illegal in the country. If they intend to study, to make sure they have all the necessary qualifications from home certified and prepared to go to the SaQa accreditation scheme and also to have their basic travelling allowance to cover any unexpected expenditure. When they come, they must identify themselves

to the Nigerian high commission and participate in the closest state or local government association of the Nigerian structure.

### **Concluding remarks**

In this chapter, I discussed the experience, attitudes, organisational life, and struggles of Nigerian migrants in South Africa, which is not part of the typical migration patterns witnessed by other African nationals. I highlighted the reasons behind their migration, specifically the complexities fuelling it.

I also discussed in this chapter the arrival of Nigerians in South Africa, their expectations and lived realities. I explored their integration methods, highlighting the vast roles of organisations in enhancing their engagements and connections with the locals, people at home and their fellow Nigerians abroad.

The last parts of this chapter looked at the counteractions currently employed by Nigerian citizens, mostly in their organisations, and their views on how xenophobia and xenophobic violence should be addressed. The following Chapter explores three South African multinational companies in Nigeria and the political economy of anti-xenophobic action.





# CHAPTER SEVEN: SOUTH AFRICA IN NIGERIA: MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ANTI-XENOPHOBIC ACTION

## Introduction



The main aim of this chapter is to examine the other leg of the argument about transnational action and the nature of ‘the political economy of xenophobia’ by looking at three South African multinational corporations operating in Nigeria: MTN, MultiChoice, and Shoprite. There are three reasons for including case studies on these three companies. Firstly, how xenophobia in South Africa affects businesses operating in Nigeria provides insights into the economic repercussions of xenophobic sentiments. It sheds light on the potential disruptions to international trade, investment, and economic relationships between the two countries. Secondly, cross-border relations; this study highlights the interconnectedness of nations in the face of xenophobia. By examining how xenophobic incidents in one country impact businesses in another, it underscores the need for cross-border cooperation, dialogue, and efforts to mitigate the negative consequences of such sentiments. Thirdly, it highlights the diplomatic and political ramifications by uncovering the diplomatic and political implications of xenophobia. It reveals how governments respond to incidents of xenophobia, whether through diplomatic channels, economic measures, or other means. Understanding these responses is crucial for comprehending the broader political context.

In this chapter I use a typology of the strategies employed by Nigerians to exert transnational pressure on South African businesses in Nigeria is presented. To highlight the benefits of these businesses to Nigeria, I also look at the social investments they have made in capital and social responsibility initiatives. This analysis utilises the annual reports, financial statements (2008-2017) and mainstream media articles to demonstrate that these companies have made significant investments in Nigeria and that a boycott of them would be detrimental to Nigeria and South Africa.

One of the critical elements of this study is the effect of South Africa's domestic xenophobic violence on South African multinational corporations in Nigeria. The continued xenophobic violence against African foreign nationals poses a risk not only to South Africa's trade relations on the continent but also to these companies, who face retaliation from South Africa's foreign counterparts in Mozambique, Malawi, and, more specifically, Nigeria, which is the subject of this chapter.

The response to xenophobia in SA in Nigeria has been multi-faceted and multi-scalar. On the one hand, some of South Africa's most prominent brand ambassadors, such as MTN, MultiChoice, and Shoprite, have become targets for Nigerians who have directly boycotted and forced a temporary closure of these stores in Nigeria over the years. On the other hand, the Nigerian government responded by boycotting the World Economic Forum (WEF) held in Cape Town in 2019 and indirectly targeting South Africa's brand ambassador companies in Nigeria. The xenophobic attacks against black African foreign nationals, particularly Nigerians, have far-reaching implications. The economic consequences of bilateral agreements between the two giants of the African continent, the impact on multinational corporations, and the influence on African unity are all factors that must be considered.

The retaliation of Nigerians against South African multinational corporations, and the frequent protest action taken by African foreign nationals against xenophobia in South Africa, shifts attention from portraying African foreign nationals as passive victims to active agents. In Nigeria, students from the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), in particular, have repeatedly threatened to close South African firms while shutting down their establishments for hours during picketing operations. These reprisals result in lost sales but irreparable harm to the reputation of these companies.

Very few scholars link investment by Nigeria in SA and South African investments in Nigeria; and how this is an essential factor in Nigeria's capacity and resources for counter-xenophobia. Though there have been notable top-down state-centric studies on the political economy of xenophobia in South Africa, those produced by Akinrinde and Tar (2021), Misago (2017), and Akinola and Klimowich (2018), a key point missing from these is civil society counter-actions.

Part one of this chapter briefly examines the impact of Nigerian action against SA. Part two examines the commercial agreements between SA and Nigeria, specifically those that govern the operations of South African companies in Nigeria. Part three provides a typology of tactics Nigerians have used to pressure South African companies in Nigeria over the years. I also investigate the financial issues of the three companies chosen for this study (MTN, MultiChoice, and Shoprite), focusing on their most recent financials in Nigeria, arguing that the gross value of these companies capacitates Nigeria for counteraction. The final part of this chapter looks at the response of both South African and Nigerian labour unions to xenophobia, considering their vested interest in labour relations and these multinationals and their workers.

While the concept of multi-scalar is discussed in chapter 1, I will highlight its most important features as it is applied to this chapter. Multi-scalar approaches look at networks of interactions, which, according to Xiang (2013:282), “delineates how movements are constituted at different scales”. Like Purcell (2006), we apply the view that scales as socially constructed strategies. In saying this, this chapter looks at how South African companies have been targeted at various scales, locally, by Nigerian boycotts and damage to property nationally through fines and bureaucratic delays.

### **Nigerian Action against SA companies in Nigeria**

The most challenging and threatening response to xenophobia in SA has been the counteraction, including boycotts and invasions of South African companies in Nigeria. South African companies have become significant investors across the African continent. A large number of South African companies are particularly invested in Nigeria. In 2005, the number of South African companies that penetrated the Nigerian market in different sectors stood at around 60 (Alden and Soko, 2005:383). Today there are over 120 companies.

While it must be noted that several South African companies have, in the very recent past, chosen to close their doors. Thus “Telkom announced it would quit its loss-making Nigerian Multi-Links business” and “in 2013 retailer Woolworths said it would close its stores in the country, blaming high rental costs, duties and supply chain challenges” (Maritz, 2016). But many South African companies such as MTN, Multi-Choice, Standard bank (and previously, Shoprite) initially reported thriving in the Nigerian market (Alden and Soko, 2005:383). The telecommunications giant MTN has become one of the biggest mobile operators in Nigeria and West Africa.

MTN’s initial investment started at around \$285 million (The Mail & Guardian, 2001); today, the company is worth over \$17 Billion in the Nigerian economy. Multi-choice has recently been listed as one of the top 50 brands in Nigeria. It is said that “the listed firms are among the most resilient in the country and achieved growth during the 2016 economic recession” (The Eagle online, 2017). Shoprite, on the other hand, before its exit, partnered with Standard Bank and Group 5 to launch an \$82 million deal (Eyinade, 2015). While several business analysts and Nigerian officials have dismissed the economic impact of the reprisal attacks, they have acknowledged the damage that the ongoing xenophobic attacks on Nigerian nationals in South Africa pose to South African business in Nigeria and the economy at large (Mbalula, Adekoya, Richards, Olaniyi, and Olaniyi, 2007).

In a meeting with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said that “South Africa and Nigeria are joined at the hip whether we like it or not, and we better make use of these opportunities we have to improve the relationship between us” (Allison, 2018), about the challenges faced by the two countries, including acts of xenophobic violence by South African against African foreign nationals. Allison (2018) states that

Evidence of South Africa’s commercial interests in Nigeria is visible everywhere in Nigeria’s quiet capital city: giant billboards advertise MTN’s data deals (1.5GB for just R37); South African private security companies patrol outside luxury hotels; there are Shoprite supermarkets and Standard Bank (known as Stanbic) ATMs, and the World Cup is broadcast on SuperSport.

Executive Director of the SA-Nigeria Chamber of Commerce has, however, said that President Ramaphosa's gesture of improving relations between these countries would not be as easy, given the volatile relationship, the ongoing xenophobic attacks and "the commercial benefits enjoyed by many South African companies in Nigeria and lack of Nigerian brands in South Africa as evidence of an unequal relationship" (Allison, 2018).

Adebajo (2019), the Director of the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation at the University of Johannesburg, writes in the Guardian about a meeting between President Cyril Ramaphosa and Muhammadu Buhari. Though provokingly, Adebajo (2019) asserts that:

The proverbial elephant in the room – involved the recent spate of xenophobic attacks in Tembisa, Alexandria, Hillbrow, Cleveland, Jeppestown, Malvern, Germiston, and the Johannesburg and Tshwane (Pretoria) central business districts. Hundreds of foreign-owned shops were burned and looted, affecting citizens of not just Nigeria, but also Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, and Somalia. Reprisal attacks by Nigerian looters against Shoprite, MTN, and Pep Stores in Lagos led to the temporary closure of these businesses, as well as the South African High Commission in Abuja. Abuja's claims for compensation for the Nigerian victims of the attacks had earlier been rebuffed by Tshwane. While condemning the attacks, Ramaphosa argued that Nigerians had not been the only targets and that other foreigners and some South Africans had also been victims. While also condemning the attacks, Buhari warned his compatriots in South Africa to follow the laws of their hosts, noting that: "When you are in Rome, behave as Romans do."

Adebajo (2019) concludes that the official state Nigeria-South Africa relationship is a weak one between two "crippled giants", asserting that:

Despite the efforts to reset this relationship, both countries currently represent crippled giants suffering from high unemployment, sluggish growth, widespread youth joblessness, and low investment. Both also lack a genuine vision and leadership....

This leads to the idea explored in this PhD that agency against xenophobia will likely be initiated by those on the ground.

## SA-Nigeria: Trade Agreements and value

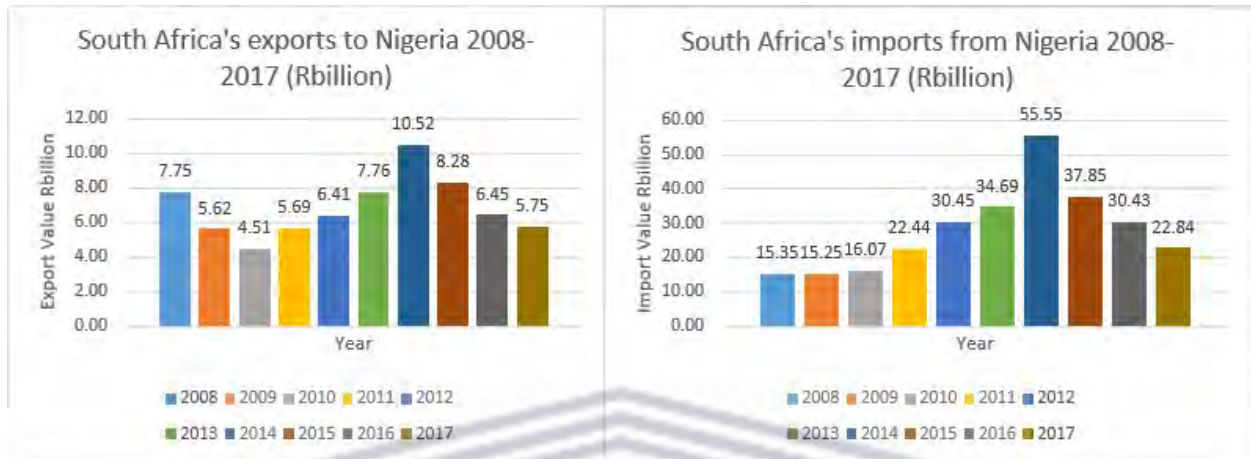
According to South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation (Dirco), the Bi-National Commission (BNC) was established in 1999 and is responsible for the formal diplomatic ties between the two countries (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, 2020). Before 1999, South Africa and Nigeria had tense relations, with South Africa taking a solid stance against Nigeria's military regime and human rights crimes.

The BNC, chaired by the Deputy President of South Africa and the Vice President of Nigeria, has, according to Dirco, been effective in promoting and emphasising harmony and unity while boosting bilateral relations between the two countries. The number of agreements between the two countries, they claim, demonstrates this, citing the *Bilateral Trade Agreement, Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investment Agreements*, and the *Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement* as examples (Department of International Relations and Cooperation, 2020).

According to the Department, Nigeria is a strategic partner and a priority country for South Africa's market share, with Nigeria accounting for over two-thirds of exports and investments. Nigeria is a big importer of plastics, edible fruits, machinery, paper pulp, and chemicals and is South Africa's seventh-largest export market. Conversely, Nigeria is a significant supplier of mineral fuels, oils, distillation products, rubber, oilseeds, lead, bird skin, fake flowers, and human hair.

According to the United Nations (UN) trademap database on international trade, South Africa's imports (mainly oil) from Nigeria have far surpassed its exports for at least the last ten years (United Nations-Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020). Graph 7.1 displays the values of commerce between SA and Nigeria from 2008 to 2017. A quick calculation reveals that South Africa imported (R280.92 billion) four times more than it exported during this period (R68.73 billion). Surprisingly, the import/export numbers of the two nations were almost equal until 2006, when South Africa started exceeding Nigeria's imports.

**GRAPH 7.1: SA-NIGERIA EXPORT/IMPORT VALUE 2008-2017**



Source Data: (United Nations-Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020) –own analysis

Trade trends between SA and Nigeria are inextricably linked to bilateral relations and government-to-government contacts at the time. Previous Presidents of Nigeria (Olusegun Obasanjo: 1999-2007) and South Africa (Thabo Mbeki: 1999-2008) shared a common purpose in building an African Union centred on regional integration. While the relationship was far from perfect, probably, President Jacob Zuma's (2009) "courting" of Angola as a strategic partner exacerbated the perceived enmity between SA and Nigeria as a result of Obasanjo and Mbeki's "activist" positions on the continent (Ebegbulem, 2013), Mbeki's opposition to Obasanjo as Chair of the African Union (AU), and the tensions linked to the denialism of the 2008 xenophobic attacks.

Despite the problematic bilateral relations between the two countries, 2014 saw one of the highest levels of export and imports from Nigeria, with R10 billion in exports and R55 billion in imports. This may be a coincidence, but it comes after the BNC's 8th session in May 2012 (the last one was in 2008), at which both South Africa's Deputy President and Nigeria's Vice President reaffirmed their commitment to improving bilateral relations.

A Joint Communiqué issued by the two states, released by the South African Government (2012), reveals to others that a Memorandum of Understanding and Implementation plan was signed, which included: "Agreement regarding Mutual Assistance and Customs Administration, Memorandum of Understanding on Economic and Technical Cooperation, Implementation Plan on the existing bilateral agreements and matters arising from the Bi-National Commission".

According to the Deputy Minister, Ms Thabethe, foreign direct investment from SA into Nigeria has totalled R35 billion since 2003, creating over 5000 employments in the Nigerian economy (South African Government, 2013). An essential player in this realm is the South Africa-Nigeria Business Chamber, founded in response to a desire to collaborate in identifying investment possibilities in Nigeria. The non-profit B2B (Business and Business) network was founded in 2005 and “has enjoyed the patronage of several hundred companies (including MTN, Absa, MRP, etc.) over the years, and it has engaged with leaders in government and the private sector in pursuit of its mandate to facilitate trade and investment” (South Africa - Nigeria Business Chamber, 2019). While South African enterprises have moved into the Nigerian economy, gaining dominance in many cases, the same cannot be said for Nigerian firms (Dangote cement, etc.) in SA, where there are only a few. Surprisingly, as will be seen later, South African corporations have significantly contributed to the Nigerian economy, surpassing SA to become the country with the largest economy on the African continent.

The more than 100 South African companies in Nigeria mentioned earlier have come to dominate many of Nigeria’s industries. One such player in Nigeria’s construction sector is the South African engineering company, Entech. According to Ebegbulum (2013), Entech, which heads a consortium of South African companies, was awarded a tender worth R2.1 billion from the Lagos State. On the other hand, South Africa’s Industrial Development Corporation, a state-owned entity, has become one of the largest investors in the Nigerian tourism sector and, in 2005, invested more than US\$1.4 billion in tourism and telecommunications in Nigeria (Ebegbulum, 2013).

## **The MTN Group**

### **Background to MTN**

The MTN Group (herewith MTN), formerly M-Cell, is headquartered in SA. One of South Africa’s brand leaders, MTN has branches in various African countries, including Afghanistan; Benin; Botswana; Cameroon; Congo; Ghana; Guinea Bissau; Guinea Conakry; Iran; Ivory Coast; Kenya; Liberia; Namibia; Nigeria, Rwanda etc.

The establishment of MTN coincides with the 1994 inauguration of South Africa's democracy. Since the company was established with the "assistance" of the South African government, it continues to be tied to several prominent South African politicians, including



the current president of the country, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, who served on the board's chairperson; Irene Charnley, a former member of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) trade union; and Mcebisi Jonas, a former deputy minister of finance. Despite being founded by the Afrikaner millionaire Koos Bekker, MTN may be perceived as having been formed by ANC officials using their "new money" instead of "old order capital", such as Shoprite, the other company in this research.

A glance at the history of MTN's development and those who appear to play a major role in it reveals that M-cell, which formally changed its name to MTN in 2002, reported that "Johnnic Holdings Limited ("Johnnic") is the ultimate controlling shareholder of M-cell" (M-Cell Limited, 2001). Interestingly, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, who held the position of MTN Board Chairman from 2002-2013, was also at the same time Chairman of Johnnic Holdings, a position he held from 1997-2006 (The Namibian, 2006). Another company that owned a 20 percent stake in MTN was New Investments Africa Limited (Nail). Cyril Ramaphosa became Deputy Executive Chairman in 1996 after resigning from the ANC. An article appearing on ITweb (online) further reveals that Ramaphosa, who was at the time also the founder and Chairman of the Shanduka Group, had in 2012, "bought a \$335 million (about R3 billion) minority stake in MTN Nigeria the cellular company's biggest unit" (Mawson, 2013).

MTN's biggest shareholders are Standard Bank, with a 47.68% share per capital, and the Government Employee Pension Fund (GEPF), with a 22% share per capital (MTN Group Limited, 2021). The Government employee pension fund (GEPF) is managed by the Public Investment Corporation (PIC), a state-owned company primarily known for managing the GEPF, Public Service and some private pensions funds worth R2.548 trillion by the end of March 2022 (Public Investment Corporation, 2022). According to an article in Business Insider in 2018, the PIC lost a mammoth R1.8 billion of these pension funds in 2015 after buying the shares owned by Cyril Ramaphosa in MTN Nigeria (De Wet, 2018). De Wet (2018) contends, "In the PIC's 2017 annual report, it valued the MTN Nigeria shares at R996 million, a loss of 65% or some R1.8 billion".

Although the PIC is not new to investing in South African businesses, the timing of the investment and the significant loss it suffered prompts questions, such as whether this was done to help Mr Ramaphosa avoid disclosing his "conflicts of interest" before taking the lead of the Presidency while maintaining the cadres' stake in MTN. The investment by the PIC came under the scrutiny of the Nigerian Government, which suspected that the PIC "received

an irregular forex clearance around the time it acquired its MTN Nigeria stake” (Sole, 2018). This was also around the time the Nigerian Government launched a probe into the alleged foreign exchange violations by banks acting on behalf of MTN.

Another example of ANC cadre involvement in MTN can be seen in the case of Yusuf Saloojee, the former South African ambassador to Iran. Saloojee was accused of facilitating a corrupt deal to reverse or cancel the operating license awarded to a Turkish mobile company, Turkcell and handing it to MTN in Iran in 2004. According to an article in Business Day (Bonorchis, 2019), “Saloojee allegedly pocketed R1.4m for his role; the money was deposited into an account of a firm of attorneys. The alleged payment was used toward the purchase of a house in Pretoria”. In this case, a former MTN Executive, Chris Kilowan, allegedly paid the bribe to Saloojee with the approval of Irene Charnley, who at the time held the position of Head of the North African and Middle Eastern operations, and Phuthuma Nhleko, the former Chief Executive and Executive Chairman of the MTN Group (Basson, 2019).

A 2014 article on Businessstech online discusses the early political battles before 1994. In the article, Muller (2014) suggests, "A lesser-known fact is that the ANC, shortly before taking power in 1994, tried to stop the licensing of Vodacom and MTN". Muller (2014) contends that the cellular controversy became a major source of conflict between the National Party (NP) government and the ANC alliance. The ANC had many concerns about black involvement in the cellular industry. Muller (2014) gives a view according to then Vodacom CEO Alan Knott-Craig, who said that “the battle between the ANC and the cellular companies were diffused through giving unions a BEE shareholding in the newly licensed cellular operators”. He further writes that “MTN, in turn, also increased the public holding of Transtel from 10% to 20% and provided a 5% shareholding to a Cosatu-affiliated pension fund” (Muller, 2014).

The ANC’s involvement in MTN cannot be denied. An article published on the IT Web (online) in 2007 discusses how the ANC orchestrated a deal between MTN and Telkom. Guest (2007) states that “MTN’s proposed purchase of some of Telkom’s assets was supported by the government and facilitated by SA’s ruling political party”. Quoting an ANC member under anonymity, Guest (2007) writes that:

The MTN/Telkom deal was being worked out with the full knowledge and participation of the ANC. As government, we saw the relationship with Vodafone

and Telkom as financial but not strategic. We believed - and still believe - that a Telkom and MTN merger would provide better strategic opportunities to government.

While the competition commission blocked this deal in 2015, Guest (2007) vividly quotes an investor analyst stating, “If government were to force competition authorities to rubberstamp the deal it would border on corruption. I can understand that pressure may be applied to speed up the investigation process, but I doubt it would be pushed through”.

Another interesting involvement, as mentioned above, is that of the former Deputy Minister of Finance (2014-2017), Mcebisi Jonas. Jonas is currently Chairperson of the MTN Group Board (formally appointed in December 2019), but he is also the PIC's former chairman and non-executive director (2015-2018). Interestingly Mcebisi Jonas, currently the Chairman of the MTN Group Board, was the PIC's Chairman when it suffered a loss of R1.8 billion from the purchase of MTN shares (see above) in 2015. Also ironic is the fact that Mcebisi Jonas, in 2016, while appearing before Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance, “cautioned against PIC investment in shaky parastatals” (Ferreira, 2016), while the PIC itself made a large investment in a shaky MTN Nigeria who had just settled a \$5 billion regulation fine.

### **MTN's road to Nigeria**

MTN entered the Nigerian market in 2001 under Irene Charnley's leadership, and by 2003 had more than 1 million members. In 2006, MTN had ten million subscribers three years later, making it one of Nigeria's cellular networks with the quickest growth. By 2019, Nigeria had over 60 million MTN subscribers, compared to 29 million in South Africa (Gilbert, 2020). The telecommunications behemoth, however, has not found it simple to join the Nigerian market.

Thomas (2009) highlights three failed attempts to obtain the required operating licenses in examining MTN's entry strategy in Nigeria. After these unsuccessful efforts, MTN purchased its GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) license in 2001 for a sum of USD 284 million (Thomas, 2009:32). MTN Nigeria is therefore owned 75% by the MTN group and 25% by locals after looking for partners in the Nigerian market to share the risk. According to Thomas (2009:33), “partner selection was of utmost importance for MTN, which needed a partner it could rely on and who could intervene for it in case of serious problems”.

Thomas (2009) discusses the rollout of MTN and its various challenges. According to him, transmission networks that MTN had paid for were found to be non-existent, and MTN had severe cost escalations related to equipment, power generation and infrastructure development. One of the biggest operational challenges experienced was clearing goods at ports, which took equipment weeks to be delivered.

Regarding its human resources, MTN needed to show their commitment to Nigerians by also employing locals and thus avoiding political pressure. Thomas (2009:36) states, "When MTN started its deployment in Nigeria, it employed locals in the region to reflect the diverse federal character of the country and not to be associated with any tribe, political clan or region". As is evident from newspaper sources, there were multiple problems for MTN in Nigeria and many different actors that were putting pressure on MTN and South Africa. In 2019 in Lagos, Ibadan and Uyo, MTN had to shut down its stores and service centre amidst boycotts against xenophobia. It suffered a major loss of trading hours (Nuhu, 2019). Highlighting the attacks on South African stores, Nugu (2019) states that:

MTN, like other South African businesses in Nigeria, has come under attack since Tuesday as Nigerians retaliated xenophobic attacks on Nigerians in South Africa... Other South African-linked businesses that have been attacked in Nigeria include retail stores, Shoprite, and PEP.

**TABLE 7.1: NIGERIA'S FORMS OF PRESSURE ON MTN**

**MTN vs the Government and the people**

As the largest mobile operator in Nigeria, MTN has faced various challenges, many imposed

When	Where	What
2012	Nigeria	MTN Fined N360 million for poor quality service <sup>7</sup>
2015	Benin City	Youths in the city of Benin storm MTN offices in response to xenophobia in SA <sup>8</sup>
2018	Nigeria	Accusations of illegally repatriating profits and withholding taxes <sup>9</sup>
2019	Lagos, Ibadan and Uyo	MTN shuts down its stores and service centre amidst boycotts against xenophobia <sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> <https://itweb.africa/content/Pero37Zg6obMQb6m>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/04/xenophobic-attacks-protests-target-s-african-business-outfits/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/09/06/africa/mtn-nigeria-tax-controversy/index.html>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/350535-xenophobia-mtn-shuts-down-all-stores-service-centres-across-nigeria.html>

by the Nigerian government through fines and bureaucratic challenges/delays. In May 2013, MTN and three other mobile communications operators were fined for contraventions on pre-registered sim cards. MTN was fined the largest amount of money, amounting to N29.2 million. Further, in 2013, MTN was fined a total of Eighty Million, Four Hundred Naira for failing to deactivate 420 improperly registered sim cards, and the fine was paid (Nigerian Communications Commission, 2022).

In 2015, MTN was slapped with one of the largest fines given to any mobile operator, totalling \$5.2 billion for failing to disconnect 5.1 million unregistered mobile subscribers (Shapshak, 2016). Although MTN only had to pay \$1.6 billion of the original \$5.2 billion fine following a settlement with the Nigerian government, the fine also resulted in the resignation of its CEO, Sifiso Dabengwa. By failing to disconnect unregistered sim cards, MTN was indirectly blamed for killing thousands of Nigerians. Shapshak (2016) quotes Nigerian President Muhammed Buhari as saying, "You know how the unregistered GSM SIM cards are being used by terrorists and between 2009 and today, at least 10,000 Nigerians were killed by Boko Haram, at least 10,000".

Shapshak (2015) reported that "MTN has lost about 25% of its market value since the scandal broke. On Thursday, the company was valued at about \$17 billion (ZAR258-billion) after its share price dipped 4.61% on the day". MTN itself had admitted that "The imposed fine eroded investor confidence in MTN Nigeria and the Group as a whole, and negatively impacted the reputation of MTN across our stakeholder groups. Between 26 October and 31 December 2015, MTN Group's market capitalisation declined by 20%" (MTN Group Limited, 2016).

Further implications of the fine are highlighted in an article titled "*MTN Feeling the pressure*", which appeared in the Mail&Guardian (2015). The article states, "The impact of the \$5.2-billion fine levied against the telecoms giant was first felt last week when it lost billions of rands in market capitalisation, as investors exited the shares listed on the JSE" (Mail&Guardian,2015). One of the most important frequent questions raised in this article is whether the fine was imposed due to the Nigerian Government's fiscal pressure and its need to accumulate funds. Quoting the director of Good Governance Africa, Oladiran Bello, "the government, under fiscal pressure from significantly lower oil revenues, is looking for income by levying such fines on multinationals" (Mail&Guardian,2015)

Since 2018, MTN has been in dispute with the Nigerian Government regarding allegations of a \$2 billion tax dispute and repatriating \$8 million in profits from Nigeria between 2007 and 2015 (Adebayo, 2018). The implications of such accusations, whether settled or not, cause irreparable damage to the reputation of MTN and result in share price fluctuations, consequences that the Nigerian authorities are aware of. Ironically, after causing much harm to its reputation and following years of court battles, the Attorney General of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and the Minister of Justice (AGF) have decided to withdraw their claim and refer the matter to the tax authorities (Nigeria attorney general drops \$2bn tax claim against MTN; next stop: tax authorities) (Alfreds, 2020).

Although most Nigerians use MTN, the corporation is strangely not very popular amongst Nigerians who view the company as exploitative. In 2012, the company suffered cuts of around 70 fibre optic cables across 7 locations in Nigeria (*MTN Nigeria's fibre network 'comes under attack'* - ITWeb, 2012). According to an article published on News24 (Speckman, 2012), "33 percent by other causes suspected to be sabotage". While the loss of this is unknown, in 2019, MTN lost a remarkable R28 million due to cyber-attacks. An attack on its servers resulted in 128GB of data distributed per individual, resulting in these losses in just under two hours (Mungadze, 2019b).

One of the biggest challenges facing MTN during this time is Nigerians' periodical boycotts and the closing of its stores in response to xenophobia in SA. In 2015 and 2019, MTN had to close its stores and centres as Nigerians boycotted outside its stores. The boycotts were organised by various civil society groups in the country. Speaking to the protest action against stores, Osuagwu, Ebegbulem, Enogholase, Abdulah, Elebeke, and Anyagafu (2015) states that:

Some of the protesters, who marched in different groups chanted anti-xenophobic songs and displayed placards with different inscriptions that read: "Dear South Africa, we have loved you, but you are attacking and killing us why? #Say no to Xenophobia; Stop killings in South Africa, Act now; we are Africans; Foreigners are not responsible for your joblessness, stop the killings; Say no to xenophobia; On February 13, 1976, Nigeria donated \$2 million to ANC to assist its liberation movement, #Say No to Xenophobia; Say no to killings of Nigerians in South Africa," among others.

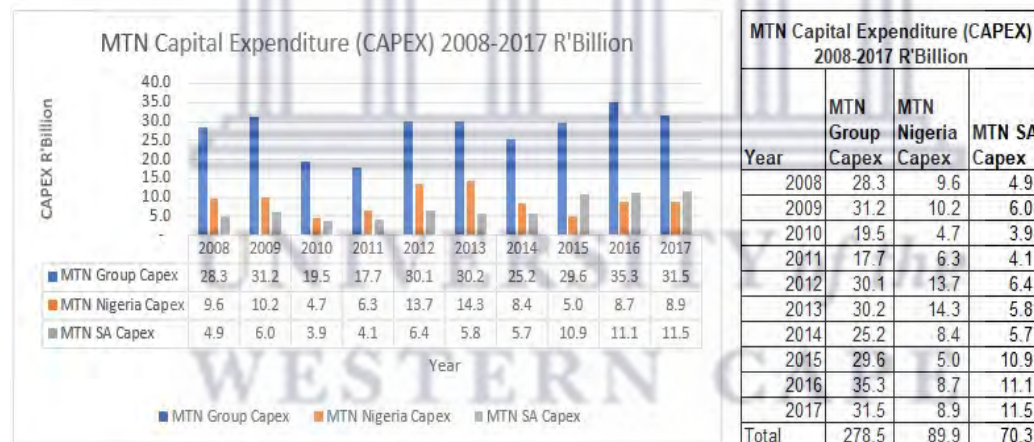
They also quote one protestor as saying, “We have spoken with some of our friends there and they have told us that they have seen a situation where South Africans are happy and excited that they are leaving” (Osuagwu et al, 2015). This points to the view that the information flow between those in diaspora, particularly through networks, is vast.

### Capital and social investment in Nigeria

Despite its many challenges, MTN has and continues to invest copious amounts of money in Nigeria. The overall Capital expenditure for the MTN Group for the last ten years (Graph 7.2) is close to R300 billion, which is equal to the tax revenue shortfall for South Africa's 2020–21 fiscal years, as announced by the Minister of Finance in June 2020. A total of R90 billion was spent in Nigeria alone to improve its network quality and develop its products; this is R20 billion more than it spent in South Africa (R70 billion) during the same time.

**GRAPH 7.2: MTN NIGERIA CAPEX 2008-2017**

(NB- The Results reflected in the MTN Group’s Integrated Reports are reflected in Billions, whilst in its Financial Statements, it is reflected as Millions. For this purpose, we will use Billions).



Source: Authors own graphs, content derived from MTN Annual reports 2008-2017-

<https://www.mtn.com/annual-reports/>

The company continued to invest R9.6 billion in Nigeria in 2008, despite the large-scale xenophobic attacks in South Africa in May of that year and the increased militant violence related to MEND’s oil war against Government forces in Nigeria’s oil-rich country. In fact, the company had, in both 2008 and 2009, spent in Nigeria (R9.6 billion and R10.2 billion, respectively), almost double what it had spent in SA (R4.9 billion and R6 billion, respectively).

In 2010, the capital expenditure dropped significantly to R4.7 billion. While MTN's 2010 Integrated Business Report attributes this drop in spending, or rather a peak in the group Capex spending in 2009, we note that the destruction of property in Nigeria is mentioned explicitly as a challenge during this year, "Mobile operators in Nigeria continued to face the challenge of having their infrastructure damaged during road construction activity across the country" (MTN Group Limited, 2011:54).

MTN had also, in 2010, faced threats from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) concerning the arrest of its leader in SA, Henry Okah. Henry Okah was 2010 accused of orchestrating twin car bombings in Nigeria which killed 12 people. An article on Foreign Policy online in 2010 reported that "the Nigerian government has threatened to nationalize the South Africa communication giant, MTN, if the country does not follow a devious script" (Dickinson, 2010). The threat to MTN was thus not only from MEND but from the Nigerian government itself.

In 2012, MTN Nigeria recorded a capital expenditure of R13 733 billion, mainly on the roll-out of 2G and 3G sites and modernisation programmes, even though the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) imposed a fine of N360 million (currently R14 590 376) on MTN Nigeria (ITWeb, 2012b). According to MTN's corporate services executive, Mr Akinwale Goodluck, the challenges of consistent power supply, vandalism, and multiple taxations contribute to these poor-quality services (ITWeb, 2012b). Heightened insecurities around the country have, according to Mr Goodluck, also hampered the ability of MTN to carry out routine maintenance (ITWeb, 2012b). The NCC thus takes no cognisance of the harsh operating environment in which companies must function.

Another significant decline in capital spending (40.4 percent) was seen in 2015. Once more, this was timed to an election-based shift in the presidency. MTN Nigeria acknowledged a challenging operating environment for this year. This is well known that Nigeria has unpredictable elections. According to Omonisa (2016), "Niger Delta ex-militants threatened to wage war against the government if Jonathan loses." One of the key reasons to stop infrastructure expansion, as MTN has done, is the political unrest in Nigeria.

Interestingly, this was the first time in Nigerian history that a president was removed from office through the electoral process. This is further to the \$5.2 billion fine received by MTN this year. There would undoubtedly be a lot of tension for any corporation and investors during this time.



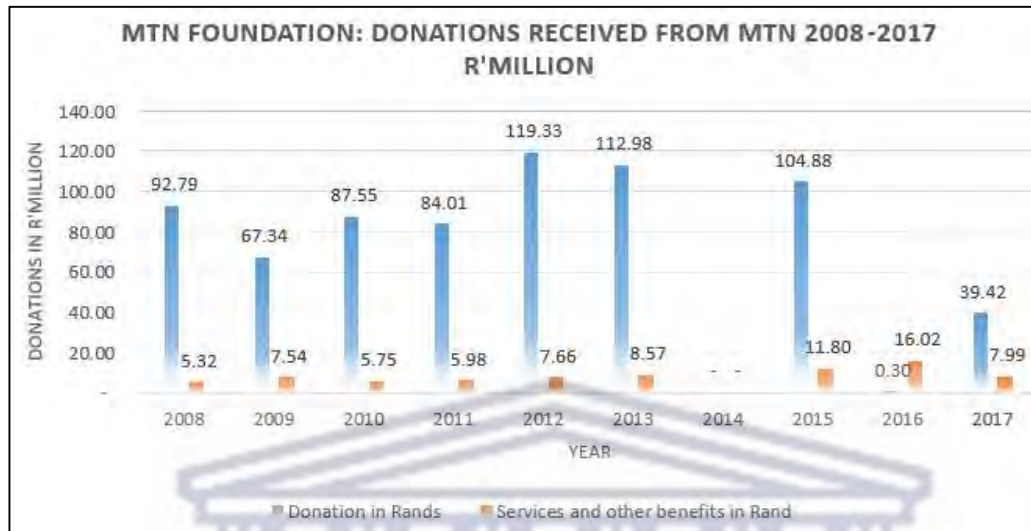
Further, in 2015, MTN faced one of the biggest fines ever given to a telecommunication operator. According to reports (Shapsak, 2015; van Zyl, 2015), MTN had been fined \$5 billion for not disconnecting 5.1 million users during registration. One way of examining what Nigerians stand to lose if companies like MTN had to close their doors is to look at how much MTN Nigeria has invested in the country and its people through its corporate social responsibility (CSR). According to the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, “Corporate Social Responsibility is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders”(United Nations Industrial Development Organization, 2022) in a country such as Nigeria where many social and environmental concerns relating especially to conflicts between various tribes, become ever more critical for any business, especially foreign-owned ones. My interest in MTN Nigeria CSR lies thus in the charity, sponsorship, and philanthropic avenues the company took to contribute to the reduction of poverty and positively contribute to the Nigerian society.

MTN, on its website, states that the company is driven by the “core belief we strive to reach the most vulnerable, marginalised, underserved communities and members of society without leaving anyone behind” (MTN, 2022). MTN’s Corporate Social Investments (CSI) is, according to them, driven towards youth empowerment, as the youth constitutes 60 percent of their market population. Their approach is “to systematically address job creation, enhance competitiveness and drive inclusive growth” (MTN, 2020).

The MTN foundation was founded in 2004 to advance the business's CSI. The vision of the MTN Foundation in Nigeria is “To be a leader in CSR initiatives in Nigeria measured by the impact and sustainability of our projects on our host communities” (MTN Nigeria, 2023). Their focus areas in Nigeria revolve around Health, Education and Economic Empowerment, but what has the company achieved over the past few years in terms of reaching its CSR mission, how has this impacted the communities of Nigeria, and what would be the effect of these initiatives no longer existing through MTN?

MTN contributes 1% of its annual income (after taxes) to the MTN Foundation for CSR projects. A 10-year analysis of these funds (shown in graph 7.3) demonstrates the significant sums of money MTN invests in Nigerian society to improve and develop its citizens through health, education, and economic empowerment.

**GRAPH 7.3: MTN FOUNDATION: DONATIONS RECEIVED FROM MTN 2008-2017**



Source: Authors own graphs, information retrieved from MTN Foundation Annual Reports: <https://www.mtnonline.com/foundation/annual-reports/>

**TABLE 7.2: MTN FOUNDATION BREAKDOWN OF DONATIONS RECEIVED FROM MTN 2008-2017**

Year	Donation in Naira	Exchange rate Naira/Rand as at 01/01 each year	Donation in Rands	Services and other benefits in Naira	Services and other benefits in Rand
2008	1 655 727 201	0.056044	92.79	95 000 000	5.32
2009	993 240 160	0.067799	67.34	111 198 371	7.54
2010	1 779 037 400	0.049214	87.55	116 858 340	5.75
2011	1 970 711 867	0.042628	84.01	140 225 779	5.98
2012	2 438 134 000	0.048942	119.33	156 508 000	7.66
2013	2 108 087 000	0.053594	112.98	159 885 000	8.57
2014	-	-	-	-	-
2015	1 688 820 000	0.062102	104.88	189 992 000	11.80
2016	3 948 000	0.076377	0.30	209 712 000	16.02
2017	887 900 000	0.044395	39.42	179 988 000	7.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>13 525 605 628</b>		<b>708.60</b>	<b>1 359 367 490</b>	<b>76.63</b>

These numbers were converted using the exchange rate of Naira to Rand on 01 January for each FY.

Source: Authors own graphs, information retrieved from MTN Foundation Annual Reports: <https://www.mtnonline.com/foundation/annual-reports/>

While the figures for 2014 are not available, MTN says it is a dedication to developing the people of Nigeria as soon as its donation to the foundation over the years. Further extending its reach under each area, the MTN foundation, under the umbrella of Economic Empowerment, provided 100 housing units to low-income families in the New Karu area, Nasarawa State. Under this portfolio, the “lady mechanic” initiative led to the graduation of 40 lady mechanics in August 2009 (MTN Nigeria Foundation, 2010). In their support of people with disabilities, the MTN foundation partnered with a local NGO and delivered, across 11 states, canes, hearing aids, braille machines and wheelchairs, amongst others. Phase one of the project was assigned more than R4 million (MTN Nigeria Foundation, 2010). In 2012, MTN donated more than R119 million to its foundation and a further R7 million in benefits. Its 336 project sites extended across 36 states in Nigeria, including the Federal Capital. Under the banner of “true support” and this portfolio, the foundation was able to “continue to assist indigent Nigerians burdened with chronic but treatable ailments requiring immediate medical intervention.

## **MultiChoice (DSTV)**

### **Background**

The South African multinational corporation MultiChoice operates DSTV, DSTV Now, GOTV, SuperSport, Showmax and Irdeto. It operates as a video entertainment company that brings these services to around 19.5 million subscribers across 50 countries on the African continent, including South Africa and Nigeria (MultiChoice Group, 2023).

Before unbundling its shares in 2019, MultiChoice was owned by Naspers Ltd, one of the world's leading consumer internet groups and technology investors. It also owns or has interests in several notable companies, including Media24, TakeAlot, and Prosus (Strydom, 2019). A quick review of Naspers' history reveals some heinous truths. It is a prime example of a corporation founded and raised on "old apartheid money" to promote Afrikaner nationalism. *The De Nasionale Pers Beperkt* (National Press Ltd), founded in 1915 by prominent Afrikaners including Willie Hofmeyer and Jannie Marais, produced and printed newspapers and periodicals and was widely known for its support of the National Party (NP). Another key player in Naspers is its current chairman of the board, Koos Bekker.

Van Der Merwe (2023) articulates the view that:

...in the 80's that Koos Bekker emerged at Naspers through a partnership with M-Net. Bekker has gone on to become one of the richest men in the world - the basis for his wealth was built on the backs of millions of South Africans that suffered during the apartheid era.

Through Naspers newsrooms across the country, the apartheid regime was propped up, and its grotesque discriminatory laws justified...There's also that not-so-small fact that the architects of apartheid - the National Party owned a considerable amount of shares in Naspers

An article published in the *Journalist* in 2015 highlights Naspers' participation in apartheid. According to this article, Media 24 CEO Ms Esmare Weideman 'apologised' for this role in the apartheid regime. Still, the apology was seen as devoid of the depth and level of Naspers' role (Tshabalala, 2015). The writer, Tshabalala, shares the opinion that this apology is "too late and too hollow", arguing that: according to Tshabalala (2015), "she only stated that... We acknowledge complicity in a morally indefensible political regime and the hurtful way in which this played out in our newsrooms and boardroom" (Tshabalala, 2015), and mentioning only the company's 'evolution' and 'role in transformation'.

No mention was made about how the company—formed and controlled by the progenitors of Apartheid, the National Party—defended racial segregation, underreported on mass killings and political violence—and spun on behalf of the Apartheid government to justify its misdeeds for decades (Tshabalala, 2015).

However, this depth and level of its financial support were revealed by *Open Secrets*, a non-profit organisation that had, in 2017, published a book *Apartheid Guns and Money: A tale of profit*, in which it had identified Naspers as one of the key financial supporters of the National Party. An article on this, published in the *Daily Maverick* in 2017, reveals that:

In a letter written to FW de Klerk on 17 August 1989, Naspers Managing Director Ton Vosloo reaffirmed the company's support of the NP. Vosloo reminded De Klerk of a donation of R150,000 (approximately R1 million today) made to the NP before the 1987 elections. He also pledged a further R220,000 in support of the NP ahead of South Africa's last race-based general elections in September 1989 (Open Secrets, 2017).

While government advertising and school textbook contracts have been revealed as rich payoffs for its support, gaining a license to launch South Africa's first paid television service, M-Net, was one of its biggest goals (Open Secrets, 2017). It claims this had the desired impact when Naspers was given a 24 percent interest in M-Net, a deal that allowed Naspers to develop the DSTV (owned by MultiChoice) paid television service. These discoveries make it difficult to refute the view that Naspers built DSTV and its other businesses on apartheid revenues.

In more recent, post-apartheid occurrences, MultiChoice made a suspicious payment of R25 million to the Guptas' infamous ANN7 channel, which was recently disclosed through #Guptaleaks (A collaborative investigation into South Africa's state capture)(Andersen, 2017). These funds were allegedly made to influence the former Minister of Communications, Ms Faith Muthambi (who had ties to the Guptas), to ensure that the encryption of Set-Top Boxes was decided in a way that benefited MultiChoice. According to Andersen (2017), Muthabi's preference for unencrypted set-top boxes was a strong vote in favour of MultiChoice, a decision that “flouted her own party’s policy on the issue”. A fascinating revelation made by the #Guptaleaks (Andersen, 2017:no page number) states that:

In September 2015, six months after Muthambi confirmed there would be no encryption, MultiChoice increased its annual payment to the Guptas’ controversial ANN7 channel from R50m to R141m – at a time when the channel had failed to win a significant slice of DStv’s news audience, and whilst the channel received widespread criticism over the quality of its content

While MultiChoice has rejected these charges, a pattern of government lobbying, bribery, and corruption appears to exist.

## **MultiChoice (DSTV) Nigeria**

With its pay television service, MultiChoice entered the Nigerian market in November 1993. According to the company's website, the introduction of Nigeria's first digital satellite broadcasting service was a joint venture between MultiChoice and local businessman Adewunmi Ogunsanya, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) (MultiChoice, 2022). In 2003, Naspers owned the subscription television business M-Net and its sister companies MultiChoice and M-Web. In Nigeria, the company has grown its staff complement from 30 people to over 1000 while indirectly supporting over 20 000 employments, thanks to its

service of offering "premium entertainment" through news, entertainment, sports, and educational programs on its DSTV and GOtv platforms (MultiChoice, 2022).

An insightful piece by business analyst Tunmise Badru was published in the online Vanguard News in October 2018. He explains MultiChoice's entry into Nigeria, growth, and essential economic contribution. According to Badru (2018), the pre-1993 mainstay of Nigerian entertainment included the following:

Movie releases at 10 pm after the news bulletin on national or state-owned television, blockbuster movies on video cassette recorders, old Latin American soaps and dramas, recorded matches of the Premier League and for the children, cartoons early in the evening

He claims MultiChoice entered the country at a moment of significant political turmoil and instability, changing the face of television in Nigeria with its vast influence. Indeed, it had been a period of enormous turmoil under the notorious leadership of General Sani Abacha.

MultiChoice has established a network of dealers, sales representatives, and installers in Nigeria -- estimated to be approximately 12 000 (MultiChoice, 2022). According to MultiChoice (2022), its economic contributions to Nigeria, confirmed through a recent socio-economic effect study from Accenture Strategy, reveal that it contributed 634.6 billion to Nigeria's GDP from 2016 to 2019. Salau (2020) states, "The corporation had spent over \$428 million on cultivating local creative talent, as a result of sourcing and producing local content for DSTV, GOtv, M-Net, SuperSport, and Africa Magic, and investing in creating local production infrastructure". He claims this has enormously aided the Nigerian film business, particularly in ensuring that Nollywood entertainment is available throughout Africa. The group generated revenue of R26.8bn. (Salau, 2020) and possibly adding to reducing the image of Nigerians as criminals. The wide popularity of local content, such as *Big Brother Naija*, helped boost subscriber growth.

Ernest-Samuel argues that MultiChoice has brought "improved quality of film production, the increased online presence of Nollywood films, enhancing the local tourism and hospitality industry and promoting professionalism" (Ernest-Samuel, 2017:7). She also highlights though, "the need for industry practitioners to engage intellectual property lawyers in their business dealings with MultiChoice and other corporate agencies to forestall exploitation" while revealing that "the lack of policy and governance has allowed foreign multinationals to exploit regulatory loopholes to the detriment of the industry" (Ernest-Samuel, 2017:7).

On the other hand, Multichoice, through its DSTV service, is a compelling South African brand ambassador that is well-known across the African continent. Like MTN, though, MultiChoice has become a target for both the Nigerian government and the Nigerian people in its response to the frustrations posed by South Africa. Nigerians have also exerted pressure on this South African company.

**TABLE 7.3: NIGERIA'S FORMS OF PRESSURE ON MULTICHOICE**

When	Where	What
2015	Nigeria	Investigation by the Consumer Protection Council for human rights violations
2016	Abuja	Nigerian Senate proposes investigation against Multichoice for alleged malpractices.
2017	Niger Delta	Niger Delta militants threaten to bomb South African investments <sup>11</sup>
2019	Nigeria and Zambia	Multichoice closed several stores in Nigeria amidst xenophobic violence in South Africa
2022	Nigeria's tax authority	\$4.4 billion tax Dispute-Allegations that Multichoice skipped taxes <sup>12</sup>
2022	Abuja	The Competition and Consumer Protection (CCPC) Tribunal N25 million fine for violating its restraining order on the increase in prices of its services <sup>13</sup>

### **MultiChoice vs the Government and the people**

As is evident from Table 7.3, multiple forms of counteraction in Nigeria and many different actors are putting pressure on MultiChoice. In 2015 MultiChoice's DSTV segment came under the investigation of the Consumer Protection Council (CPC) for apparent human rights violation complaints received from its customers. An article on Techpoint highlights some of the complaints lodged against DSTV as follows:

Poor quality of service, such as incessant disruption of service without compensation while subscription is current; wrongful abrupt disconnection of service during subsisting subscriptions; monthly subscriptions lasting less than 30 days; and poor redress mechanism and customer services (Imanah, 2015)

<sup>11</sup> <https://punchng.com/xenophobia-niger-delta-militants-threaten-to-bomb-south-african-investments>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-03-10-nigeria-settles-4-4-billion-tax-dispute-with-multichoice/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://pmnewsnigeria.com/2022/09/08/price-increase-tribunal-slams-n25m-fine-on-multichoice/>

In 2016 the Nigerian Senate proposed an investigation into DSTV over alleged malpractices. According to Fetuga (2016), a public affairs analyst, “This was sequel to a motion moved by Senator Isah Misau and titled ‘Concern About Unwholesome Practices by MultiChoice Nigeria (DSTV)’”. Fetuga’s (2016) article, which appeared in the P.M News on 29 February 2016, highlights that Nigerians have started questioning whether South African companies like MultiChoice are being vindictively targeted (Fetuga, 2016). Fetuga (2016) commented on the disputes on price increases when she said, “A court showed last year that there is no law prohibiting MultiChoice or any company from charging what it thinks the market can bear. Even lawyers do not charge the same fees.” Ironically, 6-years later, MultiChoice is still faced with court battles over price increases. Nigerians are convinced that DSTV is exploiting them, evident through the N25 million fine imposed on DSTV by the Competition and Consumer Protection (CCPC) tribunal in September 2022.

MultiChoice is amongst one of the biggest South African companies facing a backlash by Nigerian citizens in response to xenophobia in SA. In 2017, militant groups in the Nigeria Delta threatened to bomb South African companies, including MultiChoice, in response to xenophobia in South Africa (Jonathan, 2017). Commenting on how Nigerians are able to unify on the issue of xenophobia in SA, the Punch News in Nigeria states that “The threat from the militant groups, namely, Niger Delta Watchdogs, Niger Delta Volunteers and Niger Delta Strike Force is contained in a copy of a letter addressed to the Office of the South African High Commission to Nigeria located at 71, Usuma Street, Off Gana Street, Abuja” (Jonathan, 2017).

Jonathan (2017:) quotes one militant as stating

“We shall strike any property and persons from South Africa within our reach; we will bring down Multichoice (DSTV), Shoprite and others. We will not fold our arms and watch you (South Africans) slaughter our people like chickens for no just cause”.

This speaks to the multi-scalar transnational collective response to xenophobia against migrants. In 2019, MultiChoice temporarily closed several of its stores in Nigeria and Zambia, fearing that xenophobic attacks in SA would lead to backlash action in these countries. Group Executive Corporate Affairs, Jabavu Heshu, in an article published on ITWeb, said,

In the interest of safeguarding our customers and staff, we have taken the decision to close some of our offices in Nigeria and Zambia until the situation is under



control.... MultiChoice is committed to *uniting Africans* through our programming and cultural initiatives. We advocate equality and condemn all forms of discrimination. The ongoing violence in South Africa against foreign nationals is against the spirit of Africa and counter-productive to the decades of work done by African... We are a proudly African company, and although our story began in South Africa, today, *we represent the African continent* in all its diversity through our presence across the region.... We embrace and celebrate the diversity of varied nationalities, traditions, cultures, and religions from across the continent and beyond. This is demonstrated through our multinational staff complement, our multicultural supply chain, and the local and international content that we showcase on both our DSTV and GOtv platforms to leaders and well-meaning organisations to unite the continent...(Mungadze, 2019a)

Two things are evident in this statement made by the Group Executive. Firstly, it implicitly acknowledged the severe threat of xenophobia to its business and the damage Nigerian citizens could impose on the company. Secondly, it paradoxically highlights the companies' playing a Pan African transnational political card, downplaying the view that it is, in fact, a South African company.

The Premium Times, a Nigerian news organisation, lauded MultiChoice Nigeria for its effective service to the Nigerian State during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the article published in April 2021, "MultiChoice Nigeria made cash donations of N200 million (around R7.4 million) to the Federal Government of Nigeria"(Premium Times, 2021). This is a relatively small sum, but there is an explicit acknowledgement that "Not many companies have permeated the personal lives of Nigerians the way MultiChoice has been doing for over two decades of its operation in the country" (Premium Times, 2021). Further emphasising the support of MultiChoice in Nigeria, Premium Times (2021) states that:

The company also committed up to N400 million to the Nigerian creative industry. In Fela Anikulapo's voice, e no finish e no finish e no finish... The company donated 60,000 pieces of personal protective equipment and 10,000 face masks to hospitals and non-governmental organisations, as well as an approved inventory worth over N550 million in highlight National Centre for Disease Control's (NCDC) COVID-19 helplines.

## **Capital and social investment in Nigeria**

Unfortunately, MultiChoice does not indicate the financial investments and contributions made per country in its Integrated Annual reports as MTN does in its reports. While this makes it somewhat impossible to get first-hand information from the company directly, an activities and impacts assessment done by Deloitte in 2016, along with other media articles, gives us an idea of the impact that Multichoice makes in Nigeria.

Although it is difficult to pinpoint precisely how much MultiChoice has invested in Nigeria since its inception—as was done with MTN above—several publications, such as the activities and impacts assessment released by Deloitte in 2016 and other related articles, give direction on this.

Directly highlighting its social value, MultiChoice (2022) on its website states, “Our supply value chain includes more than 12000 dealers, retailers, installers, sales agents and sabimen”. Speaking to the results of a 2019 Socio-Economic Impact Report from Accenture, MultiChoice (2022) further state that

from 2016 – 2019 alone, MultiChoice Nigeria contributed ₦634.6 billion to Nigeria’s GDP, impacted the livelihood of Nigerians to the tune of ₦2.8 billion and created economic value of ₦57.1 billion through new businesses, therefore creating incremental spend in the economy. In addition, the business paid ₦39.6 billion in taxes and fees and spent ₦ 49.5 billion on content and local production facilities, with 177,459 hours of content commissioned

Speaking to the results of an economic impact assessment report commissioned by MultiChoice for the 2015-2019 period, Salau (2020) states that “the company had specifically spent over \$428 million in developing local creative talent, as a result of sourcing and producing local content for DSTV, GOtv, M-Net, SuperSport, and Africa Magic, and investing in building local production infrastructure”. Highlighting but one impact of this investment, Salau (2020) state that “This investment has greatly helped to support the Nigerian movie industry, ensuring that Nollywood movies are available across Africa and the rest of the world”.

An information pamphlet summarizing its economic impact available on its website, highlights that MultiChoice spent ₦22.4 billion (around R865 million today) on tax and regulatory fees in 2014/15, it invested N29.4bn (around R1 billion today) on transmitter sites in 2011/12 and 2014/15. It spent a total of N9.98 Billion (Around R389 million today) on

content and production facility spending in 2014/2015 (MultiChoice, 2017). The significance of highlighting these figures is to say that in the 2014/15 Financial year, MultiChoice invested more than R2 billion just in developing these areas in one financial year.

Above its capital investments in Nigeria, MultiChoice also makes significant strides in ploughing back into the Nigerian communities through its Corporate Social Investment (CSI). The Premium Times, a Nigerian news organisation, lauded MultiChoice Nigeria in 2020 for its effective service to the Nigerian State during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the article published in April 2021, “MultiChoice Nigeria made cash donations of N200 million (around R7.4 million) to the Federal Government of Nigeria and N50 million (Around R1.8 million) to the government of Lagos State”. According to the article, MultiChoice has been one of the few companies, over the last few decades, to pervade the lives of Nigerians.

In addition to these gifts, MultiChoice was active in the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to hospitals, the distribution of 10,000 facemasks to hospitals and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the free upgrade of viewers on lesser bouquet packages (Premium Times, 2021). While the 2020 financial year does not fall within the scope of this research, it is fascinating to see how MultiChoice has responded to one of the world's most serious issues.

The phrase "Enriching Lives" is familiar to everyone familiar with MultiChoice. This is the one motto under which MultiChoice conducts its CSI/CSR activities and exerts its influence in the communities where it works. MultiChoice seeks to better the lives of its operating communities through building projects and aiding previously disadvantaged communities, as well as investing in innovation and providing opportunities. MultiChoice has picked education as the most appropriate area of concentration for its CSI activities (MultiChoice Corporate Social Investment Report, 2010). Its Multi Resource Centres, developed in 2004, has, by 2010, providing educational resources and services to over 800 schools in 24 countries across the continent (MultiChoice Corporate Social Investment Report, 2010).

MultiChoice's CSI remained focused on education in 2008. MultiChoice supplied instructional television and teacher training through its 350 resource centres, which were managed in collaboration with governments and the Nepad e-schools commission (Naspers Integrated Annual report, 2008). According to a report published by Deloitte in 2016 on the operations and impact of MultiChoice's pay television business in Nigeria, MultiChoice spent roughly \$1.8 million on this initiative between 2012 and 2015 through its provision of audio-

visual education methods. According to them, the program, implemented in 332 schools across 30 states, has benefited over 60 000 children by 2015.

MultiChoice's SuperSport concluded its skills transfer initiative in 2010, allowing locals to make up 100% of the SuperSport studio staff in Nigeria. With a \$1.3 million budget, SuperSport launched the GIFT program to scale up "existing production knowledge in disciplines such as video production control, directors, cameramen, sound operators, EVS (slow-motion playback), audio and visual editing, lighting, and basic event management" (Deloitte Impact Report, 2016:63). The program benefited a total of fifteen people.

MultiChoice also focused on health matters by supporting the country's sickle cell foundation through sponsorships and creating awareness documentaries (MultiChoice Corporate Social Investment report, 2016). In its attempts to support the foundation, MultiChoice, in 2014/15, "donated a Toyota Avensis, to allow the staff to move around more easily, replacing a car donated earlier in the 2000s together with a team minibus".

MultiChoice has discovered that investing in sports activities "creates direct economic benefits through employment, money from events, consumables, and general taxation; further, it may increase employee productivity through movement and health" (MultiChoice Corporate Social Investment report, 2016:68). As a result, MultiChoice has identified and sponsored several athletic initiatives over the years, as well as modernized infrastructure and promote professionalism in the business. Its engagement in the local football sector, particularly the Nigerian Premier League, resulted in the first local football matches being televised in seven years in 2006. Local sporting codes were not solely confined to football; just 24 basketball games were aired in 2011/12, but that number had nearly doubled to 46 games in 2014/15. People tend to support and relate to local sporting codes, and MultiChoice can affect and impact not only those directly involved in these athletic activities but also the millions of fans at home, thanks to the availability of these sporting codes on their televisions.

The impact of MultiChoice's investment in Sports is also mentioned in their Corporate Social Investment Report (2016). According to the report, the sparked interest in football has led to "Gabras Football Club was bought, for the first time in history in Nigeria, for over N5bn (ca. \$5.0m)", and the consequence of seeing football on Tv sparked people's interest to see these games live at stadiums, thus generating revenue from ticket sales (MultiChoice Corporate Social Report, 2016). One of these stadiums, Enyimba International Stadium, "now charges

N1,000 (ca.\$5) for the cheapest tickets, and with on average, about 10,000 visitors results in revenues above \$50,000 per match” (MultiChoice Corporate Social Report, 2016:73).

Like South Africa, MultiChoice was intensely interested in expanding local content and production in Nigeria. MultiChoice has sponsored the growth of eight regional channels under the name African Magic, as stated in its Corporate Social Report (2016:5). One of the most considerable impacts of this local production support is the “facilitated in the physical infrastructure through its production studios and outside broadcasting vans, investing \$32.4m between 2011/12 and 2014/15”.

## **Shoprite Holdings (Ltd)**

### **Background**

Shoprite Holdings (Ltd), herewith Shoprite/ or “the Group”, is another South African old-order (white) multi-national company with its roots spread across the African continent started benefitting massively from the fall of apartheid. Headquartered in the Cape, it is called Checkers in middle-class areas and Shoprite in poor areas and Bantustans. It opened stores in 15 countries across the rest of Africa, including Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Mozambique, and Ghana. Classified as Africa’s largest food retailer, the company consist not only of Shoprite stores but also includes Checkers, Checkers Hyper, Usave, OK, House & Home, Medirite and its associated Shoprite liquor stores (Shoprite Holdings, 2023a).

The Group, which was founded in 1979, is linked to what is known as "old Apartheid money." Christo Wiese, the company's brains, is one of South Africa's wealthiest men today. Anton Rupert, Whitey Basson (Managing Director and Chief Executive of Shoprite Holdings Ltd until 2016), PSG Group founder Jannie Mouton, and Naspers Group Chairman Koos Bekker are among the wealthiest businessmen linked to him. The firms and fortunes of all Afrikaans, "Stellenbosch Mafia," as described by Economic Freedom Fighter (EFF) leader Julius Malema, are the worst of white monopoly capital.

Political journalist Pieter Du Toit saw Wiese as part of ‘The Stellenbosch Mafia’ a ‘Billionaires club’ but suggests ‘even though he benefited from the statutory and governance framework constructed by the policies of separate development, was never an apartheid ideologue’ (Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2019). An article published in Forbes in 2016 explicitly

mentions Christo Wiese as "one of the planet's wealthiest individuals"(Brown, 2016). Brown (2016) states that:

Publicly traded Shoprite does the revenue of \$9.9 billion a year, while PEP's parent company, Steinhoff, brings in \$11.8 billion (some of it from selling cellphones and home furnishings). Combined, they net almost \$2 billion in annual profits, operate more than 9,000 stores in 30 countries and employ over 200,000 people. No other African retailer comes close to rivalling their breadth and depth, and Wiese controls both

**IMAGE 7.1: 24 OF THE RICHEST PEOPLE IN SA**

Here are 24 of the richest people in South Africa

Name	Net Worth	Data Source
Nicky Oppenheimer	R103.2 billion	Forbes
Johann Rupert	R77.8 billion	Forbes
Ivan Glasenberg	R67.9 billion	Forbes
Koos Bekker	R32.5 billion	Forbes
Patrice Motsepe	R33.9 billion	Forbes
Allan Gray	R24.8 billion <sup>1</sup>	Entrepreneur Mag
Michiel le Roux	R17.0 billion	Forbes
Douw Steyn	R16.7 billion	Sunday Times Rich List
Stephen Saad	R16.3 billion <sup>1</sup>	Entrepreneur Mag
Christo Wiese	R15.6 billion	CNBC/Forbes
Jannie Mouton	R13.6 billion <sup>1</sup>	Entrepreneur Mag

Source: Business Tech (2019)

Wiese is also the largest shareholder in the infamous Steinhoff, which made headlines in 2017 for its accounting irregularities and continues to do so today. Due to the Steinhoff crisis, Christo Wiese was rumoured to have dropped from billionaire to millionaire. Bishop (2019), for example, claims that ‘In March 2017, his net worth, according to Forbes magazine, was at \$5.6 billion. Less than a year later, it fell to a mere \$300 million. Wiese stepped down from his position of Chairman in 2020, a position he has held since 1979.

An article which appeared in Forbes in 2019 maintains that:

‘Shoprite’s shareholders have called for a chairperson who is independent, complaining that Wiese’s shareholding presents a clear controversy because he has the power to push through changes and make decisions that meet his personal objectives, even if they are not necessarily in the best interest of the other shareholders (Nshehe, 2019)

According to its 2022 Integrated report, the Public Investment (PIC) Corporation owns around 13.34 percent of Shoprite shares, Old Mutual, whose current Board of Directors Chairperson is ANC veteran and former Minister of Finance, Mr Trevor Manuel. With more than 141,000 employees across its operations, Shoprite holdings is too big to fail. While the exact worth of Shoprite is unknown, the company reported a total Revenue of R156.9 billion in 2020 alone and R146 billion in the previous financial year (Shoprite Integrated Annual Report, 2020). The company, however, decided in 2019 to close its operations in Nigeria after 15 years of operations.

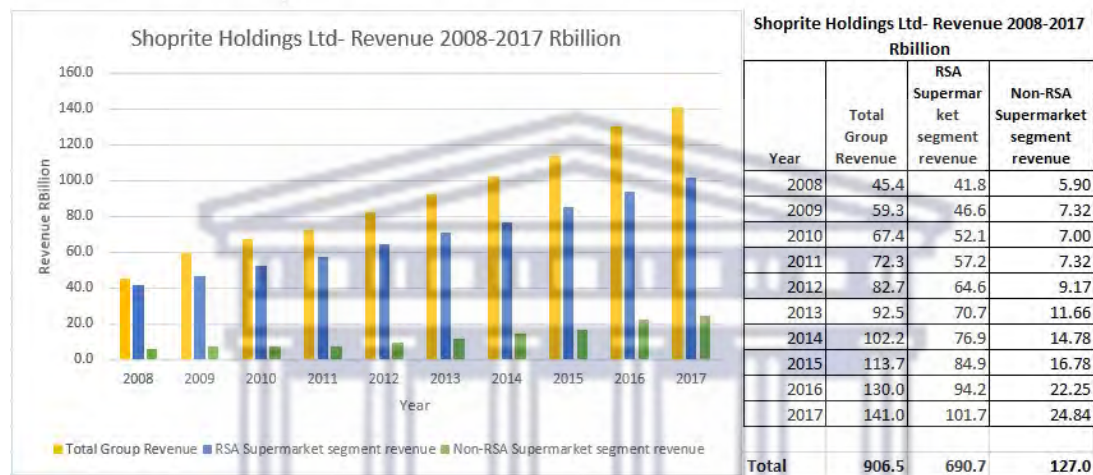
### **Shoprite Nigeria**

Shoprite opened its first store in Lagos, Nigeria, in December 2005, and in the space of 12 years, by 2017, the company had more than 23 outlets in eight Nigerian states, including Abuja. Games (2020) mentions Whitey Basson, the company's former CEO, as having an “appetite for risk (which) saw Shoprite roll out to many cities in Nigeria, including Kano in the Muslim-dominated north despite concerns at the time about security in the wake of attacks across the region by the terrorist group Boko Haram, and the logistics of getting stock that far north”.

Despite the large-scale xenophobic violence that shook South Africa in 2008, Shoprite, like MTN and MultiChoice, appeared unscathed at this stage. The revenue generated by the company in 2009, the year following the 2008 attacks, rose by more than R10 billion to R59.3 billion (Graph 7.3), of which its non-RSA segments contributed R7.32 billion. According to its former Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Whitey Basson, “Given this solid turnover and profit performance in a period of subdued economic growth, we are confident that the Group is still well positioned to continue to make progress despite the current economic realities” (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009).

Revenue for the 2010 financial year for non-RSA stores appears to have declined from R7.3 billion in 2009 to R7 billion in 2010. However, this does not indicate a decline in consumer spending in non-RSA stores, but rather “the strength of the rand relative to the US dollar and the weakening of most African currencies in which the Group trades” (Shoprite Holdings Ltd 2010:15).

**GRAPH 7.3: SHOPRITE HOLDINGS LTD-REVENUE 2008-2017**



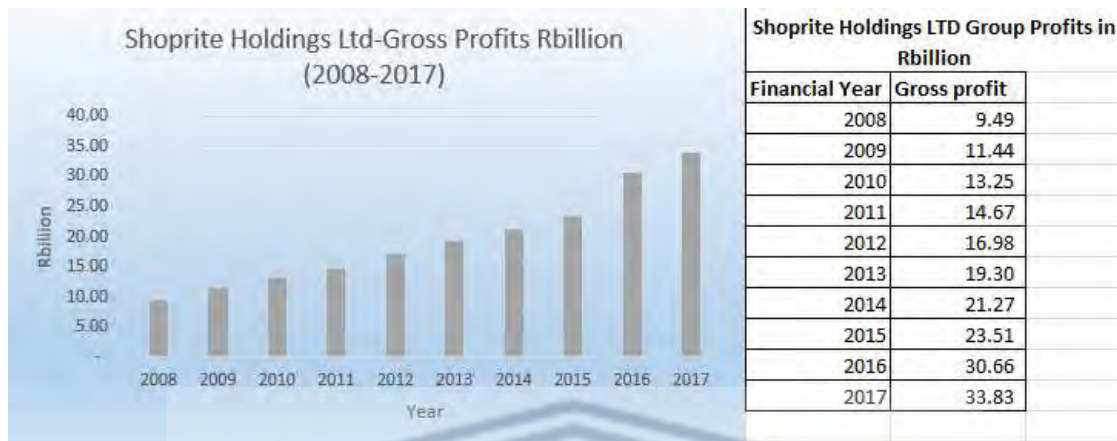
Source: Authors own graphs, derived from Shoprite holding annual reports 2008-2017-  
<https://www.shopriteholdings.co.za/shareholders-investors/integrated-reports-archive.html>

Despite rising commodity prices and the effects of the global economic crisis, which forced many customers to cut back on the "usual" pricey items, Shoprite was "positioned to serve middle and lower income groups; the brand maintained its historical positioning of offering consumers the lowest prices daily and was able to benefit substantially from the migration of large numbers of shoppers to Shoprite in an effort to derive the maximum value for their money during the present economic crisis” (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009:17).

Shoprite Holdings Ltd recorded a staggering total turnover of approximately one trillion rands during the 10-year period under consideration (2008-2017). Despite the global financial crisis, which saw rising oil prices and other commodities in 2008, Shoprite Holdings Ltd managed to turn over R59.32 billion (previously R47.65 billion) in 2009, with an actual profit (gross profit) of just under R12 billion (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009) as depicted in the graph 7.4. Shoprite Holdings Ltd, as one of the world's largest retail grocery chains, escaped the brunt of the financial crisis; in fact, this may have been a boon to the company, which says that “higher income consumers, in particular, started buying down in search of better value for their rands” (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009:8).



**GRAPH 7.4: SHOPRITE HOLDINGS LTD GROUP PROFITS 2008-2017**



Source:(Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2023b)

A major milestone was achieved in 2014 when Shoprite Ltd achieved, for the first time, a total turnover of more than R100 billion (graph 7.5) (Shoprite Holding Ltd, 2014). While Nigeria surpassed South Africa in becoming the largest economy on the African continent this year (2014), Shoprite Ltd highlights the enormous difficulties in trading in Nigeria, where poverty and violence remain a daily reality. The group maintains that “Finding well located, appropriate trading sites; moving perishable merchandise over borders; and frequently having to provide your own store infrastructure, has not become any easier due to the endless red tape involved” (Shoprite Holding Ltd, 2014:11).

In 2009, when Shoprite had merely one supermarket operating in the country, it was reported that the store did well despite the negative impacts of oil revenue on the Nigerian economy. While the Nigerian Government’s assistance in providing relief on the importation of fruits and vegetables largely assisted in this performance, the Group “has decided to abandon its plans to expand its operations to Port Harcourt for the foreseeable future” due to the volatility and violence in the oil-rich Niger Delta in the South (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2009), a risk recently taken by the new owner of Shoprite, Nigerian born businessman Tayo Amusan who bought Shoprite in 2021(Akwaja, 2022).

Shoprite’s Non-RSA stores have contributed a total revenue of R127 billion for the 10-year period. In 2016, the company grew its sales by 14.4 percent, from R113 billion to R130 billion. Despite the political and economic challenges, its Nigerian stores contribute largely to these figures. According to its CEO, Mr Whitey Basson, trading conditions in Nigeria was highly demanding due to import restrictions and a collapse in the oil industry. However,

Shoprite still opened seven new stores during this financial year (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2016), despite the calls to boycott South African companies Shoprite and MultiChoice in 2015.

Stores in Nigeria, which the group describes as a “strategic focus area”, increased their annual turnover by 19.7 percent (exact figures not known) in 2015, with the group having added two more stores to the existing ten (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2015). Interesting and very important to note in its 2015 Annual Report is its reference to its social media audience of 3.3 million followers, of which more than 1 million are in Nigeria.

In its 2016 Annual Report, Shoprite Ltd states that “Although trading conditions in Nigeria, another important West-African market for the Group, were extremely demanding because of import restrictions, collapsing oil industry and a lack of foreign exchange, the Group has continued to grow its presence, opening seven supermarkets during the reporting period with another four to follow in the new financial year” (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2016:13). With the opening of these new stores and the continued presence of its stores in Nigeria in 2017 it generated a 42.8 percent growth in sales. Notwithstanding the trading difficulties, Shoprite’s Nigerian stores were able to grow their customer base by 38.2 percent (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2017).

According to Miller (2005b), Shoprite is a South African multinational led primarily by White South Africans, a political importance of lasting racial patterns that is not lost on the host countries. Miller questioned whether the presence of South African companies in foreign African countries creates a retail renaissance or a new colonial encounter in a fascinating article published in 2005, not long after Shoprite opened its first store in Nigeria. Miller (2005b) uses Shoprite as a case study to demonstrate how ‘South African companies create managerial hierarchies in host countries that both restructure and reinforce South Africa's regional domination’. According to her, ‘the organisational structures and representational strategies of the regional South African firm refashion a colonial encounter’ (Miller, 2005b:1).

Miller states, “Like past narratives of colonisation, white South African Shoprite managers believe they are taking blacks in 'Africa' forward into the modern era. In their view, South Africa is the agent of modernisation of the region, as it has always been. Regional modernisation is a central theme of this white management ideology” (Miller, 2005b:1). Shoprite's skewed racial and gender composition, according to Miller (2005b), is evident in

the company's expansion, as 25 managing directors in corporate management and corporate operations are all white men. Typical of what can also often be viewed in its South African stores, Miller (2005b:9) states that ‘senior management in the region is largely white and male; junior and middle management personnel are primarily drawn from male, host-country nationals’.

Miller’s views of Shoprite’s racial and gender composition can also be seen in the composition of its Board of Directors. A 10-year statement (2008-2017 annual reports) of its Board of Directors composition indicates that over the ten years, the board has primarily been constituted by white men, except for one Indian Director, Mr B Harisunker. Its Board is appointed based on the ‘knowledge, skills, and experience of a potential candidate’. Interestingly, Shoprite holdings must have been struggling to find knowledgeable, skilled and experienced people of colour since the only two people of colour on its Board for the past ten years are listed as Dr ATM Mokgokan and Mr JA Rock (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2023b).

Unlike MTN, Shoprite Holdings Ltd does not include a breakdown of each country’s contributions to its financial gains in its annual reports. It thus becomes difficult to find precisely how much Shoprite’s Nigeria stores have contributed annually to its finances. However, there are a couple of articles on these contributions over specific years.

Like other SA companies, Shoprite has been under pressure in Nigeria, as shown in the table below.

**TABLE 7.4: NIGERIA PUTS PRESSURE ON SHOPRITE**

When	Where	What	Losses (approx)	Source
2010	Palms Shopping Mall	Shoprite workers protest and close their store	N80 million	<a href="https://saharareporters.com/2010/08/06/slave-wages-shoprite-lagos-looses-n80-million-sales-workers-protest-island-news">https://saharareporters.com/2010/08/06/slave-wages-shoprite-lagos-looses-n80-million-sales-workers-protest-island-news</a>
2017	Niger Delta	Niger Delta militants threaten to bomb South African investments	Unknown	<a href="https://punchng.com/xenophobia-niger-delta-militants-threaten-to-bomb-south-african-investments/">https://punchng.com/xenophobia-niger-delta-militants-threaten-to-bomb-south-african-investments/</a>
2019	Nigeria	Boycotts amidst xenophobia in SA	Unknown	<a href="https://www.news24.com/Fin24/watch-shoprite-stores-hit-in-nigeria-amid-protests-20190904">https://www.news24.com/Fin24/watch-shoprite-stores-hit-in-nigeria-amid-protests-20190904</a>
2018	Lagos	Mareva injunction restraining it from transferring its assets	\$10 million	<a href="https://guardian.ng/business-services/aic-gets-10-million-damages-from-shoprite-for-contract-breach/">https://guardian.ng/business-services/aic-gets-10-million-damages-from-shoprite-for-contract-breach/</a>
2019	Nigeria	Competition tribunal fined Shoprite for contravening competition rules	\$1.4 million	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/article/shoprite-competition-idINL8N1ZL2MZ">https://www.reuters.com/article/shoprite-competition-idINL8N1ZL2MZ</a>
	Nigerian ports			<a href="https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/406768-explainer-five-reasons-why-shoprite-is-leaving-nigeria.html">https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/406768-explainer-five-reasons-why-shoprite-is-leaving-nigeria.html</a>

### **Shoprite vs the Government and the people**

Like MTN and MultiChoice, Shoprite faced similar challenges during its many years of operations in Nigeria. Unlike its South African counterparts, which have mobile communications and television services business, the Nigerian Government and its regulatory commissions could not impose on Shoprite the many fines it does on MultiChoice or MTN since there are few areas in which a retailer can be faulted. Table 7.4 contains a list of pressure tactics used by the Nigerian government and its people on Shoprite.

In my search, I found that Shoprite had two major fines imposed on the company. The first was a \$10 million fine for breach of contract against a company called AIC. According to reports: Apart from the \$ 10 million award, the defendants are to pay an N1 million and an interest rate of 10 percent per annum effective from the date of judgment until final liquidation of the entire sum.... The court also held that the claimant was duly entitled to compensation for such a breach and awarded the sum of N1 million against Shoprite as the cost of the action as well as an interest at the rate of 10 percent per annum effective from the date of judgment until final liquidation of the entire sum (The Guardian, 2018).

The second is a \$1.4 million (around R20 million) fine by the Nigerian Competition Tribunal for contravening the competition act. According to the allegations, Shoprite's subsidiary, Computicket, was involved in anti-competitive price fixing (Reuters, 2019). Not agreeing to this fine, Shoprite decided to appeal this. However, one of the significant areas where Shoprite could be challenged is delaying its goods at ports, which is precisely the situation it faced. An article published in the *Premium Times* in Nigeria highlights one of the top reasons why Shoprite left Nigeria its concerns regarding logistics. According to the article, "Industry sources have also raised concerns about the logistics and operation of Nigerian ports. Stakeholders in the maritime industry have raised concerns over several issues, including delays experienced at Nigerian ports amid huge cost of clearing consignments and securing vessels" (Olawoyin, 2020).

As a South African brand ambassador, Shoprite was also among those targeted by the Nigerian people. In 2010, Shoprite was accused of 'slave labour', losing around N80 million due to strike action by its staff in Palms, Nigeria. Davies (2010: no page number) reported, "The workers complained of 'sweat shop' working conditions of service despite record sales. A similar scene played out in 2009 where the workers' complaints were long hours, meagre

salaries, no bonuses, no medical allowance, and no annual increments”. Found below this article is a public comment which argues that:

I don't understand why everyone is blaming Shoprite the way they treat their workers. Before we start blaming ShopRite, we should ask ourselves, what is the national minimum wage? every country has its national minimum wage, and ShopRite being a foreign company is abiding by the rules in Nigeria. So, if there is anyone to blame it has to be the naija government and not ShopRite management (public comment below Davies, 2010).

Further to the above, boycotts forced Shoprite to temporarily close its doors in 2017 and 2019 (TVC News Nigeria, 2019). During the 2019 protests against South African companies in Nigeria, Shoprite stores in Jakande and the Novare mall, in particular, were vandalised (video evidence of this is available). This was broadcast on “the Nigerian television station TVC News (TVC News Nigeria, 2019), which showed the aisles of a Lagos Shoprite store strewn with goods. An article published on News24 (2019a) highlights that:

Police foiled an attempt to set alight the Shoprite store in the Circle Mall.... The Nigerian news outlet Pulse reported that a Shoprite store was attacked by a group of protestors who knocked products off shelves. There were also reports of attacks on MTN billboards. After protests at four MTN outlets in Nigeria, the company shut all its stores and service centres in the country, it said in a statement on Wednesday afternoon. South African companies in other African countries are being targeted by protestors following xenophobic attacks in Gauteng.

### **Shoprite social responsibility in Nigeria**

Shoprite’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSI) is known as #Actforchange. According to the group, as specified on its website, communities are the foundation of its business, which “aims to build and support the resilience of the communities we operate in while creating shared value for our stakeholders”. One of the foundations of the organisation's CSI strategy is to focus on hunger relief, particularly in underserved populations.

The company focuses on fighting hunger, supporting Early Childhood Development, and offering help to vulnerable communities, guided by its mission to ‘#Actforchange.’ Shoprite Holdings Ltd (2022) aims to provide instant hunger relief to those in need through its mobile soup kitchen initiatives in its battle against hunger. This is also how meals are delivered to the organisations that benefit from them. Surplus foods and supplies from its many stores are

frequently supplied to its beneficiaries. It also provides supplies and basics to those afflicted by calamities such as floods, fires, and other natural catastrophes. The organisation aims to provide support and resources to ECD centres through its collaborations with ECD centres; the group seeks to provide support and resources to ensure that children receive adequate nutrition to support their development.

With that said, I'd like to point out that, except for SA, Shoprite Ltd does not disclose its Corporate Social Investment projects in other countries in its annual reports. However, one of the most significant consequences of Shoprite's closure in Nigeria is the initiatives and financial assistance that its Nigerian stores have contributed to their communities over the years. The following are some of the efforts that have been mentioned in the mainstream media:

One of the initiatives undertaken by Shoprite in Lagos in 2015 was to support, through its community network initiative, the 'Progressive Nursery and Primary School in FESTAC Town'. An article in *The Guardian* (2015) states that Shoprite donated resources like chairs, tables, whiteboards, and stationery to the school. While the exact value of the donation is not revealed, *The Guardian* (2015) maintains that this "donation was part of Shoprite's commitment to making a positive impact in the communities where they have stores". Shoprite Ltd appears to spend between 1 and 2 percent of its annual net income on its CSI programs, according to its annual reports (Shoprite Annual reports, 2008-2017) (Shoprite Holdings, 2023b). The Group announced the R65 million Shoprite Development Trust in its 2011 Annual Report, aimed at "facilitating the ownership of the Group's developments or properties by economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs and community organisations" (Shoprite Holdings, 2023b). It is unclear whether this was initiated for South Africa only or its communities across the globe where its stores are situated. What is also unclear is how exactly these monies have been spent since the trust was initiated and the subsequent impact thereof.

Shoprite Ltd, in its 2015 Annual report, states that it had donated food to the value of R92.4 million during this financial year. It reported on the distribution of 23.2 million meals through its fleet of soup trucks since its inception, reaching out to some of the victims of the flash floods in Malawi by supplying "maize meal, sunflower oil, water treatment solutions and sanitary products"; and supporting female entrepreneurs through its initiatives to support women (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2015). While these are some significant initiatives, it would

have been interesting to see the initiatives and developments in other countries supported by Shoprite in its Annual reports. In light of this, the company provides on its website several articles related to its initiatives and a quick search of “Nigeria” brings up some of the following:

In 2016, Shoprite Nigeria reinforced its commitment to the Nigerian communities by supporting efforts to raise awareness about breast cancer. According to the group (Shoprite holdings Ltd), “Through the Shoprite Community Network, the retailer has partnered with renowned non-profit Run For A Cure Africa (RFCA), periodically offering customers free breast cancer screenings at selected stores across the country”. It further reports that “during the opening of its 20th store saw about 300 women being screened on the day. Earlier this year, a screening was hosted in June at the Ikeja City Mall in Lagos to mark the retailer’s 10th anniversary in the country” (Shoprite Holdings Ltd,2016).

An article in the P.M. News (2011) speaks to Shoprite’s continuation of its “Change a life campaign”. During this time, Shoprite Nigeria’s Lekki and Adeniran Ogunsanya outlets donated a sum of N-468, 313 to the Hearts of Gold Hospice and the Living Fountain orphanages to support the less privileged. Shoprite collected these funds from its willing customers as part of the campaign. The article also highlights the N187, 750 donated from the Lekki branch to the Nigerian Red Cross Society for Motherless Babies Home in Adekunle, Yaba, Lagos.

In 2017, Shoprite donated to the American University of Nigeria’s Feed and Read Programme about N-2 million’s (currently R75 939) worth of goods (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2017). According to the group, these included “perishable and non-perishable food, beverages, and toiletries will be used by the program to help vulnerable children in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria, where an estimated 78% of 6-17-year-olds cannot read” (Shoprite Holdings Ltd, 2017). Shoprite also launched 2017 its “Made in Nigeria” initiative to affirm its commitment to locally manufactured products and to create opportunities where local manufacturers can showcase their goods.

### **The response of labour unions in SA and Nigeria**

Labour unions have a vested interest in the well-being of workers, including the workers of the multinational companies in this study. Protest action and boycotts against these companies threaten not only these workers' employment but also their physical well-being. Trade labour unions, whose mandate is to protect the well-being of the workers, do not often

fulfil these mandates. This study agrees with Hlatshwayo (2012), who contends that trade labour unions have taken a narrow view and undermined themselves. Commenting on Cosatu's September 1997 Commission report, Hlatshwayo (2012:234) states that:

The report revealed a contradiction in COSATU policy. On one hand, COSATU argued for the protection of external migrant workers, while on the other, it held positions which undermined the freedom of movement of people and their right to choose a country of work. The report of the commission mirrored this contradiction by calling on the South African government to implement 'voluntary repatriation' and 'fair and proper control of the entry of migrant workers into host countries.

Hlatshwayo (2012) essentially argues that COSATU takes a stance in speaking against xenophobia by calling on workers not to 'turn the gun on themselves' but fails to "call for building unity and organising migrant workers in a struggle against victimisation of all workers, regardless of their country of origin" (Hlatshwayo (2012:237).

The May 2008 COSATU Central Executive Committee did not discuss the need to organise migrant workers as part of an important response to xenophobia. COSATU's inability to undertake a paradigm shift remains an obstacle to organising migrant workers. The call for employers to stop taking advantage of migrants and the demand that employers fire the 'illegal ones' are an indication that the federation has not been able to imagine real possibilities of building international solidarity within the South African border that includes external organising migrants (Hlatshwayo,2012:240)

Gongqa (2019) found similar results in her study on the responses of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) towards xenophobia in the workplace. Gongqa (2012) states that both unions argue for including migrant workers in labour legislation and actively speak out against xenophobia. She contends that "there is a need for a more powerful and visible stand from trade unions against xenophobia in the workplace" (Gongqa, 2019:82-83). However, there is no active union campaign to deal with the discrimination and mistreatment of migrant workers in the workplace.



The National Union of Shop and Distributive Employees (NUSDE) is a retail workers' union in Nigeria. Since its inception in 1978, NUSDE was an affiliate of the Nigerian Labour Congress until 2016, when it formed part of the United Labour Congress (Ahiuma-Young, 2016). However, in 2020, the NLC and the ULC reportedly amended the rift, which had split the NLC and given way to the ULC in 2016, thus bringing NUSDE back as an affiliate of the NLC (Adedigba, 2020). Highlighting the influence of the ULC, Adedigba (2020) states that "Some of the prominent members of the ULC were the two powerful oil unions, National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), and Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN)". Similarly, an article in the Premium Times in 2017 lists the NLC as one of the most powerful unions in Nigeria (Owoseye and Adedigba, 2017). Commenting on its influence, Owoseye and Adedigba (2017) state that:

Today, the NLC has 29 affiliated unions. In total, it boasts around four million members, according to its own figures, making the association one of the largest trade unions in Africa... NLC has had various clashes with the government, especially on salaries, reduced subsidies and plans to deregulate the purchase the last national strike which NLC embarked upon which crippled the nation, was on January 2, 2012, when the union joined other socio-political groups to protest then President Goodluck Jonathan's decision to remove subsidy on petroleum products.

In 2021, following the sale of Shoprite, workers belonging to NUSDE shut down stores in Nigeria due to salary disputes (Mojeed, 2021). Even though Shoprite is no longer a South African company, the significance of mentioning this is to highlight the strength and capabilities of NUSDE to shut down these stores.

NUSDE, in this case, is comparable to the South African Catering and Commercial Workers Union (SACCAWU), significantly influencing Shoprite's retail workers. According to Salim Patel (2008:77) "South African Catering and Commercial Workers Union (SACCAWU) in this research and the entire process towards forming a continental alliance among shop stewards in Shoprite – SACCAWU is thirty-six thousand members strong in Shoprite and its leadership in this process gave confidence to unions organising in countries where Shoprite has just entered or where there are only a few operations".

Miller (2005a) vividly highlights the ability of trade unions to exert pressure on South African companies. Concerning Zambia, Miller (2005a:97) contends that "workers in Zambia have organized militant national strikes, regenerating their trade union leadership in the retail sector". Miller (2005a:111) highlights the effects of a strike organised by trade unions,

including the Zambia National Union of Commercial and Industrial Workers (NUCIWU), by stating that:

When Zambian workers began a 3-day work stoppage at the eighteen Zambian stores of Shoprite on 21 June 2003, this was surely no extraordinary event...The strike marked a turning point in labour relations for Zambian workers and was one of the first strikes at foreign stores of Shoprite.

Commenting on its membership, Miller (2005a) highlights that 70.7 percent (576 of the 814) Shoprite workers belong to the NUCIWU.

Miller (2005a:95) states, "South African multinationals in Southern Africa are opening new possibilities for regional trade unionism...Their impact has been significant.". Arguing that unions on the continent are trying to find ways to work together when it comes to Shoprite the giant, (Patel, 2008:75) states that "in 2006 the idea of a "Shoprite shop steward alliance" was mooted through the global trade union federation United Network International (UNI). In his study, Patel (2008:78) found that "Unions from four countries – Mauritius, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia – indicated that the company resists unionisation of employees and either does not allow unions to distribute information or does not allow the union to meet workers on the premises or both".

In response to xenophobia, in March 2017, the Nigerian trade union federation, the United Labour Congress (ULC), reached out to COSATU to address the issue of xenophobia; "the ULC is putting in place modalities to reach our comrades in that country to build better relations between our citizens"(The Nation Newspaper, 2017). The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) 2019 appealed to those who sought physical retaliation against South African businesses in Nigeria. They dissociated themselves from student-led protests, which could jeopardize jobs. According to Olowolagba (2019), the NLC argued that "as despicable as these attacks are, we will advise against crude retaliatory measures such as the burning down of perceived South African businesses in Nigeria because, in reality, some of those businesses are owned by Nigerians". The NLC blames the Nigerian Government for not providing conducive conditions in Nigeria, leading to an exodus to places like SA, where Nigerians are exposed to violence (Ojomoyela, 2019). According to the Union, the responsibility for addressing these attacks lies with both the South African and Nigerian Governments.

Nigerian trade unions, while condemning xenophobia, appear conservative in their approach to addressing the issue, unlike the students from NANS who have been boycotting South African companies. While some of these unions, like the ULC, intended to meet with their South African counterparts to address xenophobia issues in 2017, it is unclear whether these meetings occurred. What is clear, however, is the fact that nothing constructive or tangible campaigns have been developed between these unions to address the issue of xenophobia since this meeting was supposed to take place in 2017.

## **Concluding Remarks**

This chapter discussed the macro-effects of the political economy of xenophobia by examining three South African multinational corporations in Nigeria. Current South African literature does not discuss the multi-scalar process of the political economy of xenophobia considering the retaliation against South African companies in Nigeria.

South Africa and Nigeria continue to vie for positions on both the African continent and internationally. This subtle rivalry at the top level continuously spills over to the lower level, where Nigerian and South African citizens suffer the consequences. South African companies continue to invest large amounts of money in Nigeria. These investments are made to develop its structures and invest in developing especially the poor communities in Nigeria despite the challenges faced by citizens and government and pressure from South African incidents.

South African companies operating in Nigeria, notably major corporations such as MTN and MultiChoice, have emerged as susceptible targets for Nigerian citizens who frequently perceive South Africans as arrogant. Concurrently, there is a prevailing sentiment that the Nigerian government employs these corporations as a means of generating revenue through fines and regulatory measures. While the termination of bilateral ties between the two countries would result in substantial financial losses for both, it is my view that South Africa, heavily reliant on oil imports from Nigeria, a country which hosts numerous companies within its borders, stands to incur the most significant economic setback.

This chapter shows that the investment of South African companies in Nigeria serves to bolster Nigeria's position for counteraction against phenomena such as xenophobia and dissenting issues. Notably, the narrative suggests that the Nigerian government appears to overlook the contributions made by these companies to the upliftment of Nigerian citizens through Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives. Instead, the government is seemingly preoccupied with securing its share of financial gains from these companies.

The tendency of both Nigerian citizens engaging in boycotts and temporary closures of South African establishments, as well as the government imposing occasionally irregular fines on these companies, serves as a tangible indication of a readiness for counteraction. This chapter advances that such actions highlight a lack of consideration for the positive contributions of South African companies to the socio-economic welfare of Nigerian society.

While trade labour unions in South Africa and Nigeria have the power and ability to influence large numbers of people, their response to xenophobia has been weak. It borders on disinterest, even though xenophobia also affects their members who are employees in Multinational South African companies who face boycotts. Some of their members are probably African foreign nationals facing a direct threat in SA.

In the following chapter, I present the data collected from my interviews with one Government Department and one NGO with a vested interest in the SA-Nigeria trade relations. Herein I explore the scale of retaliation in Nigeria and the *response of South African companies in Nigeria to xenophobic counteraction*.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: MEDIATING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY SA COMPANIES IN NIGERIA

### Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the scale of retaliation in Nigeria and the *response of South African companies in Nigeria to xenophobic counteraction*. I interviewed people<sup>14</sup> in management affiliated with two South African entities (one Government department and one trade-related NGO). These entities were identified as important role-players with a vested interest in the success of the South African-Nigerian trade relations, and secondly, whose functions are impacted by xenophobia and thirdly have knowledge of the impact of xenophobia on these companies.<sup>15</sup> One of the benefits of interviewing informants from these entities was that I could examine whether these entities offered any assistance to these stressed companies when dealing with issues of xenophobia inside Nigeria. This line of approach is consistent with a multi-scalar approach. This chapter will present the information gathered from these interviews. The identities of the respondents and the names of the entities they are linked with will not be mentioned in this document to respect their privacy.

Data collected from these interviews could be categorised under four headings as follows:

1. Challenges experienced by SA companies in Nigeria
2. Assistance to SA-Nigerian Businesses
3. Impact of xenophobia on the business of the entity
4. Challenges experienced by the entity.

### Challenges experienced by SA companies in Nigeria

This study highlights that xenophobic attitudes in South Africa continue to pose a problem for South African businesses operating in Nigeria, particularly MTN, MultiChoice, and Shoprite. This view is strengthened by my conversations with John (pseudonyms) (Interview 23), an employee in one of the government departments, and Janice (Interview 24), an employee at the NGO.

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<sup>14</sup> Officials asked not to be named nor to identify the entities

<sup>15</sup> MTN, Multichoice and Shoprite not available for interviews referred me to the website

According to John (Interview 23):

Nigerian nationals in Nigeria always retaliate whenever there are attacks on Nigerian nationals in South Africa by looting and destroying the South African businesses that are in Nigeria.

Janice (Interview 24) articulates that these companies are easy targets because they are brand leaders in South Africa. She says Nigerians are often unaware of other South African companies. These companies include Nampak, Southern Sun, and Global Outdoor Services. To highlight the extent of this ignorance, Janice states:

One of the shopping malls where they did the attacks was built by a SA company with pension fund money, Novare Equity Partners; they actually own the shopping mall, and the mall was badly damaged. But people only have in their sights on companies like MTN and Shoprite, and they are not looking at things like that.

Janice (Interview 24) raised an intriguing question: How many Nigerians know that Shoprite has sold its operations to a Nigerian company? She states, "it would be interesting to see what happens in the future if they are still going to attack Shoprite".

As highlighted in the previous chapter, MTN has faced its fair share of challenges in Nigeria. Janice (Interview 24) noted that:

A lot of Nigerians feel that MTN is stealing their money, and it's a weird psychological problem, ... most people just don't know anything, and it's a knee-jerk reaction; MTN has put billions of dollars into Nigeria, and of course, they have made good money, they are reinvesting that money back into Nigeria, employing more people, paying more tax and that sort of thing. There is nothing of this in any of the discussions about it; people are just like, "oh, MTN is ripping us off and stealing our money, taking our money and sending it back to South Africa", well not really, they pay dividends, but they are reinvesting most of that money.

Also consistent with the findings I made in Chapter seven is the view shared by Janice (Interview 24) that these South African brand leaders have become targets not only for Nigerian citizens but also for the government. Janice states that:

Look at the MultiChoice thing; they tried to use something that happened 20 years ago and then found, in fact MultiChoice did not owe them money. So, they smeared

MultiChoice's name without doing their homework. First, this is the kind of thing that goes on, and they don't mind because it's just a South African company.<sup>16</sup>

Janice (Interview 24) presents an interesting argument by saying that MTN, a South African company, becomes the scapegoat for anything related to retaliation against SA. She states that:

They like making MTN sort of a whipping boy for all sorts of things because they have money, and money exercises Nigerians. I've never seen people exercise quite as much as Nigerians. MTN makes a lot of money, and this irks them; they don't think about the tax, the fact that this is going back into Nigeria, and the better MTN Nigeria does, the more tax there is. And you see, the Nigerian government itself has played into this thing; they keep trying to get more money with this nonsense and that nonsense, and Multichoice is under similar pressure, not so much about the money, perhaps. The government will tell you, and people will tell you, that they are not necessarily looking at South African companies, but more looking for tax violations; I'm telling you they are, SA companies very much at the forefront of their minds.

This is consistent with the argument presented in chapter seven, the view that MTN and its South African counterparts have become targets not only in response to South Africa's xenophobia but basically in response to any perceived antagonizing move that SA does to Nigeria.

### **SA state assistance to South African-Nigerian Businesses**

The assistance that these two entities I interviewed offer to South African and Nigerian businesses centres on developing an environment favourable for companies to grow and prosper. Their participation in trade missions is both inward and outward, and they participate amongst others in promotional activities, seminars/conferences/forums, and exhibitions to identify trade investment projects. They are also very involved in facilitating investments into the Nigerian economy by South African entities, aiming to enhance their bilateral arrangements. These entities often act as a voice for companies between the two Governments; their role includes assisting companies with various trade issues, including legal requirements.

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<sup>16</sup> Nigerian authorities recently settled a \$4.4 billion tax dispute with MultiChoice. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2022-03-10-nigeria-settles-4-4-billion-tax-dispute-with-multichoice/>

According to John (Interview 23), a departmental official:

Trade Missions are the tools the (entity) uses to undertake trade and investment promotional activities in strategic markets across the globe. The Missions seek to bring together relevant stakeholders in the priority sectors to find solutions, identify opportunities, and create collaboration between the private sectors in different markets.

Despite having a modest staff complement (about four employees in the immediate office), both entities have a vast influence. Interestingly their focus is solely on trade relations that involve large companies in Nigeria and South Africa. Though the government department has an office in Nigeria, it only has two Nigerian employees. On the other hand, the NGO does not currently employ any Nigerians, yet several Nigerian citizens serve on its Board of Directors. Considering these organisations' footprints span both nations, one is tempted to wonder what advantages employing Nigerians would have for these businesses.

My questions were around the issue of When South African Businesses such as MTN and MultiChoice face threats of retaliation in Nigeria, does the entity get involved? If yes, how? Does the department play a role in mediation talks between the two Governments about addressing xenophobia?

Posed with the above questions, the department and the NGO indicated that they are not involved in these issues. Janice (Interview 24) stated that intervening is difficult if the organisation does not have all the facts. She states that:

With this retaliation thing, the last time it happened, we sent out a press release... it's difficult for us to intervene because we often do not know all the facts. It's bad for this relationship and with Africa to have this xenophobia.

Asked whether they participate in any anti-xenophobia campaigns, both respondents indicated that their entities are not actively involved in such campaigns. However, they do speak out against such acts through press releases.



## **Impact of xenophobia on the business of the entity**

Asked whether the challenges faced by Nigerians in SA have any impact on the business, both respondents (Interviews 23 and 24) said that there are no direct impacts on their entities. However, the NGO has had to increase its efforts to convince Nigerians that South Africa is not as bad as it appears in the Nigerian media.

Speaking to this, Janice (Interview 24) states:

After one of these xenophobic attacks, the house of representatives in Nigeria said that they are sending out a delegation to come and tell South Africa off and see how we can resolve this issue and whatever... While they were out there, I said to the Ambassador we, as the (entity), want to meet this team; there's no point in them talking to people in government, well maybe no matter, but they also need to talk to normal people, and they also need to speak to Nigerians in SA and see what their perceptions of these issues are.

The impact on its members, and South African companies who seek to invest in Nigeria in particular, becomes a focal point for the organisation. Janice (Interview 24) highlights, "Every time you have one of these outbreaks, the sense of welcome for South African companies diminishes just a little more". She also highlights that people do not want to invest in a country where they do not feel safe.

Therefore, even though these organisations have not directly been affected by xenophobia, i.e., they have not received threats or been boycotted, there is undoubtedly part of the xenophobia issue. The experiences of Nigerians in South Africa seem to provoke reactions from these organisations.

## **Challenges experienced by the state entity**

Whilst the department appears not to be dealing with challenges related to the experiences of Nigerians in South Africa, the NGO does. Obtaining immigration documents for its high-level stakeholders was one of the most significant issues mentioned by Janice (Interview 24). As highlighted in the previous chapter, it is also a problem that Nigerians in SA face. According to Janice (Interview 22), the battle around visas is not just about travelling; it's about a sense of welcome and ease of movement. Speaking about this issue, Janice (Interview 24) related that:

It would sometimes be something simple like there was this one (delegate) whose family couldn't get a visa to come to South Africa, and even though there was some kind of diplomatic advantage that was supposed to happen, he took great umbrage. He said he would stop issuing visas to South Africans. We have a lot of those low-level things, but it speaks to keeping the bigger relationship on track. It often does come down to visas and immigration issues.

In light of this, Janice (Interview 24) emphasises that the struggles for visas and immigration documents are not limited to Nigerian citizens only. She maintains that Home Affairs has a history of dysfunctionality, a problem also experienced by South Africans.

These problems, she maintains, have tremendous implications for SA, which is losing out on the financial gains for wealthy tourists and events. Janice (Interview 24) states that:

And again, this is affecting the sense of welcome here; we're losing out in a lot of ways. Rich Nigerians would spend R5 million on a wedding, and we're losing out because people just can't get here and go to places like Ghana and Dubai, where they feel welcome.

Arguing that there appears to be no synergy between the government and private sector's efforts to address these challenges, Janice (Interview 24) states that:

We want to do a series of seminars to talk about South Africa to Nigerians because a lot of people are ignorant about SA, and maybe they'd like to visit here or set up a business here if they knew more, but it's difficult for us to do that when we know they can't get here.

These seminars are often also some of the tools used by the entity to engage and bring assurance to possible new investors around the issues of xenophobia in SA.

In the literature review, the consensus is that South African-Nigerian relations have been deteriorating over the last decade at least. A once-burgeoning relationship has devolved into a tit-for-tat, fuelled by the need to be the continent's powerhouse. The macro-level conflict between the governments of South Africa and Nigeria is on a downward trajectory, which feeds citizens' misperceptions of one another. Janice (Interview 24) highlights some of these issues:

I think it goes back to this continental leadership thing and the sense that Nigeria is being displaced by SA as a kind of continental spokesman. It's not helped that we are the only country in BRICS even though we made that happen, and it wasn't like we

were invited, and then there was the G20 thing. So, it's kind of like this sense that we have usurped Nigeria; it plays out at some level all the time.

At a Government-Government level, you thus have this subtle rivalry and tit-for-tat business going on, while those at the micro-level also have challenges. On the ground, Nigerians expected South Africa to welcome them with open arms, as previously indicated. Janice (Interview 24) states that:

A lot of Nigerians thought, well, they played this big role in helping secure ... freedom ... again, they will make out like they were the only ones, forgetting about Zimbabwe and the frontline states... (So) people thought if they came to SA, they would be welcomed with open arms and we'd all be friends, but that didn't happen. A lot of South Africans didn't know about this stuff and Nigeria's diplomatic role in anti-apartheid. The SA government has made very little of it, and I think that started us on the wrong foot. A lot of Nigerian people came here thinking it was the land of plenty, and because Nigeria was suffering, it was a place they wanted to be. But it didn't happen that way; a lot of people who came here couldn't get work, and a lot of people did end up in crime, maybe through necessity. And I think that just set the tone.

Speaking to the role of the media in fuelling tensions both at a macro and micro level, Janice (Interview 24) vividly states that:

The local newspapers are misreporting this thing, claiming Nigerians are at the forefront. But the reporting of SA in Nigeria is a big thing, and it's hardly ever that they report things positively. Many Nigerians have been to SA, and they can see that the xenophobia thing is in certain parts of the city; it hasn't happened in Sandton, Rosebank etc...generally, people who have been here and those at a certain level understand this, and how it works. They are not put off by this. But a lot of Nigerians are worried that if they come here, they will be targeted.

Janice (Interview 24) stresses that middle-class Nigerians and professionals visiting Sandton have a different experience of SA. This is an important insight to show how class intersects with nationality. She suggests that the response of government is reactive instead of proactive response in dealing with issues of xenophobia; Janice states that:

The SA official response to this has been dire; the first time it happened; it took days for an official response. And I think the problem is that the official response appears to be lacking, which conveys the impression that South Africa doesn't care about

foreigners here and all these issues. And nobody supports illegal immigrants. I also think we can all agree to that, but the government itself is to blame for that to a large degree for corruption etc. And then we have to look at corruption in the missions, you know, people are issued visas when they don't have the right reasons to come here, yet somehow, they are still on a plane and virtually don't have any luggage. And you ask yourself ... how did they get visas when MTN was battling etc.

The argument posed by Janice (Interview 24) around the corruption at missions and the question of how certain people are issued with visas when they do not have the right reasons for being here is an argument also supported by one respondent, Enofe, in the previous chapter.

Further I asked participants: How does the entity address the misperceptions among citizens about each other's countries?

According to Janice (Interview 24), who frequently communicates with Nigerians and has also made multiple trips there, there is a severe misconception about SA in Nigeria. One of the greatest misconceptions, she says, revolves around the idea that Nigerians are being killed in the streets of South Africa; she articulates that:

Not to say that what was happening was right, but Nigerians sometimes had a way of distorting this thing to make it look like it is them that's most affected and also that they are kind of taking up the moral ground for the rest of Africa kind of thing.

Newspapers in Nigeria, she says, often lack a proper interrogation of why Nigerians are killed, who is killing them etc., in SA. At the bottom of these newspapers, she says, you would find things like "the ambassador urged Nigerians in SA to behave themselves". One way in which she has tried to address these issues was to engage the Nigerian Ambassador on the way these issues are inflated and the view that:

Nine times out of 10, you find that these people being killed are involved in things they shouldn't be. 6 times out of 10, they are killed by other Nigerians.

This observation is also shared by one respondent, Enofe (Interview 11), as mentioned in the previous chapter.

What also needs to be addressed amongst Nigerians is the perception that SA is a country full of possibilities and opportunities. Janice (Interview 24) states that:

A lot of the time, people are quite desperate to make money and to survive, and they come here to South Africa expecting that they gonna have opportunities that don't exist. I think a lot of people misunderstand BEE; they come here thinking because they are black, they would qualify, you know, a bit of confusion and resentment around the two, that means they can't really get jobs that easily, so they have to create their own jobs in many cases, it's when you might see a bit of a grey area emerging since they have to make their own money. It is tough in SA as we know it.

The entity also gets involved in dispelling the perception that Nigerian companies are not allowed to invest in SA. She articulates, "People are forming a lot of these views based on ignorance, not facts, and they don't seek the facts."

According to Janice (Interview 24), South Africans have a lot of biased perceptions of Nigerians, even when many have not met Nigerians in person. The entity, she says, has "played a very big role in highlighting the presence of Nigerian professionals in SA and allowing South Africans to meet Nigerians". These efforts address the strewed misconception that Nigerians are drug dealers and human traffickers, as commonly known in South Africa.

### **Concluding remarks**

This chapter highlighted the issues, perceptions and roles played by one of the South African Government departments and that of a business NGO dedicated to facilitating business relations between South Africa and Nigeria. Data collected in this section reveals that entities such as these play an important supportive role to South African companies regarding trade facilitation. However, they are not necessarily able to directly address specific issues, such as retaliation, faced by these companies.

The data in this chapter reinforces the idea of the political economy of xenophobia, and the cost of counteraction. The arguments made by participants here correlate with the findings in chapter seven. Respondents confirmed the willingness of both Nigerian citizens and the government to retaliate against South Africa. There is also confirmation that these companies have become targets for anything Nigerians view as antagonizing by South Africa. An interesting point raised in this chapter, is the diminishing welcoming of South African

companies in Nigeria after every attack. The danger herein lies in the possibility that South African companies will no longer be allowed to trade in Nigeria, or their entry to the Nigerian market could be made more difficult.

This chapter also highlights dysfunctionalities in SA and its contribution to this crisis. Specific mention is made of the national crisis confronting the Department of Home Affairs. Its dysfunctionality not only impedes the integration of immigrants in South Africa, as discussed in chapter six, but it also impacts trade and investment since entities highlighted herein often struggle to bring possible investors to South Africa.

Most notably discussed in the chapter are the challenges South African companies face in Nigeria. The findings in this chapter are consistent with those in Chapter seven, which shows that Nigerian citizens and its government often target South African companies.



## CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

### Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the emergent themes from my primary data collection and secondary data insights and state my conclusions. The primary objective of this study was to examine the role and use of Nigerian migrant networks (local, national, and transnational) in the solidaristic fight against xenophobia. In other words, Nigerian citizens have moved away from being passive victims of xenophobia to agents of change. A secondary objective was to explore the response of South African companies to Nigeria's pressures in relation to xenophobia and to accelerate thinking about whether an investment in Africa might lead to more tolerant/liberal attitudes to African migrants. To increase the reliability and validity of this study, I used multiple data sources (Documents and Interviews with various categories of respondents). This was also done to ensure that the data collected speak to and validate each other, as stipulated by (Creswell, 2009).

### Nigeria's domestic problems: A migration trigger

The current challenges in Nigeria are a culmination of a British colonial legacy and the difficulties of uniting the country. The arbitrary means by which the country was created perhaps cause many modern-day problems. In Chapter 1, I discussed the historical context of its modern-day problems, highlighting the legacy of ethnic division permeating every single part of the Nigerian system.

I also highlighted the inability of the post-colonial elite, despite the country's vast oil resources, to address the challenges that impede its national unity. Historical inequalities between the North and South continue to demand attention in Nigerian society. One of the areas in which these inequalities play a significant role is education. Education-related migration is among the leading causes of migration among its people.

In this study, respondents generally argued that Nigeria is a more dysfunctional place to be, compared to South Africa, which they believe has more opportunities. They also argued that in Nigeria, the division of economic resources primarily revolves around ethnic/tribal affiliation. Since each group deems themselves worthy of a 'bigger slice of the pie', there is always conflict around the nation's resources. Oil-rich areas such as the Niger Delta have seen many violent events as everyone tries to be in charge.

My respondents revealed that ethnic/tribal discrimination plays an immense role in the lives of Nigerians. More than often, ethnic/tribal discrimination amongst its 250 ethnic groups is perpetuated institutionally, leaving many Nigerians unable to find jobs or access institutions of higher learning. Females contended that they not only had to deal with gender discrimination in Nigeria but also in SA.

During colonialism, the UK and the USA were top receivers of Nigerian immigrants. This is still the case today, and the findings of this study reveal that Nigerian organisations play a valuable role in the lives of Nigerian citizens living here. According to the data presented in Chapter four, Nigerians have been able to integrate into the US and UK without losing touch with their identities. The availability of various migrant organisations in these countries have assisted Nigerian citizens in their integration whilst maintaining ties with their home-country people; they often celebrate events and act as a support structure.

Although South Africa only became a popular destination for Nigerians following the demise of its apartheid regime in 1994, the number of Nigerian organisations available in SA indicates a well-settled community.

The second objective was to determine the nature and extent (local, national, and transnational) of Nigerian migrant networks in South Africa. Document analysis and Interviews with Nigerian citizens were the data sources employed to achieve this goal; the results are discussed in Chapters six and seven.

The third objective was to determine the contribution of Nigerian migrant networks in strengthening their stance in South Africa; its primary data source was interviews with Nigerian citizens, as presented in chapter six.



## **The grass is not necessarily greener in SA**

Leaving a country where discrimination based on ethnic or tribal affiliation appears to be the norm. Having faced some of the harshest realities of joblessness, institutional and gender discrimination, and civil and political unrest, Nigerians in SA have had to contend that they cannot escape some of these challenges.

Respondents in this study have articulated the view that the struggle to obtain the legal documents associated with their immigration, the daily reminder that they do not belong in SA, and the racial profiling of Nigerians as criminals and human traffickers, often by Government officials themselves, are just some of the things which have led them to the opinion that most South African are xenophobic.

The findings in this study reveal that Nigerians, even though many of them had not personally experienced violent xenophobia in South Africa, have a shared level of anger. All the respondents in this study indicated that they know someone who has been a victim; these are typically their friends or family members.

Since arriving in SA, the large majority of my respondents have been able to make friends with local South Africans and people from other countries. These friendships have often assisted in integrating into the South African communities where they are based. However, their connections appear to be enhanced in their respective organisations.

## **The vital role of migrant organisations**

Current scholarly research concentrates more on people's opinions and does not fully recognize the crucial function of migrant organisations. I have attempted to correct this in my study by emulating the theories of Portes (1998), Uwimpuhwe (2015), and others whose attention to migrant networks has emphasized the significance of eschewing individual attitudes in favour of collective responses. My study, however, considers not only a national but also a multi-scalar perspective. As explained in Chapter 2, it is vital to fully appreciate organisations' role in the lives of immigrants in the host country.

Several studies on transnationalism tend to underplay the importance of the nation-state; however, in this study, I found that Nigerians can be extremely nationalistic despite Nigeria being divided into ethnic regions. Respondents in this study revealed that Nigerians value connections, locally, nationally, and transnationally. They vigorously appeal not only to the home country for assistance but often to local connections and the South African

Government. What I found here supports what Alejandro Portes speaks about when he says that “individual immigrants seldom enter politics on their own account. Instead, they do so collectively in response to mobilizations organized by activists within their own communities or external ones seeking to address wrongs or achieve various goals” (Portes, 2008:1057).

Nigerian migrant organisations play an enormous multi-scalar role in strengthening the position of Nigerian immigrants in SA. Among their greatest, almost paradoxical accomplishments are giving Nigerians a forum to unite against a common adversary of violent xenophobia and allowing them to speak with a common aim, even if they do not agree on one best way to achieve the desired ends. Not everyone agrees with militant counteraction.

Despite the well-known fragmentation within Nigerian society, Nigerian organisations in this study provide platforms for unification. The spaces they provide are often used for cultural socialising, sharing Nigerian traditions, celebrating home-country events, freely wearing clothing representing Nigerian heritage, and seeing familiar faces. However, many, especially national organisations such as NICASA and NUSA, are so much more than this. These organisations provide valuable platforms of engagements, platforms, and channels to address the challenges their communities face.

### **Counter-xenophobic action – the use of influence tactics**

Although xenophobia in SA has deeply angered Nigerians, the respondents in this study do not think vengeance in the form of a sustained boycott of South African businesses is a prudent way to address it. Even those not established middle-class or business owners in South Africa had reservations about the financial and economic implications of violent boycotts for South Africa and Nigeria.

There is a common agreement among respondents that Nigerians should do something and not just be passive victims. Educating South Africans, seeking help from the Nigerian government, and joining organisations are some of the more favourable options mostly agreed to by them. Very few agreed openly with the option that Nigerians should fight back physically and boycott South African companies. However, immigrants do have access to weapons, as revealed in recent clashes in Durban.

Nigerian organisations in SA officially support and have adopted a multipronged strategy to combat xenophobia. Currently, organisations are engaged in several influence tactics to address xenophobia. Rational persuasion, as seen in organisations, such as AYIDSA, with their educated professionals especially, use themselves as an example to point out that Nigerians should not be painted with the same brush. Coalition tactics emerge in how Nigerian organisations collaborate not only with other Nigerian organisations but also with local authorities, other local organisations, and the Nigerian government itself. Ingratiating tactics refer to acts of self-promotion and selflessness by extending humanitarian aid to South Africans in need. Exchange tactics use the reminder of Nigeria's role in South Africa's liberation struggle, highlighting their contributions to the South African informal business economy. Inspirational appeals to both the South African and Nigerian Governments for interventions and to South Africans to be more gracious and accepting are evident. Consultation tactics are revealed in Nigerian organisations' engagements with South Africans on various platforms, dialogues, and forums.

Not to be excluded, however, is the direct pressure (direct action) tactic adopted in Nigeria. While Nigerian organisations in SA have not yet adopted this approach on a wide scale, the same cannot be said about their counterparts in Nigeria. This study discusses the fact that in Nigeria, students, in particular, have intermittently boycotted South African companies in response to xenophobia in SA, whereas Nigerian trade unions are more cautious about

Another important finding in this study relates to the scale and consequences of retaliation in Nigeria. It considers the possible long-term consequences of this retaliation for SA companies. My findings are inconclusive in this regard because several companies have already left, indicating that they are going or cutting back on their investments in Nigeria. However, it cannot be said whether this was due to xenophobia or just the dire economic circumstances in Nigeria.

### **Tit-for-tat: The experience of South African companies in Nigeria**

In addition to the fact that the boycotting of South African businesses in Nigeria was a direct reaction to xenophobic violence against African foreign nationals, South African companies in Nigeria also seem to be stuck in a tit-for-tat situation between the governments of SA and Nigeria. Practical examples of these tensions include the deportation of 125 Nigerian citizens from SA due to the possession of 'fake yellow fever cards'. Nigeria's Foreign Minister at the time, Olugbenga Ashiru, described the situation as xenophobic (Channelstv, 2012). The

Nigerian nation vowed to take action, so they did by deporting 8 South Africans for similar reasons (Patel, 2012).

Nigerians often complain about the successes of South African businesses in Nigeria, arguing that Nigerian businesses are not afforded the same opportunities in SA. As highlighted in Chapters six and eight, Nigerians feel that South Africans do not reciprocate Nigeria's efforts during South Africa's liberation struggle. This is even though South Africa's imports (R22 billion in 2017) from Nigeria do not come close to what it exports (R5 billion in 2017) there.

Companies like MTN are unlikely to leave Nigeria. Between 2008 and 2017, MTN alone spent R300 billion on infrastructure development in Nigeria. Reinvestment into the Nigerian communities through its Corporate Social Responsibilities led to MTN spending approximately R13 billion. Similarly, MultiChoice has spent billions of Rands on infrastructural development and corporate social responsibility initiatives in Nigeria. In response to the Covid pandemic, one of these initiatives saw MultiChoice donate around R7.4 million to the Federal Government of Nigeria and around R1.8 million to the Government of Lagos state.

Shoprite, which has since ceased to be South African-owned, also made significant social contributions to Nigeria to attempt to allay criticism. Despite these contributions, however, Nigerians and their government continue to target South African companies.

MTN and MultiChoice have seen some of Nigeria's most considerable fines imposed on foreign companies. MTN has, in Nigeria, faced accusations of illegally exporting profits and withholding taxes, and MultiChoice has been most recently 2021 accused of an R1.8 billion tax fraud by the Nigerian government. Chapters seven and eight highlight the challenges these companies face in Nigeria.

Present-day SA continues to slide into a more bottomless morass, fueling xenophobia. Opportunistic politics, scapegoating and simplistic immediate solutions by quasi-fascist groups suggest violent anti-African foreign sentiment might increase. Prominent on social media is the hashtag #PutSouthAfrica first. Many South Africans have rallied behind this hashtag, which has been used to call on South African authorities to prioritise jobs for South Africans and fuel anti-immigrant sentiments directed at African foreign nationals. Perhaps more prevalent than this online hashtag is the widespread fear and anxiety created amongst African foreign nationals by the groups on the ground, such as Operation Dudula in Gauteng (now also Durban and Northwest Province) and Operation Fiela in the Northern Cape.

Operation Dudula especially, spearheaded by Nhlanhla Lux, has received widespread attention for its “radical” call to “rid South Africa of the foreign problem”. The group, since its inception in 2021, has been targeting Africans who look “foreign” and blaming them for social ills, targeting businesses which they believe are employing too many foreign nationals, and arranging various marches across Gauteng, some of which have ended in violent clashes between foreign traders and members of the group.

Immigrant organisations' passive strategy is ineffective at dissuading these militant vigilante groups. The South African Government should consider the following:

The challenges facing the *Department of Home Affairs*, specifically with regards to processing documents, should be dealt with more seriousness. The issues of backlogs which result in the creation of undocumented immigrants cannot remain unaddressed. Undocumented immigrants are often targets of vigilante groups who do not know the difference between undocumented and illegal. In reality, the department should prioritise educating South Africans about the various categories of foreign nationals living in the country and their legal rights.

The *South African High Commission* in Nigeria needs critical intervention to deal with the number of challenges that impede on the processing of visa applications. The financial implications in terms of revenue loss should be considered here. Deal with the challenges of police brutality of racial profiling in the *South African Police Services (SAPS)*. It is common knowledge that many South African Police Officers view most Nigerians as suspects. Police Officers often appear untrained and unaccountable in dealing with black African Foreign nationals.

The continued threat of violence against black African foreign nationals and the growing anti-foreign sentiments amongst South Africans need to be addressed urgently. The South African government needs to stop denying xenophobia issues and start developing strategies to deal with these. There's a desperate need for social cohesion efforts to be enhanced. These efforts are needed to address the tensions between South Africans and black African foreign nationals and between South Africa's own racial populations.

The Nigerian government should consider providing Nigerian organisations with financial and moral support. These organisations provide a level of safety for the very citizens who contribute to Nigeria's vast sums of migrant remittances. Engage and lobby the South African Government to address the issues affecting its citizens and do more than mere diplomatic

flexing. Xenophobic violence against African foreign nationals, the racial profiling and discrimination of Nigerians in particular, pose a significant risk for South African companies in Nigeria. To navigate and address this, these South African companies should consider the following:

Play a more active role, developing or participating in campaigns against xenophobic violence and discrimination. Lobby the South African Government to deal with the challenges of xenophobia and the diplomatic row between SA and Nigeria. MultiChoice was one of the sponsors in a recent SA-Nigerian Social cohesion dialogue (held in Freedom Park in Pretoria on 31 March 2022), a platform where South Africans and Nigerians could meaningfully engage each other. While companies should consider sponsoring more of these, they should also consider hosting these in communities or places where xenophobic violence is prevalent.

A longitudinal study on the mobilisation of Nigerian nationals in migrant networks to tackle xenophobia in South Africa and transnational research and activist forums, including South Africans, could be considered. Future research might be able to include other African populations for a more comparative study of counter-mobilizations against xenophobia. In the final analysis, a more Pan-African approach and loosening of borders with a single African passport are needed. The dominance of South African capital could be challenged by insisting on equitable treatment of workers across borders, backed by Africa-wide trade unions (see Miller 2005a). Such unions could bargain continentally, thereby having comparable wages and conditions. Strikes could also be continent-wide so that all Shoprite stores could be affected.

Threats of xenophobic violence against African foreign nationals continue to exist in South Africa, but Nigerian citizens have become more organized. They have become more organized across national boundaries, and moreover, they have become more organized internationally and internally in SA. Significantly, they have been able to put considerable pressure on South African companies in Nigeria, which constitutes an unexplored aspect of an anti-xenophobic fightback.

This study's contribution has been to present Nigerians as actors, not simply as victims of xenophobia, and to understand how Nigerian nationals in SA have mobilised in migrant networks. Nigerians, globally, are very well-connected and have the ability to pose counteraction, but at this point, they choose to take on a non-violent approach. It is

remarkable to note, however, that Nigerian students, the middle class, seem to be very prominent in showing a willingness to act and mobilise. Most of the attacks against South African companies were carried out by students. Workers and Trade Unions seem slightly more guarded in their reactions. While trade unions are obviously against xenophobia, they stop short of a radical path which could lead to job losses amongst their members.

Migration literature rarely focuses on how migrants cope with violent acts of nationalism in host countries, but even less attention is paid to transnational collective action. This study shows a need for studies on transnational collective action and its modalities.



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## APPENDICES

### *APPENDIX A: LIST OF NIGERIAN ORGANISATIONS USED IN THIS STUDY*

Association of Yoruba in Diaspora South Africa (AYDSA)

National Association of Nigerian Students South Africa (NANSSA)

National Association of Yoruba Descendants South Africa (NAYDSA)

Nigerian Citizens Association, South Africa – (Nicasa)

Nigerian Union South Africa (NUSA)

Nigerian student association at the University of Pretoria

Nigerian Women's Association

Ohaneze-Ndigbo South Africa

### *APPENDIX B: LIST OF INTERVIEWS DONE WITH NIGERIAN CITIZENS IN GAUTENG, SA*

(Pseudonyms included)

Interview 1- Abidugan: Male, interviewed on 14 March 2022 in Midrand.

Interview 2- Abeo: Male, interviewed on 14 March 2022 in Midrand.

Interview 3- Amobi: Male, interviewed on 14 March 2022 in Norwood.

Interview 4- Chetachi: Male, interviewed on 15 March 2022 in Kensington.

Interview 5- Amara: Female, interviewed on 15 March 2022 in Yeoville.

Interview 6- Abeni: Female, interviewed on 15 March 2022 in Yeoville.

Interview 7- Ebele: Female, interviewed on 16 March 2022 in Orange Grove.

Interview 8- Chidozie: Male, interviewed on 16 March 2022 in Johannesburg.

Interview 9- Nneka: Female interviewed on 17 March 2022 in Kaalfontein.

Interview 10- Chuk: Male, interviewed on 18 March 2022 in Marshall Town

Interview 11- Enofe: Male, interviewed on 18 March 2022 in Brakpan.

Interview 12- Alika: Female, interviewed on 19 March 2022 in Weltevreden Park.

- Interview 13- Ifechi: Male, interviewed on 22 March 2022 in EGoli.
- Interview 14- Sarauniya: Female, interviewed on 22 March 2022 in Yeoville.
- Interview 15- Azi: Male, interviewed via zoom on 17 March 2022.
- Interview 16- Kambili: Male, interviewed via zoom on 23 March 2022.
- Interview 17- Mobo: Male, interviewed via zoom on 23 March 2022.
- Interview 18- Oba: Male, interviewed via zoom on 24 March 2022.
- Interview 19- Emanuel: Male, interviewed on 14 March 2022 in Yeoville.
- Interview 20- Monifa: Female, interviewed on 16 March 2022 in Johannesburg.
- Interview 21- Adaku: Female, interviewed via zoom on 22 May 2022.
- Interview 22- Kwentu: Male, interviewed via zoom on 05 May 2022.

*APPENDIX C: LIST OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED WITH DEPARTMENT/NGO*

- Interview 23- John, Male, interviewed via zoom on 21 May 2022.
- Interview 24- Janice, Female, interviewed via zoom on 04 May 2022.



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**Confidential**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview for the study titled *IMMIGRANT RESPONSES TO XENOPHOBIA IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: FROM VICTIMS TO AGENTS*. Your information is of importance for the success of this study.

All information is treated as confidential, and the researcher undertakes not to reveal any individual information that appears in this questionnaire. This study makes provision for anonymity and will, upon request of the interviewee, not mention any names.

This questionnaire forms part of a research study for the qualification of a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Public Administration, drafted by Ms F Lombard from the Department of Economic and Management Science, University of Western Cape. The results from this study will not be used in any form of analysis beyond this exercise nor will any further conclusions be drawn from it. In addition, the researcher guarantees complete confidentiality of the answers provided by the respondents.

Place of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Name:		Belong to Formal organisation?	
Gender:		Employment status:	

**SECTION A: LIFE BEFORE COMING TO SOUTH AFRICA (SA)**

1. When did you first come to South Africa to stay?  
.....
2. Did you come alone or with family or close friend/s?  
.....
3. What were your expectations before arriving in SA?  
.....  
.....
4. Where did you get information about South Africa and prospects here?  
.....  
.....
5. What were your biggest fears?  
.....  
.....
6. What other options did you have other than coming to SA?  
.....  
.....
7. What in Nigeria made you feel like leaving? Please explain  
.....  
.....  
.....
8. Have you ever experienced any other kind of discrimination in your own country?  
.....  
.....  
.....
9. Did you have contacts in South Africa when you planned to come and when you arrived?  
.....  
.....

10. What happened when you got here (who welcomed you; where did you stay and who assisted you in the first few weeks)?

.....  
 .....

11. Has your view of South Africa changed since you arrived here and how?

.....  
 .....

**SECTION B: LIFE IN SA IN RELATION TO XENOPHOBIA**

1. Have you or anyone you know ever been a victim of violent xenophobia in SA?

.....  
 .....

2. Have you felt discriminated against or picked on because people thought you were Nigerian? If yes kindly give a few examples

.....  
 .....

3. What is your opinion on how bad xenophobia is in SA? On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate it (1 being very bad; 3 being bad and 5 being not bad at all)

.....  
 .....

4. Please select the answer most applicable to you

a. Below are a number of statements, please read each one to indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement (Mark with X)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
South Africans are xenophobic					
You are angry about xenophobia in South Africa					
Life was better in Nigeria					
It is easy to find Nigerian friends in SA					
Nigerians should retaliate against South Africa					

b How do you think Nigerian nationals should respond to xenophobia in South Africa? (Mark with X)

Statement	Strongly agree	agree	No Opinion	disagree	Strongly disagree
Nigerian nationals should not do anything					
Nigerian nationals should defend themselves physically and fight back					
Nigerians should educate South Africa					
They should boycott South African companies in Nigeria					
They should join Nigerian organisations to fight it in South Africa					
They should seek help from the Nigerian Government					

**SECTION C: LIFE IN SA- FORMING ALLIANCES**

1. What are the common problems you have in South Africa (papers; finding a job; financial; accommodation; friendship and social life)  
 .....  
 .....
2. Who do you turn to for help?  
 .....  
 .....
3. Which organisations of the following have been helpful in making a life in South Africa (Churches, home networks; cultural organisations; sport, political; student bodies; Ngos or any other)  
 .....
4. In your current occupation do you have fellow Nigerians that assist and advise you?  
 .....
5. Give examples of the support and advice these organisations or networks provide  
 .....

6. In the following statements, please select only the answers applicable to you (Mark with X):

	Statement	Yes	No	Not Applicable
a)	I have made South African friends whom I often interact with (at least once a month)			
b)	I have made new Nigerian friends in South Africa who I often interact with (if yes how often)			
c)	Since coming to SA, I have made friends with people from other countries			
d)	I mostly rely on South Africans for help			
e)	I mostly rely on Nigerians for help			
f)	I have become aware of South African companies in Nigeria			
g)	I mostly rely on other nationalities for help			
h)	I would support a boycott of South African companies in Nigeria if needed to fight xenophobia			
i)	I often participate in South African events			
j)	I participate in events celebrated in my home country/town			
k)	I have learnt a South African language since coming here			
l)	I wear clothes that represent my Nigerian heritage			
m)	I wear clothes that make me fit in			

**The following questions need only to be answered by those belonging to a formal network/organisation**

7. In the following statements, please select only the answers applicable to you (Mark with X):

	Statement	Yes	No	Not Applicable
	I have experienced direct/ violent xenophobia at least a few times since arriving here			
	My organisation has been useful for making new friends			
	My organisation is useful in providing support i.e., monetary, personal, etc.			
	I feel safer since making friends here			
	The organisation provides a level of safety			
	Since joining the organisation, I have become more involved/active in:			
1	Engaging my fellow Nigerians locally			

	2	Engaging my fellow Nigerians back home			
	3	Engaging my fellow Nigerians abroad			
	4	Engaging the South African authorities			
	5	Engaging the Nigerian authorities			
	6	Engaging South African citizens			
	7	Participating/engaging in civic/political activities in Nigeria			
	8	Participating/engaging in civic/political activities in South African			
	9	Participating in anti-xenophobia campaigns			

**A. SECTION D - UTILISING ALLIANCES**

**The following section is to be answered by all participants.**

1. If you need assistance with anything, who do you turn to for help?  
.....
2. Where do you get information on your home country?  
.....
3. If you had to get into trouble in SA, who are you most likely to seek assistance from?  
.....
4. In relation to xenophobia, would you be able to seek assistance from your fellow Nigerians back home? If yes, who?  
.....
5. Do you engage with any Nigerians abroad? If yes, would you be able to seek assistance from them if needed?  
.....
6. What advice would you offer a Nigerian coming to South Africa?  
.....
7. What would you have done differently now that you have been here?  
.....
8. What can Nigerians do to fight xenophobia effectively?  
.....
9. Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX B:

*APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT*

Place of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Name:		Position:	
Department:			

**A. DEPARTMENT DETAILS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

1. When was the first trade missions to Nigeria undertaken?
2. What is the Department's main focus in relation to these trade missions?
3. How many employees generally form part of the trade missions?

**B. DEPARTMENT DETAILS IN NIGERIA**

1. Does the department have offices in Nigeria? If yes, where?
2. Are there any Nigerian nationals employed in the department? If yes, how many?
3. In light of xenophobia in South Africa, has the department received any direct threats from Nigeria?
4. If yes, how has the department dealt with these threats?
5. How does the department generally assist South African companies abroad?
6. How does the department assist companies who have come under threat abroad?
7. Based on the challenges faced by Nigerian nationals in SA, what challenges has the department experienced in relation to this?
8. Does the department support Nigerian SMME's in SA? If yes, how?
9. Has the issue of xenophobia affected trade and investment cooperation with Nigeria? How does the department deal with this?
10. In your opinion, what would be the impact of a shutdown of South African businesses in Nigeria?
11. Does the department play a role in mediation talks between the two Governments with regard to addressing issues of xenophobia?
12. Any other information that could be useful in terms of strengthening trade and diplomatic relations between the two countries?

*APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR NGO*

Place of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Name:		Position:	
Department:			

1. How many people are employed in the (NGO)?
2. Are any of these employees Nigerian nationals?
3. What has been some of the (NGO's) biggest success stories?
4. What has been some of the biggest challenges?
5. Does the (NGO) assist small Nigerian businesses in South Africa? If yes, how?
6. How has xenophobia influenced the business of the (NGO)?
7. Does the (NGO) participate in any anti-xenophobic campaigns?
8. How does the (NGO) assure possible new investors around the situation of xenophobia in SA?
9. On its website, the (NGO) states that it "plays a role behind the scenes to address the misperceptions among citizens about each other's countries". How does it go about doing this?
10. How does this (NGO) "work with diplomatic missions and government officials to iron out problems in the relationship", as stipulated on its website?
11. What is the nature of the (NGOs) relationship with Nigeria – South Africa Chamber of Commerce (NSACC)?
12. Are there any mutual campaigns to fight the stigma attached to Nigerians or to fight the surge of xenophobia in SA?
13. When South African Businesses such as MTN and Multichoice face threats of retaliation in Nigeria, does the (NGO) get involved? If yes, how?