In the Lens of Social Exchange Theory: Nigeria’s Commitments to Africa’s Politics and Development

Chuka Enuka
Department Of History and International Studies
Nnamdi Azikiwe University,
Awka, Nigeria

Abstract
There is hardly any shred of doubt about Nigeria’s commitment to the economic and political progress of Africa. Nigeria’s political soul right from the attainment of political independence is unarguably pre-occupied with concern for, and commitment to Africa. She has since then therefore, featured prominently in Africa’s affairs. This is underscored by the enduring principle of Afrocentricism in Nigeria’s foreign policy, which has elicited Nigeria’s undaunted commitment to the continent. This paper presents Nigeria’s varied contributions to Africa’s political, economic, and socio-cultural good. The paper adopts the sociological theory of social exchange in its analysis. Passing Nigeria’s commitment to Africa through the critical lens of theoretical and historical analysis, the paper posits that Nigeria’s magnanimity to Africa is at variance with Africa’s response to Nigeria. It recommends that a redefinition of Nigeria’s African policy is imperative. Nigeria’s foreign policy should reflect inter alia, the principle of reciprocity. Nigeria should, in her intra-African international relations, treat as she is treated.

Introduction
Nigeria has over the years been undauntedly involved in a multiplicity of socio-political and economic issues that have undeniably contributed to the good and wellbeing of the African continent. Those avowed and varied good deeds by Nigeria for Africa can be well understood and appreciated within the broad context of Nigeria’s love and concern for Africa, enshrined in her foreign policy stance of Afrocentricism. The Afrocentric or Africa-centered ideology presupposes that Africa lies at the core of Nigeria’s foreign policy concerns and calculations, and will receive priority in its
In the Lens of Social Exchange Theory: Nigeria’s Commitments to Africa’s Politics and Development

engagement with the rest of the world (Enuka 2017). As Tafawa Balewa, one time Nigeria’s Prime Minister said, “…Africa must claim first attention in our external affairs” (Akindele and Ate 2000: 104). Right from the years of independence, this foreign policy decision has remained constant in Nigeria’s engagement with the countries in Africa. Since the time, successive Nigerian leaders both during the military rule and civilian democracy have devoted human and material resources to the prosecution of this cardinal foreign policy objective, to the enormous political and economic benefit of African states. Bukar Bukarambe aptly captures it this way, “…there is the unifying fact that the conduct of all successive administrations was governed by the justification of pursuing an African policy” (Bukarambe 2000). While the style and intensity of the execution or implementation of Nigeria’s African policy may have differed from government to government, the policy focus on Africa has remained constant over the years. Consequently, Nigeria has demonstrated concern in Africa’s democracy; contributed to the liberation and political freedom of the colonized African states; strengthened African solidarity and enhanced good neighbourliness through her leading roles in the formation and sustenance of African international organizations; released her resources through both bilateral and multilateral avenues, to provide answers to many challenging economic needs that glare some African states in the face; contributed skilled personnel to many African countries through the Technical Aid Corps scheme (TAC), despite shortage of such professionals and human capital in Nigeria; has contained many conflicts in Africa, through her participation in peace operations, and had by this very fact, minimized suffering to thousands of lives in those different war-torn societies, at the supreme price of lives of Nigerian soldiers, and great financial cost. The civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia alone took the whopping sum of over $12 billion from the coffers of the Nigerian state (Enuka 2017). Succinctly put, Nigeria’s diplomatic efforts and commitment towards the political and economic good of Africa, both in military and
civilian dispensations, have stood the country out as Africa’s benevolent giant and a welcoming home for all from Africa.

Against this backdrop of Nigeria’s profound magnanimity and friendliness which she demonstrates by committing her material and human resources towards ensuring the welfare, peace and stability of various states within the African continent, one would have expected that African nations would in turn, reciprocate Nigeria’s benign and humanitarian foreign policy and offer of olive branch, in their diplomatic relationships with, and treatment of, Nigeria and Nigerian nationals. This is because in line with the theoretical provisions of the social exchange theory and the expected global political practice of reciprocity, it is a take that favours, benefits or penalties that are granted by one state to the other should be returned. But with the experience of various degrading and intolerable treatments being meted out to Nigerians by the governments, nationals and security operatives of different African countries, the reverse has remained the case. From Libya to South Africa, Nigerians are hounded, maimed, gagged, robbed, shot at, and killed extra-judiciously on flimsy excuses and at little or no provocation (Idehen and Osaghae 2015). Regrettably, those are states and people, whom Nigeria nurtured and is still nurturing to growth, nations that Nigeria championed their cause for political freedom and stability, and to whose socio-economic development, Nigeria is still contributing.

Adopting the sociological theory of social exchange in its analysis, this paper presents Nigeria’s varied contributions to Africa’s political, economic, and socio-cultural good, made in fulfillment of her Afrocentric foreign policy. Passing these commitments to Africa through the lens of the theoretical framework of social exchange, the paper finds that Nigeria’s magnanimity to Africa is at variance with Africa’s response to Nigeria. It therefore, interrogates the reasonableness and profitability of Nigeria’s continued Afrocentric gesture towards its African brothers. It recommends that a redefinition of Nigeria’s African policy is imperative. Nigeria should
resort to a foreign policy stance that will ensure adequate compensation of her commitments in her diplomatic relations with her African brothers. Inter alia, the principle of reciprocity should reflect in Nigeria’s foreign policy such that in her foreign relations, Nigeria should treat as she is treated.

**Theoretical Framework**

The analysis of this study borrows largely from the theoretical foundations of the sociological theory of social exchange, which views social life as a patterned exchange between individuals and between groups (Jidere 2010). Peter Blau defines social exchange as the “voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others” (Blau). The theory supports that relations should be mutually gratifying. It requires, as Gouldner puts it, that people repay assistance from others in any form either by helping them in return or at least by doing nothing against their benefactors. Though Social exchange norm demands a return to good done, however, what is returned must not necessarily be equal in value with what is given, for social exchange often involves the trade of different types of actions. What is important is to return a good gesture with a good gesture not necessarily of exact quality or quantity. In such reciprocal relationship, each party has something different to offer, for their needs are complementary, not identical. Thus the social structure of a society can be seen as a network of obligations between individuals and groups based on prior services. Though the social exchange theory was not originally formulated with international or interstate relations in mind, but it does apply to that level of relationships. International relations involve a trade of favours or services. Relations between states sometimes break down when one or both parties believe that they are not receiving a fair return (Larson 1998). In this order, respect and regard for Nigeria’s interest should be returned by the African states for the numerous important security and economic roles of Nigeria in Africa. The governments of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi gave military assistance to
Laurent Kabila in overthrowing Zaire’s President Mobutu Sese Seko, in anticipation for favourable governmental policies and foreign policy behavior from Zaire under Kabila (Larson 1998). Beyond Africa, Aid donors from among the powerful countries of the world give economic assistance to lesser developed countries in return for military base rights or raw materials.

Persuasive academic arguments in respect to social exchange have been advanced by many respected scholars. Emile Durkheim pointed out that generalized social exchange aids social integration and leads to the development of cultural communications networks based on widely accepted moral norms. He further asserts that the result of this is an interdependent society with an increasing degree of organic solidarity. Levi-Strauss’ exchange theory focuses on the symbolism of exchange. According to this principle, what is important is not what is exchanged, but rather the symbolic value of the relationship. For example, if you offer a gift and nothing is returned or what follows the gift is antithetical to the giver’s interest, it then means that the gift was not appreciated by the recipient. In essence, the reciprocity is a mark of appreciation and continuity of a relationship. With regard to the principle of social exchange and reciprocity, if Nigeria, as the foremost black African power, has certain responsibilities to Africa, then there should be no disputing the fact that Africa also has responsibilities to Nigeria. Nigeria, like other states in Africa and elsewhere, has definite interests to promote and protect, for which she shall require the support and assistance of other African States. If when we say that Africa is the centerpiece of Nigeria’s foreign policy, we mean that Nigeria should identify with and defend the legitimate interests of Africa, collectively, then it also means that Africa and African States should identify with and defend Nigeria’s interests. However, the realities evident in Nigeria-Africa relations indicate that Nigeria is yet to have a supportive response from the African States which are in a position to do so.
The culture of giving and taking is as old as man. It is as an act well entrenched in human and group interactions from the ancient years, cutting across ages. Emperors, kings and statesmen exchange visits as a mark of reciprocity. States maintain permanent missions as embassies and consulates, and also extend assistance to other states. As earlier mentioned, Nigeria, driven by her Afrocentric foreign policy stance, has unarguably featured prominently in African affairs, and has offered dearly to her African brothers, but evidence points to a shocking revelation that Nigeria’s magnanimity to Africa is at variance with Africa’s response to Nigeria.

**Nigeria’s Commitments to Africa:**
Political Freedom: Nigeria’s concern and contribution to Africa’s political liberation is clear and obvious. Liberation of the African countries still under colonial bondage was seen by Nigeria as abysmally abnormal political situation. Nigeria therefore, stopped at nothing to ensure total liberation and decolonization of the affected African territories. In his maiden address to the 15th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the late Prime Minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, made the first pronouncement of Nigeria’s foreign policy as including, “…commitment to African…decolonization and fight against racism and apartheid” (Adeniji 2005: 26). Within the framework of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations, and other multilateral and bilateral frameworks, Nigeria demonstrated her commitment to Africa’s freedom, by engaging in active liberation and decolonization roles in Africa. Especially under the dynamic and proactive governments of General Murtala Mohammed and General Olusegun Obasanjo, which brought vigour and vitality into the realization of Nigeria’s Afrocentric foreign policy objectives, true decolonization of Africa received a lot of attention. In her pursuits for Africa’s political freedom, Nigeria insisted on the full implementation of the Articles of the Charter on Self-determination, and demanded for complete wresting of political powers from the colonialists on the continent. In these efforts,
Nigeria oftentimes, mobilized both local human and material resources, as well as diplomatic avenues to achieve her objective. Nigeria’s astuteness and outspokenness over the question of destroying the bastions of colonization in Africa stood her out as a force to be reckoned with. She was recognized internationally as the credible voice of Africa. It was to a point that Nigeria became the rallying point for decolonization in Africa as well as the gateway to the international community. For her concern and commitment to the political liberation of the African continent, Nigeria was admitted into the prestigious position of the membership of the OAU Liberation Committee. So great was Nigeria’s involvements in the struggle to liberate the continent from the shackles of colonial rule that she became counted as one of the frontline states, despite her geographical distance from the theatre of those struggles. South Africa, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, were among the many African countries where Nigeria’s commitment to political emancipation of the peoples of Africa was eloquently demonstrated.

Economic Development: Nigeria’s commitment to Africa’s economic progress is not in doubt. Extrapolating from diverse examples, it is evident that Nigeria has been a major player in promoting development and economic growth of the countries in the continent of Africa, and had made robust contributions towards the betterment of the lives of African people. Nigeria got itself deeply committed to the enterprise of assisting the development of fellow African states and societies as a practical demonstration of her historic and manifest mission in the continent. Nigeria is traditionally recognized as the leader of Africa, because of her territorial size, a huge, dynamic and virile population, abundant oil deposits, inter alia (Tyoden 2012). Going by this, it will amount to failure of leadership on the part of Nigeria to wallow in riches, and watch her fellow African brothers smeared in the mud of penury and economic quagmire. Consequently, Nigeria has employed diverse avenues, both of bilateral and multilateral nature, over the years, in spending huge quantity of her
resources, both in human and material forms, in the course of pursuing Africa’s development agenda. Appreciable number of African states has been assisted by Nigeria’s largesse, as the country shows itself as an answer to various challenging economic and developmental needs that glared and still glare at Africa, demanding practical attention. This benevolent disposition towards Africa is not peculiar to any particular administration. “Every government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria since independence has been in the vanguard of promoting the economic and social development of Africa” (Ogunjobi 2007: 379). As have been mentioned, this stance is derived from the governments’ avouched foreign policy that places Africa as its centerpiece.

The development initiatives to which Nigeria has committed enormous resources for the purpose of promoting economic development in the developing countries of Africa abound: the African Development Bank (AfDB) has afforded Nigeria the avenue to express in practical terms, her belief in functional cooperation as a pathway for Africa’s social and economic development. Standing on this conviction, Nigeria committed itself to outstandingly unique roles and huge financial contributions towards the creation and sustenance of the African Development (AfDB); The Nigeria Trust Fund (NTF), an affiliate of the African Development Bank, was created at the sole initiative of Nigeria under General Olusegun Obasanjo in 1976. This was born out of Nigeria’s pro-African policy stance, and aimed at assisting the development efforts of the low-income African members of the bank, whose economies and social conditions and prospects require concessional financing. The Fund is an expression of Nigeria’s desire to use a portion of her oil revenue to benefit other African countries; In addition to the ADB’s Nigeria Trust Fund, Nigeria has in the recent years set up another Fund in the African Development Bank, called the Nigeria Technical Cooperation Fund (NTCF). The Fund was signed into existence on April 5, 2004 by the agreement between Nigeria and the African Development Bank, establishing the NTCF (Emenike 2015). The NTCF was
intended as a grant window to complement the resources of the Nigeria Trust Fund, consisting of some 25 million US Dollars drawn from the net income of the NTF; Concessionary oil sales has featured as a strong element of Nigeria’s strategy to further consolidate her commitment to Africa’s economic wellbeing engineered by her Afrocentric foreign policy principles. It was a decision by the Nigerian government under Yakubu Gowon, and was continued by the Murtala Mohammed’s administration (Aluko 1990); Joint commissions with a number of countries within the African continent have been established by Nigeria. These establishments are for various reasons which include the need to help alleviate the hard and difficult economic situations of different countries of the continent. Among such established joint commissions, is the Nigeria-Niger Commission, which has, to no mean extent, profited Niger as a country in need. Nigeria has, even in her times and seasons of distressed economic situation, given out huge sum of money to needy African states, in terms of loans, grants, financing of construction of hospitals, roads and agricultural projects.

One of the avenues through which Nigeria has shown her benevolence towards Africa is the Technical Aid Corps Scheme, TAC, instituted during the era of former President Ibrahim Babangida’s military government in 1987. The Nigerian government under President Babangida intended it to serve as a platform for helping African states with technical manpower, to fast-track their socioeconomic and cultural transformation (Tyoden 2012). Put differently, the Technical Aid Corps is a mechanism for Nigeria’s foreign aid and technical assistance to especially African countries, through the use of Nigeria’s abundant trained manpower, to assist the needy countries in Africa. The TAC scheme underlies the big brother role of Nigeria in Africa, aimed at providing, as Emeka Anthony will say, ‘a more sustainable assistance to African states’ (Obi 2006). Motivated by the realization that some African states have compromised their ability to respond to the legitimate aspirations and needs of the citizenry, Nigerian
government under the military administration of Ibrahim Babangida, felt the imperative to introduce the Technical Aid Corps to fill the gap created by the weak capacity of some states to produce highly trained manpower towards driving the economy of those states. The impact of the TAC programme has been profound right from the outset. Fage argues authoritatively that “…the scheme has made some remarkable achievements” (Fage 2012: 200). Through the TAC scheme, Nigeria has over the years contributed skilled personnel to many African countries, despite shortage of such professionals in Nigeria itself. Nothing else demonstrates Nigeria’s sacrificial commitment to the African course.

Peace and Security Roles: Another strand of Nigeria’s commitment to Africa which sprouted its roots in the Afrocentric foreign policy stance, is conflict management. Nigeria emerged from political independence with a great sense of responsibility of not only contributing to global peace, but providing the lead in the African continent. She has therefore, progressively committed herself to the vision of freeing the African continent from the devastating effects of dangerous conflicts. This vision has been pursued through Nigeria’s contributions and involvement s in the areas of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace enforcement, joining in developing a Pan African mechanism for good governance, and other matters on Africa’s peace believed to be a fundamental requirement for the socio-economic transformation of the continent. Considered only in terms of number of participations, Nigeria’s peace mission record has been quite impressive. Both under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU), Nigeria has played quite a number of peace roles in the African continent. It is noteworthy that since the commencement of peace support operations by the United Nations in 1948, the organization has sponsored about 60 initiatives, out of which Nigeria has actively participated in over 40 or about 73% of the missions around the world (Dike 2010). This is illustrative of the country’s love for peace. Specifically,
Nigeria was profoundly contributive to the peace process that returned Liberia to normalcy, having been convulsed by a prolonged intractable conflict that nearly that country exterminated from the political map of the world. Nigeria spearheaded the formation of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) which intervened militarily into Liberia with a mandate to end the civil war that was ravaging the country (Enuka 2017). Several thousands of Nigerian soldiers were part of the troops that fought for the peace of Liberia. Nigeria and Ghana provided the naval and air detachments for close support operations, patrol and transportation purposes. The force consisted of eight thousand four hundred and thirty troops organized into ten battalions. Of these figure, four thousand nine hundred and eight troops were Nigerians (Galadima 2011). Compelled by the imperative for peace in the West African sub region, Nigeria participated both militarily and diplomatically in the mandate to end the lingering ugly civil war in Sierra Leone and to reinstate the democratically elected government of President Tejan Kabbah. Among other things, Nigeria Alpha fighter jet flew over Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, intensifying pressure on the rebel forces. All these military efforts facilitated the restoration of peace in Sierra Leone, and the return of the ousted President Tejan Kabbah. Nigeria’s involvements in the peace process of other conflicts in Africa are too obvious to detain us here.

International Organization: Since the years of her political independence, Nigeria has been involved in every sub-regional and regional effort at developing institutions for cooperation and integration in Africa (Dede 2012). Nigeria’s role was decisive in the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. Nigeria was equally significant in piloting the birth of the African Union in 2002, as well as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), in 2001. Nigeria played very pivotal role in the formation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and also laid the formation, much later, of the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980. These initiatives, in line with the consistent tilt in Nigeria’s
foreign policy perspectives, were aimed at strengthening solidarity, instilling good neighbourliness, accelerating the pace and broadening the scope of economic cooperation among African states. Subscribing to Nna Okeke’s position, we state that Nigeria’s role at the African Union and other African international organizations is best understood within the context of Nigeria’s overall orientation and commitment to Africa in her foreign policy (Agwu 2014).

Contribution to Africa’s Culture: Nigeria did not only realize the imperative of ridding the African continent of colonialism, and of being committed to efforts at securing Africa’s political freedom, as has had been shown in the second chapter of this book, she equally became concerned about cultural subjugation of the African and black race within and outside the continent, by the same imperialists. Therefore, pursuant to her Africa-centered foreign policy stance, and angered by the realization that the immense contributions of Africa and the black man to world civilization have been deliberately undermined and underrated over the centuries, Nigeria, under the military rulership of Olusegun Obasanjo resolved to host the Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in 1977, committing to the huge financial expenditure which the festival required. The aim, inter alia, was to accord Africa’s culture its rightful place in the globe. It is within this context of the pursuit of Nigeria’s Afrocentric foreign policy principles and the accompanying understanding of the imperative of cultural security that Nigeria spearheaded and hosted the Festival of Arts and Culture in 1977. While Africa-centered foreign policy places the defence of African affairs, including her culture, at the center of Nigeria’s foreign policy concern and international relations, cultural security provokes the consciousness that defends the inalienable right of a people (in this case, Africa), to cherish and protect those elements and features of their culture that are dear to them, without molestation, or intimidation. The projection of the African continent in socio-cultural terms was regarded by the Nigerian leadership at the time, as a logical derivative of Nigeria’s foreign policy objectives and
her desire to assume leadership role on the continent. In sum therefore, the hosting in 1977 of the 2nd Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), was a manifest expression of Nigeria’s commitment to promoting and advancing the cause of Africa and the blacks in diaspora, in a bid to fulfill the demands of her Afrocentric foreign policy objectives. This very remarkable initiative by Nigeria drew delegates from Black and African countries and communities globally. It featured performances, exhibitions, and colloquium. Babawale describes it as “…a universal assembly of Black and African artistes, scholars, and experts to interact …and appreciate the similarities and differences in their creativity, opinions and postulations on African culture” (Babawale 2014: 245). At its end, it was adjudged to have recorded a lot of achievements that left Africa with a lot of socio-cultural gains that fitted into Nigeria’s concerns for the continent.

In the Lens of Social Exchange Theory: Africa’s Mistreatment of Nigeria
Issues stemming from Nigeria-Africa relations demonstrate the obvious that Nigeria’s magnanimity to Africa, fuelled by her Afrocentric foreign policy principles and convictions, failed to be met with reciprocal responses from the numerous African countries who are beneficiaries of Nigeria’s largesse. Africa does not treat Nigeria in manners that corroborate Nigeria’s concern and commitment to the good of the continent. In utter contravention to the tenets of reciprocity and the provisions of the Social Exchange theory, Nigeria and Nigerians are not treated the way Nigeria treats other African countries and their nationals. Evidences to this abound, and will in the next few lines be shown.

Owing to the negative image projected of Nigeria internationally in the recent past, Nigerians are maltreated in many parts of the continent. One can cite many instances where Nigerian citizens have been subjected to degrading treatments and violent attacks, sometimes leading to death. They are subjected to all manners of inhuman treatments. At the points of
application for entry permits, they are denied certain entitlements even when they meet the requirements. African states that play host to thousands of Nigerians have not lived up to the responsibility of ensuring justice and humane treatment for Nigerians. The welfare and businesses of Nigerians are constantly subjected to threats from the citizens of the host community. Some of the countries where these ugly incidences of maltreatment have occurred and continue to occur, have thriving businesses in Nigeria. Their citizens abound in Nigeria, and carry out their own businesses without molestation or even discrimination, contrary to what Nigerian citizens experience in those countries.

Nigeria’s experiences with South Africa do not only negate the contents and provisions of the social exchange theory, but most seriously make a nonsense of Nigeria’s sincerity in her commitment to the political and economic wellbeing of Africa. Nigeria’s enormous sacrifices made in support of the struggle against apartheid, and the consequent end of White minority rule in South Africa did not result to good and friendly treatment of Nigeria by South Africa, expected within the context of social exchange theory. Among many other things that demonstrated South Africa’s unfriendly disposition towards Nigeria is the Nelson Mandela’s show of indifference to Nigeria after his release from prison. Both President Mandela and his ANC government, through their visits, was busy romancing with the Western countries, and never treated Nigeria with any sense of priority. Throughout his administration in South Africa, President Mandela never visited Nigeria.

It is indeed irksome that inspite of Nigeria’s enormous concern for, and contributions towards the liberation of South Africa, “The Nigerian leader was not even invited to the celebration marking the end of apartheid in 1994 in South Africa, the cause for which Nigeria had sacrificed greatly in human and material resources” (Izah 2011: 350). When Nigeria, for the first time, was suspended by the Commonwealth of Nations, on the grounds of
human rights abuse, it was Nelson Mandela, the South African President that lit the fire. It is not as if one is moralizing the blatant and condemnable insensitivity of the Nigerian government towards rights of its own citizens, which culminated in the gruesome killing of the Ogoni Nine, but given the enormous sacrifices of Nigeria’s successive governments towards the freedom of both South Africa and Nelson Mandela himself from the stranglehold of the Dutch imperialists, it staggers the imagination to see Mandela championing the agitation for Nigeria’s punishment. As though that was not enough for South Africa represented by its President, Nelson Mandela returned to South Africa from the Commonwealth meeting, and began to generate action against Nigeria at home and abroad (Akinterinwa 2014). Among other things, President Mandela recalled South Africa’s High Commissioner to Nigeria, pushed for the United States and United Kingdom to impose oil sanctions on Nigeria, and requested a Southern African Development Commission (SADC) meeting to take the Nigerian matter further.

There have been negative press reports and xenophobic stereotypes of Nigerians as drug traffickers and criminals in South African media and popular imagination. As a result of this, there is the wrong perception of Nigeria and Nigerians often arising from stereotyping. Resulting from this unfortunate situation has been the incessant arrests of Nigerians by the South African police, who come with cooked up warrants and other guises, knowing that they will get away with it since there is the assumption that every Nigerian is inherently a criminal. Agbu noted that the South African criminals and hoodlums seeing that the inhuman treatments and illegal maltreatments of Nigerians by the police, go unchecked and unsanctioned, became emboldened to attack, loot, and kill Nigerians with the confidence that the same police will neither have the matters thoroughly investigated nor meet out punishment for their offences. Nigerians have been harassed by South African police, trailed to their hotel rooms and robbed or murdered upon arrival in South Africa. Many have been wrongly accused
and set up by the South African police, for just being Nigerians. This is obviously a situation that is most heartbreaking, especially from the very persons Nigeria’s successive governments have laboured so greatly to assist.

In addition to the many manifestations of South Africa’s malevolence and unfortunate mistreatments of Nigeria and its citizens, is the issue of deportation of Nigerians from South Africa. Without recourse to due diplomatic process, the South African authority deports Nigerians from the country in their hundreds, at the flimsiest excuse. Osita Agbu noted that up to two hundred Nigerians could be deported within a week. Some of the deportations stemmed from the acclaimed fact of non-presentation of yellow fever vaccination certificate. Though the yellow fever card is one of the documents a traveller is expected to present, but studies suggested that deportation of Nigerians by the South African authority on the excuse of non-possession of yellow fever card was part of the South Africa’s xenophobic tendencies against Nigeria (Akinterinwa 2014, Onuoha 2008). It is widely known that yellow fever vaccination certificate is usually issued at the South Africa High Commission in Nigeria, before a visa is issued. Therefore, to deport Nigerians who are already in South Africa on the grounds of non-possession or non-presentation of the yellow fever vaccination certificate is to be mischievous. More so, the standard practice requires that where such yellow fever cards were not produced by a traveller or is suspected to be fake, the travellers involved will be quarantined and inoculated for a fee at the airport, not necessarily to deport them. To deport a traveller on such reasons above, is as Ashiru described, ‘an affront to diplomatic norms’ (Akinterinwa 2014). What further suggests that South Africa has something up her sleeves against Nigeria is that the Nigerian authority would not even be notified prior to the deportations. The notification would come when the deportation must have been accomplished.
Similar to the above was the Angolan government’s attitude towards Nigeria. Suffice it to say, that weighed on the scale of the social exchange theory, Nigeria’s contributions to Angola’s political independence, was monumental foreign policy regret. Despite all the sacrifices by Nigeria towards the political freedom of Angola, Nigeria’s name was not found in the Angola’s official list of the countries that assisted Angola in its struggling years. As though that was not enough, at Murtala Muhammad’s death, Angola could not say anything to condole Nigeria until the expiration of about a month. Though what appeared to be a condolence message eventually arrived from Angola, but “...only its first three sentences made...reference to our tragic loss. The remainder contained another shopping list” (Garba 2005: 36). In spite of the energies, financial resources and all the diplomatic efforts stepped up to stabilize the Angolan government after her attainment of independence, Angola was ‘a typical case of an ingrate’ (Garba 1987). Akinyemi reported that Nigerian delegation to Angola was dictated to in Luanda on who should be on the delegation. In what I have called the Lamentations of a Foreign Affairs Minister, Joe Garba, who was Nigeria’s minister of External Affairs in the years of Nigeria’s commitment to the Angola’s liberation struggle, cried out that “...we gave and gave to Angola, and in return got nothing” (Garba 2005: 39).

The un-reciprocal attitude of ungrateful African countries towards Nigeria’s benevolence is again classically demonstrated by the Zimbabwean government, when in 1986, Nigerian President and Foreign Affairs Minister visited Harare for the Non-Aligned Summit that held that year. Prior the Summit, the Nigerian government under President Babangida felt the need to assist Zimbabwe, in shouldering the financial burden of hosting the Summit. To this effect therefore, Nigeria donated the sum of ten million (10, 000, 000) US Dollars to the Zimbabwean Government. During the Summit, while President Robert Mugabe acknowledged the contributions made by other states to Zimbabwe, he
ignored that of Nigeria, even in the presence of Nigeria’s sitting president and Foreign Affairs Minister, Ibrahim Babangida and Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, respectively.

Added to the above very many mistreatments of Nigeria by South Africa and Angola, which runs contrary to the provisions of the social exchange theory, is also the annoying fact that Nigerians are being harassed and maltreated in many other states in Africa. There are harassments of Nigerians abroad, in African countries, especially in the countries that have benefited and are still benefitting from Nigeria’s kindness. Many of the countries had killed, maimed and deported Nigerians without recourse to the due process of law. Gabon is said to be topping the list of such countries that are hostile Nigeria and Nigerians. Libya has remained particularly hostile to Nigerians who are using Libya as an escape route to Europe and America. Inspite of Nigeria’s gestures towards Libya, Libyan security officials have continued to humiliate Nigerians living in Libya. The Nigerian Embassy was not spared the mortification meted out to Nigerians generally by the Libyan security personnel. In 2006, Libyan security invaded Nigerian Mission in Tripoli and abducted the Chancery guard on duty. They carried away all the keys to the Mission’s doors (Ibrahim 2010). All the protests against this act made by the Mission were ignored. The Mission’s request for a consular visit to the detained guard in accordance with Libya’s obligations under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations was not granted. Recently, Ghana illegally entered into the premises of Nigerian High Commission in Accra, demolishing the fence to the building, and pulling down part of the High Commission’s main building. This was a height of diplomatic insult on Nigeria as a country unknown in the annals of the history of African continent. The implications of this dastard act are far reaching, especially in the eye of the existing diplomatic and international law. Besides showing the extent Nigeria has been relegated and treated with disdain by the people and government of Ghana, that display was an act of aggression, and therefore, an invitation to
war by Ghana. The extraterritoriality rights of Nigeria and Nigerian foreign mission was abysmally insulted and violated, and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR 1861) breached.

Going by the principles of the social exchange theory, Nigeria expects African countries to stand by her in the United Nations, and in the African Union when she enlists their support for her leadership roles. But regrettably, African countries have always acted on the contrary. Succinctly put, reciprocal expectations from the recipients of Nigeria’s sacrificial assistances, is forlorn. This rather disappointing experience by Nigeria in her African international relations is a pointer to the hard international political reality that “…there is no gratitude in international relations” (Anyaoku 2012). Nigeria’s largesse has not been requited with the expected diplomatic clout. Little wonder Nigeria’s African brothers have, on constant note, left Nigeria in lurch, refusing and failing to be swayed into voting for Nigeria’s candidacy in international organizations or to support their benefactor’s policy. It is on record that Nigeria contributed twelve thousand out of the thirteen thousand ECOMOG troops deployed to Sierra Leone, and Nigeria’s treasury released nearly four hundred million US Dollars annually for the peacekeeping mission (Enuka 2017, Galadima 2011). Nigeria provided at least 80% of the ECOMOG’s troops that kept peace in Liberia and 90% of its funding (Obioma 2013, Adekeye 2008). But contrary to the expectations of social exchange theory, both Liberia and Sierra Leone voted against Nigeria’s interest and candidature of non-permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council. The actions of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo during the 2009 elections of non-permanent members into the United Nations Security Council, was particularly shocking. These countries were not enlisted as candidates for the elections, but rather than voting for Nigeria, the African representative in the election, they wasted their votes by casting them for themselves. Contrary to their wishes however, Nigeria still emerged victorious in the election. These were countries Nigeria spent its resources to assist.
After the Liberian and Sierra Leonean Wars, disappointedly, no Nigerian construction company or human resource firm was offered a contract in both countries for rebuilding and reconstruction as a way of compensating and recouping the enormous amount of money spent on peacekeeping in the two countries. As Obioma noted, Nigeria failed to take advantage of these military deployments and spending in diplomatic terms. There was no clear indication that such good gestures by Nigeria were regionally appreciated beyond rhetorically expressed gratitude.

Owing to the steady economic decline of African states, the ADB African members’ accumulated loan repayment arrears stood at five hundred million (500,000,000) US Dollars (Bukarambe 2000). Nigeria cleared its own arrears of forty-two million (42,000,000) US Dollars then, just in time for it to host the bank’s meeting that year. But most disappointedly, the African members of the bank worked in concert to frustrate Nigeria’s expectation and pursuit in the bank. The non-African members of the bank were able to influence Nigeria’s African brothers to vote against Nigeria’s candidate for the presidency of the African Development Bank. Added to the above, was an open campaign sponsored by non-regional members of the African Development Bank, accented to, by the African members, for Nigeria’s diplomatic isolation. Nigeria could not but be heartbroken over the treatment which she labeled “A gang-up by members of Francophone group and Southern African Development Community” (Ate and Bukarambe 2000: 112).

As has been demonstrated by so many examples in this study, we reiterate that Nigeria’s input in Africa does not reflect in her treatment by fellow Africans. Put differently, the attitudes and behaviours of African states are not commensurate to Nigeria’s kind gestures towards them.
Conclusion
In tandem with the global political practice of reciprocity, as supported by the social exchange theory, it is a take that favours, benefits or penalties that are granted by one state to the other should be returned. But conversely, this is not reflected in practice in Africa’s foreign relations with, and treatment of Nigeria and Nigerians. Nigeria’s diplomatic efforts and commitment towards the political and economic good of Africa cohesion, both in military and civilian dispensations, has made the country a haven and a welcoming home for all human races, from Africa, Asia and elsewhere, nurturing and guiding smaller upcoming and post-conflict countries across the globe, committing hard earned material and human resources towards ensuring the welfare, peace and stability of various states within and outside the African continent. Against this backdrop of unrivalled magnanimity, humanity and friendship, one would have expected that African nations would in turn, reciprocate Nigeria’s open door policy and offer of olive branch in their diplomatic relationships/treatment of Nigeria and Nigerian nationals. Regrettably, the reverse is the case, with the experience of various degrading and intolerable treatments meted out to Nigerians by the governments, nationals and security operatives of various African countries, whom the country nurtured and is still nurturing to growth, for whom Nigeria championed their cause for freedom/stability and to whose socio-economic development Nigeria is still contributing.

References


Daura Mamman (2010) “Beyond Twenty-Two Years: A Prospective Analysis of the Technical Aid Corps (TAC) Scheme” in Eze Osita (ed) Beyond 50 Years of Nigeria’s Foreign Policy: Issues, Challenges and Prospects. Lagos: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs


