Ethnic Conflict, Equity, and Sustainable Global Peace: An Interrogation of the Israeli-Palestinian Crisis

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Abstract

Ethnic equity remains a topical global phenomenon. It has therefore attracted the attention of scholars across academic spectrums and ideological persuasions. Scholars across disciplines have variously interrogated the phenomenon, albeit from different perspectives. In all these, one thing is certain, and that is the fact that ethnic conflicts have remained unabated and have almost become ubiquitous. And often, it exacerbates in a manner that constitutes a threat to global peace. Communities and regions across the globe grapple with ethnic related conflicts, though in different forms and degrees. This study interrogated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and noted that despite the efforts of the United Nations to mitigate the occurrence of global crises, ethnic groups, driven by ethnic nationalism, have continued to push the global community to the precipice. The crisis in the Middle East has engendered an intractable humanitarian crisis and seems to be bringing today's nuclear-driven world closer to World War III. The study adopted the qualitative method and relied on secondary and primary sources of data. For a theoretical background, the study adopted an eclectic theoretical approach by integrating the structural functional theory and the frustration-aggression theory to analyze the Israeli-Palestine ethnic conflict. The study interrogated the historical roots of the Israel-Palestine conflict and demonstrated how ethnic conflicts could mutate and spill over. The study found that beyond territorial contestation and equality of access to opportunities, the distinct and peculiar nature of ethnic crises has made a one-size-fits-all solution impotent. In conclusion, the study, amongst other things, suggested ethnic equity as a way out, and provided policy direction to the United Nations, sovereign states, and related global stakeholders and groups. Ethnic equity in the context of the study speaks to social, economic, and political equity.

Key Words: Ethnic Conflict, Equity, Global Peace, Israeli-Palestinian Crisis

Introduction

A conflict deemed to be the most complex and complicated, that defied every clear cut analysis, the conflict between Israel and Palestine suffers from conceptual plurality (Morris, 2021). The dynamics cover diverse groups and bears different forms and description, from religious conflict, economic, or the struggle to defend territorial integrity (Pappe, 2004). However, the conflict remains a product of an ethnic contention, and fragmented system (Durkheim, 1997). In the views of the Arabs, it is a territorial contest, an effort to preserve the Middle East from the grips of the Western world using Israel as their proxy.

The pro religious school, especially Islamic adherents see the conflict as an affront on their holy sites, while others were apprehensive of the socio-economic implication of the dominance of the Jews, especially on their return after the Holocaust to the region (Pappe, 2004, 2006; Morris, 200, 2004; Khalidi, 1992). No doubt, ethnic

conflicts present a critical threat to global peace, security and economic development. Conflicts from Myanmar, the Sahel region, Balkans, Rwanda, Chechnya, Iraq, Indonesia, Ethiopia and Tigre (Clapham, 2021), and few others are most notable in recent history. These conflicts have consequential effects on global peace and development. It constitutes a threat to items number 16 and 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals. This study placed the Israeli-Palestine conflict at the centerpiece of this discourse within the context of ethnicity, ethnic nationalism, peace building through ethnic equity by examining the interplay between ethnic grievances and peace building. Through the interrogation of the Israeli-Palestine conflict, the study further contributed to the broader global discourse on sustainable peace through ethnic equity, and the relationship between peace, development and equity. To enrich the study, ethnic conflicts beyond the Middle East were explored with reference to Rwanda, the Balkans, Ethiopia, and Nigeria. For instance, the debilitating fratricidal war between Ethiopia and Tigre, and its spillage over Eritrea led to regional instability within the populous country in the Horn of Africa, leaving thousands of people dead with 350,000 displaced as a result of ethnic driven political instability (BBC, 2021).

In Nigeria's North Central region, ethnic diversity has foregrounded serious conflicts. Contests for the lush and fertile region that stretches across the center of Nigeria have resulted in the death of over 2,347 persons in 359 incidents between 2020 and 2024 (Eromo, 2025). Contestation over diminishing land and water resources have set the sedentary crop farmers against the nomadic cow herders resulting in deadly raids against farming settlements, and Christian communities (Agbegbedia, 2014). Perceived lack of equity and attention to the needs and the demands of the host communities have made the conflict intractable.

This study aimed to evolve a formidable strategy for sustainable peace within the context of the Israel-Palestine ethnic conflict by interrogating the following: historical antecedents of the conflict; the effect of the conflict on peace process; impact of equity as a veritable tool in peace building process; and how ethnic nationalism accounts for the persistence and escalation of ethnic conflict. With a view to achieving the aforementioned objectives, the study was guided by the following questions: what is the historical root of Israel-Palestine conflict; what is the effect of the conflict on the peace process; how does social, economic and political equity influence the peace process; and how does ethnic nationalism account for the persistent escalation of the ethnic conflict? The study adopted a qualitative approach and relied on secondary and primary sources of data collection. While the secondary data was gathered through the use of extant literature that bears relevance to the study; the primary data was gathered through indebt interview. And to theoretically locate the conflict, the study used the structural functional theory and the frustration aggression theory. The introduction of the second theory was accentuated by the need to plug the gap identified in the first theory.

The study is a robust contribution to the existing body of knowledge especially with regards to conflicts and global peace as contained in Goals 16 and 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDGs are a collection of 17 interrelated goals conceived as a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. This study focuses on Goals 16 and 17 which are interrelated. Goal 16 covers the following: promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; providing access to justice for all, and building effective and accountable institutions at all levels. On the other hand, goal number 17 is partnership for the goals (Sen, 1981). Given the consequences associated with ethnic conflict such as human rights violations, genocide, and others; it undoubtedly, pose a threat to these goals.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted an integrated theoretical approach by using the Structural Functional Theory and the Frustration Aggression Theory. The Frustration-Aggression Theory: The Frustration–aggression theory, more commonly referred to as the frustration–aggression hypothesis, is one of the most seminal and prolific theories in research on aggression. The central thesis of the frustration–aggression hypothesis which owes its emergence to Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer & Sears (1939) is that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration, or put differently, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression (Elson & Breuer, 2017). Consequently, the theory established the existence of a link or a chain that interconnects motivation, behaviour, frustration and aggression (Moshood & Ifeanacho, 2020). As Harlan & Joe (1973) put it:

…….aggression is always the result of frustration. Given the requisite conditions, an individual whose basic desires are thwarted and who consequently experiences profound sense of disappointment and anger is likely to react to his condition by directing his aggressive behaviour at what is perceived as being responsible for thwarting the desires or at a substitute; the greater the perceived importance of the desires, the more comprehensive the checking, the more vigorous the aggressive response.

To Dollard et al. (1939), the strongest aggressive reactions are those directed toward the perceived sources of the frustration, this is more or less a type of retaliatory behaviour, on the other hand, aggressive response to a frustration can also be directed toward individuals or groups not responsible for the interference with the attainment of a goal; this is commonly described as misplaced aggression. To the proponents of the theory, there is a gap between expected ends and realized ends, this gap eventually creates frustration and this frustration in turn leads to anger that consequently precipitates aggression and violent behaviors. In apparent corroboration of this supposition, Elson & Breuer, (2017) argued that there is overall ample evidence for the link between frustration and aggression.

Gurr (1970) in the book 'Why Men Rebel' opined that repeated and prolonged experience of frustrations can lead to an outburst of aggression and violence; not just at the individual level but equally at the group or societal level. He further argued that at the societal level, such frustrations could be a consequence of severe economic recessions, and lack of (or) restricted access to resources. It could also be accentuated by systematic and/or institutional discrimination against certain groups in the society. And this is where this theory is relevant to the study. The unabated friction between Israel and Palestine, the activities of pockets of resistance groups of Palestinian descent against the Israeli state, and vice versa smacks more of frustration linked aggression especially taking into cognizance the restrictions, fear, sense of insecurity and uncertainty that hallmarks Israeli-Palestinian relations. The situation regularly culminates into what Dollard et al. (1939) conceived as retaliatory aggression.

It is however pertinent to note that not all frustrated individuals or groups resort to aggression or violent behaviour as a means of venting their frustration. Curiously too, not all individuals or groups that manifest aggressive behaviour are frustrated. Frustration and aggression can in some cases be totally independent of each other, to the extent that one cannot necessarily in all cases lead to the other (Moshood & Ifeanacho, 2020:1). As a matter of fact, the ascription of universal validity to the theory by Dollard et al. (1939): to the extent that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration is grossly deterministic in that it undermines other causative factors; both environmental and perhaps behavioral. Berkowitz (1989) referred to this as "sweeping generalization". Dennen (2005) while accepting that the frustration-Aggression theory enjoyed massive acceptance, noted that it had early critics who took strong exception to the universal claims espoused by the theory. To address this gap, the study introduced the structural functional theory.

The Structural Functionalist Theory: Structural Functionalism is a macro theory that looks at the relationship and interdependence that exist between the structures or institutions in a society. Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) is credited as one of the progenitors of the theory. This theory has been considered as one of the prominent schools of thought in understanding various aspects of culture and society. Functionalism pays attention to the function or part that is played by several parts of the society in order to maintain a social system. The central notion of the theory is that society is a system with different parts or components and these parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This theoretical orientation pays attention to both social structure and social function and describes the inter-relationship that exists between these several parts of any society. These parts are interrelated and interdependent. These assumptions can be summed up thus:

- Society is an integral whole, where all components/parts are interconnected.

- Every structure in society works together to maintain stability and the wellbeing of its members.

- Institutions and people are interconnected, when one shifts, the other has to change or compensate to maintain equilibrium.

According to Akinyetun (2023), structural functionalism is an approach to understanding political systems that took into account not only its structural components - its institutions - but also their functions within the system as a whole. Similarly, Hammond, Cheney & Pearsay (2015) cited in Akinyetun (2023: 1) argued that:

> the society can be studied the same way the human body can be studied - by analyzing what specific systems are working or not working, diagnosing problems, and devising solutions to restore balance. Socialization, religious involvement, friendship, health care, economic recovery, peace, justice and injustice, population growth or decline, community, romantic relationships, marriage and divorce, and normal and abnormal family experiences are just a few of the evidences of functional processes in our society.

Lotha (2023) argued that "Structural functionalism underwent some modification when the American sociologist Talcott Parsons enunciated the "functional prerequisites" that any social system must meet in order to survive: developing routinized interpersonal arrangements (structures), defining relations to the external environment, fixing boundaries, and recruiting and controlling members". These 'functional prerequisites' evidently presuppose the existence of an affective relationship between the state and the groups that make up the state. The state through its institutions defines social relations and fixes boundaries; but it doesn't end there. The functionality or otherwise of these institutions and its ability to exert control robs off on the social relations that exist within the society.

The implication of this is very simple. In a functional society boundaries are fixed and control is exerted but in a dysfunctional society, the reverse is the case. A dysfunctional society breeds all forms of anomalies and this is where Structural Functionalism comes handy in the attempt to theoretically situate the Israel-Palestine conflict. In relations between Israel and Palestine, boundaries are not adequately articulated. The United Nations which provides international administration exerts limited control; a situation further worsened by the United States' penchant to veto anti-Israel resolutions. The dysfunctional nature of their relations and the lack of institutions on the Palestinian side that can control activities of groups like Hamas further contribute to prolonged conflicts.

As articulated by the progenitors of Structural Functionalism, in a functional society, the roles of individuals and groups are adequately spelt out and functionally coordinated and regulated by the state/political system. This they do through the

instrumentality of the various structures/institutions at its disposal. In the relations between Israel and Palestine, same cannot be said. Where these structures are weak or practically non-existent, the system becomes dysfunctional; and every dysfunctional system is characterized by anomalies which serve as precipitants for all forms of unacceptable behaviour by groups and individuals within the political system. Expectedly, the theory has been criticized on various grounds.

It was criticized for not taking into cognizance the conflictual nature of political systems knowing that dominant institutions repress weaker groups and that conflict pervades all of society, including the family, the economy, polity, and education. The criticisms earlier pointed out notwithstanding, the Frustration Aggression Theory and the Structural Functional Theory has provided the framework for interrogating the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

Conceptual Review

Ethnic Conflict: Conflict as a social phenomenon is dynamic and complex, comparable to seven blind men that were asked to describe an elephant, each came out with a description of their experience, while some said that an elephant is like a tree, others said an elephant is like a hill, etc., so this study harnesses experiences to explain the basic human development, interdependence and challenges within the society and to describe imbalances, inequalities and friction that existed through human history ordinarily known as conflict. The issues in conflict cannot be over emphasized, nations globally grapple with one form of conflict or the other, from communal clashes and ethnic conflicts, to several forms of wars, all points at the dynamics of the society's journey to stability.

Conflict is a fundamental feature in human existence. Nnoli (1998) argued in that direction. In his work, "Ethnic Conflicts in Africa", he argued that conflict is a contradiction that exists at all spheres of the society, individuals, groups, institutions, and in international relations. To him, it is a backlash or the contradictions that are born out of societal complex interdependence. Attempts to manage these interests, ideological differences, sentiments, orientations, perceptions of inter group existence in some ways produce friction. Conflict is thus a universal social phenomenon that seems unavoidable. Conflict might sound intractable to human survival but same time inevitable within the social system, organizations, and families. It can be intra-national or international in nature. Interests provoke conflict and it is globally ubiquitous.

Several conclusions have been advanced by scholars to understanding conflict, ranging from personality differences, incompatible needs and interests, especially when many needs are pursuing scarce resources (Alao, 2015), when perceptions vary, and opinions are diverse. From World War II till date, the world has been inundated with

conflicts ranging from soft conflicts, organizational conflicts, and ethnic conflicts, to high octane wars.

There are factors that inadvertently provoke conflict and high in the order is interest, when there is conflicting agenda and different outcomes (Nnoli, 1998). Demand placed on government could lead to conflict (Easton, 1953). Conflict depends on social interaction for its manifestation; it is synonymous to the scientific friction where the nature of surface provides support or opposes motion. Friction is inevitable. The state of the surface determines the force of friction, like the social forces in a social relationship which encompasses the economy, culture, religion, and politics. These interactions help to establish the communal relationship that maintains and stabilizes the society. It can as well destabilize the society.

The Israeli-Palestinian crisis is a reference point when we speak of an ethnic conflict that has metamorphosed into a full-fledged conflagration. It has cost hundreds of deaths, displacements, and other forms of socio-economic crisis. Today, the impact has taken a global dimension. And this reinforces the postulations of the theories adopted in this study. At the root of the crisis is frustration and non-existence of institutional framework that defines the co-existence of the Israelis and Palestinians when the colonial British government's attempted to establish a Jewish state within the mandate Palestinian territory in 1948. While the attempt was vehemently resisted by the Arabs, the Jews accepted it. The consequence has been revolts that have culminated in wars. The spillover effect of the crisis is evident. It has spilled over to Iran, Lebanon and Yemen; with the United States remaining a staunch ally of Israel.

Sustainable Global Peace: The centerpiece of sustainable global peace is the prevention of wars and addressing the root causes of conflicts through sustainable development which includes economic growth and equitable resource distribution. This is with a view to promoting inclusivity, justice and also aiding international cooperation. And importantly, creating an understandable relationship and building bridges across ethnic, cultural, and religious groups and circles. This will in the long run help in addressing their perceived differences, encourage groups and persons and create a veritable atmosphere for peace and conflict resolution and create an equitable society within the context of SDG 16 & 17 which speaks to Partnership, Planet, People, Prosperity and Peace (UN, 2023).

In achieving this, collective action is inevitable because it is instrumental to growth, and development. Noteworthy is the UN's sustainable growth and development which provides that the essence of peace rests upon economic prosperity, social inclusivity, environmental stewardship and equitable governance. The SDG 16 which encompasses peace, justice, and strong institutions might remain an illusion except ethnic

tensions and crisis such as one under study is equitably resolved through ethnic equity. Not just the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but other conflicts.

Ethnic Equity: Ethnic equity within the context of this study is rooted in the African traditional rights or ancestral heritage; a right that equally pervades most cultural societies. It is always not about welfare but the quest to preserve ancient root. This study recognizes the significance of ethnic equity as a panacea to ethnic conflict. Ethnic equity as different from equality, while equality generalizes, equity takes into account various layers of the subject matter, it looks into the historical, institutional, political, economic, and philosophical imbalances faced by various ethnic groups (Fraser, 2000) and takes strategic and technical actions to correct such imbalances. Equality strives to mete out same treatment to all while equity concerns itself with identifying peculiar needs. Lucia Melcore, the HR Director, Equality and Inclusion Europe and Global E & I Practice at P & G corroborated this position. At the World Economic Forum (WEF), she pointed out that "one size fits it all approach doesn't work" (Lucia, 2025) in solving ethnic problems.

It is therefore pertinent that with respect to ethnic conflicts, groups, policy makers, institutions and persons that superintend peace initiatives and conflict resolution adhere to the principle of equity, which implies identifying peculiar needs of parties to the conflict. The failure to overtime identify and address the peculiarities of the Israeli-Palestinian ethnic communities escalated the conflict to its intractable level. This goes to explain that inequities if not properly accounted for, could snowball conflicts, generate frustration and turn it into aggression. And this invariably constitutes a barrier to the realization of SDGs especially goal 16 & 17. Conclusively, the imbalances created by the insensitiveness to equity accounts for the on-going conflagration in the Middle East between Israel and Palestine. According to Taylor (1994), ethnic conflict is beyond the struggle for limited resources but also the struggle for recognition. This interestingly represents the case under study. This study thus highlights the significance of equity in handling ethnic cases.

Historical Overview of Israel-Palestinian Relations/Conflict

The history of Palestine before 1948 was complex, being a society with diverse cultures, harmony and conflict was the hallmark. Palestine, located in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin is bordered by modern-day Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon (Albright, 1940). It was hitherto a melting pot of different cultures and civilizations. Prior to 1948, it was home to Arabs, Jews, and Christian groups, as all these groups had religious ties to the area, especially the city of Jerusalem. Power had regularly changed hands in the territory. It was under the control of various empires, such as the Assyrians, Babylonians,

Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, and eventually the Islamic Caliphate and the Ottoman Empire (Pappe, 2004). Eventually, the League of Nations granted Britain a mandate to administer Palestine. As further argued by Pappe (2004) the British Mandate aimed to establish a national home for the Jewish people; while also protecting the rights of the Arab majority. According to him, the arrangement triggered tension between the Arab and Jewish communities leading to widespread unrest and violence.

The establishment of the State of Israel and the subsequent Sixth Day War however had an indelible impact on the region. It resulted in the displacement of the Palestinian people and foregrounded the struggles for a sovereign Palestinian state (Oren, 2002). Buck passing ensued, with both sides laying claims to the land. The claims and counter claims were premised on history. In about 722 BC, the kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Judah alone was spared. In less than a century and half later, Judah was overthrown. Its capital Jerusalem was sacked, the Jewish Temple destroyed and many of Judah's inhabitants were exiled (Koch, 2023).

Following the exile's end a little under 50 years later, the territory of the former kingdom of Judah served as the heart of Judaism for almost seven centuries, although the rebuilt Temple was again destroyed in AD 70, by the Romans (Koch, I, 2023). In 135 AD, following a failed Jewish revolt, Roman Emperor Hadrian expelled the Jews from Jerusalem and decreed that the city and surrounding territory be part of a larger entity called Syria-Palestina (Goodman, M, 2007). Palestina took its name from the coastal territory of the ancient Philistines, Israel's historical enemies.

Following the Islamic conquest of the Middle East in the seventh century (Kennedy, 2007), Arab peoples began to settle in Palestina. Apart from about 90 years of Crusader domination, the land fell under Muslim control for just under 1,200 years. Although Jewish habitation never ceased, the population was overwhelmingly Arab. British control in the second half of the 19th century (Laqueur, 2003), coupled with the longstanding yearning of Jews in the diaspora to return to their ancestral land birthed the nationalistic movement called Zionism. The movement was driven by innate frustration from the experience of the holocaust, and by extension resentment over the Arabs occupation of the land. Going further, the land came under British control. The prevailing crisis was therefore a consequence of the 'The Balfour Declaration' of 1917. During World War 1, Britain pledged to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. This was christened the Balfour Declaration, after then Foreign Secretary Author Balfour. Eventually, British troops took control of the territory from the Ottoman Empire at the end of October 1917.

In 1923, Mandatory Palestine, which included the current state of Jordan, was created. The Jewish Holocaust triggered a chain of events. In 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 181, partitioning the land into Independent Arab

and Jewish States. The Arab rejected the resolution and Palestinian militias attacked Jewish settlements. Then in 1948, the Zionist leadership declared the founding of the state of Israel. The new Jewish state was immediately invaded by the coalition of the Arab states, in conjunction with Palestinian militants. However, the Palestinians lost almost 4/5th of their United Nations allotment. And a population of about Seven hundred thousand had been displaced (Al Jazeera, 2023). This event was called Al Nakba (the catastrophe). It laid the foundation for the territorial contestations that have persisted. But for the Jewish Israelis, it was the War of Independence.

In 1988, the Palestinian National Council issued a declaration of independence, and the UN General Assembly granted it a non-member observer status. In the Six-Day War of June 1967, Israel repelled what it perceived as a real existential threat, routing a heavy Arab military force massed at its borders. Israel's eventual seizure of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza during the war has left Palestinians under various forms of painful Israeli occupation or control.

A two-state solution, with clearly delineated boundaries seems to be the solution. But since 1990, these two warring ethnicities failed to negotiate a two state solution which could have represented the principle of equity. Israel predates Palestine with close to a thousand years, but along the line, the same territory became home primarily to an Arab population, again for more than a millennium. Impliedly therefore, both the Jews and Arabs have legitimate claim to the land. A large-scale Jewish migration to Palestine was accelerated by the quest to escape Nazism in Europe. Between 1918 and 1947, the Jewish population in Palestine increased from 6 percent to 33 percent.

As Palestinians were further displaced, Israel declared the annexation of East Jerusalem in 1980, but the international community still considers it an occupied territory. Palestinians on their side want East Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. The Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signed the Oslo Accords, which aimed to achieve peace within five years. It was the first time the two sides recognized each other.

The two-state solution is not a novel idea, neither is the resistance it has witnessed. During the British Mandate, the idea of a separate Jewish and Arab state was muted several times. However, these proposals were met with stiff resistance from both ethnicities, making it difficult for the British authorities to find a solution to the restiveness. In 1947, the United Nations proposed the partitioning of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem as an internationally administered city. The Jewish communities accepted the proposal but the Arab communities rejected the plan because in their view, the proposal didn't take their interests into cognizance. It eventually culminated in the outbreak of civil war (Al Jazeera, 2025).

In conclusion, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 effectively ended British rule in Palestine. But it did not settle the tensions about territory. Rather, it triggered the first Arab-Israeli War, which as earlier noted involved a coalition of the neighboring Arab countries. The war resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs. Israel captured the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip (Khalid, 1992), with Gaza Strip and the West Bank becoming occupied territories. Presently, humanitarian conditions in these have deteriorated. This conflict has led to the rise of Palestinian nationalism, as the Palestinian people sought to establish their own state and regain their lost lands. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has engendered a retinue of peace initiatives and negotiations, but a comprehensive and equitable solution remains elusive. This study however argues in favor of ethnic equity as a way out.

Analysis of the Conflicts' Causative Factors

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be traced to a myriad of factors. This study however focused on two, the structural and philosophical factors. The structural framework underscores the total structure of the region under study. This includes the socio-economic and the political system. The geo-politics of the Middle East region is embedded in the struggle for the control of the territory and the natural resources, the diverse belief systems, and the contest for political authority. And at the root of the foregoing is international meddlesomeness and colonial interference. British control and the process that led to the establishment of the state of Israel created an antagonistic parallel between the two ethnic groups. The lack of mutuality was further exacerbated by the absence of well-articulated social structures that can moderate actions and inactions in the territory.

Given that humans possess this tendency to behave in selfish and egoist manners, order is inevitable in all societies. Hechter and Horne (2009) argued that for social order to arise and be maintained, two separate problems must be overcome. People must be able to coordinate their actions and they must cooperate to attain common goals. Coordination in this context requires that people develop stable expectations about others' behaviour. For example, Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza in 2007 after the Hamas group came to power. The siege continues till date. Israel also occupies the West Bank and East Jerusalem-the territories Palestinians want to be part of their future state. It will be unnatural to expect that these actions will not precipitate responses which we simply call conflict.

About five million Palestinians live in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem and 1.6 million Palestinians are citizens of Israel. This makes up about half of their total population. The other half lives in other countries, including Arab countries. There are about 14.7 million Jews around the world today, of which 84 percent live in Israel and the United States. The rest live in other countries including France, Canada, Argentina and

Russia (Al Jazeera, 2025). Thus, highly ordered societies have a remarkable capacity to sustain cooperation contrary to the building of Israeli settlements and a separation wall on occupied territories which has fragmented the Palestinian communities and restricted their mobility; about 700 road obstacles, including 140 checkpoints across the West Bank. About 70,000 Palestinians with Israeli work permits cross these checkpoints in their daily commute. This, no doubt will engender frustration which can in return fuel conflicts. The absence of mutual consensus on the social and structural configuration of the territory is therefore a factor in the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

The second factor derives from the philosophical perspective and level of analysis. Scholars, especially those of the primordial persuasion argued that ethnic conflicts stems from the innate attachment to rigid ethnic nationalism and deep rooted loyalty to one's ethnic group, this includes the group language, culture, and ancestry which are seen as a mark of belongingness and identity (Killick, 2011). To him, these perception leads to conflict in the midst of competition with others.

Taylor (1992) equally posits that identity politics is a precursor to ethnic conflict. He argues that when a group feels not recognized or excluded from the cultural framework of the state, it provokes ethnic sentiments and historic grievances. To him, ethnic conflict is beyond struggle for limited resources but also recognition. Protection of cultural identity is therefore a factor in the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. The philosophical perspective explains the response of the ethnic groups in question to various developments in the region. The Israelis could respond violently in the face of threat of aggression toward them because to them, it portends a threat to their existence. Same manner the Palestinians reacted to the inflow of the Jewish returnees from the European Holocaust, the Barfour declaration, partition of the Palestinian land and the eventual declaration of the Jewish state. According to Taylor (1992), the misrecognition or denial of identity can be causal moral harm and justify resistance. He insisted that ethnic conflict is a struggle for recognition, not just for resources or power because in his words, due recognition is not just courtesy; it is a vital human need. This study argues therefore argues that the Israeli-Palestinian crisis revolves around the foregoing factors. But not in any way foreclosing other factors, be it minute or significant.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The SDGs are a developmental framework canvassed in 2015 as a response to the debilitating poverty and violent conflict ravaging the global community. Most of these conditions arose from ethnic conflicts and high intensity wars which set the international community on a precarious pedestal because of the attendant international humanitarian crisis. These goals, set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) formerly articulated and adopted 17 interrelated objectives designed to serve as a shared blue print for peace and prosperity in all forms. Pointedly, agenda 16 and 17 are very

crucial to realizing the SDG mandate by 2030. This study identified ethnic conflict as being antithetical to the achievement of these goals. According to Kymlicka (2021), most countries are culturally diverse, and multiple ethnic societies are prone to conflict. He pointed out that there is an estimated 184 independent states, with over 600 living language groups, and about 5,000 ethnic groups. The consequence needs no explanation.

The United Nations dashboard on global ethnic conflicts annual report on mostly ethnic driven conflicts has the following: during the last five years high intensity armed conflicts accounted for 40% of all armed conflicts, in 2016, and 2017 to 27% and 32% between 2018 and 2019, repeating and increased significantly in 2020 when it got to 47% , with 2021 with the highest intensity reached to 53% and 2022 to 52%, notably Africa presented 12 of the 17 high intensity armed conflicts globally at above 70% (Alert, 2023). The United Nations did not stay aloof. It engaged in peace making, mediation, peace building, socio-economic development, protection of minorities and human rights, but yet these conflicts escalates, ethnic conflict continue to be the Achilles heels in terms of conflicts.

This study is a robust contribution in addressing the menace of ethnic conflicts. And in doing this, the study identified and drew attention to ethnic equity as a solution to the protracted challenge of ethnic conflict ravaging communities and societies, especially the Israel and Palestine crisis which formed the focal point of the study. The study conceptualized ethnic equity from the perspective of ethnic recognition. This presupposes paying adequate attention to the grievances of the host communities as contrasted to equality. A deliberate balancing borne out of deliberately taking into cognizance the needs and cultural peculiarities of Israel and Palestine pre-establishment of the Israeli state perhaps would have been the magic wand. It possibly would have forestalled the crisis in the region. And the same can be said of other countries experiencing similar ethnic conflicts around the world. Be it Ethiopia-Tigre; Nigeria's North Central farmers-herders clashes, et cetera.

Conclusively, with respect to the questions earlier posed in the study, the study argues that ethnic conflict goes beyond ensuring that everyone regardless of their ethnicity has equal access and opportunities and resources, but rather, recognizing the peculiar needs and requests of host communities or nations. This is because the dynamic circumstances in conflict societies effectively render one size fit all approach impotent. More so when you consider the fact that ethnic conflicts are not always about the struggle for limited resources but also the struggle for recognition.

Recommendations

This following recommends are put forward to get the nation out of the woods;

1. This paper advocates for a new grooming process/framework for the recruitment of public officials in Nigeria. The subsisting system has failed in this respect as such, the need to come up with a new framework that will streamline the process for better efficiency and for better results.

2. Similarly, this paper recommends the establishment of more leadership and governance institutes in the country to cater for the needs of prospective public officials in Nigeria. In a similar manner, it calls for the expansion of the mandates of existing leadership institutes-NIIA, NIPSS etc. to ensure they do more assist in this regard. The expansion of the operations of the existing leadership training institutes should include other categories of individuals including career public servants, technocrats and business executives.

3. This paper equally calls on political parties who serve as vehicles for elective offices to key into this new framework and objective in the interests of the nation. By implication, this study recommends the amendment of the electoral act in this regard by stipulating that persons or political parties ensure that aspirants have some level of certification and competence from accredited leadership institutes. Political parties must ensure that the size of the pockets should not necessarily guarantee candidacy but, adequate knowledge about governance and leadership are major prerequisites. The country can no longer gamble with leadership recruitment or governance.

4. This paper equally calls on leaders of thought and opinion moulders in the country to lead an advocacy campaign to address Nigeria's leadership deficit. Acknowledging this challenge will provide the leeway to change course of action. After 26 years of democratic practice, the time to ensure that only those prepared for public office and governance get the nod from these persons. For this reason, our resolve to change the narrative must be loud, clear and unambiguous.

5. Finally, this paper calls for more diligence by security and intelligence agencies who are saddled with the responsibility of screening and clearing prospective candidates before they are presented to the public. This call has become important against the backdrop of discovery of persons with forged certificate, or with questionable records after they had secured electoral victory. The deployment of more resources by these security agencies and the screening out of these individuals of questionable character or records is very germane to addressing the nations' leadership challenges. As we go on in our democratic experience, we must all resolve that the nation puts its best hands forward for elective positions. This is important in our path and journey to peace, progress and prosperity for all.

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