Research paper on the european union in the israeli-palestinian conflict

[Experience](), [Peace]()

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The European Union in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

- Introduction and Research Question

For decades, the Israelis and the Palestinians had remained at odds with one another because of the decades-old conflict on mutual recognition, territorial boundaries, and national identities that still remains unresolved despite various negotiations held for the resolution of the conflict. According to Tessler (1994), the conflict can be traced since the 19th century when the Zionists and the Arabs first came into contact and argued as to their right of access and claim to the religious sites such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Canaan. However, the arguments escalated as the Arabs and Palestinians also have earlier claims in these areas. It was becoming visible to all parties that each would not back down from their claims and tried to foster a settlement. The Palestinians, at that period, were caught in between as they were led by the Arabs. The region was also corrupt, leaving the Palestinians under poverty, underdevelopment and disease despite the developments aimed to bring Palestine in line with its modernized neighbors.

After World War I, Isaac (2011) stated that Palestine slowly became

developed under British rule as its mandate in 1922, comprising 27, 000 sq. km and a population of over 700, 000 Palestinians and Jews. While it would seem that the Jews were open to a Palestinian state, it was visible that the Zionists were showing signs of revolt. The international community knew they had to step in to resolve the issue. A proposal on making a partition through the contested areas was proposed by the committees sent to the area, prompting the adoption of Resolution 181 or the UN Partition Plan of 1947. The Plan will divide Mandated Palestine into three regions: a Jewish state (56. 5%), an Arab state (43. 5%) and the " Corpus Separatum" or the internationally administered area comprising Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the other religious sites contested by all parties. The Arabs saw the proposal a violation of their sovereignty while the Zionists supported the Partition. The conflict further deepened in 1949 as the newly established Zionist-led Israel slowly forced the Arabs and Palestinians out of their homes and claimed 78% of the land comprising Mandated Palestine. While Jordan and Egypt still handles the remaining 22% of the land (Gaza Strip and the West Bank), Israel continues to occupy these areas illegally and causing the Palestinians and Arabs alike to take refuge in neighboring territories while fighting against Israel's actions.

As the conflict continued to escalate, the international community had varying positions over the issue but agreed the conflict must be stopped. In the case of Europe, Schweiss (2006) stated that with the Middle East and Europe being geographical neighbors, instability within the region would easily affect Europe. This may be visible through the influx on migration and a scarcity on oil as refugees would immediately go to Europe's borders while

instability would prevent European-Middle Eastern affairs from prospering.
Cooperation between the two regions is also crucial as it would determine
the effectiveness of Europe's human security policies, as well as their access
to oil and other commodities only found in the Middle East With the conflict
continuously causing problems not just for the parties involved, but also to
Europe's interest, the question now is what was the action done by the
European Union to influence the course of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
from 1940 to present?

Theoretical Framework

In order to understand the nature of the issue and the action done by the
European Union to influence the conflict, this research will use the
democratic peace theory. According to D'Anieri (2011) the democratic peace
theory argues that the interaction between states is crucial to peace.
Democratic states, on their end, behave differently as compared to
nondemocratic or autocratic states as they are often peaceful due to the lack
of violence and conflict. Policies and programs from democratic nations,
which often are shared with autocratic states could be seen as a means to
promote both democracy and peace. It is noted that the argument of the
theory shows that the peace experienced by democracies can explain the
rationale on why states go to war. Wars often done to install democracies
often entail peace for the long run, something that Woodrow Wilson had
argued when the US entered World War I. The validity of the argument,
however, is questioned because it should be considered that establishing
democracies may entail possible consequences to the nations or peace

would not be attained when war is invoked.

There are at least two versions of the democratic peace theory: the simple model and the dyadic model. It can also be considered liberalist in nature as it argues that peace is possible unlike the realists and structuralists' stance over the issue. The first model argues two notions, the public are disinclined to go to war and they have the capacity to stop their governments when it happens while authoritarian leaders start the wars to distract the public from their actions. This model had been conceptualized Immanuel Kant, writer of the book Perpetual Peace, which discussed that citizens are peaceful themselves because it is they who go into combat. Autocratic governments, in this end, disregards the capacity of their citizens, who can stop them but could not in fear of punishment. In terms of war, on the other hand, these autocratic regimes use it to emphasize their power. The second model or the dyadic/ cultural model argues that norms and values that is deeply enmeshed in democratic societies causes them to lean towards policies that focuses on peaceful settlement of war, such as those seen in UN Resolutions and EU Directives. However, both critics and skeptics had argued that these arguments are not explanatory as to how war could be justified. Wars are very rare and democracy itself is also quite rare in many regions in the planet. In this case, it should not be justified that democracies do not actually experience wars. There is also the argument that the theory does not take into account the changing political or economic climates each country has before it could be considered a democracy. An example to this is the case of Germany prior to World War I as political experts and scholars are still uncertain whether Pre-War Germany is a democracy. There is also

the agreement that the theory is difficult to sustain, especially when it comes to democracies that already have a history of conflict against their neighbors.

The theory will be applied in this study in answering and analyzing the nature and role of EU action to the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and how its programs attempt to emphasize EU's position on its resolution. The EU has long been a key proponent for international security since its creation and its members have long been concentrated in fostering peace they have attained since World War II. In this case, the theory's concept on democracy and peace mirrors EU's desire to help the Middle East find peace and stability and open borders and channels for both regions to communicate. The theory's arguments the connection between regimes (democratic or autocratic) and war would provide an insight in understanding the conflict. The concept of conditionality is also addressed by this theory as the EU pursues expansion of its connections to the two parties.

Literature Review

Aoun (2003) and Nabulsi () stated that the European Union, throughout the conflict acted as a main proponent of Israeli-Palestinian Peace Talks, pushing for a two-state solution that would create a Palestinian and Israeli state. Their position was mostly influenced by the fact that a possible spillover to Europe by the conflict is becoming imminent and they also believe that cooperation between the parties and EU would not be possible if wars continue to ravage the region. The original nine Member States had first entered the conflict on November 6, 1973 when the Yom Kippur War was

held, stating in a communique that they will support UN Resolution 242 and the legitimacy of the Palestinians caught in the conflict. This declaration of the EC had been in contradiction to American action as they believed that the American's strategy failed to influence Israel and the resolution of the Palestinian issue and pushing for a separate state for both Palestine and Israel would ultimately help in the recovery of both parties. Despite active support in insisting the peace talks for the two-state solution, a deadlock occurred as the US, Israel, the Arabs and the Palestinians were not actively in support of peace agreements such as the Oslo Accords. The continued deadlock between the parties had left the EU in the middle as the informal ' Geneva Accords' of 2002 was still unable to get parties to commit despite the financial and political backup coming from the EU, Russia and even by the United Nations. While the accords aimed to settle a compromise between Israel, America and the Palestinians, the EU mostly stayed out of the development process as they mostly focused on humanitarian and emergency aid in the region. There was a restriction to their movements by the time the Accords were developed, finding themselves unable to sustain its position throughout the conflict as some members supported the US while others were weary if they should sustain a separate position from the US. Nonetheless, the Geneva plan was slowly taking into effect; pressuring the Palestinians to support the initiatives. Palestine had criticized the Accords as they were not invited in such meetings and it would only be favorable to Europe's interest.

Further complications to EU's desire to foster peace in the issue were also seen by Barbe and Johansson-Nogues (2008) as the lack of recognition

regarding the HAMAS government in 2006 was only triggering further conflict. The Arabs have interpreted EU's refusal to acknowledge the HAMAS as a sign they were no longer interested in pushing for peace in the region, withholding bias towards the region. The EU member states even found themselves at odds when it came to pushing for democracy as the Union's credibility was put to the test when they did not recognize the ' terrorist' organization leading the Palestinians. With this in mind, the Arab nations are reluctant to accept funds from the EU, therefore lacking support in their position in actively fighting for the conflict's resolution. Hollis (2004) stated that the EU could overturn such complication by providing a framework that would allow the Arabs, Israelis and the Palestinians to gain from the peace process and make it possible for the Palestinian state to be created. Israel must be given a guarantee that while they are slowly withdrawing from the region and receiving aid, they would still be given means to foster a closer relationship with Europe. It is necessary to take into consideration that both needs and concerns of Israel and Palestine must be taken into consideration before EU action could work in sustaining their separate territories.

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