INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE QUEST FOR AFRICAN VOICE

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ABSTRACT
International Relations (IR), as a discipline, has European origins and a universal inclination, but it is the United States that largely determined its recent academic development. Several scholars have lamented the neglect of the developing world, especially Africa, in the study of IR. This paper examines the place of Africa in the IR discipline from the perspective of African scholars who argue that it is not a truly international discipline as it does not capture the full range of ideas, approaches and experiences of non-Western societies. It highlights the areas of perceived marginalization of Africa, the Western dominance in IR theorizing, various constraints to Africa's visibility in IR and shows that Africa continues to figure largely on the margins of the discipline. It builds on existing researches that situate African scholarship as a viable contributor to knowledge production and theorization in IR, and calls for an African-centered perspective of IR.

Keywords: International Relations, Africa, Marginalisation, African people, International Relations Theory

INTRODUCTION
International relations is a widely used term with two main meanings. The first meaning of the term, which is often written as "international relations", pertains to interactions among states and between states and state-based actors across state boundaries, as well as non-state actors, and individuals. The other meaning of the term – International Relations (commonly abbreviated as IR) – denotes a field of academic inquiry. It is often considered a branch of political science, but it is also a subject studied by historians (international or diplomatic history), and economists (international economics). Also, it is a field of legal studies (public international law) and an area of philosophy (international ethics) (Jackson and Sørensen, 2013).
Historically, the field of IR has established its boundaries, issues, and theories based on Western experience. Consequently, several scholars have argued that IR scholars are part of a global discipline with a single, shared object of study – the world – and yet theorizing gravitates around a number of concepts that have been conceived in the United States or United Kingdom.

Since Stanley Hoffmann's 1977 depiction of IR as an American social science, it has become commonplace to assert that IR is not 'international' at all, but rather characterized by the pervasiveness of Anglo-American modes of thought and their respective conceptual and spatial boundaries (Wæver and Tickner, 2009). Several scholars challenge the dominance of Western thought in the field and argue that IR marginalizes those outside the core countries of the West (Acharya, 2014: 647). In other words, IR as a discipline is believed to be too Western centric (Acharya, 2016; Tickner, 2013). While Tickner (2016: 158) avers that IR scholarship has long been focused on questions of importance to the great powers of the Eurocentric Westphalian system, Buzan (2016: 156) opines that much of mainstream IR theory is simply an abstraction of Western history.

Much of the literature on these perspectives also focuses on the barriers imposed upon the intellectual production and circulation of ideas from other parts of the world. Steve Smith, in his Presidential Address to the International Studies Association in 1993, did not mince words when he posited that "the discipline of International Relations has been a very partial one. It has been a view decidedly from somewhere, and that somewhere has been the world of the wealthy, imperial powers. Just as the discipline in the 1930s reflected British self-interest, so since the end of the Second World War it has reflected U.S. interests. In the name of explanation, it has

recreated the hegemony of U.S. power and U.S. interests" (Smith, 2004: 507). He argued that theorists should desist from hiding "behind the mask of value-neutrality and empiricism" to theorize in a manner that will make the discipline less hegemonic (Smith, 2004: 514). This hegemony does not only reside in the theories propounded but also the medium through which they become known.

Several African scholars also share these perspectives and argue that Africa, in particular, is marginalized in IR. Several articles and edited volumes, including Clapham, 1996; Harbeson and Rothchild, 2000; Dunn and Shaw, 2001; Nkiwane, 2001; Ofuho, 2009; Cornelisson, Cheru and Shaw, 2012; Brown and Harmon, 2013; Smith, 2017; Fasakin, 2018, have advocated for bringing Africa into the mainstream of the study of IR. This paper, thus, examines the viewpoints of African scholars who aver that Africa is generally under-represented in the mainstream IR scholarship emanating from the West and is mostly left out of the theoretical debates that have animated this scholarship. While some scholars have argued that Africa is overlooked as an important object of study, others have lamented the unsatisfactory tools with which IR tries to make sense of Africa. The paper argues that Africa continues to figure largely on the margins of IR discipline and the paper builds on existing researches that situate African scholarship as a viable contributor to knowledge production and theorization in IR and the world economy at large.

History of International Relations as a Discipline

International relations (IR) has several origin stories, some of which are stronger than others. Two main accounts are, however, predominant: the account which links its origin to 1648 and provides a foundational account about the states, the state system and its underlying principles and institutions traced back to the treaty of Westphalia and the second account which links its origin to 1919 and provides a foundational account about the discipline, with a focus on the close relationship between the subject matter under study and the discipline that studies it.

The first account linked the origin of the study of IR to the Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648, which ended the Thirty Years' War (1618−1648), in which the major continental European states – the Holy Roman Empire, Spain, France, Sweden and the Dutch Republic – agreed to respect one another's territorial integrity. The treaty is important in modern International Relations theory, and is often defined as the beginning of the international system with which the discipline deals. International relations were studied at this time within the discipline of law, philosophy, economics, politics and diplomatic history. In other words, the history that underpins IR assumes 1648 and the birth of the idea of national sovereignty as a sort of a major break between a world (Europe) under feudal/religious authority and a secular modern world of nation states.

The second account linked the study of IR to its emergence as a formal academic discipline in the United Kingdom (UK) in 1919. The First World War (1914–18), which started 300 years after the Westphalia Treaty gave rise to the need to have a discipline devoted to the study of IR. Thus, the first endowed Chairs of IR in the UK were established at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth (1919) held by Alfred Eckhard Zimmern and endowed by David Davies, the London School of Economics (1924), and Oxford University (1930) by philanthropists horrified by the destruction of the First World War (Brown, 2009). Since then, many contemporary universities offer courses and degrees in IR and most major countries and regions have their own professional associations.

In essence, according to Steans, Pettiford, Diez and El-Anis (2010), the story of the origin of IR as a discipline usually begins with an account of the First World War, a war so horrific that many

people believed it was the war to end all wars. The destruction and devastation, the physical and economic effort expended on killing and the horrific slaughter of an entire generation (of predominantly young men) was on a scale few could have imagined before 1914. This gave birth to the Idealist school of thought. For the Idealists, it was accepted that international relations could, and should, be managed in a more peaceful manner. However, events in the 1930s, with a series of international conflicts, revealed that the assumptions of Idealist thought were far removed from the views held by decision-makers in a number of states. The mechanisms preferred by Idealists proved incapable of preventing war, and the outbreak of the Second World War shattered the Idealist worldview. Specifically, mediation did not work, and more saliently, assumptions about the dysfunctional nature of war proved to be an illusion.

E. H. Carr, in his famous book, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (1939), wrote on the eve of World War II that the IR field "has been in the initial stage in which wishing prevails over thinking, generalization over observation, and in which little attempt is made at a critical analysis of existing facts or available means" (Carr, 1964: 8). Attributing its existence to the calamities of World War I, Carr argued that the field "took its rise from a great and disastrous war; and the overwhelming purpose which dominated and inspired the pioneers of the new science was to obviate a recurrence of this disease of the international body politic" (Carr, 1964: 8).

The response to the failure of Idealism to explain the dominant events of the 1930s was the emergence of Realism as an alternative paradigm. John Vasquez (1983) argues that Realism had three central assumptions: that nation states are the most important actors; that there is a sharp distinction between domestic and international politics; and that the focus of International Relations is the study of power and peace. In addition to these assumptions, Realists contend that the international political system is anarchic, as there is no supranational authority to enforce rules, states act in their rational self-interest within the international system, and view security as a central issue. To attain security, states try to increase their power and engage in power-balancing for the purpose of deterring potential aggressors.

By the late 1950s, however, theoretical work began to appear that addressed some of Realism's lacunae. In particular, the appearance of - and favourable reception to – Kaplan's *System and Process in International Politics (1957)* and Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin's *Foreign Policy Decision-Making* (1962) can be understood as frontal reactions to gaps in Realism's account of international politics.

The study of international relations, thus, began as a theoretical discipline. Two of the foundational texts in the field, Carr's *The Twenty Years' Crisis* and Hans Morgenthau's *Politics among Nations* (first published in 1948) were works of theory in three central respects. Each developed a broad framework of analysis which distilled the essence of international politics from disparate events; each sought to provide future analysts with the theoretical tools for understanding general patterns underlying seemingly unique episodes; and each reflected on the forms of political action which were most appropriate in a realm in which the struggle for power was pre-eminent. However, IR has since developed several theoretical perspectives in order to identify and explain the recurring patterns of international relations – most notably the causes of war and the preconditions for peace.

Until World War II, Europe was the center of gravity of IR. The density of the discipline's components was sufficiently high to constitute a critical mass and essentially secured the kick-off of the new discipline. However, though the discipline has European origin and a universal vocation, Hoffmann (1977: 42) argues that "it was in the United States that international relations became a discipline". Corroborating, Jørgensen (2018: 86) notes that:

After World War II, the prime center of disciplinary gravity moved to the United States. The mixture of émigré scholars, generous funding, a solid institutional infrastructure and due to the, at the time emerging, Cold War, an increased need to know the world, produced a unique conjuncture and a unique configuration of components. In the United States, the discipline became a blend of positivism, a distinctly conceived social science, within which the emerging political science departments simply subsumed the study of international politics.

Hoffmann (1977) argues that the growth of the discipline cannot be separated from America's role in world affairs after 1945. America's rise to power after the war also led to the conviction that "a concern for America's conduct in the world blended with the study of international relations, for the whole world seems to be the stake of the American Soviet confrontation ... To study United States foreign policy was to study the international system. To study the international system could not fail to bring one back to the role of the United States" (Hoffman 1977: 35). This conviction, in turn, favored the development of the scholar-citizen, one that not only seeks to produce knowledge, but also implicitly or explicitly produce knowledge that can be politically useful and reflect the country's values (Hoffman 1977: 47). Thus, America's preponderance of power enabled it to mold world politics and it required theoretical justification for doing so, whereas scholars in less powerful countries were less motivated to look at global phenomena beyond the study of their nation's foreign policy. As an intellectual and analytical framework, realism thus proved to be the ideal compass for policy-makers.

Hoffman (1977: 49-50) avers that three institutional features peculiar to the United States made the development of IR scholarship thriving in ways unthinkable elsewhere: 1) the close links between academics and policymakers, who could easily move in and from academia, think thanks and policy circles; 2) the funding of policy-relevant academic research sponsored by wealthy foundations and 3) the mass-education system that allowed for disciplinary specialization. Thus, the discipline of IR, Hoffmann contends, was a distinctively American social science, an identity that affects the way research is conducted.

In the decades following the publication of Hoffmann's article, several scholarly works, including Alker and Biersteker, 1984; Crawford and Jarvis, 2001; Friedrichs, 2004, are of the same view that IR is an American-dominated discipline, thereby making the depiction of American preponderance operates as a disciplinary truism. Hoffmann's image of the field as an American-dominated enterprise has been adopted and seamlessly reproduced by academics time and time again. For instance, Steve Smith (2000: 396) states that "the discipline remains a United States dominated one", and Arlene Tickner (2003: 297) claims that "[t]wenty five years after Stanley Hoffmann's critical depiction of IR as an American social science, the basic contours of IR have changed surprisingly little". Wæver (2007: 296) describes IR as an American discipline that dominates by having the largest and best-funded academic community, having the dominant journals, and being able to ignore the work of scholars outside the United States. Within IR, most of the key journals are United States based, and they prefer theory testing to the development of new theory.

On his part, Duncan Bell (2009: 4) posits that America and its researchers have acted as the center of gravity in the evolution and developments of the IR discipline, suggesting that Americans contributed to the development of the field and remain hegemonic within it. Biersteker (2009) notes that there are more IR degree granting institutions, more IR faculty, and more IR dissertations, degrees, associations, and conferences in America than in any other country on the globe. Most of this development has taken place in America since 1945, coinciding with the dawn of what many have described as "the American century," and there is a broad consensus in the United States about the importance of using the most sophisticated methods of the social sciences to pursue the analysis of international relations.

In addition to training future generations of United States scholars, many practicing and aspiring academics from outside the United States have been educated or will seek out their doctoral degrees there, encouraging the intellectual reproduction of the United States IR model. The fact that this country grants more PhDs than any other place in the world and equally important, more PhD fellowships, is not just a matter of academic capital, but finance plain and simple. Also, 50% of the IR professoriate in 20 countries believes that obtaining a PhD in the United States gives the candidate an advantage in her/his home job market (Maliniak, Peterson, and Tierney, 2012: 51).

Furthermore, Nossal (2001) points out that IR theory is 'produced' by an exceedingly small number of scholars, mostly English-speaking, and mostly based in American universities. The rest tend to either 'consume' that theory, implicitly or explicitly, in their writing, or simply ignore the theoretical 'produce' altogether. Publishing patterns in specialized IR journals indicate the pervasiveness of these same scholars (Aydinli and Matthews, 2000; Friedrichs and Wæver, 2009). It is also noted that IR teaching, especially in the area of theory, revolves largely around United States or UK authored approaches. Jonas Hagmann and Thomas J. Biersteker's (2012) analysis of the required reading lists of core graduate IR theory courses in 23 United States and European universities points to the generalized dominance of 'rationalist' modes of thought (quantitative, formal theory, applied rational choice) — more pronounced in the former than in the latter — the near invisibility of 'radical' approaches (neo-Marxism, feminism, postmodernism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism), and almost total non-recognition of non-Western or peripheral authors.

In their examination of articles published in five leading English-language IR journals (*International Organization, International Studies Quarterly, International Security, Review of International Studies,* and *European Journal of International Relations*), Friedrichs and Wæver (2009) reveal that United States-based scholars dominate the first three (US) journals, accounting for between 80% and 100% of the articles published in any given year between 1970 and 2005. Even in the latter two (non-US) ones, American authorship continues to account for an average of 33% of all articles, surpassed only by British-based scholars. In comparison, authors stationed in Europe fare quite poorly, representing on average less than 10% of articles in the United States and British (*Review of International Studies*) journals and 34% in the European one (*European Journal of International Relations*).

In tandem with general findings in the social sciences, the 'rest of the world' is essentially invisible in all five publications. A close-up of publication trends in recent years leads Friedrichs and Wæver (2009: 274) to conclude not only that United States' dominance is not in decline, at least in terms of the publication game, but also that it actually seems to be growing. The general ascendance of international publishing, especially in outward-looking institutions, as one of the main criteria for extending recognition in academic communities throughout the world, only reinforces the centrality of United States and European publications, most likely breeding greater homophile, which works at cross-purposes to intellectual pluralism (Tickner, 2013).

Thus, the disciplinary self-image of American disciplinary dominance has become deeply embedded within the discipline and is treated *a priori* and rarely questioned. As Richard Little (2004: iii) argues, it has become almost a cliché to argue that, during the course of the twentieth century, the study of International Relations developed into a quintessentially American discipline. Many peripheral scholars have also largely embraced theories and concepts developed in the United States and Europe instead of revolting against them, despite the common mantra that they are sorely inadequate for understanding problems and dynamics in the global South (Tickner, 2013). Even articles examining the state of the discipline in different national communities, for instance, Chong and Hart (2009), Hadiwinata (2009), Makarychev and

Morozov (2013), often begin by unquestioningly declaring that America is disciplinary preponderant. This readily adopted premise is then used as a foundation from which to launch their investigations into national IR communities (Turton, 2016).

Furthermore, the study of various 'third world' contexts has led to claims that key IR concepts, including the state, self-help, power, and security, do not 'fit' third world realities and may not be as relevant as others for thinking about the specific problems of such parts of the world (Wæver and Tickner, 2009). In Africa, in particular, the most commonly cited problem facing IR in understanding the continent is that the discipline is somehow too western. Common theories of IR—liberalism, constructivism, realism—all rest on western conceptions of statehood, civil society, political processes and rationalities, and have been developed with reference to western historical processes of state formation. Africa, so the argument goes, is different from the West and thus, does not fit within these western models of understanding international relations (Harman and Brown, 2013). Many of the calls for greater diversity in the field rest on the assumption (or on anecdotal evidence) that American ideas and practices differ markedly from those in other regions, and that United States scholars and institutions continue to dominate the discipline. In a nutshell, they argue that IR is not a global discipline as it is dominated by Western biases.

Development of International Relations Discipline in Africa

How does Africa fit into IR's history? One thing that we need to bear in mind is that Africa is not a monolithic actor and also, different historical experiences have resulted in various notions of identities such as Francophone, Anglophone and Arab Africa. As noted by Fasakin (2018), Africa is a region whose history and place in the world's socio-cultural, economic and political ladder define the interests of its scholars, their understanding of world affairs, their approach and disposition towards the discipline and the kind of contributions they made to the development of the field; the same way these factors influence African policy-makers. It is, therefore, important to understand and state that although Africans contribute to international relations in general, even as of the period of the formal establishment of the first Chair in IR at Aberystwyth, and the origin of academic institutions studying in the West in the previous decade, African states were yet to be independent actors studying IR. The states were neither independent, capable of making their own diplomatic decisions towards the external others on their own, in the Westphalian state system sense, nor their scholars 'doing' independent thinking about the world from African based institutions (Fasakin, 2018).

Suffice to say, nonetheless, that although many African countries were under colonial rule in the first half of the 20th century, Africans were aware of the international politics at play globally and in international relations in general as it affected their thinking about the status of their states. They realized that their 'countries' and situations were tied to powers and events outside Africa, hence the birth of liberation movements driven by writings on the travails of the colonies and the evils of colonialism during this period. These writings became precursors to subsequent nationalist agitations in Africa.

Thus, international relations studies were first developed following African independence, when the newly emerging states faced the need to interact with the rest of the world (Ofuho, 2009). At this time the 'international' was more of a practical notion than a theoretical one, given its rootedness in immediate problems such as the post-colonial reordering of African political life and the establishment of diplomatic relations with other countries. Given that post-independence states and ruling elites lacked expertise in international affairs, most African countries appointed academic specialists to external or foreign affairs posts. The fact that

governments depended upon these specialists to guide their foreign relations facilitated the development of IR as an academic subject of study (Ofuho, 2009).

It is not accidental that international relations studies were created first in Nigeria. According to Aluko (1989), although Nigeria did not become independent until 1960, as early as 1956 the Balewa government introduced to the pre-independence parliament Sessional Paper No. 11 which provided, among other things, for the training of future Nigerian diplomats. Such training was to be carried out in overseas institutions, such as the London School of Economics, Oxford University and the School of Diplomacy at The Hague, as institutions for such training were not available in Nigeria in the late 1950s. The impetus for the study of international relations was provided by the Nigerian government when it established the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) in 1961, with the following objectives:

1. to encourage and facilitate the understanding of international affairs, and of the circumstances, conditions, and attitudes of foreign countries and their peoples;

2. to provide and maintain means of information upon international questions, and promote the study and investigation of international questions by means of conferences, lectures, and discussions, and by the preparation and publication of books, records reports ... so as to develop a body of informed opinions on world affairs.

The Institute was also enjoined by the government to promote the scientific study of international politics, economics, and jurisprudence. Its purpose is also to provide information and advice to the government and members of the public on matters concerning international relations and 'to provide facilities for the training of Nigerian diplomats and personnel and those of other countries whose vocations relate to international affairs. Finally, it is to 'promote and encourage the study and research into all aspects of international affairs'. (Aluko, 1989). The Institute publishes two journals of IR, *the Nigerian Journal of International Affairs (NJIA)* and the *Nigerian Forum*, to serve as a platform for the dissemination of IR research.

The study of IR in Nigerian universities began during the second half of the 1960s. In 1965, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka began offering some courses such as comparative government, the foreign policies of the Great Powers, as well as those of some African states, including Nigeria. In 1966, the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), signed an agreement with the Nigerian government to train its external affairs officers, however, the political crisis and conflict that gripped the country from late 1966 until January 1970 made it extremely difficult to implement this agreement (Aluko, 1989). The University College of Ibadan (now University of Ibadan), which was the only university in the country upon independence in 1960, did not offer any course in IR until the early 1970s, and this was within the Department of Political Science.

In 1971, the University of Ife established postgraduate courses in IR and in March 1976, it established the first Department of International Relations in Nigeria. In 1977, the University of Ife established the first Chair in IR in Nigeria, and in the whole of black Africa. In 1982, the University began its undergraduate program in IR. In 1980, the Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria had introduced a separate undergraduate program in International Studies within the Department of Political Science. Since then, virtually all universities in Nigeria run a number of courses and programs at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in IR within their various departments of Political Science or as separate departments.

Advancement in the teaching and research of IR in Nigeria during the 1970s was enhanced by two major factors. First, the interventionism of numerous foreign powers in the Nigerian civil war made Nigerian leaders and students of international affairs realize that external forces could

seriously endanger the country's security and territorial integrity (Aluko 1989). Second, the Nigerian economy was very strong in the 1970s, due to the oil boom of the period. The Nigerian government made use of oil revenues to provide funding to universities to intensify IR studies, among other areas.

In other African countries such as Egypt, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania, departments such as Department of Political Science at the University of Cairo, the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies (IDIS) and Department of Government at Nairobi University and the Departments of Government, Political Science, or Liberal studies respectively engage in IR related scholarship. In South Africa, IR is considered as part of Political Science and taught at most universities. Separate IR departments exist at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and Rhodes University. The majority of South African Political Science departments offer IR along with other areas of Political Science (Gouws, Kotze and van Wyk, 2013). Schoeman (2009: 53) observes that "doing IR (teaching, research, publication) in South Africa" is rooted in a 'triple history', namely colonialism, apartheid and the country's relations with Southern Africa and the world. To this, she adds several drivers, namely the end of the Cold War and apartheid, the globalization of the ideology of neo-liberalism and the politics of transformation in Africa.

Two major outlets for South Africa's IR scholars are *Politikon,* which is the official journal of the South African Association of Political Studies and the *South African Journal of International Affairs* (SAJIA), the official journal of the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), an independent, non-governmental policy research institution established in 1934. In her review, Schoeman (2009: 63) concluded that between 1990 and 2007, *Politikon* published a total of 225 articles. Of these, only 73 (32%) were IR articles. These articles were also predominantly applied theory or policy related or descriptive with only 8% purely theoretical. For the same period, SAJIA published a total of 342 articles with 324 (95%) being IR articles. Although, 85% of these articles were policy-related or descriptive and only 5% were pure theory.

While it may be argued that IR African writers focus on making contributions related to the diplomatic relations and practices, and foreign policies of their respective countries, their inputs are relevant in making meaning of IR for Africa's sake than partaking in the mainstream debates within the field (Fasakin, 2018). Although the Cold War provided the context for their analysis, approaching it from diverse perspectives and IR dominant theories, they reflect more on Africa's place in the world and engage with this context to improve understanding of African existential realities.

Is Africa Marginalized in International Relations (IR)?

Sub-Saharan Africa has been on the margins of the international system for many years, and yet the continent has been deeply and inherently engaged in the global trade system since the beginning of the nineteenth century (Engel and Olsen, 2005). This striking duality between marginalization and 'globalization' has had a significant impact on the academic studies on Africa's place in international politics. Only to a very limited extent have such studies been inspired by theoretical thinking or by the theoretical debates that have taken place within the study of IR. Also, the duality between marginalization and globalization has had far-reaching consequences for how the region has been treated in international relations theory.

Philip Gourevitch (1998: 326) notes a 'stubborn misconception' dominating Western attitudes toward Africa –"that Africans generate humanitarian catastrophes but don't really make meaningful politics". This assumption that Africa does not have meaningful politics, only humanitarian disasters, has marginalized the continent on the world's political stage. The continent usually appears in IR scholarship as a case of delinquency – as the site of conflict,

suffering and disorder, which in its institutional make-up fails to conform to Westphalian norms of state sovereignty and which is of little consequence to the world economy (Engel and Olsen, 2005).

Gallagher (2011) also notes that in the UK, Africa is presented as pitiable, helpless, fragile, broken, needy and incapable. Television charity extravaganzas hammer home the pitiable state of Africa and glamourize the Western pop-stars and celebrities who go there to help (Nash, 2008). According to Jones (2005), in Britain, households are regularly requested to give donations, to sponsor children, to contribute one pound a week to help pay for a school or a bore-hole in a poor rural village in Africa. The compassion of the ordinary student, parent and worker is appealed to through images of children's faces, often surrounded by scenes of rural poverty. Such requests appear in newspapers and leaflets, in envelopes arriving through letterboxes, on television advertisements. This creates a popular understanding informed by compassion, pity and concern for the suffering of fellow human beings far away. It is this narrow approach that has led Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2013) to lament what she calls the 'danger of the single story about Africa', particularly as it is a 'single story of catastrophe'.

The marginalization of Africa in the international system is reinforced by the disciplinary marginalization of Africa in IR. This is interesting because, as Craig Murphy (2001: ix) puts it, "more than one out of ten people are African. More than one out of four nations are African. Yet, I would warrant that fewer than one in a hundred university lectures on International Relations given in Europe or North America even mention the continent".

Harman and Brown (2013) also note the paradox surrounding Africa's place within the study of IR. Africa has occupied something of a precarious position in the discipline, pushed to the margins of some mainstream approaches by their focus on Great Powers. Such marginalization is decried by critics of IR who depict an unbridgeable divide between 'mainstream' IR and Africa, some seeing in that divide a hegemonic and exclusionary project. Conceptually and theoretically, they argue, the 'western' origins and focus of IR mean that Africa will always be a problematic 'other' in the discipline, at variance with a western norm. Others, meanwhile, conduct substantive research into a host of important issues that engage with issues pertinent to IR but pose little direct challenge to the theoretical, conceptual or methodological basis of the discipline. Dunn (2001) asserts that Africa's pseudo absence in IR theory is exacerbated by the continued privileging of concepts that help maintain that invisibility. Thus, basic concepts that are central to traditional IR, like the state, sovereignty, and markets become problematic, if not highly dubious, when applied to Africa.

The idea that scholars in the core of the field (mainly the US and UK) are the innovators of theory, while scholars in the periphery (Africa and the rest of the developing world, and also to an extent other countries falling outside of the Anglo-American tradition) are mere consumers of theory, has been widespread in the field. For instance, a recent publication titled, *Fifty Key Thinkers in International Relations* (Griffiths, Roach and Solomon, 2009) reveals a list of all the theorists who matter in IR. Of the long list, none of the theorists listed is of a non-Western origin. The argument here is validated by the fact that out of these fifty 'key thinkers' in IR, not even one African, South American or Asian scholar is cited. This is not due to mere forgetfulness. Rather, it does indicate that "the 'who' of IR studies continues to be a select number of academics hailing primarily from the countries of the core" (Tickner, 2003: 296).

Santos (2012) notes that the global South is not simply a geographical space but also a metaphysical space of inequality, exclusion, and invisibility which also defines certain communities and space within what is geographically designated as the West. According to

Santos, primacy is afforded to knowledge of Western origin based on its perceived superior scientific rigor while knowledge emerging from the South is marginalized, seen as primitive, unscientific, and thus inferior. This ideologically based binary has profound implications for knowledge production in terms of what is regarded as researchable. This in turn determines the knowledge that is judged worthy of inclusion in an academic curriculum.

The general picture of African underrepresentation in world knowledge is replicated across fields, disciplines, and diverse subject matter. It tends to be compounded rather than mitigated through the international partnership arrangements that are set up to favor the Western partners in the deal. Thus, just as world systems theory identifies westernized elites in peripheral economies as playing an important role in maintaining the dependent relationship between core and periphery, one could also say that academic elites (many of whom were educated in Northern institutions) continue to maintain Western academic dominance in the South.

Thomas and Wilkin (2004: 252) aver that Western knowledge remains the form of knowledge against which all other forms are evaluated. This of course extends to the field of IR, where "the science generated in the Anglo-American debate is the most authoritative account of international relations available to us. It serves as the discursive boundary for those wishing to enter legitimate debates about International Relations". In the same vein, Tickner (2003: 300) maintains that "IR reinforces analytical categories and research programs that are systematically defined by academic communities within the core, and that determine what can be said, how it can be said, and whether or not what is said constitutes a pertinent or important contribution to knowledge". The result is that the concerns and interests of scholars in the developing world are simply overlooked.

Furthermore, as Acharya and Buzan (2007) argue, the contributions of non-Western scholars remain hidden from view because of their inability to publish in the leading journals in the field, nearly all of which are edited in the West. The overall picture which emerges by looking at the social structure of IR in a global perspective is much more one of intellectual segmentation and stratification than one of intellectual integration which one might think the subject matter itself to be suggesting.

The impression of a three-tiered system is reinforced if one examines another dimension of the social structure of the discipline, that is, its publication system in general and its hierarchy of journals in particular (Wæver, 2007: 296-297). If access limitations (as measured in terms of journal acceptance rates) are accepted as a measure of reputation, clearly the most competitive journals of the discipline are published in the United States and Europe, and/or controlled by American IR scholars. In several countries, getting published in these top journals is of central importance in order to climb the academic career ladder. For instance, in some Nigerian universities, lecturers are expected to have a certain percentage of their researches published in 'offshore' outlets, while some of the 'onshore' outlets are referred to as '*Agbowo*' (a location in Ibadan) outlets. In other words, these onshore publications are usually perceived as not being adequately peer-reviewed, even if they were.

Internal Constraints to Africa's Visibility in International Relations

Quite a number of African scholars have made significant contributions to the development of the field of International Relations. Of significance is the postcolonial/decolonial scholarship that can be linked to intellectuals such as Léopold Sédar Senghor, Amilcar Cabral, Kwame Nkrumah, Gamal Abdul Nasser and Franz Fanon. Julian Go (2016:8) referred to them as the first wave of postcolonial thought as they emphasized colonial exploitation and the racist and racialized foundations of imperialism, highlighted the costly psychological impact of colonialism

upon the colonized and the colonizer and "the postcolonial thought they spawned was a critical engagement with empire's very *culture*—its modes of seeing, being and knowing".

Also, several other African scholars engage in the adaptations of existing concepts or frameworks of IR or come up with concepts or analysis that focus on the peculiarities of Africa. For instance, in shedding light on the foreign policy of African states, Thomas Tieku (2012), not only refines existing frameworks or refines concepts, but also incorporates indigenous worldviews into this analysis. In an attempt to develop an alternative explanation for the behavior of African states, Tieku draws on the African worldview of Ubuntu in calling for the state to be re-conceptualized in a collectivist, societal to develop understandings of, amongst others, the African solidarity norm (Smith, 2017). Also, Vineet Thakur, Alexander E. Davis and Peter Vale (2017) offers an alternative account of the origins of academic IR, arguing that the ideas and method of what was to become IR were first developed in South Africa.

Furthermore, scholars like Janis van der Westhuizen (1988), Maxi Schoeman (2000) and Eduard Jordaan (2003) re-interpreted the concept of "middle power," arguing that there are specific characteristics that set emerging middle powers like South Africa apart from traditional middle powers. These scholars made an important contribution to the literature on middle powers by developing the concept through providing greater analytical clarity, and specifically making the distinction between traditional and new, emergent or emerging middle powers. (Smith, 2017).

Despite these and many other contributions, African scholars face a lot of challenges in their quest to be visible in the field of IR. While some of these challenges can be attributed to the western dominance in IR as discussed earlier, some of these challenges are internal. First, lack of financial resources (translating into limited funds not only for research but also for library resources and travel) remains one of the most severe restrictions faced by scholars from the continent. This in turn impacts on their ability to attend international conferences, where not only are scholars from the developing world exposed to the latest debates, but, more significantly, their work receives exposure. Material benefits (research funding, travel funding, and library resources) continue to pose a big challenge in African institutions. Most African universities are grossly underfunded, understaffed, ill-equipped with the facilities required for first-class teaching and research, and are sometimes, subject to extensive political interference on the part of the state. African governments need to invest in African universities and to implement policies that facilitate research.

Secondly, a lot of African institutions are trapped in a perennial struggle to catch up with the rest of the world in terms of modernization and development. Unfortunately, due to the unstable political, economic, and social situation that characterizes most of the continent, a lot of these institutions are unable to compete with the Western institutions in terms of curricula, resources, and academic productivity.

Thirdly, several African scholars just replicate what they learn from the Western world instead of being critical and innovative by looking inward. There is a need to make the teaching of IR in Africa more reflective of the local conditions. Most of these local conditions are reflective of happenings in other parts of the world.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the viewpoints of some scholars that Africa is marginalized in the discipline of IR. To borrow from the argument by Smith (2009), Africa remains on the fringes of the discipline. Where there have been attempts at bringing Africa into the fold, it has been done

from the perspective of 'what can Western IR do to incorporate Africa', rather than 'what can we learn from Africa'. There are good reasons to believe that African and other developing world insights into IR will be significantly different to the ones we are familiar with, and that they warrant an exploration.

While not advocating for shunning other perspectives to IR, this paper calls for an African-centered perspective of IR. There is a need for African scholars working in the field of IR to do more in theorizing the continent, the discipline and, also, daily occurrences in their environments. As noted by Harman and Brown (2013), Africa is very significant in IR. It is the geographical space where much that is systemically important in international relations has played out, from colonial rule to resource competition to post-conditional aid dependency. It is the site of much empirical research into the practice of international relations, whether with regard to old and new security threats such as weak state contagion or piracy, or with regard to the impact of orthodox neo-liberal economics on policy-making and state reform. Africa is both the site of social change and uprising (for instance, in North Africa) and the space in which new power configurations emerge (as in the case of Nigeria and South Africa) and old power configurations play out. The research on Africa in these areas is rich in empirical detail and would suggest that the continent represents a flourishing field for IR.

In essence, a focus on different actors, different worldviews and lived experiences can enrich our understanding of IR. Africa's difference, thus, becomes a tool to give us new insights into the workings of international relations not just in Africa, but in other parts of the world as well. Acharya and Stubbs (2006: 128) note how scholars of Southeast Asian IR have adapted IR theories to make them more appropriate for understanding the particularities of the region. Significantly, they note that these 'modifications' may not only be limited to engendering greater understanding of that particular region, but may also contribute to studying other parts of the world, with considerable potential to advance IR theorizing.

There is a need for African scholars to adopt this and other kinds of strategies. First, they need to establish themselves within the IR field by producing valuable contributions towards advancing the discipline as a whole and stepping out of the periphery. Secondly, African scholars should draw from their unique experiences and realities to develop theories or highlight exploratory researches within IR in ways that explain these peculiarities as well as areas of convergence or divergence with the rest of the world.

Thirdly, African scholars need to utilize IR journals domicile on the continent to encourage and promote the study of IR from Africanist perspective. In addition, there is a need to set up IR academic associations in African countries, which should hold annual conferences to provide the platform for African scholars to showcase their researches and to provide avenue for networking. Papers from these conferences should be properly peer-reviewed and published in Africa based journals.

Furthermore, in as much as there is an English and American Schools of IR, there is a need to create an African School of International Relations, which will encourage the creation, dissemination and distillation of African theories, concepts and ideas of IR. Africa's slavery, colonial experience, decolonization process and post-colonial statehood are sites of unquantifiable raw data. Issues of terrorism, violence, democratization, and reforms have the potentials to challenge dominant theories and discourses on and of Africa. Thus, Africa has a lot to contribute to IR scholarship.

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