The Axis of Hate: Identitarianism, Afroxenophobia and Vigilantism

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ABSTRACT

This is an investigation into the similarities and shared values between Identitarianism, xenophobia and vigilantism, by analyzing recent xenophobic and vigilante attacks of foreigners and migrants in Europe and Africa. Identitarianism or the European brand of the Far-Right political dogma is built on adherence to the concept of homogeneity of race or ethnicity, culture, religion, language, and the general aspiration of a body politic. This is the same as basic foundations of Pan-Africanism design. Identity Politics is typified by the systematic exclusion of people with dissimilar ethnicity, racial characteristics and disparate socio-political belief-systems. The three axis of hate, namely Identitarianism, Xenophobia and Vigilantism were conceptually analyzed using refereed papers that were freely available on the Internet to shed light on their relationships and similarities. The aim was to show how these concepts are being deployed by certain socio-political elements in Europe against Africans and other migrants or even legal immigrants. It also shows broadly, how Africans in some African nations deploy the same tools of hate and exclusion on other Africans of different nationalities by way of physical attacks, and economic sabotage and invasion of businesses owned by foreigners. Such experiences have in the past, occurred in Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, Gabon, Angola, Kenya and others. Key finding is that the European brand of Identitarianism and Xenophobia; in all of its hostilities are not intrinsically different from Afro-Xenophobic foundations of Pan-Africanism and African societies even today. What is different is that Identity Politics is actively practiced within the culturally relative African democracies, where the Party in power doles out appointments and contracts to both deserving and undeserving Political Party operators, related persons and entities.

Keywords: Africa, Identitarianism, Pan-Africanism, Vigilantism, Xenophobia.

I. INTRODUCTION

“No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man”
(Heraclitus of Ephesus, 530-470 BC)

Identitarianism is a prevailing socio-political philosophy in many nations in the European Union. As a working philosophical approach, it is designed to attack, intimidate, harass and exclude both legal and illegal immigrants from the European space. Xenophobia as an outward demonstration of hatred towards foreigners is embedded in Identitarian dogma. Xenophobia as practiced in Continental Africa has long been articulated in an overarching Pan-Africanist political philosophy, chartered by the African Union. This is what this author calls, ‘Afroxenophobia’, which finds expression as a stand-alone but silent, howbeit, salient pillar of African Identity thought. During the struggle for national independence by the various African nations, aspects of Afroxenophobia were often violently demonstrated and directed at the colonial administrators (Oppong, 2002; Peil, 1974).

Afroxenophobia (the fear of other ethnic black or foreign person and his way of life), can be expressed intra-country starting with the ethnic Biafra war in Nigeria (1966-1970) (Goetz, 2001). It can also be outwardly displayed as in the case of Ghana’s expulsion of Nigerians, (1968-69) and Nigeria’s retaliatory expulsion of Ghanaians, (1984-85). It can be expressed covertly as in tribal Identity Politics in African democracies, or violently as it was in Eastern Africa in Rwanda and Burundi. The Rwanda Genocide of 1994 was an intra-country Identity war, whiles the Ugandan expulsion of Asians under Idi Amin, 1972, or
Kenyan Asian attacks of 1982 were outward expressions of the hate of foreigners (Romola, 2015; Aremu, 2013). Tanzanian’s Sungu-Sungu or vigilantism against Nomadic herdsmen, or Libyan enslavements of migrants from other African nations (2013-2018), and the South African hate attacks of Nigerians in Johannesburg and Durban, (2014-2019) or the socio-political vigilantism directed at foreigners and migrants in other nations in Continental Africa are all well documented incidence of African nationalism or Identity crises (Oni & Okunade, 2017; Hanekom & Webster, 2010; Oppong, 2002). Vigilantism is the vehicle or the means of execution of the philosophy of exclusion, in order to realize Identitarian goals of a group or a community. At first glance, it may appear as if there cannot be a connection between the anti-immigrant politics of Europe, New Zealand or the United States of America and the people of color, such as those from the African nations, yet xenophobia is a common feature of human societies (Miller & Rensmann, 2010; Horowitz & Noiriel, 1992).

Afroxenophobia is as rife and alive in Africa proper and among Diaspora blacks as other types of xenophobia are present among the other races represented in just about every nation. Every single human being on earth has, at one time or the other, expressed xenophobic tendencies or hostilities, insults, abuse and panned a person from another race, ethnicity, socio-economic class or educational background (Oni & Okunade, 2017). Hate and fear move in constant flux, where one moment one is Anglophone; Negrophile; Francophile; Chino-phile, and another moment one is Anglophobe, Francophobe, and Chino-phobe. Afroxenophobia like Identitarianism emerged out of Pan-Africanist ideology with local variations such as the Uhuru movement in Kenya, Ujamaa (a socialist Co-operative) economic movement of Tanzania with former President Julius Nyerere as its chief proponent, circa 1950-1960 (Eigas 1980: 387-393). Although hate was not the overriding impulse of these movements, the movements arose out of the desire for African Identity or Nationalism as a counterpoint to colonial control and power. Pan-Africanism’s underlying philosophy is the political and social union of the indigenous inhabitants of Africa with those in the Diaspora in the Caribbean, Latin America, the United States and Canada.

A. The African Union Charter, African Identity and Afroxenophobic Incentive

Embedded in the AU Charter are strong Identitarian incentives for the promotion of Afrocentricism. The Charter begins with homilies, which really are sentinel calls for the defence of the motley ethnicities of Africa against the harmful advances of other nationalities and jurisdictions against Africa’s ontology. The African Union takes its philosophical inspirations from the pre-independence Pan-Africanists proponents as Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah and other luminaries of African descent. The Pan-African Association was established around 1897 by Henry Sylveter-Williams, who is reported to have organized the first Pan-African Conference in London in 1900 (Wikipedia, 2022). Its purpose was from the start, the promotion of Black Identity in exclusion to all other ethnic or racial interests. Its ideology was deepened and, perhaps, hijacked by post-independence leaders like Muammar Gaddafi of Libya for their own political agenda. From its soaring Charter, the African Union was dedicated to the ‘promotion, consolidation and development of African interests and its peoples, culture, languages, and autonomy’, values which are not different from those of Generation Identitaire (AU Charter, 1963, p. 1). The cultural promotion included the adoption of traditional, non-English or Biblical names even as first names. In the case of Ghana, names like (Ishmael, John, David, Mathew, Mary and Esther) of people were dropped from children’s names by way of affidavits and change of names, in preference for ethnic names such as Kofi, Yaw, Kwame, Ama, and Akua. Casual ware, aesthetics and office attire were also affected. In the fervent of rabid Pan-Africanist resurgences from about 1950 through 1996, clothing choices such as ‘Jorome’ shirts in Ghana, Togolese Dumas top and down print ware, Zaire crew cut print fabric suits, and Nigeria flowing Boubou made from cotton or lace and worn by both men and women, were not only promoted but made compulsory by presidential directives or national policies. It turns out the cotton material used to sew the Boubou in Nigeria is mostly manufactured by the Bauer Company in Germany. The lace comes from China and India, three geographically places that are as culturally, politically and economically different from just about every nation in Africa, is tantamount to cultural appropriation. The extent of cultural relativism in the appropriation of cultural and proprietary artifacts by Africans is even far more invasive into African cosmopolitan culture than the active propaganda by Europe or China for the indoctrination of the African child that his culture is inferior to that of Europe or China. Today the mainstreaming of Pan-Africanist tendencies is still present. In Ghana, just about every company or government agency, department or ministry has a so-called “Friday Wear”, a printed cloth inspired by Dumas, Holland fabrics to promote African or national pride? Nonetheless, Pan-Africanism continues to permeate all facets of Negro or Black lives even today, including the development of Negro spiritualism and religious ethos with many of the people of Africa not being aware of the philosophical, historical and sociological basis of their way of live or religious faith (Garvey, 1983, pp. 20-30).

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B. Generation Identitaire as Pan-European Nationalist Movement

“Génération Identitaire (GI) was established in 2012 in France, stemming from a bigger movement called Les Identitaires (or previously Bloc Identitaire), and advocating for a new generation of active European citizens. The movement spread across the European continent and now has prominent affiliated groups in the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria and Italy.” GI’s main foci are two-prong: elimination of immigrants from Europe or the stoppage of new migrants into Europe and the need to change European political thought from liberalism to conservatism (https://eyes-on-europe.eu/defending-european-identity-the-dubious-struggle-of-generation-identitaire).

Both of these movements, that is, Pan-Africanism and European Identitarianism, though uncomfortable to compare them on the same pages due to racial undertones of one or the other, appear to have the same impulses and incentives. They both are dedicated to the promotion, protection and defence of their ethnic, national, and other interests in exclusion of others and for the benefit of their members: Europe First, or Africa First. Unlike Eurocentricism as pursued by the adherents of GI, the development of Afrocentricism or Pan-Africanism was not initially motivated by anti-immigrant fervor but the need to correct the wrongs of the international (perhaps, white) community against the people of African descent resulting from slavery, racism and discrimination and promote Black pride. Although never really admitted to, publicly, the AU’s agenda included kicking the white man or woman out of Africa or, at least, out of African affairs, but for Africa’s dependence on the later. The promotion was not only done on the intellectual plane, but on the lyrical, poetic as well as in street demonstrations and civil disobedience and through the music of luminaries like James Brown: ‘Say it Loud, I am Black and Proud’, (Brown, Vox Studios, 1968).

Nonetheless, at some epochal points in time, the nobility of Afrocentricism as racial and economic equity and inequality equalizing agent, was rejected in favor of tribal and ethnic cleansing against other ethnic groups and nationalities. At such moments, African nationalism became the same in purpose and conduct as GI groups. It was not only the nationals that were culpable of attacks of foreigners, but central governments too participated in hate fare. Nations like Ghana and Nigeria enacted anti-immigrant and foreigner laws that were swiftly implemented by forceful removal of immigrants (Romola, 2015, Oni & Okunade, 2017).

Today, the driving philosophy of Eurocentricism or Generation Identitaire has matured and crystallized against the seemingly uncontrolled migration, economic deprivation of the youth in many European nations. The fear of the loss of European Identity, European bloodlines, and European racial features of being white, brown or blue eyes, blond or brunette, and speaking unique European language or languages drives the popularity of GI and its progeny of Identitarians (Fligstein et al., 2012; Holmes, 2009).

Added to the social pressures are economic dynamics. Due to economic pressures on governments everywhere, ‘immigration has recently become a salient, front-burner issue in both the advanced and developing nations’. This appears to ‘suggest a rejection of globalization, and ethnic diversification’ (Hjerm, 1998; Fetzer, 2000; Miller & Rensmann, 2010).

The harmonization of identitarian and xenophobic contentions with vigilantism in Continental Africa and the European Union is an attempt to explain the anti-immigrant phenomenon sweeping across many geographical spaces. It is not limited to Europe in general, or the Far-Right in France, or the Alt-Right in the United States (Fligstein et al., 2012; Holmes, 2009). The attacks by members of Generation Identity and Afroxenophobia in other African nations seem to validate the avowed hatred against all things foreign by the Boko Haram movement. Boko Haram also hates the foreign usurpation of Islamic African cultures and traditions. Although such a comparison may be unfair, the consequential effect of physical attacks perpetrated by civilians against foreigners and their businesses is probably the same as being a victim of Boko Haram incursion or attack on both nationals and foreigners, irrespective of religious faith. Although a group like Boko Haram has an ideological basis for its expressed hatred for foreigners of a certain kind and all things foreign, there is not a known indigenous movement besides Boko Haram with organized structures or ideology operating in Africa, as it is with the Identitarian Movement and its branches in Austria or New Zealand. Predominantly however, what seem to pertain in Africa, and in nations such as Ghana, South Africa, even Nigeria, which is often the victim of vigilante activities, is quasi-state sponsored xenophobic ad hoc movements that may attack foreigners under the guise of enforcing the law. There is also state-sponsored vigilantism that helps to maintain law and order against so-called marauding Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria, Ghana and in Tanzania. The anti-immigrant politics appears to be evolving into mainstream national and international politics with mixed results at local and national elections in both Africa and the EU (Handler, 2019; White, 2012; Oppong, 2002, Owusu, 2001).

C. The Nexus between Vigilantism and Xenophobia

It has been asserted in this paper that vigilantism is the vehicle through which xenophobic attacks, intimidation, harassment and expulsion of immigrants take place. It is therefore germane to consider its nature as resplendently elucidated in the referred literature. Fleisher (2000, p. 209) when writing about “sungusungu” or state-sponsored vigilantism among cattle herding community of Kuria of Tanzania,
offered that “the word ‘vigilanism’ is widely invoked to refer to actions taken to control behavior deemed to be ‘deviant’, outside the purview of the official justice system’. In this instance, the deviant behavior would be the ‘invasion’ of European and African nations by migrants or immigrants, to describe migration loosely.

In 1974, Sederberg and Rosenbaum (1974, p. 542) defined vigilantism to mean ‘to take the law in one’s hands, a sort of do-it-yourself justice when resorting to all other established means fails’. In this instance, the destruction of Nigerian shops and business in Johannesburg and other towns in South Africa in 2008 and 2015 onwards, for example would fit the description.

Johnston (1996, p. 222) defined vigilantism to mean ‘to be alert’. Vigilantes are first responders ‘to danger or to detect danger’ (Johnston, 1996). As has been noted, alertness is one of the skills of Afroxenophobic and Identitarian group activities.

Other researchers such as Kowalewski (1982), and Little and Sheffield (1983) defined vigilantism to mean ‘establishment violence’, perpetrated in furtherance of ‘conservative’ ends, and ‘designed to create, maintain, or recreate an established socio-political order” (Fleisher, 2000, p. 209).

It was noticed that the expulsion of Nigerians in Ghana in 1968 and that of Ghanaians in Nigeria in 1983 are two cases that fall within “establishment or government-sponsored vigilantism and violence”. Together, the characterization contained in the definitions provided, describes the violence or intimidation perpetrated against foreigners by GI groups and Afroxenophobic nations in either Europe or Africa.

The resurgence of anti-immigrant politics and increased public discourse on the matter, reflect the growing concerns of the affected populations about their ontological security. Immigrants are often scapegoated as the couriers of diseases, crime and vice. In some cases, they have been accused of appropriating the national wealth, jobs, contracts and every economic activity available (Handler, 2019; White, 2012; Hartleb, 2011).

D. The Search for Identity leads to Xenophobia in the EU and AU

Some of the reasons for the current wave of anti-immigrant protests is ascribed to the search for self, for national identity, which provides the fuel for the ignition of ‘Identity Politics’, particularly in difficult economic times (Bajaj et al., 2016). Part of an individual’s selfhood can be explained by membership in specific groups’, according to social identity theory of group behavior (Handler, 2019:1; Tajfel and Turner, 1985; Wiarda, 2014). Identity Politics applies to groups who identify themselves with their own kind, through work, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and economic status (Niworu, 2018; Wiarda, 2014; Horowitz & Noiriel, 1992; Tajfel, 1985). These descriptors are the core characteristics of Pan-Africanism. In Ghana and in South Africa, identity politics is defined by one’s affiliation with a Political Party more than one’s ethnicity, although the mainstream Political Parties’ memberships tend to be skewed to one ethnic group or the other in terms of percentage representation. For example, due to the extreme politicization of the mundane activities of the society, in Ghana, each man or woman is what he or she makes himself or herself to be: Either a member of the Political Party (A) the New Patriotic Party or, Party (B), the National Democratic Congress. Man is reduced to a political equation: NPP or NDC. Beyond such labels, politically unaffiliated men and women are simply not as important entities in the apportionment of the national cake, jobs, opportunities and justice as those, who are credentialed members of a given Political Party. For this reason, they can be ignored, denied jobs, promotion and even succor (Norman, 2019).

The importance of such identification and affiliation is due to the intentional and uneven distribution of jobs to those with bloodlines closer to the Presidency, the CEO or the Chief Director or a leading member of the Political Party in power. ‘All politics is identity politics – and pretending otherwise only benefits the far-right’. Or in the case of Africa, it only benefits the opposition. ‘All politics requires that we build coalitions around a shared picture of reality, a shared image of the future, deeply rooted in our image of ourselves, and what justice or progress might look like. Racial or ethnic background shapes how we experience the criminal justice system’. In Ghana and in Africa proper, Political Party affiliations shapes how one experiences justice, whether in a criminal or civil matter. ‘Gender shapes how we experience work, or how we experience violence. If one were disabled, one would be more likely to be at the frontline of austerity’. Political and economic demands that bind interest groups together, whether it is the demand for greater public transparency and accountability or it is about the equitable distribution of the national cake, ‘are not indulgent departures from real politics. They are rooted in concrete realities of who has power, who has resources, who is exposed to violence and who is sheltered from it. They are cultural frameworks for understanding, organizing and indeed changing the world’ (Eleanor, 2019, pp. 1-2).

Nationalism is a form of identity politics, crafting a sense of a collective, and then using that image to determine policy priorities: who gets welfare payments, who gets employment priority, who gets bombed. White supremacy is a form of identity politics, too: one which has dominated global politics and class relations for hundreds of years. The collective pearl-clutching over about the embattled
state of “western liberal democracy” is a kind of identity politics. It concocts an idea of a shared universal “progress”, which must be defended at all costs... (Eleanor, 2019, pp. 1-3).

‘Nationalism’ or tribal politics as practiced even today in Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and many other African nations, ‘is indeed, a form of identity politics’ or patriotism and branding (Nagashima, 1970; Fan, 2006; Hakala et al., 2013). People everywhere are motivated by the same or similar impulses or passion for personal security, food and shelter, for example, and differ only in degrees. It is therefore not inconceivable to think that there may exist similar political movement in other parts of Africa, without yet a name or public presence and ideology like Generation Identitai or the Far-Right, pushing the national agenda against foreigners and with acerbic ideology such as Boko Haram. Boko Haram, though an extremely violent movement, is about African Identitarianism much in the same way that Al-Qaïda was about Islamic Identitarianism (Oliver, 2015; Ibramhim, 2007; The 9/11 Commission Report, 2002). If the promoters of xenophobia are considered as being also the promoters of extreme nationalism, it can be also said again that, the activities of racial vigilantes or xenophobes are not different from the Far-Right. Just as the Far-Right attacks other nationalities trading or living in their nations, in South African or Ghana, activists or vigilantes do carry out the same or similar attacks on Nigerians, Fulani Herdsmen and other foreigners (Oppong, 2002).

E. Conclusion to the Literature Review

The operations of the Identitarian movement in Europe, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States of America, occur away from the African soil. Yet, the effect of the actions of its activists affect the African continent in diverse ways, much in the same way that xenophobic attacks and vigilantism do when they occur in an African enclave or community. The European Identitarian movement or ‘Generation Identitaire’ originated from France as an off shoot of the Far-Right Political movement. Activists of the movement advocate an elusive homogenous world, where only people of certain European physical features and pedigree live apart from the other races and religions, exchanging value for value, perhaps, among themselves. They self-describe as ‘ethno-pluralists’, and ‘espouse ideas of cultural racism, xenophobia and racialism’ (Burley, 2017). The movement hates racial minorities, adherents of Islam, migrants and other non-white people (Lee Benjamin, 2016; Knight, 2017). Afroxenophobia has been practiced in Africa for a long time. Researchers, scholars and policy makers in the continent may do well to halt criticizing European Identitarian activities against foreigners and immigrants, if they do not at the same time see that Afroxenophobia chases the same ends as Identitarianism in Europe and elsewhere.

II. Method

The author assessed both the public health, human rights, constitutional and procedural approaches to the topic. The data set collated was analyzed based on the author’s skills and abilities in both analytical and empirical research, public health and human rights law vis-à-vis international best practice in legal immigration and cultural diversification. Altogether, 91 pertinent publications were reviewed for this paper spread among the major themes of Identitarianism, European Identity Politics, Xenophobia, Pan-Africanism, Immigration and Migration issues as well as vigilantism and violence. The snowball effect was relied on in the search for appropriate literature, starting with the key paper, and searching the reference list to locate more relevant papers. Inclusion of a paper in this list was whether it addressed any of the three themes.

Search engines included Researchgate, Goggle Scholar as well as data bases such as Springer, Science Direct, Scopus, Psychological and Psychiatric Journals, and Journals on Migration, Human Rights and Violence, Political Science and the Humanities. To identify appropriate literature, different permutations were used in the search, which included “links between Identitarianism and European Identity Politics and Xenophobic attacks”, “Vigilantism and Xenophobia”, “Pan-Africanism and Xenophobia”, “Pan-Africanism and Vigilante attacks of Immigrants”; “Causes of Xenophobia” were found in blogs, news files, reports, scholarly papers and government grey papers. “Identity politics in Ghana” and the “History of Xenophobia in Africa” were also searched. These were broadened to include: “Afroxenophobia”, or “African-on-African violence or vigilantism”, “expulsion of Nigerians from Ghana”, and “expulsion of Ghanaians from Nigeria”. Most of the results produced by the search on the World Wide Web directly related or addressed the topic or sub-themes of the topic, although only a handful of the papers related to Pan-African incentives for Xenophobia or Identity politics.
III. FINDINGS

A. Competition, Hostilities and Xenophobic Attacks

It has been reported by various researchers that competition in the same industry or the fear of competition held by nationals, arouses hostile feelings towards both legal and illegal immigrants (Aremu, 2015; Asamoah, 2014; Fligstein et al., 2012; Holmes, 2009). Asamoah, (2014) appeared to have implied that xenophobia is a form of trade protectionism that seeks to eliminate not only the opportunity to foreigners to compete. It also seeks to deny the foreigner access to the market space, by physically removing him away from the place of the competition (Aremu & Ajayi, 2014).

In some cases, governments have carved out by legislation, trade exclusionary zones for the nationals. This may include demanding higher minimum capitalization requirement from foreigners as well as proof of residency, statutory entry requirements for certain commercial activities and creating a complex regulatory hurdle to frustrate the foreigners in favor of the nationals. The Aliens Compliance Order of the government of Dr. Abrefa Busia of Ghana of 1969 was such legislative tinkering by a regional member nation that had previously promoted Pan-Africanism in earnest.

The motivations for the growth of Identitarianism in the EU have been attributed to economic shocks and stressors (Eleanor, 2019; Handler, 2019; Niworu, 2018; Aremu, 2015; Asamoah, 2014; Fligstein et al., 2012; Horowitz & Noiriel, 1992; Tajfel, 1985). In the case of Ghana or Nigeria, the agitations against the Nigerians in Ghana then and even now, has been aroused by the perceived control of Nigerian traders over select commercial activities, such as secondhand car spare parts dealership, second-hand clothing market, domestic electrical wires, sockets and cables. In the period leading to the 1969 expulsion of Nigerians in Ghana, Ghana’s economy was in dire straits. Both the nationals and central government blamed the worsening of micro-and macro-economic conditions, run-away exchange regime and the scarcity of essential commodities, on both the legal and illegal immigrants from Nigeria and on other foreigners. The International Monetary Fund, IMF offered a truce in the blaming game: The Structural Adjustment Program. The government of Dr. Abrefa Busia was hesitant to commit Ghana to that facility, due to the strict and unfair conditions attached to the facility. In the meanwhile, the nation saw the Nigerians as easy prey. In one of the biggest open sky markets in Africa, Makola market, in Kantamanto both in Accra, and in Kejetia trading centers as well as traders at Kumasi Asafo markets, Obuasi, Ho, Kpandu, and Kpeve markets, and in the entire national commercial centers, including Navrongo, Bolgatanga, Wa, Tumu, Yendi, Paga and Tamale, the agitation for the expulsion of Nigerians was open, vociferous and deliberate. This was extended to Indians, Syrians and Lebanese and other mom and pap commercial operators from the Middle East.

The agitation which assumed political character when some long-time but foreign residents in Ghana began to dabble in national politics beginning from 1961, took a long time coming. The participation in national politics by the foreigners was, in hindsight, totally unwise. Wealthy Nigerian businessmen like Alufa Osman Lardan, Ahmadu Baba, Samuel Faleye, Balamimu Oni and Alhaji Raji Bakure got themselves deported from Ghana, by Kwame Nkrumah for sponsoring a political party, long before the mass expulsion of more than two million of his countrymen were deported. What Alhaji Bakure and his compatriots had began had taken seed among some of their admirers, who continue to sow seeds of discontent among other foreign traders and business community. Their agitation garnered more vim when President Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966 with the support of the Central Intelligence Agency of the U.S.A in order to stop Ghana from following Kwame Nkrumah into Communist or Socialist political bloc. The agitation for the expulsion of the foreigners continued unabated by the supporters of the new civilian administration which took over the national government after a series of failed military regimes. By now, the demand for the expulsion of Nigerians in Ghana had become the new national consciousness, the new obsession.

The next civilian government after the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah, was led by Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia. Although Dr. Busia did not see eye to eye with Mr. Kwame Nkrumah, (Nkrumah’s Ph. D was honorary) his government continued with some of Nkrumah’s programs. His government dealt the decisive blow to foreigners when the national parliament promulgated and passed the Aliens Compliance Order of 1968, to the applause of the proud Ghanaians. An interesting historical fact about all this is that at the inauguration of Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia as Prime Minister of Ghana, (circa: 1969-1972) he said some nice things about democracy and the need to form an all-inclusive government of not only Ghanaians but also those in the West African community of nations. Busia said:

_We consider that an important function of the democracy we will endeavor to establish here in our country will be to enlarge sympathies one for the other, and make our souls more roomy so that our loyalties to our families, tribes, political parties do not divide us as a nation, but rather provide the foundation for the extension of the brotherhood of family or tribe to the wider brotherhood of the nation_ (1969, p. 1).
These words are scary because they are devoid of patriotism or nationalism. He asked Ghanaians then to make their “souls more roomy so that our loyalties to our families” can be extended to the tribe. For such words to be written and spoken by a recognized sociologist of international reputation, those words were evidence that communitarianism (regionalism, pan-Africanism) was dead in Ghana, or the nation never practiced communitarianism or even Pan-Africanism. That the inclusive aspects of the concept of Pan-Africanism were not mainstreamed but lay in the heart and soul of Kwame Nkrumah and his fellow founding fathers of the Organization for African Unity, now the African Union. Therefore, his passing ended the national pretention for all things Pan-African. What we thought to be a communitarian ecosystem was all about family and then maybe the tribe. Busia saw commitment to country as a third priority to first, commitment to one’s family and then, perhaps, to the tribe, before commitment to the nation. Increasingly, the followers of the Busia political tradition are being seen as being more about family, than, perhaps, the tribe and, perhaps, the nation.

In the same speech, Dr. Busia asserted the national desire to live as an independent nation that cared not only for its citizens but its neighbors as well. And while he was showing off, telling Ghanaians how independent they were, how they would not allow any powers and principalities from the Western capitalist bloc or Eastern socialist bloc to boss Ghanaians around, his government was being bossed around by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to go for an economic bandage under the Structural Adjustment Program. The speech continues:

Let it not be thought by anyone that we shall be tied to the apron strings of any country, whether east or west. But we cannot run away from the facts of history. It would be unconvincing pretence not to acknowledge the fact at this moment of history we share more common interests with some countries than with others. These compel us to endeavor to forge the closest links with our brothers in Africa, particularly with our neighbors with whom we share common boundaries. While we acknowledge this, we also recognize that we need to establish friendly relations with all countries in furtherance of our economic development and progress generally (1969, p. 2).

What seems so amazing even today; is that while Dr. Busia was wooing the West African community as one who would pursue an all-inclusive government and nation, his government under the auspices of the Progress Party was busy formulating the Alien Compliance Order. Prior to their departures, the nation seduced them into selling their holdings and private properties to nationals at throw-away prices, or through forced acquisition against claims that some of those nationals were the owners of those demised properties. As the legal cases lingered on, the parties that were foreign were eventually forced to vacate from the nation. And then because of their absence from the jurisdiction and the several changes of government, the cases died natural deaths. Some of the Ghanaians became owners of houses and businesses in which they had not invested even a dime but acquired through moving papers around for official stamps to authenticate their ownerships (Oni & Okunade, 2017, Aremu, 2015, Oppong, 2002).

B. Nigeria’s President Shehu Shagari’s “Ghana Must Go Movement of Hate”, 1983

By 1983, the miracle that the Nigerian oil discovery and wealth was meant to cast had begun to elude the nation due largely, to official corruption and a slump in oil prices on the international market (Ismail, 2010). President Shegu Shagari saw that the panacea lay in the removal of the foreign traders in Nigeria to pave way for the nationals, which would in turn create a multiplier effect in the marketplace and help the Nigerian economy regain its sheen. His government came out with a simple, lyrical slogan to articulate its anti-immigrant policy: “Ghana Must Go”. “The President, Shegu Shagari had thought that the “Ghana Must Go” policy would increase his popularity, and legitimacy and enhance its electoral victory in the 1983 presidential and parliamentary elections (Owusu, 2012). Finally, the chicken has come home to roost, when in 1983, January 17th, Alaji Ali Baba, the then Nigerian Federal Minister of Internal Affairs, in a televised broadcast, boldly but calmly ordered all unskilled foreigners residing and working illegally in Nigeria to leave the country by 31st January 1983. Although he was careful in pinpointing it out that the order was for unskilled foreign workers, everyone on the streets of Nigeria understood it to mean all foreigners, irrespective of typology of skill. This affected some two million illegal aliens who were mostly from Ghana (Aremu, 2013).

What happened to Nigerian residents in Ghana in 1969 was evenly and squarely retaliated in 1983 as an act of retorsion in international diplomacy. Ghanaians made a big show of criticizing Nigeria for its response which came when Ghana was least expecting. In 1983-84, life in Ghana was miserable, truly horrible under the military government of Jerry John Rawlings. There was hunger, starvation, scarcity of every imaginable consumer product and systemic poverty. The arrival of the almost two million Ghanaians from Nigeria made life in Ghana very unbearable and pessimistic even for the usually optimistic Rawlings’ military government. Despite the historical fact of what Ghana had done to Nigerians in 1969, which would have been totally insane if Nigeria had not retaliated, sanctimonious Ghana heaved all the blame on Nigeria. This is, perhaps, the main marker for why Ghanaians simply hate, Nigerians, though if asked on camera.
about their feelings towards Nigerians, there is always prevarication (Esses, 2001; Aremu & Ajayi, 2014; Hart, 2016, Oni & Okunade, 2017).

C. The Rejection of EU policy towards Social Exclusion by Generation Identitaire

The concept of Social Exclusion translated as social integration of immigrants, the vulnerable members of European society so as to reduce poverty and raise social inclusion, became a sore point for the Identitarian Movement. The movement took the literal meaning of the phrase: Social Exclusion to mean actually the exclusion of immigrants from European life. However, the concept of social exclusion was meant to be an enabler not the way the Identitarian Movement has turned it into. Mathieson et al (2008) reported that in the modern era, it was the French that first popularized the term: Exclusion Sociale. However, even in France, the concept dates back to Emile Durkheim’s work in 1895. Peace (2001) traced the origins of the concept and added to the discussion that, ‘exclusion sociale’ was not an affirmative action concept (or entitlement concept) as it is made out to mean now, at least, in France. This reading reverts to Rene Lenoir’s socialist policy initiative in France. It was used as a motivating tool to enable people to reengage in society, especially those who had been down and out and wanted to get back into mainstream social activities like securing gainful employment, marrying someone who was actually gainfully employed, and so on. It was “important to know what people were being excluded from and by whom” (Peace, 2001; Levitas, 2005; Estivill, 2006). In Western Europe and the European Union, the phrase has for a long time underscored public policy on poverty alleviation, and the social integration of immigrants by compelling immigrants to learn the national language and culture (Mathieson et al., 2008; Harvey, 1990, 1994; Silver, 1994; Barry, 1998).

Despite the rapid assimilation of the concepts of social exclusion and social isolation into the very social fabric and legal protections of the citizens and residents of the various European nations, particularly those in the European Union, genuine efforts were made to define the terms for operational purposes. As can be seen, to say that the social exclusion means in practical terms, social inclusion raises a lot of questions. If that was the meaning, why wasn’t the term “Social Inclusion” used. If social inclusion had been used, perhaps, the debate about exclusion sociale would not have arisen. Among the EU member states, there are various definitions for the same term. In Northern Ireland, social exclusion is defined as: … a set of processes, including within the labor market and the welfare system, by which individuals, households, communities or even whole social groups are pushed towards or kept to the margins of society. It encompasses not only material deprivation but also more broadly the denial of opportunities to participate fully in social and civil life (Peace, 2001; Dialogue: Social Exclusion/ Social Inclusion, 1995). Another definition of social exclusion offered by UK is: “Social exclusion is a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown” (Peace, 2001; Barry, 1998).

Mathieson et al., (2008) offered that “the European Commission has taken up the concept as central to the formation of social policy, by linking the notion of social exclusion more closely with the idea that it is the inadequate realization of social rights”. That is to say, citizens cannot live their best lives without autonomy and choice within an enabling economic system. There was the appreciation that the ‘social rights of the citizens’ were best demonstrated or experienced in their basic living standards and in their abilities to participate ‘in the major social and occupational opportunities of the society’. This thinking was extended to Europe’s recent immigrants, legal or illegal (Room et al., 1992; Sen, 1993; Ridsdel, 2012). There appears to have been a major leap forward within the European discourse of social exclusion. From thinking of the capabilities of the citizens in view of their social rights, or the lack of it, there was a jump from that platform to the conclusion that, social exclusion results in poverty among other contributing factors. Mathieson et al., (2008) offered that, despite this apparent leap, Western Europe recognized that in addition to the linear equation that social exclusion equated with poverty, the ability to earn an income or undertake expenditure was not the only indicator of poverty. That was to admit that while income is essential means to various ends, income was not the overriding need of people. The next effort was applied to identify the causes of social exclusion or isolation.

D. Juxtaposition of the causes of Social Exclusion and Solidarity: Europe and Africa

A Ghanaian historian, Adu Boahen offered that the practice of social exclusion as a negative human rights concept, has existed in the African context for as long as those societies had been created. In the European context, Oni and Okunade (2017) made similar assertion. In the context of Africa, and in the rural setting, communal ties are strictly observed, whether the society is organized around either the matrilineal or patrilineal system of inheritance and legacies or not (Boahen, 1966). In Africa, social exclusion existed and aimed to achieve both a punitive outcome and a community health measure. As a punitive measure, if a person committed an offense universally accepted as morally wrong and against the normative values of that society or against social etiquette, the individual was excluded from the community by banishment or,
on a more permanent basis, by execution (Boahen, 1966). In the old times, organized prison system as we know it today in most of Africa did not exist in many African city-states. Though slaves were kept in temporary holding bays, or huts, and dungeons, or holes, the communities did not keep criminal offenders in such places for reformative purposes, but rather either executed them or took the more lenient measure of banishment. This practice accommodated slavery and probably perfected it by not just sending the alleged wrong doer into another town but rather by selling the person or persons for profit to overseas merchants.

Social exclusion was also conducted against people born with certain deformities, malformations and disabilities (Kambon, 2016; Roberts, 1997, Richardson et al., 1961). Infants with physical or developmental challenges were summarily killed, thrown away or smothered to death. The consideration here was for the avoidance of cost and shame, justified by animist religious ethos. In a place where most of the people were poor and uneducated, where most of the people belonged to clans that were constituent parts of the larger families and therefore the community, poverty was never the basis for discrimination or segregation. This position is affirmed by Kambon:

As in most developing countries, there is a strong extended family system. Poorer members may seek financial assistance from their better off relatives for school fees, medical expenses etc. ... In Asante, the family line is matrilineal - in that it passes through the mother to her children. A man is strongly related to his mother’s brother but only weakly related to his father’s brother. This must be viewed in the context of a polygamous society in which the mother/child bond is likely to be much stronger than the father/child bond. As a result, in inheritance, a man’s nephew (sister’s son) will have priority over his own son. Uncle-nephew relationships therefore assume a dominant position. In Ghana, legislation was introduced in 1984 to change this traditional pattern of inheritance (Kambon, 2016, pp. 105-113).

In the European context, at least in the metropolitan setting, Mathieson et al. (2008) offered that people have chosen rather to be excluded but not because of poverty. “Similarly, in Africa, historical research effectively challenged dualist models of economy and society which posited an excluded sector (traditional and subsistence).” What was being resisted was how the various ethnic groups forming the constituent nations, were combined leading to civil wars and protracted insurgency in Nigeria with the Biafra war, Burundi, Rwanda, Angola, Mozambique, Liberia and Sierra Leone, to mention but a few. “The conventional wisdom which had emerged by the first half of the 1970s was that individuals and communities had been incorporated into the broader economy and society and that what was problematic was their terms of incorporation. Since the late 1970s, with spiraling crises, key concepts have been “disengagement” and “withdrawal”. “People are not suffering from poverty owing to exclusion. Rather, they are excluding themselves from the wider economy and society, and from the burdensome and unequal obligations of citizenship, in order to survive” (Peace, 2001, p. 22).

Just as it is in Europe, in Africa too, the urban poor see a nexus between central government policies and the overall performance of the economy, the outcome of which affects their livelihood and well-being more intimately than any other force. To them, social exclusion is not only about economics, income and expenditure but it is also about the synergy between the people and the state in a deliberative and collaborative manner to create the conditions for health, well-being and doing. To this class, the “fulfillment of the human potential”, to borrow the words of Dudley Seers (1969) in his definition of what development meant), “requires much that cannot be specified in purely economic terms.” These include as he put it, “adequate educational levels, freedom of speech, citizenship of a nation that is truly independent”, freedom of expression and from intimidation and a participatory democracy where government decisions “do not predetermine his own decisions” (Seers, 1969, p.7). Although this exposition may be simplification of the complex issues in the concept of social exclusion, meaning, social inclusion, the net effect of the operationalization of the concept in Europe is the instigation of awareness coupled with anger among the urban poor and marginalized in Europe. The economic issues aside, they saw that their nations were bending over backwards to cater for the needs of immigrants and migrants against their pecuniary interest and welfare. Out of such morass, out of the feeling of being even further marginalized in their own nations, emerged what was initially a community of social rejects, who needed to announce their presence by committing or arousing the community’s outrage through violent acts against immigrants. The rhetoric attracted intellectuals who felt that way but were unable to express their views. When they aligned their politics and views with the others of similar goals, a social and political movement was borne.

E. The African Union Charter, African Identity and Afrosexenophobic Incentive:

As previously stated, the AU Charter of 1963 is strong on Identitarian incentives for the promotion of Afrocentrism. Although the homilies in and of themselves do not direct anti-immigrant and other anti-social behaviors, such as genocide, the AU is famously known for doing very little as parts of the Continent are on fire (Adama Dieng, 2014, UN Special Envoy on Genocide).

The first homily of the Charter begins:

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INSPIRED by the noble ideals which guided the founding fathers of our Continental Organization and generations of Pan Africanists in their determination to promote unity, solidarity, cohesion and cooperation among the peoples of Africa and African States; The call-back to history in the context of Africa, is a call-back to the pristine times when Africa was still unadulterated by colonial influences and cultural or religious amalgamations. The recall of a period of heroic struggle and liberation of the continent has already set the stage for the African narrative. The African colonial narrative provides the material for future race conflict and regional conflict due to nostalgic and vengeance ideation and affectations (AU Charter, 1963, p. 1).

Extolling the good old days or anguish over a heroic past has been one of the motivations for the call to recreate an Islamic Caliphate in the Maghreb or Syria or Afghanistan by certain ultra-conservative Muslims. In their angst, they are no different in aims and objective from Generation Identitaire and its progeny of social exclusionist groups (Gartenstein-Ross & Grossman, 2009; Haddad, 2004; Huffman, 2011; Irish, 2012, Jenkins, 2012). The AU has undergone a long period with leaders that enjoyed puffing and exaggeration of the uniqueness of Africa. Among some of these leaders are the original Pan-Africanists Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah and most recently luminaries like Muammar Gaddafi of Libya.

The next homilies run thus:
CONSIDERING the principles and objectives stated in the Charter of the Organization of African Unity and the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community;
RECALLING the heroic struggles waged by our peoples and our countries for political independence, human dignity and economic emancipation;
CONSIDERING that since its inception, the Organization of African Unity has played a determining and invaluable role in the liberation of the continent, the affirmation of a common identity and the process of attainment of the unity of our continent and has provided a unique framework for our collective action in Africa and in our relations with the rest of the world;
DETERMINED to take up the multifaceted challenges that confront our continent and peoples in the light of the social, economic and political changes taking place in the world (ibid, p.1)

The conceptual basis of the AU Charter did not anticipate its bastardization by future adherents or citizens of the constituent nations under its umbrella. Although Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah was instrumental in the formation of the AU, it was envisioned that all of Africa would bind together against the Western Industrialized nations or the Eastern Bloc and exert Black Power.

The movement against foreign domination turned inward against itself. The concept of one continent under God, indivisible and unified in purpose, was replaced by the concept of one country under God united against all other neighboring nations no matter how proximate. Dr. Abrefa Busia’s government adhered to a different drummer which stood in direct opposite to Nkrumah’s call for African Unity and common identity. The AU call for unity and commonality of union was simply too illusive, too reckless with respect to the history of the continent and with total disregard of how not similar the respective African cultures were. The momentum created by AU to achieve an African multi-culturists status, emerged against intense resistance, coalescing in civil war in Angola, Mozambique, Congo DRC, Ethiopia and Eretria and Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Cultural diversification, it appears, is not what Africans really want, but relative national superiority over one’s neighbor or nation. Such resistance is often demonstrated by the various nations by way of xenophobic attacks, expulsion of the citizens of one nation from the host countries and the general underlying issues of mistrust and misalignment of goals among African nations. This is despite, the creation of the Economic Commission of West African States, ECOWAS, South African Development Corporation, SADC, New Partnership for Africa’s Development, NEPAD and recently, the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, CFTA; all inspired by concepts and templates from the EU and the USA.

IV. DISCUSSION

The 1980s opened another epoch of European hate, discrimination and malfeasance against immigrants until it became mainstream politics (Espenshade & Hempstead, 1996; Joppke, 1999; Miller & Rensmann, 2010). The worsening of national economics as it was noticed in the case of Afroxenophobic attacks and expulsions, and returning to Europe, as it was during the era of Nazism, was blamed on immigrants, which catapulted into European consciousness, and the so-called loss of European Identity. While it has been reported that the outcome of anti-immigrant politics differs from country to country in terms of election results, the fact that immigration has emerged as a leading voter concern does not portend well for multiculturalism and international relations (Miller & Rensmann, 2010; Minkenberg, 2001). Handler (2019) presented that European Identity and Identitarianism in Europe are intertwined, because, and according to social identity theory, part of an individual’s right of self-hood can be explained by membership in a specific group. This position is supported by other researchers in the European and other places (Handler, 2019;
Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Wiarda, 2014). It is often argued also that in the EU, identity politics extends to the concept of being European and underscores the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, as well as the European Commission in 1973. These institutions emerged out of conventional principles of freedom, democracy, the rule of law, solidarity, and respect for human rights, despite the promotion of a broader European image, local identity against the backdrop of the principle of subsidiarity. Although some commentators have panned European Identity as illusive, there is no doubt that there is a geographical space called Europe with unique features and identity that do not necessarily appear as American or Canadian or Australian (White, 2012). The quality of the European identity is both ethereal and real. One knows it when one sees it, or experiences it, to borrow from the US Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s definition of pornography (Jacobellis v. Ohio, 1964).

The widening of the EU membership may have had some detrimental effects, although there is strength in numbers and in the coordination of national resources towards the ontological security aspirations of continental Europe. It is also plausible that some of the beneficent expectations are not measurable and therefore, perhaps, illusory and vary from person to person and may lead to variations or worse, itinerant groups for local politics, regional politics and national politics with varying objectives (Handler, 2019; White, 2012; Hartleb, 2011). The checkered history of European Identity appears similar in many respects to the disequilibria experienced by the various African Union member states in the form of civil war, political insurrections, mass movements against the establishment and doubtful degrees of good governance. Although there is obvious differences of purposes and operations between the Identitarian Movement and the Union European, it is emotionally, often difficult to dissociate the activities of the Identity Movement from European Identity (Miller & Rensmann, 2010). The European political set-up, including individual member nation’s representation at the European Parliament, and other Supra-national Committees and Commissions with member states’ representations; it is probably easier to ascribe the conduct and activities of the Identitarian Movement to the broader European Community (Minkenberg, 2001). That is to say, the machinations, the anti-immigrant stance or fight of the Identitarian Movement invariably benefits the broader European Community by reducing the maintenance cost of immigrants or migrants and the cost of social integration for starts (Miller & Rensmann, 2010; Kaina et al., 2017, Ciaglia et al., 2018; Handler, 2018). The fact that the Far-Right Political Party now are significant parliamentary players in a few European nations attests to how far Identitarianism or Identity Politics have become comingled with mainstream European politics, policy directions and diplomatic relationships.

The same kind of impetus and activities cannot be documented about the African Union, Pan-Africanism or even political groups, except by inference. Afroxenophbic movement has not evolved as yet into a political movement, although this possibility should be expected, futuristically speaking. By inference, the African Union, together with its regional compacts such as the Economic Community of West Africa appear to be unconcerned about central government intimidation of the press, murder and abductions of political opponents, and more specifically to this paper, Afroxenophbic attacks against the citizens of another nation in the perpetrator-host nation. When xenophobic attacks are visited on Nigerians in South Africa, or in Ghana, when Nigeria expels nationals of Ghana from its space and when genocide occurs and little is heard from the African Union, it is difficult for that institution to have the respect and political muscle to undertake greater works to protect the citizens of Africa (Blumer, 1958, Bjorklund & Andersen, 2002, Ballyn, 2011). The AU Charter may be part of the reasons why that institution does not promote real African Unity, due to its xenophobic incentive as a consequential outcome of promoting national identity, culture and uniqueness.

V. CONCLUSION

The goal of this effort was to show that there are really no great differences between Identitarianism, Afroxenophbic and Vigilantism. Whiles Identitarianism and Afroxenophbic are two distinct axis of hate, Vigilantism or violent behavior is the means through which either Identitarianism or Afroxenophbic obtains its material expression. If either of such philosophies were merely rhetorical in nature, and devoid of actual violence, it may not have received the attention of many scholars, researchers, politicians, policy makers and the public. Both Identitarianism and Afroxenophbic have violent streaks, the manifestation of which could be a lone wolf attack in a mosque in New Zealand (Ip, 2021). It could also be an active shooter event in a gay night club in Florida, or the beating, killing, and destroying of Nigeria shops and business in South Africa as well as the expulsion of foreign residents in Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Gabon, Angola and many other black African nations, all under the watchful eyes of the African Union. All of such attacks and killings on the African continent due to the three axis of hate: Identitarianism, Afroxenophbic and Vigilantism led the United Nations to create in 2018 ‘Xenowatch’, “an online platform managed by the University of the Witwatersrand, an UNAI member institution in Johannesburg to monitor xenophobic threats and attacks on people and property across South Africa” (Academic Impact, 2022).
Frankly, the Xenowatch initiative should have been created by the African Union, but it was not meant to be. As a general matter of observation, the Africa Union is often too slow in reacting to matters of continental concern to Africa. Although no one in his or her right mind would accept violence as rational choice in dealing with the wicked issue of illegal migration, xenophobic and Identitarian attempts to consolidate ethnic hegemony through vigilant activities, have proven to be ineffective tools for managing the growing concerns for illegal migration. While the integration of immigrants is costly and entails tedious processes besides the financial outlays for nations that continue to receive legal immigrants and illegal migrants, it appears to be a more humane approach against harm to another person due to their immigration status. Social integration and inclusion are more likely to yield better outcomes than the use of force and violence on both legal immigrants and illegal migrants and offer huge dividends to soften the initial financial investment of money and time. When immigrants are well-integrated, they become responsible taxpayers and net social contributors in the long run.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

No conflict of interest is declared.

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