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Xenophobia and the challenge of regional integration in Africa: understanding three cardinal dynamics

While the literature on xenophobia views the phenomenon as a major challenge to the regional integration of Africa, the key nuances about how xenophobia affects regional integration, and how that could be tackled, have not been adequately captured. Addressing this knowledge gap, we examine the scholarly constructs surrounding citizenship and economic participation, as enablers of xenophobia and demonstrate how the state is called into these negotiations, and how that affects regional and continental integration. Methodologically, this paper adopts a thematic qualitative approach relying on relevant literature and theories from history, political science, migration studies, peace and conflict, international relations, sociology, and development studies. The analysis offers a three-pronged argument that xenophobia (i) generates new discourses of 'othering' or belonging, (ii) promotes perceptions of betrayal and retaliation in foreign policy framing or *ad-hoc* actions and/or attacks on non-nationals, and (iii) redefines rights of occupancy or territorial belonging. The analysis of these dynamics offers valuable knowledge on security, development, and regional integration of Africa from in-country 'xenophobia studies' to both in-country and continental/regional level understanding of xenophobia.

Keywords: regional integration, xenophobia, Africa, state, citizen

Introduction

The spirit of unity and solidarity which seemed to have characterised Africa's anti-colonial movements, the early independence era, and the resistance against the Apartheid regime in South Africa, has given way to a swirling atmosphere of xenophobia which has been a key impediment to the prospect of regional integration[1] (Okem, Asuelime & Adekoye 2015; Akinola 2019; Khalema 2018). In the pursuit of sustained continental economic growth and self-sufficiency, as witnessed in other regional communities such as European Union (EU) and United States of America (USA). The African Union (AU), formerly the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), has for decades made attempts at regional integration, as reflected in key regional strategic vision and policy frameworks such as the *Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa* (1980-2000) and the *Agenda 2063* ('The Africa We Want' – 2013) among other blueprints (see D'Sa 1983; Bilal 2016). In particular, the *Agenda 2063* represents a concrete manifestation of how the continent intends to achieve regional integration within a 50-year period from 2013 to 2063. This framework, which covers 20 priority areas ranging from high standard of living to self-financing of Africa's development, envisions "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena" (AU, February 2020). Although Chingono and Nakana (2009) observe that regional integration may not always be desirable due to challenges emanating from interference in domestic policy formulation by member states, the burden of membership dues on some countries, and illicit cross-border trade, the bulk of the literature rather strongly establishes a positive relationship between regional integration and sustained development (see Hartzenberg 2011; Thonke & Spliid 2012; Kayizzi-Mugerwa, Anyanwu, & Conceição 2014). To this batch of scholarship, integration enhances well-structured, coordinated sharing/exchange among member states of relevant knowledge, personnel, and material support in critical matters of security, economic, political, and social dimensions, which ensure self-sufficient growth in other regions such as the EU and the US.

However, after decades of policy blueprints and academic discussions on continental governance in Africa, the vision of African integration appears to be a very distant reality, owing to impediments such as the legacies of colonial governance and economic structures, neo-colonialism, poor political leadership,

1 We define regional integration per Chingono and Nakana (2009: 397), as the unification of previously independent states into a single unit with one hierarchy of governance, for instance, the United States of America. Thus, in an integrated Africa, independent, isolated states are expected to work under a condition of unification and incorporation, for all key purposes of governance, including economic, social, and political dimensions.

xenophobic or Afrophobic policies and actions, various political instabilities (Okem, Asuelime & Adekoye 2015; Akinyemi et al. 2019), and overlapping membership of sub-regional bodies (Jordaan 2014; Kayizzi-Mugerwa, Anyanwu & Conceição 2014) among other challenges. Besides the general continental failure of a meaningful integration, there exists an uneven story about efforts of integration across different Regional Economic Communities (RECs) (Chingono & Nakana 2009; Bilal 2016). The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is believed to have advanced the most with efforts at sub-regional integration in politics, economy, and cultural exchanges than others, including the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and Southern African Development Community (SADC) (see Chingono & Nakana 2009; Akinola 2019). Consequently, Flahaux and De Haas (2016) rather characterise Africa as a continent witnessing mass migration and displacement instead of integration, and this is very pronounced due largely to the porosity of national borders with corresponding poverty and growing youth unemployment.

While all the foregoing challenges have attracted arguably adequate discussions in the literature on Africa's regional integration, some important dynamics of xenophobia in the discourse and practice of regional integration remain significantly lacking. Xenophobia poses perhaps the most important challenge to Africa's integration because it affects all the main components of integration – politics, security, trade, and cultural exchanges (Onditi 2021). According to Bordeau (2010), while globalisation has promoted the migration of individuals across the world, especially within the African continent, the politics of diversities surrounding ethnicity, culture, and nationality have negatively affected the settlement and productivity of migrants. The policies, discourses, and relations of these diversities among migrants and host states and communities are believed to mostly cause hostile interactions, giving rise to growing notions about the concept of xenophobia, which is rooted in colonialism and fuelled by the modern state and global forces (Neocosmos 2010; Adjai & Lazaridis 2013; Klotz 2016). Using the case of Southern Africa, for instance, Okem, Asuelime & Adekoye (2015) and Akinola (2019) argue that the negative effect of xenophobia on Africa's integration trajectory has not been meaningfully acknowledged and addressed by the continent's leaders. They bemoan South Africa's rising xenophobic tendencies and attacks and call on the AU to strongly address the issues of xenophobia to enhance the potential of continental integration in Africa.

While the link between xenophobia and Africa's integration has gained considerable traction in contemporary scholarly debates, the discussions fail to adequately address how xenophobia reflects in some important contemporary questions surrounding the decades of efforts at regional integration for sustained

growth of Africa's economy and political systems. The bulk of the literature mainly reifies the concept, xenophobia, examining the phenomenon from socio-cultural and economic dimensions, and creating a linear victim-perpetrator relation. This broadly talks about the negative effects of xenophobia on regional integration but does not nuance the discussion on how the dynamics of xenophobia affect integration beyond the general picture. Understanding the specific dimensions through which xenophobia influences integration, we argue, forms the most critical aspects of the discussions on xenophobia because these spaces invite scholars and policymakers to tease out some key details within citizens' and states' perceptions and practices on xenophobia and how these affect interstate relations and thus integration on the continent.

Understanding the trends of citizen-state and state-state relational dimensions of xenophobia and Africa's integration requires that we undertake a qualitative analysis of the constructs of citizenship and economic participation, captured as the enablers of xenophobia in the scholarly debates. We adopt a thematic approach, analysing the relevant literature and theories from the fields of history, political science, migration studies, peace and conflict, international relations, sociology, and development studies to offer a nuanced examination of the major xenophobic manifestations and how they influence the course of regional integration. In what follows, we first present an evolutionary understanding of xenophobia in the global arena, and examine the scholarship on xenophobia in Africa. We then examine the key reflections of xenophobia and how they influence the discourses and practices of African integration. The conclusion affirms that xenophobia deeply affects efforts at regional integration in Africa and that the best way to understand the dynamics of the subject is to systematically tease out the constructs and enablers of xenophobia within the reinforcing spaces of the state and citizen relations and how those affect continental integration.

(Mis)Understanding xenophobia

According to Bordeau (2010: 4) 'xenophobia' is derived from two Greek concepts 'xenos' and 'phobos' which translate into 'fear of a foreigner'. Scholarly debates have simply defined xenophobia in different but generally the same expressions such as an irrational fear of foreigners (Landau et al. 2005), "anti-foreign sentiments" (Okem, Asuelime & Adekoye 2015: 79), "extreme nationalism and anti-immigration acts" (Akinola 2019: 83), and "irrational fear of the unknown … the fear or hatred of those with a different nationality" (Steenkamp 2009: 439) among others. Akinola (2017) and Landau et al. (2005) thus posit that xenophobia encompasses all forms of discriminatory, sometimes violent actions or gestures towards people usually considered to be 'different' or 'non-national' from those

claiming to be national or original occupants or duelers of a place or polity. In line with these understandings, Lee (2020) views the wide range transformation of some public policies, for instance, in the US under the Trump administration, as xenophobic. Lee (2020) opines that like the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era of the US, Donald Trump's administration was focused on the expanded capacity and power of the nation-state, and the growth of US global power, and in doing so essentially legitimised racism and white supremacy. Such identity-related hostilities usually radicalise migrants and cause atmospheres of "violent othering" (Vale 2002: 7).

There is no scholarly agreement about the history of the concept of xenophobia in global discourses on migration, economy, politics, and culture. For instance, while Lee (2020) points to state policies against mass migrations to the US during the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era of the 19th and 20th centuries, Cheng (2020) traces xenophobic expressions further back to health concerns in the 14th century, when Jewish communities were stigmatised during the outbreak of bubonic plague. Cheng reports that similar treatments were meted out to African and Caribbean communities during the 2014 Ebola outbreak. In contemporary times, he adds, the outbreak of the COVID-19 saw the rise in xenophobic attacks against Chinese and other people of East Asian origin, as Chinese and Asian migrants were abused physically, verbally, and emotionally across Europe and the USA at the height of the COVID-19 outbreak, because the pandemic was described by many as a Chinese sickness. The form of xenophobia that appears during an outbreak of infectious diseases, and in particular, COVID-19, can be situated within historical discourses from the 19th century with the first international conventions aimed at controlling the spread of infectious diseases (White 2020). White asserts that there were very stringent biases against non-Europeans who were viewed as carriers of diseases, thus generating aggressive xenophobic responses. For instance, the outbreak of the 1901 bubonic plague in South Africa witnessed massive quarantines and deportation of black Africans, which enhanced the idea of segregation and manifesting in contemporary economic, and cultural expressions of anti-migrant across the globe (White 2020).

Though mostly used loosely as a universal concept, the understanding and manifestation of xenophobia is linked with context and time, spanning different social, economic, political, and cultural attitudes towards foreigners (see Landau et al. 2005). Xenophobia influences and is influenced mostly by the discourses and practices surrounding cross-border migration and state migration and settlement policies, and these centrally affect the dimensions of host citizens' reactions towards migrants in violent ways, which radicalises migrants (Vale 2002; Bekker 2015). Taking the South African xenophobic attacks, for instance, Everatt (2011) uses the terms 'Afrophobic' or 'Negrophobic' in place of normative

xenophobia. Concerning its manifestation in Africa, Mngomezulu & Dube (2019) argue in line with Everatt, indicating that 'Afrophobia' and 'Negrophobia' are more applicable than xenophobia in Africa, because 'xenophobia' loosely applies generally to hostilities towards migrants across all the continents, whereas the African version is mostly against migrants from within the continent, thus 'Afrophobia'.

According to Adeola (2015) most parts of Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa, have witnessed xenophobia for many decades. Adeola stresses that xenophobia in Africa centrally hinges on such issues including prejudices, attitudinal orientations, and hostile behaviour, as well as the use of derogatory language and violence towards foreigners, who mostly come from other African nations, thus affirming Everatt's 'Afrophobia' or 'Negrophobia'. These circumstances usually lead to the expulsion of migrants, threat of expulsion, and, more recently, violent attacks against foreigners (Adeola 2015). Everatt (2011) argues that the roots of xenophobia in Africa stem from an array of factors: a combination of deep structural social, economic, and spatial inequalities; a long-standing tradition of reliance on cheap labour, a shortage of shelter, township competition, racism, and history that includes the use of violence to advance sectional interests. Horowitz (2001) and Kersting (2009) have grouped these driving forces of xenophobic outburst under four major factors: ethnic or national antagonism, 'reasonable' justification of violence, response to certain events, and aggression in situations where mobs rarely face punishments. Akinola (2020) has revealed that factors such as bad governance, political considerations, and the non-participation or inactiveness of regional bodies like ECOWAS and AU in the fight against the same in West Africa encourage xenophobic attacks to thrive.

The bulk of the literature traces xenophobic attitudes towards migrants in Africa to the 1960s. The Ghana-Nigeria question is one of the major examples of 'Afrophobia'. Ghana-Nigeria relations, which surround economic activities and that of the South African question, highlight how historical xenophobic policies and practices have been socialised among citizens, hindering the chances of Africa's integration. In the case of Ghana, then Prime Minister of the country, Kofi Abrefa Busia, introduced the 'Alien Compliance Order' to expel undocumented migrants (Adjepong 2009). According to Adjepong (2009), the Alien Order saw the mass deportation of about 1.2 million migrants from Ghana between 1969 and 1970. This was in response to the dwindling economic fortunes of the country after the overthrow of Dr Kwame Nkrumah and the subsequent political instability which negatively affected the economy. Migrants became 'scapegoats' and a national policy was framed against them, influencing the general perception of foreigners as the cause of unemployment in Ghana. While most of the migrants who were affected included nationals of neighbouring West African countries mainly Togo,

Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria, the Nigerian migrants were the most affected by the mass expulsion policy (Brydon 1985; Adjepong 2009). According to Brobbey (2017), the policy direction against the migrants influenced mass hostility towards migrants, using the economic factor, which largely explains the long-standing claim by the Ghanaian business community that foreign nationals, especially Nigerians were taking over the retail market in Ghana contrary to the reservation by law of retail business for Ghanaians only.

Similarly, the declining economic conditions in Nigeria in the 1970s and 1980s also saw the expulsion of over two million migrants in 1983, with half of the deportees being Ghanaians, which was viewed as a retaliation by the government of Nigeria (Adeola 2015). In 1985, another expulsion saw the deportation of 300 000 Ghanaians based on claims of them being illegal migrants, most of whom were claimed to have engaged in various illegal work and economic engagement in Nigeria. This was in response to dropping fuel prices and political instability, which stunted the growth of the Nigerian economy, leading to foreigners being tagged as part of the problem. The mass expulsion of Ghanaians from Nigeria birthed the popular expression, 'Ghana Must Go', in global development and migration discourse. This tug of war between Ghana and Nigeria bred decades of prejudice towards citizens from the respective countries, causing hostile acts such as random attacks, the closing of Nigerian shops in Ghana, and the closure of Nigerian trade borders among others (Mngomezulu and Dube 2019; DW-Africa 2020).

In a similar but perhaps less Afrophobic manner, Uganda in 1972 expelled and expropriated the businesses of thousands of Asian migrants who had settled in the East African country since precolonial trade with the East (Maina 2009; Taylor 2018). Another example of the sweeping xenophobic stimuli in Africa's post-independence era is the Gabonese government's attempts to expel all Beninese from the country in 1978. Consequently, there was a ban on Beninese entry into Gabon. This created a system of prejudice against Beninese by the citizens of Gabon (UN 1978). Similarly, the declining economic conditions in Ivory Coast in the 1990s led to institutionalisation of 'Ivorian identity' which further exacerbated resentment against non-nationals. Consequently, following tension between Ivorians and Burkinabe farmers, the country expelled around 12 000 Burkina Faso nationals (Wiafe-Amoako 2015). Siegel (2009) and Adebajor (2011) also show that the claim that citizens of Democratic Republic of Congo were stealing Angolan natural resources prompted the expulsion of Congolese from Angola in recent decades. In Zimbabwe, under the government of Mugabe, there was the concerted seizure of white farms without compensation (Kersting 2009).

Nonetheless, South Africa's version of xenophobia has attracted the most scholarly attention in recent times. The South African xenophobic actions have a deeper historical root than the other cases presented before. South Africa's internal politics, especially from the era of the Mfecane, through colonialism to the much discussed Apartheid regime, have greatly shaped the country's discussions on xenophobia (Landau et al. 2005). Landau and his compatriots have shown that these histories of the country coupled with mass immigration by other African nationals, have increased the number of non-nationals within South Africa, further complicating the dynamics of xenophobia in the country (Landau et al. 2005). In addition, the Group Areas Act of the Apartheid government further exacerbated the idea of xenophobia by internally displacing millions of people. This forced many to live in artificially created communities with increasingly hostile racial and ethnic rivalries that have morphed into a war against African migrants (Landau et al. 2005).

In the post-apartheid era, xenophobic reactions and attitudes in South Africa assumed a new dimension. Among other manifestations, violence has become an important tool employed by black South Africans against black non-nationals (Steenkamp 2009). As in the case of Ghana and Nigeria, the new dimension of xenophobia in South Africa arose because of the "fear of economic competition, the belief of foreigners as criminals and as a drain on public resources" in the country (Landau et al. 2005: 2). In the new wave of xenophobic attacks witnessed in 2008 in South Africa, the nation experienced violent attacks characterised by the murder of about 60 people from Somalia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe, as well as other nationals especially from Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Ghana (Kersting 2009). Xenophobic treatments meted out to foreigners focused on the victims' non-national tag and the associated prejudices. For instance, while Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland migrants are treated quite fairly, those from Mozambique and Zimbabwe face greater challenges due to their sheer number and perceived competition for economic opportunities with the South African nationals (Steenkamp 2009).

From the foregoing debates, one can argue that the growing manifestations of Afrophobia across the continent reaffirm the need to create sustainable economic opportunities to prevent the influx of migrants and the mass immigration from many African countries in search of economic opportunities. While unemployment has been an economic challenge in post-independence Africa, the presence of migrants exacerbates the frustrations of nationals who, in turn with the complex interplay of state policies, develop negative perceptions about migrants and meter out hostile treatments to them. The victims or foreigners thus become the scapegoat for the justification of the challenges associated with elected leaders (Landau et al. 2005; Steenkamp 2009).

Challenging the economic dimension of xenophobia, however, some accounts have offered three other factors that greatly influence or trigger the economic claims, and in most cases are even more important in stoking the attacks. First, it is argued that Afrophobia relies deeply on the flow of myths and stereotypes on foreigners (see Crush 2000; Valji 2003; Bordeau 2010). In South Africa, for instance, foreigners are constantly associated with committing crimes, spreading diseases, swamping social services, and 'stealing' employment (Steenkamp 2009). Second, media prejudice, sensationalism, and skewed reportage against migrants also incite xenophobic attacks in Africa (Adeola 2015). According to Steenkamp (2009), the media shapes public discourse and thus the content of the discussions about migrants from many media houses perpetuates and justifies stereotypical assumptions and generalisations about foreigners. Thus, the media propaganda about migrants in South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria strongly influences public perceptions and attacks on foreigners by nationals (Crush and Pedleton 2004). Third, the roots of xenophobia are traced to Africa's colonial heritage (Adeola 2015; Akinola 2017). After independence, and in contemporary times too, colonially imposed borders have become a critical question on the definition of identity in Africa (Adeola 2015). The artificial and arbitrary boundaries have generated the question of 'foreign other', which was not necessarily a feature of pre-colonial African societies (Adeola 2015). According to Kersting (2009), the othering of immigrants is underpinned by a new form of nationalism, a phenomenon that focuses on internal othering and exclusion of social groups within society from gaining access to state resources. Therefore, within the imposed borders, nationals have employed xenophobia that is borne out of nationalism to maintain the distribution of resources and social service (Kersting 2009).

Xenophobia and the question of African regional integration

As gathered from the above discussion, it is understood that one of the major hindrances to Africa's regional integration is the phenomenon of xenophobia, which is exacerbated and reinforced by discourses and practices surrounding deep-rooted issues such as colonial political and economic structures, poor political leadership, and overlapping sub-regional membership. Afrophobia, expressed in many forms across the continent, reduces the possibilities of regional integration beyond policy propositions. In this section, we attempt to provide adequate insight into some important details about the nexus between xenophobia and regional integration, by examining the relevant socio-economic and political constructs and practices at play within and between citizens and migrants and the respective states or regional contexts. We offer a nuanced analysis of how xenophobia affects regional integration using a three-pronged

argument that xenophobia (i) generates new discourses of 'othering' or belonging, (ii) promotes perceptions of betrayal and retaliation in foreign policy framing or *ad-hoc* actions and/or attacks on non-nationals, and (iii) redefines rights of occupancy or territorial belonging. An examination of each of these themes reveals a reinforcing relationship between the state and citizens and the multiplier effect on interstate relations in the continent.

New discourses of 'othering' or belonging

Under the first theme, it can be deduced from the literature that African governments' framing of what most scholars consider as xenophobic migration policies, for instance, Alien Compliance Order and Aliens Control Act of 1991 by the governments of Ghana and South Africa respectively, has generated new discourses of citizenship and 'othering'. While some regional policies usually appear to promote the free movement, trade, and settlement especially cross-border traders and transhumance farmers within the RECs (see ECOWAS protocol 1979; Paalo 2020), the individual state policy framings regarding African citizens as aliens in neighbouring countries, serve as fertile grounds for citizens' view of migrants as 'others', foreigners. Although the Aliens Order was not further pursued after Ghana's Second Republic (1969-1972) and the Aliens Control Act was revised in 2002 and came into effect in 2005 to promote inclusion and attract migrants, such policies have caused the entrenchment of discrimination, prejudice, and hostile treatment of African citizens (Crush & Dodson 2007; Okem, Asuelime & Adekoye 2015; Klotz 2016: 180).

According to Crush (2000), Valji (2003) and Bordeau (2010), the Afrophobic framing of state policies are usually further embraced and socialised in public discourses mostly through the media and local government representatives. This, to them, emboldens anti-migrant prejudices, myths, and stereotypes, in which case the poor performances of some governments are partly blamed on migrants' activities. Migrants, e.g. Nigerians in Ghana, Ghanaians in Nigeria, and Zimbabweans and Ethiopians in South Africa, among other divisions, are seen by host citizens as 'other citizens' carrying economic bad luck, ordinary nationals and state actors reinforcing the hostile relationship between migrants and nationals through policies and discourses about migrants. This influences the recurrent xenophobic attacks in South Africa in recent times and the mounting pressure by the Ghana Traders Association to close Nigerian shops in the country because both nationals and migrants have been radicalised through the discourses of citizens vs. non-citizens.

Brydon (1985) suggests that such policies from the state are usually reactionary measures to appease the anger of the citizens for governments' inability to

improve the economic situations in most parts of the continent. For instance, he indicates that the implementation of the Aliens Order in Ghana reduced the anger that Ghanaians had against the government due to the economic hardship of the day. He furthers says that while these state policies are formal bureaucratic legislation, they disturb the "informal balance in relationships among states whose populations had played host to and incorporated traders and travellers for hundreds of years" (Brydon 1985: 564). In line with Vale (2002) and Khalema et al. (2018), therefore, the distortion of the informal balance of relationships between citizens and respective countries reduces the level of solidarity and neighbourliness which characterised Africa's anti-colonial struggle, immediate post-independence, and the struggle against Apartheid, conditions which heralded the integration of the African continent. Therefore, a key area of focus for the success of African integration is to tackle how state policies generate public discourses of identity and how they affect interstate relations, and to continue to engage the media on matters of public discourses that border on citizenship and economic participation.

Feelings of betrayal and retaliation in foreign policy framing or ad-hoc actions against foreigners

Under the second theme, we are exposed to the fact that growing images of 'otherness' in xenophobic state policies reinforced by respective nationals' discourses depletes the brotherly feeling of 'Africaness' and promotes feelings of betrayal and subsequent formulation of retaliatory policies. The importance of *Ubuntu* – a traditional Xhosa expression of the feeling of oneness and the communal handling of political, social, and economic matters in Africa (Murithi 2008; Paalo 2021) – became greatly relevant in the 1960s with the pronouncement of a United Africa by Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ahmed Sekou Touré, Jomo Kenyatta and other pioneers of African political leadership after colonial rule. However, the spirit of continental unity started shattering when the OAU began to disintegrate, as manifested in the Casablanca and Monrovia groups, right from its birth (Okem, Asuelime & Adekoye 2015). This failed move at regional integration rather translated into RECs from a decade later. Nonetheless, the foregoing literature suggests that sub-regional bodies have also failed to advance meaningful political and economic integration. It rather appears that xenophobic policies, discourses, and attacks are instead more pronounced within the sub-region, especially SADC and ECOWAS. This suggests that even the smaller units of the continental bloc are less likely to substantially integrate.

The accounts of Adeola (2015), Kersting (2009), and Klotz (2016) inform us that the Afrophobia challenge with regional and sub-regional integration –

from colonial legacies to post-colonial state policies including retaliatory foreign policies ranging from migration, employment, and trade to border disputes – are shared across the continent, as witnessed for instance between Ghana, Togo and Nigeria, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Rwanda and Uganda, among others. According to Flahaux and De Haas (2016), the formulation of targeted and retaliatory policies against migrants from neighbouring African countries could be cited for the increasing high-level border restrictions in many African countries, a trend which they observe has been increasing since the late 1980s. By 2013, Flahaux and De Haas (2016: 19) show,

> [...] on average, about 90% of nationals from non-African countries needed a visa to enter African countries, while on average 78% of Africans needed a visa to enter another African country. This is substantially higher than the global average of bilateral visa requirements of 65% reported in ... which seems to confirm that African states are rather closed towards the free movement of people.

Although they laud West Africa for being the most open REC "to – at least nominally – free travel and migration between ECOWAS" followed by Southern Africa, which has gradually opened up following the disbandment of the Apartheid regime, North Africa has rather remarkably increased in "visa restrictiveness for other African nationals from a comparatively low level of 69% in 1973 to 89% in 2013" (Flahaux and De Haas 2016: 19). This, they believe, may partly affirm the cross-Mediterranean migration border controls. However, Baldwin-Edwards (2006) and Matsinhe (2016) believe that the various forms of harassment and maltreatment of black Africans in the Maghreb region is due largely to long-standing prejudice against black Africans. Eastern Africa is not left out of the sub-region's restrictive visas and borders against African nationals, mostly arising from negative perceptions of neighbours, due largely to the volatile security situation, including conflicts and terrorist attacks. The East African region scores from 80% to 90% visa restriction index for African nationals, like Central Africa, which shares most of the challenges with its Eastern neighbours. While these challenges may arise from the prevailing political situation in Africa, pre-existing retaliatory and sour foreign relations, for instance, between Kenya and Somalia over the tag of terrorism against the latter, have caused more Afrophobic treatments in foreign policies between the two polities. Okem, Asuelime, and Adekoye (2015) have thus expressed concerns that as free movement of people, financial capital, knowledge, and skills across national boundaries represents a key aspect of integration, there remains a grave challenge in the attainment of continental integration in the atmosphere of 'brotherly' betrayal and retaliatory, *ad-hoc* in-region foreign policies.

Redefinition of claims over rights of occupancy or territory and activities

The third dynamic of xenophobia's influence on regional integration is about constant othering, the conflict of nationals versus non-nationals, in the policies and discourses across Africa, which leads to the situation of perpetual redefinition of the rights of citizens in terms of territorial occupancy and socio-economic and political engagements. For instance, the Aliens Control Act of 1991 in South Africa (revised in 2002) led to a redefinition of the brothers of South African citizens. This leaves unresolved questions about neighbouring territories and migrants, creates new citizenships, and reorders the White-Black belonging and relations. This situation is further complicated by some exclusionary democratic tendencies surrounding the definition of nationals and non-nationals (Landau et al. 2005; Klotz 2016). Similarly, the Afrophobic Aliens law in Ghana and the 'Ghana must Go' episodes in Nigeria coupled with the recent 'trade war' between the two countries, are at variance with the ECOWAS protocol on free movement and establishment of West African citizens within the sub-regions, as well as the provisions made in AU's Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) policy document which came into effect in May 2019.

Therefore, while the vision of an integrated Africa is contained in key policy blueprints at both continental and sub-regional levels, there are policy incoherencies between continental definitions of 'African citizens' and individual states' conceptions of citizens and non-citizens. These policy inconsistencies emanate from many factors including varied colonial experiences, prevailing political contexts, and overlapping sub-regional regulations (Kayizzi- Mugerwa, Anyanwu, & Conceição 2014). These factors shift the boundaries of the concept of citizenship, which reflects strongly in domestic policies against migrants, radicalising them and breeding atmospheres of hostilities between migrants and nationals. For instance, while nomadic herdsmen mostly rely on the ECOWAS protocol to practise cross-border transhumance, they face severe challenges to their right to engage in cross-territorial movements within the region. This is usually because member states provide very limited rights to West African migrants especially in terms of economic participation, and consequently the host communities mostly resist the right of nomads whose cross-border activities are nonetheless in accordance with the ECOWAS protocol (see ECOWAS protocol 1979; Penu & Paalo 2021). Such confounding of the right to territoriality, belonging, and occupancy, emanating largely from Afrophobic policies and prejudices, negatively affect the chances of integration from sub-regional to continental level.

Conclusion

This paper set out to examine how xenophobia affects regional integration, and how this challenge could be tackled. We examined the scholarly constructs concerning xenophobia, focusing on the African continent, and discovered that while scholarship on xenophobia abounds, only a few accounts attempt to address the nexus between xenophobia and the question of African integration discussions. The extant literature broadly views xenophobic tendencies and attacks as a major challenge to the regional integration of Africa because it negatively affects the socio-economic and political relations needed for continental integration. Nonetheless, we found, the literature falls short on an important account. It mainly succeeds in creating a broadly negative image of xenophobia, as a hindrance to regional integration due to the poor treatment of African nationals in some African countries, which is predicted to slow the likelihood of sustained integration. However, we are unable to tell from the literature in which specific ways xenophobia, both a process and an act, affect regional integration. Our addressing of this knowledge gap led us to our three-tier argument. First, the phenomenon of Afrophobia generates new discourses of 'othering' or belonging, creating identities such as nationals, aliens, and non-nationals. Second, Afrophobia promotes feelings of betrayal by fellow Africans, and thus causes the formulation of retaliatory foreign policies or *ad-hoc* actions against African migrants within the region. Finally, the challenge of Afrophobia promotes the redefining of rights of citizenship, occupancy of territories, and participation especially in economic activities. While research exists on xenophobia in Africa this paper offers two important contributions to knowledge. First and most important, by its triad themes of argument, it leads scholarship to the specific angles through which xenophobia hinders regional integration. Second, this paper furthers knowledge on security, development, and regional integration of Africa, from in-country 'xenophobia studies' to both in-country and continent/regional level understanding of xenophobia.

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