

Reclaiming Africa's International Relations Space: Echoes  
of Kemet

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**Abstract**

*The repositioning of Africa within the international relations debate is the responsibility of African intellectuals. Regrettably, the continent has been dispossessed of its position as the home of international relations theory. The study assumes that Ancient Egypt (Kemet), which was the cradle of civilization, is, by extension, the motherland of international relations theory. The Westphalian narrative is only suitable for Euro-centric explanations of the development of international relations in Europe and not any other continent. Afro-centricity informed this study because it has the intellectual vigor to bring sanity to the contemporary international relations discourse. Qualitative research methods were employed to gather data through secondary sources like books, magazines, online and print journals and articles. The study found that the traits of international relations concepts in Ancient Egypt clearly demonstrate that modern civilization and international relations practice started in Ancient Egypt. It concluded that the attribution of the evolution of international politics to a Euro-centric narrative is a deprivation of Africa's rightful position in the discipline.*

**Keywords:** International Relations Theory, Kemet, Sovereignty, Civilization

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### **The Argument**

International relations theorists have deliberately neglected Africa in the body of international relations literature. The continent is only considered when attempting to demonstrate that it provides fertile ground for testing, challenging, and updating some of the hoariest precepts of international relations theory narratives. Molefi Kate Asante's work on Afro-centricity (*Afrocentricity Ideas*, 1987 and *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*, 1990) has necessitated the repositioning of Africa in the international relations discourse. Ama Mazama (2001) echoes this thinking by saying that Afro-centricity's appeal lies in the remedy that it suggests. In this study, Afro-centricity provides the remedy to Africa's deprivation of its position in the evolution of international relations theory. Closer to the conditions of early modern Europe than to contemporary state-centric models and sovereignty, the African continent offers a living laboratory of political evolution and adaptation to both internal and external pressures. Ancient Egypt is the original homeland of international relations theory. As Dhliwayo (2015) observes, "very often scientific thought is wrongly attributed to and perceived as a monopoly of Western thought." This observation supports this study's submission that crediting international relations theory to European political thought is a misconception. Any attempts to relegate Africa as a laboratory for testing Euro-centric international relations approaches are contemptuous and thus should be challenged to the core. The location of international relations to Westphalia, which only came in 1648, has remained the greatest international relations Eurocentric myth. The time for debunking this myth has ripened more than ever before. The forthcoming sections provide details on the Afro-centricity paradigm as a tool of analysis and the systematic usurpation of the African legacy of international relations thought by Euro-centric scholars. Kemetic traits of diplomacy, trade and commerce as well as its quest for state preservation and the loopholes in the Euro-centric narrative on the development and evolution of international relations Theory will also be detailed.

### **Theoretical Dimensions of the Study**

This investigation was informed by the Afro-centricity archetype. Asante (2009) defines Afro-centricity as the inkling that African people should re-assert a sense of agency to achieve reasonableness. Mazama (2001) points out that Afro-centricity contends that the main problem for African scholars is their usually unconscious adoption of the western perspectives and their attendant conceptual frameworks in the international relations discourse. The reclamation of Africa's position in the international space can only be achieved by analyzing it from an Afro-

centric perspective as opposed to a Euro-centric perspective. This radical philosophical shift is important to African orientation, centeredness, and agency in the field of international relations. Molefi Kate Asante (2009) notes that Afro-centric methods consider that no phenomena can be apprehended adequately without locating it first. Dieng (2010) contemplates Africa as a subject and not simply an object of the field of international law. This is why Afro-centric scholars should investigate the complex interrelationship of the science and art, design, execution, politics, and tradition of the first civilization in the world, called Kemet, to demonstrate the enormous contribution of Africa to the evolution and development of international relations theories.

The application of Afro-centricity is significant in giving Africa its rightful place in the evolution of international relations discourse. Molefi Kate Asante (2009) points out that analytic Afro-centricity is the application of the principles of the Afro-centric method to textual analysis. A closer analysis of the literature available on civilization and Ancient Egypt points to Africa as the motherland of international relations theories. The Afro-centricity paradigm is the most appropriate tool of analysis for this study because Afro-centricity seeks to demonstrate clarity by exposing dislocations, disorientation, and de-centeredness that have long marginalized Africa as the underpinning foundation of the international relations theory. This will cement Africa's place at the core of international relations theories.

### **Kemet and The Historical Development of International Relations Theory**

In most academic literature it would seem as if the international relations theory has never had roots in Africa. Odutan (2015) noted that it has been demonstrated quite convincingly that much of what forms the basis of thinking in the international political order had its roots in Africa with the influences of African thinking and legal practices to be found in what has developed into sovereignty, jurisdiction, territorial control, war, truce, and capitalization amongst others.

Many names have been used about Egypt from time immemorial. However, Janus (2016) notes that "a popular ancient name for Egypt was Kemet, that means the land of the blacks or the Black Country". The rise of Kemet initiated the international relations theories. Dhliwayo, (2015) writes that "the ancient Egyptians, the creators of a civilization that spanned from 3200-332 BC, called their country Kemet, the name Egypt comes from Greek and means land of Black People". Asante (2007) notes that Kemet is the first instance of human beings organizing themselves into a nation comprised of many different ethnic and social communities. Egypt was the first nation created out of the values of African resources and the environment. It was a nation with varied backgrounds

and communities. Settlers of various farming lands, pastoral groups, towns, and villages were brought under the control of one central government. Customs, beliefs, names, and designations of deities became more than a family or clan achievement. These aspects of life were now national. A closer analysis shows that there is an organic link between Kemet and modern political, social, and economic systems. This busts the myth that Africa has not contributed to the development of international relations.

Ancient Egypt was a civilization of ancient Northern Africa. It was concentrated along the lower reaches of the Nile River in the places which are now modern-day Egypt. It should be noted that it is a historic civilization that rose independently. According to *Black History* (2017), Egyptian civilization followed prehistoric Egypt and coalesced around 3150BC. The history spanned the period from the early prehistoric settlements of the northern Nile River to the Roman conquest in the 30BC. The Pharaonic Period is dated from the 32<sup>nd</sup> century BC when Upper and Lower Egypt were unified until the country fell under Macedonia's rule in 332 BC. Several studies credit Ancient Egypt as the first civilization and its influence on the rest of the world is undeniable. Kemet civilization initiated the development of international relations theory and the political ideas the modern world is privileged to be practicing today. It practiced international relations and the concept of sovereignty and statehood did not originally come with the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) or the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) as Euro-centric writers contend.

National interests form the backbone of international relations. They are the goals and ambitions of the state whether they are economic, military, cultural or otherwise. Morgenthau (1951) explains:

permanent interests are relatively constant over a long period; variable or temporary interests are what a nation chooses to regard as its national interest at any particular time ... general interests are those interests that a country applies positively to a larger geographic area, to a large number of nations or in several specific fields ... specific interests are closely defined in time and space and are a logical outgrowth of general interests.

Every internal and/ or external policy that the Egyptians took was in the interests of the kingdom. National interest is the state's action concerning other states where it seeks to gain the advantage of benefits to itself. The success of Ancient Egypt civilization came, partly, from its ability to adapt to the conditions of the Nile River valley for agriculture wherein their food security was

guaranteed. Their adaptation to the environment was in the interest of the Kingdom. They predicted flooding and controlled irrigation for social and cultural development. Other developments included mineral exploration, writing system, collective construction, trade, and military changes which were intended to assert Kemet's dominance and survival in the anarchical ancient times.

Kemet left a lasting legacy as the land which initiated international relations theory. Diop (1974) pointed out that Africa is the birthplace of mankind and inevitably the forum for the first meaningful intercultural exchanges between nations. Dieng (2010) contends that Africa is the first world's oldest continent and her nations, institutions, and peoples are humanity's first. Odutan (2015) claims that ancient African civilizations are responsible for founding the original logic, structure, and method of statecraft for which modern human civilization is structured. A bureaucracy of elite scribes, religious leaders, and administrators under the control of the Pharaoh motivated and organized all these social, political, and economic activities which Kemet pursued in the name of national interests for security purposes. This ensured the cooperation and unity of the ancient Egyptian people in the context of an elaborate system of religious beliefs. A greater appreciation of Egyptian achievements and legacy can prompt one to assume that the civilization and international relations scent spread to the rest of the global village at the same time in antiquity.

Scholars like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoras either got their work and knowledge or was directly influenced by the political, social, and economic developments in Ancient Egypt.

The Greek scholars were the first group to introduce what was learned from North Africa to modern Europe and claimed responsibility for it. Pythagoras claimed the Pythagoras theorem for Mathematics. The theorem is named after him despite the concept having originated from Africa. It is the Kemetic civilization that influenced the international relations theory which is wrongly credited to Europe. All theorists and philosophers write their theories based on their social, political, and economic life experiences. The above assumption, therefore, supports the assertion that if Europe and Asia are beneficiaries of Kemet's civilization that the philosophers who were born and bred there, were directly or indirectly influenced by Kemet. Critically the global political, economic, and social setup with its social thought and ideas, have a Kemet umbilical code.

The authority of Kemet was extremely centralized and the Pera-aa was the prime connection between the people and the deities. He was able to rule this sizable population because as the

divine king he was given veneration and respect and he had a massive official bureaucracy that aided him in maintaining control of the terrestrial. Asante (2014) stated that Kemet stretched about 620 miles from Aswan (Syen) to the Mediterranean Sea. To effectually reign such a large state, the king had to use other people to run the country. These were customarily well-educated civil servants, chiefly scribes and tax collectors. The responsibilities of these officers remained undeviating even when the country changed kings. Essentially, kings and dynasties came and went but the general configuration of the country changed little in thousand years. The modern states are also using these systems of governance through governors, members of parliament, district, and provincial offices amongst others.

The political philosophy of Kemet was made stable by a strong fixation of the populaces with religious and moral thoughts. Asante (2014) echoed that ancient Egyptians' conceptions about the universe were aimed at promoting the longevity of the nation probably through a commitment to the ideologies that were formed by the priesthood of Heliopolis, Hermopolis, and Mennefer. Asante (2014) pointed out that in Kemet people usually honored gods in triads such that in Weset the triads consisted of Amen, Mut, and Khonsu and at Men-nefer, it was Prah, Sekhment, and Nefertem. The longevity of the nation is an indication of how well-organized Kemet was in playing the politics of ancient times. There was always a single supremedeity worshipped as the almighty God by the people of Kemet. This single deity was a father figure. Asante (2007) notes that "at Weset the father figure was Amen and at Men-nefer he was Ptah". This unified the kingdom. The ideas that Greek philosophers imported from Egypt influenced European international relations scholars to formulate theories and concepts which they claimed to be their own yet they were the stolen legacy of Ancient Egypt.

In international relations security is of pertinent concern. Morgenthau (1951), illustrates that from a realist point of view, the success of a statesman is determined by his ability to make decisions that would preserve and improve the state's power and not misuse it in a way that would weaken the state. The manipulation of the environment was an ancient environmental diplomacy practice. The Ancient Egyptians handled the environment in a way that their state and human security concerns were addressed. This in turn promoted a strong state, food security, and economic security amongst other issues of security concern. This was very significant for the survival of the ancient Kemet kingdom in a very anarchical system in ancient times. The realist school of thought in international relations theory emphasizes the pursuit of national interests for the survival of the

state in an anarchical system. The Egyptians did this using their indigenous knowledge systems very effectively. Kemet is indeed the doyen of international relations. Egyptians, in particular, and Africans in general, are arguably the fathers and mothers of international relations.

Alliances in Ancient Egypt were used as the empire tried to survive during ancient times. Chigora (2006) notes that "cooperation only exists when there are no clashing interests, absence of that may lead to enmity". The survival of the state was the main goal of the kingdom. The kingdom pursued its interests by cooperating with other neighbors during wars. Mokhtar (1990) notes:

the Sactic kingdom of Egypt was freed from Assyrian domination by an Egyptian named Psamnetik, in 658 he managed, with the help of Gypes of Libya and Greek mercenaries to throw off all vestiges of Assyrian overlordship and start a new dynasty, the twenty-sixty dynasty.

The kings of the dynasty tried valiantly to restore Egypt's position by prompting commercial expansion. Upper Egypt became a rich agricultural region growing produce that Lower Egypt sold. This indicates that Ancient Egypt practiced international relations.

Matrimonial alliances were also used as a strategic tool in international relations during ancient times. Mokhtar (1990) pointed out that in the interests of the empire, Snefru of the Fourth Dynasty legitimized his reign by strategically marrying Hetep-Heres, the eldest daughter of Huny of the third dynasty. This was an intelligent move that carried the royal blood over to the new dynasty. Any action that can be regarded as important for the survival of the state as it carries with it a built-in justification.

Oduntan (2015) illustrated that, despite the abundance of evidence, intellectual accounts of the contribution of Africa to the empire of human laws and international relations have been austere. This continuing situation was, however, carefully cultivated through concerted efforts at maintaining an otherness by aspects of Western scholarship and political leadership as part of the justification for the project of colonialism. It is important to note that the concept of the exclusivity of international law to European thinking is an engineered falsehood, conveniently deployed as part of the general imperial project of Western Europe in the past few centuries. The incontrovertible evidence that the predominant position from as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> century until the nineteenth century even amongst European writers was that international law had been universal, based on natural law, and applicable to all nations. The writings of Grotius (the so-called father of international law) clearly express the organic nature of international law as rising from shared

universal values and traditions, emanating from various human civilizations. Orakhelashvili (2006) claimed that Grotius himself treated international law as universal and secular. This piece of literature exposes that the foundations of international law are not universal but rather should be traced from the first civilization.

African conceptions of justice have been sophisticated for several epochs. Limited lawyers nowadays are conscious of the African roots of human legal ordering and the groundworks of international diplomacy. Odutan (2015) highlighted that fewer lawyers still are aware that the now celebrated statue of justice (portrayed by the figure of a Greek goddess blindfolded and holding in one hand the balancing scale and on the other hand a sword), was for many eras heralded by Egyptian goddess who also balances in one hand scales of justice and in the other hand a feather with which it weighs against the soul of all mortals when they face divine judgment. The resemblances and conceptualization of ideals are so noticeable. Mancini (2004) argues that this goddess' forerunners seem to have been Ma'at in Egyptian culture. Curtis and Resnik (1987) demonstrated that Herodotus indeed decorously observed that the Greeks got the names of their gods from the Egyptians. These historical facts should not be ignored because they help in correcting the historical injustice of not appertaining the contribution of Africa to the development of international relations and international law.

Odutan (2015) demonstrated that the primogeniture of law generally, and international law by extension in primitive terms is naturally African. This assertion will certainly be controversial in some quarters but Diop (1974) stated the essential factor is to retrace the history of the entire nation of mankind. According to Levitt (2010), the monogenetic thesis of humanity even at the stage of the homo sapiens and scientific conclusions about filiation deriving from DNA science makes compelling the argument that all other races in the world descended from black Africa. In every society, from ancient times to the age of computers, the law has always played a central role. For progress to be made, in leaps and bounds, it has always been based upon a group of people and societies who coalesce to pursue commonly accepted goals. Shaw (1997) defines international law as "that element which binds members of the community together in their affixation to accepted standards and values". In international relations, international law is very important because it provides the legal basis of international relations. Nations and societies will try to conduct their relations following the rules of international relations. It is through international law that



diplomacy gets operationalized and ordered. One of the sources of international law is treaties. Treaties were signed in antiquity which is a clear sign that international law existed in Kemet. Imperialist intellectuals systematically tried to create the impression that the evolution of treaty law and international law started in Europe. This is a biased narrative. Wood (2012) suggests that Alberico Gentili, Francisco de Vitoria, and Hugo Grotius are regarded as the fathers of international law. He credits the current order of international law to the peace of Westphalia (1648), which denies Africa its rightful place in the evolution of international law. Mokhtar (1990) notes that Tefnalkht made a treaty with Hosea of Samaria against the Assyrians. Treaties, a source of international law, existed before the so-called Western narratives which try to steal the African glory of civilization. Treaties in Kemet were used as a diplomatic tool and political instrument to mend international relations. This was in pursuit of power as a goal, power as the attainment of security, and power as a measure of influence. Undoubtedly, it should also be noted that diplomacy started in ancient Egypt.

Customary law is another source of international law. Constant customs and traditions of Kemet are the major factors that contributed to the survival of the kingdom in antiquity. It is this practice that was the rationale behind the longevity of Kemet in ancient times. Customary law is derived from the constituent practice of the state. The Egyptians' state beliefs were constant if one critically analyses the religious practices, social, political, and economic setup of the kingdom. Visibly, international law existed in Africa from time immemorial. Subsequently, international law is a branch of international relations theory.

Trade is the oldest and most important economic nexus amongst nations, indeed trade along with war has been central to the evolution of international relations. Trade was a diplomatic method used in Kemet as the kingdom sought to pursue its interests. This was a way to fortify the kingdom. Trade reflects why Egypt was militarily, economically, and socially capable as a kingdom. The Egyptians jealously safeguarded their territory and sovereignty at the same time expanding their trade relations with neighboring countries. Mokhtar (1990) points out that punitive measures were carried out against those who tried to jeopardize trade relations. They were carried out against the Libyans of the western desert, the Bedouins of the Sinai, and the Semite people of the south. Evidence of foreign trade relations was noticeably reported by Mokhtar (1990). He highlights that Great Sea going ships visited the coast of Palestine during the reign of Sehure and the Somali coast

to procure highly valued cargoes of myrrh, ebony, animals, and many other goods. They also traded with Syria in cedar goods. The port of Byblos, on the coast, saw more and more Egyptian timber fleet.

Egypt used a protectionist kind of economic strategy. They engaged with foreign neighbors to obtain rare goods not found in Egypt. They traded with the Nubians to obtain gold and incense and with Palestine. Porat and Den (1992) presume that Palestine-style oil jugs were discovered in the burials of the first dynasty Pharaohs. There is an Egyptian colony stationed in southern Canaan which dates back slightly before the first dynasty. Ancient Egyptians traded with Anatolia in copper, Afghanistan for Lapis Lazuli (the bluestone) as well as Greece and Crete, which provided olive oil. Kemet exported its luxury goods and raw materials such as grains, gold, linen, papyrus, glass, and stone objects. This demonstrates that there was interaction among these kingdoms. Critical scrutiny confirms that international relations started in Kemet in the same vein as civilization.

There were two dimensions of power in Kemet, which are hard and soft power. Kemet needed these two faces of power to support its foreign policy effectively. Nye (2011) differentiates between two types of power. Hard power is ‘the ability to get others to act in ways that are contrary to their initial preferences and strategies’. This is the ability to coerce, through threats and inducements (“sticks” and “carrots”). On the contrary, Nye (2004) defines soft power as the ability to get 'others to want the outcomes that you want, and more particularly 'the ability to achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion. The above-mentioned faces of power are crucial in international relations. They are tools for survival in a very brutal and uncertain international system where only self-help and national interests defined in terms of power are key in that system.

The use of force is the ultimate tool of international relations. Strassler (1996) writes that Thucydides notes in a speech attributed to the Athenians in the Melian dialogue that, right as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.

War was used for conquest, amassing resources, and strengthening the economic as well as military capabilities of the kingdom. Amenhotep I consolidated and expanded the conquest of Nubia as the third cataract. Palestine and Syria remained quiet during his reign of nine years. The quietness of Syria can be credited to good and sound international politics played by Kemet.

Wars were used as a diplomatic, coercive, expansive, deterrent, counter, and active strategies. Lloyd (2012) noted that Hobbes believes that the condition of man is a condition of war of everyone against everyone. The main goal in Kemet was national interests as the main signpost for survival in the international system of ancient times, thus concepts of national interest and survival were pillars of Kemet's international politics. This positions Kemet and Africa as the initiators of international relations theory.

The Ancient Egyptians also used their medical superiority as soft power in their foreign policy. Dhliwayo (2015) points out:

the Egyptian influence on the Greek world in both medicine and pharmacology is easily recognizable in their remedies and prescriptions. Egyptian medical technology enjoyed great prestige in antiquity as we know from Herodotus. Doctors used *materia medica* of 1000 animal, plant, and mineral products.

Egypt used soft power to coerce others. It also used it to make sure that others admired it. This explains why Europeans came to Kemet to study its economic, social, and political systems. One of the greatest historians to visit Africa and study African history is Herodotus. Visibly, he visited and managed to get translators to help him during his research sojourn in Africa. The above is openly an indication that there was a cultural exchange during ancient times. Cultural exchange is a diplomatic practice. Diplomacy is an international relations discipline, hence the study's contention that Africa is the cradle of international relations.

Kemet's superiority in architecture, writing, culture, medicine, mathematics, and agriculture were soft power strategies it used to seek dominance, security, and power in the ancient international system. Its soft power diplomacy promoted the spread of civilization and international relations to the rest of the world. These scientific contributions made other kingdoms admire Kemet, thus cementing its legacy as the powerful kingdom of ancient times.

As contended earlier, the evolution of diplomacy should be credited to Ancient Egypt. The Amarna letters or Amarna correspondences testify that Egypt, in particular, and Africa, in general, practiced international relations. The letters are very pertinent evidence of missing history which clearly illustrates this study's main thesis. Africa has a rich pre-colonial history and is not the "dark continent", portrayed in Euro-centric scholarship, but a shining beacon of some of the greatest world civilizations. Mokhtar (1990) pointed out that the Amarna letters were found in Upper Egypt

at al-Amarna the modern name for the ancient Egyptian capital of Akhetaten founded by Akhenaten (1350-1330s BC) during the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt. Mokhtar (1990) noted that Kemet had diplomatic representatives across the world. The Amarna clay tablets primarily consisted of diplomatic correspondence and its representatives in Canaan and Amurru amongst other nations. It should be pointed out that in modern times diplomatic representatives are the vital cog of foreign relations across the international systems. Every country has embassies and consular offices in foreign countries to promote and strengthen foreign relations. Every aspect of foreign relations carries a fraction of a country's national interests. In this regard, diplomacy is Kemet's legacy. International relations theory is an African philosophy. Braithwaite and Drahos (2001) demonstrated that Egypt, by nearly all universally recognized studies and across many disciplines, is the home of ideas, concepts, and practices in arts, science, literature, law, politics, and government that gave birth to Pythagorean mathematics, the theory of the four elements of Thales of Miletus, Epicurean materialism, platonic idealism, Judaism, Islam and modern science, letters of credit, for existence amongst the black civilization along the Nile including ancient Egypt. Odutan (2005) illustrated that the concept spread through the ancient Greek to Roman civilizations, and Islamic civilizations and ended up in the modern manifestations we have in the world today.

The diplomatic letters shed more light on Kemet's foreign relations with Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, Canaan, Alashiya (modern-day Cyprus), Matanni, Hiburru (Hebrew), and Hittites. As recommended by Nye (1998) "national interest must be superseded by international interests or world order approaches, which go beyond the inherent selfishness of national interest". The above illustrates that there was an ancient interdependence during the period under review. Collective security and interdependence are exhibited in ancient times as shown by the Amarna letters. There was collective security and interdependence in the form of military alliances in ancient times. Other rulers involved in the letters include Tushratta of Mitanni and Rib-Hadda of Byblos whose over fifty-eight letters continuously plead for military help. The majority of the letters were requests for military help against the Hittite invaders from the north and the south against the Habiru. Chigora (2008) argues that "in international relations, there is only cooperation when there are no conflicting interests". This indicates that Egypt got into these alliances for its national interests. This study assumed that public diplomacy is diplomacy aimed at communicating directly with the citizens of a nation or subjects of a kingdom. Public opinion was respected in Kemet. This is a

domestic and foreign policy formulation stratagem that is now widely used across the globe in modern times. The above cement Kemet as the land where diplomacy evolved from. Diplomacy is one of the legacies Kemet left for the rest of the world to practice in international politics. Mokhtar (1990) notes that during the sixty dynasties there was some indication that Pepi I may have taken his son Merenre as his co-regent. He did not reign alone for more than five years. When Merenre, Pepi II a child of six, rose to power and ruled for ninety-four years he ruled the kingdom with the help of his mother and brother. The Pharaoh was the high priest but as a gesture of respect to his subjects, he reigned with the assistance of his deputies as he carried out his divine word. Mokhtar (1990) points out that cabinet ministers, officials in the province, priests in the temple, and generals in the army formed the backbone of the public opinion concept in the politics of the ancient Egyptian kingdom.

As a survival strategy and accumulation of power for the strengthening of the kingdom, the unification of the kingdom was done to reinforce the capabilities of the empire and accumulate power. Power is a very pertinent concept in international relations theory. The unification happened under the rule of Namer, who was called Menes in 3400BC. As Asante (2017) postulates, “a king of the south concerned the other kings of the Nile valley, thus combining the crowns of Kemet as the supreme, reigning symbol of god on earth called Perr-aa”. Perr-aa became the unifying factor of the kingdom. It should be pointed out that by bringing the kingdom together under one paramount king, Kemet created a multi-dimensional nation-state, while most societies were still insisting on a single ethnic identity. The modern-day idealist theory emphasizes unity and peace which was the hallmark of Ancient Egypt.

The kingdom also used coercive means as they tried to force other kingdoms to act in the interest of Kemet. Mokhtar (1990) contends that the Fourth Dynasty of Ancient Egypt witnessed successful campaigns against the Nubians to the south, Libyan tribesmen to the west, and the maintenance of trade in timber with the Syrian coast. It was done in the interest of the kingdom. Coercive diplomacy in Kemet influenced other kingdoms to also implement their foreign policies that way. In modern international relations, power coerces other nations as they pursue their national interests in this uncertain and very anarchical global order.

International relations rely on the concept of sovereignty. Bodin (1576) describes sovereignty as "being a state, that sovereign powers have absolute power over to their territories and that such power is limited by the sovereign's obligations towards other sovereigns and individuals". Such a

foundation of sovereignty warrants is indicated by a sovereign's obligation to other sovereigns, interdependence, and dependency. This arrangement is reflected throughout the ancient Kemet. The king was the sovereign ruler, in Ancient Egypt, responsible for national security, and the accolades concerning military victories were his as the military leader. Pharaohs, like their opponents, hired Greek mercenaries recruited by cosmopolitan adventures. As Nasu (2011) points out “the traditional view of security is defined in military terms, with the primary focus on state protection from threats to national interests”. The aforementioned is a great reflection of the interdependence between Kemet and Greece. The fallacy that sovereignty comes with the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia and that sovereignty is a Western political concept must be exposed.

Egyptian political thought influenced the contemporary global political and economic structure which debunks the misconception that international relations theories and concepts are western phenomena. The concept of sovereignty supposedly originated with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 when governments ceased to support co-religionists in conflict with their states. Shillington (2007) points out that Egypt was a major world power backed by a standing army. The king established an empire and extended his rule by conquest into Palestine and Syria in the northeast and into Nubia.

From the above, it is crystal clear that Africa is the original home of international relations theory and concepts. Salvador (2010) noticed that before the age of European expansion to other continents and Portuguese circumnavigation of Africa Renaissance Italy had already become a common and frequent destination for scores of Ethiopian monks and dignitaries. These purveyors of the Ethiopian age of exploration approached European monks and dignitaries as active agents of transcontinental discovery interested in learning more about a region they regarded as the ultimate center of organized Christianity. It is undeniable that the world is a beneficiary of the great ideas developed by the ancient residents of Africa. This contribution to African international relations thought is enormous. Egypt invented all its scientific thoughts for the fulfillment of the national interest, thus the long-term survival of Kemet. Historical facts like this ought not to be ignored as much as they run counter to ideas of African and black inferiority that have quite unfairly represented legal epistemology for much of the modern period.

### **The opacities of Euro-centric international relations theory narrative**

Ancient Africa exhibited various disciplines of international relations which European scholars choose to ignore. Often, the history and development of international relations are attributed to

Europeans as the ones who imported it to Africa, Asia, and America through colonialism and Western standards of civilization. Achebe echoed that “there is that great proverb, that until the lions have their historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter”. He was right because Africa’s knowledge written by a non-African is deliberately distorted to suit the interests of the author.

The moral basis of imperialism and exploitation over the years has promoted a sophisticated form of the systematic destruction of African civilization. As Ali Mazrui (1980) argues, “a people denied history is a people denied dignity”. Civilization is often attributed to a monopoly of Western thought. Similarly, the origin or evolution of international relations theory is perceived as a monopoly of European thought. This study emphasizes the need to dignify Africans as the owners of international relations theory. The Euro-centric dominion in international relations theory which accredits itself as the foundation of international relations does not stand up to serious critical inquiry. Africans initiated and contributed to international relations way before the Westphalia narrative of 1648. The Egyptians, the ancient kingdom of Ghana, Nubia, Mali, and Sudan played a significant role in initiating the disciplines which were later exported to Europe and the rest of the world. This paper paid crucial attention to the developments in antiquity and specifically the Egyptian scenario. There is an African narrative to the development of international relations theory which Euro-centric scholars choose to ignore.

The perception that Africans made little or no contribution to the development of international relations is unfortunately prejudiced against Africans. This suggests that there is a gap in the existing literature, especially in the area of conceptualization in the history and development of international relations. Dunn (2000) points out that “the Western media continue to employ a “hearts of darkness style rhetoric to paint an image of an incomprehensible land filled with natural and manmade disaster, beyond Western reason or control. Africa's contributions to international relations have been systematically destroyed by European scholars. Josiah Rougies in a column in the African Movement Magazine (2018) observed that “the attempt to destroy African civilization involved the most sustained and widespread co-operation between the European military, economic, religious and scientific thinkers”. This was done to deny Africans their outstanding achievements as the cradle of civilization and the land where international relations theory evolved.

Throughout the history of international relations and international politics, the non-European

world has been neglected through the fabrication of Euro-centric texts. Ofonagora (1980) argues that "the Afro-Euro relations since the 15<sup>th</sup> century have been colored by European dominance and characterized by the mythologies of African inferiority". Consequently, many European scholars often ignore the African contribution to international relations. This was an attempt to justify the Western centered hegemony of world affairs.

There were lots of inter-group affairs in sub-Sahara Africa and antediluvian Egypt. One has to consider the forms of inter-group relations in sub-Sahara Africa to appreciate the deviance from the state-centric standpoint of international relations. The Berlin conference of 1884 to 1885 which portioned Africa destroyed these inter-groups. For example, the precolonial state of Hausa was divided between Nigeria and Niger, the Yoruba people were divided between Nigeria, Togo, and Benin, and the Fulani between Cameroon and Nigeria. Intellectual imperialism is groundless affinity if the intelligentsia flouts alternative theories, viewpoints, and methodologies. The transition from an unproductive ethnocentric standpoint to an objective paradigm in the disciplines of history, international relations, and art history is evident only with the emergence of African history as a field of historical inquiry after World War II. This was an attempt to intellectually decolonize Africa.

Awolowo (1977) writes:

the writing of the African past through the Eurocentric and colonialist lenses in form of Euro traders, missionaries, travelers, and adventures did harm Africa to the extent that even the African nature and features are named after European and some do not carry indigenous names as if they only come into existence with the coming of the Europeans, for example, the Vaal River and the Drakensberg in Mountains in South Africa and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

This reflects how the history and development of international relations in Africa were doctored to suit European interests. The main hypothesis of this paper is that civilization started in Africa and that Africa is the pinnacle of the development of the international relations theory. There are prejudiced misconceptions in the international relations circles towards Africa. The conspiracy theory that has marginalized the continent in world politics is that the continent has no meaningful politics but only humanitarian disasters.

Major theories perceive Africa and the third world as peripheral in their systemic analysis of the international system. Waltz (1979) stated that "it would be ridiculous to construct a theory of



international relations politics on Malaysia and Costa Rica, general theories of international relations is necessarily based on the great powers”. Morgenthau (1973) in his *Politics Amongst Nations* asserted that “Africa did not have a history before the Second World War, it was a political space”. Neo-realism authorship ignores Africa’s analysis of international relations. Neo-liberalism perceives Africa as a continent with a hegemonic power and for that reason, it focused the international relations narrative on great powers. According to Dunn (2000), neo-liberalism's marginalization is based on the view that Africa suffers the whims of the stronger global players. Dickson (1997) notes that neoliberalism only paid attention to Africa when it was motivated by the development theories which aimed at reproducing Western economic, political, and cultural ideals.

At first glance, structuralist theories such as Marxism, dependency, and world system approaches seem to force their gaze on Africa. A closer analysis shows that much of their literature uses African examples to illustrate the exploitative hierarchical nature of the existing world system. It should be noted that the structuralists have been responsible for exposing the historical specificities and exploitative hierarchical nature of the existing world system.

Several pieces of literature trace the evolution of international relations based on the sovereignty states to the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 as a stepping stone to the modern-day state system. Contrary to popular belief, Westphalia still embodied a layered system of sovereignty, especially with the Roman Empire. There is also the treaty of Utrecht of 1713 which is thought to reflect an emerging norm that sovereignty had no internal equal within a defined territory and no external superiors as the ultimate authority within the territory's sovereignty borders even before the French Revolution which is believed to have added the new idea that not the princes or the oligarchy but the citizenry of a state, defined as the nation, should be defined as sovereign. The aforementioned statement lacks explanatory vigor. Ancient Egypt is the first nation on earth with a well-structured government, a structure that influenced the structure of modern governments. Shillington (2007) states that the day-to-day business of government was carried out by a huge bureaucracy of well-educated civil servants the most important of whom were scribes and tax collectors. The kingdom was divided into forty local districts each overseen by a governor appointed by the Pharaoh. Kemet was a highly centralized system of government that the king and his chief ministers controlled. Consequently, Kemet was the proponent of a highly centralized system of government centuries before the Westphalia narrative.

The Euro-centric narrative of the development of international relations is that the Westphalian narrative is the main significant point of departure in tracing international relations theory. Lubasz (1964) notes that "the process of the development in Europe was the wider and deeper process of transformation that also witnessed the birth of modern science, technology, modern Christianity and Protestantism". The narrative above is a deprivation of Kemet's rightful position as the home of the first civilization. As far as Euro-centric scholars are concerned, international relations and the modern state system came into its existence with the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. The treaty ended a series of devastating thirty-year wars and purportedly marked the notion of sovereignty. This also led to political integration and linguistic homogenization. It should be noted that the same trajectory did not apply to Africa. The attempt to explain African phenomena by using essentially European models is inadequate. African states did not emerge as a result of a long period of social, economic, political, scientific and religious development. It is a colonial imposition created to serve Western interests, not African interests. Thus, the models of international relations used to conceptualize international relations since 1648 are mostly irrelevant to Africa. The African historical experience is the best suitable narrative to explain international relations. This can only be the home of the first civilization which is Kemet.

In ancient Africa and pre-colonial Africa, the political system embodied a full range of governance practices. Potholom (1976) laments the fact that in pre-colonial Africa monarchy, democracy, dictatorship, and theocracy co-existed though within a relatively small geographical area, often under similar social-economic conditions. A closer analysis shows that Africa was not a dark continent as most Western-centric scholars assume. Majubane (1999) writes that "Hegel in his *Introduction to the Philosophy of History* states that "Africa is not the historical part of the world. It has no movement or development to exhibit, Europe is the absolute end of history and Asia the beginning". It is clear that Asia's part of history is connected to Africa, Kemet to be precise. It is Asia and Greek philosophers who came to Egypt to study and transferred the Kemet civilization to Asia and Europe. European civilization is the deprivation of African achievement. As Roper (1963) echoes these sentiments by saying:

There is only the history of Europeans in Africa, the rest is darkness, and darkness is not a subject of history. I do not deny that men existed in the dark countries and dark centuries nor that they had a political culture and life to sociologists and anthropologists.

From a pan-Africanist perspective, Trevor Roper's implicit exclusion of the Nile is part of a long-

entrenched European common attitude.

Trevor Roper's argument was a twinkling of superciliousness that swiftly developed into a disreputable assertion of African history. Appiah (1998) notes that Trevor Roper's argument was not as he insisted immediately, that nothing had happened in Africa. It was (to use in old distinction) African history as the discipline, not the going in the "res gestae" of the African past. Admitting that there was a political culture in the so-called Dark Continent, Trevor Roper convoluted himself. It should be pointed out that the same political culture which Trevor Roper ignorantly admitted to existing is the one that influenced the centralized political system of governance across the globe. As a result, if Africa is the first civilization, then the evolution of international relations should be traced to Africa.

There are far more Egyptian records that are much older than the European records. The fact that sociologists and anthropologists came to Africa from various parts of the world to learn about African political, social, and economic life is in itself a legacy for the African continent. Herodotus, the so-called father of history traveled to Africa. He was provided with the evidence that there was a vast quantity of Egyptian records many of them even older than any European records. Africa is not a concept but a foretaste of the infinite. The Euro-centric scholars who considered the interaction of cities in ancient Greece as the first full-fledged international system lacked authentic facts in their arguments. Buzan and Richard (2000), for example, consider the interaction of ancient Sumerian city-states in 3,500 BC as a fully-fledged international system. The interaction of cities alone cannot fully explain the emergence of international relations theory. One would expect cities to interact because they do not live in isolation. Greek scholars traveled to Egypt to learn, but Buzan and Little (2000) chose to ignore that. It is Greece and those cities they interacted with which are the beneficiaries of Kemet's mighty civilization and international relations thought.

### **Conclusion**

Africa is the home of international relations theory since antiquity. In the contemporary international relations discussions, it is not only difficult but impossible for one to ignore Africa's contribution to the development of international relations theory. Odutan (2015) illustrated that the age of enlightenment in Europe can only be credited to Africa. The human capital and labor that Europeans acquired during the Atlantic Slave Trade were essential in promoting the agrarian revolution in America and Europe. The development of agrarian capitalism in England, with those involved in agriculture divided into landowners, capitalist tenant farmers, and laborers, saw the

development of better farm management and more efficiency in using the workforce. Colonialism played a significant role in the industrial revolution in Europe, African natural resources were electrified and helped the process of the industrial revolution in Europe. Therefore, the developments in Europe and USA should be accredited to Africa. Africa is the mirror where European sees themselves through. Africa has been and is always a major place in the development of international relations theory. Africa is black regardless of where you live. African individuals crucially shaped, American politics. Malcolm X, a civil rights activist in America in the 1960s, Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Sengor, Du Bois, W. Sylvester with their Pan Africanism Ideology, Julius Mwalimu Kambaraji Nyerere with his African Socialism (Ujamaa), Nelson Mandela with his reconciliation and peace ideas and many others, all played a critical role in repositioning Africa in the International Relations theory modern discussions. One cannot make a discussion in international relations without referring to the political thoughts of the above-mentioned. The formation of the African Union block of fifty-five sovereign countries, a continent of over one billion people, is paramount to the development of the contemporary international relations theory. The current international political dynamics point to the importance of Africa as every country in Asia and Europe is now in the business of summoning Africa to summits. Examples of these summits are the Sino-Africa summit, the India-Africa summit, Japan-Africa Summit, Russia-Africa Summit, and France-Africa Summit. These summits are not benefiting Africa but the conveners' national interests. However, the competition for association with Africa is a reflection of Africa's importance in the international system. It should be noted that Africa has contributed to the development of international relations theory since antiquity.

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