The Difference between Theories of International Relation and Natural Science Theories

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Abstract
The discipline of International Relations covers a wide range of subjects and issues of global concern. It is multidisciplinary in nature, and extends to Economics, Geography, Law, History, Peace, Conflict and Strategic studies, and Foreign Policy among others. The quest to understand the circumstances that surround peaceful or conflictual co-existence among states has provoked the search for scientific and systematic study of International Relations which has pr-occupied International Relations' scholars for several decades. However, this paper argued that the dynamism, exactness and reliability of theories of International Relations cannot be compared with those of natural science because of the unpredictability nature of the subject matter of International Relations. The paper is qualitative and utilizes content analysis. The paper recommended among other the development of additional methods of inquiry to help International Relations with empirical prepositions which are verifiable.
Keyword: analysis, nature, theory, international relations, state and national interest

Introduction
International Relations is a broad discipline that covers a wide range of subjects and issues of global concern. (Saliu & Aremu, 2013). This partly makes sweeping generalizations and theory-building an indispensable and engaging enterprise in the discipline of International Relations because the search for theory is a search for rules to explain social phenomenon (in which case, states foreign policy behaviour). Therefore, the need for a coherent understanding of the complex and anarchical international system makes the discipline of International Relations intellectually demanding and stimulating. In particular, International Relations' scholars have grappled with the questions of war and peace as it relates to states behavior in an anarchical world system. Therefore, the quest to understand the circumstances surrounding peaceful or conflictual co-existence between and among states has prompted the search for scientific and systematic study of International Relations for several decades. From inception, scholars of International Relations have engaged the subject matter in various ways with different methodologies and approaches. For instance, as an intellectual off-shoot of the writings of early thinkers such as Plato, Kant, and Hegel, idealist argument on International Relations gained tremendous momentum in the inter-war

periods as a paradigm to explain the delicate fault-line between war and peace (Saliu & Aremu, 2013). However, the theoretical argument of idealism about human nature and the possibility to eschew violence if certain legal and institutional mechanisms are put in place was rendered untenable with the outbreak of World War II. As such, the search for theory continued which saw the emergence of realism with counterfactual propositions to those of idealists. For instance, the realists have no faith in human nature or in any universal moral principle as the idealists would want to make us believe. For the realists, the evil nature of man reduces international politics to a state of permanent war characterized by perpetual struggle for power pre-eminent by states; and that this struggle for power becomes a primary interest which detects states behaviour and determines the possibility of cooperation and conflict between and among states.

As an intellectual outgrowth of the works of early philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, James J. Rousseau, Thucydides and Nicola Machiavelli, realism took off with the argument that power is the currency of international politics defined in terms of national interests such that the more of it a state possesses, the more it seeks (Saliu & Aremu, 2013). Therefore, theories of International Relations are social science theories that deal with human behaviours and how states conduct themselves in the international system. To this end, the question as to why states behave the way they do in an anarchical international system, some scholars such as Alabi (2014), Bappa and (2011)argued that it is a question of international relations theories, while others Toyin (1999) posited that is a question of foreign policy theory. Therefore, the question why do states behave the way they do in the international system that has no overarching authority to regulate the conduct of states, is the question that theories of international relations seek to answer. Accordingly, theories of international relations are theories that deal with states, institutions, dynamics and process of international institutions as they affect the entire global system (Alabi, 2014). The neglect of the marked differences between theories of international relations which are social science theories, and the natural science theories by scholars of International Relations, is the basis of this intellectual enterprise in order to draw a balance sheet between what is and what ought to be.

Conceptual Clarification
Theory
Basically, theory, whether in social or natural science has some methodological expectations. A systematic way of understanding and explaining a phenomenon must be distinguished from several other ways in which man can explain facts and laws that relate to different aspects of some phenomenon. Accordingly, Harrington (2005) writing on the concept of theory with its etymological root and stated that it derives from the original Greek word theorem (which means to contemplate, look upon, consider or observe) meaning contemplation and reflection.

Kelinger (1979) defines theory as a set of interrelated constructs, concepts, definitions, and propositions that explains or predicts events or situations by specifying relations among variables. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) see theory as an organized body of concept and principles intended to explain a particular phenomenon. Okolie (2016) defines a theory as the general or abstract principles of a body of fact, a science or an art; it is thus a plausible and scientifically acceptable general principle or body of principles offered to explain natural phenomenon. Swanson (2013) observes that theories are formulated to explain, predict and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing

knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions. According to Asika (2012), a theory is also a statement of invariant relationship among measurable phenomenon with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomenon. Mbachu (2005) views theory as a set of carefully and logically used laws that is used to classify, clarify, explain and predict phenomena. Therefore, a theory is a set of principles or rules that helps us to select facts and interpret them in such a way to facilitate explanation concerning the regularities, recurrence and repetition of observed and observable phenomenon.

International Relations
International relations as a sub-field in the discipline of political science do not lend itself to a universally acceptable definition. Several scholars have defined international relations based on their epistemological foundations. Toyin (1999) defined international relations as the study of all forms of interactions that exist between members of separate entities or nations within the international system. This therefore means that international relations is concerned with every form of interrelation amongst nations which could be between two or more nation-states or even corporations and social groups. Saliu and Aremu (2013) defined International Relations as the study and practice of relations among nation-states and their government. However, this definition is state-centric because it fails to encapsulate the interactions that take place between non-governmental organizations and non-state actors, which have become increasingly significant actors on the global scene. Ojo (cited in Saliu & Aremu, 2013) sees International Relations simply as a gamut of actions, reactions and counter-actions by actors in the international system, acting individually or collectively at times to achieve their objectives which may be covert or overt.

National Interest
National Interest is one of the most controversial concepts in International Relations which was developed by Hans Morgenthau (1951) and Kenneth Thompson because of its proliferation of meaning (Rosenau in Saliu & Aremu, 2013). national Interest has been conceptualized as 'a goal', as 'a method of reaching a goal', as 'a means to an end', as 'the basic motivations for foreign policy formulation and execution', as 'a guide for policy makers', as 'an organizing concept for scholars', and as 'a criterion of judgment for the citizenry' (Eminue in Saliu & Aremu, 2013, p.67). In essence, the concept of "national interest" describes the basic motivations which under-gird the diplomacy of the respective states in the international system (Ogwu, 1986). The concept is a short-hand expression of the sum total of the objectives and goals of a state. According to Rosenau (cited in Saliu & Aremu, 2013), national interest is the key to any explanation of goal-seeking behaviour that states pursue in their interactions with other states in the international system.

Overview of Some of the Theories of International Relations
There are many theories developed by different scholars of International Relations to explain the behaviour of state and non-state actors in the international system. Some of these theories include but not limited to idealism, realism, balance of power theory, deterrence theory, theory of social conflict, democratic peace theory, game theory, leadership theory and theory of war among others.

Idealism – idealism as a category of traditional approach in international relations is based on an ideal; that is 'what ought to be or should be' as against 'what is' (Bappa, 2011). It also refers to as imaginary state where everything is thought to be perfect. It is more or less

a prescriptive approach to international relations. Idealism emerged after the World War 1, in spite of the horrific and devastated nature of the war, scholars and statesmen alive felt that there should be better way of co-existence rather that resorting to conflicts and wars. Idealism is an argument that people and the countries they represent are capable of finding mutual interest and cooperating to achieve them at least in part by working through international organizations and according to international law. As an approach to International Relations, idealism was influenced by the philosophy of such men as J.J Rousseau in his epoch work '*social contract*', and by the idealism of statesmen like President Woodrow Wilson of the United State and his drive to found the League of Nations . Idealism was also a reflection of the times with a research in 1930; it diminished in the 1930s and re-surged in 1970s when the cold war began to thaw (Bappa, 2011). Idealism stresses the spread of democracy and the idea of democratic peace theory.

Basic Assumptions of Idealist Theory
According to Bappa (2011), the basic assumptions of idealism includes: The first assumption of the idealist theory is about human nature. Idealism believed that human nature is essentially good, and that bad human behaviour is not a product of evil people but of evil institutions. The idealists submit that human beings can be masters of their fates and that through reason they can shape their future in a desirable way. For the idealists, war is not inevitable and can be eliminated by eradicating the institutions that encourage war. Idealism posits that war is an international problem that requires collective or multilateral rather than unilateral national efforts to eliminate. Idealist theory also argued that armaments and war are evil and that disagreement between and among states should be resolved by non-violent means through reason and persuasion. The idealist further posited that to discourage war the international community must recognized itself to eliminate the institutions that make war likely. The idealist further called for the establishment of international institutions, legal control of war and disarmament. In response to the argument of the idealist theory, the League of Nations was established.

Limitations of Idealism
The idealist theory is state-centric in the sense that it lays more emphasis on state. The theory is idealistic because it failed to explain the outbreak of the Second World War. The theory is also prescriptive; that is, it only attempts to explain how countries could cooperate without stating the possibility of cooperation between and among sovereign states in pursuit of their national interests in an anarchical world system.

Realist Theory
Realism emerged as counter argument to idealism partly as a result of the outbreak of World War II which repudiates the idealist's argument about the possibility of shaping the cause of world events by deliberate human efforts and will. As an approach to international relations, realism can be traced to such ancient practitioners and thinkers as Sun-Tzu (544-496 BC), a Chinese General and the author of the *'Art of War'*, Thucydides (460-399 BC) a Greek Historian and the author of the *'History of Peloponnesian War'*. Recently, realism also has diplomacy of such statesmen as Otto Von Bismarck (1815-1898) the iron chancellor who engineered the unification of Germany under Prussia's control (Bappa, 2011). Others include Nicolas Machiavelli (1532) and an English Philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) who argued in his book *'The Leviathan'* (1651) that human beings generally have an inherent urge to dominate and endeavor to subdue and destroy one another. For the purpose of this intellectual discourse, the theory of realism emerged in the

year surrounding World War II (1939-1945) as the dominant theory developing academic discipline of international relations scholarship. Notably, the view of realism was taken up in the writings of such scholars as the British political scientist Edward H. Carl (1939) in his work, *'The 20 Years Crisis'* (1919-1939), and American scholar Hans Morgenthau (1948) in his epoch work, *'Politics among Nations and the Struggle for Power and Peace'* where Morgenthau argues that international politics is the struggle for power among states defined in terms of *national interest*.

What then is Realism!

Realism according to Kegley (2009) is a paradigm based on the premise that world politics is essentially and unchangeably a struggle for power and position among self-interested states under anarchy, with each competing state pursuing its national interest. Rowke (2008) defines realism as the view that world politics is driven by competitive self-interest.

Mathew and Platt (2001) argued that realism is the rejection of the romantic idealization of nature, the poor, love and polite society. In essence, realism is the practical understanding and acceptance of the actual nature of the world rather than an idealized romantic view of it.

Basic Assumptions of Realism

According to Kegley (2009), the basic assumptions of realism are:

- The realists assume that the international system based on sovereign actors (states) which answer to no higher authority is anarchical with no overarching authority to regulating the conduct of states or provide security and order.
- Realists argued that the result of an anarchical global system means that states acquire military capability to deter attacks and rely on their resources to flourish and survive.
- The realists see states as the main and dominant actors in international politics, and as such states should not entrust their self-protection to international security organization like the United Nations, international law nor accept any global governance
- Realism submits that if states seek to maximize power, stability will result by maintaining a balance of power that counter others expansionist motives or tendencies.
- The realists also posited that force is a use-able and effective rational instrument for foreign policy and that there is hierarchy of issues in world politics and a number of this hierarchy is military security
- The realists have no faith in human reasoning or in any universal moral principles. They believed that human beings are inherently evil and wicked; and that human beings are driven by lust for power and the desire to dominate and subdue one another.
- To the realists, the evil nature of man has reduced international politics to something close to a state permanent war characterized by perpetual struggle for power pre-eminent by states; for them, this struggle for power becomes the primary interest which dictates states actions and determines the possibility of cooperation and conflict between and among states.

From the foregoing assumptions, it is not out of place to submit that the emergence of power theory could be traced or attributed to the realists argument, that states struggle for

power under anarchical international system in order to pursue their national interests. What this means therefore, is that, the fact that each state works towards achieving her national interest, justifies the realist argument. Lastly, the military alliance among states, for example North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)and Warsaw Pact which creation was motivated by the Soviet Union (Russia) desires to maintain control over military forces in Central and Eastern Europe, reflects the reality of the realists belief that a hierarchy of issues in world politics is military security to counter other states expansionists motives or tendencies (Alabi, 2014).

Balance of Power Theory (BOP)

Balance of power theory is the oldest most persistent and most controversial of all theories of International Relations that has attracted more scholarly works than any other theory of international politics because the uni-polar structure of the contemporary international system is fundamentally different from the multi-polar world system in which balancing theory emerged (Alabi, 2014) . Hume (1995) traced the origin of balance of power from ancient time to eighteen century. However, in modern times, balance of power is associated with the Newtonian conception of a universe in equilibrium. Notwithstanding the many definitions, the concept of balance of power means that hegemony do not form in multipolar systems because perceived threats of hegemony over the system generate balancing behaviour by other leading states in the international system (Levy, 2004). Though the contemporary unipolar structure of the international system is fundamentally different from the multipolar world system in which balance of power theory emerged (Watz, 2000). At the heart of balance of power theory is the idea that national security is enhanced when military capabilities are distributed so that no one state is strong enough to dominate and lord it over all others. Major proponents of this theory included James .J Rousseou, David Hume (1995), Hans Morgenthau, (1948), Thucydides (460-399 BC), Niccolo Machiavelli (1532), Little Richard (2007), and Shechan (2000). Others are Paul W.Schroeder (1989), Chisholm Hugh (1911) and Rizwan Naseer (2011).

Basic Assumptions of Balance of Power Theory

According to Naseer (2011), the basic assumptions of the balance of power theory are:
* The theory argues that states are the dominant actors in the international system; and that the desire to survive in an anarchical international system is the driver of states behaviours.
* This theory assumes that in order to maintain stability and prevent the emergence of hegemony, an aggressor or a dictator, states align to protect themselves against the power of threats from other states. For instance, during cold war era, the NATO and WARSAW PACT were able to maintain stability in the bipolar world system.
* The theory also holds that for states to survive in an anarchical international system, states must increase their military capabilities or form alliances to protect themselves against the power or threats from other states.
* Balance of power theory further maintains that the determinants of alliance formation and reformation of forces come overwhelmingly from the structure of the international system, particularly the real and potential external threats that states faces.

Strength of the Balance of Power Theory

Balance of power theory ensures stability and mutual security in the international system. It strengthens and prolongs international peace by deterring war and confronting an aggressor with the likelihood that a policy of expansion would meet the formation of a counter forces or coalition. The theory also prevents the constituent of a universal

hegemony and preserves the constituent components of the international system and the system itself (Sheehan, 1989)

Weaknesses of Balance of Power Theory
In spite of the marked strengths of this theory, Morgenthau (1951) found balance of power theory deficient on the following grounds:
The balance of power is uncertain because no complete reliable means exists to measure, evaluate, and compare power in international system. Balance of power theory has the tendency to lead to arms race as states try to acquire arms to defend themselves. The theory is also deficient in the sense that, there is no way to guarantee that the alliance formation will work because, the mere fact that states come together to form alliance against real or perceived aggressor, does not mean that such aggressor could be defeated. Similarly, in the contemporary unipolar world that is dominated by the United States, the alliance formation is increasingly becoming irrelevant because of the preponderance of the United States.

Deterrence Theory
Deterrence theory is one of the most important theories of international relations and strategic studies aimed at maintaining power balance among nations by ensuring that nations could adopt alternative approach to conflict management rather than wars involving the use of nuclear weapons. Deterrence therefore, could be defined as an attempt to dissuade the other party to a conflict from resorting to an open arm conflict through threat of overwhelming retaliation. In other words, deterrence is a conscious device by the decision-makers in one state to prevent a certain line of action which a potential or perceive aggressor could take by threatening to revenge with an overwhelming military retaliation (Hosti, 1972). Major exponents of deterrence theory include Paul K. Huth (1999), Thomas Schelling (1966), Kenneth Waltz (1979), Hans Morgenthau 1967), Thucydides, Jeremy Bentham and Henry Kissinger among others. It is pertinent to note that deterrence theory emerged following the emergence of the international system from the horrific and traumatic experience of World War II with nuclear weapons, which when used, no nation is sure to survive (Toyin, 1997). Most importantly, the inability of nations to invent an immunity to the massive destruction that could result from the use of nuclear weapons compelled statesmen to evolve the concept of deterrence (Adeniran, 1999). The basic purpose of deterrence is to avoid war as much as possible, so that conflicts among states could be resolved peacefully or through other alternative methods.

Basic Assumptions of Deterrence Theory
The proponents of deterrence theory submit that a potential or perceived aggressor will be discouraged to taking a particular line of action because of the fact that the adverse consequences of such action outweigh its advantages. The theory is predicated on the assumption that nations are rational in their decision-making. This theory also argues that, for deterrence to be effective in the international system, availability and possibility of the retaliating force must be credible (Tunde, 1986). This means that the deterring state must possess, not only the weapons to back up her position, but must also demonstrate the willingness to carry out the threat should the deterred state behave otherwise. The theory further posited that, the fear of the adverse consequences by an aggressor will always discourage or dissuade an aggressor from taking a particular line of action. Furthermore, this theory also asserted that, for deterrence posture to be credible, the deterring nation must not be too vulnerable to the state(s) she wants to dissuade. What this means therefore, is

that the deterring state must be economically independent of the deterred nation, or inwardly sustain itself independent of the deterred nation.

Criticisms of the Deterrence Theory

Critiques of deterrence theory have argued contrary that, not all actors or national leaders in the international system are rational. For Frank Zagare (1990), there could be some suicidal actors or national leaders such as Adolf Hitler that could throw the world into nuclear war. They also averred that deterrence policy has the tendency to promote arms race and cold war among world powers. To Kevin Kennedy (1983), deterrence approach also encourages actors in the international system to seek first strike advantage over their opponents, especially in the nuclear war where the enemies could have been destroyed. However, despite the criticisms, deterrence theory has the propensity to maintain balance in world peace (Alabi, 2014). For instance, deterrence has been effectively used in the series of crisis in the Middle East between Israel and Arab nations. Israel, the only nation in the Middle East with nuclear reactor located in the Neger Desert has continuously stressed that she will not be the first nation to use nuclear weapon in the Middle East (Ray, 1980). Similarly, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 is a typical example of the application of deterrence theory in international relations.

Nature of Scientific Theories

Generally, natural science is concerned with nature which could be inanimate. Therefore, natural science theories deal with atoms, chemical, re-agents and plants etc, whose behaviours are predictable with universal acceptability. Mbachu (2005) itemized properties of science to include, objectivity, parsimonious, logical, determinism, empiricism, generality and constant. Therefore, the innate characteristics of natural science theories include:

* Scientific theories are objectives; this means that no matter your personal biases or values and assumptions, all researchers employing the same methods on the same phenomenon or subject should arrive at similar results.

* Scientific theories are logical-science, is logical in the sense that science must be sequential, thorough, rigorous and rational understanding of material or societal behaviour.

* Scientific theories are deterministic- this means that all events are determined (inescapably caused) by pre-existing events which, when considered in the context of inviolable physical laws; it means that things do not just happen. There must be a reason for everything that happens. Hence, it is the principle of cause and effect which underlies many scientific enterprises.

* Scientific theories are empirically verifiable: This essentially means that science is based on facts, not belief. Therefore, the scientists reject as unproven any conclusion not supported by observed facts because science must be observable and repeatable.

* Scientific theories are parsimonious: This means that science is interested in obtaining the most information from the fewest variables.

* Scientific theories are constant: This means that relatively constant conditions exist in nature because some phenomena do not change their basic characteristics in a given period of time. Besides, change in them takes time to occur. Essentially, this principle suggests that every phenomenon contains identifiable indicators which reality is objective enough for any analysis.

* Scientific theories are general: science is only interesting in general patterns, not in any particular events or things.

Analysis of the Nature of Theories of International Relations
Theories of international relations are social theories that deal with human behaviours. States, supernatural organizations like the United Nations, and other international institutions such as Organization of American States and African Union do not run themselves; otherwise, international relations will be dehumanized. Therefore, states and human beings that represent them are the actors and movers of events in the international arena. Hence every theory in the noble discipline of social science are apparently social theories because they deal with human behaviour, institutions, dynamics and processes of international institutions as they affect the global system. Therefore, in analyzing the nature of theories of international relations, the following characteristics are germane:
* Unlike scientific theories, international relations theories are concerned with a systematic study of relations among states and non-state actors in the international system. For instance, democratic peace theory submits that democratic states do not wage war against each other for fear of mutual assured destruction.
* Theories of international relations are social sciences theories that deals with human behaviour unlike natural theories that deals with matter such as atoms, chemical, reagent etc whose behaviour can be accurately predicted with universal validity
* Unlike the natural science theories that changes in them take time to occur, , theories of international relations are not static but reflect dynamism in international arena. These theories are constantly evolving and addressing issues and development in the international system. Currently, the theories of international relations pay particular attention to the concepts of unipolar global system, multi-polarism, global terrorism, globalization, and the global economy recession.
* The exactness and reliability of theories of international relations cannot be compared with those of natural science where atoms and oxygen will remain constant either in Nigeria or Russia. In essence, the exactness and reliability of theories of international relations have seriously been questioned because of the unpredictability nature of human behaviour. Cultural and religious values inundate man which makes absolute objectivity impossible. For instance, the opinions of a Christian scholar would be radically different from that of his Moslem counterpart because of the radical differences in their religious beliefs. Similarly, the Americans and the West see Taliban in Afghanistan as terrorists, but many Arab states would rather see them as freedom fighters or patriots.
* In the final analysis, there are no universally acceptable theories of international relations; as such several theories could be employed in the analysis of any issue at hand by international relations scholars. For instance, the Syrian or Somalia crisis could be analyzed from the premise of either the theory of social conflict or leadership theory.

Conclusion and Recommendations
International relations theories are social science theories that deal with the behaviour of human beings. Nations and international organizations like the United Nations and international organisations like the United Nations, Organization of American state, African Union, and European Union do not run themselves. Human beings that represent them are the movers of events in the international system. Therefore, theories of international relations are theories that deal with institutions, dynamics and processes of international institutions as they affect the global system. The distinction between social and natural science theories is very crucial. Natural science deals with nature which could be inanimate. Natural science theories deals with atoms, chemicals, reagents and plants, etc. whose behaviour could be predictable with universal acceptability unlike international relations theories that deals with human behaviour that is largely unpredictable. Hence, the

marked departure between social and natural science theories which are reliability, exactness, predictability, empirical verification, generalization, logical and parsimonious, is the main focus of this paper.

From the foregoing analysis and conclusion, this paper recommended among other things that:

* Observation of social phenomenon should be based on facts not beliefs because science rejects as unproven, any conclusion not supported by observed facts and repeatable

* The principle of cause and effect should underlie many social enterprises to show that things do not just happen because there must a reason for everything that happens

* Social sciences should strive to obtain the most information from the fewest variables. For instance, in natural science, it is fashionable to express the equivalent of mass and energy by the formula $E=mc^2$, in which c represents the velocity of light, E is the energy that is contained in a stationary body; while m is its mass.

* The study of social phenomenon should be systematic and should place primary emphasis on empirical method that is observable.

* Additional method of inquiry should be developed by scholars of International Relations and social sciences in general, to help social science with empirical prepositions and theories of systematic salt tested by closer and more observation of social phenomenon.

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