

Re-Caging the Leviathan: Of Elephant, Lion and Cockroach

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Abstract

Violence and crime are ubiquitous; it exists in all countries of the world. The relationship between Nigeria and South Africa is like the Elephant and the Lion in the jungle sneering at the cockroach. Nigeria is depicted as the giant of Africa and South Africa as a power house in Africa. Both countries had been in a simile good relationship after the victory over the apartheid regime in South Africa with the aid of other African countries especially Nigeria. Both countries had ever since sign several political, economic and social agreements. The relationship between the

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countries begins to dwindle when unemployment, crime and violence begin to rise in South Africa unabatedly. This symptom was allegedly traced to other nationals other than South African and especially Nigerians. The result includes the indiscriminate killing of Nigerians and others, looting and general destruction of their properties. Should this two major power houses in Africa sneer at cockroach instead of helping Africa to form a formidable political and economic ideology in global politics? Broken window and tyre burning theories are utilised in this study and conclusion is premised on caging crime and promoting unity instead of indiscriminate killings.

Keywords: Apartheid, Crime, Development, Diplomacy, Soft Power and Xenophobia

Introduction

Violence and crime are ubiquitous. It exists in all countries of the world. In fact there is no country or human association that do not have the element of crime and violence. The only thing that may vary is the percentage of its concentration and dimensions. That was why classical philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato and neoclassical philosophers such Hobbes, Machiavelli and the Utilitarian philosophers such as Bentham, Mill among other class of modern philosophers opined that the main purpose of the state is to ensure and safe guard the lives and properties of the citizens. The citizens have submitted their rights to the state and in turn the state need to secure them from the state of nature phenomenon (Steinberg, 2018)². This phenomenon is said to be in a state of

chaos which is short, nasty, solitary, poor and brutal.

When crime and violence in a society becomes so rampant, the community is returning to the state of nature. Everyone will be for himself but God for all. The slogan will become the survival of the fittest and jungle justice. The rich and the influential in such situation oppress and subjugate the poor. The poor on the other hand due to their population strength may react with violent destruction of infrastructures in the community. However, some of the important purposes of the state is to control, correct and reduce such negative occurrences so that there will be a harmonious relationship among all classes of people in the society³.

There is no country in the world that is not made up of the two classes; the rich and the poor. Also, there is no country that is totally self sufficient and does not need the assistant of the other countries. Also, there is no state or country that is completely homogenous. That is to say, all countries in the world consist of both the homeland citizens and the citizens of other countries. Many countries in the world relates on such diplomatic ties in such a way that they have mutual, bilateral or multilateral agreements in terms of political, economic, social and military or security terms. These levels of diplomatic relationship involve the movement of citizens from one country to the other so as to facilitate the relationship.

The relationship between Nigeria and South Africa is one of such bilateral trade relationship among other binding factors. The relationship between Nigeria and South Africa is like the Elephant and the Lion in the jungle sneering at the cockroach. The elephant depict Nigeria as a giant of the 'jungle' which is Africa. It can cause severe uproar and panic attack in the jungle. The Lion on the other hand is a powerful hunter that has the capacity to attack any animal in the jungle but still give due respects to the Elephant. The phenomenon of the cockroach is an unbeneficial insect to

both the Elephant and the Lion but only creating unnecessary distractions.

In other words, Nigeria is depicted as the giant of Africa and South Africa as a power house in Africa. Nigeria has the population bases and in fact, the largest black population in the African continent and indeed, the entire world. The population are very industrious and resourceful both within and outside the shores of Nigeria. The citizens have high tensile strength to bear tough and harsh conditions which is Nigeria's unique selling point character. This character has helped them to be able to survive in any part of the world. They engaged in all forms of economic productive activities at all levels of significance. These include; professional and non professional, skilled and non skilled labour force supply to their host country. Due to this high yielding strength, Nigerians abroad have the tendency to dominate in their economic activities at the expense of their host nations' citizens. This in many cases breed envy and jealousy at some quarters. A typical example is the recurrent xenophobic attacks on Nigerians and their businesses in South Africa since 1994 till date.

It is noteworthy to say that Nigeria had help South Africa in many important aspects of their existence as a country. A notable assistance was the fight against the apartheid regime. Nigeria spent billions of Naira to fortify the black South Africans struggle for freedom and equality. This struggle made significant impact in the early 1990s when top negotiations were reached among the fractions of the White and Black South Africa. The resultant optimum effect was the securing of the release of Nelson Mandela and the regain of equity among all races and colours in 1994 (Solomon, 2019)⁴. Nevertheless, both countries had been in a simile good relationship after the victory over the apartheid regime in South Africa with the aid of other African countries especially Nigeria.

In post apartheid period, both countries had ever since sign several political, economic and social agreements. These agreements facilitated the relationships between the two countries. Nigeria has the largest market in Africa and South African companies like other countries had taken a 'lion-strength' advantage of this⁵. Millions of dollars are repatriated to South Africa homeland through some of their companies that invested in Nigeria's economy such as in the telecommunication, aviation, banking, and wholesale and retail trading ventures among others. Nigerians on the other hand had several large and small scale industries in South Africa. The extent and volume of the small scale trading of Nigerians in South Africa is large. However, the income in dollars might not be comparable with that of the gains of South African large companies in Nigeria. However, due to the numerous domination and integration of Nigerians small scale investors in South Africa, it seems that foreign nationals had taken over the economy at the expense of their citizens. This notion seems to be the beginning of xenophobia in South Africa.

Furthermore, the relationship between the countries begins to dwindle when unemployment, crime and violence begin to rise in South Africa unabatedly⁶. Many South Africans seems to rely on the foreign nationals for their daily income and employment. The government in some points still allow the white South African to own lands and keep back several amounts of money in the bank instead of investing it. This makes jobs to be scarce and highly competitive. The foreign nationals that are investing their own resource are seen as intruders on their economy despite the job opportunities they are creating in the country.

Whenever the white South Africans invested, many of the black South Africans are not employed because of the level of the educational sophistication it required. In many cases, the foreign nationals have such educational requirements and they are gainfully

employed. This perceived symptom of unemployment was allegedly traced to other nationals especially Nigerians other than South Africans. The result includes the indiscriminate killing of Nigerians and others foreign nationals, looting and general destruction of their properties. This is termed xenophobic attacks.

It seems that both countries are sneering at cockroaches which is an indication of emphasises on distractions and irrelevant issues which are base on sentiments, pride, envy, ignorance and other similar distractions. Should this two major power houses in Africa sneer at cockroach instead of helping Africa to form a formidable political and economic ideology in global politics? Broken window and tyre burning theories are further utilised in this study to explain the onset of the distractions and break down of diplomacy of Nigeria and South Africa with the enormous consequences.

Conceptualising Xenophobia

Xenophobia is an ambiguous and contested term in scholarly debates. Xenophobia generally connotes the hatred for strangers or foreigners on ones homeland. Xenophobic violence is often intertwined within other material, political, cultural or social motivations and may be fundamentally driven by such concerns. Crush, et al.,⁷ opined that other complementary use of similar terms include nativism, autochthony, ethnocentrism, xeno-racism, ethno-exclusionism, anti-immigrant prejudice and immigration-phobia.

As applicable globally so also, xenophobia in South Africa translates into a broad spectrum of behaviours including discrimination, stereotyping and dehumanizing remarks; discriminatory policies and practices by government and private officials such as exclusion from public services to which target groups are entitled; selective enforcement of by-laws by local authorities; assault and harassment by state agents particularly the

police and immigration officials; as well as public threats and violence⁸. Xenophobic violence often results in massive loss of lives and livelihoods. Dodson⁹ also posited that xenophobic violence has motivations and concerns on material, political, cultural or social issues. ILO, IOM, OHCHR¹⁰ and Misago et al¹¹ further opined that characteristics which is in form of any violence that mobilises and exploits differences based on spatial, linguistic, or ethnic origins are xenophobic.

In the case of South Africa, xenophobic violence in particular has become a longstanding feature in post-Apartheid era. Since 1994, tens of thousands of people have been harassed, attacked, or killed because of their status as outsiders or foreign nationals. Xenophobic violence was most intense and widely scrutinised in May 2008 when attacks across the country left at least 62 dead, 670 wounded, dozens raped, more than 100,000 displaced. Millions of rands worth of property was also looted and destroyed.

In the recent times, the chronicles of xenophobic violence has the following residue; in 2011, at least 120 foreign nationals were killed, five of them burnt alive, 100 were seriously injured, at least 1,000 displaced, and 120 shops and businesses permanently or temporarily closed through violence or selective enforcement of bylaws. In 2012, the number of violent incidents increased: at least 250 incidents were recorded resulting in 140 deaths and 250 serious injuries. In 2013, an average of three major violence incidents were recorded per week, with attacks regularly reported in many areas across the country during 2014¹². In 2019, several lives were wasted and properties destroyed due to perceived hatred for foreigners within the country.

Broken Window and Tyre Burning Theory

Broken window theory explains the beginning of violence and other societal misdemeanours. It also reveals how the

misdemeanours become integrated within the fabrics of the society. Wilson and Kelling¹³ professed that societal disorder, such as hatred, ethnic chauvinism, religious bigotry, nepotism and crime have developmental sequence syndrome. Social and political psychologists including security agents also tend to agree that if a little abandonment of a dysfunction in a structure such as if window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken.

If a bad societal attitude or problem is left unchecked, it can spread contagiously until it becomes an epidemic social menace. If a window is smashed and left unattended to, sooner, another window will be smashed until the house becomes a harbinger for social vices or hideout for hoodlums. Also when government's responsibilities are left on done, several social misdemeanours and dysfunctional behaviours such as violence in all forms including xenophobia will endanger the peace, good healthy living and security of the environment¹⁴.

Tyre Burning Theory (TBT) also pushed the argument further that when the misdemeanours in the society become unabated, when the government continue to neglect the plight of the people, this will lead to series of reactions against the government and the perceived object of violence. This will lead to series of protests. When protest goes bad like the case of xenophobia, the peaceful agitation become violent, the destruction of innocent human lives residing in the location becomes imminent. Properties are burnt down and the socio-economic and political life in that area becomes paralysed. A major left over sign in such protest is the burning of tyres against a perceived individual or object¹⁵.

Re-Caging the Leviathan

The relationship between Nigeria and South Africa goes sour because the government in each state have failed in the area of

diplomacy. The citizens' welfare is held with a simple hand at the expense of the foreigners. Nigeria's economy has South Africa's investments such as in the banking and telecommunication sector. Nigerians as well in South Africa are investing in large scale and majorly small scale businesses which are positively impacting the economy of the host country. The missing link that resulted in the xenophobic violence against foreigners includes; the poor rate of investment in the economy by Black South Africans, high dependence on their White counterpart's jobs. Therefore, the foreigners are creating the little jobs and establishing their capitals at the expense of the black South Africans. So should Nigerian be punished for investing in economic activities in South Africa?

Also crime rate in South Africa are on the increase which makes life difficult. The easy prey of xenophobia criminal violence is against the foreign nationals usually blacks. The level of unemployment in Nigeria as well makes people to migrate to greener pastures and as such competing with the limited resources in their new location. The height of bad governance is also alarming in both countries. Other issues that led to the scuffles include; selfish leadership styles, corruption, money laundering, diplomatic cluelessness, poor economic growth and political gerrymandering.

These are thorns in the flesh of both countries that must be repelled. They are the leviathans that must be re-caged all over again. The incident of destructions of lives of innocent Nigerians and other foreign nationals in South Africa is against constructive diplomatic tenets. Instead, both countries should concentrate efforts on development of their homeland economy and indeed Africa. If the homeland economy is virile, the citizens will hardly migrate as a palliative measure.

Instead of a reprisal attack and or immediate nationalisation of South Africans investments in Nigeria, Nigerian government should set out new diplomatic revitalisation strategy to relate with

countries in the calibre of South Africa. This strategy will place foreign investments within the country under close checks. Instead of the free repatriation of capital to their homeland, gradual nationalization outlook should be introduced to such organizations. The foreign missions of Nigeria elsewhere need to be empowered with strategic information on securing the lives of the citizens in the foreign land.

Conclusion

Nigeria as a giant in Africa and South Africa is a stronghold in Africa needs to live up to expectations beyond rhetoric. Crime, violence, unemployment, poor level of local investment, selfish leadership, racial segregation, hostility to visitors among others are leviathan steering against the harmonious international relationship in Africa especially between Nigerians hosted in South Africa. Both Nigeria and South African governments respectively have tried to some measures to cage the developmental leviathan within their countries. However, the leviathan seems to have escaped and it is causing more damage to the diplomatic ties across Africa continent. The leviathan must be re-caged.

This xenophobic violence implies that the diplomatic ties between Nigeria and South Africa have fundamental flaws. This has spill-over and domino effects on the surroundings and international politics. Many Nigerians are mostly at the receiving end of the violence in South Africa. The xenophobic violence against foreigners especially Nigerians in South Africa depict that the government is getting some things wrong or the citizens have wrong impressions on the foreigners. However, the action plan expected from Nigeria is not an outright cut off of diplomatic tie with South Africa or a reprisal attack on South Africa and their investments.

A partial and temporary disengagement from full diplomacy with South Africa is important to send a signal of discontentment

of the reoccurring xenophobic attack on Nigerians. There is no need for military action to be embarked on by Nigeria. Soft power demonstration and negotiation in the political, economic and social ties should be reviewed by Nigerian government. High sense of sobriety and re-networking among the affected countries must be expressed and embarked on by South Africa government. Also, the security of foreign nationals' agreement must be enforced while any breached must be brought to book immediately. Robust domestic investment that will take care of all groups in the country must be ensured. Preventing crime by creating better security surveillance and employment generation will also effectively re-cage the ravaging leviathan against Africa's Unity.

Endnotes

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