



STRANGERS IN OUR FATHERLAND: EXAMPLES OF SUBTLE XENOPHOBIA IN NIGERIA?

Tosin Tunrayo Olonisakinⁱ,
Sulaiman Olanrewaju Adebayo

Department of Psychology and Behavioural Studies,
Ekiti State University Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Abstract:

Throughout the history of mankind, preference and preservation of one's kin or kind has been evident, an up-close observation of this behaviour birthed such theories as kin selection, social identity theory, realistic group conflict theory and reciprocal altruism. The sense of "wennes" and "theyness" has largely precipitated most devastating wars and conflicts that have besieged the world, though incompatible goals or scarce resources are usually fronted as responsible. Such wars and conflicts have been called by different names like racism, xenophobia, nationalism or ethnocentrism. The term xenophobia has particularly gained wide recognition most especially in the wake of South-Africa's crisis in the past. Nigeria has equally experienced such conflicts in the past and still does, however the magnitude of the violence in Nigeria has been played down due to the term used to describe such violence; sometimes it is called prejudice or discrimination or sometimes ethnocentrism or hegemony. This paper makes the argument that the phenomenon of xenophobia exists in Nigeria, may be more common than we realise and also may be an adaptive mechanism employed by people for personal and group survival. Examples of xenophobic acts in Nigeria are discussed and theoretical explanations for their existence and perpetuation are addressed, together with recommendations of managing their occurrences.

Keywords: xenophobia, religious crisis, inter-ethnic conflict, moral disengagement, norm of anonymity, political crisis, homo-interaction, Nigeria

ⁱ Correspondence: email tosinsakin@yahoo.com, sulaiman.adebayo@eksu.edu.ng

Introduction

Since Darwin proposed his theory of evolution in 1859, most scientists have come to accept that nature is wired to ensure survival and continuous existence of its species. Darwin stressed the concept of survival of the fittest; species which are able to survive and preserve their continuity eventually become the dominant ones (Darwin, 1859). He proposed that in a given population, there are varieties of species, those that have inheritable traits or skills that give them an edge over others are able to live and reproduce their type, ensuring that such characteristics are preserved and propagated overtime. On the other hand, species which have less adaptable traits or skills that favour continuity and preservation will be purged overtime because species having such characteristics will have lower chances of survival (Confer, Easton, Fleischman, Goetz, Lewis, Perilloux & Buss, 2010; Passer, Smith, Atkinson, Mitchell & Muir, 2003). This process Darwin called natural selection, that is, nature selected those who are most suited to adapt and survive. A salient purpose of natural selection Darwin emphasised is achieving balance or control or self-preservation. Without natural selection, population would exceed the resources that are available to ensure its survival. In this way, Darwin proposed the intricacies of survival of the entirety of nature's species.

Although Darwin's theory of evolution did not specifically concern human evolution until his publication in 1871, his theory had implications for human evolution right from the beginning. A field of psychology which draws its underpinnings from Darwin's proposition is the field of evolutionary psychology. Evolutionary psychology is the theoretical proposition that addresses the role of evolution in the shaping of human behaviour; how biology has shaped behaviour to ensure survival. Evolutionary psychologists believe that humans have evolved behaviours that increase their chances of survival in their immediate and remote environment (Daly & Wilson, 1997). In other words, human behaviour reflects psychological adaptation just like physical adaptation (Gould & Lewontin, 1979; Confer et al., 2010; Wood, 2000). In the same way physical adaptation has stimulated the development of complex mental processes and physiological development (such as human ability to tell the difference between poisonous and beneficial food or to release energy stimulating hormones when in a flight response mode), psychological adaptation has stimulated human's ability to think, reason and learn from experience (such as ability to tell the difference between a friend and a foe and to identify with groups that can further one's cause); both forms of adaptation developed in response to the need for survival, balance and control. Indeed, Gawronski and Bodenhausen (2006); Wood (2000) argued that the evaluative capacities of organisms in determining what stimuli to avoid or approach and the ability to transfer and apply the outcome of such evaluations to similar situations are two basic

adaptations for any organism. Learning ways that help one to survive in one's environment implies developing certain attitudes (positive or negative judgment of a stimulus) to the different stimuli that one encounters in daily living. People develop mental schemas or scripts of myriad of stimuli and the appropriate response when encountered. That is, people encounter a stimulus, assess it as favourable, hence, develop a positive attitude towards it and vice versa. Thus, people's ability to assess a stimulus, determine its suitability to survival and then access or activate such assessment in similar situations for appropriate response is essential for adaptive functioning. The list of adaptive behaviours emphasised by evolutionary psychology is inexhaustive; they include kin selection, mate selection, having emotions such as love, jealousy and anger (Daly & Wilson, 1997; Wilson, Johnson, & Daly 1995); but most people would agree that most, if not all of these behavioural manifestations occur within peoples' relations with one another. Hence, it is important to focus on the significance of the adaptive mechanisms employed in interpersonal relations. The theory of evolution by means of natural selection has implication for human relations within the society. With this in mind, this paper focuses on the attitudinal phenomenon of xenophobia as an adaptive mechanism for humans to achieve self-preservation, balance and control in their lives and for survival in their environment.

This paper is presented in five sections. The first section as already discussed above draws attention to Darwin's proposition of the theory of natural selection and survival of the fittest and its implication as an adaptive mechanism displayed in xenophobic attitude in interpersonal relations. The second section focuses on the conceptual definition of the term xenophobia, arguing that it is not different from or it is similar to other negative intergroup relations or intolerance (for example, nationalism, ethnocentrism, racism and so on.) displayed towards individuals/groups that are different from one's. The third section discusses examples of xenophobic attitudes in Nigeria with an attempt to link them as being engineered by people's need to maintain or regain control over their lives, sometimes in relation to perceived limited resources and the implication of such for societal health. The fourth section discusses the underlying process in the formation and maintenance of xenophobic attitude. The fifth section recommends ways of managing the problem of xenophobia in Nigeria.

The Concept of Xenophobia

The word xenophobia is derived from the combination of two Greek words of "*xenos*" which means stranger or guest and "*phobos*" which means fear or flight which then combine to mean fear of strangers (Merriam-Webster, n.d). Matsumoto (2009) defines xenophobia as an abnormal fear of strangers or foreigners or people of different

traditions, ways of life, values, social structures or tribes often borne out of the need to maintain one's territory and expressed through hostility or physical aggression. It is typically set off by deep dislike or hatred of an out-group based on their assumed origin, gender, religion or sexual preference and is show-cased in hostility, unequal treatment or violence for the purpose of hurting or debasing such perceived out-group (United Nations [UN], 2013). Also, Cherry (2015) sees xenophobia as "*an excessive and irrational fear of anything that is foreign...most often of foreign people, places or objects...while often used interchangeably with prejudice and racism, these terms have different meanings*". In a similar vein, the term is portrayed as a generalised and unfounded extreme loathing or fear of people who have cultures different from one's own, that goes beyond the usual prejudice or racism and which is often without justification (Xenophobia n.d.). More broadly, Psychology Dictionary (2015) defines xenophobia as a pathological fear of strangers show-cased in hostile relations with people from different nation, ethnic groups, or even separate areas or neighborhoods. McKinley, Robinson and Somavia, (2001) see xenophobia as indicative of reactions to other people solely because they are from a foreign nation or community.

The underlying themes in the above definitions of xenophobia are that the out-groups become recipients of certain negative acts such as hostility, physical aggression, violence, unequal treatment and subjugation which may be expressed verbally or nonverbally. However, verbally or nonverbally, such acts have negative implications for the recipients. Indeed, Kollapan (1999) emphasise the inseparability of xenophobia from violence and the need to define the concept in ways that portray it as such; it is not only a negative attitude towards strangers but a practice that brings harm or injury to the recipients. This is reflected in the definition of xenophobia by Yakushko, (2009) as "*a form of attitudinal, affective, and behavioural prejudice toward immigrants and those perceived as foreign*". The second theme is that such fear, hatred or hostility may be unfounded or unwarranted or irrational which is in line with the scapegoating hypothesis of xenophobia which links xenophobia to the need to blame a crisis situation on someone outside of the self (Morris, 1998; Tshitereke, 1999).

Attacks on foreigners by natives of the host country have been a frontline occurrence for many years (for example, the Jewish holocaust, the Ku Klux Klan anti-black movement in America, the apartheid period in South-Africa, ethnic cleansing in Rwanda (Thomas, 2013), South Africa: 2008, 2011, 2015) and extensively studied and debated (Fayomi, Chidozie & Ayo 2015; Munro, 2006; Tafira, 2011; Toy, 2002; Warner & Finchilescu, 2003; Yakushko, 2009). A lot of evil has been perpetrated by humans in the past as a response to perceived scarce resources, invasion of personal space, invasion of privacy, protection of personal sanity, need to maintain status quo, need to preserve values/tradition and so on (Esses, et al, 2005; Licata & Klein, 2002; McKinley, et al., 2001;

Tafira, 2011; UN, 2013). Such evils will continue to exist in human society without conscious attempt by people to check themselves when their tendency to resist the new/strange/foreign is stirred by the environment. In other words, it is a worldwide and multidisciplinary topic that has generated a lot of views and opinions, hence; it is a social issue that is intimately linked to societal health. Most xenophobic attacks are tied to terrorism, pollution, overpopulation, economic decline, declining employment opportunities, housing scarcity, reduced accessibility to education and social welfare service (Cowan, Martinez, & Mendiola, 1997; Fayomi et al., 2015; Morris, 1998; Munro, 2006; Sengupta, 2001; Tshitereke, 1999; UN, 2013).

There are various instances in which xenophobia occurs in Nigeria (for example, the numerous inter-ethnic and inter-religious strifes) which Nigerians may underrate, perhaps, because they do not result in massacre as history has recorded of some events at different times in the past and do not get as much publicity which nevertheless has its own implication for both physical and mental health of humans. Perhaps it may be referred to as "*xenophobia in its subtlety*"?; one in which fear and dislike for others occurs almost imperceptibly and as a norm in interpersonal relations. Some definitions of xenophobia such as that given above by Xenophobia (n.d.) and Cherry (2015) suggest that xenophobia is different from prejudice or racism or that it goes beyond these concepts. However a perusal of historical events and research, evidence the fact that just like xenophobia, prejudice or racism or ethnocentrism and other similar negative intergroup relations also involve violence (Albert, 1999; Johnson 1973; McKinley, Robinson, & Somavia, 2001; Okwudiba, 1980; Oladoyin, 2001; Tshitereke, 1999; Yakushko, 2009) against out-groups and is precipitated by similar reasons, this begs the question of whether xenophobia is a more potent form of the acts of prejudice, racism, discrimination, ethnocentrism or whether these acts are expressions of xenophobia or that xenophobia is the end result of holding such beliefs or attitude. Some of the analysis and definitions that have been made for these similar concepts include the following:

A. Racism, Racial Prejudice or Racial Discrimination

Matsumoto (2009) defines racism as an irrational belief in the inferiority of a race and in the similarity of the people of such a race to each other and such belief being usually closed to review. McKinley et al. (2001) made the following submissions regarding racism, discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of inter-group intolerance against foreigners and nationals. Racism in general involves ideology-focused discrimination and relegation based on phenotypical differences such as hair type, facial features, skin colour, cultural attributes and historical "*inferiority*" of a group (McKinley et al., 2001). Racial discrimination, according to the International Convention on the Elimination of

all Forms of Racial Discrimination, is any discrimination, relegation or favouritism based on racial, national, ethnic or phenotypical classification which denies other people of their fundamental human rights in any area of life (UN, 1965 as cited in McKinley et al., 2001). The position of McKinley et al. (2001) is also that racism and discrimination are two different concepts, however they often overlap. Though it is usually difficult to differentiate the two concepts since differences in physical features are often used as a basis of categorisation into "they" and "we", xenophobic behaviours are not restricted to people of phenotypical contrast but are also directed against people of the same physical features and heritage (Declaration on racism, 2001; McKinley et al., 2001). In sum, that racism and other inter-group discrimination overlap meet the agreement of various scholars (Hooghe, 2008; Tafira, 2011; Warner & Finchilescu, 2003; Wimmer, 1997). For example, Tafira (2011); Warner and Finchilescu (2003) argue that xenophobia in South-Africa is racialised.

B. Ethnocentrism/Ethnic Discrimination

Matsumoto (2009) in the Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology describes ethnocentrism as a world-wide phenomenon. It is the readiness to exalt one's culture or group (as defined by language, physical features, religion or other socially significant markers) as superior and its standards as those that should be imbibed by others and to relate with those categorised as out-group with hostility and lack of cooperation. Likewise, Reber's (1995) Penguin Dictionary of Psychology sees ethnocentrism as a "habitual disposition" to place one's ethnic group as culturally superior to others and to use one's own group practices as a yardstick for judging others. Ethnocentrism also refers to the position taken by an ethnic group regarding its superiority over other groups and its standards as the norm which others should imbibe, the disregard of which may lead it to hold the other groups in contempt (Sumner, 1907). Furthermore, Hooghe (2008) sees ethnocentrism as the belief in and expression of the superiority of one's ethnic group, its standards and the absoluteness of such standards. Hooghe also sees this concept as intimately linked to other inter-group attitudes such as xenophobia, racism and prejudice and tends to be exhibited towards all groups that constitute an out-group; be it on linguistic, religious, descent or physical features classifications.

C. Nationalism

Nationalism involves ethnocentric bias and belief in the superiority of one's nation over others (Esses, Dovidio, Semanya & Jackson, 2005; Licata & Klein, 2002; Woolf & Hulsizer, 2005). Links between nationalism, racism and xenophobic attitudes have been established. For example, Esses, et al. (2005) found that higher belief in nationalism corresponds to increased negative attitude towards immigrants.

In all, it may be summarised that xenophobia seems to be as a result of an evaluation that a group is of a different race and inferior to one's own (racism), that one's nation is superior to others (nationalism), or that one's ethnic group is superior to others (ethnocentrism). Such idealistic justifications lead to discrimination against the perceived out-group more so when they are perceived as a threat or an encumbrance to personal or group goals.

However, when the implications of all these acts are examined both on a small and large scale one may come to regard the expression "*xenophobia in its subtlety?*" as oxymoronic or such a question as needless. Perhaps, this is the case because xenophobia has been equated with prejudice, racism, ethnocentrism, nationalism and group hegemony (Esses et al., 2001; Esses, et al., 2005; Licata & Klein, 2002; Matsumoto 2009; McKinley et al., 2001; Misago, 2009; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994; Reber, 1995;; Warner & Finchilescu, 2003; Yakushko, 2009; Schirmer, 1998. For instance, Esses, et al. (2001) found group hegemony to be related to discrimination against foreigners; while, Pratto et al. (1994) found that high social dominance orientation increases the likelihood of inter-group discrimination such as racism, nationalism and sexism and intolerance for unpopular groups such as gays and lesbians. Also, the result of a study conducted in the post-May 2008 xenophobic attack in some selected areas in South-Africa as reported by Misago (2009) showed that the violence was not only directed at expunging foreign nationals from the nation but it was also an attempt at sectarian claim to wealth, power and territory. The author concluded that such sectarian rivalry if not curtailed could escalate into violence that will target anyone that can be regarded as a foreigner in any form. With such findings, what can be espoused is that the line between racism or nationalism or ethnocentrism and xenophobia is foggy. Indeed, a considerable number of works on xenophobia in South-Africa discussed xenophobia and racism in the country in relation to each other (Misago, 2009; Moyo, 2009; Warner & Finchilescu, 2003). For example, Warner and Finchilescu (2003) contend that xenophobia in South-Africa is racialised and a good number of incidents usually target blacks or refugees from other African nations. Another factor which reinforces xenophobia as different from other negative intergroup relation or intergroup intolerance is that in historical incidents termed as "*xenophobic attacks*" they were mostly directed against people of different national origin (for example, Ku Klux Klan anti-black movement, South Africa xenophobia crisis: 2008, 2009, 2011, 2015), however, this is not always the case. Xenophobic attack occurs in the neighbourhood and within communities of people who share the same national, racial or even ethnic origin (Esses et al., 2001; Kim, 2000; UN, 2006). A case in point is that xenophobic attacks in South Africa have not been limited to non-South-Africans. For example, in the May 2008 xenophobic attack on foreign nationals in South-Africa, 21 of those that lost their lives

were citizens of South-Africa who were married to noncitizens or belonged to minority ethnic groups (which somewhat diminished their "South-Africaness") and refused to participate in the attack (Moyo, 2009). Another author (Tafira, 2011) vehemently argued that the term xenophobia which has been used to qualify the repeated violence in South-Africa against people from other African nations should be renounced. Rather, the concept that should be embraced is "*new racism*" which is the violence committed against people from the same African descent who are considered to be culturally inferior. The scholar equated xenophobia to racism and argued that the term xenophobia and its usage in describing intergroup tolerance in South Africa is borne largely out of the media's usage of it and perhaps for lack of an understanding of its meaning or for want of a better term or concept to describe such waves of violence. In a similar vein, the above positions suggest that xenophobia, nationalism, ethnocentrism and racism are intricately linked.

The foreignness or strangeness of people that instigate the fear or hatred as found in the definition of xenophobia does not emphasise or focus on whether the individual or thing is of a different national origin. Rather, as long as the individual/group constitutes foreignness or strangeness (vis-à-vis race, culture, religion, ethnicity, idea, name, worldview, sex, age and so on) and also poses a threat (real or perceived) to the individual or group. This position has also been taken by other scholars (for example, Capstone, n.d; Warner & Finchilescu, 2003). If xenophobia is different from other acts of violence or injustice against out-groups and the foreignness of the victims is the bone of contention in xenophobic incidents; then such attacks should be directed at all foreigners or all individuals who can by any means of classification be considered foreign and not some specific groups. Besides, as observed by Yakushko (2009), the term xenophobia is porous because different communities may have different conception of xenophobia using certain parameters. For example, given the historical context of Western Europe racism is associated with anti-Semitism of the Nazi period and the Holocaust whereas in the United States, xenophobia connotes all negative attitudes towards foreigners (Yakushko, 2009). In the Nigerian setting a lot of what is termed inter-ethnic or intra-ethnic conflict, religious conflict or even norm of anonymity (that is no longer limited to the urban but gradually pervading the rural areas too) and some other similar incidents will qualify as xenophobia if examined within the above analysis. The point of the above analysis is that perhaps because some incidents in Nigeria have not been tagged "*xenophobia*" has made Nigerians not appreciate the enormity of certain acts. Such crises incidentally have as their instigator, perceived threat to limited social, cultural, material, economic, mental or political resources.

Also important is the need to answer a prominent question. How can xenophobia suddenly crop up within, between or among groups that were previously coexisting peacefully? Some arguments can be made in response to this question. As has been discussed earlier, one of the instigators of xenophobic attitude is perceived scarce resources. Individuals or groups could coexist peacefully until situational variables like economic recession make the individual/group realise that previously available resources will no longer be in abundance nor would it be enough to share. Equally, the realisation that one individual or group has been unduly favoured by certain factors may make individuals/group feel they have to act so as not to be relegated to the sideline given that an individual or group's worth is attached to the resources possessed. Thus, individuals/groups begin to think of their own survival and prioritise their needs above those of others. The second argument is that groups are constantly being created such that members of a previously existing group may dissent to form their own group because of disagreement or because the group is no longer able to meet their needs. It is possible that this results in two groups that are completely or partially antithetical to each other in norms, values, goals, beliefs and way of life which is a ripe site for conflict, fear and hostility. Each may begin to see the other as enemies, depending on the resources available to both groups, they may constantly strive to outdo and undermine each other.

The Ife-Modakeke crisis in Nigeria is a classic example of when peacefully coexisting groups begin to antagonise each other due to perceived threat to its resources.

A Perusal of the Ife-Modakeke Crisis

History documents that Ife and Modakeke crisis dates back to the 1800's; the Ife and Modakeke people are both of Yoruba descent, the Ife people originally inhabited Ile-Ife while the Modakeke were Oyo settlers who came to Ile-Ife due to the fall of the old Oyo Empire in the 19th century (Albert, 1999). The Modakeke people started a new life in Ife and were well received by the people. Soon they demonstrated their skills as good farmers and skilled soldiers during the time of war. The reigning king allowed the Modakeke people an expanse of land outside the walls of Ife which was named Modakeke (Asiyanbola, 2007). The first crisis occurred between 1835 and 1849 (Albert, 1999) which set the stage for a chain of violent conflicts between the two towns, history records 1835-1849, 1882-1909, 1946-1949, 1981, 1983, 1997-1998 and 2000 as periods of instability in this region (Albert, 1999; Asiyanbola, 2007) which led to the loss of lives and properties and the displacement of people from their homes. The crisis may be construed as a landlord- tenant/stranger crisis (Oluwaseun & Olasunmbo, 2014).

Important to note is that these crises are the major ones; it is logical to assume that there would be the everyday hostility in this community that may not be reported. Political crisis which led to the death of an Ife chief by the Oyos bred feeling of alienation among the people of Ife and resulted to hostility towards the Oyo settlers in Ife. Subsequent crises between the Ife and Modakeke have been centred around land ownership, payment of tenancy fees, the creation and location of local government (Asiyanbola, 2007).

For a brief analysis, the period between the major crises between the Ife and Modakeke people were 33years, 37years, 32years, 2years, 14years and 2years respectively, while the period between the first major crisis and the last major one is 165 years. The conflict is more than a century old and still persists. Perhaps some of the reasons for the perpetuation of this crisis are that in societies with long-standing competitive conflicts, such conflicts are aided by certain cognitive errors that become ingrained as the conflict continues (Deutsch, 2000) and become part of the norms of the society as a way of coping with the conflict (Bar-Tal, 1998). In addition, Michelle (2003) posited that in moral conflict, parties in conflict act from different stand points and may find it difficult to break the pattern of interaction since both sides consider themselves to be right and the other party wrong.

Furthermore, both groups in conflict have the same origin in that they are all "Omo Oduduwa" and they are from the same ethnic group, have phenotypical similarities and both are in the Southwest region of the country. The Ife people see the Modakekes as strangers or as refugees given how they came to settle in Ife and what started the conflict was a perceived threat to their political importance from the Oyos. Given these reasons, and from the earlier analysis on xenophobia and its relation to other inter-group intolerance, how does one say the crisis between these two groups is as a result of ethnocentrism but not xenophobia? Both groups have the same origin/ethnic group, yet, they express hostility towards each other, does the Ife-Modakeke conflict situation not fit the concept of xenophobia? Can it be said that ethnocentrism (belief that the Ife people are the original owners of Ife and therefore superior to the Modakeke settlers) led to xenophobia when there was a perceived threat to the prestige of Ife? Is the conflict at the onset not a classic case of finding a scapegoat because certain resources (reduction in prestige or political relevance of the Ife people) are no longer as available as before which is in line with Betz (1994); Givens (2002); Morris (1998); Swank and Hans-Georg (2003); Tshitereke (1999), who have linked periods of social and economic transition to xenophobic sentiments especially against foreigners? Is it not possible that there are other settlers in Ife that have not received the same treatment that these groups mete to each other?

2.2 Nigeria: Xenophobia in its Subtlety?

Below are examples of what happens in Nigeria that reflects xenophobic attitude.

A. Norm of Anonymity in Cities as an Expression of Xenophobia

The city has been characterised as the *"being together of strangers"* (Young, 1990). The norm of anonymity is a concept that characterises how the city person exists. It is the way the city people strives to maintain their autonomy and privacy amid the continuous stream of stimuli (physical and mental) that pervades the senses while still exerting their individuality (Goffman, 1972; Milgram, 1970; Simmel, 1905). It is the resultant change in the individual as driven by the need to adjust and adapt to city life; that elevates rationality above emotionality in interpersonal relationships (Simmel, 1905). Thus, the individual develops varied types of responses such as sympathies, aversions and indifferences of different levels of intensity to curtail unwanted attention (Goffman, 1972; Milgram, 1970; Simmel, 1905).

The experience of living in a city displays a remarkable expression of xenophobia. According to scholars on city life (Young, 1990; Milgram, 1970; Turnaturi 2005; Wirth, 1938; Wolff, 1950), some of the observable characteristics of a big city are (i) large numbers of people, (ii) a high population density and (iii) heterogeneity of population. Milgram further proposed that these three factors should be at the foundation of any socio-psychological theory of explaining the city life and city people.

It is widely documented in studies on city life and the resultant coping mechanisms that social interaction among city dwellers is somewhat limited (Goffman, 1972; Milgram, 1970; Turnaturi 2005; Wirth, 1938; Wolff, 1950). Despite the number of people individuals in a city are exposed to, they do not take advantage of the opportunity such exposure offers. City dwellers are exposed to myriad of stressor stimuli in their daily lives (van den Berg, Hartig, & Staats, 2007); using a city like Lagos or Ibadan for example, the residents of these cities are exposed to overcrowding, crime, homelessness, inadequate supply of water, poor drainage facilities, problems of refuse disposal, poor road conditions and erratic power supply all which can put great mental stress on the inhabitants in these cities. Urban dwellers are relatively more stressed than their rural counterparts and prone to higher levels of anxiety, mood disorders and schizophrenia (City life and the brain, 2010; Coren, 2011; Haris & Edlund, 2005; Marcelis, Takei & van Os 1999; Lederbogen et al., 2011; Milgram, 1970; Olufemi & Oluseyi, 2007; Pedersen & Mortensen, 2001; Turan & Besirli, 2008) which directly results from the effect of the environment on the mind (Lederbogen et al., 2011). Indeed, regarding the downside of city life, Berman, Jonides and Kaplan (2008), based on the result of their study that showed the *"cognitive deficit that results from a short walk in an*

urban environment", emphasised the limitations of the mind in absorbing the different stimuli from the environment and how city experience can exceed such limitations.

Takooshian (2005) asked a question regarding what role the city plays in shaping the personality, values and behaviours of the inhabitants?; A question which many scholars have addressed even as far back as the last century and which continues to be an issue of pressing concern considering the number of research and analysis that have been conducted on the issue (for example, Berman et al., 2008; Goffman, 1972; Marcelis et al., 1999; Lederbogen et al., 2011; Milgram, 1970; Pedersen & Mortensen, 2001; Simmel, 1905; Wirth, 1938). Simply put, since city life is associated with stress, how does such stress affect her residents? A number of the above-mentioned scholars have documented coping strategies adopted by city residents. Simmel (1905) came up with the concept of *"nervous energy"*, *"the intensification of nervous stimulation"*, Benjamin (1939) coined the term *"phantasmagoria"* while Milgram (1970) proposed the concept of *"overload"* to explain the effect that city life has on her residents. These concepts were used by these authors to illustrate a situation in which the city person is bombarded by myriad of objects and human stimuli such as the crowded and noisy roads and sidewalks, sirens, neon signs, the homeless and beggars all of which the city person perceives at a pace that leaves s/he mentally exhausted and unable to process new stimuli. When the human brain begins to receive stimulation at a pace and quantity it cannot process, it begins to adapt by shutting out some of them. Unavoidably, since city life may involve constant experiences of overload; overtime this becomes its mode of responding to the environment such that the city dwellers learn to survive overload by limiting the quantity, quality and intensity of their interaction with their environment which then becomes the norm in social relations and socialisation (Goffman, 1972; Milgram, 1970; Simmel, 1905, Wirth, 1938).

Goffman (1972), Milgram (1970) and Simmel (1905) further proposed the following modes of adaptation with which the city person comes to cope with the multiple stimuli that infringe the consciousness.

- Ignoring those things/people considered as less important than others such as the drunk, the homeless or the beggars on the street or those regarded as social miscreants,
- Transferring the burden of overload to another party such as when a driver chooses to ignore passerby and drives fast as opposed to slowly on a flooded road leaving the passerby the responsibility of keeping out of the way to avoid getting sprayed,
- Disabling people from making contact with one such as switching off one's phone, barring certain phone numbers, not picking calls from unknown numbers

or assuming an aloof or unfriendly countenance that discourages others from approaching,

- Holding relationships with only a few people with such relationship being superficial at most. Simmel (1905) refers to such relationship as “*reserve*” by which people sometimes are unable to recognise their neighbours; this he said gives the urbanite some amount of personal freedom. He further emphasised that:

“Indeed, if I do not deceive myself, the inner aspect of this outer reserve is not only indifference but, more often than we are aware, it is a slight aversion, a mutual strangeness and repulsion, which will break into hatred and fight at the moment of a closer contact, however caused”

- Developing a “*blasé attitude*” (indifference) by numbing reactions to recurring rapid, numerous and overwhelming stimuli as a way of coping with mental exhaustion,
- Becoming open-minded which makes it easier for the city person to accommodate the individual difference, eccentricities and excesses of people they come in contact with rather than be laden with the mental effort that will be used in processing the absurdity or anomaly of the stimuli.
- Upholding the norm of civil inattention or normalised non-relations. The concept of civil inattention Goffman (1972) proposed as a way of maintaining anonymity among city dwellers. It is observable in the brief and discreet eye contact between strangers or non-acquainted persons that meet or when in a crowd to signal the acknowledgement of the other, the recognition of the individuals personal space and the lack of interest in further interaction. Goffman’s concept of civil inattention suggests a way of promoting impersonal relationships and strangeness among city dwellers that are constantly exposed to multitude of people. Rather than ignore the other or stare, people briefly make eye contact and loose it in order to remain unnoticed.

Although the above adaptations are perhaps helpful in preserving the “*sanity*” of the city person; it does comes with its undesirable effects. For Goffman (1972); Milgram (1970); Simmel (1905) the individual is denied the openness to freely relate with and become involved with life, so such adaptation while helpful, also harms the individual. That is, it may restrain the city person from fully benefiting from the opportunities which a city offers because of the fear of being bugged with acquaintances or relationships they may not care to maintain or have the mental resources to preserve. Also, research has shown that those who react to stress with

hostility, anger or other negative affect make themselves prone to health problems compared to those who respond in positive ways (McIntyre, Korn, & Matsuo, 2008; Williams, 2001).

While the above modes of adaption to cognitive overload and its resultant negative effects are seemingly subtle and uninvolving of physical violence; this is not always the case. Evolutionary evidence of species survival showcases aggressive and violent behaviours in survival. The concept of survival of the fittest means that those who have characteristics that facilitated their survival are the fittest (Darwin, 1859). Such characteristics may be in the physical features (such as coloration, speed, size, agility and so on) or mental ability (cunningness, intelligence) or temperament (aggressive or gentle). Furthermore, theoretical positions on aggressive behaviours with regards to the effect of space on human behaviour and mental state, have emphasised human's reaction to space constrain. For example, the Cognitive Neoassociation theory (Berkowitz, 1989; 1990; 1993) proposed that negative and unwanted states such as uncomfortable temperatures, frustration, loud noise and unpleasant smells can stimulate aggressive behaviours. The author proposed that under any of those circumstances, the individual may experience negative emotional states that sets in motion cognitive, motor and physiological processes produced during the fight or flight reaction to aversive stimuli. In addition, cues in the environment during such negative affect become associated with the event and stimulate cognitive processes that bring up related concepts. For example, during a state of anger, a plank lying around can stimulate thinking of concepts like threaten, harm, kill or injure. In addition, the theory suggests that the individual experiencing the negative affect when motivated to do so, reason and consider the causes of the negative affect and whether such feeling should be acted upon (Anderson, Anderson, Dill & Deuser, 1998).

Similarly, with regards to man and his personal space, environmental psychology and social psychology have much to say about this. Being able to maintain one's privacy has implication for mental health such that the denial of privacy may be psychologically distressing to an individual (Brown, Lawrence, & Robinson, 2005; Margulis, 2003). Also population density and noise affect people's mood and behaviour (Berkowitz, 1993; Cohen & Spacapan, 1984; Glaser, 1964; Meacham, 2012); such that insufficient space or lack of opportunity for privacy can lead to aggressive behaviour, mood disorders and stress (Friedman & Reed, 2007; Glaser, 1964; Hughes, 2004; Meacham, 2012). With such recognition, such concepts as territoriality, personal space, privacy, psychological distance, solitude, anonymity, reserve and so on, have been used to characterise human's need for a space to call his own either temporarily or permanently (Adebayo, 2004; Altman, 1975; Milgram 1970; Simmel, 1905) with some scholars suggesting a genetic or instinctual need for this (Ardrey, 1966; Cohen, 1976).

Looking at these concepts though, it clearly stands out that they are interrelated but the end goal still seem to be the maintenance of privacy. Privacy has been defined as being able to maintain reserve, isolation, solitude and intimacy when one desires it (Pederson, 1979). Altman (1975) on the other hand see privacy as being able to freely control other's access to oneself or one's group. Examining the context of housing and living quarters within major cities like Lagos, Ibadan and Porthaccourt in Nigeria, one can see how violations of privacy and personal space are pervasive because of the proximity of buildings, overcrowding and the resultant irritations such may generate. The most suitable example will be the "face-me-I-face-you or face-me-I-slap-you" residential kind of building in Nigerian cities. This face-me-I-face-you or face-me-I-slap-you kind of building is a term used in describing residential buildings erected in such a way that the rooms are in two rows with each of the occupant's room facing each other or seemingly adjacent to each other. Other features includes shared kitchen, bathroom and latrines by the tenants, noise and sounds filtering into others' rooms due to the thinness of the walls, shared area for recreation, overcrowding, average of 8-12rooms, cheap to let, lack of privacy, nosy and quarrelsome neighbours, dirty or untidy environment and competition for space (Awala, 2016; Maddex, 2016; Nigeria news, 2016). That people in such areas are even able to make do with such living arrangements is another evidence of the contracting and expanding nature of personal space in correspondence with what the situation demands (Reber, 1995).

That limited privacy and space restraint can lead to mood disorders and aggressive tendencies is exemplified by the numerous ghastly occurrences that have taken place in the Nigeria face-me-i-face-you residential buildings. Below are some accounts of violence and aggressive behaviours in this type of house setting and others in relation to privacy issues in Nigeria:

"Policemen attached to the Homicide Unit State Criminal Investigation Department at Panti Yaba Lagos Police Command are investigating a 20 – yearold lady, Onyinyeche Ogbona for allegedly biting her neighbour to death. It was gathered that Ogbona, and the deceased identified as Engineer Pius Ezema were neighbours at Number 15 Ondo Street Okobaba in Ebute Metta area of Lagos State but trouble started on March 12 th [sic] when Pius allegedly quarrelled [sic] with Okoro for singing loudly near his window in the "face-me-I -face -you apartment where they lived as next door neighbours..."

(Ogbo, 2016)

"Helen Okeke is currently being held by the Lagos State Police Command for allegedly killing her neighbour during an argument. The incident, which happened in Ikota, Ajah, Lagos, saw Helen slit the throat of her neighbour, Rose, over an argument about who

poured urine on Rose's cloths and spread them on the entrance to her room. Information gathered reveals Rose had been preparing for her wedding and had returned from work to find the clothes at her door post reeking with urine. She went on to report to her landlady, Alhaja Iyabo Hamzat, who pacified her and offered to give her money to buy detergent to wash the clothes. It wasn't long after that neighbours heard Rose's cry for help on the corridor. The suspect was seen by neighbours holding the deceased by the neck, with a bloodstained kitchen knife in her hand. Rose died before she could be rushed to a nearby hospital..."

(Lawal, 2015)

"A 29-year-old man, Anthony Ogbogu, has been arraigned before a Magistrate's Court for murder after he stabbed a neighbour to death during a fight. Anthony Ogbogu is in deep trouble after stabbing his neighbour death during a scuffle in the Egbeda area of Lagos State. The unfortunate incident happened Monday, December 22 after an argument ensued in the compound. It all started after Anthony's younger sister, Loveth, was taking her bath in the bathroom and was said to have blocked the passage leading to the male section of the bathroom. A neighbour simply known as Jonathan Emeh, was said to have wanted to use the male bathroom but was denied access by the blockage by Anthony's younger sister. Without warning, Emeh was said to have broken down the blockage which brought about an exchange of words between him and Loveth. The girl later reported the issue to her elder brother who accosted Emeh and a scuffle ensued...During the scuffle, Anthony picked a kitchen knife from the bar and stabbed Emeh at the back..."

(Dede, 2015)

"I do not know the spirit that got inside me that day..." he began. Chinonso, who is being held at the Department of Criminal Investigations, Yaba, Lagos, told PUNCH that he only sat in the front of his house to relax that Sunday morning when the deceased and another neighbour came to trouble him. "I no longer go to church" he said. "I was relaxing in the front of my apartment at 100, Mba Street, Ajegunle, when my neighbours, Ismail and Kunle (Abiola), told me to join them where they were sitting. I told them I would not and they started to foment trouble. I did not want to associate with them because I don't speak their language and I can't trust them. But while they were troubling me where I sat, Ismail pinned my arms behind me and Kunle slapped me. Immediately he slapped me, I could not control myself anymore, it was like I was on remote control as a spirit pushed me to go and take a kitchen knife. I rushed in and took the knife, came back outside and stabbed Kunle." The deceased was stabbed twice – in the chest and jaw. As incredible as Chinonso's claim sounded, he swore he was telling the

truth. He explained though, that Abiola had in the past slapped him for no concrete reasons. "There was even a time I went to a drinking joint in our area and saw him (Abiola) there. As soon as I sat down, he came over and challenged me for coming to the same joint where he drank. He slapped me right there and I could not do anything" Chinonso said..."

(Lailas blog, 2015)

"A 22-year-old woman, Nwuse Ayom is currently in custody of the Benue State Police Command for allegedly stabbing her abusive neighbour, Tererse Ayua to death in Gboko town. While being paraded at the Command Headquarter in Makurdi, the State capital, Nwuese revealed to pressmen that the deceased, Tererse was fond of raining insults on her after having a baby four months ago out of wedlock. "We were neighbours. I had nothing with him; he used to abuse me since I had my baby, and sometimes he went as far as accusing me of abandoning my baby at night to sleep with other men. "He kept doing it and I kept begging him to leave me alone. He refused. A few days ago, while I was sitting outside the house peeling oranges and attending to my baby, he came and started harassing me, threatening to beat me up that I flirted with another man, while I left my baby crying. "I tried to explain that I went to make my hair, but he would not listen to me. Our argument led to a fight. He beat me and my baby fell from my hand. It was at that point that I reached for the knife I was peeling the orange with and stabbed him in the stomach. I learned he died before getting to the hospital" She narrated..."

(Stelladimokokorkus, 2016)

One Sola Solomon, a 67-year-old landlord at Iga Idunganran Street in Idumota, Lagos Island area, of Lagos State, has allegedly poured petrol and set fire on one of his tenants, Abeeb, a father of one, over a disagreement on the use of the compound's toilet. The victim, who had barely spent five months in the house, was reportedly struggling to put out the flames, but was pushed down by the landlord from the top floor of the three-storey building and landed with a thud, as the flames consumed his body. A former occupant of Abeeb's room, Ruka Rufai, expressed regret on passing the room to the deceased, saying she left the room due to constant threats to her life from the landlord. She said, "I left that room about five months ago. The landlord threatened me, so I decided to vacate the room. Abeeb pleaded with me that he needed the accommodation. Now, he has been killed," she sobbed...She said, "Before the sad incident yesterday, there had been a squabble in the house over the use of the toilet. Everybody had complained that the landlord always messed up the toilet after use. "But yesterday, he had another quarrel with Abeeb over the use of the toilet. During the argument, he threatened to set the man ablaze. " Later in the evening, the landlord was seen carrying a keg, saying he was going to buy fuel but no one

thought he was going to carry out his threat. "I called Abee and calmed him down; I also called the landlord and appealed to him to let the matter go, and he said he had forgiven Abee." ...By 12 am, the landlord was said to have wet the passageway of the house and knocked on the door of the deceased...The tenant said, "As Abee stepped out of the house, the landlord poured the petrol on him. Before Abee could snatch the jerry can from him, the landlord had ignited fire with a lighter in his hand. "Abee struggled to put out the fire, but the landlord pushed him down from the third floor. He fell to the ground and died."

([Ogbeche](#), 2015)

The above account of violence in the face-me-i-face-you residential houses exemplifies the kind of violence and aggressive behaviours that festers in environment where people may experience cognitive overload, reduced opportunity for privacy, impossibility of anonymity and exertion of individuality. Although it is arguable those aggressive acts may not be solely attributable to privacy and mental exhaustion issues without empirical investigation; nevertheless, it cannot be completely divested of it since some of those violent acts were precipitated by issues of invasion of privacy.

While the previous submissions (Goffman, Milgram, Simmel) of adaptation to city life involve "*subtle reactions*" to stressors, the above account of aggressive behaviours among people who live in close quarters that deny privacy, shows that subtle reactions may not always be the case. It also seems reasonable to suggest that even those subtle reactions may not be as subtle as they seem. Just as Simmel (1905) suggested that the reserve maintained by city people to avoid or limit interaction may burst into violence on moment of closer contact that is perhaps "*too close for comfort*". Such subtle reactions, perhaps, may be termed "*passive aggression*" that metamorphosises into full blown active and physical aggression when subtlety no longer works.

The interpersonal relational mode in cities can be said to be expressive of xenophobic attitude, be it in the reserve, blasé attitude and civil inattention held by people in order to maintain their anonymity and privacy or in the violence and aggressive behaviours displayed towards others when such privacy is threatened or has been breached. Given, the myriad of stimuli that can invade the senses as one goes through the daily hassles of life, coupled with economic situation in the nation and the continuous struggle to make ends meet, erratic power supply, bad roads, housing problems, incompetent leadership and the numerous problems that Nigerian have experienced or are still experiencing; individuals will attempt to avoid mental breakdown and cognitive overload from people and the environment which can be considered as strangers competing with the individual over scarce resources or denying

one of them . Hence, in order to protect and preserve mental functioning, space and privacy (scarce resources) individuals may use different mechanisms such as blasé attitude or reserve (xenophobic attitude) to push people and other environmental stressor (strangers) away and may result to violence (xenophobic attitude) if need be. This fits into the perceived scarce resources-xenophobia (fear and violence towards strangers perceived as a threat to limited resources) causal linkage analysis.

It is important to mention at this junction that although the major emphasis has been on cities thereby seemingly excluding rural dwellers from the above illustrations, this is not the intent of the above review, some supposed rural areas, if one is to go by technicalities as spelt out by acclaimed definition or designation of the rural, would qualify as cities. Therefore, the above discussion is not limited to city dwellers but to all who are experiencing such mental exhaustion and deprivation of privacy in their environment.

B. Inter/Intra-Ethnic Conflicts in Nigeria as an Expression of Xenophobia

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with over 250 ethnic groups (Handley, 2010; Otite, 1990) further divided into ethnic majorities and minorities (Otite, 1990). An ethnic-group refers to a group of people set apart by a unique culture, race, language or territory, worldview or religion (Boaten, 2000, Nnoli, 1980). In Nigeria, the different ethnic groups are predominantly found in certain regions of the nation (for example, Hausa-Fulani predominantly in the North, Yorubas in the West, Igbos in the East and so on) but due to economic necessities, marriage and so on, there is a mixture of different ethnic groups in different states of the country. Nigeria as a nation has witnessed quite a number of inter/intra-ethnic conflicts whose aftermath ranged from social unrest, displacement of people, homelessness, to massacre of people that left an indelible memory in the individual victims, the regions in which they occurred and in the nation as a whole. Conflict occurs when two or more parties have opposing or incompatible goals, ideas or outcomes concerning issues of mutual interest. Inter-ethnic conflict, thus, involves conflict between two or more ethnic groups having opposing or incompatible goals, ideas or outcomes concerning issues of mutual interest while intra-ethnic conflict occurs within an ethnic group.

Some examples of ethnic clashes over the years which includes among others: Ife-Modakeke crisis in Osun state; Ijaw-Ilaje conflict in Ondo State; Ogoni-Adoni in Rivers State; Yoruba-Hausa clashes in Idi-Araba in Lagos State; Aguleri-Umuleri in Anambra State; Zango-Kataf in Kaduna State; Eleme-Okrika in Rivers State; Basa-Egbura in Nassarawa State; Fulani-Irigwe in Plateau State; Tiv-Jukun in Wukari. The Ife-Modakeke crisis in Osun state in particular is very old, the first occurred between 1835 to 1849 (Albert, 1999) and a perusal of the literature (Albert, 1999; Johnson 1973;

Okwudiba, 1980, Oladoyin, 2001) traced the antecedent of this crises to a toggle for power, dominance, autonomy and territory between these groups. Similarly, the Aguleri-Umuleri crisis in Anambra State is mainly predicated on dispute over land (Onwuzuruigbo, n.d) in which the first crisis between 1995- 1999 led to the loss of over 1000 lives and properties priced at billions of naira (Okoli 2012); Zango-Kataf in Kaduna (May 1992) was triggered by dispute over relocation of a market (Human Rights, 1993); Eleme-Okrika crisis in Rivers state was also over toggle for land ownership (John, 2013).

All these crises could be said to have been triggered through both parties' perception that the other are strangers or visitors and therefore should have lesser or no claim to certain resources. They originated from the need to maintain control over resources (material or nonmaterial) or to maintain boundaries or territories which all led to significant loss of life and properties, loss of kinship, impoverishment and homelessness, security threat and displacement of people from their homes. Communities, neighbours and kinsmen engage in war with each other because they perceive an immediate or potential threat to the control they have over certain resources from those whom they consider as out-groups (strangers).

The above account of inter/intra-ethnic conflict degenerated into war which qualifies them as a violent conflict. But there are also wars that are not fought with violence; there are wars fought with mouths or mannerism; examples include when:

- People from different ethnic groups cannot work or live in peace even outside the towns from which they originated. For instance, worker A refuses to work with worker B because they are from different ethnic groups which happen to have a long-standing feud between them. How does it affect the productivity of an organisation when its workers are engaged in constant malice, rumor mongering and backbiting?,
- Neighbours cannot live in peace because of some dispute back in their hometown or stereotype held against the other,
- Business owners refuse to partner with each other or transact businesses that can contribute immensely to the development of the economy of the nation because they see the other as a stranger due to ethnic differences,
- People avoid inter-ethnic marriage because of some age-long dispute or taboo or feelings of ethnocentrism,
- Ethnic affiliation is also one of the basis by which people judge others as relevant or irrelevant to them in their attempt to avoid cognitive overload.
- An ethnic group resident in a city of different origin is sanctioned with curses and reprisals for holding opinions or views or affinity that contravenes that of the host. For instance, during the governorship election in Nigeria in 2015, the Oba of Lagos was reported to have said that the *"Igbos who reside in Lagos would*

perish in the Lagoon should they fail to vote for Mr. Ambode, his choice for Lagos governorship” (Abimboye, 2015).

C. Religious Conflict as an Expression of Xenophobia

It is the position of some scholars (Harris, 2002; Mattes, 1999; Warner & Finchilescu, 2003) that the widely held notion that dislike, fear or hatred of foreigners as an accurate description of xenophobia is erroneous; they argue that not all instances of xenophobic practice are directed towards foreigners in general but rather towards certain foreigners. Hence, they define xenophobia as the dislike of specific foreigners. Nigeria's religious crises exemplify xenophobia of specific religion as observed in Christianity vs. Islam vs traditional religious worship.

Just as Nigeria is divided into different regions based on ethnic affiliation, religion also has a major divisive element in the segregation of the Nigerian nation. There are three predominant religions in Nigeria which are Christianity, Islam, and traditional religious worship (TRW). The nation can also be categorised on religious bases, the Christians are found mostly in the south while Muslims are predominantly in the northern part of the country (Handley, 2010) while traditional religious worship which has its variations (for example, the Ogbonis, Eshu worshipers, Ogun (the god of iron) worshipers, Sango (the god of fire and thunder) worshipers, Osun (the goddess of the river) worshipers, amadioha (god of thunder and lightning) worshipers) are not particularly domiciled in any region but practiced all over the country with each ethnic group, state and township having its own deity. Pew Forum (2010) gives the statistic as Nigerians being 52% Muslim, 46% Christians and 1% TRW.

Both Islamic and Christian doctrines are said to have been drawn from the Torah (Hebrew Scriptures) (Neusner, 2004) while TRW has no scriptural text, it is maintained through rites, traditions, myths and festivals guided by oral traditions (Madu, 2013). A major source of difference among these religions is that in Islam and Christendom, the devil also called Satan and Lucifer whose Yoruba literal translation is “Esu” is the arch enemy of the followers of these religions and was the originator of the original sin (Eve eating of the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden) which created conflict between man and God which was the beginning of human suffering. Coincidentally there is also a deity worshiped among the Yorubas called “Eshu” which is a god that performs intercessory role for its worshippers as a link to Olodumare (the owner of the universe) and he is also a prankster and a deceiver whose English literal translation also is devil. The translation of the devil in Islam and Christendom to be that of the Yoruba Eshu is said to have been made by Ajayi Crowther who translated the English bible into Yoruba (takeupanarm, 2011). Thus, in Christianity and Islam, the devil is taken to mean the Yoruba eshu who lives in hellfire while witches, wizards and witch doctors and other

occult are seen as the agents or representatives of Eshu who try to get him disciples in God's disfavour. Hence, most evil such as sins, calamities, failure, sickness and such other negative events are usually deemed to be diabolic and tied to Eshu and its representatives. Therefore in addition to Islam and Christianity as opposing religions, the TRW is also seen as an obsolete, inferior and evil practice and the practitioners of such are feared, prejudged, discriminated against and castigated through prayers because they are believed to be evil. So while physical violence may not be fought with the traditional religious worshipers, they are constantly engaged in spiritual and psychological warfare by practitioners of Islam and Christianity.

Religious crisis in Nigeria has been a common occurrence for a long time and in most cases its violent cases occur mostly between the Christians and the Muslims. This is not to say that the traditional worshipers are excluded from the crossfire. As discussed earlier, not all wars are fought with physical violence; some are fought with the mouth and mannerism. Religious conflict occurs when the proponents of different religions have incompatible values, norms, traditions or rules as demanded by their religions. A delve into history will reveal numerous instance of religious crisis between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria (Agi 1998; Uka, 2008): The Sharia crisis (1976-1979), the Shagari regime religious crises (1979-1983), the Buhari regime religious crises (1983-1985), the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) crisis (January, 1986), Ahmadu Bello University religious crisis (June 1988), Kaduna (1987, 1988 & 1992), Kano (1980, 1982 & 1991), Katsina (1991), Bauchi (1991), Maiduguri (1982), Yola (1984), Zango-Kataf (1992), Zaria (1992), Funtua (1993) and Potiskum (1994). The loss of life consequent upon these crises was well over 10,000 (Uka, 2008). However, this is little compared to the lives that have been lost to Boko Haram insurgency in the northern part of Nigeria. Although Boko Haram terrorism has mostly been consigned to the north, Nigerians all over the nation, even those in the diaspora may probably have lost someone dear to these massacres not to mention the displacement, terror, insecurity, poverty and bad national image it has created for the nation. These crises could be attributed to the perception of the adherents to each religion that the others' religion is inferior and the fear of being dominated by the other. Any conflict arising between individuals or groups with different religion may be deemed to have religious undertones.

D. Political Conflict as an Expression of Xenophobia

Nigerian politicians are constantly in a game of who can outdo the other in the political front. Just as ethnic and religious affiliation have been at the center of the lack of unity and perennial conflict in the Nigerian state, politics, that is, the need for power has anchored and perpetuated this division. In Nigeria, ethnic affiliation, religious affiliation and politics are all intertwined; the state is not separated from religion and

politics is riddled with religious and ethnic sentiments. Newspapers and social media constantly contain tirades (for example, Buari, 2015; Ezeamalu, 2015; Mironovich, 2015) of how one party would perform better than the other if they were to be in power and election campaigns are often and largely centered on demarketing the opposition party. Obviously each sees the other as inferior, an out-group and as competitors in the political race. As an example, the wife of the immediate past president of Nigeria during election campaign made statement like those below against the opposition party All Progressive Congress (APC) *“if you drink APC, you will die”....“don’t go for analogue, go for digital. PDP is digital, APC is analogue”* (BellaNaija.com, 2015).

According to Bello (2012) and Uka (2008), a foremost reason for adopting the federal system of government in Nigeria is to allay the fears of the different ethnic groups about being dominated by the other owing to the politics of divide and rule bequeathed on Nigeria from her colonial master. For their own political gain, the colonial masters pitched a multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious people against each other by dangling the opportunity to rule in front of one (the Hausa-Fulani in the north who were predominantly Muslims) and the fear of being relegated in front of the others (Yorubas in the west and Igbos in the east who were predominantly Christians and other minority ethnic groups) (Bello, 2012; Jacob, 2012; Nnoli, 1980; Osaghae, 1991) thereby setting the way for politics of ethnic and religious conflict till date. The result is that the leaders from the different ethnic groups are always looking for ways to use the nation's resources to enrich their own region (Jacob, 2012) and this is a major factor in the (1967-1970) secession by the Igbos to create the Republic of Biafra (Dlakwa, 1997; Murray, 2007). Hence, when an individual from one ethnic group or religion is appointed or elected to a political post, such an ethnic group or religion is conceived as being in power. For this reason, politics in Nigeria is played by appealing to ethnic and religious sentiments to garner vote and support for a candidate contesting for election (Jacob, 2012; Obi & Obiekeze, 2004). Suffice to say this is one of the reasons behind favouritism and nepotism in the nation, where people are given jobs or contracts based on ethnic or religious affiliation rather than on merit. Those in political positions also surround themselves with a retinue of staff with whom they share working history, ethnic, religious or political party affinity. For instance, most Heads of State/Presidents of Nigeria in the past and in the present surround themselves with aide-de-camp (ADC) or Chief of staff who either belong to the same political party, served in the Nigerian Army as they did or with whom they are friends or had prior working experience with, or hail from the same ethnic group/region or those of shared religion. For specific examples, past presidents like Aguiyi Ironsi, Shehu Shagari, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, Ibrahim Babagida, Sani Abacha and the incumbent president of Nigeria President Muhammadu Buhari all had/have ADC/Chief of staff

who was/is from the north of the country or a friend of theirs or who served in the Nigerian Army as they did (ADCs of Nigerian, 2016). The Chief of staff Alhaji Abba Kyari of the incumbent president of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari hails from the northern region of the nation and is a Muslim while the Secretary General to the Federation Lt. Col. Lawal is also from the north of the country, served in the Nigerian Army, ran the election campaign of the president between 2002-2010 and belongs to the same political party as the president (ADCs of Nigerian, 2016; The SGF, n.d). The choice of these individuals for such key positions may not have been solely borne out of religious, ethnic or political affiliations of the president; however, it seems safe and reasonable to assume that such considerations cannot be ruled out.

Adebayo (2001) rightly attributed such acts to the need for security, to feel safe and free of anxiety for the safety of their lives and their secrets. All these have grave consequences for the nation in terms of the likelihood of having incompetent workers and the ripple effect it will have on the success of the organisations or institutions manned by those workers. In addition, is the feeling of being left out or unfairness when only those from a given ethnic/religious/political cohort alone seem to be getting ahead in the political front. For instance, President Buhari was accused of favouritism, being lopsided and unreflecting of the principle of federal character in his appointment of top officials in the nation (Daniel, 2015). Furthermore, those consequences are just a tip of the iceberg compared to when grave social unrest owing to such relegation breaks out; a typical example will be the civil war of (1967-1970). Indeed, Dlakwa (1997) pointed out that the Biafra war was triggered by the Easterners' perceived unequal opportunity and segregation while Agi (1998) asserted that all ethnic crises that spanned the 1980s to 1990s had religious undertones. Another example is the inter-party violence that often occurs during election periods in which supporters of opposition parties engage in killing, maiming and promoting general social unrest all in an attempt to win elections. Some examples of inter-party violence in Nigeria history are National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) in the old Ondo state in 1983; Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) between 2003-2006 in Ekiti state; People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Action Congress (AC) in Osun state in 2007 among others. Opposition parties with the knowledge that there is only one sit of power strive hard to ensure they get such votes to acquire power, again perceived limited resources (political positions) engineers violence. The opposing parties see themselves as strangers and enemies struggling to acquire power rather than as partners, brothers or Nigerians who are all stakeholders in ensuring a progressive nation.

Grier and Cobb (1968) as cited in Adebayo (2001) proposed three defensive behaviours that occur among repressed or segregated groups, which can be used to

explain the behaviours of political parties in Nigeria. They are cultural paranoia, cultural depression and cultural antisocialism. Cultural paranoia is characterised by suspicion and mistrust of a group different from one. It is exemplified when one political party assumes that when an opposition party wins an election or its members are part of one's government, they will act in ways that will destroy the credibility of one's government. A good example will be the concern voiced by the wife of the ex-President Goodluck Jonathan during election campaign in 2015 that if the opposition party (APC) wins the election, her husband and all the then incumbent leaders in government will be jailed (Tukur, 2015). Cultural depression on the other hand occurs when the subservient party that has been subjected to years of being on the side-line are coloured as incapable or unworthy or inexperienced in holding the rein of power and denied the opportunity to correct such perceptions. As an example, when Nigeria gained her independence in 1960, the colonial masters bestowed greater political advantage to northern Nigeria more than the western and eastern part of the country, endorsing the northern belief in their prerogative to be leaders (Adebayo, 2001; Jacob, 2012; Nnoli, 1980; Osaghae, 1991; Subaru 1996; Uka, 2008). The Yoruba, Igbo and minority ethnic groups were subjugated and made to watch the north and their politics of hegemony and their appalling disregard of the principle of federal character. Another example is that, PDP was on the presidential seat of the nation for sixteen years to the ridicule of its major opposition All Progressive Congress (APC). While the third defensive behaviour which is cultural antisocialism constitutes the response to the subjugation experienced by the subservient party or groups, which is war, conflict, social unrest, disregarding the law and the emergence of various political movement as a representative of the repressed parties. Some examples are groups such as the Odua People Congress (OPC), Ibo Progressive Congress (IPC), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and lately the Avengers.

Because of the political advantage that accrue to the ruling party in the country, the feelings of superiority that may accompany such influence, the affluence, and the belief by all parties contesting for a political position that such position is rightfully or as a matter of fairness theirs; political parties attempt to undo and degrade the other in the hope that such power can come to them. This undeniably is expressive of xenophobic sentiments; each sees the others as obstacles, out-groups and strangers with incompatible goals that must be overcome in the struggle to acquire power. This brings to mind that analysis of social structure, hierarchies and resistance to attitude change have shown that individuals with social hegemony orientation, social inequality orientation, need for hierarchical control and a high need to stick to tradition, have a tendency to be xenophobic (Adebayo, 2001; Esses, et al., 2001; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Pratto

et al., 1994; Religious crisis, 2013). For instance, Adebayo (2001) argued that the feudal system, solidarity and cohesion observed among the Hausa/Fulani in the north ensure their synergy in increasing the benefits or dividends that accrue to this ethnic group in Nigeria. And as mentioned earlier, Esses, et al. (2001) found group hegemony to be related to discrimination against foreigners.

E. Homo-Interaction in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions as an Expression of Xenophobia

Homo-interaction as used here denotes relations between persons of the same or similar origins in terms of ethnic group/state of origin and the university where degree is obtained to the exclusion of those of different origins and the reluctance for intra and inter-institution research interaction. Another obvious display of kin selection and perhaps xenophobic attitude in Nigeria's tertiary institutions particularly for state-owned universities, is employing mostly indigenes (academic staff) based on either ethnic/state of origin or university where degree is obtained criterion. There is discrimination in the employment of academic staff in terms of state of origin and the university where degree was obtained. Anecdotal evidence shows that majority of academic staff (particularly state-owned tertiary institutions) tends to be indigenes of where the institution is sited; the argument given for this is usually that people from within the state should be considered first or reap the benefits of their state than strangers. In other words, charity begins at home. A university environment is supposed to provide universal knowledge and experience to both students and staff via course curriculum and interpersonal relations. With regards to interpersonal relations, that environment (physical, cultural, familial and so on) influences behaviour is no longer debatable. For example, the recognition of the diversity in humanity based on differential genetic, upbringing, cultural, and other environmental forces has engendered the need for national and continental psychology, hence, we have American psychology, European psychology, Nigerian psychology, African psychology, Asian psychology and so on (Khoapa, 1980; Chukwuokolo, n.d; Nsamenang, 2007). This is in acknowledgement of the fact that the environment affects behaviour. Where and from whom the academic staff that constitutes a particular department receives their training influences their method of teaching, span and depth of knowledge, work ethics and so on. If their learning has been limited in any way, it may come to bear on the quality and quantity of knowledge passed on to students and if there is discrimination in favour of only indigenes who are products of a department for academic staffing; it is possible that such cycle of limitations may be reproduced across generations. Whereas if academic staff are pooled from people of diverse background and knowledge; who have been opportuned to garner experience from

different places, perspectives from different origins and who will come with their unique experiences, teaching methods, skills and ideas, perhaps it will do such departments a whole world of good and by extension the entire institution and the nation as a whole.

Another area of discrimination in the academia is that graduates of a particular institution who attempt to go to another university for a post-graduate study may be discriminated against because of the belief that their previous department is somewhat inferior in terms of the quality of academic staff and academic grooming. In addition, there are few inter-university activities of sister departments of different universities (Nsamenang, 2007). The point is that there is minimal cross-interaction among departments of the same discipline in Nigerian universities; such interactions that would have been stimulating in terms of ideas, research, experience, knowledge and ways to improve the discipline's growth and relevance (Nsamenang, 2007). For example, research efforts in Nigeria are not thriving because there are no associations to enforce high quality standards and inter-institution intellectual discourse. When such associations are available, they are plagued with factional disputes and personal discords among other problems. For those researchers in the same institutions, they are more concerned with self-promotion at the detriments of others rather than in scholastic activities and mentoring of junior colleagues (Nsamenang, 2007). Also, scholars within the same department of an institution are more familiar with publications of Western researchers than those of their colleagues (Nsamenang, 1993) which perhaps, seems to suggest a reluctance to acknowledge the research or academic skill of other colleagues or that in *"In Africa ... people ... always develop hostility towards those who are better than them"* (Carr & MacLachlan, 1994).

The question to ask now is what are the individual researchers afraid of? The fear of being considered inferior or less brilliant than a colleague? What are the different departments afraid of? The fear of having non-indigenes (strangers) among themselves? The fear that in the unforeseeable future such department may become dominated by non-indigenes who will compete for prestigious administrative positions within the department and in the university? The fear that employing non-indigenes represents a threat in exposing how limited in knowledge, skill and experience, the home department is? The fear that taking in a foreign student for post-graduate studies represents a threat to students in the home department and a threat to the lecturers if the foreign student performs academically better than the home students? Or is it just feelings of superiority and inferiority that is at work?

Xenophobia: The Underlying Process

Theoretical Background

In the forage for the cause of xenophobia and how this attitude is formed, various theorists have provided explanations which either point towards the need to protect perceived scarce resource (man as the economic man: realistic group conflict theory, relative deprivation theory), the need to transfer aggression (scapegoating theory), the need to maintain beliefs and attitude (cognitive dissonance theory) and the need to maintain personal and group self-esteem (social identity theory). This section will focus on the underlying causes of xenophobia.

A. Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT): The Formation of the Xenophobic Attitude

All species are wired to ensure their survival and continuity. This position is central to the proposition of the Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT) on human relations. The central contention of the RCGT is that in intergroup relations, humans are "*economic humans or rational human*"; hence, conflict arises between groups first and foremost over ownership, dominance or sharing of scarce resources (actual or perceived), such conflict in turn increases group solidarity as group members oppose a common enemy. This theory is based on Blumer's (1958) group position theory which proposed that in societies there exists the entrenched view that there are groups and that some groups have supremacy over others and therefore should have certain resources while other groups of less social standing should have less or nothing. Hence, the dominant groups see the minority or the out-groups as a threat to their superiority. According to this theory, the primary cause of the conflict is the actual or perceived scarce resources, which then strengthens the group's solidarity informed by a perceived common enemy (out-groups) which threatens the availability of the resources wanted by both groups (Morris, 1998; Schram n.d; Sherif, Muzafer & University of Oklahoma, 1961; Tshitereke, 1999). The RGCT is also in line with the "*insecurity hypothesis*" (Betz, 1994; Harris, 2002), which has economic interest as the root cause of xenophobic attitudes. The insecurity idea identified transition and social change (economic and political change, globalisation, post-industrialisation) as causal factors in anti-immigrant attitude. Those hit by social and economic transition will hold xenophobic sentiments owing to their realisation that resources are no longer as available as before (Betz, 1994; Givens, 2002; Morris, 1998; Swank & Hans-Georg, 2003; Tshitereke, 1999). This situation leads people to find others who will take the fall for such social reality, that is, they create a "scapegoat". Research and historical evidence have demonstrated that in times of political or economic power shortages, dominant groups tend to look at the minorities

as the cause (Bobo & Vincent, 1996; Morris, 1998) especially if they are foreigners (Cowan et al., 1997; Fayomi et al., 2015; Morris, 1998; Munro, 2006; Myers & Spencer, 2001; Sengupta, 2001; UN, 2013).

From a psychological standpoint, the insecurity hypothesis of the RGCT implies that social comparison is inherent in intergroup relations; that people compare what they have/are getting with what others have/are getting and make analysis of fairness or unfairness as perceived by them and on the basis of such analysis decide on a course of action. This position is exactly what relative deprivation theory addresses; when people compare themselves with others in terms of the quality or quantity of resources possessed or not possessed by them and conclude they are not getting what they deserve, they may result to aggressive or violent or antisocial behaviours (Myers & Spencer, 2001; Smith, Turner, Garonzik, Leach, Urch-Druskat & Weston, 1996). That violence results from perceived deprivation is also the basic tenet of the frustration-aggression hypothesis (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer & Sears, 1939); frustration breeds aggression (Myers & Spencer, 2001; Smith et al., 1996; Tshitereke, 1999) more so when the frustration is perceived as unjustified (Dill & Anderson, 1995). Feierabend and Feierabend (1968; 1972) examined the role of the frustration-aggression hypothesis in political instability within 84 nations and found out that in societies undergoing rapid change, urbanisation and increasing material awareness; frustration increases as the gap between goals and accomplishments widens. Even as wealth continues to saturate and deprivation diminishes, frustration and aggression may increase. This implies that although, societal injustice, inequality and actual deprivation may be central in conflict, such frustration result mainly from individual's subjective perception of the gap between goals and accomplishments (Feierabend & Feierabend, 1968; 1972). The reason for such sustained feelings of relative deprivation and frustration and aggression in the face of improving economic situation is that they may be threats to one's belief in systemic fairness which may be linked to one's general sense of self-integrity (Lerner, 1980; Sherman & Cohen, 2006).

In sum, the RGCT in its application to xenophobic attitude, suggests that in every society, some groups are likely to believe they have supremacy over other groups based on some criteria valid to them and that in situations of economic limitations or other forms of social change people will compete for scarce resources and blame their deprivation on some out-group (as defined by the in-group based on race, ethnic, political and religious affiliation or some other markers). Such competition will foster in-group solidarity and hostile attitudes towards the out-group as such group unite against a common enemy (out-group). Furthermore, such deprivation may be actual or perceived but what may count most is individual's/group's inability to make aspirations align with accomplishments. With this in place the society may be set for anomie. Some

scholars offer empirical validation for this position (for example, Golder, 2003; Norris, 2005) both found that social level factors (for example, poverty, job scarcity, modernisation) play important roles in xenophobic attitudes. As discussed above under norms of anonymity, mental resources are also what people protect to avoid cognitive overload and is adequately captured in the application of the RGCT to interpersonal relations and xenophobic attitude. In order to protect ones mental overload (scarce resources) individuals will use different mechanism (blasé attitude, reserve and so on) to push others away.

B. Social Identity Theory (SIT): The Formation of the Xenophobic Attitude

A perusal of the xenophobia literature will show that not all wars or attacks were instigated by economic considerations. For example, the Ku Klux Klan anti-black movement and the ethnic cleansing in Rwanda, although those involved may find a way to weave in dispute over resource, as a front.

In the literature on xenophobia, scholars in order to provide a theoretical framework with which to explain this behaviour, often employ various theories of intergroup relations to make sense of this phenomenon. Some scholars usually have the RGCT discussed above and the social identity theory within their framework; looking at both as opposing theories in their applicability to xenophobia (for example, Capstone n.d) or as mutually dependent (for example, Schram n.d). Social Identity Theory (SID) as proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1986) argue that in intergroup relations people make in-group (group to which one belongs) and out-group (group to which one does not belong) categorisations based on a certain criteria (class, race, phenotypical qualities, sex, age, beliefs, religion and so on) and draw references for attitude and behaviour from their in-group. Analytically, Wood (2000) based on SIT proposed that individuals tend to:

- classify themselves as in-group and others as out-group based on a certain criteria;
- engage in social comparison and use in-group as a reference to determine the behaviours or attitude to display and
- adopt and display behaviours, attitude and beliefs characteristic of the in-group.

Consequent upon people making in-group and out-group distinctions, identifying with their in-group and conforming to its norms; they tend to be prejudiced in their thoughts and actions regarding their in-group and the out-group. Such prejudice is said to be based on two biases borne out of "we" and "they" categorisations. They are in-group favouritism or in-group bias (tendency to favour one's own group members and ascribe positive qualities to them) (Myers & Spencer, 2001; Tajfel, 1970) and out-group homogeneity bias (tendency to perceive similarity among out-group

members than among in-group members and to be unfair to the out-group) (Linville & Jones, 1980). Another mechanism underlying the SIT and that perhaps works hand-in-hand with the above two biases is what is called informational and normative influence (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). In order to help understand why people conform to group behaviour, psychologists have investigated the informational and normative influence on behaviour; the first tells us that individuals tend to go along with the group because they believe the group to have valid information and therefore should be right, that is, they employ the heuristic rule, taking group agreement to mean truth (Chaiken, Giner-Sorolla & Chen, 1996; Cialdini & Trost, 1998) while the latter means that individuals go along with group norms or decision to avoid dissent and gain approval of the group (Chaiken et al., 1996; Cialdini & Trost, 1998).

Furthermore, SIT is based on the premise that people's self-esteem or self-concept (positive or negative evaluation of the self) is not only closely tied to their identity as a person but also to their identity as a member of the group to which they belong (Hogg, 1992; Myers & Spencer, 2001; Passer et al., 2003; Reber, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1982). Membership of a group avails individuals respect and they take pride in the in-group accomplishments because it strengthens the self-esteem (Myers & Spencer, 2001; Smith & Tyler, 1997; Wood, 2000), hence, people will make sacrifices for their group including killing and dying for their group (Myers & Spencer, 2001). Since one's self-esteem serves adaptive functions (Diener, 2000; Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997), it can be said that self-esteem constitutes part of the personal resources for well-being. Hence, maintaining a positive self-esteem is closely tied to having a positive social identity and having a positive social identity is linked to having a positive contrast to the out-group of relevant comparison. This is expounded by Tajfel (1978):

"The characteristics of one's group as a whole (such as its status, its richness or poverty, its skin colour, or its ability to reach its aims) achieve most of their significance in relation to perceived differences from other groups and the value connotation of these differences."

In a similar vein, Horowitz, (1985) posited that a group's worth is a result of its upper hand in economic and political competitions. So, the SIT of intergroup relations suggests that conflict arises between groups when there is a threat to the in-groups identity (self-esteem) and the opportunity to degrade the out-group helps to rebuild the group's identity. This has been theoretically proposed and empirically tested (Brown, 1986; Fein & Spencer, 1997; Myers & Spencer, 2001, Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Wills, 1981). The more dissimilar the in-group to the out-group on the relevant comparison,

the more it enhances their self-esteem. Because of the tendency for in-group bias and the need to maintain or continually increase self-esteem people estimate their value higher and consider their in-group as superior or valid or respectable than the out-group (Lindeman, 1997; Myers & Spencer, 2001; Schram n.d) and themselves than their in-group (Lindeman, 1997). SIT suggests that the more an individual identifies with or is attached to a social group of interest, the more they will be favourably prejudiced for the in-group and unfavourably against threat from the out-group (de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003; Esses et al., 2001; Schram, n.d; Turner, 1991).

The basic tenets of RGCT above is that intergroup conflict is engendered by perceived scarce resource which then strengthens solidarity among in-group members as they all confront a common enemy (out-group). On closer examination it is clear that the RGCT is no different from the proposition of the SIT in that both theories propose that groups will have a clash over perceived scarce resource; in the case of the SIT, the resources in question is the self-esteem of the group and by extension the self-esteem of the individual members of the group which is encapsulated in their identification with their in-group and its achievements. Individual's self-esteem performs varied functions for the individual such as in achievement motivation, withstanding stress or pressure, enjoying satisfying relationships and avoiding depression and anxiety (Baumeister, 1997; Brown, 1998; Taylor et al., 2000). This means that self-esteem is tied to one's social status, accomplishments, affluence, influence and so on, which all constitute part of an individual or group's identity. Hence, the analysis done under the RGCT above is also very much applicable with the SIT. With SIT, groups believe in their supremacy over one another based on their ownership of certain resources, which is tied to the group's esteem, a threat to such resources or its scarcity may create feeling of insecurity and relative deprivation. The resultant frustration within the group may lead them to scapegoat the out-group and display aggression. Indeed, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory emphasises self-esteem need as a basic need and its denial may lead to the development of a pathology to kill (Gire, 1999). Likewise, the SIT is also evident in norm of anonymity as an expression of xenophobic attitude; individuals also attempt to avoid cognitive overload. In order to avoid mental overload (scarce resources) individuals may use different mechanism (blasé attitude or reserve) to push others away and avoid immediate and anticipated threat to the mental resources meant for their personal and/or familial wellbeing.

In line with the above theories, a thoughtful look at the Nigerian situation exemplifies the position of the RGCT and SIT. That there is hierarchical status in societies and that some groups believe in their supremacy over others is observable in the Nigerian situation. With the creation of three political regions by Nigeria's colonial master into East, West and North which were predominantly inhabited by the Igbos,

Yorubas, and Hausa-Fulanis respectively; the minority groups were relegated to a subservient position, lost within the dominant ethnic groups (Jacob, 2012; Nnoli, 1980; Osaghae, 1991; Suberu, 2001). Also, between the three dominant ethnic groups, the Hausa-Fulanis owing to having the largest population and coupled with the greater political advantage bestowed by the colonial leaders, practiced a politics of hegemony. Hence, the economic and political upheaval of this period and the continuous alienation of the minority groups from political and economic decision; led to ethnic strife and conflict as competition surged within the nation as each ethnic group viewed each other with mutual suspicion in their dealings. This created a wide gap in the political, economic and educational achievement of the different regions (Jacob, 2012; Nnoli, 1980; Osaghae, 1991; Suberu, 2001). The result of such segregation is evidenced in the numerous ethnic-political crises that have been recorded in Nigeria's history, for example is the Biafran war, the Yorubas' refusal to attend the 1994 constitutional conference set up by General Sanni Abacha's regime as well as others mentioned above. The different ethnic groups see each other as competitors for the nation's political and economic resources at the detriment of the nation's development. As a result, a slight to one member of the ethnic group is then seen as an attack on the entire ethnic group and creates increased group solidarity among the wronged group, for instance, the oppression of the other ethnic groups by the northern hegemony and the annulment of the 1993 election won by a Yoruba man led to the formation of different ethnic militias in the nation (Jacob, 2012).

In the religion front, clashes between the Christians and Muslims are never ending as is the case of the recurrent Jos crisis over the years and can be linked to feelings of superiority by both religions. The Boko-Haram (literally: Western education is forbidden or sinful) insurgency in the north is said to be borne out of competition for the dominant religion and education in the north and dates back to the 1960s when the Muslims and the Christians in northern Nigeria vied to be the dominant religion which later produced the waves of religious violence between Christians and Muslims in the north and the establishment of terrorist camps in places like Zaria and Kaduna, which progressed unchecked by the government (Religious crisis, 2013). There are even assertions that Boko Haram insurgency is a political tool to make the nation ungovernable by the incumbent president and make him look incapable (Okpaga, Chijioke & Innocent, 2012). The above analysis clearly points towards crisis engendered by differences in religion, values, culture and politics and competition between and within groups who see each other as strangers rather than as partners with equal stakes in nation building.

Furthermore, the RGCT and SIT are also applicable to conflict in interpersonal relations and xenophobic attitude. Given the different stimuli that present to an

individual and the continuous struggle to entertain them while maintaining composure, individuals may result to becoming reserved, aloof, hostile, violent and superficial (xenophobic) in their relations with other in order to preserve their mental capabilities (scarce resources) and avoid mental exhaustion. Finally, the RGCT and SIT equally capture the intricacies of homo-interaction in the university. Once a group is constituted, there is likelihood for individuals to become political in their relations with each other. The Nigerian university community may be seen as a group whose members feel some supremacy over the others by such considerations as year of establishment, whether it is state or federal-owned, the accomplishments of the individual staff and by other criteria of personal relevance. Hence, each university/department may strive to protect its status by preventing the dilution of their constitution by staff or students considered of inferior or different training; particularly in consideration of competition for future influential or affluent administrative positions and other reasons favoured by them.

Xenophobia and Morality: Are They Related?

From a social psychological perspective, perhaps, a first and foremost concern in the effect of xenophobic attitude and practice will be how it impacts morality. Since society survives through interdependence (Myers & Spencer, 2001) and the individual and collective consciousness of that which is considered right or wrong; what is the implication of xenophobic attitude for moral sensitivity, moral values, moral conscience, moral emotions, moral judgments, moral decisions and moral behaviours? For instance, what happens in a society in which individuals place their personal freedom and independence above helping others, communal effort, doing what is right all in a bid to prevent one's own mental exhaustion? According to Bandura (1991) in the absence of morality and self-regulatory processes, people would conform to whatever is expedient at a given moment; does this mean that if preventing immediate or potential mental overload and social involvement is most expedient at a given point in time, people may choose to ignore what is right or the needs of others no matter how dire such needs are?. According to Milgram (1970), eventually people develop an efficient means of categorising other people and their needs as important or unimportant to one's goal and completely disregard those who fall into the latter category; this has implication for bystander intervention in crises, common courtesy or civilities and willingness to trust and assist strangers. Other obvious implications include respect for human life, respect for others' property, and respect for others' emotional wellbeing.

Morality concerns moral principles as defined by a particular group regarding what behaviours are right and wrong. It is an agreement by a group regarding norms of

how its members ought to behave (MacIntyre, 1985). Morality is an inherent issue in almost all social situations and it is said to be a major distinguishing element of humans from animals (Haidt, 2003). How does xenophobia constitute a moral issue? The genocide that has been committed in world history, for instance, the German Nazi against the Jews, the Ife-Modakeke crisis and other ethnic, religious and political conflicts in Nigeria, Rwanda crisis in 1994, South-Africa xenophobia crises; all these incidents have moral undertone. By simply looking at the consequences of this attitude to its originator, recipient and the environment; then it becomes obvious that xenophobic attitude tend to have some moral implication. Such consequences include the massacre, discrimination, debasement and denial of fundamental human rights of freedom of life and movement. Another consequence is when people because of their strangeness or foreignness or because they are seen as responsible for social upheaval (true or false), are displaced from their home/country and families are disunited. When a human being can look at another fellow human being and kill him/her based on differences in skin colour, religion, state of origin or when one denies the self and others of mutually beneficial opportunities all in a bid to avoid relations with people considered as strangers or inferiors; this clearly has moral undertones. Finally, the costs which will be incurred in the reconstruction of properties destroyed during such conflicts are among the consequences of xenophobic attitude.

At this point, it is necessary to ask the questions: do people feel discomfort when they engage in immoral acts (xenophobic attitude), if they do, how do they persist in such acts regardless of the discomfort (resistance to xenophobic attitude change)? The following are attempts to answer these questions.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory: Is There Discomfort in Xenophobic Attitude?

Most people consider themselves to have some moral qualities; it is a rare person who does not (Schnall & Roper, 2011). Hence, do people feel some discomfort when they engage in immoral or xenophobic acts that contradicts their moral standards?

According to Festinger (1957) people feel discomfort when they behave in ways that contradicts their personal code of conduct. He proposed the cognitive dissonance theory to explain how people strive for consistency between their attitudes and behaviours. Counter-attitudinal behaviours are behaviours that contradict one's attitude; hence, they produce a state of discomfort or tension (dissonance) which leads people to strive to resolve such inconsistency. Such discomfort is also a function of whether such behaviours were intentional or coerced and whether they produce foreseeable negative consequences or threatens the self-regard (Cooper & Fazio, 1984).

This theory proposes that in order to reduce or resolve such contradictions people will either modify their attitude or their behaviours or rationalise their behaviours.

In explaining why such discomfort results, some hypotheses have been put forward. They include the following:

Self-affirmation Theory: Why There is Discomfort in Xenophobic Attitude

Self-affirmation theory proposed by Steele (1988) asserts that individuals strive to maintain an overall or global positive self-image and moral integrity at all times. Such integrity refers to the cultural definition of good, moral or appropriate behaviour; hence, people have a constant need to perceive themselves to be of good conduct. When a threat (for example xenophobic attitude that contradicts personal value of concern for the welfare of others) to such self-image or integrity occurs people strive to restore or reaffirm it by looking at aspects of their lives unrelated to the threat in order to convince themselves of their untainted integrity. In this way such singular event does not define who they are.

Another point of view regarding why people experience discomfort when they behave in ways that contradict their beliefs is that such discomfort is a function of how central morality is to the self-concept. Generally, people develop standards of behaviour, thoughts and actions that help guide their conducts and work hard to ensure that they maintain such standards because of its functions in the protection of a positive self-concept and self-worth (Bandura, 1990; 2001; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli 1996; Schnall & Roper, 2011; Sherman, & Cohen, 2006). While Bandura (1990); Blasi (1983; 2004); Schnall and Roper (2011); Sherman and Cohen (2006) proposed that moral behaviour is a function of how pronounced and central morality is in the individual's self-identity. These two statements imply that all humans have a moral agency which is part and parcel of the personality and the extent to which one displays moral behaviour is a function of how central morality is to one's definition of the self.

However, personal moral code or standards sometimes does not stop individuals from engaging in acts that may be deemed amoral; what happens when moral value or moral reasoning is not translated into moral behaviours or actions? For example, what happens when an individual who holds the moral value that all individuals should be able to exercise their fundamental human rights would be willing to engage in acts that denies others of such rights because of some perceived inequality or deprivation or the need to scapegoat someone as responsible for their problem?

Bandura, (1991) proposed that individual's moral values or reasoning births moral behaviour through the application of self-regulatory processes that ensures that

behaviour complies with moral standards and inflicts punishment on the self when one deviates from such standards. He proposed a social cognitive theory of the moral self that involves interaction between self-organising, proactive, self-reflective, self-regulative and social influence mechanisms that motivates and regulates moral actions (Bandura, 2001). Rather than appeal to abstract moral reasoning that focuses only on cognition, Bandura emphasise the interactive process that occurs between cognition, affect and situational influence in the regulation of behaviour. He reasoned that the process involved in the translation of moral code into moral behaviour is an active one in which individuals take into consideration social reality and an anticipatory one in which individuals are able to envisage the consequences of their behaviours on self-satisfaction or self-worth, hence, choose the course of action of positive consequence in the situation of interest. The emphasis on moral behaviour as being produced through an active process suggests that the individual personally activates the self-regulatory process that ensures that moral codes are at par with moral actions. There are several ways of preventing such activation and avoiding self-reprisals for acts that people find reprehensible, Bandura described this process in the psychological concept of moral disengagement (Bandura, 1990).

Moral Disengagement: Tools in the Resistance to Xenophobic Attitude Change

Moral disengagement is the process of persuading oneself that moral standards or ethical standards do not apply in a given situation (Fiske, 2004) or may be ignored for justifiable reasons. It is the process of ignoring personal moral standard and self-regulatory thoughts and actions in order to carry out actions that one deems amoral while preserving one's self-worth. Why the need for disengagement?; through reflective, theoretical and empirical perusal of the nature of man, it still points to the need for survival, control, adaptation, preservation and balance which is the foremost position of this paper. With regards to the preservation of moral self-regard or integrity, *"the purpose of the self-system is to "maintain a phenomenal experience of the self ... as adaptively and morally adequate, that is, competent, good, coherent, unitary, stable, capable of free choice, capable of controlling important outcomes ..."* (Steele, 1988). Hence, humans have a *"psychological immune system"* that shields the self from immediate or expected threat to moral integrity (Gilbert, Pinel, Wilson, Blumberg, & Wheatley, 1998), the different modes of adaptation contained in such immune system are so many and perpetual that Greenwald (1980) qualified the human ego as *"totalitarian"* in its strive to have an utterly predictable world in which it gets what it wants, the way it wants it and it refuses to accept change or be implicated in the causation of negative things.

How do people adapt to or cope with such threats and defend their self-integrity? Below are the mechanisms of moral disengagement (Bandura, 1990; 2002; 2007) involved in the production and maintenance of xenophobic attitude (resistance to attitude change) that may contradict personal codes of behaviour. They can either occur independently or conjointly.

1. Reconstructing or Redefining the Conduct

In order to provide moral sanction for their behaviours people may redefine or rename the act using the following means.

A. Moral Justification

Since one experiences discomfort when one's behaviour falls short of one's moral standard, one way of avoiding self-censure and discomfort is to provide a moral justification for one's actions so as to make it personally and socially correct. Such actions may be interpreted to serve a higher purpose. The most apparent example of moral justification is seen in the behaviours of activists who result into violence to make themselves heard or to drive home their point. Some terrorists, anti-abortion activists, religious activists and political party campaigners sometimes result to killing, arson, maiming, social unrest, bombings to give them a voice. Since they feel the goal is to preserve the status quo, fairness, justice, equality, morals, values, traditions, resources, world peace, the spirit of nationalism or demonstrate superiority or power; violence as a recourse should not be left out because the *"end justifies the means"*. Some Nigerian example will be the activities of Boko Haram whose initial outcry is "western education is bad" but have since included other tirades in the justification of their inhuman acts. Other examples will be the kidnaping and vandalism activities of the Niger/Delta movement and the violence perpetrated by opposing political parties during election period. In a statement said to have been made by Aliyu Gwarzo, a supporter in favour of a Hausa/Fulani president in Nigeria in 2014 election year showcase a blatant expression of xenophobic attitude and of moral justification for inexcusable acts and the sanctioning of intended immorality:

"When I say that the presidency must come to the north next year I am referring to the Hausa-Fulani core north and not any northern Christian or Muslim minority tribe. The Christians in the north... are nothing and the Muslim minorities in the north... and all others know that when we are talking about leadership in the north and in Nigeria, Allah has given it to us, the Hausa-Fulani...we also captured Ilorin, killed their local king and installed our Fulani Emir. We took that ancient town away from the barbarian yoruba

and their filthy pagan gods. We liberated all these places and all these people by imposing Islam on them by force. It was either the Koran or the sword...in return for the good works of our forefathers Allah, through the British, gave us Nigeria to rule and to do with as we please. Since 1960, we have been doing that and we intend to continue. No Goodluck or anyone else will stop us from taking back our power next year. We will kill, maim, destroy and turn this country into Africa's biggest war zone and refugee camp if they try it...If they don't want an ISIS in Nigeria then they must give us back the presidency and our political power."

(Our Reporter, 2014)

The above, without doubt does not represent the opinion of the entire Islamic Hausa/Fulani community. However, it exemplifies xenophobia and emphasises the similarity or overlap of the phenomenon with other types of intergroup intolerance. In a multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-tribal nation like Nigeria, an individual is able to make the statement quoted above which disregard the right of individuals to choose their own religion, the right of voters to vote their choice, the right of different political parties to nominate a candidate for the president of the nation, demean some individuals of shared geographical location, religion and lineage as minorities and unimportant and justify the killing of members of a community described as barbarians who serve filthy gods because the right to do so was bestowed by his God through the British. It seems that this individual is saying "*all is fair and just in war*" as a way of justifying his tirade. A perusal of other political, ethnic or religious crises in Nigeria's history will no doubt reveal such acts of moral justification in the sanction of immoral acts.

Likewise, people may also justify their own inhuman actions and condemn those of their opponents using some self-defined morality by drawing justification from the way they perceive the doctrines of their religion. Moral justification through the use of religious doctrines really deserves special attention given the extent of the evil that has been perpetrated in world history. The world has experienced gross inhumanity and the massacre of innocent people when people quote the scripture out of context.

B. Euphemistic Labeling

In justifying immoral behaviours, the words with which such acts are defined, called or explained plays a major role in lessening their potency or how negative or injurious they are perceived. Inhumane behaviours can take on a different meaning or effect depending on what they are called (Bandura, 2002). To make the self feel comfortable with antisocial behaviours, one may decide to call it by a name that is socially acceptable. Euphemistic labeling through the use of complex words can be used to

portray cruelty as good or necessary so as to reduce personal responsibility and feelings of guilt (Bandura, 1990; Bandura, et al., 1996; Bandura, 2002; Lutz, 1987). One form of such euphemisms is called sanitising language which involves the use of words to lessen the potency or outrageousness of one's actions. Terrorists may refer to their victims as infidels or targets making it sound like the accomplishment of a set goal, what is looted from war may be referred to as the dividend of wars, stealing of state money or resources is referred to as earning the dividend of democracy or sharing of the national cake. In order to avoid relations with other ethnic/religious/political/racial group or absolve one of responsibility in inhumane or xenophobic acts one may describe such acts as *'separating the shaft from the grain'*, or say *'the sheep who moves with the dog will eventually eat excrement'*, or that *'a lie is an alternative version of the truth'*. Furthermore, in order to justify an act of favouritism that denied a member of an out-group of a job opportunity, an individual may say "one must nip the branches of the Iroko tree very early in order to contain it" or that "charity begins at home" or call it "not taking in filth" or "ethnic cleansing" which suggest a pleasant event. An excerpt from the statement made by Aliyu Gwarzo, the example under moral justification is equally applicable here as an example of euphemistic labelling through sanitised labeling:

"...We also captured Ilorin, killed their local king and installed our Fulani Emir. We took that ancient town away from the barbarian Yoruba and their filthy pagan gods. We liberated all these places and all these people by imposing Islam on them by force."

(Our Reporter, 2014)

This individual justifies the killing of people, the dethroning of a king and the imposition of a religion on a society of different religious belief(s) by sanitising the act as "liberation".

Another form of euphemistic labeling is agentless passive voice, which involves pushing responsibility for one's reprehensible acts unto nameless beings or forces rather than the self. For instance, when one says it was the devil that was responsible for personal grievous acts or that one must have been possessed by an evil spirit.

C. Advantageous or Palliative Comparison

Using the discounting principle of perception or impression formation, individuals may compare their own behaviours to those of others deemed superior in cruelty to avoid discomfort. By comparing one's immorality and its consequences to those deemed of graver or blatant consequences committed by others, one can make the self feel better as one sees personal conduct as the lesser of two evils or of other evils. For such upward

comparison, it is the agent's perception of the weightiness of personal conduct compared to that of the contrast conduct that matters and not the act itself (Bandura, 1990). A person who killed 20 persons for reason of ethnic cleansing may feel more moral than someone who killed 100, a person who is responsible for killing 20 men may find solace in the fact that they were not children or women. In the political arena, a political party that rigged election to win may justify its behaviour as resulting from the need to effect changes in the political atmosphere and with the argument that such opponent party has equally been rigging election for a long time. In specific, as an example of advantageous comparison, the leader of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was reported to have challenged the All Progressive Congress (APC) of reversing PDP's legacies and accomplishments in terms of economic gain and conduction of credible elections (Eniola & Akanbi, 2016). In reprimanding APC for making such a statement, the publicity secretary of APC replied:

"We wonder what legacy a failed and corrupt party like PDP is talking about if not the legacy of corruption, shameless looting, infrastructural wreckage, ineptitude, decay, disease, hunger and want...one question that Nigerians have been asking is if anything good can ever come from a PDP that in its 16 whole years of rule, notoriously looted the country's treasury and left every sector of the Nigerian economy bare..."

(Anu, 2016)

Similarly, the Osun state chapter of the PDP was reported to have said that the effort of the incumbent president to fight corruption is a ruse as long as such effort continues to exclude members of the president's cabinet or allies. The party was reported to have said:

"...APC, at present, has in its fold, some of the most corrupt individuals that other parties, including PDP found rather too dirty to be accommodated, and yet they are being covered with the party's duvet...with glaring evidence of corrupt act, against even some members of the kitchen cabinet of president Buhari, corruption "fighters" of the present administration, have not seen the need to begin the "cleansing right from the presidential closet"..."

(Kolawole, 2016)

The exchange between these two parties is all in an attempt to expose and emphasise the perceived fault of the opposition party and make each party look better in comparison to the other by weighing the accomplishments and faults of each party against that of the other. Just as Horowitz (1985); Tajfel (1978) posited, a group's worth

is tied to its economic and political superiority and the group's characteristics achieve its significance and worth when they are different from and better than that of the other group.

Through advantageous comparison, people may justify their immoral conduct as serving a moral or valid purpose and make themselves feel and look better than the individual or group of comparison. These three mechanisms of moral justification, euphemistic labeling and advantageous comparison for reconstructing or redefining events, Bandura (1990; 2002; 2007) deemed the most effective and readily accessible of the moral disengagement techniques.

2. Displacement or Diffusion of Responsibility

Another disengagement practice is to shift the blame for one's action to another person or situation (Bandura, 2007). This technique of disengagement is often played out when in groups. When in a group people may absolve themselves of guilt by appealing to the reasoning that their behaviours were a product of group decision and compliance was needed to maintain group solidarity. Hence, personal responsibility is diminished in immoral act and displaced to the group (Bandura, 2002). For diffusion of responsibility, personal agency is diminished because there was collective effort or contribution in the production of the immoral act; hence, no one is singly responsible for the act or can singly produce the act (Bandura, 1990). The mechanism underlying this act is what social psychologists call de-individuation which means the anonymity and obscurity provided by the cover of a crowd. This concept has been widely applied in the explanation of group or collective deviant behaviours (Diener, Fraser, Beaman & Kelem, 1976; Staub, 1996) and online pornography viewing and computer scams (Kiesler & Sproull, 1992; Roewecklein, 2006). Deindividuation functions by decreasing personal restraints for behaviours that are usually kept in check (Postmes & Spears, 1998). People are more likely to engage in immoral acts when in group or when the responsibility for such acts is shared by the group or can be displaced to an authority (Milgram, 1974; Staub, 1996; Zimbardo, 1995). Displacement and diffusion of responsibility are still most depicted in the Zimbardo's classical prison experiment and also in the widespread political thuggery and religious fanaticism who assert their massacre are directed and sanctioned by their leaders and god respectively or in bystander effect when people are slaughtered in public while no one tries to stop such barbaric act.

Going by the reality of displacement or diffusion of responsibility, it can occur in two ways. First, the one authorising the immoral act can displace the blame for such acts to those who physically carried out the act thereby absolving the self of responsibility for the act "*I was not physically involved*" a good example in Nigeria will be the acts of political "God fathers" or key party members who silently direct atrocities

on the sideline while claiming innocence or ignorance. During election period, thugs are often used to create unrest all in an attempt to destabilise an opponent party and even make them take the blame for such unrest. Another example is the terrorist group Boko Haram in Nigeria that is reported to be a political tool by some political leaders to incapacitate the government (Okpaga, Chijioke & Innocent, 2012).

Similarly, an individual in an attempt to avoid interactions with an individual of different religious or ethnic affiliation may justify his/her refusal to help when it was in their capacity to do so, by saying, the bible directs us *"not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers"* or that the Quran asked us *"to do away with infidels"*. An example is the statement reportedly made by Buhari (incumbent Nigeria President) in the year 2000 regarding upholding Sharia law in the nation; *"I can die for the cause of Islam. If necessary, we are prepared to fight another civil war. We cannot be blackmailed into killing Sharia"* (Freedom house, 2000 as cited by Donrichdavid, 2015). The statement was made obviously without considerations of what a civil war will do to the nation in light of the ones Nigeria has experienced. The concept of civil war is one of the most absurd oxymoronic concepts as there is nothing civil about a war. The statement as made by Buhari, seems to suggest that the Islamic religion sanctions the use of war as a means to an end; thus, displacing the responsibility for such statement and such a war (if it happens) as being the directive of the religion.

Second, on the part of who was ordered to carry out the immoral act, he or she can absolve the self of guilt by saying *"I am only doing my job or just carrying out orders"* to displace the responsibility and justify their involvement or *"I am not the only one involved"* to diffuse the responsibility. Likewise to justify the hatred and violence towards people of a particular ethnic group, religion or political party, an individual may say that such hatred has been in place since the time of their forefathers or that it is a mandate or directive of their forefathers or God and that it is a taboo to relate with such people, thereby displacing the responsibility for their actions to their forefathers or God. An excerpt from the statement made by Aliyu Gwarzo, the example under moral justification (lines 9 -14) is equally applicable here as an example of displacement of responsibility:

This individual in addition to justifying inhuman acts in the past and the intended ones also displaces the responsibility for such acts as to have been sanctioned by his God and the authority to rule bequeathed to his tribe by Nigeria's colonial rulers.

3. Misrepresentation, Minimisation or Disregard of Injurious Consequences

Ignoring the consequences of one's immoral actions or downplaying it, is one way of removing self-censure and feelings of guilt or discomfort. Not taking personal responsibility for harm caused may also require that the causers of such harm see their

actions as having no significant effect on the recipients of the acts. This mechanism works through ignoring, minimising, distorting, disregarding, disbelieving or avoiding contact with the consequences of one's actions (Bandura, 2002). Not having to come face to face with the negative effect of one's actions or when such effects may not occur in the nearest future can make one disregard self-censure and self-regulation in immoral acts.

To explain further, the discounting principle mentioned above is also applicable here. Discounting principle is applied in the attribution of causes; this means that when an effect has other possible causes, it cannot be attributed to only one cause (Matsumoto, 2009). Another psychological concept of relevance is temporal discounting, which is the tendency to be relatively unfazed by the consequences of one's actions or give them lesser value because they are delayed in time (Loewenstein, Read & Baumeister, 2003; Matsumoto, 2009). The delay seems to lessen the subjective value of the consequences of personal actions and its power to restrain the self (Matsumoto, 2009), indeed, temporal discounting may be taken as a reliable, indirect measure of self-control (Matsumoto, 2009; Reynolds, Ortengren, Richards & de Wit, 2006). Being able to come up with the reasoning that one's immoral act could in no way constitute the sole cause of harm or that it causes little harm or that the harm resulting from one's injurious act is the cumulative result from multiple sources that may not be entirely possible to pinpoint or that the consequences of one's injurious act will occur slowly or almost imperceptibly and will be spread over time such that it will be difficult to be traced back to one's action(s) given its possible multi-causality, can relieve individuals of moral self-reprisal, self-restraint and negative self-concept and provide justification (Bandura, 2007). For example, an individual or party involved in rigging election or murder in order to win an election may disregard this act by saying "*all is fair and just in war*", "*it is for the good of the people*", "*the end justifies the means*".

4. Dehumanisation

This mechanism of disengagement functions by debasing or stripping the recipient(s) of one's injurious acts of human qualities so as to perceive them as deserving of the ills done to them. It involves describing or qualifying those considered as different/strangers/inferior with derogatory terms or names. When the targets of immoral acts are seen as less than human or inferior and defined or named with words not befitting or appropriate for a human being, the perpetrator can rid the self of any guilt in subjecting the target to inhumane treatment. Empathy, which is the ability to identify or relate with the opinion, feeling or perception of another person, is required for the development of moral standards (Reber, 1995). When people think of the potential harmful consequences of their behaviours and reason that the recipients are

fellow humans who do not deserve such treatment because they can imagine what they will feel if they themselves were to experience their intended acts, they are more likely to exercise self-restraint. However, when the recipients of injurious acts have been stripped of human qualities and reduced to nothing; empathy is removed from the equation and the injurious act can be meted out without restraint and guilt.

Being able to divest other people of human qualities is made easier owing to human natural perceptual tendency to categorise into in-group and out-group on different criteria (Passer et al., 2003). Members of out-group (based on race, sex, vocation, religion or ethnic grouping) are usually perceived as similar to one another, prejudiced, stereotyped and prevented from having close contact. It is easier to treat members of out-group inhumanely since there is little or no contact with them (Bandura, 2002) moreso when they are regarded as inferior and qualified with despicable names or terms such as infidels, animals, pigs, fools, monsters, devil, babarians and so on.

In Zimbardo's prison experiment the prison guards were able to inflict cruelty on the prisoners perhaps because they began to see the prisoners (out-group) as real prisoners who have been found guilty of serious crimes that included rape, murder, arson and such other crimes. For a local example, the inter-political party, Christian/Muslim clashes, intra and inter-ethnic crises in Nigeria has dehumanisation as one of its catalyst. For example, during the APC campaign during 2015 election in Nigeria, a supporter of the party was reported to have made the statement "*we have decided to rescue Nigeria form Poverty Development party*" (Buari, 2015) deliberately changing the acronym of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to connote something ugly or to be avoided. The wife of President Goodluck Jonathan also made statements like.... "*if you drink APC, you will die*""*don't go for analogue, go for digital. PDP is digital, APC is analogue*" (BellaNaija.com, 2015)..."*APC is a prison party*" (Mironovich, 2015)... "*Akwa Ibom is a PDP state. It's not for expired drugs, because APC cannot heal you, outdated drugs cannot heal you...they will continue changing names until they reach Ebola...you know what Ebola normally do*" (Ezeamalu, 2015). An excerpt from the statement made by Aliyu Gwarzo, the example under moral justification is equally applicable here as an example of dehumanisation: ... "*we also captured Ilorin, killed their local king and installed our Fulani Emir. We took that ancient town away from the barbarian yoruba and their filthy pagan gods*" ... (Our Reporter, 2014). Thus, the killing of members of a community and the imposition of a foreign religion is made justifiable through dehumanising the victims as barbarian Yorubas who serve filthy gods. Also, there are other seemingly subtle derogatory terms used by different tribes in Nigeria to qualify others. For example, some Igbos describe Yorubas as "*ndi ofe nmanu*" (literally, those who eat oily soup), the Igbos are described by some Yorubas as "*ajokuta ma mumi*" (literally, those who eat stone without drinking

water; a reference to the solidity of some of the food eaten by Igbos), the Hausas are referred to as Gambari by some Yorubas and there is the saying that “*Gambari pa Fulani, ko lejo nu* (which translates into Hausa kills Fulani, there is no case)” implying that both individuals are the same and are not important. Also, the Igbira people from Kogi state in Nigeria are also derogated; for example, there is a usual statement as “*three persons and one Igbira* (implying that an Igbira person is not a human being)”.

Furthermore, people also result to misinterpreted religious doctrines to see others in different religion from theirs as enemy or infidels to provide justification for cruelty. Others give sanitised labeling to their cruelty such as ethnic cleansing, suggesting that they are ridding themselves of varmint and provide moral justification for displacing people from their homes and disuniting families. Also, the reserve that people hold to avoid cognitive overload is borne out of highly developed perceptual skill for differentiating those who are important and deserving of continued interaction. Thus, one may justify avoiding relations with neighbours by saying they are nuisances or qualify beggars on the street as social miscreants. Perhaps, Boko Haram in Nigeria has been able to dehumanize their victims to motivate their continued massacre. The hatred and animosity held by groups towards each other lowers moral self-censure and restraint (Bandura, 2002).

5. Attribution of Blame

For this disengagement practice, the perpetrator takes on the belief that the injurious act was provoked by its recipient or necessitated by the situation; hence, they (the perpetrators) should be regarded as a victim in the situation. The blame is shifted to the one who suffered/will suffer from such cruelty as deserving of it; hence, the reaction is justifiable. The height of the use of this mechanism is that the victims may come to believe and accept that they truly are deserving of the cruelty done to them. Examples are: the statements made by Buhari on BBC Hausa Services in Kaduna (the incumbent Nigerian president) while aspiring to be president, “...infact if there is a repeat of the civil war again, I will kill more Igbos to save the country” (Zubby, 2016), ... “If what happened in 2011(alleged rigging of election) should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon will be soaked in blood” (Binniyat, 2012). The statement made by Aliyu Gwarzo in support of a Nigerian president from the Hausa/Fulani tribe in the north is applicable here as an example of attribution of blame:

“...Many say we are behind Boko Haram. My answer is what do you expect? We do not have economic power or intellectual power. All we have is political power and they want to take even that from us. We must fight and we will fight back in order to keep it...If

they don't want an ISIS in Nigeria then they must give us back the presidency and our political power".

(Our Reporter, 2014)

This individual justifies proposed inhuman acts by blaming Nigerians or perhaps political parties as having stolen the presidential seat of the nation from his tribe. This individual believes in imposing Hausa/Fulani as the tribe with the authority and power to govern the nation regardless of his own admission of their lack of intellectual power, what is reasonable to assume is important in the governance of a state. Thus, according to this individual, if such killings and maiming happens as threatened, Nigerians should see themselves to be at fault.

6. Moral Licensing

This mechanism of disengagement is not one of the ones proposed by Bandura but it provides a valid and interesting way of dissociating the self from moral self-censure and guilt. Everyone seems to hold the belief that they possess some measure of moral integrity and strive to protect it (Schnall & Roper, 2011; Sherman & Cohen, 2006). To explain how individuals are able to convince themselves of their moral integrity in the face of obvious contradictions, some scholars came up with the concept of moral licensing. People unconsciously make mental records of their moral deeds which they store up as "*moral credits*" which can later be used to offset immoral acts; hence, when people feel they have enough moral credits stored up they may be unmotivated to engage in good behaviour (Merritt, Effron, & Monin, 2010; Monin & Miller, 2001; Zhong, Liljenquist, & Cain, 2009). That is, they believe they have done enough good in the past which is more than enough to take care of their immoral act. This suggests that people may only display moral behaviours when the integrity of their moral self is threatened, perhaps when they have used up their moral credits (Schnall & Roper, 2011). However, since there are myriad of techniques of disengagement that can be used to prevent self-censure, it is possible that people may never feel they have exhausted their moral credits. For instance, people can redefine the act, sanitise it, dehumanise the victim or displace the responsibility for such acts.

As an example, an individual who denies another of an employment opportunity because of his/her ethnic/religious/political affiliation may absolve herself/himself of blame by saying that s/he has helped numerous others in the past or that he has helped such others in the past which resulted into negative consequence(s). In the same way, an individual may avoid or limit interactions with neighbour(s) owing to the reason that such relationship from experience leads to material/financial/attention cost which they are/have been incurring but are not ready to make available in such instance or in

the future. A political party that rigged election may justify this act by saying they have avoided rigging in past elections which made them loose while the other party that rigged election won.

7. Just-World Belief

The belief that the world is fair and just and that everyone gets what s/he deserves and deserves what s/he gets (Lerner, 1980) is also implicated in moral disengagement. With this belief, people opine that the world is structured to ensure that good deeds are rewarded with good and evil deeds are rewarded with evil. Some usual saying that depicts such belief includes "*what goes around comes around*", "*you can't eat your cake and have it*" and "*you reap what you sow*". Because people hold such beliefs, it is possible that they are able to avoid guilt or self-censure for engaging in injurious activity. Thus, people may hurt others because they believe that such people deserve it, or have prior knowledge of impending harm to others and refuse to prevent it or warn the intended recipient, or ignore victims of cruelty because they believe he or she must have done something to earn it. Just-world belief provides people with moral justification for their moral transgressions or intended immoral acts. For instance, refusing to help an individual because one feels the individual may abuse such opportunities by milking it and justifying such by saying the individual must have done something that made him/her deserving of their present situation. For example, saying an individual is poor because s/he is lazy or that an individual's present predicament must be as a result of the individual's past misdemeanours. The example given under attribution of blame equally applies here, finding ways to justify one's inhumane acts by blaming the victims as deserving of them may also mean drawing on the reasoning of fairness or justice being served or meted out to the victims.

Having devised ways of coping with threat to self-integrity in a way that produces minimal or no guilt, such defence strategies may become activated involuntarily and people may become accustomed to these defence mechanisms in the furtherance of immorality or xenophobic attitude. Moreso, because such coping strategies may be perceived as beneficial to mental and physical wellbeing (Diener, 2000; Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997; Taylor & Brown, 1988). Hence, it is necessary to find a way to ensure moral awareness and moral self-reprisal as a perpetual state of human existence.

Recommendations

Social reality for individuals and societies are created through their numerous experiences and interactions with people which helps them develop a cognitive,

affective and behavioural system for dealing with future interactions, based on past relations. Gradually and overtime, such system comes to constitute the way of life of the inhabitants of such societies and the norm for behaviour; thus, the consciousness of people cannot be divested from their cultural reality. Obviously and without doubt, people's attitude serve a lot of adaptive functions; it gives a feeling of control; helps to maintain self-esteem; helps in survival and in communicating impression of other people, events and objects (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006; Krebs & Deuton, 1997, Milgram, 1985). However, life is characterised by changes both internally within the person and externally in the environment, an unyielding attitude even in the presence of valid evidence that disconfirms personal beliefs may be antithetical to growth and peaceful coexistence within the society. Since people who constitute a society are responsible for what happens in such societies, effort to bring about social change inevitably must recourse to changing the attitude of individuals in that society.

It is said that theories that can explain war or conflict can also be used to explain peace. Using this analogy, a theory that explains war reveals the catalyst for war thereby also supplying how to reverse the effect of the catalyst. In recognition of this, Underwood (n.d) asserts that in bringing about change in beliefs and attitude, such effort will be unfruitful if not studied in relation to the underlying reasons that engenders and maintains them.

Throughout this paper, in theoretical and empirical explanation of the causes of xenophobia, certain catalysts have been implicated in the cause of this attitude; some of these catalysts will now be discussed as a way of reversing this attitude (attitude change).

1. Religion

Religion has been defined as behaviours of individuals that reflect what they consider to be divine (James, 1902). Nigeria is a multi-religious society and Nigerians are considered to be very religious people (Adebayo & Olonisakin, 2016) so the appeal to religion as a moderator of xenophobic attitude has potential in that religion has engendered numerous conflict in Nigeria and that people would adhere to the teachings of their religion.

Although some authors have argued against the potential of religion in curbing immoral behaviours; pointing out that such relationship is borne out of mere assumption or myth rather than evidence and buttressing their point with the fact that nations considered to be highly religious equally rates high on antisocial behaviours (Beets, 2007; Marquette, 2011; Mitchell, 2001; Paldam, 2001). For instance, Marquette (2011) examined the relationship between religion and corruption in Nigeria and India and found that though religion may influence attitude towards corruption, it may not

influence actual behaviour. People who are religious may through the process of moral disengagement rid themselves of self-censure when engaging in corrupt behaviour. However, some authors (Gatti, Paternostro, Rigolini, 2003; Uguru-Okorie, 2002) have also emphasised the existence of such relationship and its power in curbing antisocial behaviours. For instance, Uguru-Okorie (2002) posits that religious institutions constitute an important site for cognitive restructuring for people for them to imbibe national discipline. Also religious leaders have a role to play in being a prototype of who and what religious doctrine dictates.

Religion and morality are interwoven, indeed, most people draw their moral code from their religion and morality is at the heart of most religions. People will refrain from engaging in acts that contradicts their moral code or values in order to avoid self-censure and will only engage in such acts if they are able to disengage moral self-censure. Disengaging moral restriction in antisocial acts usually occurs through the ways religious doctrines are interpreted and imbibed by its followers. Hence, there is need for cognitive restructuring of the adherents of the different religions in Nigeria. Islam, Christianity and traditional religion which are the foremost religions in Nigeria all emphasise peaceful coexistence, brotherly love, helping, oneness in diversity and selflessness. Religious doctrines can be explored as a tool in removing xenophobic attitude. In addition to Nigerians being religious, they also tend to show great respect for religious or spiritual leaders as they are believed to be messengers of God on earth. Hence, there is need for mobilisation of reputable religious leaders in all types of religion practiced in the nation to hold a national conference for the purpose of explaining what their religion stipulates with regards to peaceful relation and being accommodating of one another. Repeatedly airing television and radio programs featuring reputable and popular religious leaders teaching against hatred, prejudice, discrimination and xenophobic attitude against those considered different from the self and against misinterpreting religious doctrines for personal satisfaction or exerting revenge, should also help keep such messages in the heart of the people. Studies on moral elevation (moral arousal) have shown that exposure to acts of morality stimulate in the viewer the inspiration to want to do good (Freeman, Aquino & McFerran, 2009; Haidt, 2003; Schnall, Roper & Fessler, 2010). For instance, Freeman et al's. (2009) study revealed that exposure to stories or excerpts about forgiveness increased willingness to donate to charity for Black students among Whites with racist attitude. In addition, consistent exposure to an idea can lead to its eventual acceptance (Sparks, Nelson, & Campbell, 1997). Using religion as a channel for eradicating xenophobic attitude should be a veritable strategy.

Literature on persuasion emphasise that the credibility of the persuader or communicator influences whether the other party agrees with the persuader.

Credibility encompasses the expertise and trustworthiness of the communicator. When religious leaders who are reputable as seasoned men of God in their chosen religion are able to gather together to speak against the ills of discriminating against others and hurting fellow humans, such should have influence on the followers of such religion. In addition, in Nigeria, there are religious crusades/meetings/revivals that take place from time to time, particularly for Christians and Muslims. There are religious leaders in both religions that regularly organise revivals/meetings/crusade for which people from all over the nation attend, for example, we have the Redeemed Christian Church of God and Synagogue for Christians and NASFAT for Muslims among others. Such avenue can be used to preach the importance of togetherness and peace as emphasised by the originator of such religions. The repetition of such forum regularly should be a source of trigger of cognitive dissonance for those who believe yet do not adhere to their religion's principle on living in peace with fellow human beings.

2. Psychological Sense of Community

Society exists and perpetuates through interdependence. People work, play, marry and live with others; interacting with others opens people to opportunities and no one single individual has all the necessary skill to be self-sufficient. Though humans are social beings in nature, it seems inherent in human nature to favour one's kin (Passer et al., 2003) and to have foremost concern for the self. Ethnic, religious and political conflict in Nigeria can be traced to toggle for power and resources because each individual, family, religion, tribe, political party and other forms of differential categorizations see others of opposite categorization as strangers, moral inferiors and opposites rather than as those with whom there is shared nationality and stake in national development. Each party feels its point of view is right and should be the norm that should be imbibed by others. Engendering psychological sense of community should help curb the incessant strife within and between groups in Nigeria. Sense of community refers to the shared feeling that individual member's well-being is the concern of the group and that there is a shared purpose in meeting member's needs (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) while Rossi and Royal (1994) list the elements of a sense of community to include acceptance of diversity, trust, caring, respect, communication, commitment and shared value, purpose and vision. For Nigerians regardless of ethnic, religious and political affiliations differences, to work together and be committed for the nation's growth, there must be a feeling of belongingness. Aside from ethnic, political and religious dichotomies, anecdotal evidence shows that the populace feel separated from the government; pronouns such as "they" versus "us", and "their" versus "our" is used in discussion of the activities of the government in relation to the citizens. In order for the citizens of the nation to share a sense of oneness, they must feel

involved and relevant to outcomes in the nation (Uguru-Okorie, 2002). This is similar to the principle of equal status contact which propose that prejudice and discrimination can be reduced between groups in conflict when they are kept in contact with each other, are given a task in which successful outcome depends on cooperation between the groups and when the groups have equal status in such interaction (Allport, 1954; Sheriff, 1961). Such effort should be done in all spheres, for example, in education, in politics, in the work place and so on. For example, as a matter of school policy, pupils/students of different cultural origins should be given group work or assignment to do and all Muslim or all Christian school should be discouraged. Cultural mix should be encouraged in work teams and departments. Such cultural intercourse should foster cultural intelligence; open-mindedness about the beliefs, values and way of life of other people. Such regular contact should increase tolerance, peace, humility and acceptance of one another.

3. Developing Stress Coping Strategy

The daily hassle of trying to survive can be stressful. Numerous sources of stress exist ranging from the mild to the extreme, how stressful an event is, is relative because people have different reactions to stressful events. The Nigerian environment no doubt can be extremely stressful given the economic condition, unemployment, epileptic power supply, housing problem, traffic situation, overcrowding and other sources of stress that may be known only to the individuals undergoing them. Under these situations, it may be very hard to be accommodating to others as everyone strives to survive such that ignoring other people's needs or well-being seems rational as one of the ways to maximize output. Hence, people may exhibit xenophobic attitude which may range from anger, hostility, mistrust to violence as a way of preventing and coping with cognitive overload from those considered as strangers. However, studies have shown that negative reaction to stressful life events has health hazards (McIntyre et al., 2008; Williams, 2001). While a previous study (Taylor, Klein, Lewis, Gruenewald, Gurung, & Updegraff, 2000) found that the "*tend and befriend*" (reaction to stress characterised by the willingness to interact with the source of stress and build the resources to cope with such stress) response to stress as opposed to the "fight or flight" response to stress, serve positive health benefits (for example, lower risk of heart disease) in that there is lower level of arousal in the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal (HPA) axis which is associated with increased blood pressure, heart rate, respiration and suppression of the immune system. In a similar vein, Kottak (2000) proposed that a sociable lifestyle has adaptive value in that it provides access to resources and social support. Hence, finding ways in one's busy schedule and strive for survival to accommodate neighbours, family, work colleagues and others who need one's help or

attention, time and other resources rather than push them away or relate with them with hostility or anger serve positive health functions. Indeed, if one remains closed to others in order to avoid immediate or potential cognitive overload, one may equally lose the opportunity to develop and sustain meaningful and beneficial relationships. Psychological hardiness also helps people in coping with stress. Psychological hardiness is a term similar to resilience, it means the ability to see stressful or challenging situations as opportunities, believe that situations will improve, retain a sense of control in the face of challenges, learn from experience, deal adaptively with the environment and attend to one's activities with vigour believing them to be very important (Kobasa, Maddi & Kahn, 1982; Kobasa, Maddi, Pucceti & Zola, 1985). Psychologically hardy individuals have positive health outcomes than those who are not (Dolbier, Smith, & Steinhardt, 2007; Levy & Myers, 2005).

4. Making Morality Central to Self-Concept

How central morality is to the self-concept of an individual influences its role in shaping the behaviour of such an individual (Bandura, 1990; Monin & Jordan (n.d); Schnall & Roper 2011; Sherman & Cohen, 2006). For instance, Monin and Jordan (n.d) propose that for those high in moral self-importance (the extent to which an individual aspires to be moral), morality is an important goal in life and a key indicator of how well they are faring in life. It seems plausible that making morality an integral part of the self can increase moral awareness or sensitivity of an individual which in turn should influence moral motivation. The personological approach to the study of morality usually take the standpoint of morality as due to individual differences formed in the development process (Monin & Jordan (n.d)). This points to the possibility of fostering moral sensitivity in people as they grow. Thus, parents, teachers, guardians and others in whose care children are placed should make teachings of right and wrong behaviours, the importance of moral consideration of one's actions, the importance of moral consideration in social interactions and resolving of moral dilemmas salient in the training or bringing up of children. Using appropriate reinforcement strategies can help to encourage desirable behaviours. Values such as friendliness, other-sensitivity, togetherness and open-mindedness should be emphasised. In addition, the care givers should be moral exemplars to the children as they grow.

5. Improving the Welfare of the Citizens

When people are asked to obey the law, for them to adhere to such directives they must also be provided with a means of compliance. When societies set standards for people to adhere to and provides its people with no means of actualising such standards, a state of anomie is created. In line with this, Misago (2009) posited that in a situation

under which violence against out-groups serve political and economic benefit, everyone can be a target. Providing resources that can help alleviate stress is important to give people the cognitive wherewithal to accommodate others. Improving roads, power supply, water supply, employment situation and other resources for which citizens may compete should help alleviate stress. Encouraging equal representation of religion, ethnic and political categories in all spheres of governance is also important.

6. Inter-Departmental/Inter-University Interaction

The reservations held by different departments and universities should be abolished. As long as a student or a candidate for employment meets the requirements or qualification for studentship or appointment, such an individual should be given the opportunity to learn or contribute their own quota to the development of the university. Such transfer of knowledge, experience and ideas should go a long way in boosting the academic growth in the nation. It is important to have diversity in the university. The goal of the university is for the students is to gain knowledge, learn how to learn and to be continuously receptive to knowledge, hence, diversity in the university/department is important to teach and encourage receptiveness to ideas within the students and staff as they both cope with diverse and even contrasting knowledge which all provides motivation for intellectual competitiveness and achievement. Indeed the name university connotes universality and should not experience limitations in the choice of its lecturers and students as long as they possess the requirements or qualification.

Conclusion

Variety is said to be the spice of life, although when xenophobic attitude is discussed in relation to morality, some grey areas may emerge. For instance, is it moral to commit nepotism on behalf of a family member who is qualified and in need of a job or is it moral to go through the proper channels and leave the family member to compete with everyone? Although the resolution to such a moral dilemma may be difficult to provide, one may also look to higher norms for guidance, for instance, is it against the law to commit nepotism or favouritism or consider the moral debate about whether all the other applicants for the job are not equally as important. However, in all social interaction, individuals should have as their foremost concern the effect their actions and inactions have on others and the possible ripple effect of such.

The nation has much to gain through cooperation than through unhealthy competition. Though it may be argued that competitiveness has survival value, it is obvious that cooperation, mutual trust and care for others wellbeing will play a more fundamental role in the nation's development. When there is crisis in a particular region

or community, it affects other regions or communities in the nation; hence, it is important to always remember that society survives and perpetuates only through interdependence.

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