Interrogating the Contending Issues in Nigeria-Ghana Relations: Reciprocity of Consequences or Constructive Engagement

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The objective of this paper is to offer theoretical, analytical, and methodological investigations into the character of Nigeria's relations and reactions towards Ghana on how it has been able to get to the level of reciprocity over trade disputes, political differences/relevance and superiority of influence in West Africa, Africa, and the world. In recent times, the counter measurers over demolition of Nigeria's High Commission building in Accra and here conducts against the Ghana's moves while it opted for constructive engagement and downplay the call for retaliatory or regulatory steps on Ghana. It also investigated how Nigeria has been able to use its constructive dialogue skills/diplomacy over reasons of reciprocity on other matters of national interest in relation to Ghana as citizens of both states have been deeply affected while businesses shutdown in both capitals at critical stages. The paper posits to examine the point of departure and seek ways for diplomatic intervention, and calls for leadership political will, factoring in the case of African Continental Free Trade Area Agreements, National and Strategic interests of both states, and the establishment of a compensation fund to Nigeria and Nigerians in Ghana. The paper makes use of secondary data while it adopts theories of interdependence and reciprocity as theoretical frameworks for the study.

Keywords: bilateralism, cooperation, constructive engagement, diplomacy, interdependence, national interest, reciprocity

Introduction

Nigeria-Ghana relations dated back to pre-colonial era. It was formally solidified shortly after independence of both countries from the same colonial master—Britain in the early 1960's. They therefore established diplomatic embassies in their various capitals to strengthen their relations. Ghana and Nigeria have been trading for more than five years before independence as traders visited each other country for business activities. After independence, Africa contemporary record stated that more foreigners trooped into Ghana due to the encouragement of freedom of movement encouraged by the pre-colonial masters also as result of increased economic activity in Ghana (Alagbe, 2019). While the establishment of diplomatic relations is based on reciprocity, mutual trust and understanding (George, 2010).

The two states can be located within the West African region. Nigeria had robust cordial relations with all its neighbours on bilateral agreements based on good neighbourliness and friendship to promote political, strategies, cultural, social educational and economic integration growth and support Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) efforts in West Africa (Country Studies, n.d.). Both countries are key forces to

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be reckoned with in West Africa and Africa as they are needed to complement each other's' contributions to make the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS strong trading blocs as more investment and bilateral friendship between them would lead to the West Africa sub-region's prosperity. The cordiality has been a reflection of the preferences of the ruling elites which are normally rationalized as a means of aggregating and promoting their core value and national interests in their foreign policy dispositions (Aiguosatile & Onebamhoi, 2011).

The two countries are the biggest economies in West African sub-region, their historical, economic, social, political similarities by the way, both states are normally skeptical of each other's policies commonly in trade matters. There is strong complex in their views on regional integration with respect to their elites perceptions and trade/economic policies (Ademola, 2016).

According to Aiguosatile and Onebamhoi (2011),

> Even though Ghana and Nigeria have the history, experience, the culture, the resolve, the people and resources to lead both the region's integration and economic growth, the foreign policy of Nigeria towards Ghana in particular and the relations between the two countries in general over the years, has faced dramatic twists and turns. In a restless manner, the relations between the two countries have oscillated between co-operation and mutual suspicion. There is no gainsaying the fact that both countries are forced to reck on with not only in the sub-region but also in the African continent. They both need to complement each other's efforts to make ECOWAS a powerful trading bloc as more investment bilateral relations between the two countries would lead by the West African Sub-region's Prosperity. (p. 141).

To Akinterinwa (2020),

> There are three immediate and critical irritants in Nigeria's relationship with Ghana: applicability of reciprocity in the relationship; misunderstanding between the government of Nigeria and Ghana, on the one hand, and between the people of Nigeria and Ghana, on the other, and relevance or irrelevance of diplomacy as means of settlement of the misunderstanding. (p. 1)

States Responsibilities to International Obligations, Bilateral Relationship and Multilateral Engagements

States responsibilities are fundamental principles of global international law and conventions emanating from the nature, dynamics of international legal system, the doctrine of state sovereignty and equality of states. It afforded that when one state commits a deliberate unlawful action against the other, international collective responsibility is put in place between both states. As such, the international obligation gives rise to prerequisite for reparation (Shaw, 1997). The principles of state responsibility note that countries are accountable for breaches of treaty or customary international law by a way of diplomatic reactions and actions where such are in place with respect to the subject matter at issue should resort to international arbitration or international court. The basic import is that states are not to behave as to inflict harm or injure the rights of other states (Shaw, 1997), while bilateral relations covers the way relations between two states are managed in various manners as the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations remains the bedrock of bilateral diplomacy in contemporary international world (Rana, 2015).

Foreign policy denotes the authoritative actions which governments take or are committed to do either to preserve the desirable aspects of the international arena or to alter its undesirable side of actions. It represents the dimension of actions and decisions carried upon by various segments of the government of a state in its relations with other states in order to project its national interest of that particular country (Akinboye & Ottoh, 2007). It is the overall orientation and intentions of a particular state towards the other. A country seeks to

achieve in her rations with another or other countries and as the means for achieving a particular goals or objectives as reflected in her interaction with inter-states within the international system (Adeniran, 1983).

Diplomacy relates to the management of inter-states relations bothering on various mechanisms and techniques, like consultations, consensus building, negotiations, bargaining communication and agreements amongst states and international organizations (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012). It deals with the means and methods through which nation-states conduct their businesses with one another or actors in the international arena (Ojo & Sesay, 2010).

It is the application of skill and intelligence to the conduct of official interactions. Likewise, national interest means the aggregate objectives and goals of a nation-state to the basic motivation for foreign policy formulation execution as a guide for policy-makers. It examines how and why nations do what they do when they engage in international action and behaviours (Eminue, 2013). It encompasses a country's values, goals, means, and belief that can guarantee its self-dignity and national security with the variable, such as political, economic socio-cultural, and diplomatic advancement (Kolawole, 1997; Eyinla, 2010).

In international relations and foreign policy activities, the principle of reciprocity notes that any favour benefits, penalties, and consequences that are granted by one state to the citizens/states or legal entities of the other state/citizens should be returned, while articulation of the national interest is at the heart of foreign policy which is essentially about the protection and advancement of the national interest of a country (Enuka & Ojukwu, 2016). While the notion of reciprocity is embedded in the citizen diplomacy framework as diplomacy of consequences (Ujara & Ibietan, n.d.), sovereignty provides for a clear range of unilateral action for decision, a dimension that includes the obligation and right to do some wrongs as it is international laws, practices, and norms that specify how states may and should properly behave in interstates affairs (Shue, 2006).

Nevertheless, the deteriorating relationship among states and their social orders has impeded the creation of institutional mediations thereby enhancing the propensity towards statism and official repression while simultaneously limiting the reach of public agencies (Chazan, 1989), as international institutions can only facilitate cooperation when there are common objectives to be actualized (Stone, 2019).

Areas of Co-operation in Nigeria Ghana Relations Over the Years

On bilateral levels, both states have cooperated, collaborated, and harmonized ideas on several areas to strengthen their aged interactions and relationship for their national interests, West African sub-region, Africa, and the world at large. These including the following spheres of inter-states interest:

Participated in Formation of Organization of African Union (OAU) (Later) the African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West-Africa States (ECOWAS) as Founding Fathers

After two years of Nigeria's independence, the country became a force to be reckoned in the African continent, playing a vital role in the process of the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In that regard, three African groups emerged, namely: the Casablanca group which stood for immediate and political union of all African countries with a radical approach to Africa's international relations, the moderate Monrovia group, which advocated functional cooperation, equality of all states, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states as well as opposition to forced political union of the continent, and the conservative Brazzaville group which was made up exclusively of French colonies adamant on maintaining their ties and influence with France. It was against that background of political fragmentation that those groups came

together at the conference held in Addis Ababa in May 1963 to form a single organization that embraced all African states with Ghana Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco Libya played critical involvement (Akinterinwa, 2005; Nweke, 2010; Obikeze & Anthony, 2003).

According to Juma and Mangeni (2018),

> Efforts at regionalism in Africa commenced early and focused basically on the regrouping of African states. The importance of the need to promote economic cooperation among African countries but also on its political unification for regional transformation/practical implementation were conceived by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and supported by president AbdulNaseer of Egypt. (p. 1)

Also, the federal government of Nigeria on the regional integration tendency was known. According to the Nigerian Prime Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, as stated in 1963 as cited by Olaniyan (2005),

> Some of us feel that African unity could be achieved by taking practical steps in economic, educational, scientific and cultural co-operation and by trying first to get Africans to understand themselves before embarking on the more complicated and more difficult arrangement of political union. (p. 414)

Furthermore on the above, both states especially Nigeria and Togo initiated the formation of ECOWAS while Ghana joined its emergence almost immediately (Ojo, 1980).

Omelle (2004) noted that:

> The perception influenced president Nkrumah of Ghana, who worked for the formation of a continental organization to pursue the matter of African unity, and more importantly, to champion the liberation of the continent from all forms of imperialist domination. Advancing the course of Pan-Africanism in Africa, Nkrumah place the agenda of African Unity on the front burner of his struggle which made him to be regarded as one time as the greatest Africa advocate and theoretician of Pan-Africanism. (p. 124)

Again, according to Yakohene (2009),

> Ghana's initial efforts at integrating with other countries in Africa and West Africa in particular, were based more on economic interests than political. This has of course changed over West Africa and Africa in general, have always been the focus of Ghana's foreign policy.… However, as typical of all foreign policies, the leadership style, prevailing socio-economic and political conditions, as well as happenings on the international plane, have always affected positively and otherwise, Ghana's quests at integration. (p. 2)

Also, both states engaged in collaboration to fight colonial rule in African continent through the activities of African Liberation committee in 1963 based in Tanzania to articulate all kinds of support for liberation movements across Africa (Aremu, 2014a).

Joint Commission Between Nigeria and Ghana on Bilateral Matters

The establishment of a joint task force from the trade ministries of both states to inspect manufacturing facilities of companies registered under the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) in both states as the two states organized an economic summit in Accra in 2010 (Aiguosatile & Onebamhoi, 2011). This provided a veritable platform for sustaining and consolidating relations as well as eliminating trade barriers as a result of their collective governmental polices (Linck, 2007, as cited in Aiguosatile & Onebamhoi, 2011).

Regional Security

Nigeria has a notion that her view about its disposition in the maintenance of regional security in West Africa revolved within her and Ghana as it has commit many resources to the region (Yoroms, 2005).

According to Haasturp and Lucia (2014),

> Nigeria's perception of security, framed in the West Africa, and to a lesser extent, in the African context have been historically characterized by three interconnected elements: a strong representation of the connection between national and (sub) regional security; the perceived necessity to be the guarantor of West Africa's stability, and to be its leader as well as Africa's regional leader. (p. 9)

The collective security of West Africa which Nigeria and Ghana championed signaled a radical departure not only from the legal regime but also from the classical relationship that existed between its own collective security region and that of the United Nations (Ayodele, 2004) while the issue of security and upsurge of conflicts in the sub-region equally bothered Nigeria (Ajayi, 2004).

Citizens'/Workers' Relations (Home and Abroad)

Both states have large proportion of foreign workers in their soils as labourers for Chinese firms, and many multilateral corporations (Ben & Mohan, 2014). Both countries have histories of migration in the past as they have accommodated the system of migration in the past (Akinterinwa, 2020).

Fighting Terrorism/Engaged in Peace Keeping Missions

On steaming the tide of terrorism, Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, and Togo agreed the four-nation arrangement on co-operation agreement security and intelligence, while Nigeria set up a counter-terrorism unit at the armed forces command and staff college in Jaji Kaduna to train security forces of other west African countries including Ghana (Yoroms, 2007). According to Afinotan (2010),

> The foreign policy orientation of concentric circles was therefore, in the first place aimed at the attainment of the objective of national security engendered by the idea of national Unity and Cohesion as well socio-economic and political stability, not only in Nigeria, but also in the West African sub-region and on the African continent itself… (p. 312)

Nigeria as well as Ghana have ratified/signed relevant instruments at the level of the African Union particularly the 1999 Convention on Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and ECOWAS Instruments on Convention on Mutual Assistance in Critical Matters (1998), the Convention on Extradition (2005), the Convention on Small Arms, Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements based on Intelligence Gathering and Military Co-operation (Oche, 2013; Venda, 2015).

Likewise, on peacekeeping missions, both countries have ideological/doctrinal disposition to the commitment to the principle of non-alignment provided to be neutral in the cold war era power politics. As such, it afforded them the credibility to engaged and served in regional and continental crisis/conflict areas where two or more states are at war while as peace-keepers, which further underscores the prominent and critical roles they have played in conflict prevention and resolutions (Musa, 2010; Nuamah, 2003).

Educational/Cultural Cooperation

According to Aremu (2014b),

> A major institution that has promoted regular educational relations between Ghana and Nigeria is the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) established as a non-profit making examination body in 1953 to promote educational cooperation and development in the British West African Colonies with its headquarters in Accra-Ghana and branch office in Yaba-Lagos Nigeria. Apart from the linkage which WAEC provides between Nigeria and Ghana, citizens of both countries have been attending schools across each country's borders in recent times, while the proximity of Ghana to Nigeria and the language factor also made Ghana, a preferred destination for others. (p. 6)

Others areas of co-operation, collaboration and bilateral relations between Nigeria and Ghana include the following:

1. Transport and telecommunication;

2. Energy and power;

3. Diaspora linkage: The Nigerian and Ghanaian diaspora communities have a good and important network role in linking migrants, to their home country which has been a means for exchanging mutual benefits (Fayomi, 2013, p. 14);

4. Culture and tourism;

5. Migration linkage;

6. Music, videos and films;

7. Languages and cultures;

8. Colonial and political ties;

9. Economic relations (Aremu, 2014a, p. 23).

Youth and sports which according to Omeruah (2005) noted that:

> Cultural and sporting exchange have become veritable tools of international integration for the fostering of inter-states relation and world peace. The commonalities and affinity enjoy through sports and cultural harmony have played well in no small way in galvanising peace and unit even between Nigeria and Ghana. (p. 193)

Finally, it is to be noted that Nigeria anti-military rule role in the first military regime of Ghana National Liberation Council in 1966-1967 led by Lt. Gen J. A. Ankrah, where emissaries were sent to some countries including Nigeria and in return for the Ghana Military regime supported Nigeria during her own state of emergency declared in Western Nigeria, the military rule and the Aburi Accord Saga (Yakohene, 2009).

Areas of Disagreement, Rivalry and Disharmony Between Nigeria and Ghana

i. Diplomatic conflicts specifically between both states in their early years of independence (1960-1966) caused by inter-personal disputes between the political leadership of both countries as they are fondly called "the friendly rivalry" were counterproductive to derail their relations.

ii. The expulsion issue/saga happened persists of 1969, 1983, and 1985 respectively (Aremu, 2014b). As the relationship became sour for various reasons as under the Compliance Order in Ghana's, Nigerians immigrants were forced to leave Ghana as they made up a significant percentage of Ghana is large undocumented population. In 1983, Nigeria retaliated and deported up to 1million Ghanaians and other African immigrants when Ghana was facing severe drought and economic challenges (Owusu, 1994; Fawole, 2003; Olaniyi, 2009).

According to Alagbe (2019),

> There have been bad manners as observed by scholars to which migrants were expelled from both countries which was harsh that have inimical effects on their people or inappropriate as the case maybe. Presently, there have been laws governing the movement of nationals from one state to the other. Nigeria and Ghana belonged to ECOWAS African Union (AU), Commonwealth of Nations, United Nations Organization (UNO) as they have much to gain from bilateral relations to multilateralism. (p. 6)

While Lawal (n.d.) noted that: "…in the expulsion and counter expulsion that happened decades ago in which few millions were the causalities, while as between 2018 and now, 723 Nigerians have been deported

from Ghana for prostitution and yahoo yahoo or cybercrime offences" (p. 8).

iii. Ghana's Role in the Nigerian Civil War (1976-1970)

The technical, emotional, and tactical supports by the Ghanaian government to the breakaway eastern region/Biafran state aggravated relations with the federal government of Nigeria. It all started as a mediator between the two sides of the conflict but later ended up as collaborators with the secessionist Biafran Camp. That incident or act still flow in the memory of Nigerian governments and its people (Aremu, 2014b).

iv. Ghana's Difficult Economic Policy on Nigerians

In spite of the cordial bilateral relations between the two states, since the government of President John Atta Mills of Ghana came to power, Nigerian businessmen in Ghana have complained about the discriminatory policy under the Ghana Promotion Act which raised higher the amount in registering businesses owned by foreigners in Ghana especially Nigerians and banned them from selling their goods in market areas sequel to the alleged plan of the government of Ghana to stop buying Nigerian oil and other trade issues (Aiguosatile & Onebamhoi, 2011).

Also, Nigerian trade policy has had implication for its relations with Ghana. In 2004, Nigeria placed a ban on the importation of over ninety-six Ghanaian products including textiles, garments, starch, plastic, poultry products, and rice among others as Ghanaians exporters continued to complain about their inability to benefit from the ECOWAS trade liberalization scheme as well (Kufour, 2013).

v. Nigeria's borders closure to neighbouring countries without prior notice for commerce and trade generated issues within the West African sub-region especially Ghana (Krippahl, 2020). This is against bilateral agreement, ECOWAS treaty and the new African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AFCFTA) signed into operation in 2019.

vi. The politics of seniority of national sovereignty, as Ghana gained independence in 1957 while Nigeria had her own independence in 1960 which makes Ghana to be known beyond the shore of Africa than Nigeria with the three years plus over Nigeria by Ghana.

vii. The conflicting personality clash of both leaders at the period of independence count much as President Kwame Nkrumah upheld a radical character while Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa demonstrated a conservative view towards Pan-African Unity and African matters with their different attitudinal dispositions to African issues which form their various foreign policies (Akinterinwa, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the theories of interdependence of mutual dependence and reciprocity as its theoretical frameworks to pilot the critical understanding of it. The interdependence theory (of international relations) means the involvement and linkages among states, actors and institutions system of global politics. It denotes interconnectedness of states relations in which two or more actors are linked in a system of interactions in such that changes, actions, reaction and counter-reaction in one party leads to contagious impact or implication in very serious manner on the outcome and responses on the other actor(s) (Roger Coate, Jeffery Griffin, & Elliott-Gower, 2015). To Keohane and Nye (1977), interdependence affects world politics and the behaviour of states but governmental actions also influence patterns of interdependence by creating or accepting procedures, rules, or institutions for certain kinds of activity and control transnational and interstate relations with multiple channels, agenda, and linkages strategies (Keohane, in the interdependence approach, views the world as a complex network of primarily political economic and socio-cultural relations of mutual dependence among

states [Stone, 2009]). Theorists, proponents and writers of the theory include Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye, K. Rogerson, Sassoon Jackson, Thomas Walker, Randall Stone, Karl W. Deutsch, and Kal Holsti that provided deeper understanding on the theory for international system.

Utilities of the Theory to the Study Rest on the Following

• The important analytical thread in interdependence theorizing has been international integration where the formation of cooperative transnational linkages for dealing with technical matters could yield in a learning method that manifest behaviour about cooperation.

• Interdependence as a vital element, more systemic frameworks for analyzing the nature and role of transnational relations in world politics can be actualized.

• The interdependence of parts of various system play vital role in world system theory as well reflected or related to dependency of system. While the linkage to the study narrates the co-operation, collaboration and differences between Nigeria and Ghana which have corresponding effects on both states' actions.

Defects of the theory lie on:

i. The prevailing situation of the world as regards flexible approached and relative gains and problems associated with two or more actors or where there are asymmetries among the large number of countries (Rana, 2015).

Table 1

Whey We Need Interdependence Theory

S/N	Situation	Relevant motives
1	Level of dependence	Comfort versus discomforts with dependence; and comfort versus discomfort with independence.
2	Mutuality of dependence	Comfort versus discomfort with vulnerability (as dependent). Comfort versus discomfort with responsibility (as power holder)
3	Basis of dependence	Dominance versus submissions; and assertiveness versus passivity.
4	Covariation of interests	Prosocial versus self-interested motive rule for self). Trust versus distrust of partner motives (expectation about others)
5	Temporal structure	Dependability versus unreliability; and loyalty versus disloyalty.
6	Information certainty	Openness versus need for certainty; and optimism versus pessimism.

Source: Rusbult & Van Lange (2008, p. 5).

ii. Theory of reciprocity which explains that people reward kind actions and punish unkind parts. It evaluates the kindness of an action not only by its consequences results but by the motive behind the action. It also explains why in bilateral relations results tend to be fair while n competitive markets are strictly unfair as it may arise (Falk & Fischbacher, 2000). The theory is associated with the notion of fairness, "an eye for an eye or do unto others as you would have them do unto you" as it connotes one's payoff depends both on one's own action and on the actions taken by others (Crescenzi, Best, & Kwon, 2010, p. 5). It explains why states cooperate in spite of the lack of a coercive overall authority (Larson, 1988) while it is important in generating cooperation and conflict resolution between states as it is limited reaction of a state against certain behaviour that harms other country (Ishmael, 2013), the theory is in Mary variation/types, like "specific" which is to exchange items of equivalent value between specified partners and "diffuse" reciprocity bothers on equivalent less strictly defended and one's partner in exchange which may be viewed as a group rather than as particular actor (Keohane, 1986; Odock, 2010) while others are punitive, protocol, cooperative, and force

majeure-induced reciprocity (Akinterinwa, 2010; Ugo, 2010). Among the theorists, writers and proponents of the theory include Keohane Robert, Perter Blall, Gouldner Alvin, Black Khurst, Taylor Michael, Oskamp Stuart, Warner Wilson, and others that have provided much understanding about the theory.

The usefulness and linkage of the theory revealed that:

• It characterizes certain types of interactions between states in a game theoretic framework.

• Induced reciprocity which eliminates the off-diagonal options is sufficient to get the players out of prisoner's dilemma.

• It is a meta-rule in international law (Parisi & Ghel, 2002).

• It examines the role play by different types of states obligations including bilateral and multilateral ones.

• It helps further in international integration and solidarity (Agwu, 2010).

• It examines how reciprocity inter twine with the principle of equality as the rights and duties of states are equal regardless of size, military and economic strength and the benefit derive in creating peace, stability and cooperation amongst countries (Fard, 2015).

Linkage of Theory

The study lies in the fact that Ghana often uses retaliatory measures against Nigerians citizens living and trading in Ghana as a measure of give and take style or tit-for-tat diplomacy in the past and with the present destruction of Nigerian government's building in Accra. It also exhibited the theory in revenge to many Nigeria's policies that go against her national interest as against dialogue and beneficial constructive engagement method.

Defects of the Theory

Defects of the theory lies in the realm of anarchic and if cooperation is to exist, whatever results must be consistent with the principle of sovereignty, equality and self-help (Keohane, 1986). Again, the problem flows from the assumptions used to generate the relatively parsimonious hypothesis and a significant neglect of domestic politics (Milner, 1992).

Contending Issues Associated with Nigeria-Ghana Diplomatic Row

Relations between Nigeria and Ghana have not been cordial in recent times, which have heightened up high tension, negative comments and counter comments from both sides. The ethics of diplomatic relations are no longer being observed in their actions and reactions to issues affecting them. Below are the current areas that have led to serious stand points in their bilateral relations as hostility against Nigerians in Ghana, the people and the governments.

• Persistent attacks on Nigerians and their businesses in Ghana. Foreign shop owners in the country which the majority are Nigerians have said they fear they have little choice but to leave the country (Cameroon Tribune, 2020). According to the head of the Nigerian Traders' Associating in Ashanti (2020, as cited in Cameroon Tribune, 2020) that "we are used to shops locked but this is the first time the government is involved" which however the Ghana's Trade ministry spokesmen said" the government was forced to act because the businesses failed to comply with the rules" (Cameroon Tribune, 2020, p. 10). This warranted an imposition of a new registration fee of $1 million on traders in Ghana with Nigerian traders being the sole targets as 250 shops which belonged to Nigerians have been shut down which has been very discriminating and targeted at Nigeria's in the country. Whereas, they are ECOWAS community citizens (Akinterinwa, 2020).

• Most recently, the demolition of Nigeria's High commission building located on No. 10, Barnes Road, Accra and the demolition of another building also belonging to Nigeria situated at No. 19/21 Julius Nyerere street, Accra as a result of breach of legal agreement between Nigeria and Private Ghanaian citizen while the Ghanaian authority exhibited lukewarm, uncared and undiplomatic attitudes during the demolition (Okwumbu, 2020). According to the Nigeria Foreign Affairs Minister Geoffrey Onyeama (2020, as cited in Okwumbu, 2020),

> We are engaging the Ghanaian government and demand urgent action to find the perpetuators and provide adequate protection for Nigerians and their property in Ghana as two criminal attacks were made on the residential building within Nigeria's diplomatic premises. In one of the attacks, a bulldozer was used by unknown persons to demolish the building within the premises. (p. 2)

• There were serious condemnations from both capitals; Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO) Ghana chapter equally provided details of the attacks on the diplomatic residence and Ghana government eventually apologized for the incident. There have been high level discussions from the two countries on how to bring the current stalemate to an end as Nigeria's speaker of the House of Representatives engaged in shuttle and legislative diplomacy by visiting Ghana on a peace mission to meet the Ghanaian's head of state while in return the head of Ghana has equally visited his counterpart in Nigeria. This is a serious escalation of diplomatic row between them as Nigeria has been apt in constructive engagement while avoiding retaliatory measures as against Ghana that makes all retaliatory actions as tools of her foreign policy and national interests instrument to actualize her goals not minding the reciprocity of its consequences they have generated.

Implications and Consequences of Bilateral Crisis Between Nigeria and Ghana Relations

Where diplomacy, negotiation, and compromise fail to prevail in any bilateral issues, their resultant effects are crisis, competition, rivalry, hostility and war which endanger stability, cooperation, and peace. Below are possible impacts and consequences of the bilateral crisis:

• Violation of international law, treaties, and conventions. Ordinarily, all diplomatic buildings and residence are inviolable and persons of such diplomatic attachments enjoy immunities and privileges as entrenched in the 1961 Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Immunity and 1963 Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Relations among states (Wunti, Ibrahim, Musa, & Yakubu, 2019; Cooper, 2018). As such, Ghanaian authority has failed to protect the diplomatic buildings of Nigeria's government which is an exhibition of reciprocity.

• Trade war: The bilateral tension could lead to trade war as economic and trade embargoes might be placed on each country by themselves. This action and counter-action have negative and multiplying effects on the trade policies of ECOWAS and the African Union under African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement whereby goods and services cannot be transacted and transported along and across market system.

• Spontaneous xenophobic attacks on both nationals of the countries could get escalate to an alarming rate and to a large proportion out of control. Tension runs high in Accra and other big towns in Ghana as Nigerian businessmen have their shops closed.

• The tension breeds regional and continental economic and political instability as both Nigeria and Ghana are parts of the founding fathers of Africa and are equally giants states with big economies. Investment flows from outside the continent could be affected.

• Each pursuing different national interests and foreign policies actions and decisions that do not give room for bargaining, conciliation and alliance formation as Ghana favours reciprocity agenda, while Nigeria upholds constructive engagement in settling regional and bilateral problems.

They have not allow regional, continental, and international mediators to intervene into the bilateral crisis as both believe that it could either be resolved or not while minding the long-aged dimension for the competition, rivalry, cooperation, and collaboration.

According to Akinterinwa (2020),

> Without doubt, there is a recidivist mesentente between the two countries, which has prompted the mistreatment of Nigerians in Ghana. The misunderstanding dates back to 1931 when the people of Ghana first kicked against foreigners, and particularly, Nigerians. The mistreatment to which Nigerians are today subjected in Ghana is therefore not new and cannot be objectively resolved without a clear understanding of the genesis and issues involved. (p. 3)

Prospects for Possible Solutions to the Bilateral Crisis Between Nigeria and Ghana

- Establish a joint commission to address all contending issues.
- Create a joint commission to inject in more impetus for further collaboration and cooperation between both countries.
- Inward re-strategies in resolving the recidivist misunderstanding with Ghana.
- Nigeria government needs to priority its operational areas on the identification of national interests in the concentric circles.
- The government of Nigeria needs to emphasis on the economic diplomacy and its dividends with relation to Ghana.
- Citizen diplomacy be paramount to the government while uphold the concert of medium powers approach.
- For the West African sub-region, the balance of power policy must be entertained by all countries.
- Political will from both leadership of the two states is a veritable tool for lasting solution.
- Governments need to launch initiatives to encourage behavioral change from both nationals of the two countries.
- Governments need to follow up on the procedural and legal reviews and work towards bringing their trade, investment and other policies—their application into compliance with existing ECOWAS commitments (Hoppe, 2014, p. 8).
- The new African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement needs to be exercised by both states in their inter-state relations.

Conclusion

The bilateral relations between Nigeria and Ghana have not been totally cordial or partially acrimonious. The current demolition of Nigeria's diplomatic, building in Ghana and Nigerians businessmen in Ghana facing trade war and persecutions which could be termed as punitive reciprocity, approaches and measures from the Ghanaian government towards Nigeria and her people. Despite the calls by Nigerians for the application of the rule of reciprocity, Nigeria as a country has been restrained to apply, such as it treats other countries within West Africa with the policy of good neighbourliness not to retaliate but always apply the principle of constructive engagement rather than applying the policy of reciprocity of consequences which Ghana often enforces to Nigeria which the collateral effects are damaging to the West African sub-regional. The challenges are about evolving foreign policy of strategic national focus that will earn more respect, image, and hope for the people and government of Nigeria at large.

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