IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

THESIS

THE LACK OF REGIONAL HEGEMON IN AFRICA: PERSPECTIVES FROM INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES

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JUNE 2019

APPROVAL PAGE

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ABSTRACT

THE LACK OF REGIONAL HEGEMON IN AFRICA: PERSPECTIVES FROM
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES

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MA in Political Science and International Relations

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Ali Aslan

June 2019, 74 pages

This study is an attempt to understand why Africa lacks a regional hegemon and the seeming lack of aspirations by any African state towards this end. The logic behind this rests with the hypothesis that African problems would be easily managed and effectively addressed if effective leadership (regional hegemon) existed. The lack of same dissuades the focus and direction needed and benchmarks the openness and exposure of the continent to the exploitation of other regional hegemons and global superpowers. The study was carried-out by analyzing and testing the logical fundamentals of the three basic theories of international relations – realism, liberalism and constructivism. In other words, the researcher employed a theory testing approach in addressing the puzzle under consideration. From the examination of the three basic theories of International relation, it emerged that the realist perspective offered better explanatory power than the other two perspectives. In an intriguing fashion, the explanations provided by the two perspectives (liberalism and constructivism) go to reinforce the logical dimensions and psychoanalyses of leadership presented by the realist perspective. In other words, the two theories explain the 'means' towards an 'end' sanctioned in the realist thought – hegemonic power.

Keywords: Africa; Balance of power; Hegemon; International politics; Realism; State capacity.

ÖZET

AFRİKA'DA BÖLGESEL HEGEMON EKSİKLİĞİ: ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER KURAMLARINDAN PERSPEKTİFLER

Mohammed Zulkarnain

Siyaset Bilimi Ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Yüksek Lisans

Tez Danışmanı: Dr Ali Aslan

Haziran 2019, 74 sayfa

Bu çalışma, Afrika'nın neden bölgesel bir hegemondan yoksun olduğunu ve herhangi bir Afrika devleti tarafından bu amaç için görünen özlem eksikliğini anlama girişimidir. Bunun ardındaki mantığı; eğer etkili liderlik (bölgesel hegemon) mevcutsa Afrika sorunlarının kolayca yönetilebileceği ve etkin bir şekilde ele alınacağı hipotezine dayanıyor. Aksine, etkili liderlik eksikliğinden dolayı, gereken odak ve yönü dikkate almamakta ve kıtanın diğer bölgesel hegemonların ve küresel süper güçlerin sömürülmesine karşı açıklığını ve maruz kalmasını ölçmektedir. Bu çalışma, gerçekçilik, liberalizm ve yapılandırmacılık gibi üç temel uluslararası ilişkiler teorisinin mantıksal temellerini analiz ederek ve test ederek gerçekleştirildi. Başka bir deyişle, araştırmacı, inceleme altındaki bulmacayı ele almak için bir teori test yaklaşımı kullanmıştır. Uluslararası ilişkilerin üç temel teorisinin incelenmesinden, gerçekçi bakış açısının diğer iki perspektiften daha iyi açıklayıcı bir güç sunduğu ortaya çıktı. Şaşırtıcı bir şekilde, iki bakış açısının (liberalizm ve yapılandırmacılığın) sağladığı açıklamalar, gerçekçi bakış açısıyla sunulan liderliğin mantıksal boyutlarını ve psikanalizlerini güçlendirir. Başka bir deyişle, gerçekçi düşüncede yer alan "son" (hegemonik iktidar) için "araçları" bu iki teori ile açıklanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Afrika; Devlet kapasitesi; gerçekçilik; güç dengesi; hegemon; Uluslararası politika.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the Almighty Allah and my sweet niece, Iman. You are a blessing and a precious angel in our lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

1.0.   Introduction

Hegemonic power relation as couched in the sphere of domination has been the structural base of international politics addressed by the various contending scholarly perspectives in international relations. In one extreme vein, the conjecture of international relations is addressed in the domain of the relation between powerful and weak states (Mearsheimer, 2001). On the other, the base is sustained on the relations between powerful states relegating the weak states to the backburner (Spykman, 2017; Wohlforth, 1999). In both conjectures, the underlining contour is an attempt to delineate the concept of power taking into account; the nature of power, structural, importance and how it is exercised among others (Cox, 1981).

The current drive and the spread of globalization has introduced a number of facets into the analysis of power relations among states, precipitating reviews of some perspectives while strengthening others. Indeed, the interconnectedness of states in this increasing globalized international system implies that the domination held in one power base becomes a glaring phenomenon requiring more attention than ever. As the globalization agenda spreads, the relationship between states takes eclectic dimensions rendering importance to an extended base of the concept of power including concepts such as regionalism, balance of power, hegemony and the likes.

Given this amorphous rendition of the international system, any analysis of the egregious situation in Africa devoid of this element is unfathomable. The lack of leadership and the scramble to occupy same by supposedly emerging economies on the continent such as Nigeria and South Africa cannot escape the telescope of analysts of political developments on the continent (Flemes, & Wojczewski, 2010). Africa's regional political leadership is currently in a vacuum, leaving the region pathetically exposed in an increasingly competitive and often unforgiving global system. Until this

leadership vacuum is filled, the capacity of the continent to play effective role in global affairs would remain at the periphery (Machiavelli, 1940).

To be sure, academics and observers alike have attempted varied explanations to reflect the different perspective relating to this subject matter. While some of these efforts focus on the unprecedented flux of developmental and security problems facing the continent, others have emphasized on the future prospects of the continent and have even concluded that the future global space would be dictated by progress on the continent. Combining these two major perspectives reveals that the continent has what it takes to sail the muddy waters of underdevelopment, poverty, insecurity among others and emerge as a powerful global player.

However, what lingers on the mind of many is how can the continent structure itself in the best ways possible to effect these changes in the light of a leadership vacuum? This study proposes to explore this question through the deconstruction of the logical base of the three main international relations theories namely realism, liberalism and constructivism. At the core of this endeavor is an attempt to understand the scope and the dynamics of the regional power vacuum as a means of deconstructing the existing analysis on how the regional political leadership should be constructed and structured.

1.1.   Research Problem

The conjecture of power relations between states has generally been contextualized in two folds. The first christened as the globalist or institutionalist perspective holds that the nature of current global and regional problems require strengthening relationship between states through global and regional institutions and bilateral and multilateral agreements to confront common problems such as poverty, insecurity, deprivation among others (Keohane, 2005). Here, the power relationship between states is but a minimal consideration as the survival of each states depends on collective efforts than on the individual efforts of the state. The crucial element behind state relations stems from actual or perceived 'common threat' which elicits the pulling of collective efforts and resources towards 'collective security'. Like in domino, states are of equal strength in this milieu such that pulling of one out of the system destabilizes it entirely

(Monar, 2007). Thus, the collective interest is more important than the national interest of individual states.

The second fold known as 'primacy' engages the relationship between states by drawing extensively on the element of power. According to this perspective, the theory of collectivity fails to account for one critical element underpinning even collective actions; leadership. Adherents of this proposition argue that the collective thesis is weakened without leadership which could only be accounted for through the dimension of power (Walt, 1997). Thus, it is imperative for an overwhelming hegemonic power to extend leadership towards both selfish and collective goals. In short, competition for power is at the core of international politics and the relations between states irrespective of the conjecture; regional or global (Snyder, 2002).

Contemporary African politics appeals to both sides of this debate. Indeed, over the past several decades, the first dimension of the debate has been applied in Africa with little success. What remains in focus is the fact that the continent still harbors many of the world's poorest states. Exacerbating the situation further, the continent is still fraught with conflict both intra and inter. Many conflict situations on the continent has gone worse in the absence of leadership to steer the affairs of the collective. Although, the frequency of interstate conflict and friction has reduced tremendously over the years, the risk of intra state conflict continue to be a major concern[1]. Further, the exploitation of the continent has skyrocketed with many states helpless in the process. Continent wide institutions such as the African Union (AU) have to constantly rely on outside powers to carry out their mandates and when these external support dwindle; these bodies are reduced to shells. Intriguingly, although this leadership vacuum has existed from pre-historical times, there seems to be very little or lack of ambition from African states to fill it.

Researchers have seen this phenomenon perplexing and have attempted using different tools to understand it. Unfortunately, the points of departure of most of these studies have been problematic. They focus on secondary issues rendering the primary concern to the backburner. Such studies flow from the assumption - some implied,

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[1]Exploring the future of intrastate conflict in Africa, it is projected a decline of large-scale violence and worrying is the persistence of the risk of violence and stability. See; Cilliers, J., & Schunemann, J. (2013). The future of intrastate conflict in Africa-more violence or greater peace?. Institute for Security Studies Papers, 2013(246), 24-24.

others explicit – that the differences in material possessions (size of the economy, size of the military, infrastructural development, among others) of states in the continent provides a basis for the emergence of a hegemon (Viera and Alden, 2011). Thus, comparative material possession automatically translates into power relations with the wealthiest automatically becoming the hegemon. They conclude thus, the continent of Africa could not be said to be bereft of regional hegemon. Proceeding from this assumption, scholars then turn their attention to examine which states on the continent best fits the criterial of a hegemon.

Instructive and puzzling as this seems, a number of weakness are exposed by this strategy. First, scholars who proceed from this base fail to account for the nature of the power structure and the nature of power relationship between African states. Second, an assumption of an occupied power space presupposes that the power space was at some point empty. What accounted for such emptiness and how did it impact on the relationship between states? Moreover, continent wide superpower should have global credentials. How, competitive is the supposed occupant relative to other regional wide superpowers such as the United State, China, France, United Kingdom and Russia among others.

These questions are left hanging and could only be addressed by an exploration of the nature of the regional power base in Africa; proceeding from an assumption of the emptiness of the regional power base; the point of departure of this study. This grants several advantages. First, it provides the space to distill the nature of the power structure of Africa. This encompasses exploring and understanding the nature and composition of the power structure; how it is constructed and deconstructed across history, the actors involved, the institutional dimensions, the nature of the relationship between the regional power structure and the global one; are they reinforcing each other or antagonistic? Second, it allows for a better analysis of whether or not occupiers exist and in which form. Thus, a scope specific analysis of secondary questions is better granted via this approach.

1.2.   Research question

The African continent has attracted various attention both in the negative and positive spheres of development. In the positive realm, the recent spikes in economic growth recorded by a number of African countries has propelled the tag of 'a continent on the rise' in many circles. On the other hand, the issues of poverty, deprivation and conflicts (intra state conflicts) appears to endure and efforts at ending these tragedies have yielded very little results (Cilliers and Schunemann, 2013). For example, although global poverty seems to be on the decline, the result is largely driven by the progress in China and India, with very little to show in Africa despite the fluorescence of economic growths. In addition to individual state efforts, the collective efforts by African states in terms of instituting regional and sub-regional organizations to deal with the myriad of problems facing the continent has been passive at best owing to several challenges.

Researchers over the years have tailored their intellects in trying to understand these phenomena via different tools and perspectives. The perspective relevant for this study is stationed at understanding the leadership deficiencies particularly in the political sense which perpetuates these negative developments. This study, therefore, follows suite the logical dimension domain of existing literature. However, it diverges on the basis of ontology. It proceeds with a hypothesis of an empty power space; that understanding the nature and scope of the power vacuum is the most viable way towards unearthing the nature and leadership deficiency thereof. Against this backdrop, this study is guided by two core questions thus;

- Why is Africa lacking a regional hegemonic power?
- What is the nature of the hegemonic power vacuum in Africa?

To aid the exploration of the core questions forgone in a more simplified way, the following secondary questions are worth exploring.

- What is the relevance of regional hegemon in Africa?
- Will the presence of a hegemon improve the capacity of the continent to deal with its myriad of developmental and security problems?
- What factors impedes the emergence of regional hegemon in Africa?

1.2.1: Variables

In the context of this study, the independent and dependent variables are defined as follows;

Independent variable: The lack of regional hegemonic ambitions African states, operationalized in terms of the combined effects of statecraft, state capacity, and the structure of the international system. These variables define the specific condition of the African political systems both domestic and regional-wide.

Dependent variable: The lack of regional hegemon defined in terms of no African state possessing the capacity enough to act as the leader of African states both in terms of coercion (material capabilities measured in terms of economic and military capacity) and persuasion (ideology).

1.3.   Aims and Objectives

International politics has undergone tremendous changes over the course of history especially in contemporary times. Concurrently, the intellectual abstractions of the nature and operations of the system have witnessed series of reviews and adjustments. This study fits this general framework as it attempts to deconstruct some layers of existing IR thoughts in the sphere of hegemonic politics within a regional context. At the core of the study lies the attempt to understand the nature and scope of regional hegemonic power vacuum in Africa. Unlike similar studies in this area which assumes the existence of an occupier or would-be occupier, this study proceeds with the assumption of an emptiness of the regional power space in Africa. By this, the study aims to achieve the following:

1. To assess the causal mechanism relative to the absence of regional hegemon in Africa.

2.To understand the power dynamics between states in Africa.

3. To understand the impact of the absence of regional hegemonic power on developments in the region.

4. To examine the relevance of regional hegemon for Africa.

1.4. Significance of the study

Every study is unique in terms of the constituency it seeks to direct its findings to. While the findings of some studies are explicitly connected to addressing policy issues, others are much bound in the direction of contributing to academic literature either in the domain of plugging gaps or enhancing the robustness of existing literature. But be as it may, whether explicitly in either sphere, every study implicitly holds some dimension of the other as well. Consequently, I envisage that the findings of this study even though highly contributive in the academic circle, has implied relevance for public policy as well. In the academic realm, the findings of this study seeks to retune attention to the analysis of hegemony in Africa by tackling the primary question of the subject; what makes the Africa continent resistant to the emergence of regional hegemon? what are the global, regional and local dynamics facilitating this development? What are the historical process underlying this?

To be sure, studies on regional hegemon in Africa are relatively new endeavor partly triggered by the recent economic progress and development on the continent and partly as a results of the persistent challenges relative to state-building on the continent. Existing studies have tended to focus largely on secondary questions backed by the assumption of an occupied regional power space, hence focusing attention on supposed occupier(s). Interesting as this point of departure assumes, they fail to address the dynamics of the regional power system and structures which questions their foundations. Those that attempted to account for these dynamics, often import the local dynamics of the supposed occupier(s) and perilously represent them as quintessential of the regional dynamics.

In a way, the existing literature fails to account for the ideological and normative dimension of the subject matter. This study, therefore, departs from this base with an explicit objective of exploring these regional dynamics through a constructivist perspective (literary). By this, a better foundation would be provided to strengthen the studies in the secondary question domain. In addition, the study is relevant in the regional studies of Africa by attempting to construct and deconstruct the nature of regional power relations on the continent.

On the front of public policy, this study makes an implicit contribution. Here, just as Machiavelli did in his *theory of the Prince*, the goal is to serve as a guide toward better statecraft by exposing the challenges that are inherent in the existing state structures in Africa thereby granting policy makers the abstraction needed to craft and better position their states towards an occupier or a would-be occupier.

1.5.   Scope and organization of the study

This study is composed of five main chapters. Chapter one christened as the introductory chapter includes the background, statement of the problem, aims and objectives, significance, and the scope of the study. Chapter two, dubbed as the literature review section of the study encapsulates related literature on hegemonic study, balance of power politics, the theories of international relations which sanctioned the theoretical underpinnings of the study among others. It also covers the conceptualization of hegemony in the African context and the components therein. The third chapter addresses the methodology of the study encompassing issues such as research design, data sources, and data analysis among others. Chapter four covers the analysis and discussions of the findings of the study. It further discusses the relevance of regional hegemonic state in relation to the specific context of Africa, compares the African hegemonic case to historical hegemonic studies to distill the uniqueness or otherwise of the African case. Chapter five is the final chapter of the study and comprises the summary, conclusions, and recommendation for further studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0.   Introduction

This chapter covers the literature on hegemony in international relations. The discussion here includes the conceptualization of hegemony, hegemonic stability theory, theories of international relations, existing studies on hegemony in international relations; identifying the gaps and positioning this study appropriately within the contours of these gaps. The chapter also addresses the models of hegemony concept of power and balance of power politics within the general framework of this study. Based on the theories reviewed, the theoretical conceptualization of this study is then distilled.

2.1.   Conceptualizing Hegemon

Hegemon in international politics has taken various dimensions over the course of history as reflective of happenings on the global stage. In its literary sense, the word hegemon is a derivative of the Greek word *hegemon* which means 'leader, ruler, often in the sense of a state other than his own' (Williams;1977: 144). Thus, hegemon has been used to describing the predominance of one state over another in the political sense. Comprehensively, both the sphere of coercion and persuasion in the relations between states converge in the explication of the term. In other words, aside the requisite hard power in terms of economic and military strength, effective hegemon also requires the projection of soft power in terms of ideology which elicits an overwhelming acceptance and internalization by states considered weak relative to the capacity of the hegemonic state (Cox; 1996:99).

 In the annals of the persuasive dimension of hegemonic power and the eliciting of recognition by the relatively weaker states, the international community plays a

critical role. The international community provides room for the regional hegemon to assume roles that projects, bolsters and fluorescent their reach and position in the eyes of both domestic and international players. By this, the international community gives due recognition to and acknowledges the superior position of the regional hegemon vi-a-vis her peers in the community of states.

Conventionally, the term hegemon has assumed negative tags over the years. Whenever it is invoked, it instigates a platitudinous frame of coercion and bullying (Landsburg et al; 2003:173). Thus, the term in this way could be likened to the traditional notion of power akin to Robert Dahl; "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do." (Dahl, 1957). In the least, this is a narrow and erroneous presentation of the concept. In its comprehensiveness, hegemon also implies an aspect of cooptation and leadership meant to drive mutual beneficial goals (Danial Bash quoted in Landsburg et al 2003).

In much significant fashion, hegemon portrays more of a leadership drive than the method of control (Graham Evans and Jeffery Newham, 1990). By this, the concept depicts a situation where "one state is powerful enough to maintain the essential rules governing inter-states relations, and willing to do so" (Keohane; 1996:287). Thus, hegemon implies a state(s) that holds "…a preponderance of power in the international system or a regional subsystem, so that it can single handedly dominate the rules and arrangements by which international and regional political and economic relations are conducted" (Mansfield,1992:3-15). This implies that the hegemon has significant power superiority over its peers both in terms of material possession and ideological dominance. According to Keohane (1984), to achieve this, the hegemon "must have control over raw material, control over sources of capital, control over markets and competitive advantages in the production of highly valued goods" (Keohane 1984; 34).

In the context of this study, hegemon is defined in terms of a state or states which possess superiority both in the domain of material and ideational benchmarks. Invariably, an African regional hegemon is a state that dominates its peers in virtually all aspects of power and commands the recognition from other states both in the region and beyond. In addition, the hegemon's influence must transcend its immediate sphere of influence and must be seen to projected in other regions as well. In this way, the

position of the regional hegemon is said to have both domestic and international clout. The use of hegemony this way brings the term into conflict with the concept of "superpower" which implies that there can be more than one dominate power in either a regional or international system. Given this, a review is in order. I therefore, propose to combine the two terms such that an argument can be sustained that hegemonic state in the regional context can be unipolar, bipolar or multipolar.

2.2.   Realism in International Politics

The realist perspective has been the dominant theory in international politics since the second world war. It emerged as a challenge to the idealism of liberal internationalism which placed overwhelming credence in the ability of international institutions such as the league of nations to spearhead global stability and peace. This charge was led by E. H Carr who emphasized the critical place of power and national interest in the conjuncture of state behavior. In its simplistic touch, realism is said to nurse in the conflictual, anarchical and competitive aspects of international politics. In this frame, the realists employ analytical tools such as security dilemma and balance of power politics to explicate the flows and trends in international politics (Buzan, 1997: 53). It is in this context that the focus on superpower politics receive a pride of place as they constitute the main 'movers' and 'shapers' of global engagements (Mearsheimer, 2001: 17-18). Concurrently, the determinant of international outcomes rests with the distribution of power (Frankel, 1996). To this effects, realist pride themselves as representing the empirical rather than the normative aspects of international politics.

At the heart of realism rests concepts such as the pre-eminence of states international politics, survival and security, power as the end of international politics, anarchy among others. According to adherents of realism, "states recognize that in anarchy there is no overarching authority to prevent others from using violence, or the threat of violence, to dominate or destroy them. This is in fact the core insight of realism concerning international politics" (Grieco, 1990). In other words, "because other states are potential threats, and because there is no higher authority to come to their rescue when they dial 9-1-1, states cannot depend on others for their own security" (Mearsheimer, 2014). Against this background, the primary objective of states in

international politics is to secure their survival from predatory behavior of other states. This is best achieved, according to realist, by the pursuance and accumulation of more power relative to others rendering international politics a zero-sum game. In this way, states are viewed as rational actors which pursue selfish interests defined in terms of power and national interest.

It is worth noting that realism is a rich tradition encompassing a variety of strands and perspectives. Chief among these strands are the classical and the neorealist dimensions. Classical realism is represented by such scholars as Thucydides, Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Max Weber, E.H. Carr, Reinhold Niebuhr, Carl Schmitt and Hans Morgenthau among others. The tradition is structured within the philosophical framework of human nature in a state of nature where men "endeavor to destroy or subdue one another" (Hobbes, 1980; XIII 3). In such a state, men find themselves in "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceases only in death" (Hobbes 1994). A condition which perpetuates a state of war pitching "every man against every man" (Hobbes, 1994; XII 8). The twentieth-century classical realism flows from this assumption of human nature and was shaped by the charges leveled against idealist first by Reinhold Niebuhr in the 1930s and later E.H. Carr. The tradition was bolstered by the failure and subsequent collapse of the League of Nations as well as the outbreak of the World War II. "Critical of the optimism and explanatory ambition of [the idealists], classical realists instead stressed the various barriers to progress and reform that allegedly inhered in human nature, in political institutions, or in the structure of the international system" (Bell, 2018).

Carr criticized the idealist for their utopianism relative to the workings of the international system. He rebutted the concept of common interest of the idealist with the concept of conflict of interests. By this, Carr shot down universal moralistic underpinnings of the idealistic scholars by emphasizing on the struggle for power as the defining base of international engagements. According to this, morality in international politics is but relative and a tool orchestrated by the most powerful in the system to "to justify and maintain their dominant position" (Carr, 2001; 75). Similarly, Morgenthau stressed that states "think and act in terms of interest defined as power" (Morgenthau, 1978). That Universal moral principles, cannot be applied to

the actions of states in their abstract universal formulation, they must be filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place" (Ibid).

What needs to be emphasized is that classical realism do not reject the relevance of ethics and morals in international politics. Rather, they seek to construe morality as a byproduct of power. By doing so, they succeed in defining politics as an autonomous sphere bounded by its own currents. This definition then implies pragmatically that the rules and norms of international politics are the constructions of power. Serially, without coercive power, morality in itself ceases to exist.

Despite the promise and current classical realism generated, the period between the 1950s and 60s saw the tradition coming under series of attacks from within led by scholars who favored a scientific approach to the study of international politics. These movements culminated into the birth of neorealism. Cautiously, neorealism should be treated as existing side-by-side with classical realism. To be sure, the charges of the neorealist scholars such as Kenneth Waltz did not sink the classical realist tradition. It rather, contributed to the sustenance of the tradition thanks to the defense mounted by Morgenthau, Bull and others.

Neorealism also known as structural realism as a tradition in international politics can be described as the neo-positivist stream of realism. Just like classical stream, neorealism primary emerged as a charged against liberalism and an attempt to close certain gaps and institute some modifications to address the anachronism of the classical tradition. The principles sanctioning the neorealist thesis was laid in Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics (1979)*. In this book, Waltz argued that the main explanatory variable underpinning the behavior and actions of great powers in the international arena rests with the anarchical structure of the international system. In such a system, "states do not willingly place themselves in situations of increased dependence. In a self-help system, considerations of security subordinate economic gain to political interest." (Waltz 1979, 107). By this measure, the ultimate goal of states is survival. Thus, "internationally, the environment of states' actions, or the structure of their system, is set by the fact that some states prefer survival over other ends obtainable in the short run and act with relative efficiency to achieve that end" (Waltz, 1979).

A cursory look at the analytical frameworks of the two traditions highlights differences in the way power and state behavior are conjectured. In the classical tradition, power is construed "as both a means and an end, and rational state behavior was understood as simply the course of action that would accumulate the most power. In contrast, neorealists assume that the fundamental interest of each state is security and would therefore concentrate on the distribution of power" (Korab-Karpowicz, 2018). Whereas the distribution of power in the system is subject to changes, the anarchical structure of the system remains constant and hence has more fundamental impact on the behavior of states.

Empirically, while classical realism tilts more towards the philosophical aspects, neorealism endeavors to incorporate scientific positivist approach to the study of international relations. Scholars in this tradition were influenced by microeconomics and the revolution in scientific behavorialism taking place in the 1960s (Jackson et. al, 2019). This involves on "empirical testability of knowledge and on falsificationism as a methodological ideal" (Korab-Karpowicz, 2018). This methodological rigor and the fact that it syncs with contemporary scholarships explains why the neorealism became arresting to scholars and practitioners in the field. Indeed, this study also dwells on this theoretical dimension partly because of its explanatory power and partly due to the methodological acquaintance with contemporary frameworks. This notwithstanding, it must be underscore that this very methodological rigor limits and narrows the scope of study in international relations. In the US where it holds its origin, it has been reduced to quantitative investigations. Thanks to recent push, however, the scope has been expanded beyond this frame. Another critical area of debate between the classical and neorealist theorists is the conceptualization of power and balance of power politics to which I direct my attention to in the subsequent sections.

2.3. Theoretical conceptualization of the study

This study draws on a compound of neorealist, neoliberalist and constructivist theories of international relations as its foundation and general theoretical framework. This notwithstanding, the main theory conscribing this study is the neorealist perspective

as it addresses the core of the subject matter under investigation. Fundamentally, the major argument contained in this compound relates that the lack of regional hegemon in Africa has facilitated further exploitation of the continent by great powers and that this has further contributed to the persistent state of conflict, underdevelopment and fragmentations on the continents. This argument is sustained in a broader dimension which implies the lack of regional hegemony in Africa as product of the structure of the international system and micro level internal politics of Africa. The neorealist perspective holds its relevant based on its macro level foundation which relies on explanatory variables such as power distribution and structure of the international system. In the sense of this study, the situation of Africa is akin to the anarchical state of the international system underpinning all realists thought. Moreover, at the base of struggles of states on the continent and their behavior thereof, a quintessential frame of struggle for survival and security is evident.

The structure of the current international system argued by the neorealist is balanced by the perspective presented by the neoliberals. In the current conjecture, one cannot defy the boundaries of cooperation and norms of engagement at play in the relationship between states. Indeed, liberal institutionalists and their counterpart idealists portrayal of the peaceful aspect of human society is well suited in the twenty-first century configuration of the international system where interstate institutions such as the United Nations (UN), African Union, European Union, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and sub-regional such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), among others play critical roles in the ordering of state behavior. In fact, the idea of internal sovereignty has made it challenging for the exhibition of a critical power struggle harbored in state expansion through territorial acquisition. This provides the framework for the argument that the interconnected of states and expansion in the cooperative sphere of states as well as the norms and rules generated thereof impacts the capability of states on the continent to vy for hegemonic position.

Finally, the constructivist theory explicates the base for state relations which neither the neoliberals nor the neorealist addresses comprehensively. Thus, in understanding the case under study, it is imperative to comprehend the layers of interaction and the perceptions that these generates to unearth for example, why no state shows the needed ambition to occupy the regional hegemonic power vacuum. Putting it in

another way, ambitions is a product of the interactive and intersubjective relations between parties.

2.4.   Concept of Power

The concept of power is central to any study in politics and international relations. Indeed, interstate relationship is more defined in terms of power relations than any other conjectures. Just like many concepts in politics, "power is a complex and contested concept, in large part because there are important but distinctive ways to understand how social relations shape the fates and choices of actors. If international relations scholars have erred in their past attempts to understand power, it is trying to identify and rely on a single conception. But no single concept can capture the forms of power in international politics" (Barnett & Duvall, 2005: 66-67). Thus, the concept, given the context, space and time of application elicits different meanings and scope.

This notwithstanding, in its broader term "power may comprise anything that establishes and maintains the power of man over man. [This may range] from physical violence to the subtlest psychological ties by which one mind controls another" (Morgenthau, 1965: 9). By this, power is understood as, "the ability to get others–individuals, groups, or nations–to behave in ways that they ordinarily would not" (Payne, 2013). This perspective identifies two streams of power; the physical (coercive) and non-physical mostly referred to as soft power. In other words, the concepts appeal to both the material and non-material capabilities of states in their own rights as well as in their relationship with others.

Referencing the classical understanding of the concept, however, emphasis is placed on the layer of the coercive dimension of power. The classical realist by their explication of human nature in an anarchical environment have contributed significantly in relaying this viewpoint. Measured in this way, "power tends to be equated with material strength, especially of a military nature…" (Morgenthau 1965: 9), which encompasses the "size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence" (Waltz, 1979: 131).

Recent scholarly interest in soft power and other power dimensions have helped in toning down the focus on coercive power, occasioned by modifications in the classical realist tradition following the emergence of the neorealist thoughts and partly owing to the revival of liberalism in what is today neoliberalism. This development has given credence to the ideological base of power. It must be underscored, however, that this secondary base of power has always been represented in the classical conjecture. The slant, however, remains a mere shift relative to the context and the condition underpinning the weight put on each dimension. Thus, while the interwar period elicited interests and focus on the coercive material dimension of power, the collapse of the cold war and the consequent unipolarity of international system, the strengthening of international institutions, globalization and relatively peaceful nature of world politics today contributed in energizing interests in the nonmaterial and ideological base of power.

For the purpose of this study, a broad definition of power encapsulating both the material and nonmaterial dimensions is necessary. This fits well within the scope of the study that a hegemon must be able to project both coercive and persuasive dimensions of power. Concomitantly, a hegemon is appreciated as playing vital leadership role that shapes both the physical and non-physical aspects of counterparties.

2.5. Balance of power

Balance of power (BOP) politics has been one of the defining concepts of the scholarly debates in international politics for ages. Indeed, the concept in recent times has gained currency courtesy the current unipolar world system. Like many concepts in international relations, distilling the exact meaning of BOP is problematic. Indeed, "the problem with balance of power is not that it has no meaning, but that it has too many meanings" (Claude, 1962; 13). Fundamentally, the concept posits that states behavior and actions on the international scene are geared toward preventing a single state from holding overwhelming power to enable it dominate international and global affairs. It underlines "the aspiration for power on the part of several nations, each trying either to maintain or overthrow the status quo, leads of necessity, to a

configuration that is called the balance of power and to policies that aim at preserving it" (Morgenthau, 1966) Thus, "great powers balance against each other because structural constraints impel them to do so" (Layne, 1997).

Similar to other realist concepts, the underlying logic of BOP stems from the logic of the anarchical state of the international system where the motivation of states which bounds states in constant struggle for survival and security. The plane of operation of the concepts rests with the distribution of power in the international system. By this, BOP system "consists of two scales, plus a third element, the 'holder' of the balance or the 'balancer'. The balancer is not permanently identified with the policies of either nations or group of nations. Its only objective within the system is the maintenance of the balance, regardless of the concrete policies the balance will serve" (Morgenthau, 1948; 187).

Two levels of balancing can be distilled from the analysis of BOP. First, balancing can be achieved by a state accumulating more power. By this, "the greater military advantage one state has…the more secure it is" (Mearsheimer 1994-95, 11-12). Second, balancing can be achieved by states entering into alliance with others. This affords the establishment of a coalition of mutually operated alliance. In sum, the "balance[ing] process can be carried on either by diminishing the weight of the heavier scale [as it is in the first case] or by increasing the weight of the lighter one [as in the second]" (Morgenthau, 1948; 172)

Evolutionarily, BOP gained prominence in Europe in the period between the end of the Napoleonic wars and World War I (WWI). During this period, the concept was employed to define the power relationship between European states holding Great Britain held as the balancer. Following the collapse of the European power structure of the middle ages, the concept undergone significant challenges giving rise to competing concepts such as bandwagoning, balance of threat, and buck-passing among others.

Among the concepts which emerged as a challenge to balance of power, bandwagoning requires some attention. While in some cases, it is held in similar fashion as balance of power, in others, it is held as competing concept. But be as it may, the second sphere appear more convincing because most of the phenomena characterized as bandwagon reflects the behavior of weaker states and not great

powers which largely underpins the BOP. Additionally, while the goal of balancing is security and survival, the goal of bandwagoning is varied ranging from security to economic interests among others. Thus, while the logic behind BOP is to prevent the emergence of hegemon(s), bandwagoning can even emerge in the theatre of hegemony.

Empirically, scholars have attempted tests of the efficacy of the two concepts in understanding state behavior in international politics, generating mixed results in the process. From a historical survey of international politics, Paul Schroeder found that the behavior of states in anarchy was more aligned to bandwagoning than balance of power (Schroeder, 1994). Following suite, Robert Powell in testing the logical consistency of the concept through a model based on commitment and information problems, and technology of coercion came to the conclusion that "balancing is relatively rare in the model. Balances of power sometimes form, but there is no general tendency toward this outcome. Nor do states generally balance against threats. States frequently wait, bandwagon, or, much less often, balance" (Powell, 1999). From the forgone, bandwagoning seems more likely outcome of state behavior in international politics than BOP.

In sum, BOP and bandwagoning is relevant for this study as it goes to the core of the case under review. One of the fundamental argument sanctioning this study holds that due to the lack of regional hegemon to balance the global superpowers present on the continent, the continent has become a 'play thing' of superpower politics. In furtherance of this, the behavior of African states has been to bandwagon superpowers in the hope of securing handouts to further their national interests. Thus, the lack of regional hegemon has made balancing on the continent challenging tilting the scale further towards bandwagoning. Concurrently, in the present of regional hegemony, the two scenarios are likely to playout simultaneously; balancing against superpowers and bandwagoning either with regional hegemon or superpowers.

2.6.   Related literature

Generally, existing literature on hegemony studies can be broadly categorized into two spheres. The first sphere comprises studies that examine hegemony at the global level. The core of such studies entails the debate over the level of polarity on the global stage at each point in time and its impact on global peace and security. Thus, these studies seek to establish a nexus between hegemony and global peace and stability. The idea of hegemonic stability theory stems from this base and despite its expansion to cover regional base politics, it is mostly codified in the annals of the global hegemony discourse. On the other hand, the second sphere encapsulates studies that seek to explore the hegemony at the regional and sub-regional levels. Studies in this domain mostly sanction the debate of hegemony in relations to a would-be candidate. In line with this, a case or several cases (states) is/are examined to ascertain whether the would-be candidate(s) fit a regional hegemony status. Conventionally, studies on hegemon in Africa takes this shape and involves a comparative analysis of states to expose their fit for regional leadership status.

Customarily and as hinted earlier, the literature sanctioned on the global level debate looks at the distribution of power among powerful states and takes two shapes: first, understanding the level of polarity (whether the system is unipolar, bipolar or multipolar) and second, which of these polarities best anchors global stability, peace and security. Analyses of scholars in this domain are usually accentuated by polarity shifts dictated by "decline scar scares—concern that as other powers rise, … the [hegemon] will lose its competitive edge in foreign relations" (Wohlforth, 2007). This forms the preliminary objective of studies in this area. Thus, addressing the distribution of power and the level of polarity in existence forms the first step in studies in this domain. Illustrating this trend, these studies begin with emphatic and conclusive statements such as "for the first time in modern era, the world most powerful state can operate on the global stage without the counter-balancing constraints of other great powers. We have entered the American unipolar age."

The most profound period characterizing this benchmark was the periods during and immediately after the end of the cold war. During the cold war period, the debate was between proponents of bipolarity (a structure resulting from when two states are

substantially more powerful than all others) and multipolarity (a structure involving three or more especially powerful states) centered around global stability. Scholars such as Deutsch and Singer (1964) argued that "as the system moves away from bipolarity toward multipolarity, the frequency of war should be expected to diminish." (Deutsch, & Singer, 1964). That, multipolarity with its various centers of power provided better balance, perhaps "in the dynamic equilibrium sense" and checks on the power of powerful states in the system. It raises the cost of defection and provides stability to alliances. However, considering the balance of uncertainty generated by such systems, Hoffman (1972) and Waltz (1998) argued that multipolarity is more prone to conflict than envisaged. The main source of danger in multipolarity resides in a wide arena of miscalculations and the fact that dangers are more diffused than in others (Hoffmann, 1972; Waltz, 1988). Moreover, the ease with which coalitions shift in multipolarity tends to upset the balance of power in the structure and render it easily susceptible to attacks (Edelman et.al, 2011).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, unipolar world order ensued and the United State emerged as an unrivaled global power, dominating in virtually all material capabilities (Ikenberry, 2011). This shifted the discourse about global hegemony to a debate between unipolar and bipolar world order enthusiasts. Per the claim of proponents of bipolarity, unipolarity is inherently unstable. Such systems given the nature and structure of international politics propel opposition coalitions to push for the limitation of the power of the hegemon. To them, the most stable system in the international system is bipolarity (Waltz, 1990;1964). Thus, unipolarity is neither peaceful, nor durable (Monteiro, 2012). This criticism is strongly refuted by unipolar enthusiasts who argued that contrary to the conventional claim of the instability of unipolar systems, "unipolarity is more peaceful than what theorists predict. In causal terms, its dynamics might be less unidirectional than what is often assumed" (Terhalle, 2011). Besides, it is more than two decades old and seems to endure. To Wohlforth (1999), if Washington plays its cards right, [the unipolar system] may endure long enough as bipolarity or even more (Wohlforth, 1999).

Largely, at the base of these polarity debates stands the role and importance of balance of power politics in the relations between states in the international system (Mearsheimer, 2001). The presence of a balancer or balancers in a bipolar and multipolar world order accounts for their relative stability and durability. The

distribution of power in such systems is such that checks and balances are placed on the actions and behavior of superpowers. The absent of this balancing frame in unipolarity marks its fragility. The overwhelming and overarching power of the hegemon over other states akin to unipolarity breeds more suspicion as constraints on the power of the hegemon is immediately unavailable (Lieber and Alexander, 2005). Thus, as intimated by Waltz (1997), "unbalanced power, whoever wields it, is a potential danger to others" (Waltz, 2000). However, as Jervis (2009) correctly asserted, constraints on the power of hegemon is not entirely sanctioned by argument advanced by standard balance of power (Jervis, 2009). In a unipolar world, states can devise other means to ensure security under anarchy without necessarily resorting to coalitions to balance the power of the sole hegemon (He, 2012).

Moreover, to maintain the argument of standard balance of power implies that we hold the structure of international system constant throughout history or irrelevant. Thus, if a structural analysis of the current international system is factored into the equation, constraining elements and checks on the powers of hegemon in a unipolar system can be identified (Ruggie, 1983). Indeed, an argument could also be advanced to the effect that the stability of the bipolar system of the cold war was not the result of level of polarity per se but the threat of a full-blown nuclear confrontation and the devastation that such confrontation holds for the world (Waltz, 1990). In other words, advancement in military technologies and hardware contributed to the stability of the bipolar world and not merely the level of polarity. Thus, "nuclear possession can enhance the security of their possessors by shifting conflict to the lower end of the intensity spectrum (Rauchhaus, 2009)." Interestingly, the shift of the system to unipolarity has not eliminated this threat hence, the likelihood of peace and durability holds some effects.

The second group of literature analyzes a potential hegemon or hegemons. Studies in this category are usually regional based. Such literature proceeds with the assumption of power vacuum in a given region and adopt a case or cases as would-be occupier(s) of the vacuum. This assumption, however, is not granted significant space in the analysis since the main objective of the researcher is the analysis of the would-be occupier and why such would-be occupier merit the position of the hegemon. Findings arrived at in such studies either points to the would-be hegemon as a reluctant hegemon, usually possessing some superiority in some dimension of power such as

the economic realm or military realm while exhibiting weaknesses in others. Peterson's (2011), and Bulmer and Paterson (2013) examination of Germany's role as a hegemon in Europe clearly illuminates this dimension.[2] In a larger sense, studies under this umbrella are focus-studies particularly on emerging economies in the global south such as India, South Africa, China, Turkey or Brazil among others.[3] In other engagements, comparative studies involving multiple cases are carried out.[4] In all, the main objective is to examine the emergence of regional powers and understand how they impact on regional and global developments.

Studies on hegemony in Africa are largely drafted into this second category of literature on hegemony studies. They comprise comparative analysis of either single or multiple cases addressed through testing domination across various sectors of power; economy, military, technological and geopolitical among others. A large collection of the literature focusses on South Africa's emergence as regional power in Southern Africa and how she shapes peace and provide leadership in the sub-region (Prys, 2009, Schoeman, & Alden, 2003; Alden, & Schoeman, 2015; Habib and Landsberg, 2003; Tjemolane, 2012).[5] In the general context of the continent, existing

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[2] Germany is a passive regional hegemon in Europe despite having the material capabilities to actively assume the hegemonic leadership of Germany, Bulmer, S., & Paterson, W. E. (2013). Germany as the EU's reluctant hegemon? Of economic strength and political constraints. Journal of European Public Policy, 20(10), 1387-1405; Paterson, W. E. (2011). The reluctant hegemon? Germany moves centre stage in the European Union. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 49, 57-75.

[3] Emerging economies as regional leaders; see Destradi, S. (2012). Indian foreign and security policy in South Asia: Regional power strategies. Routledge; Prys, Miriam. "Regional hegemon or regional bystander: South Africa's Zimbabwe policy 2000–2005." Politikon 36, no. 2 (2009): 193-218; Schirm, Stefan A. (2005). Leadership indicators and explanatory variables for Brazil's new international policy. Latin America analysis, 11 (107), 30.

[4] For more comparative analysis of would-be occupier or occupier of regional power vacuums see, Flemes, D. (2013). Network Powers: strategies of change in the multipolar system. Third World Quarterly, 34(6), 1016-1036; Flemes, D. & Wojczewski, T. (2010). Contested leadership in international relations: power politics in South America, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa; Burilkov, A. & Geise, T. (2013). Maritime Strategies of Rising Powers: developments in China and Russia. Third World Quarterly, 34(6), 1037-1053; Erickson, E. J. (2004). Turkey as regional hegemon—2014: Strategic implications for the United States. Turkish Studies, 5(3), 25-45; Hickok, M. R. (2000). Hegemon rising: the gap between Turkish strategy and military modernization. Parameters, 30(2), 105.

[5] For the analysis of South Africa's capability as a regional and sub-regional hegemon, see; Prys, M. (2009). Regional hegemon or regional bystander: South Africa's Zimbabwe policy 2000–2005. Politikon, 36(2), 193-218; Schoeman, M., & Alden, C. (2003). The hegemon that wasn't: South Africa's foreign policy towards Zimbabwe. Strategic Review for Southern Africa, 25(1), 1; Alden, C. & Schoeman, M. (2015). South Africa's symbolic hegemony in Africa. International Politics, 52(2), 239-254; Habib, A. & Landsberg, C. (2003). Hegemon or Pivot? debating South Africa's role in Africa. August, paper presented at Centre for Policy Studies; Tjemolane, T, Neethling, T. & Schoeman, A. (2012). South Africa's foreign policy and Africa: Continental partner or hegemon? Africa Review, 4(2), 87-106.

studies are generally carried out in a comparative fashion employing South Africa and Nigeria as cases (see: Ogunnubi, & Isike, 2015; Adebajo, & Landsberg, 2003).[6] In such studies, hegemon is understood as leadership in a region which possesses significant power base to either coerce or persuade other states towards particular agenda. Even though, this may be the case in sub-regional context, in the entirely of Africa, no state can be said to possess the power base significant enough to exert leadership on the continent. Surprisingly, despite the fact that existing studies on hegemon in African to some extent acknowledge this power vacuum, they fail to adequately account for the nature of this power vacuum thereby rendering their foundations weak.

In summary, admittedly, existing models have contributed in significant ways in shaping our knowledge and understanding of and relationship between African states and between Africa as a continent and the global community of states. Unfortunately, the approach implied little attention to the internal dynamics of African societies. The net effect is the imposition of superficial notion of leadership which consequently impedes our understanding of political leadership within the regional context of Africa (Haas, 2001). I argue that instead of a focus on secondary or second order questions which existing literature establish as their basis, there is the need to give due credence to primary questions to understand the composite of the study area. This is the gap this study seeks to bridge. By doing this, the nature of the hegemonic power vacuum would be better understood to enable a better foundation and conceptualization for the examination of secondary and tertiary questions. In other words, this provides the foundation upon which better analysis in the form of secondary and tertiary questions could best be conceptualized and framed.

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[6] Comparative studies on South Africa and Nigeria as regional superpowers; see Ogunnubi, O., & Isike, C. (2015). Regional hegemonic contention and the asymmetry of soft power: A comparative analysis of South Africa and Nigeria. Strategic Review for Southern Africa, 37(1), 152.; Adebajo, A., & Landsberg, C. (2003). South Africa and Nigeria as regional hegemons. From Cape to Congo: Southern Africa's evolving security challenges, 171-203.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0.   Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology employed in the study. It covers the research design, study area, sources of data, instrumentation, and data analysis. Academic studies and research holds their contour and framework of operation encompassed in the questions that they sought to address and the methodology utilized. The methodology employed in a study defines the rules, procedures and lens through which problems of society are evaluated and made sense of (Nachamias and Nachamias, 1996). Therefore, it is imperative that careful attention is dedicated to the design and adoption of methods that aids in bringing out the best possible results based on agreed scientific rules and principles.

3.1.   Research design

This study is exploratory in nature and scope because the definitions of concepts employed and their operationalization are less problematic (Babbie, 2013). Specifically, existing literature in relation to global hegemony study are reviewed. And drawing on similar regional studies, deductions and inferences are made to understand the central question guiding the study. Studies in this category are usually termed as 'non-reactive research' owing to the fact that it is undertaken without eliciting awareness on the part of the subject under investigation. Against this, it can be argued that the impact of behavioral shifts and changes on the part of the research subject would be minimized. By this, the study aims to retune the debate on hegemonic study as new variables are introduced and evaluated. In terms of data, mainly secondary sources are utilized. This data includes previously published articles, books, and data analysis from various sources. It also involves distilling the

logical basis of theories constructed in regional studies and international relations. This is relevant in the identification of the scope conditions of the theories.

In any case, this study utilized a case study approach employing Africa as the case. The use of case study method enables the researcher to obtain detailed and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study through the utilization of wide range of research tools (Gerring, 2006). It is also well suited for studies that seeks to deconstruct the dynamics of complex situations (Yin, 1994). Thus, it allows for the researcher to explore the underlying factors constituting a case or phenomenon in great details. Case study approach can either be quantitative, qualitative or a mixed method.

For the purpose of this study, largely qualitative technique is utilized. This involves literature analysis, text interpretation and theory testing to explain the phenomenon of the absence of regional hegemon in Africa (Gerring, 2006). In a particular sense, this study is a disciplined configurative case study because it seeks to utilize approaches that seek to explain a case using established theories. Through this approach, the study can both problematize the logical consistency of the theories employed and achieve a heuristic purpose by making a case for "new theory in neglected areas" (Bennett et, al, 2005).

As a way of method, the study employs the within-case interpretation approach largely sanctioned on congruence method. The congruence method involves approaching the study via a theory and "then attempt to assess its ability to explain or predict the outcome in a particular case. The theory posits a relation between variance in the independent variable and variance in the dependent variable; it can be deductive or take the form of an empirical generalization" (Ibid). The advantage inherent in this method relates to irrelevance of a great deal of data because the logic is not to trace the causal process from the independent to the dependent variable. In addition, the method provides ample room for flexibility and adaptability which makes it relevant in the domain of theory development. This makes it well situated in disciplined configurative case study (Ibid).

Despite these advantages, congruence method has some defects which the researcher must bear in mind. In congruence method, "although consistency between a theory's predictions and case outcomes is often taken as providing support for a causal

interpretation (and, for that matter, for assessing deductive theories generally), researchers must guard against unjustified, questionable imputation of a causal relationship on the basis of mere consistency, just as safeguards have been developed in statistical analysis to deal with the possibility of spurious correlation" (Ibid). This problem can be addressed by clarifying how variances in the dependent variable is measured. In addition, the method is made more problematic when the researcher employs less grounded theories. This study addresses this problem through the adoption of well-established and well-grounded theories thereby reducing the problem of internal inconsistency of logic which impacts on the ability of the theory to make predictions.

Accordingly, a model is developed based on the neorealist thought framed around a nexus between Althusser's *theory of the New Prince* and Schweller's *Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the revisionist back in*. In consonance with congruence method, these theories provided the building blocks of the study which honed the scope and parameters of the case. This way, the variables that establish the case (Africa) as relevant for the study of hegemony were distilled. In addition, the liberal and the constructivist perspectives were explored as areas for additional variables to determine the constitutive nature and scope of the case under study and as alternative interpretive framework.

3.2. Data Analysis

According to Yin (1994), the logic behind data analysis resides in fair treatment of evidence such that comprehensive and compelling conclusions resident in the evaluation of alternative explanations could be adduced (Yin, 1994). Concomitantly, three intertwined flows of activities are evident namely data simplification, presentation and conclusions, and verification. In the area of conclusions three dimensions can be distilled namely inductive, deductive and adductive (Trochin, 2005). Inductive approach is employed with the aim of establishing new theories, often in the framework of limited theoretical perspectives (Babbie, 2013). A deductive method shares some commonalities with inductive approach such that both begin with the examination of empirical facts. Nonetheless, in deductive, the aim is to arrive at

logically coherent conclusions through the application of general theories or laws to specific context (Ibid). Here, the study is structured within the framework of existing theories and literature. Finally, abductive involves "inferring a case from a rule and a result. Like induction this inference is also more or less probable, and not sure" (Svennevig, 2001). Thus, the results adduced is compared to the theoretical frame to ascertain the level of probability of accuracy.

Based on the forgone, to situate this study in the proper context, a deductive approach stands as the most plausible approach. In line with this approach, variables are adopted from the research questions. They are then coded and thematically analyzed in accordance with the study's objectives. Themes are adopted from the analyses of the building blocks of the theories employed and the research questions. Although, I seek no generalizations with the findings of this study, I hold the view that the selection of setting and theories make replication of this study plausible. The additional ingredient required would be some modifications taking into account new circumstances and dynamics. In all, such studies are to provide a window for better understanding of the situation of hegemonic power relations in different contexts. Effectively, some common patterns could be identified enabling subsequent case of generalizability.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0.   Introduction

This chapter covers the analyses of the study based on the research questions. The framework of the analyses is conjectured on a synthesis of Althusser's '*Theory of the New Prince*' structured on the principles of Macheivelli's '*Prince*' and '*Discourses*', and Scweller's taxonomy of states behavior in his thesis on *Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back in* in which he sought to construct and deconstruct the arguments contained in Walt's 'balance of threat analysis'. The combination of these theoretical frameworks resulted in the construction of a hegemony model which served as the mechanism for the analysis of the subject of this study. The themes of the analyses are embedded in the model with strong connection to the research questions. In other words, the model was developed based on the main research questions and possible explanations. The chapter is structured in three forms as follows; a brief review of the two theories which underlay the base of the analysis as a prelude to the model developed; assessment of the relevance of regional hegemony in the African context as means of affirming the relevance of the study; analysis of why Africa lacks a regional hegemon.

4. 1.   The theory of the 'New Prince'

Among the renowned political philosophers, Machiavelli stands out as the most imposing on the thesis on how to acquire and maintain political power. Considered as a cynic, his thesis on the subject matter as captured in the '*Prince*' projected an anti-moralistic view of power and legitimacy. For Machiavelli, it is erroneous attributing moral principle to power and authority. He maintained that power and authority are but bedmates and that the taxonomy of legitimate and illegitimate power defies logic

because power automatically confers the necessary authority for its exercise. But authority in itself is inadequate in the maintenance of power. For the prince to effectively maintain and secure his power, there must be a republic (achieving internal harmony and hegemony). By this, authority and legitimacy are seen as flowing from different rivers.

Following this conjecture, Alhusser established the theory of the 'New Prince' (Althusser, 1999). The theory holds its foundation to a synthesis of the principles of power and hegemony established in the '*Prince*' and that of authority and legitimacy addressed in the '*Discourses*'. The principles of power and hegemony explicate the conditions under which the emergence of a leader is expected, the characteristics of the would-be leader and the environment conducive for its flourish. Thus, the '*Prince*' establishes the benchmark by which power can be acquired and nurtured. On the other hand, the '*Discourses*' provides the layers by which power could be maintained. Here, the parameters for the establishment of a republican system of government namely; rooting the base of power in the people are laid bare (Machievelli, 1970). Thus, whereas the Prince provides the basis for the establishment of absolute rulership, the discourse structures the route for the confinement of absolute power through processes such as laws, and popular legitimacy among others (Althusser, 1999).

The synthesis of the two essays (the Theory of the New Prince) is anchored on the question; how can a strong and united state capable of wading off external intrusions but rooted in republicanism be established and maintained? The framework sanctioning the theory is three-fold which cumulatively illustrates the conditions crucial for strong political leadership. The first dimension entails the internal condition of the state (Rome) which forms the basis for takeover. Here, the situation is likened to an ulcerated *matter* awaiting *form*; a condition of nothingness and emptiness - conditions which reduce the state into formlessness requiring a skillful sculpture for shape. The second dimension relates to the readiness of the citizenry. This provides the window to determine the legitimacy anchor of the state based on the readiness of the citizenry either for change or retention of the status quo.

 The final dimension entails the issue of leadership, laced in the question; what type of leadership is necessary to shape and reconstruct` a strong and powerful state? In other words, this component addresses the characteristics of the Prince capable of restoring the system back to its glory days. Per the principle of the essays, the

leadership required to restore form to the matter rests on a perfect communication between *fortuna* and *virtù* (ibid). By this, an encounter between fortuna and virtù is not enough unless its either premised on a compromise or deferred compromise to be established later.

To succeed in this endeavor, it is necessary to go beyond shaping the formlessness of the system to include the reconfiguration of the subject as well (Foucault, 1982). Since the configuration of every system is different, the leadership of the new system and its subjects must be configured according to the tenets of the new system taking into account the vagaries of current state of affairs; hence a new system definitely requires both a new prince (hegemonic African state) and new subjects (in terms of allegiance).

4. 2.   Bandwagoning for profit (the revisionist variable)

In his thesis, Schweller sought to challenge the conventional wisdom behind the BOP and bandwagoning theories; that states engage in balancing or bandwagoning behavior solely for survival and security. His armory was particularly directed at the refined version of BOP (balance-of-threat) by Stephen Walt. Indeed, he chastised this frame of thought observing that it is too narrow and simplistic in capturing the real motivation behind the behavior of states. Specifically, he chided the theory for been too status quo centric as it ignores the behavior of revisionist states despite its centrality in international politics. Thus, to appreciate international politics within the proper contexts of BOP and bandwagoning, it is exigent to take the behavior of revisionist states into account.

Laying bare his theory, Schweller observed that state behavior in international politics are depicted in "the opportunistic aspect of bandwagoning, and the alliance choices of states that pose threats as well as those of states that respond to threats" (Schweller,1994: 75). Thus, states choose between bandwagoning and balancing based on different reasons and goals and not just survival and security. Simply put "alliance choices, … are often motivated by opportunities for gain as well as danger, by appetite as well as fear" (Ibid, 76)." In other words, "the aim of balancing is self-preservation and the protection of values already possessed, while the goal of bandwagoning is usually self-extension: to obtain values coveted" (Ibid: 74). This

general framework nonetheless, the thesis is more focused on bandwagoning (eliciting the alliance behavior of weaker states) than on balancing (alliance with weaker powers).

Conceptually, bandwagoning, traditionally held implies an asymmetrical relationship between dominant and weaker states in which the latter always dance to the tune of the former. Simply put, the relationship is calibrated in favor of the dominant power. This view of bandwagoning is challenged by Schweller who argues that such thoughts failed to capture what he termed 'positive inducement'; a situation where dominant powers attract bandwagoning through appeasements or the promise of immediate or future reward. Obviously, the fear of coercion is not the only reason underpinning the bandwagoning behavior of states. Indeed, bandwagoning behavior also responds to rational calculation of gains and losses (profits). Bandwagoners like investors, are attracted mostly to portfolios which promise higher returns or gains. Schweller cited a number of cases where dominant powers used positive inducement to get weaker states to bandwagon with them. He observed that just like others before him, "Napoleon Bonaparte used territorial rewards and spectacular military victories to attract bandwagoners" (Ibid: 90).

Answering the questions relative to motivation for bandwagoning and balancing, Schweller put forth a balance of interest theory which hinges on both unit and structural level analysis. While the unit level makes reference to "the costs a state is willing to pay to defend its values relative to the costs it is willing to pay to extend its values… [the structural level] highlights the relative strengths of the status quo and revisionist states" (Ibid: 99). The analyses forgone culminated into a taxonomy of states behavior as brilliantly depicted in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 State Interest (n) = (value of revision) - (value of status quo).

Status quo (satiated) states   Revisionist (insatiable) states

$$-n \qquad\qquad 0 \qquad\qquad n$$

←——Lions——— ——Lambs—— ——Jackals—— ——Wolves——→

Self-extension

	Lions	Lambs	Jackals	Wolves
Goals:	Self-preservation	Self-abnegation	Limited aims	Unlimited aims
Behavior:	Balancing or buckpassing	Appeasement and wave-of-the-future bandwagoning; distancing	Jackal band-wagoning	Risk-acceptant aggression
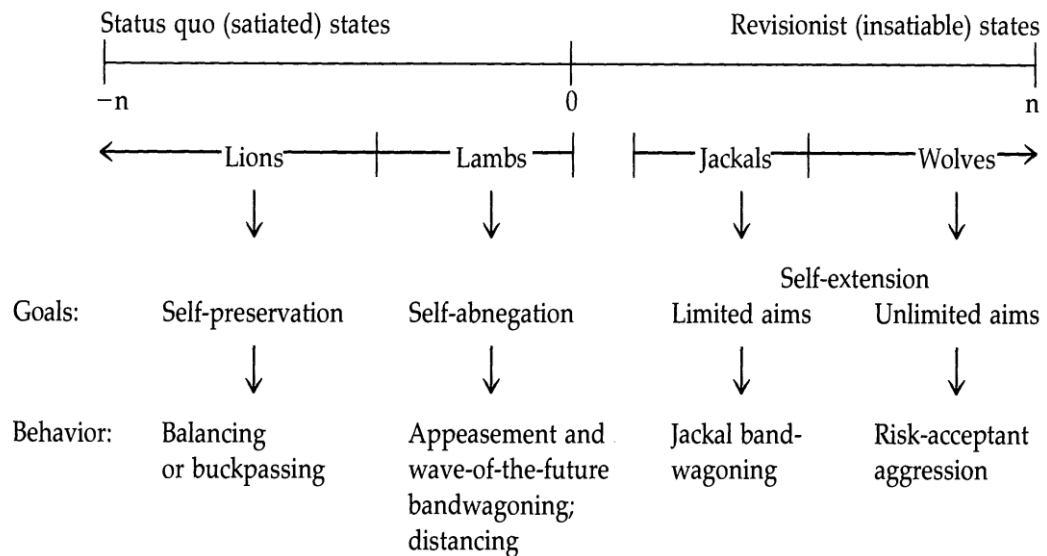
Source: Schweller, 1994; 100

4. 3.   Nature of African Regional vacuum

The synthesis of Althusser's *New Prince* and Scweller's *bandwagoning for profits* allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the African regional power vacuum, unearthing the nature of the vacuum and the character of the regional hegemon likely to emerge. The 'formless matter' construed in Machiavelli's 'Prince' depicts the present condition of the African continent. And the *form,* represents the leadership, systems and structures desired to foster and lead the continent under common structures, norms and rules towards collective goals.

The matter encapsulates three main constituents. First, the misery of the continent which subjugates it to various forms of scramble represents a status quo buried in a state of hopelessness and despair and reflected by the level of poverty, underdevelopment, disease, and dependency among others. There are no established and well-functioning structures of relations on continent to sanction collective leadership and assertion of claim and strength against other powers. Contrary to what pertains in other contexts illuminated by structures such as NATO, pseudo states in the Middle East such as the Emirates, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the likes to establish a

foothold, the global hegemon and other powerful states seem less interested in developing structures in Africa, preferring rather the chaotic situation as it furthers theirs loots. To be sure, packs entered into by the global powers with African states are just but further layers of chaos to enhance the continuous flow of loots. Given this, the hindrances that lie before a would-be hegemon could be best described as ad hoc, less structured and less systemic. In this sense, tactical and foxlike approach is likely to be an effective.

The second dimension relates to popular support against a perpetual formlessness. In other words, a pool of mass pillar prevails relative to calls for the fixing of the matter via the occupation of the regional political vacuum by an African state; the popular support for the emergence of a regional leader (hegemon). Rephrasing Machiavelli's words thus;

> The opportunity to provide [Africa] with a liberator, then, after such a long time, must not be missed. I have no doubt at all that he would be received with great affection in all those regions that have been inundated by the foreign invasions, as well as with a great thirst for [form], with resolute fidelity, with devotion and with tears of gratitude. What gate would be closed to him? What people would fail to obey him? What envious hostility would work against him? What [African] would deny him homage? (Machievelli, 1970)

The third constituent of the matter involves *virtù* which constitutes the material and non-material resources including the tactical and strategical abilities to read the situation and constitute the appropriate strategies and techniques thereof to endanger *form* for the *matter* (Althusser, 1999). In other words, *virtù* represents "the ability to respond to fortune at any time and in any way that is necessary" (Nederman, 2014).

The combination of these three characteristics; the misery of the continent, popular support for change and the needed resources to accomplish the feat of providing *form* to the *matter* implies that the matter is ready for form. From Schweller, the kind and characteristics of the ambitious state(s) are distilled which aids the understanding of the nature of the system if this obtains. The hegemon model generated from the synthesis of these two theoretical frameworks is captured in figure II below.

Figure 4.2: Hegemony model
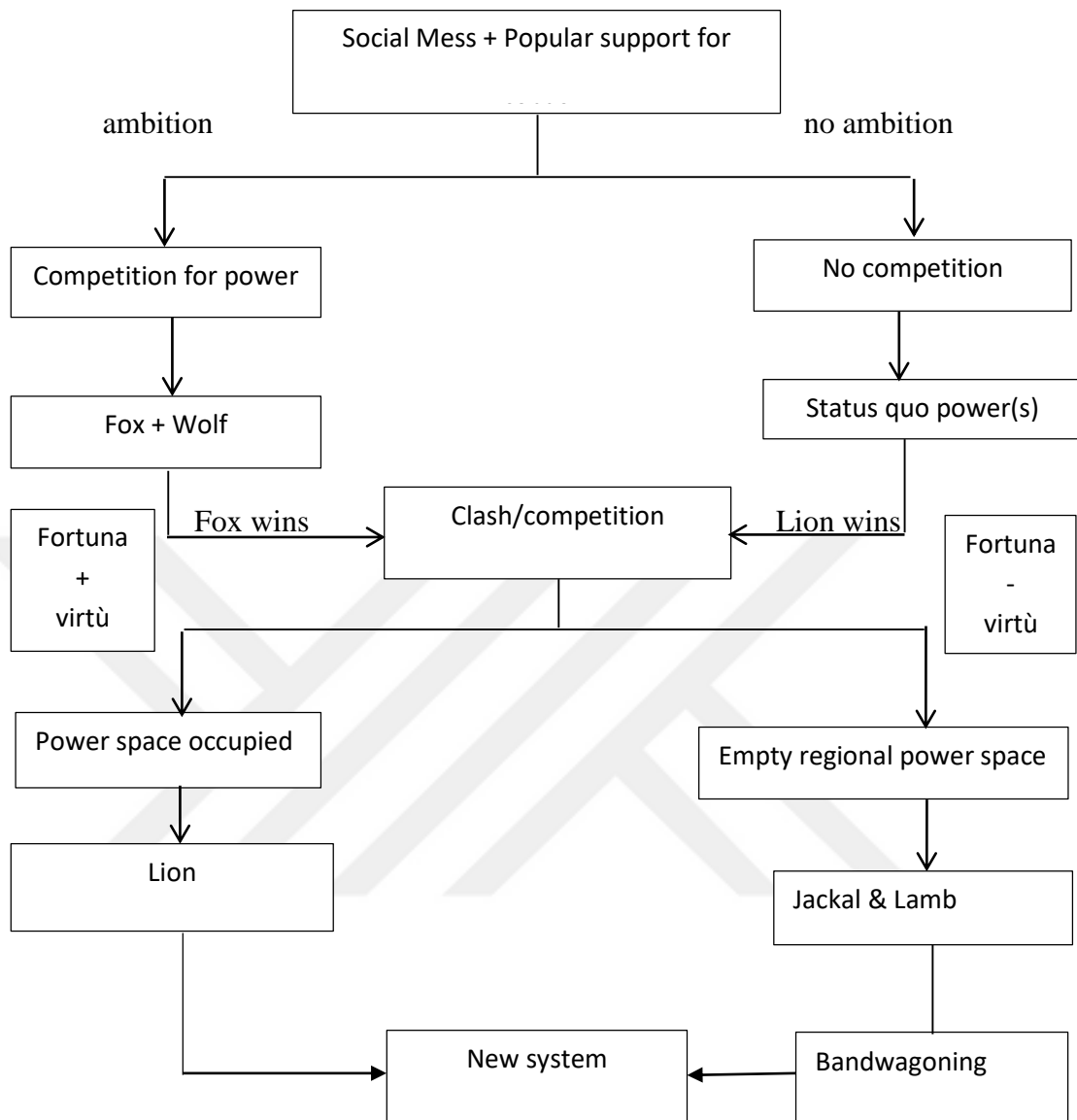
Source: Author, 2019

From the figure above, a condition for the emergence of a hegemon is depicted by a *formless matter* defined by the combination of social mess and popular support. The left side of the figure explicates the nature of the system should a state(s) with regional hegemonic ambition emerge. The right side defines what pertains in the absence of state(s) with the ambition to occupy the regional power vacuum. In a sense, it depicts the nature of the African regional power vacuum from when the continent joined the community of states. From this frame, the lack of ambition by African states has submerged the continent under the control of global powers. Accordingly, a status quo of chaos and emptiness is said to dominate which only varies in degree with changes

in global superpower positions. Since there is no African state with the ambition to occupy the vacuum, a condition of *fortuna* without *virtù* prevails and the void persists. This condition reduces African states to jackals and lambs - bandwagoning against threat and profits.

On the other hand, if an African state with regional hegemonic ambition emerges, a condition bounded in competition and friction with external powers operating on the continent would emerge. It is worth noting that the presence of external powers on the continent does not connote an attempt to fill the regional power vacuum, since they are unwilling to harbor the cost of running the system. Rather, the presence is to facilitate the drawing down of the excessive profits of chaos that *fortuna* brings. That granted, the nature, scope and degree of the competition and fraction are contingent on the approach of the ambitious state. If the ambitious state proceeds in a belligerent manner from the onset, the competition is likely to be costly for it. However, if it approaches its goals in a strategic and tactical manner like a fox, it is likely to reduce costly confrontations and hence widen its winning space. China brilliantly does this in the capitalist world, drawing from the full benefits of the system without courting the anger of the hegemon until recently.

Lacing the two sides together, for a state to develop regional hegemonic ambitions, it must have the *virtù* to take down *fortuna*. Thus, when *virtù* is positive in the face of *fortuna*, a regional hegemon is likely to emerge. However, in the absence of virtù, ambition seizes. In other words, ambition and virtù are inextricably intertwined. In addition, for an ambitious state to prevail, it must establish a synergy between the character of a wolf (self-extension) and a fox (cunning and able to detect traps). This implies it neither a bulwark of superpower preferences nor revisionist. If the ambitious state prevails, a new system and structure which expands the options of bandwagoning for the rest are likely to emerge. With time, that state would assume the traits of a lion in order to protect these entities. If it losses, the status quo remains albeit with much control and constraints.

4.4.   Does Africa need a regional hegemon?

This question is critical in affirming the relevance of this study. I proceed with the thesis that Africa requires an African regional hegemonic power if it wants to catch up with global trends and developments and remain relevant and competitive in global affairs. Thus, a regional hegemon is needed to give shape to the present formlessness (Machievelli, 1940) of the continent. A number of reasons underpins this argument.

First, it takes a hegemonic power to establish and maintain the rules of regional and global engagement and to institutionalize these rules and norms (Keohane, 2005). Historically, hegemons have developed the institutionalized context within which leadership is exercised. By doing this, they assumed the cost of creating these institutions and provide the leadership needed to move these institutions in the direction envisaged and persuade others into this vision. For example, the United Nation's architecture and other global structures and institutions owe their existence to the United State (US), acting as the global hegemon. Indeed, the US remains the largest contributor to the UN's annual budget and working capital. The facts show that she covers 22 percent of the cost of running the organization and its various institutions. This figure outweighs the contributions of the next three highest donor countries combined (UN, 2019:2018:2017).[7] In peacekeeping terms, the figure stands at about 29% (Blanchfield, 2018). In the creation of sub-regional institutions, we can mention the leadership (albeit reluctantly) of Nigeria in the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in West Africa and South Africa's leadership role in the development of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Southern Africa among others.

On the continent wide, however, the lack of a regional hegemon has rendered many of the regional intergovernmental institutions ineffective in the delivery of their mandate. The AU, for example, has been ineffective in the discharge of its duties for its inability to mobilize necessary resources to meet its obligations. In fact, "about 30 member states default either partially or completely on average annually, creating a significant funding gap between planned budget and actual funding"[8] as illustrated in

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[7] "Assessment of Member States' contributions to the United Nations regular budget for the year 2017

[8] https://au.int/en/financingau

figure 4.3 (AU, 2017). This gap is usually filled by donor partners who use this leverage to exert influence on the agenda of the institution. Even several attempts with the latest been the 27th Summit in Kigali, Rwanda in July 2016, to address this challenge have proven futile. For example, only 14 out of the 55 states have complied with and implemented the 0.2% levy on eligible imports agreed at the 27th Summit leaving the institution still languishing in the quagmire of financial distress (Ibid). This problem would have been ameliorated if the continent had a hegemon willing to run this institution and provide it the needed leadership. The hegemon just as in the case of the US at the global level, would have assumed the biggest share of the cost of running this institution and thereby bolster its effectiveness.

In addition, a hegemon in a region contributes to the development of the region through the provision of public goods; either consciously or otherwise. Consciously, a hegemon may provide these goods in an attempt to lieu weaker states into its vision and goals as a way of enhancing its legitimacy and support for its leadership. In an unconscious fashion, hegemons in an attempt to expand their powers through enhancing their capacities, engage in certain developmental and technical projects that fosters the development and growth of others. A historical example was the transportation and trade infrastructural development under the Mongol empire. Similarly, the industrial revolution spearheaded by Great Britain in the 18th century led to transfer of technical and technological know-how which sped developments in Europe and beyond.

In the context of Africa were serious developmental challenges in the area of infrastructure pertains, a regional hegemon is needed to foot or accommodate large portions of the cost of interstate infrastructure. The possibility of this stems from the spiral underpinning of hegemonic power. As the hegemon gains preponderance, it seeks more power and hence invests in activities that enhances its extraction capacity in particular and overall capacity. Conventionally, individually African states have small markets compared to others. However, when taken from a collective perspective, the continent boasts of one of the biggest markets in the world. Given this, a regional hegemon would more likely tap into this opportunity by enhancing interstate connections. In this way, all states stand to benefit as cost of doing business home reduces.

Third, hegemons provide leadership by presenting their own goals as common and collective goals to get the buy ins of relatively weaker states. In the context of hegemonic stability theory, this leadership is equated to common security and survival strategies. Nonetheless, hegemonic leadership cannot be reduced to just material provisions, it also encapsulates nonmaterial and non-transactional dimensions of leadership which entails issues such as ideology and norm creation. If well-orchestrated, the hegemon succeeds in the couching of or reshaping identities in the region; a major challenge bedeviling the effort at integration and the formation of meaningful union in Africa.

On many occasions, African countries have failed to adopt common position on global issues primarily for lack of continental wide leadership. In cases where common positions prevailed, those positions had been fragile unable to withstand the ability of powers outside the continent to play the divide-and-rule tactics by pitching each against the other. The European Union posts remarkable success in this regard. During its trade negotiations with ECOWAS, the EU successfully employed the divide and rule tactics when it realized that it could not get it way by negotiation with ECOWAS as a block. States like Ghana had to sign an interim deal because of the threat of losing trade concessions to Ivory Coast in case of noncompliance. With a hegemon, the continent is more likely to present a common and formidable front on global matters such as trade negotiations among others.

Finally, the psychological renditions of other states to form coalitions to balance the power of the emerging hegemon has important implication for cooperation on the continent. Moreover, playing by the same cards, infiltrated powers on the continent would also find the pleasure, risk aversion, to attract bandwagoning in an attempt to keep the status quo. Grafting into these innumerable schemes would be the turning of the continent into a focal point of global power politics in a form which spares the flow of investments and other productive resources. Spirally, these schemes usually culminate into building the capacity of others likely to emerge as contending state for a hegemonic position in the future. Thus, the initial attempt at balance of power endangered by the ambition of a state for regional hegemony produces spiral and vicious cycle which stands to benefits the entire continent. To borrow liberal economic cliché, competition fosters further growth and progress.

In conclusion, I am not oblivious of the problems regional hegemons could subject regional politics to in their bid to maintain and expand their powers. However, it would be erroneous to attribute tensions in state relations entirely to the presence of a hegemon. Interstate relations have always been and continue to be characterized by tensions, whether in the presence of a hegemon or not. What remains incontestable is the contribution of hegemons in the development of their area of influence and beyond. For example, it took the marshal plan of the US, as the hegemon of the Western Hemisphere to get Western European countries out of the miseries of the second world war and set them on the path of growth and development. To icing the cake, it is far beneficial for regional power vacuum to be occupied then remain empty. The emptiness of the vacuum creates more havoc than when the vacuum is completely occupied.

4.5. Why African Lacks a regional hegemon?

The major argument of this study holds that the lack of regional hegemonic power in Africa results from the lack of ambition by African states to occupy the vacuum. Thus, the persistent emptiness of the regional hegemonic power space in Africa relates to the lack of ambition on the part of African states to fill it. Before I proceed, due to the complex nature of the subject-matter, some few critical observations are in order. First, in the scope of this study, ambition was examined through the mechanism of interstate relationship, through the dimensions of power and honor. By so doing, the ambition of statesmen is threated selfsame as the ambition of the state but contingent on the ability of statesmen to achieve internal harmony and hegemony. Thus, the ambition of Pericles, Napoleon, Guile, Saddam Hussein, among others, for example, is viewed in the scope of the ambition of the individual territories they led consolidated through the internal harmony they garnered which reflecting the legitimacy of their rule. Since the state architecture by itself cannot act, it takes the statesman to provide form to the collection of matters that makes up the state. Hence. The ambition of the statesman is the same as the ambition of the state. In this context, it would therefore be fit to represent the behavior of these statesmen as the behavior of the state.

Secondly, since the domestic context sharps the actions and behavior of states abroad. I shall examine how this domestic context translates into the behavior and ambition of the statesman abroad. Nonetheless, this would be done in a generalized context without visiting the details relative to the composition of individual domestic contexts. I take this as a superfluous endeavor and therefore would limit myself to variables applicable broadly such as the nature of statecraft, composition of the state, among others. The rationale behind this is well captured by Waltz as below;

> If the aims, policies, and actions of states become matters of exclusive attention or even of central concern, then we are forced back to the descriptive level; and from simple descriptions no valid generalizations can logically be drawn … If the situation of actors affects their behavior and influences their interactions, then attempted explanation at the unit level will lead to the infinite proliferation of variables, because at that level no one variable, or set of variables, is sufficient to produce the observed result (Waltz, 1979: 65).

Finally, it is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate whether or not ambition is a good or bad value. I admit that ambition represents both sides of a coin. It harbors both good and evil, it led to the deification of some statesmen and their states in some cases, and the vilification and crucifixion of others and their states in others. However, can power vacuum both internal and external be filled in the absence of ambition? In a nutshell, what I seek to do is to drive home the necessity of the regional power vacuum in Africa to be occupied by an African state. And that could only be materialized when African states develop the appropriate ambition commensurate with the context.

4. 5. 1. Ambition

Ambition is a tricky concepts encapsulating a number of strands. In its fundamental, ambition involves the desire for something which positions one in a position of influence inter alia. In terms of statecraft and statesmanship, the ends of ambition could either be for power and/or honor: "To deserve, to acquire, and to enjoy the respect and admiration of [other states], are the great objects of ambition…" (Smith, 1982; 62). As captured by Hume, ambition represents the desire of a state to acquire power that garbs it the authority over others (Hume, 2003). In realist terms, this represents the mechanism for state survival and security in the arena of anarchy. In

whatever form it takes, the objective of the statesman's 'desire to rise' in an anarchical international system is to secure itself and territory against external threat through the acquisition of more power in whatever context dictated by the prevailing international order (Mearsheimer, 2001). Among others, four features of ambition can be distilled:

> First, in addition to a desire, ambition involves a self-disciplined commitment or determination to obtain its object. Secondly, the commitment and desire of ambition must manifest themselves in actions. These actions must extend beyond merely dwelling in thought upon the desired object to taking steps seen as instrumental to achieving ambition's end. Third, ambition's end cannot be achieved overnight. Its achievement is temporally distant and usually requires that one plan and execute various intermediate stages. Fourth, the end toward which ambition's desire and commitment are directed is difficult to achieve (Pettigrove, 2007: 5).

To rephrase Shakespeare's *Let me not to the marriage of true minds (Sonnet 116)*, ambition is not ambition which alters when it alteration finds, or bends with the remover to remove… By this, ambition is resilient in the face of challenges. Thus, a state with hegemonic ambition persists in its pursuit even in the face of setbacks whether perceived or real.

Furthermore, harboring ambitious desires in itself is not enough to qualify one as ambitious. These desires must be backed by the ability and capacity to harvest them. Without the capabilities to set a state's ambitions into action and consequent fruition, mere ambitions are like daydreaming. At this point, I must admit that capacities are fostered by the actions of others and some element of luck. That notwithstanding, an ambitious state cannot just depend on luck to fulfil its ambitions. It must build its capacities and channel its ambitions in that regard. That said, ambition and capacity are inextricably intertwined and operates in a spiral.

Zealously, ambition has a psychological effects of motivating one in generating the needed resources and capacity. But a higher ambition is contingent on the fulfilment of lesser ones. Without which it loses its potency. An ambition fulfilled ignites to the higher ambitions which entwines capacity building. Thus, for a state to harbor regional hegemonic ambitions, it must first achieve internal hegemony through internal harmony, followed by a sub-regional ambition. Regional hegemonic ambition then follows the fulfilled sub-regional ambitions which guides capacity building accordingly.

In summary, I maintain that it must not take a state to build its capacity before developing ambitions. Indeed, the mere present of ambition drives the building of state capacities thereof. States which waits to acquire needed capacity before developing ambition fail from the onset. Putting it bluntly, states with hegemonic ambition do not mobilize needed resources before developing the ambition or setting it in motion. Rather, they develop the ambition which serves as blueprint for building and mobilizing appropriate capacities and resources. In this sense, for ambition to be worth itself, it must be strategic (like virtù). This way, they are able to respond to the competitive environment in which ambition plays. To be sure, every state irrespective of its status possesses some level of capacity. Ambition for leadership beyond the immediate boundaries of the state fuels the desire to acquire capacity beyond that needed for internal hegemony. When this is achieved, coupled with favorable international environment (defined by the actions of other states plus luck), the more likelihood of success. It must be clear now that I have subordinated variables such as statecraft, capacity, fortune and the international system under ambition. This would become clearer in subsequent sections.

4.5.1.1. Why African states lack regional hegemonic ambitions?

If the forgone characteristics sanction state hegemonic ambitions, why are African states lacking regional hegemonic ambition? I addressed this question on three thematic areas namely; the nature of statecraft, state capacity, and the structure of the international system. These themes serve as the operational variables of *ambition*. Thus, the presence of these variables in full swing in any setting denotes the existence higher ambition and vice versa. I take these themes in turns in the following sections.

4.5.1.1.1. Statecraft in Africa

By statecraft, I mean state-building, "an endogenous process [developed] to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state–society relations … primarily a domestic process that involves local actors, which means that the role of

international actors is necessarily limited" (OECD, 2011b).[9] The political configuration of African states is anchored on ethnicity and tribalism. Given the historical tenets of state creation in Africa, these internal dynamics of African states produces vicious cycle of political and social instability. Most African states are divided against themselves, implying that the attention, goals and resources of the state are directed at addressing these pitfalls leaving little space for higher ambitions.

The multiparty democratic systems adopted by many African states from the 1990s onwards further illustrates this quagmire. In most African states, political parties are formed along ethnic and tribal lines, highlighting the deficit of consensus and unity of purpose. As it would be evident in subsequent sections, most states in Africa have the potential to harness the needed capacity to occupy the regional power vacuum. But they have failed for internal instability. Could this underpin the rationale behind the formation of one-party states in most African states immediately after independence? Well, that represents a digression from the main purpose of this study.

Furthermore, the nature of African culture has played against building robust, effective and well-functioning states. African states have not been able to take up full charge of their territories. They continue to be entrapped in competition for loyalties with institutions such as the chiefdoms, tribal networks and the likes. Although, African states pride themselves as republics, kingdoms which exercise control over significant sections of the population and even political leaders still exist. For example, in Nigeria, among others, the Emir of Kano, and Obas continue to be powerful, exercising tremendous amount of power alongside the state. Selfsame situations prevail in South Africa, Ghana, Tanzania and in many other African states. The inability of the state to extend its reach beyond the capital and mostly major cities furthers the powers of these rival institutions propelling this state of affair further. With various centers of power competing in the state for dominance, there is bound to be a psychological disposition of weakness on the part of African statesmen which undermines the development of higher ambitions.

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[9] OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) (2011b): Supporting Statebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Fragility: Policy Guidance, Paris: OECD (DAC Guidelines and Reference Series)

In addition, state-building in African has failed to meet the expectation of the populace. In fact, the level of poverty and deprivation on the continent is matched by none. As illustrated in figure 4.4 in the appendix, it is estimated that by 2030, 87% of the world's extreme poor would be resident in Sub-Sahara Africa. The picture becomes more worrying when country-based statistics are considered. Indeed, the economic powerhouse of the continent, Nigeria and Congo combined are said to harbor 40% of the world's extreme poor (Worldpoverty, 2019)[10]. Unsurprisingly, the income gap between the poor and the rich keeps skyrocketing. Apart from Mauritania which appears on track in meeting the SDG goal on poverty, in 11 African countries including Nigeria and South Africa, poverty levels are rather rising, while at the same time 42 African countries are off-track in meeting this target considering the rate of progress (Ibid). Given this bleak iconography, little wonder the audacity of the youth to migrate to polities outside the continent for mirage green pastures.

Worse, African states are still locked up in colonial and imperialist state structures and institutions. Since independence, very few aspects of the inherited state institutions and structures have been changed or reformed (Herbest, 2012: 120). Perhaps, the system either plays perfectly in enhancing the position of the elite relative to the masses and/or it is accentuated by inability of African states to mobilize the needed capacity to ascend these institutions to meet contemporary requirements. Either way, this goes to underscore the level and nature of the ambition harbored by these statesmen. They appear buried in consolidating their privileged positions internally by blocking any threat against such positions that they fail to see possible opportunities for honor and power outside their borders. To be sure, these colonial institutions have failed to establish and consolidate state-society relationship. The net result has been the growing concern regarding the problem of legitimacy in many African states. With this raging on, it becomes a challenge attempting to consolidate the energies of the people against projects beyond their immediate borders.

In sum, the nature of statecraft or state-building in Africa is yet to resolve the issue of competing identities which hinders social order, state legitimacy and internal harmony; critical conditions for regional hegemonic ambitions. Indeed, African statesmen are yet to develop an overarching identity which unite citizens beyond

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[10] https://worldpoverty.io

immediate tribal and ethnic identities. Worsening the situation further, the political, social and economic bases of African states have not changed since independence. Economically, they are still the suppliers of natural resources with little or no value addition. Socially, state and society sits on different pedestal with little or no relationship or at best antagonism between them. Politically, state capacity in all four necessary dimensions namely; extractive, coercive, administrative and legitimacy remain weak and underdeveloped. Simply put, the African statesman and their flocks are ill-prepared to assume higher ambitions.

I conclude on this score that the internal instability of African states; owing to the failure to ensure social legitimacy and consolidate internal social order through better state-building mechanism that unites the state and society, drains the energy of the statesman from harboring higher ambitious. It also creates internal enemies which external forces can easily fall on to further destabilize the state and sway it from its goals. Higher ambitions such as regional hegemony are the preserve of strong states; states with internal harmony and hegemony.

4.5.1.1.2.   *Capacity of African states*

State capacity measures the degree to which states are able to deliver on and meet the basic needs of the citizenry. Effective state capacity endangers public trust and social legitimacy which plays in improving and enhancing state-society relationship. Thus, for social order and political stability to prevail, the state has to sharpen its capacity to effectively administer the space under its authority. Historically, African states have been synonymous with low capacity. Largely, the colonial structure did not take into accounts the various competing identities in fashioning out a robust state architecture which transcends them. Given the nature of governance during the colonial era, the existing architecture served the purpose since the colonial powers were only interested in the protection of areas where the treasures for building their home countries hold.

To begin with, although Africa has the potential human and material resources to improve itself and strike a breakthrough in effective and efficient capacity, states on the continent have been lackluster in exploiting these potentials. On material

resources, "the continent is home to a third of the planet's mineral reserves, a tenth of the oil and it produces two-thirds of the diamonds…." (The Economist, 2015). On the score of human resources, "Africa has the youngest population in the world, and it's growing fast. By 2055, the continent's youth population (aged 15-24), is expected to be more than double the 2015 total of 226 million. Yet the continent remains stubbornly inhospitable – politically, economically, and socially – to young people" (Yahya, 2017). Given these prevailing conditions, Africa has no answers to the question of sustainable development, hence, poverty eradication and inequality. Thus, building state capacity in Africa requires huge investments to harness and radically transform both the material and nonmaterial potentials on the continent.

Generally, state capacity is conjectured on four basic domains; "the capacity to mobilize financial resources from the society to pursue what the central policymakers perceive as the "national interest" (extractive capacity); the capacity to guide national socioeconomic development (steering capacity); the capacity to dominate by using symbols and creating consensus (legitimation capacity); and the capacity to dominate by the use or threat of force (coercive capacity)" (Wang, 1995).

First, state steering capacity denotes the administrative competence of the state - the ability to effectively and efficiently manage the affairs of its territory and people in a manner that generates hope and trust. Poor steering capacity endangers the legitimacy of the state and reduces it to nothing but a shell. On the other hand, effective steering capacity enhances the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of its citizens and serve as a barrier against particularly internal threats. States are then able to develop ambitions beyond their borders as they could easily draw on collective energy.

Available data such as the 'government effectiveness' indicator of the World Governance Index (WGI) and the Failed State Index's (FSI) indicator on 'public services' show that African states face precarious situation in terms of their steering capacity. These indicators, particularly, the Failed State Index's (FSI) indicator on 'public services' provides helpful illustration of this phenomenon as it mirrors not only the provision of basic and essential public goods and services but to whom these goods are directed (distributional justice).[11] Between the period 2008 and 2018, African states only witnessed marginal improvements across all indicators. However,

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[11]http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/decade-trends/

comparing this performance to their economic performance over the same period, gravious problem on the horizon emerges. Underlying all are weak, mediocre and underdeveloped bureaucratic structures bereft of efficiency and effectiveness to extend the reach of the state. Thus, African states are unable to translate their resource potentials into building the capacity needed to assume higher ambitions.

Second, in terms of the extraction capacity, the story is no different. Data from various sources including the World Bank and IMF corroborate the poor extractive capacity of African states. Aiding this state of affair has been the structure of the African economy and the manner in which it was integrated into the global economy. Little has changed relative to the structure of the African economy. It is still natural resource-driven and configured according to the colonial architecture, a situation which renders it susceptible to global commodity price shocks. This explains why Africa was unable to sustain the impressive 2014 GDP growth of $2.4 trillion, recording constant declines to $1.9 trillion in 2017.

On natural resources, every state on the continent is blessed with one resource or the other; from petrochemical resources, minerals such as Gold, Diamond, Cobalt, Manganese, phosphate to food as represented in figure 4.5 in the appendix. The problem has been how to transform these resources into enhancing the extractive capacity of the state. This deficiency is revealed by the tax performance of African states relative to GDP. Except in few cases such as South Africa (24.7%) and Botswana (31.3%), on the average, less than 17 percent GDP is realized as revenues from taxes in Sub-Sahara Africa. This creates serious revenue shortfalls which pushes African states into relying on external benevolence for self-sustenance. Without sustainable flow of revenue to lead development in their individual states and by extension the continent, how likely is an African state able to develop hegemonic ambitions beyond its immediate borders.

Third, African states have demonstrated ineptitude in terms of coercive capacity. Indeed, Africa harbors many of the world's failed states. The relatively stable ones could not boast of effective forces able to assert the states monopoly over the use of force. Regional wide, these forces are poorly equipped or under-resourced. Interestingly, instead of employing the little coercive force at the disposal of the state in the protection of its territories and citizens, African statesmen utilize these

resources in the intimidation of citizens to extract submission as a way of perpetuating personal rule and self-aggrandizement. The net effect as scintillatingly captured by Kaplan is that "formal governing bodies and regulations, disconnected from the informal institutional framework that guide people's behavior, command only superficial allegiance and compliance. Real life goes on outside them. State laws go unheeded because no one acknowledges them as legitimate" (Kaplan, 2008:2). Given this condition, states on the continent continually invest their attention, resources and energy in the protection and maintenance of internal sovereignty. With this level of concentration, little room exist for the accommodation of ambitions that the state cannot even fulfil.

Fourth, the deficiencies in the three capacity areas forgone culminates into poor state legitimation defined as the extent to which the generality of the public accepts the state as rightful; confirming authority to the state. As intimated by Coicaud (2002:10), "to justify power and obedience simultaneously is the first issue involved in the question of legitimacy. Upon this two-fold demonstration depend both the right to govern and what result therefrom, political obligation". As intimated earlier, the post-colonial African states are patched estates with multiple and sometimes competing sources of legitimacy. Even the recent waves in democracy has had little impact in enhancing state legitimacy. According to the World Bank's data on World Governance Indicators (WGI) covering six indicators namely "government effectiveness," "control of corruption," "rule of law", "regulatory quality", "political stability and absence of violence/terrorism", and "voice of accountability", between the period 2000 and 2015, the legitimacy of African states has been on a downward trajectory on all indicators (World Bank, 2019). This supports the thesis on feckless internal harmony, hence, the poverty in regional hegemonic ambitions.

From the foregone, it can be deduced that Africa states exhibits selfsame deficiency in virtually all dimensions of state capacity. Weighing heavily on these deficiencies relates to the wholesale adoption of colonial structures and institutions. These colonial structures "were little more than elementary bureaucracies with limited personnel and finances and were more comparable to rural country governments in Europe than to modern independent States" (Jackson, 1993; 139). The little modification and reforms attempted in placing these structures in consonance with the reality of current social dynamics has proven ineffective and shallow at best. Consequently, state-society

relation continues to be cast in antagonistic crystals with seeming order bludgeoned through irresponsible deployment of the coercive forces of the state. Trust in political actors and institutions continue to dwindle. The adoption of democratic system of government achieved little in wading the storm.

Given such unfavorable setup, achieving internal harmony and subsequent internal hegemony is akin to breaking a rock with one's fist. Perhaps, the solution rests with a radical breakaway from and not the reform of existing structures and institutions. Indeed, since institutions are backed by some logic upon which functional tenets are cast, reforming existing institutions without changes in the logical domain is but an exercise in futility. In the framework of this amorphousness, internal security threats continually take away the attention of the statesmen from higher ambitions. Even if statesmen are able to see higher power vacuums, the failure to harness necessary capacity to provide form to the local matter hinders their desire for such higher goals. They are constantly reminded of the unpleasant noisome of losing their local power base whenever they attempt higher adventures or ambitions abroad.

4.5.1.1.3.   *The structure of contemporary international system*

It is critical to consider both the Waltzian and Gilpian conceptions of the nature of global politics. Per the framework adopted, the Waltzian conceptions which emphasizes on systems deprive us the tools to analyze global politics on the score of agents and agencies. By this, I make inference to the fact that anarchy as the centralized variable in international politics is not like manna from heaven, but one purposefully set up and fostered by the actions of individual states and their relations with each other. Against this, like Milner (1991), I argue that a comprehensive way of understanding contemporary international politics would best be served by establishing a nexus between anarchy (system) and structure (interdependence). It is by doing this that we can introduce and analyze the actions of states in furthering and perpetuating anarchy and decipher the various shapes that anarchy assumed historically.

By drawing this line, I do not intend in the least to draw myself into the discourse on superiority of argument between liberal institutionalist and realist like Grieco (2009). Similarly, I do not by this argument suggest an alliance with the theses on different forms of anarchy in international politics. Accordingly, anarchy is threated as anarchy irrespective of the form it assumes per time and space. Thus, just by changing the color of my house doesn't seize my ownership of the property, even though it has the potency of swaying the uninitiated.

My analysis of the impact of the nature and structure of contemporary international politics on the lack of regional ambitions among Africa states holds in two ways. In the first, I take the current nature and structure of international system as an impediment to the aspiration of regional hegemony and subsequent emergence of regional hegemon in Africa. Thus, it plays into limiting the view of African states relative to the nature of the regional political vacuum which impacts the nature and scope of ambition they harbor. Simply put, it renders opportunities for increasing power to African statesmen as straws relevant only when other options fail. In the second frame, I argue that the structure of contemporary global politics opens up conducive space for harboring regional hegemon in Africa by throwing in several lifelines to support ambitious states. Combining these two frameworks, I arrived at the conjecture that the agency of Africa states in seeing the nature of the power vacuum and the supportive instruments in the nature and structure of the international system impacts on the level of ambition relative to the available regional power vacuum.

4.5.1.1.4. *International politics as impediment*

The nature and structure of contemporary international politics harbors variables inimical to the emergence of regional hegemon in Africa. I address these variables on three layers; first, anarchy (in the realist terms of the absent of central authority); second, the unipolar status of the international system; third, information asymmetry. These variables combined underscores the manner in which African states were drafted into the structure of contemporary international politics, rendering them incapable of impacting on the configuration of the structure either in explicit or

implicit terms. The only impact traceable remains the guide their status and position provides in predicating the architecture of domination and dependency in the system and structure.

To begin, contemporary international politics and its structure remains overwhelmingly dominated by a single state, a situation defined as unipolarity. For the first time, a single state holds preponderance over all in virtually all dimensions of power. This embeds 'signaling effects' relative to cost of revisionism (belligerence behavior) aimed at challenging the logical composition of the structure of international engagement codified by the global hegemon. From the onset, a convenient atmosphere is created to foster bandwagon behavior towards the hegemon rather than a resort to revisionism. Through interventions such as the US invasion of Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Libya among others, a seemingly omnipotence of the global hegemon is created thereby instituting some elements of fear which inhibits ambitious behavior. In addition to direct interventions, past and ongoing internal destabilization of mostly weaker states through divide-and-rule tactics also contribute toward enhancing the fear of the hegemon. Thus, hegemonic power signaling confers checks on the level of ambition that relatively smaller states could harbor by increasing the cost of such endeavor. Given capacity constraints, weaker or less powerful states are less likely to infiltrate into areas perceived as the playground of the hegemon.

Furthermore, this 'signaling effects' is fostered by the state of anarchy in contemporary international politics. Anarchy continue to be a constraint not only on the behavior of powerful states but on weaker ones as well. The absence of a central authority to whom protection can be sought from implies that less powerful states must logically restraint themselves from engaging in actions and behaviors potentially challenging to and which could erupt the anger of stronger ones. Moreover, in the domain of contemporary international politics, the idea of 'internal sovereignty' has helped in securing the survival of weaker states to some extent. At the same time, this also implies an implicit compliance to the whims of powerful states enshrined in the institutions and norms sanctioning the structure of interstate relations. Thus, although, the current international structure has worked in limiting domination through land grabbing or territorial expansion, it has succeeded in psychologically implanting a false notion of relative security into weaker states stimulating the thoughts of the

needlessness of ambition beyond themselves for safety and survival. Painfully, a unipolar world provides limited space for weaker states to manipulate these structures as they appear the only alternative. Supposed alternatives operate via the overarching domain of these hegemon dominated international structures thereby limiting the space for 'forum shopping'.

Finally, the perpetuation of these structures rest on the level of information access and credibility. The overwhelming domination of the of structures of the system by the hegemon grants it tremendous control over information, further perpetuating the myth over its resolve, omnipotence and omnipresence. More than any other state, the hegemon can easily manipulate information to serve its purpose and drive misconceptions about itself among other states. Indeed, with this powerful tool, the hegemon sits an advantageous position to access sensitive information relatively easily about other powers than those powers can relative to the hegemon.

As a way of an illustration, the US's leadership in the information, communication and technology world (ICT) means that it has the power to manipulate information easily both in the sphere of obtaining information about other states and in the projection of itself. Similarly, the US's leadership in the capitalist world which sanctions international commerce has turned her into chief speculator of investment information. A simple announcement of economic sanctions against a country by the US can easily collapse that country's economy. These tools may signal the power of US in ways inconsistent with the reality. The net result is that it succeeds in scaling down the ambitions of other states particularly less powerful ones to the levels deemed acceptable by the hegemon.

4.5.1.1.5.   Structure of International politics as facilitator

As implied earlier, beyond the constraints on ambitions, the contemporary structure of international politics holds a number of variables or elements supportive of regional hegemonic ambitions. In particular, three features combine to set this benchmark: First, the polarity of the structure: Second, regional level anarchy resulting from the cost of running the global structures of international politics: Third, the presence of

global revisionist operating in the context of the structured rules and norms created by the hegemon; the exhaustion relative to taking down these revisionists.

First, arguably, the structure of contemporary international politics is unipolar implying a single power has been able to achieve the status of a hegemon. The unipolarity of global politics means that the entire range of interstate and other non-state international wide relations falls under the control and leadership of one great power. The hegemon cannot afford to be seen as ineffective in the management of these manifold, complex and multilayer structures of engagement, hence overstretches itself to hold and project presence in virtually all areas. The net effect is that exhaustion sets in quickly. To prevent this, the hegemon most often holds its base on symbolical presence.

The currency here manifests in the void created in areas where the hegemon largely depends on symbolic presence to project its dominance. States in these areas with leadership voids such as Africa can easily develop the ambition and subsequently mobilize the needed capacity to occupy the voids by strategies that appeals to the hegemon and in terms not so threatening to its powers. The character of a regional hegemonic aspirant in this context should be premised on the combination of the trait of a 'wolf in lamb skin' (appearing appealing and able to conceal real intentions) and a 'fox' (ability to identify traps in the system). Due to the cost implications of running a global-wide system, the global hegemon is likely to rely on threat and offshore balancing which has proven ineffective in many instances. Indeed, compared to the cold war period, this unipolar era is characterized by the growth of powers dubbed as "middle powers' or "emerging power"; powers with sometimes regional hegemonic ambitions exposing the weakness in the system.

Second, the ridiculous cost of managing the structures of global politics relegates the hegemon into secretly seeking opportunities for cost sharing particularly in areas not directly threatening to its powers and status. The US in recent times has withdrawn its support from a number of global organizations and instruments such as UNESCO, UN Human Rights Council, Paris Climate Agreement, and Trans-Pacific Partnership among others. Simply put, the global hegemon is becoming more internally minded

that globally responsible.[12] Given these attempts at cost cutting due to the pressure from over-expansion, voids of leadership are created at both global, regional and sub-regional levels. Thus, by deflating effective leadership at the global level, a weakening hold on adjacent layers like Africa arises. This affords ambitious states such as China ample opportunity to manipulate the space to emerge as worthy global players. Taken the African case into account, there is no structured system in place. What exists is the submerging of the continent into existing global structures. In such cases, ambitious states have few constraints to deal with since there is no need to challenge any existing configuration in order to establish its base.

Finally, at the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the USSR, the hegemon (US) had no power capable of balancing its powers on the global level. However, this situation changed markedly when China and Russia began asserting themselves as possible candidates for global leadership. Consequently, the US has dedicated itself in an effort to foil the ambitions of these powers. With this shift in focus, a state can easily develop the ambition of becoming a regional hegemon as far as it does so independently of the emerging global powers at loggerheads with the global hegemon. In fact, the US presence in Africa is not an attempt to take charge of the continent or prevent the emergence of an African regional hegemon, but to check the expansion of global rivals such as China and Russia on the continent. Rationally, therefore, it would be in both the interest of the US if a regional hegemon which it could rely on to offshore balance the interests of other global players such as China, and Russia, among others emerges.

In conclusion, with poor preparation and failure to achieve internal hegemony, states are less likely to see the supportive variables inherent in the structures of contemporary international system. Rather, they are more likely to be tormented by the impediment ghost the structures harbor. It beholds on states in areas with leadership void such as Africa to see beyond the impediments and reach out to the opportunities presented by the structures of contemporary international system to balance their internal efforts toward emerging as suitable candidate for the religion leadership seat.

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[12]https://www.trtworld.com/americas/trump-s-top-five-withdrawals-from-international-agreements-18543

4.6. Why past ambitions cannot be termed the regional hegemonic ambitions?

Some scholarships have argued that Africa has never been bereft of statesmen with regional hegemonic ambitions. Citing the likes of Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Sékou Touré of Guinea and more recently Muammar Gadhafi of Libya (Asante, 2012), these scholars insist that the lack of regional hegemon in Africa is entirely an exogenous condition. Among the ambitious leaders often cited, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana received the most prominent place. According to proponents, Nkrumah's regional hegemonic ambitions is unquestionable. Indeed, the declaration of Ghana's independence simultaneously set Nkrumah' regional hegemonic ambitions in motion, a claim sustained through excerpts from his awe-inspiring independence speech; 'the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up to the total liberation of the African continent'. In the same vein, the establishment of a Pan-Africanist school to train persons such as Patrice Lumumba, Robert Mugabe among others who later emerged as leaders of the independence struggle in their respective countries, coupled with his leadership in the creation of interstate institutions such as the African Union and the Non- Aligned Movement are cited as evidence to support the claim of Nkrumah's regional ambitions.

I argue that this is but purely sentimental and emotional engagement relative to Pan-Africanism and that it has very little correspondence to regional hegemonic ambitions (see Mazrui, 1997). Truly, some sort of ambition could be detected. However, it remains merely sentimental ambition with little or no resemblance to regional hegemonic ambition. This sentimental ambition was merely Pan-Africanist aimed at breaking Africa and the black race from the shackles of colonialism both structural and agential. Consequently, I maintain that the requirements of regional ambition were far beyond the reach of these leaders. I assessed this on two layers namely, the nature of the post-independent African states and the nature of the international system.

First, the failure to achieve internal harmony and internal hegemony foiled the thought of a regional hegemonic ambition. Recapping an argument made earlier, ambition is

not ambition when it is harbored on straw. African states at independence lacked the capacity to even maintain internal hegemony. Indeed, the structures of governance inherited by these leaders limited their efficacy in extending state control beyond the capital cities. This created multiple power blocks which the new leaders had to grapple with. Besides, owing to the nature of colonialism, many vast areas of the territories inherited lacked basic necessities of life. The net result was that the cost of achieving internal harmony and consequent internal hegemony far outweighed the capacity and resource available. Therefore, statesmen couldn't afford to develop strategic ambitions that superseded the emotional and sentimental. Hence, ambition for leadership beyond the immediate territories of these states was untenable.

little wonders that these so-called ambitious leaders were overthrown by external forces acting in collaboration with internal ones, pointing to the failure of the first test of ambition, internal harmony; failure to increase the cost for internal revisionism. Moreover, Nkrumah's speeches and appeals demonstrated this awareness. His framework of a united Africa is analogous to the European Union today; a union still in search of a hegemon. intriguingly, the strategy of one party state adopted by most of the new leaders immediately after political independence was, in a way, a response to the lack of internal harmony and a calculated attempt to achieve that.

Second, the global environment then was unfavorable for such a course. The bipolarity of the system implied a sharing of the cost of running the global system between the two polars; the US and the former Soviet Union. In this sense, none of the global powers was overstretched akin to wholly assuming the responsibility of running the entire global system. Each global power had to just maintain its area of influence while containing the expansion of the other through internal maneuvers (proxy-wars). In order words, the unipolar world system today is more expensive and exhausting than bipolarity and multipolarity.

Compounding this further, the period under consideration was the peak of the cold war era where the superpowers were very suspicious of not just each other's moves but that of weaker states as well. In such a scope, the nature of the global environment increases the cost of harboring such ambitions. This coupled with lack of needed capacity even at the local level renders regional hegemonic ambitions dead at birth. To intimate that some African statesmen had this ambition implies a claim of

recklessness on their part for failing to see these exigencies. Indeed, Nkrumah is on record to have proposed a united African project not based on the superiority of some states over others. Even granting the claim that Nkrumah harbored an aspiration of becoming the president of Africa in a project, where lies Ghana as the hegemon? As one could suspect and aptly so, Ghana would seize to exist in such a project.

4.7. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I addressed the main question of the study; why Africa lacks a regional hegemon? The analysis proceeded from the premise that the current condition of Africa depicts a *matter* desperately in need of *form*. That the continuous emptiness of the regional power vacuum aids the further perpetuation of this *formlessness*. From the forgone, a duality pertains on this discourse. On one hand, while African states are replete with the potential material and non-material resources required to build the capacity supportive of regional hegemonic ambition, the regional hegemonic power vacuum remains unoccupied on the other.

The analysis exposes this phenomenon to be anchored on the lack of regional hegemonic ambition. This is operationalized through the combined effects of statecraft, capacity deficiency, and the structure of the international system. Against this, African states lack regional hegemonic ambitions because the nature of state building, the capacity at their disposal and the structure of the international system cripple them from harboring ambitions beyond those needed to manage internal affairs. Thus, these deficiencies limit the options available to the African statesman and narrow his vision. Accordingly, until African states are able to achieve internal hegemony through internal harmony, they are less likely to develop regional hegemonic ambitions.

Furthermore, somewhat in sync with the conventional concept particularly in the realist tradition, the analysis also revealed that the structure of contemporary unipolar international system provides more opportunity for the emergence of regional hegemons than other polarities. Indeed, the harboring and actualization of regional hegemonic ambitions appears less costly under unipolarity compared to bipolarity

exemplified by the cold war system. The problem, therefore, stems from the failure of African states to vividly see the regional power vacuum steering at them and the supportive environment inherent in the current international system and structure to aspire to occupy the vacuum. With this blindness, coupled with the cost of harboring regional hegemonic ambitions under bipolarity, the thesis purporting that some African statesmen during the cold war period harbored regional hegemonic ambitions could safely be dismissed as overly simplistic and lacking rigor.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1.   Summary

The African continent has always been under scramble since it came into contact with the world of interstate relations created by the West. In simple terms, three waves of scramble can be deduced from the relationship between Africa and the rest of the world. The first sanctioned by the Berlin conference of 1878 occurred between the colonial and the independence period. A period which witnessed the official scramble of the continent among great and emerging powers in Europe. The second wave involved the cold war period where the bipolarity of the international system fueled the scramble of the states on the continent among the USSR and the US. Unlike the first wave, the second wave marked the period where Africa states were turned into battlefields of great powers. The number of military coupes and state subversions on the continent during this period is marched by none. The third wave took shape after the end of the cold war and still underway. This scramble combines the features of both the first and the second waves. From the first wave, the scramble involves both great and emerging economies. Akin to the second phase, it involves the tacit support of African leaders. Guided by this phenomena, clearly the continent has not been able to assert itself in its relationship with the rest of the world. These scrambles partly point to the formlessness and vulnerability of the continent and partly to the need for the regional power vacuum to be filled (leadership).

This study emerged as an attempt to examine and understand the formlessness of the system and the persistence of the emptiness of the regional power base. Relying mainly on secondary sources and employing text interpretive tools and theoretical interpretations, the study argued that the persistence of the regional power vacuum stems from the lack of regional hegemonic ambition by African states. Defined in terms of the nature of state-building, state capacity and the nature of contemporary

international system and structure, the political ambition of African states has been circumscribed to the internal base.

Furthermore, the structure of the international system provides the luck base or otherwise upon which an ambitious state with great preparations (right ambition + capacity) is able to consolidate its ambitions. Favorable international system avails itself only to prepared states waiting to harvest it. Unprepared states no matter how favorable the system is, are but passersby. While capacity and ambition rests largely in the bosom of individual states, the global environment and structures therein within which higher ambitions of states play out lies outside the strict domain of individual states. This is not to suggest that a state's ambitions and capacity are not impacted by the actions of other states and luck. But that ambition and capacity are more determined by endogenous than exogenous exigencies.

To use the scenario of the famer, great farmers prepare their fields awaiting the rains. Even though, their interaction with nature contributes in determining the amount of rainfall, they are, nonetheless, unable to decide the amount and nature of rains for each season. Thankfully, technological improvements have reduced the reliance on rain-fed agriculture with improvement in yield. However, the nutritional dimension (quality) of the outcome of these inorganic modification is incomparable to organic led-farming, largely rain fed and field determined. Interestingly, to reap the benefits of these modifications require preparation and investment in these technologies and even ready to go beyond it. Failure to do this renders one in a melancholic state.

Analogous to contemporary international relations, several modifications such as intergovernmental international institutions and norm structures have been achieved which has introduced some level of certainty or predictability into global politics. For example, the intervention of the global superpowers in some situations and not others provide clues relative to the strength and resolve of these powers which enables ambitious states to reduce margins of error, hence increase the success space. Similarly, the nature of the current system itself, unipolarity, reduces the stress in terms of the number of eyes needed to study the system. In fact, all that ambitious states need to focus on is the understanding of the actions and behavior of the hegemon. To borrow an African proverb, ambitious states need not get their 'noses stuck by looking into the bottle with both eyes'. In short better vision is assured with

little stress when one looks into the bottle with one eye, assured only under a unipolarity.

The study also noted that Africa is likely to take its rightful place among the community of nations if the regional power vacuum is filled by a competent and effective African state. In the absence of this, the formlessness of the matter stands to persist as the emptiness of regional power base prevails. Unfortunately, despite the opportunities inherent in the current global environment in terms of lowering the cost of harboring regional hegemonic ambitions, African states are bereft of this ambitions. The reason for this lies at the heart of the failure of African states to achieve internal harmony and hegemony due to the nature of statecraft and the deficiency in capacity. Thus, African states are ill-prepared to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the structures of contemporary international system to fill the empty regional power space.

5.2.   Recommendation

My objective in this section was to address the issue of how a regional hegemony can emerge. In figure 4.2, snapshots of this were provided. This section builds on these snapshots to provide further polishing to what an African state should do to position itself worthy of an occupant of the regional power space.

First, the African statecraft requires radical modelling and remodeling because they hinder the construction of internal harmony. This may be consequent on radical events quintessential of events such as the French revolution (1789), the English civil war (1642-1651), the American civil war (1861-1865) among others. The importance of events such as these relates to the inherent opportunity for the development of crosscutting structures transcending the multiplicity of power bases at the internal level. With these power bases submerged under the state, achieving internal harmony is but an arm's length, consequently establishing the internal hegemony of the state over all internal power bases. This was amply captured by Machiavelli's main argument behind the creation of a republic. Thus, a state which seeks higher ambitions

should make it costly for external forces to seek to exploit internal cracks by blocking and rendering such cracks ineffective and costly.

Second, for African states to develop the required ambitions to fill the regional power vacuum, they must be able to assemble the needed capacity and the resources for local hegemony. Fortunately, states on the continent are awash with potentials to build the capacity commensurate with higher ambitions. However, the strategies and competence to harness these potentials are still out of reach. Therefore, the desideratum to develop appropriate exploitation tools. To achieve this implies the emergence of a crop of statesmen strong and charismatic enough to unite the people. And ambitious enough to exploit the necessary opportunities to enhance the capacity of the state.

Third, ambition tailors capacity building. The development of higher ambitions is more contingent on the fulfilment of lesser ones and less contingent on marshalling needed capacity as first step. Mobilizing needed capacity is only required when states sets on the painstaking journey to fulfil higher ambitions. In other words, states need not wait to generate adequate capacity to aspire for higher ambitions. Without ambition to start with, the scope of capacity needed would be blurred leaving room for procrastination. Thus, ambition serves as the light which illuminates the path of capacity building and resource mobilization.

Fourth, higher ambitions ought not necessarily be successful. Indeed, in failure lies precedence to guide the future. Statesmen usually earn respect through engagements with opponents at similar levels even in the face of unfavorable odds. Unarguably, knowledge of the odds in any engagement is crucial in the pursuit of higher ambitions, but trying in the face of odds may be profitable for future engagements. Simply put, precedence is a better guide for future successes. To be sure, desiring higher ambitions sparks a desire to understand and know the weakness and strength of powers within such brackets. Thus, merely being in confrontation with an opponent ignites the interest to study such opponent and plan for robust response system.

Finally, would-be regional powers should neither be bulwark of global superpowers nor a revisionist to attract unnecessary clashes. To succeed in their ambitions, ambitious states must find a way of walking through the tight rope of bootlicking and

assertiveness; knowing what cards to play and what cards to keep per time and space is the secret to surviving.

To be sure, these recommendations are not cast in stones but contingent on the vagaries at both the domestic and global levels. This notwithstanding, for states to wade through these storms, necessary preparations particularly internally must be satisfied because this level of engagement lies directly at the base of the state. Failure in this regard translates automatically to the global level where states rely more on luck than mere capacity. As amply noted by Kaplan (2008), "states work effectively when they are a logical reflection of their underlying sociopolitical, historical, geographical, human, and economic environments, and when they are deeply integrated with the societies they purport to present, able to harness the informal institutions and loyalties of their citizens" (Kaplan, 2008: 4) Internal harmony is the foremost criterion for higher ambitions. It cements the eternality of national interest as it draws on popular support and legitimacy. Changes in leadership is unlikely to cause considerable shifts in strategy and policy since the statesman would have to navigate the precarious waters of changing popular believes and ideologies. The net results cement consistency of actions which narrow the space for porousness.

5.3.   Conclusion

International politics has taken significant turn since the end of the cold war. Appealing to the preponderance of unipolarity, contemporary international relations operates in line with the logic and structural premise of the global hegemon (US) underpinned by liberal relations and capitalism. The existence of this structure of relations at the global level presupposes that the hegemon structuring these relations operates as regional hegemon in some context. Thus, the United State as the global hegemon simultaneously sits as a regional hegemon in the Western Hemisphere (Mearsheimer, 2001). In this sense, we can safely argue that global hegemonic studies proceed from a regional hegemonic one. That a focus on either of the two automatically draws in the other. This study underscored this convention and argues that a regional hegemon is vital for the recalibration of Africa's relationship with the rest of the world. The continuous emptiness of the regional power base predicates a

state of more vulnerability and sets the continent apart from its rightful place in the community of nations.

Significantly, Africa has a rich history and potentially harbors what it takes to play a formidable role in global politics. For now, the continent attracts international attention for the wrong reasons ranging from conflict, poverty, migration, diseases among others. Africa appears a porous region where anything goes. States on the continent remain poppets in the hands of others. The persistence of regional power vacuum further perpetuates this state of affairs as the leadership required to unite the continent and project a common front continually appears elusive. Clearly, the operations of external powers on the continent illustrates but mediocrity and exploitation.

Against this background, this study argues for the necessity of the regional power vacuum in Africa to be filled by an African state. Unfortunately, at the moment, African states are still hesitant in their aspirations to fill the regional power vacuum despite the favorable external conditions inherent in the contemporary international system and its structures. This hesitation stems from a colossal deficiency in all dimensions of state capacity explained by defects in statecraft. Explicitly highlighted in the daily struggle of African states to project their authorities internally. As a result, basic internal hegemony lies way from their grip, hence a veil blurring the extent to which they see the emptiness of the regional power space before them. More important, the framework developed in this study could be employed in examining and understanding power vacuum as well as the emergence of hegemonic powers in other contexts such as the middle east, Europe, Asia, Americas, among others.

Some interesting observations emerged in the course of the study. In the first place, this study deliberately neglected the assessment of a would-be hegemon based on criteria established in studies such a Wohlforth (1999) and others. In my opinion studies like that failed to premise the understanding of regional hegemony in the proper context. Unlike the global level hegemony studies anchored on a single context, regional level hegemony studies lay in multiple context making mere comparative study of relative capacity across states in a region ineffective. Thus, in the case of global hegemony, the distribution of power is measured across a single layer (the international context), while the distribution of power in a regional context

exhumes multiple layers; the region in question, other regions and the global context. Second, the existence of a global and other regional powers in a particular region does not automatically constitute filled power base. In the African context, the presence of the US and powers such as China, Russia, France, among others invalidates not the regional power vacuum. Concomitantly, understanding the nature of the power vacuum in a region is consequential in understanding how the vacuum is to be filled or filled.

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Appendixes

Figure 4.3: AU planned and actual budget
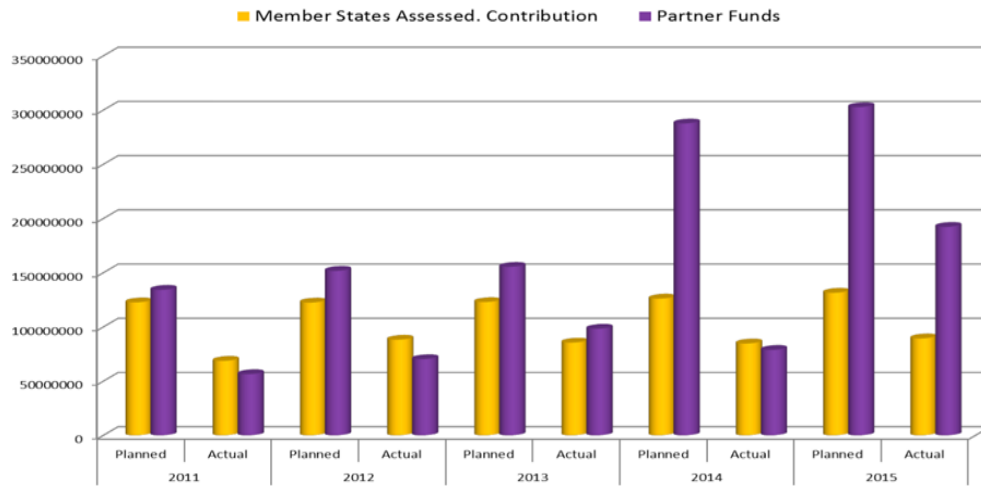
Source; AU 2019

Figure 4.4 Projected extreme poverty in Africa compared to the world

The weight of the SDG on Ending Extreme Poverty by 2030 will fall on sub-Saharan Africa's shoulders. In particular, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo together will account for 40 percent of the world's extremely poor.

World
434 100%

Sub-Saharan Africa
376 87%

Nigeria
112 26%

Congo, Dem
61 14%

Millions of people in extreme poverty by 2030
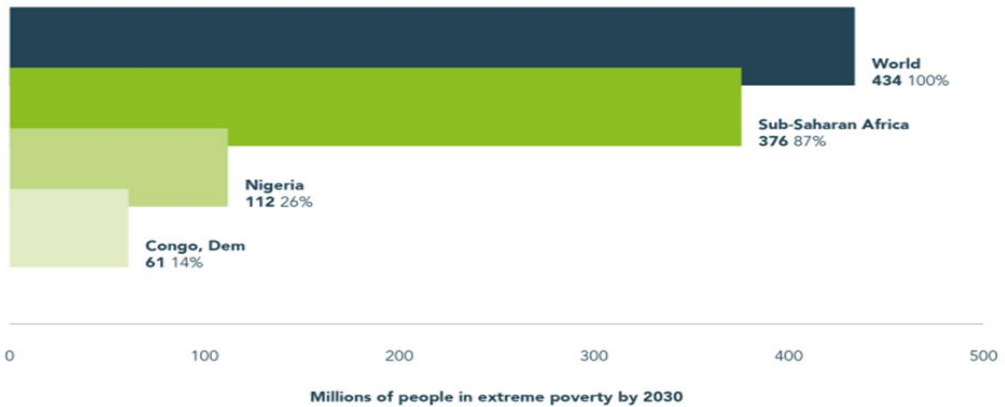
Note: Percentage for each bar reflects percent of global total. Extreme poverty is defined as the population living below $1.90/day in 2011 PPP.
Source: World Poverty Clock by World Data Lab, data as of January 2019.

Figure 4.5: Resource endowment of Africa

Source: Al Jazeera
Updated: October 2016