AFRICA AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

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Abstract

The position of Africa as a continent has transformed significantly in the recent decades on the global landscape. Amidst the socio-cultural exchange, political and economic interdependence, and complexity of the geopolitical organizations, Africa stands as a pivotal juncture that navigates a myriad of challenges while also leveraging new opportunities. Africa among its greatest challenges faces the persistence of socio-economic disparities across and within its member nations that are compounded by underdevelopment and historical legacies of colonialism. The continent's engagement with the international community presents a lot of opportunities. Despite the continent's reserves of youthful population, emerging markets, and natural resources which can lead the continent to become a key player in the global arena, emerging challenges like migration, climate changes, and security concerns are placing Africa at the forefront of global dialogues. As such, international relations consider Africa as merely part of the global issues and arena to study. Adopting theory of constructivism to the study of international relations, the paper aims to identify the status quo of Africa as the continent in the field of international relations, emphasizing the opportunities and challenges in a globalized world. The paper adopts a descriptive research design. The paper finally concludes that the continent's progress in many areas is nevertheless constrained by ongoing conflicts, unstable political environments, and governance issues. Economic disparities and inequalities in development persist, and African concerns are often sidelined by global power dynamics. It is essential to recognize, nevertheless, that Africa's problems do not characterize all of its international participation. Additionally, the alliances of Africa have grown as governments from other parts of the world see the need to cooperate with the continent.

1. INTRODUCTION

As far as international relations are concerned, the African continent has made tremendous advances and progress in recent decades. In addition to influencing and being influenced by international dynamics, Africa has become one of the key players on the world stage, with globalization serving as the primary engine. International relations in Africa have been marred by marginalization, exploitation, and colonization. After colonialism, Africa, however, has actively engaged in global affairs and reassessed its role in the world. Independent African states have resulted in increased demands for sovereignty and self-determination, as well as retaining Africa's rightful position in the international sphere. As a result of decolonization and the formation of regional and continental organizations like the African Union, Africa's desire for greater autonomy and power was encouraged. (Smith, 2018).

The complexity of Africa's political environment is one of its primary challenges in a globalized world. Across the continent, political instability, corruption, and a lack of competent leadership limit its ability to engage in international affairs effectively. Several African countries have suffered from human rights abuses, displacement, and humanitarian crises as a result of a legacy of violence and civil war. African nations' internal dynamics, as well as Africa's international position, are affected by these anxieties. The immense potential of Africa must, however, be realized. All of these natural resources are in high demand worldwide, including minerals, oil, gas, and arable land. Both industrialized and developing nations recognize Africa's enormous potential for economic growth. Therefore, Africa has been able to expand its market base and strengthen its economic relationship as a result of the rise in trade and foreign direct investment. Moreover, the growing importance of Africa's consumer market presents a lucrative business opportunity for multinational companies. (Hameiri, & Jones, 2018).

In addition, Africa's population advantage shapes its engagement in international politics. There is a rapidly growing young population in Africa, which can provide a large labour pool for economic growth and innovation. It is important, however, to invest in healthcare, education, and employment development to ensure that the young have the skills and opportunities to succeed in a global society. Activists and youth-led movements have emerged throughout Africa over the past few years, demonstrating that the young may act as a catalyst for social and political change. A globalized world brings both possibilities and problems for Africa's participation in international politics. There is still potential for constructive change in

Africa, despite historical legacies, political uncertainties, and governance challenges. Together, African countries, regional organizations, and the global community can overcome obstacles and fulfill the potential of the continent. As Africa enhances governance, supports peace and stability, and invests in human capital, it may enhance its status in international relations and contribute to a more equitable and inclusive global order. A globalized world offers Africa both opportunities and challenges in terms of international relations (Acharya & Buzan, 2019). This paper aims to identify the status quo of Africa as a continent in the field of international relations, emphasizing the opportunities and challenges in a globalized world.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper adopts the theory of custructivism to the study of international relations. Identity, convention, and idea development in the context of international relations is a fundamental concern for constructivists. The importance of cultural values, historical legacies, and identity politics on state behaviour, regional cooperation, and conflict resolution may be brought to light by taking a constructivist position in Africa.

Instead of passively collecting information from the outside world, constructivism holds that people actively construct knowledge by their experiences and interactions with it. In the context of international relations and Africa, constructivism highlights that our impressions of the continent's strengths and shortcomings, as well as its position in the global community, are impacted by our own experiences and opinions, rather than a static and objective fact. This shows that various persons active in international relations may have varying views on the potential and problems confronting Africa depending on their own experiences, attitudes, and beliefs. In order to better comprehend Africa's position in international relations, its difficulties, and its prospects, constructivism highlights the importance of acknowledging and interacting with varied viewpoints and experiences. Furthermore, constructivism says that our views of Africa and world events are impacted by our own biases and preconceptions, rather than being impartial or value-free. Constructivism also promotes researching the manner in which social concepts, customs, and identities effect the foreign relations of African governments. By understanding the effect of these elements on perceptions and behaviours, researchers and policymakers may build more nuanced and successful methods to dealing with Africa on the global arena (Bevan & Kwasi, 2003).

To better comprehend Africa's position in today's linked world, scholars have resorted to constructivist theory, which highlights the relevance of social constructions, multiple views,

and individual interpretations in international relations and African studies. It highlights how vital it is to take a more wide and inclusive approach to comprehending and solving the possibilities and difficulties Africa confronts in the global arena. Furthermore, a more extensive exploration of the power dynamics influencing Africa's place in the globalised world is made practicable by the application of constructivist theory to the study of international relations and Africa. This perspective makes it evident that ideas, conventions, and identities that shape the connections between African nations and the international community also play a part in defining Africa's agency and influence in international relations, in addition to material capacities (Bevan & Kwasi, 2003).

3. AFRICA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Deep and complex facets exist in the relationship between Africa and the rest of the globe. These processes have millennia of history behind them. social, political, and economic factors. Africa's relations with other countries have changed throughout time in response to many developments, including globalization, Cold War dynamics, colonialism, decolonization, and constantly shifting geopolitical environments. In the introductory section. A brief synopsis of the historical context that shaped Africa's connections with the rest of the world will be provided. The beginning of colonization in the late 15th century had a lasting impact on Africa's interactions with other nations. European nations, namely Portugal, Spain, Britain, France, Germany, and Belgium, launched colonial endeavours throughout Africa intending to extract resources and impose their own political and socioeconomic structures. The period of European dominance had far-reaching effects, such as forced migration, the enforcement of arbitrary borders, and the exploitation of valuable resources like minerals or agricultural commodities. African ties to the global community underwent a significant shift in the middle of the 20th century as a result of liberation struggles. African nations persevered in their struggle against colonial rule, leading to their ultimate attainment of self-determination. achieving self-reliance and independence. Important leaders like Nelson Mandela, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, and Kwame Nkrumah emerged from Africa. They supported nationalist organizations that promoted African brotherhood and unity (Lewis, 2018).

3.1 Colonialism and Independence Movements

Among the continents of the world, Africa is renowned for its diversity. In terms of colonialism and independence movements, it has a variety of situations and experiences. Each state's

struggle for independence was quite different. has distinct dynamics and details. Africa saw colonialism in the late 20th century when European nations acquired power and occupied various regions of the continent. The motivations for colonialism included the advancement of Christianity and Western culture, as well as political and economic exploitation. Major European powers such as Belgium, Britain, Portugal, France, Italy, Germany, and Spain established colonies across Africa. The characteristics of African colonialism were resource exploitation, forced labour, and cultural absorption. Africans faced prejudice, had their lands taken, and were taken advantage of by Europeans. Furthermore, these oppressive conditions emphasized resistance and the emergence of independence movements (Young, 2018).

African independence movements sought to establish self-governance by removing colonial rule and sovereignty. These movements took several forms, ranging from nonviolent protests to armed resistance. African leaders and organizations played a crucial role in bringing Africans together in their struggle for liberation. Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in Nigeria, Patrice Lumumba in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya were among those who were heavily involved in the continent's independence movements. These individuals promoted Africa's independence by founding political organizations such as the National Liberation Movement, the African National Congress (ANC), and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC). Under various conditions and phases, the African independence movements were successful; in 1957, Ghana became the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to achieve political and economic independence. Following Ghana's lead, other African republics did not take long to achieve independence, and by the 1960s, a significant number of African governments had done so. Typically, the decolonization process included conversations, arms races, and constitutional revisions. African nations faced several challenges after gaining independence, such as developing economies, resolving social and ethnic conflicts left over from colonization, and establishing stable governments. Africa is still affected by the effects of colonialism, including dependency, unequal economic development, and arbitrary borders (Ayoade, 2010).

3.2 Africa's Role in Decolonization Efforts

When the Second World War ended in 1945, there were only four independent states in Africa: The Union of South Africa, which remained under British domination in the south, Liberia, which escaped imperialism, Ethiopia, which had regained its sovereignty in 1941, and Egypt, which had qualified independence but still harboured British occupation forces in the Suez

Canal zone. After fifteen years, in 1960—known as Africa's "anno mirabile," or marvel year—the continent already had twenty-three independent countries, and for the next seventeen years, another seventeen joined them. Without a doubt, an African revolution was imminent. The post-war period was characterized by "progress and welfare," but it was also marked by the realization that the "civilizing mission" had ended and that all but one colonial power no longer had to protect the colonies at all costs. Holding onto colonial colonies was no longer economically feasible or beneficial for the home countries. Portugal was an exception, continuing the colonial connection presumably due to financial constraints on decolonization (Oelofse, 2015).

A detailed analysis of the decolonization process reveals no characteristically British, French, Portuguese, or Belgian method of granting independence. There were distinct instances as well as similarities in the ways that colonial nations handled the decolonization of Africa. In other instances, distinct characteristics of different colonies whether under the administration of Portugal, Britain, France, or Belgium pushed them towards similar modalities. For instance, compared to Côte d'Ivoire, Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Tanzania, or the Central African Republic, the process of decolonization was much more violent and agonizing in Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and to a lesser extent Kenya, Namibia, Zaire, and Zimbabwe. While settler interests were less of an issue in the later scenarios, their prevalence in the early ones significantly changed the nature of the national fight. There were also often significant variations according to the disposition and aptitude for the organization of individual nationalist leaders. It would be beneficial to swiftly examine the philosophical and historical foundations of the nationalist period before delving more into the factors that affected the timing and character of the African independence struggle in certain colonies (Keller, 1995).

A pivotal phase in African colonial history, World War II was characterized by developments that profoundly altered the pre-existing relationships between African colonies and their European overlords. The colonies were arranged to be critical to the war effort, even though in several cases they were practically cut off from their respective metropolitan rulers. This was the first time when building up indigenous manufacturing capability took precedence over just extracting raw materials. For example, to extract record amounts of agricultural and mineral resources, forced labour was used more and more in French, Belgian, and British colonies like Côte d'Ivoire, the Congo, and Kenya. Due to Germany's military commitments, it became more difficult to get raw materials to Europe for processing throughout the war. On the other hand,

it was difficult to get finished goods from Europe to the colonies to satisfy the demands of colonial bureaucrats and white settlers for consumption. Colonial governments were in charge of managing their African subjects to supply essential nonmilitary and military goods, such as copper and uranium in the case of the Belgian Congo, in addition to promoting domestic economic production. These products were crucial for fighting wars, but they also provided much-needed hard currency for urban state coffers (Keller, 1995).

Additionally, a large number of Africans were enlisted in the colonial powers' military, where they performed a variety of jobs including drivers, cooks, porters, fighters, and servants. African soldiers sometimes saw a different side of their European overlords as a result of their war experience. Instead of seeming like unbeatable, confident, emotionless gods, European soldiers demonstrated their humanity on par with that of any African. Both wealthy and destitute Europeans existed. Like everyone else, they described sentiments of fear and apprehension during conflict. Fighting alongside European soldiers throughout the battle had a profound formative impact on many African soldiers, broadening their perspective and making them doubt their subject status and the alleged sympathy of their European overlords. These Africans came to believe that if they were willing to act, make sacrifices, and pursue their goals, they might have an impact on their destiny (Keller, 1995).

Many Africans began to pursue more formal education and more economic participation after 1945. In urban areas, this was particularly true. Due to their active and significant involvement as wage workers in the nascent industrial and manufacturing sectors throughout the war, city dwellers had high expectations that their lives would continue to improve after the conflict. The majority of African schools at the time were still either Christian mission schools or traditional Koranic institutions. Official education was often limited to the primary level during the colonial era. Africans were thought to just need a basic understanding of reading, math, and the ability to communicate in the imperialist tongue. It was believed that having too much information may raise expectations, which would then spark early protests—the very opposite of what colonial authorities wanted to see. Before the conflict, only a few Africans had the good fortune to pursue higher education in Europe and the United States; it was from this small group that the nationalist leadership emerged. Training Africans to fill technical, political, or administrative positions had not been a conscious policy of the colonial authorities. Often, it was the determination of individual Africans and their communities that enabled them to seize opportunities to pick up tactics from their European conquerors and therefore improve their status. There were even others who dreamed of changing the colonial state (Keller, 1995).

3.3 Post-Colonial Diplomacy

The dominant theories of diplomatic theory and practice show an increasing trend in the history of diplomacy away from its purported "origins" and towards its more globalized expressions. This approach combines the norms of both classical and contemporary diplomacy with the requirements of a raison d'état-specific political logic and the diplomatic traditions of Armana, Greece, Westphalian, Venetian, and French. This understanding of diplomatic history and its philosophical and legal underpinnings gave rise to political communities, anthropological theories, and diplomatic law and recognition regimes. These regimes validated the colonization of non-European cultures by Europeans, the conversion of locals by missionaries, the rejection of indigenous diplomatic apparatuses, and the modern meddling in and governance of former colonial countries. The voices, "diplomatic bodies," and practices of colonial polities are conspicuously absent from this narrative. When accepted as diplomatic, the mediation strategies of indigenous peoples and earlier colonial civilizations are sometimes transformed into modern or statist forms that define what, who, and how one is to be diplomatic in the modern world. Francisco de Vitoria's Relectio de Indis (1532), for instance, emphasizes the diplomatic fallout from this colonial past. To subvert indigenous diplomacies and self-concepts and establish racial and colonial hierarchies between Spaniards and Indians, Vitoria collapses "Quechuas, Aymaras, Nahuatls, Mayas, etc., under the label 'Indians,'" using the idea of "ius gentium" (rights of the people or rights of nations) (Opondo, 2018).

Against these colonial and Eurocentric narratives, postcolonial diplomacies and theories offer historical, theoretical/conceptual, ethical, and practical/strategic claims that contest the historicist 'idea' of time as progressive that supports the story of evolution in diplomatic practice. Recognizing that "colonialism was not a footnote or episode in some larger narrative... but has been central to shaping the modern world," postcolonial diplomacy pays attention to the coeval construction of the colonial and modern diplomatic spheres while offering a critical analysis of the modern world. Moreover, it affected the sense of self of both the colonized and the colonizer (Seth 2013). The "post" in postcolonial diplomacy refers to both the ongoing diplomatic efforts to challenge colonialism's legacy as well as the diplomatic cultures and encounters of the entire period of modern colonialism, which dates back to the conquest of the Americas in 1492. A variety of ethical and critical approaches to diplomacy that remain aware of colonialism and its legacy, as well as the diplomacy of a particular historical period, may be referred to as postcolonial diplomacy. It also extends beyond the entirety of state and professional diplomacies in the post-Cold War era region commonly referred to as "the Global

South," a term Siba Grovogui (Grovogui 2011) claims has its roots in Cuba's Tri-continentalism, the 1955 Bandung Conference, the 1961 Non-Aligned Movement, and twentieth-century anti-colonialism.

A delicate topic in the middle of the 20th century was African state sovereignty because of the continent's past experiences with colonialism and neo-colonialism during the Cold War. African states thus developed diplomatic standards and tenets that were linked to their unfavourable circumstances in international relations and world politics. Though there is little opportunity for a thorough analysis of these norms, understanding them concerning regional integration is essential. The primary African diplomatic norm or role is for African governments to endeavour to purge the continent of foreign and external forces that would exploit its people. It is important to remember that in the decades that followed the start of self-rule, African leaders' rhetoric of economic independence persisted, even as anti-European liberation movements came to an end when Zimbabwe gained formal independence in 1980. Even if anti-imperialist rhetoric is now being used to downplay the shortcomings of autocratic or corrupt governments, its ongoing use and association with African Americans demonstrate how enduring and common the trend is. Integrationists have a dilemma since tiny countries may see the transfer of sovereignty to Addis Ababa as a neo-imperialist threat if they believe that the more powerful African countries are forcing integration (Nwekwo, 2015).

The second norm that African diplomatic integrationists at the AU face and reject is the ardent allegiance to the political boundaries set by the colonial powers. Over the last fifty years, this legislation—which was adopted by the OAU in its charter and at subsequent conferences—has had a significant impact on the continent. This has ensured that the borders that the European powers drew in Berlin in 1884 and 1885 remain in place across the continent, notwithstanding their absurdity. Therefore, it has been difficult for secessionist movements to get the backing of neighbouring African nations. The OAU promoted the national sovereignty of the state by working to reach agreements while upholding the integrity of colonial borders. Africans who believe that the established reputation of the regional organization impedes their right to democracy and self-determination would be criticized by African integrationists. Though the AU-sponsored military assault into northern Mali seems imminent, the effective independence of South Sudan has the potential to change the status quo (Nwekwo, 2015).

The third norm of African diplomacy is the union of African states on the world scene. Control over the region's voting bloc, which is statistically the largest in the world, at international

organizations remains one of the core tenets of the Pan-Africanist movement. Speaking with one voice, in Nkrumah's opinion, was essential to try to make up for the political, diplomatic, and economic limitations that various African nations face, both now and when they gained their independence. Although this is a common subject at regional meetings, the UN—of which the African Union is 28% a member—is the best place to see this norm in action. UN votes were immediately unanimous after independence, quickly extending to non-African agenda items (Nwekwo, 2015).

4. GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS AND AFRICA'S ENGAGEMENT

African participation in international issues has historically been centered on the AU. Sub-regional actors were drawn into international politics via the AU's auspices, nevertheless, as alliances and coalitions grew. Several actors are involved. Among the most significant players in international relations are RECs, NEPAD, the African Development Bank, the African Economic Research Consortium, UNECA, and civil society organizations. Despite this, the majority of these individuals have little authority inside the major international organizations that Africans have been working hard to join. Some African actors outside of government remain completely silent, while African governments lack sufficient voice. Insufficient voting rights and structures in international organizations, a lack of groups to express African voices collectively—especially since many groups are dominated by large middle-income countries—and insufficient technical capacity to express that voice are some of the factors that have been identified as having an impact on the current state of affairs (Oloo, 2016).

Africa has seen significant socioeconomic and technological growth since the turn of the century, which has created a special need for connectedness with the rest of the world. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, African governments committed to economic liberalization and reforms. This led to a substantial economic transformation that increased the continent's appeal as a business destination for regional and international partners and promoted more equitable prosperity for the continent's citizens. Over the last 20 years, Africa has seen several of the fastest-growing national economies in the world, and the proportion of Africans living in poverty has decreased by 16 percentage points. The African ecosystem is changing and developing faster than ever because of a plethora of occurrences. First, the population of Africa is rapidly growing: Africa is expected to provide 50% of the global population growth by 2050, with most of that people living in urban areas. Consequently, by 2030, the continent is expected to have the largest workforce in the world. In a similar vein, the middle class in Africa is

expected to grow rapidly, reaching 1.1 billion people by 2060 (Deloitte, 2013). Compared to Western nations, which experience slower rates of population growth and an aging labour force, Africa is becoming increasingly appealing to the private sector for investment and attention (Signe & Heitzig, 2022).

It had argued that Africa contributed from human and mineral resources to climate change security. As Phezo (2022) stated that:

> From human and mineral resources to climate change and security, Africa's aggregate contribution to the welfare of the world has never been more evident. Yet, despite the resources, as a bloc, African countries struggle to assert themselves as key players and partners in world affairs. At CSIS, we strive to bridge the policy gap between the strategic and economic interests of industrialized nations and those of African countries, particularly as related to the aspirations of the populations and the high demand for better governance. In recent years, we have noted a heightened interest in summitry concerning Africa. From China to Brazil, from Turkey to Germany to Russia, from France to the United States to Japan, and the Gulf Arab states, to name but a few examples, each country that can afford it either hosts an African summit or embarks on an Africa charm offensive.

In recent decades, Africa has begun to abandon its trading strategy, which was centred on Europe and depended heavily on commodities. It has set itself up to take on non-traditional trading partners including China, India, Japan, and the Middle East. The leaders of the continent have taken deliberate steps to promote regional integration, as seen by the creation of the African Union, regional economic communities, and the current implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. With a combined GDP of $3.4 trillion, the AfCFTA is the largest free trade area in the world by nation membership, consisting of 55 countries and 1.3 billion people. Currently, governments are securing cross-border worker migration via bilateral efforts. Bilateral and international projects that have been equally successful have created a physically and socially connected Africa. Officials want to use this coherence not just to attract foreign direct investment but also to create a more diverse and localized trade portfolio that will fill in gaps in supply chains that have traditionally been outsourced (Signe & Heitzig, 2022).

Larger changes and the expansion of regional integration have coincided with the establishment of new international alliances. Africa's relationship with the rest of the world has changed significantly in the last 20 years. China's rise in banking and trading with Africa has given it more prominence. However, to capitalize on its wealth and regional integration, Africa has also made an effort to forge closer ties with both non-Western and Western countries. As these new

partners grew, the United States withdrew: between 2010 and 2017, it saw a decline in its debt holdings, trade, aid, and foreign direct investment in Africa. With the incoming administration, the United States may make up ground that was lost in these areas. Since new partners have various approaches to dealing with Africa, the United States will need to decide whether to stick with its current policy or try something else (Grimm & Wenping, 2012).

On this issue, Africa as a continent contributes to global order plus economic order. This has not been seen, until late 2019 when the pandemic of COVID-19 exposed the stand of Africa in international relations. Phezo (2022) continue to argue that:

> What COVID-19, however, exposed was the inequalities in our world. And it was starkly clear that Africa remains on the periphery of the global economic order. We are only contributing about 3 percent of world trade. We realize in Africa, in the throes of COVID-19, that we don't make enough. That we are not industrialized. And that we have very little control over global supply chains. Therefore, we need new partnerships that will fundamentally change Africa's integration into the world market. Africa can no longer be that continent that is simply there to produce raw materials for others, where its best talent is drained out of the continent, and our markets are jam-packed with finished goods from abroad.

As a result, partnerships are required, and Africa must insist on partnerships that invest in people, provide knowledge and technological transfer, build infrastructure, help us strengthen our public health and education infrastructure, and enable Africa to foster inter-Africa trade. Inter-African trade is the way of the future. In this regard, I think the Africa Continental Free Trade Area is critical. Africa is expanding. There are sad and difficult stories coming out of Africa, but there is also an Africa that has shown that it can innovate in the face of COVID-19 challenges. Africans were suddenly producing items such as ventilators, syringes, and medical equipment.

4.1 The Africa in Diaspora and the Rapid Rise of Remittance

Remittances surpassed foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2019 as the main source of incoming funds for low- and middle-income countries. Around $50 billion in remittances were sent to sub-Saharan Africa in 2018, up 66% from 2009. Additionally, the cost of these remittances is consistently decreasing: from the first quarter of 2019 to the same point in 2020, expenditures decreased by 3.8 percent, which was the largest decrease of any place. It is expected that the outbreak has curtailed the flow of remittances to Africa and developing countries in general. Both a sizable portion of verified COVID cases and a sizable portion of remittances originate

from developed countries. 75% of migrants live in countries that account for 75% of global COVID-19 cases (and 90% of global remittances). Global remittances may decline as a result of the pandemic, but this trend is probably going to reverse itself as wealthy countries recover. There are already signs of this in a number of these countries. (2020, Kromad).

Additionally, remittances are thought to be much more robust than private equity and foreign direct investment (FDI) sources of capital inflows. This resilience is crucial because, although remittances to African countries may increase during a recession, foreign direct investment (FDI) and private equity tend to flee unstable economies. Remittances' countercyclical nature stems from the African diaspora, which has driven Africans to cross the world for a variety of reasons. According to the BU Centre for Finance, Law & Policy (2015), African immigrants continue to maintain strong ties to their home countries on an ethnic, cultural, or religious level.

Governments on the African continent are becoming more and more reliant on foreign direct investment (FDI), which is essential to the region's economic and human growth. This is because both public and private debt levels are rising. Africa does not currently get enough foreign direct investment (FDI) to meet the SDGs; it only accounts for 3.5 percent of global FDI (UNCTAD, 2019). Still, FDI is finding Africa to be a more attractive destination. FDI flows to Africa increased by 11% in 2018 despite a global decline in FDI flows. Resurgent commodities prices in the short term and the AfCFTA in the long term are major draws for FDI. Since international businesses may benefit from lower tariffs and more efficient processes, the AfCFTA itself encourages foreign direct investment. The AfCFTA also encourages investments that are more diverse across sectors, time horizons, and destinations since regional trade is much more varied. Apart from the obvious economic benefit, foreign direct investment (FDI) has a positive correlation, even in non-economic metrics, with better future SDG accomplishment (Signe & Heitzig, 2022).

5. AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBAL ISSUES

Africa is more than just a modern, imperial, or colonial concept. It is also more than just a continent in need of outside assistance from more affluent and advanced civilizations. Africa may be politically unsteady, economically in need of assistance, and somewhat chaotic socially due to civil conflicts and other social unrest. But there's no denying that the continent and its people are not like the awful image that the mainstream media perpetuates. Africa is now undergoing a vast cultural, intellectual, and spiritual expansion with enormous potential,

adding to current conversations about the ethics of globalization. Africa was the cradle of civilization throughout the pre-colonial era.

The incredibly beautiful Africa fell prey to external goals that drained the continent's resources. The underdevelopment of the continent is the fault of former colonizers as well as current defenders of oppressive governments. While it is commendable that those who are motivated to help have sincere intentions, the reality around poverty porn is that assistance might end up dividing rather than uniting the continent. To the extent that we do not see Africans as helpless victims whose needs must be met by outside saviours, our sympathy and desire to help are endearing. It is unjust to ignore Africa's intellectual, cultural, and economic capacity for growth and self-expression in favour of a moral duty framed in the donor countries' self-declared goal of developing Africa from their own, sometimes top-down, perspective. The intellectuals of the continent are right to emphasize justice and criticize the whole of assistance and foreign aid. To change our perspective and moral presumptions and act with empathy for justice, the voices from inside Africa beg us to put ourselves in their shoes and grasp the nature and causes of suffering and deprivation. By shifting our focus from our empathetic perception to an understanding of the systemic causes of deprivation, we may commit ourselves to uplifting those who are imprisoned in poverty and underdevelopment. Sympathy for others has nothing to do with making up for the structural and historical harm. In the sympathizing mind, there is also no understanding of how to support the victims and march with them on the way to justice (Masaeli, Yaya, & Sneller, 2018).

IMF Africa's department (2023) notes that African nations are now under significant financial strain due to tighter global financial conditions. Simultaneously, these economies have significant financial requirements to fulfill their developmental goals, particularly concerning improvements in infrastructure and education. Leaders in Africa are attempting to address long-standing structural issues as well as the effects of external shocks like Russia's involvement in Ukraine and climate change. Both healthcare and education are under strain due to low enrollment and high dropout rates among young people who, in the next five to ten years, will account for around half of the world's growing working-age population. The region's economy and food security depend heavily on agriculture, a sector that is hampered by low productivity, the effects of climate change, and restricted access to new technologies. Inadequate infrastructure and investment, shoddy institutions, high unemployment, and income inequality also impede economic progress (IMF, 2023).

Regarding climate change, Africa is the most vulnerable continent in the world despite having made little contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions. Natural disaster frequency and intensity are rising due to anomalous rainfall, rising sea levels, and rising temperatures. The lives of millions of people are at risk due to climate-related disasters because of their heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture and limited ability to adapt to weather-related shocks. The 27th Conference of the Parties, sometimes known as "the Africa" COP, has just concluded. Leaders from across the world gathered in Sharm El-Sheikh to discuss how to organize group efforts for drastic emission reductions and adaptation (IMF, 2023). Africa has made relatively little contribution to global emissions; yet, the continent is already feeling the effects of global warming in many different ways, as shown by the evident changes in the hydroclimate, biodiversity, and dynamics of wildfires. Significant social and economic changes were taking place in several countries at the same time as these advances. It follows that a great deal of fascinating research is conducted throughout the continent, much of it important even outside of its many regions. Nine researchers from seven different nations share their perspectives on this viewpoint, discussing open questions, outlining the most important research in their field and region, and offering strategies for converting this knowledge into climate action (Al-zubi, Dejene, Hounkpe, Kupika, Lwasa, Mbenge, & Toure, 2022).

The challenge of providing equitable services, infrastructure, housing, and measures to adapt to the extremes and calamities of climate change persists in African cities. A well-known issue is the discrepancy between the pace at which cities are growing and the more slowly developing critical infrastructure and services. For large swaths of the population, this results in inadequate sanitation, water supply systems, and localized waste management, all of which significantly worsen poverty and inequality. Urban management must incorporate low-income communities into the urban economy to create inclusive, equitable, prosperous, and climate-resilient cities. This can be done by guaranteeing that these communities have access to energy-transition resources, water, and waste management, reducing poverty, and enhancing resilience through creative problem-solving (Lwasa, 2022).

6. CHALLENGES TO AFRICA'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

There is much evidence to suggest that the international system is structured hierarchically. According to Waltz, the primary interest of international relations theory ought to be the great powers of a given era. Waltz, however, incorrectly characterizes the international organizing principle as anarchical by ignoring the "lesser powers." He ignores the way the state system

has developed historically, particularly the emergence and integration of "Third World" countries. The creation of the international state structure does not belong to the governments of Africa. Instead, as specialized producers within a global division of labour constructed following the objectives of the European powers, they were incorporated into the global capitalist system. Western colonialism and hegemony spread the international state system, which had its origins in Westphalia. Third World states were forced to graft their sovereignty onto a productive structure historically constructed to rob their economies of autonomy, diversity, and robustness. European colonizers transformed their colonies in Africa and elsewhere into "regions of specialized production within an expanding division of labour centred around European states' competitive needs" as they worked to build the current international state system. In Africa, European materialism created the hierarchical state system, which is now sustained by Western interests' ongoing economic dominance and hegemonic institutions like the World Bank and IMF. Thus, including African experiences in the discussion demonstrates how the state structure that was and remains in place was hierarchically structured (Dunn, 2000).

The achievement of IR objectives in Africa is beset with issues. The challenge facing African countries is balancing principles with the practical implementation of IR. Because of Africa's ongoing lack of security and peace, human rights violations persist in many African states, including the subjects of globalization, human rights, and democracy are now prominent in changes in international relations and diplomacy. The AU's establishment in 2002 opened up opportunities for advancement in a number of its IR goals. However, as noted by Ujunwa, African States have not yet achieved all of their IR objectives and most likely won't shortly. The reasons for this include governments' reluctance to include a variety of diplomatic processes in their IR implementations as a result of tight and strict sovereignty norms. This is so because domestic political activities often have a significant impact on the procedures involved in developing and implementing policies. Furthermore, the continent's reputation is damaged, and despite the best efforts of African diplomats and other officials to explain Africa's position to other countries, their efforts have been fruitless since the majority of African states still uphold an absolute definition of national sovereignty. They argue that human rights and related issues are African problems, deserving of African solutions. The Kenya v. International Criminal Court (ICC) case from 2010 to 2015, the Rwandan genocide, and the elusive peace and stability in South Sudan are a few examples. The majority of African presidents take a seat within their nation's borders and treat their people in any way they choose,

disregarding the reaction of the outside world. Despite being primarily domestic issues in law and international relations, democracy and human rights are becoming important factors in IR (Munyiva & Ogwaya, 2022).

First and foremost, there has been an imbalance in Africa's participation in global decision-making. That is, referring to the global decision-making process and the pursuit of Africa's UN seat. African countries have made a strong case for changes to the international governance framework, focusing on the institutions of global governance in particular. Their argument is based on the need for more justice and equitable representation in international affairs. Despite being the largest group of countries in the General Assembly, Africa lacks a permanent seat and veto power on the UNSC. Five non-permanent seats and two permanent seats have been claimed by the region. To increase the African share of power and broaden the basis of decision-making, the continent has also voiced calls for reforming the Bretton Woods institutions and the current weighted voting system. Selected African leaders have received repeated invitations to attend G7 gatherings in recent years; these invitations have mostly been for sessions focusing on the difficulties facing the continent and offers of assistance. These invitations haven't exactly succeeded in correcting the underlying imbalances in the regulations and functions of the global financial system, even though they may have been intended as an act of inclusivity and solidarity that speaks to both the African continent and the civil society and social movement critics of that forum's role in global economic governance. For this reason, African countries have a strong interest in pursuing a reform of the international development architecture in addition to the fundamental issues of political governance (Kohnert, 2021).

Africa's industrial base continues to be mostly reliant on exporting a few basic goods to more developed nations like the United States, China, and Germany. For instance, Africa's importance as a commercial partner of China has been noticeably growing, despite the continent making up just 4% of China's overall foreign trade in 2011. Chinese firms, especially large state-owned enterprises, have recently invested millions of dollars in resource-rich African states, leaving resource-poor nations with little chance of industrialization (Munyiva & Ogwaya, 2022).

Furthermore, IR firms have suffered greatly as a result of changes in political leadership in certain regions, which has a negative influence on the execution and compliance of previously signed Memorandums of Understanding. There have been times when political disputes

between the leaders of sub-states and the state have negatively affected their relations. One such instance is what is now happening in Ethiopia and its northern region, Tigray. Ethnic violence has since resulted from regional wars, posing new challenges including the increase in refugee populations, cross-border illegal arms trafficking, and even environmental degradation. Developing African institutions to support conflict resolution and regional integration has emerged as a critical IR objective. However, developing conflicts that impede level interstate links and regional economic regression have hindered its implementation (Appiah-otoo, Chen, Song, & Dumor, 2022).

7. SECURITY CHALLENGES AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

In general, the idea of security is acknowledged at every level of human activity, from the micro to the macro, national, and international. Thus, it is possible to see security from every angle, including national, international, social, and personal. Other definitions of security include food security, financial security, psychological security, and physical security. In essence, security is the lack of or defence against a certain kind of risk, which might be financial, psychological, or physical. On the other hand, insecurity implies being open to any of these risks. Security is important whether it is at the individual, national, or regional levels because without it, people in a state will find it difficult to engage in productive activities, and without it, the state will undoubtedly find it difficult to use its resources—both human and material—toward meaningful development and the advancement of the general well-being of the populace (Ogwu, 2008). The concept of regional security originated from the same understanding that common interests drive regional cooperation and integration. a conviction that member states within a certain geographic area have tangible and intangible interests that, in the event of a threat or actual assault, would negatively impact, to varying degrees, the enjoyment of peace and normal living conditions in that specific region. Thus, regional arrangements are concerned with, or designed to preserve peace and security inside their area, just as individual states are concerned with maintaining law and order and protecting peace and security within their borders (Ogwu, 2008).

As regional governments are drawn into global crises like terrorism, migration, people trafficking, and drug trafficking, African countries are working more and more with other states and international organizations on matters of international security. For IR to function in the future, African countries will need to modify their domestic and local security strategies, which are under the purview of international security mandates, to address the main issues raised in

the international accords. For a better and more secure future, coordinated efforts must be encouraged since security is a problem that no country can solve on its own (Munyiva & Ogwaya, 2022). Within the AU, there doesn't seem to be a dominant force when it comes to regional cooperation. With the Union's large membership base and lack of a major power or nuclear weapon state, this is not surprising. Nonetheless, the struggle between various subregional powers and their attempts to sway the Union's agenda usually drives the security dynamics of the continent. In this regard, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Algeria, Ethiopia, and Libya have been the main players. The African Union (AU) has repeatedly emphasized the importance of avoiding bilateral disputes that might escalate into armed conflict and the need for its members to take part in the amicable resolution of those that do arise. Under Article 9(1) of its Protocol, the Union has delegated authority to its Peace and Security Council to intervene in potential conflict situations. To achieve this goal, the AU has established several institutions and methods that allow it to engage in peaceful diplomacy, facilitation, mediation, and peacekeeping in addition to periodically criticizing rival members in public (Greenleaf & Cottier, 2022).

As the World Bank report (2023) stated:

> Africa (especially West Africa) is making impressive progress in economic growth, democratization, and regional cooperation. While the recent rise in violence and conflict as well as drug trafficking, piracy, extremism, and other emerging threats have sparked concerns over its future development, efforts to prevent conflicts have also improved, contributing to overall stability. Development policy has a critical role to play in supporting stability to reduce conflict and violence over the long term. This requires interventions in many areas including support for lagging regions, strengthening local governance, improving land management, and spurring job creation among others.

8. CONCLUSION

In summary, within the context of a globalized world, Africa's engagement in international affairs offers a dynamic environment characterized by both opportunities and challenges. Due to its distinct geopolitical, economic, and social conditions, the continent is a significant player on the dynamic global scene. Africa has a wide range of foreign relations challenges. The continent's progress in many areas is nevertheless constrained by ongoing conflicts, unstable political environments, and governance issues. Economic disparities and inequalities in development persist, and African concerns are often sidelined by global power dynamics. It is

essential to recognize, nevertheless, that Africa's problems do not characterize all of its international participation. Additionally, the alliances of Africa have grown as governments from other parts of the world see the need to cooperate with the continent. Collaboration in several fields, such as trade, infrastructure development, and security, may be made possible by these partnerships. African nations may actively participate in shaping global policy via international organizations and initiatives aimed at addressing global issues including health crises and climate change. According to the discussion in this article, Africa, despite its challenges, supports international law, and global economic stability, particularly in the fields of industrialization, and responds to international climate change policies. Therefore, this article makes the case that the international system of the globalized world needs to be redesigned to take Africa's concerns into account. This is because Africa has been left to handle its problems, which puts the stability of the global economy and politics at risk. These problems range from the disruption of the democratic political system to the policies about climate change.

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