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Gender Dynamics In Conflict Prevention, Management, and Post-Conflicts Peacebuilding in Nigeria

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Abstract
This study investigates the complex interplay of gender dynamics in conflict prevention, management, and post-conflict peacebuilding in Nigeria, where deeply rooted patriarchal norms and gender inequalities exacerbate conflict and hinder sustainable peace. Recognising the marginalisation of women in peacebuilding efforts, the research aims to analyse the barriers to their meaningful participation and explore strategies for promoting gender mainstreaming. Employing a qualitative methodology based on a desktop review of existing literature, interviews, and surveys, the study examines the lived experiences of women peacebuilders. It analyses the impact of gender-sensitive policies and programs. Findings reveal that while women play crucial roles in grassroots peace initiatives, their contributions are often undervalued, and their needs are overlooked in formal peace processes. The study advocates for integrating gender perspectives into all aspects of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, emphasising the importance of systematic data collection, gender-sensitive indicators, and robust monitoring mechanisms. By addressing the root causes of gender inequality and empowering women in peacebuilding, Nigeria can foster a more inclusive and peaceful society.

Introduction

Conflict in Nigeria has multiple dimensions, particularly in the multi-religious and culturally diverse northern region. Gender roles and relationships remain circumscribed by patriarchal ideology and polygamy bigotry. Moreover, in a distinct Sharia-institutionalised domain, pre-colonial gender roles are reified. Consequently, pursuing causes of conflict and coexistence amid diversity is crucial to understanding the conflict dynamics, which is essential in developing models for peaceful coexistence and conflict prevention. Gender dynamics refer to the interplay of societal expectations, roles, and power relations between men and women within a particular context. Conflict management is the process of handling disagreements and disputes constructively and effectively. Conflict prevention aims to prevent the outbreak, escalation, and recurrence of violent conflict.

Traditionally, conflict management has primarily focused on political and military solutions; recent events have seen a growing recognition of the centrality of gender dynamics in achieving sustainable peace. As such, the critical role of women in conflict prevention, management, and resolution is increasingly recognised. The United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution (S/RES/1325) on women and peace and security (WPS) in 2000, which marked a watershed moment by acknowledging the disproportionate impact of conflict on women

and emphasising their vital contributions to peacebuilding (United Nations, n.d)). This global framework has spurred regional and national efforts to integrate gender perspectives into peace and security agendas.

Successful examples of gendered conflict resolution and peacebuilding approaches can be found globally. For instance, the Colombian peace process stands out for including women's voices. In contrast, in the Philippines, women played a vital role in the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) process following the Bangsamoro peace agreement (Centre for Women, Peace and Security, 2018). The African Union (AU) Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) (2003) further reinforces the commitment to women's rights and participation in conflict resolution (OHCHR, n.d). The AU has also significantly promoted the WPS agenda, establishing a network of Women Mediators deployed in mediation efforts throughout the continent (UN Women, 2023).

Following the 1994 genocide, Rwanda has made significant strides in women's political participation and gender equality. Women hold over 60% of parliamentary seats, and the country has implemented policies promoting women's inclusion in peacebuilding and security sectors (Dutta, 2023). In Liberia, for example, women played a crucial role in the peace process that ended the country's civil war and have been actively involved in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding. The women mobilised across ethnic and political divides to demand an end to the violence and participated in peace negotiations. Their involvement helped ensure that the peace agreement addressed gender equality and women's rights. The country has adopted legal frameworks promoting gender equality and women's participation in decision-making (Matilda & Simonsson, 2024). On the other hand, Nigeria has demonstrated commitment to international frameworks by adopting the National Gender Policy in 2006, which provides a framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The policy recognises the importance of women's participation in all aspects of national development, including peace and security. Nigeria adopted Nigeria's first NAP for 2013-2016 and the most recent National Action Plan (NAP) in 2017 for 2017-2020. Nigeria's WPS commitments are also in its national reporting for Beijing+25 and preparation for CSW64 (2020).

Nigeria grapples with diverse conflicts, from the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast to resource-based conflicts in the Niger Delta. While these crises affect all segments of society, women and girls often bear a disproportionate burden, facing heightened vulnerability to gender-based violence. These conflicts, whether intra- or inter-communal, often stem from deeper societal issues, including socioeconomic inequalities, weak governance, identity-based divisions, and, critically, gender inequality. Despite this resistance nationwide, women have participated in post-conflict peacebuilding to achieve sustainable peace. Women have played a key role in advocating for environmental justice and sustainable development in the region; women have also been involved in various peace initiatives; for example, in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, women have been actively involved in mediating conflicts between communities and oil companies.

In spite of women's advancements, reality reveals that women remain marginalised mainly in peacebuilding efforts, and implementation remains a significant challenge (Sheidu & Patrick, 2024). Conflict analysis in Nigeria has often been incomplete due to a lack of focus on gender dynamics and the exclusion of women from peacebuilding processes. Women's voices are often silenced,

their experiences overlooked, and their contributions undervalued in peacebuilding processes. For example, in negotiations with Boko Haram, women have largely been absent from the table, even though they are often the first to notice signs of radicalisation within their communities and could play a crucial role in preventing recruitment. For instance, in the ongoing conflict in northeastern Nigeria, women have been abducted, forced into marriage, and subjected to sexual slavery by Boko Haram. This marginalisation undermines their rights and hinders the effectiveness and sustainability of peace efforts (International Gender Champions, 2024).

Thus, the research addresses the imbalance by focusing more on women's situation, though inadequate recognition exists of women's barriers to participating meaningfully in peacebuilding processes. These barriers include insecurity, cultural norms, lack of access to resources, and political exclusion. In addition, the study explores the lack of gender-sensitive policies and programs that effectively address the specific needs and priorities of women in conflict-affected communities. It further examined the lived experiences of women peacebuilders and the complex interplay of gender, conflict, and peacebuilding. By highlighting women's challenges, this research will inform policy and practice to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in peacebuilding.

2. Conceptual clarification

2.0 The following terminologies and their definitions are essential for an in-depth understanding of gender dynamics in conflict prevention, management, and post-conflict peacebuilding. It is crucial to provide discussions of these definitions within the context of Nigeria to understand terms as they apply to Nigeria and thereby grasp the underlying perceptions of the Nigerian people.

2.1 The Concept of Gender

Cynthia Enloe (2018) defined gender as not just about women; it is about how power is distributed and exercised in society and how that affects both men and women." This definition highlights the importance of examining power relations in understanding gender dynamics in conflict.

Judith Butler (2002) defined gender as performative, meaning that it is produced through repeated acts and behaviours that reinforce social norms." This definition emphasises the dynamic and fluid nature of gender, which is constantly being constructed and reconstructed through social interactions.
Enloe's definition is suitable for the study as it provides a more comprehensive and relevant lens for examining the complex interplay of gender and power in Nigeria's conflict prevention, management, and peacebuilding context. It allows for a deeper understanding of how gender norms and power relations contribute to conflict and how they can be transformed to promote sustainable peace. The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 recognises the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls and calls for their increased participation in peacebuilding processes. It underscores the importance of considering gender in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution.

2.1 Gender Dynamic

Gender dynamics encompass the complex interplay of social roles, expectations, power structures, and norms that shape the relationships and interactions between individuals and groups based on gender. Various scholars have offered nuanced definitions; for example, Judith Butler (1990) views gender dynamics as performative, arguing that gender is not inherent but instead constructed through repeated acts and behaviours that reinforce societal expectations. (Butler, 1990). Raewyn Connell (2005) focuses on the concept of "gender order," which

encompasses the hierarchical power relations between different genders and how these relations are maintained and challenged. (Connell, 2005). Joan Scott (1986) emphasises the historical and cultural construction of gender, arguing that gender is not a fixed category but a fluid and dynamic concept constantly being negotiated and redefined. (Scott, 1986). The study chose Connell's and Scott's definitions because they integrate power relations by recognising the unequal power dynamics between genders and how these inequalities can exacerbate conflict and hinder peacebuilding efforts.

Furthermore, the definition acknowledged the influence of cultural norms, traditions, and beliefs on gender roles and expectations in Nigeria and how these factors shape the experiences of women and men in conflict and peacebuilding processes. Gender dynamics are not static but constantly evolving in response to social, political, and economic changes. This highlights the importance of considering the agency of women and men in challenging and transforming gender norms in the context of conflict and peacebuilding.

2.2 Conflict Prevention

Lund, M. S. (1996). Preventing Violent Conflicts: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy. Lund defines conflict prevention as "action to prevent the outbreak of violent conflict, to keep low-level conflicts from escalating into violence, and to limit the spread of violent conflict when it occurs." This definition emphasises a multi-stage approach, addressing potential conflict at various intensity levels. Wallensteen, P. (2002). Understanding Conflict Resolution: War, Peace, and the Global System. Wallensteen proposes that conflict prevention involves "measures to identify and address the root causes of conflict before they escalate into violence." This definition highlights the importance of proactive measures and addressing underlying conflict-related issues.

Harris, P., & Reilly, B. (Eds.). (2011). Democracy and deep-rooted conflict: Options for negotiators. Harris and Reilly suggest that conflict prevention encompasses "efforts to address structural and systemic factors that create an environment conducive to conflict." This definition broadens the scope to include social, economic, and political structures that can contribute to conflict. United Nations (UN). (1998). Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. The UN defines conflict prevention as "action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur." This definition, similar to Lund's, focuses on preventing the emergence and escalation of conflict.

The study chose Lund (1996) and Wallensteen (2002) as the most suitable for the research based on the notion that conflict prevention encompasses actions taken to identify and address the root causes of conflict, including social, economic, and political inequalities, intending to prevent the outbreak of violence, keeping low-level conflicts from escalating, and limiting the spread of conflict when it occurs. The definitions by Lund and Wallensteen acknowledge the multi-faceted nature of conflict and the need to address root causes, including social, economic, and political factors. This is crucial when examining gender dynamics, as gender inequality often intersects with other forms of inequality to contribute to conflict. Further, it emphasises proactive measures to prevent violence before it erupts, aligning with the research topic's focus on conflict prevention. The author's definitions created space for examining how gender norms, roles, and power dynamics contribute to conflict by highlighting the importance of addressing root causes, including social inequalities. The applicability of these definitions to Nigeria's context allows for the examination of various conflict contexts in Nigeria, including inter-communal conflicts,

ethno-religious conflicts, and resource-based conflicts, all of which are influenced by gender dynamics.

2.3 Conflicts Management

Rahim (2011) defines conflict management as "a process in which the parties involved attempt to resolve their disagreements." This definition emphasises the processual nature of conflict management and the active role of the parties in seeking resolution. Lederach (1997) offers a more nuanced definition, stating that conflict management is "the capacity to transform relationships, attitudes, and structures that produce violence into those that foster justice and peace." This definition highlights the transformative potential of conflict management and its focus on addressing the root causes of conflict.

Wallensteen (2007) defines conflict management as "the use of different techniques and mechanisms to handle and transform actual or potential violent conflict into peaceful processes of social and political change." This definition emphasises using various tools and strategies to address conflict and promote peaceful change. Fisher and Ury (1981), in their seminal work "Getting to Yes," define conflict management as "a method of negotiation that focuses on identifying the underlying interests of the parties and finding mutually acceptable solutions." This definition emphasises the importance of understanding the needs and interests of all parties involved in a conflict.

The study chose Lederach's (1997) definition of conflict management as the most suitable: "The capacity to transform relationships, attitudes, and structures that produce violence into those that foster justice and peace." The definition explores gender dynamics in various stages of conflict, including prevention, management, and post-conflict peacebuilding. Lederach's definition emphasises the transformative potential of conflict management, which aligns with the research's aim to understand how gender dynamics can contribute to positive change. The definition acknowledges the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict, including relationships, attitudes, and structures. This is particularly relevant to the research topic, which seeks to examine the role of gender in shaping these factors.

In addition, the definition explicitly mentions peacebuilding as a goal of conflict management. This is directly relevant to the research topic, which includes post-conflict peacebuilding as a key area of inquiry. The definition also highlights the importance of fostering justice in conflict management. This is crucial for the research topic, which seeks to understand how gender dynamics can contribute to a more just and equitable society.

2.4 Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

The UN defines peacebuilding as "a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development." (UN, 2000)

Barnet, Kim, O'Donnell & Sitea, Lt (2007) define peacebuilding as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict." (p. 7) Call and Cousens (2008) offer a broader definition, describing peacebuilding as "an attempt to overcome the structural, relational, and cultural legacies of violence and to address the root causes of a conflict." (p. 15). Mac Ginty (2010) emphasises the transformative aspect, defining peacebuilding as "a political process that is focused on creating a more peaceful, just and sustainable set of relationships and institutions." (p. 295). The study chose Call and Cousens (2008) as the most suitable because the definition explicitly addresses the "root causes" of conflict, which is crucial for understanding how gender dynamics contribute to conflict and

how peacebuilding efforts can address these underlying issues.

Further, it encompasses structural, relational, and cultural dimensions, providing a holistic framework for analysing the complex interplay of gender and conflict in Nigeria. The definition emphasises transformation by aiming to "overcome the legacies of violence," highlighting the transformative nature of peacebuilding, which is essential for achieving sustainable peace and gender equality. Thus, the definition explores how gender norms, roles, and power relations influence conflict dynamics and peacebuilding processes.

3. Methodology

This research employs qualitative data collection and analysis techniques using desktop review. The study gathered qualitative data through past interviews with key stakeholders, including women's organisations, government officials, and community leaders. It also collected data through surveys and analysis of existing datasets related to conflict and peacebuilding in Nigeria. The study utilised the participatory approach, providing a deeper understanding of their contributions and challenges. The study generated evidence-based insights to inform policy and practice to empower women and enhance participation, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and prosperous Nigeria.

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1 Feminist theory

The roots of feminist theory can be traced back to early thinkers like Mary Wollstonecraft (1792), who challenged the prevailing notion of women's inherent inferiority and advocated for equal rights. However, the formal development of feminist theory as an academic discipline emerged in the late 20th century with the rise of the second-wave feminist movement. Pioneering thinkers like Simone de Beauvoir (1949), Betty Friedan (1963), and bell hooks (1981) challenged the traditional patriarchal assumptions that underpinned social, political, and economic structures. At its core, feminist theory seeks to understand and address the systemic inequalities and power imbalances between genders. It critiques patriarchal structures that privilege men and marginalise women and advocates for social, political, and economic equality. Feminist theory also emphasises the importance of intersectionality, recognising that gender intersects with other social categories, such as race, class, and ethnicity, to create unique experiences of oppression and discrimination. Feminist theory helps to illuminate the specific ways in which conflict affects women and men differently. For example, women are often disproportionately affected by sexual violence, displacement, and economic hardship during conflict. Feminist theory highlights women's crucial role in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding. Women's participation in peace processes has led to more sustainable and inclusive peace agreements.

Feminist theory provides a framework for challenging the patriarchal norms and structures that contribute to conflict and hinder peacebuilding efforts. This includes addressing issues such as gender-based violence, unequal access to resources, and limited political participation for women. Feminist theory advocates for integrating gender perspectives into all aspects of peacebuilding, from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction, by focusing on their active roles in mediating disputes and fostering reconciliation. For example, in Plateau State, women from different ethnic and religious groups formed peace committees to address the root causes of farmer-herder conflicts, facilitating dialogue and mediating community disputes. Another example is that women in the Northeast have organised protests and advocacy campaigns to end the Boko Haram insurgency and demanded that the government address the humanitarian

crisis (Imam, Biu and Maina Yahi, 2020).

Feminist theory emphasises women's contributions to post-conflict reconciliation and healing, often through community-level initiatives that promote forgiveness and social cohesion. For example, in 2019, the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta reported that the women's groups in Rivers State organised inter-communal dialogues and reconciliation workshops to address the legacy of violence and promote peaceful coexistence in areas affected by militancy and oil-related conflicts.

While feminist theory offers valuable insights into gender dynamics in Nigeria, its limitations and potential exceptions are that Feminist theory must recognise the diversity of experiences among women in Nigeria, considering factors such as ethnicity, religion, class, and sexual orientation. Owing to the fact that conflict affects women from different ethnic and religious groups in distinct ways. For example, in the Northeast, Christian women face targeted abduction and forced conversion by Boko Haram, while Muslim women experience stigma and suspicion due to their association with the insurgency (Crisis Group, 2016).

It is important to state that ethnic and religious identities can influence women's access to resources and opportunities. In some communities, cultural and religious norms may restrict women's mobility and participation in public life, limiting their involvement in peacebuilding. (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2015). This study believes that while feminist theory often focuses on women's experiences, it is crucial to consider men's roles and experiences in conflict and peacebuilding. Feminist theory encourages critical reflection on how societal expectations of masculinity can contribute to violence and conflict. Engaging men in discussions about these norms can promote healthier expressions of masculinity that value peace and non-violence.

For instance, the MenEngage Nigeria network works with men and boys to challenge harmful gender norms and promote gender equality. They have conducted workshops and community dialogues on topics such as responsible fatherhood, preventing violence against women, and promoting peaceful conflict resolution. (MenEngage, 2020).

The following studies document case examples demonstrating gender perspectives in conflict prevention to illustrate the feminist theory. One such case study is the Sotitobire Church incident in Ondo State (BBC, 2021). The incident itself did not stem from gender inequality. The reactions and consequences revealed deeply ingrained gender biases and the vulnerability of women and children in such situations. The Inter-Religious Women Peacemakers of Southern Kaduna and the Traditional Women in Kaita demonstrate how women, leveraging their social positions and cultural understanding, contribute significantly to conflict prevention, management, and post-conflict peacebuilding (World Council of Churches, 2021). Each case example reflects unique details, but multiple common lessons emerged.

5. Scholarly Review of Gender Dynamics in Conflict Prevention, Management and Peacebuilding

Enloe (2000) pioneered the analysis of conflict's gendered impacts, highlighting how conflicts disproportionately affect women and men, often exacerbating preexisting gender inequalities. This foundational work paved the way for further research on women's specific vulnerabilities and needs in conflict settings. Cockburn (2004) further emphasised the disproportionate impact of conflict on women, particularly their vulnerability to sexual violence, displacement, and economic hardship. This work drew attention to the

urgent need for protection and support for women during and after conflicts.

Pankhurst (2008) focused on gendered power structures, demonstrating how conflicts often reflect and reinforce existing power hierarchies, including gender inequalities. This analysis underscored the importance of addressing power imbalances in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. Rehn and Sirleaf (2002) highlighted women's exclusion from decision-making processes and limited access to resources, which hinder their ability to influence conflict resolution. This work emphasised the need for women's meaningful participation in all stages of peace processes. Paffenholz (2013) proved that women's participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction contributes to more durable and inclusive peace agreements. This research reinforced the argument for women's inclusion as a critical factor for sustainable peace.

Mazurana and McKay (2004) argued that women's perspectives and priorities can challenge traditional power dynamics and promote transformative change. This perspective highlighted the unique contributions that women can make to peacebuilding efforts. True (2012) stressed the importance of gender-sensitive conflict analysis for identifying the underlying gender dynamics that fuel and perpetuate conflict. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of conflict and informs effective interventions. Jennings (2007) argued that addressing the root causes of gender violence is essential for building sustainable peace. This perspective emphasised the need to tackle the underlying structural and cultural factors that contribute to gender-based violence.

Meger (2007) pointed to the resistance to change as a significant challenge in promoting gender equality in peace processes. Patriarchal norms and profoundly entrenched power structures often hinder progress towards gender justice. Carpenter (2003) highlighted the ongoing marginalisation and discrimination faced by women in conflict and post-conflict settings. This work emphasised the need for continued advocacy and action to address these persistent challenges. Crenshaw (1989) introduced the concept of intersectionality, emphasising the importance of recognising the interconnectedness of gender with other social identities, such as race, ethnicity, and class. This framework allows for a more comprehensive understanding of women's complex experiences in conflict.

Yuval-Davis (2006) further developed the concept of intersectionality, arguing that these intersecting factors can compound women's experiences of conflict and marginalisation. This perspective underscored the need for inclusive and responsive peacebuilding efforts. Kabeer (2005) argued that opportunities exist for transformative change, emphasising the importance of empowering women through education, economic opportunities, and political participation. This approach focuses on strengthening women's agency and enabling them to challenge discriminatory norms.

Sjoberg (2010) believed that continued advocacy and awareness-raising efforts can contribute to normative shifts that promote gender equality and women's inclusion in peacebuilding. This perspective highlighted the importance of sustained efforts to challenge harmful gender norms and promote social change. Despite the significant contributions of these scholars, much of the research focuses on women's experiences; this study provides a more balanced study on men's and women's roles in conflict and peacebuilding, including how masculinities are constructed and how they can be transformed to promote gender equality. Moreover, to capture the diversity of women's experiences in conflict and peacebuilding, the study better accounts for the intersectionality of gender with other social

identities, such as ethnicity, religion, class, and sexual orientation. Over and above, the study utilised more longitudinal research to track the long-term impacts of conflict and peacebuilding interventions on gender relations and women's empowerment.

6. Gender and Conflict in Nigeria

Nigeria has long been plagued by conflict ranging from ethnic and religious clashes to resource-based disputes, and the Boko Haram insurgency has had devastating consequences for the country's people and its development (Çancı & Odukoya, 2016). While the triggers of these conflicts may vary, gender inequality is a critical underlying factor that exacerbates conflict intensity and perpetuates its cyclical nature. A study by Dahal, Joshi, and Swahnberg (2022) identified that a power play between men and women reinforces inequality and increases the likelihood of violence for women. Interestingly, conflicts in Nigeria disproportionately affect women and men, often exacerbating pre-existing gender inequalities. While conflicts affect both men and women, the impacts are often experienced differently due to existing gender roles and power dynamics.

Women, in particular, face heightened risks of sexual violence, displacement, and economic hardship due to disrupted livelihoods and the burden of caring for displaced families (OHCHR, n.d). The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the outbreak of violence in Sudan serve as stark reminders of the tragic consequences women suffer in conflict situations, including indiscriminate attacks, inhumane detention, and a range of rights abuses (United Nations, 2024).

While women bear the brunt of conflict's consequences, men are not just the primary perpetrators of organised violence. Men often face targeted forced recruitment into armed groups or are forced to participate in combat, exposing them to violence and trauma. An example is the military junta in Myanmar, which has a long history of forcibly recruiting men and boys into its army. These recruits are often subjected to abuse and forced to participate in operations against ethnic minority groups. Another is the Boko Haram terrorist group, which forcibly recruited thousands of young men and boys in northeastern Nigeria. The fact that men are victims of forced recruitment into terrorist groups does not negate the reality that dominant conceptions of masculinity, which often emphasise aggression and violence, play a significant role in conflict (Sjoberg, 2010). While men are victims of forced recruitment, they can also become perpetrators of violence within these groups. This perpetuates the cycle of violence and reinforces harmful gender norms.

As Sjoberg notes, men are often the "ideologues, strategists, and executors" of violence, perpetuating a cycle of conflict fuelled by toxic masculinity. The statement by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in an interview with NBC News in 2014, *"A man's got to do what a man's got to do, and a country's got to do what a country's got to do,"* exemplifies this mindset. However, it is crucial to recognise that men are not a monolithic group and that masculinities are diverse and fluid. Some men actively challenge harmful gender norms and engage in peacebuilding efforts. For instance, organisations like MenEngage Africa work to engage men in promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women.

It is crucial to analyse the intersectionality of gender with other social identities, such as ethnicity, religion, class, and sexual orientation, to understand the impact of conflict on women fully. These intersecting factors can compound women's experiences of conflict and marginalisation. For example, women from minority ethnic or religious groups may face discrimination and exclusion, making them

even more vulnerable in conflict situations. In the predominantly Muslim north, Christian women face discrimination and marginalisation, which can intensify during religious conflicts. They may be targeted for attacks, abduction, or forced conversion. For example, during the 2011 post-election violence in Kaduna, Christian women were specifically targeted for sexual violence and killings (Orji & Uzodi, 2012).

7. Gender Inequality as a Driver of Conflict

Gender inequality is manifested through economic marginalisation, political exclusion, and patriarchal norms, and it is a fundamental driver of conflict in Nigeria. Deeply ingrained patriarchal norms that normalise male dominance and female subordination contribute significantly to conflict dynamics. These norms often justify violence against women, creating a climate of fear and insecurity. Moreover, women in Nigeria face significant economic disparities, with limited access to education, land ownership, and inheritance (World Bank, 2021). When women are denied equal access to land, credit, and economic opportunities, it can exacerbate poverty and fuel competition over scarce resources. This can lead to tensions and conflict, particularly in communities dependent on agriculture or natural resources. In Nigeria's Middle Belt, where farmer-herder conflicts are prevalent, women often have limited land ownership rights and access to decision-making in land management.

This can contribute to disputes over grazing routes and access to water, escalating tensions between communities (World Bank, 2007). This marginalisation pushes women into informal and low-paying sectors, fuelling social tensions and grievances. For example, Girls often face barriers to accessing education, early marriage, child labour, and cultural norms that prioritise boys' education. This limits their future opportunities and earning potential. World Bank's 2017 and 2018 reports stated that child brides are much more likely to drop out of school and complete fewer years of education than their peers who marry early. For example, Amina, a young woman from Northern Nigeria, shared, *"I had to drop out of school when I was 13 to get married. My parents said getting an education was more important for my brothers.* "Women often face discriminatory customary laws and practices restricting their ability to own and inherit land. This limits their access to credit and economic independence.

Human Rights Watch in 2017 reported that women are often told shortly after the deaths of their husbands that the relatives intend to take over the homes and lands or other property where the husband and wife had lived for decades. A Zimbabwe widow had this to say: *"My husband died, and his brothers took all the land. They said it belongs to the men in the family, even though I worked on that land with my husband for years"* Women are disproportionately represented in the informal sector, where they often work in precarious and low-paying jobs with little or no social protection. A 2018 International Labour Organisation (ILO) study estimate shows that 93% of all employment in Nigeria is informal, with 95% of women working in the informal sector compared to 90% of men. Furthermore, the underrepresentation of women in political decision-making processes further exacerbates conflict.

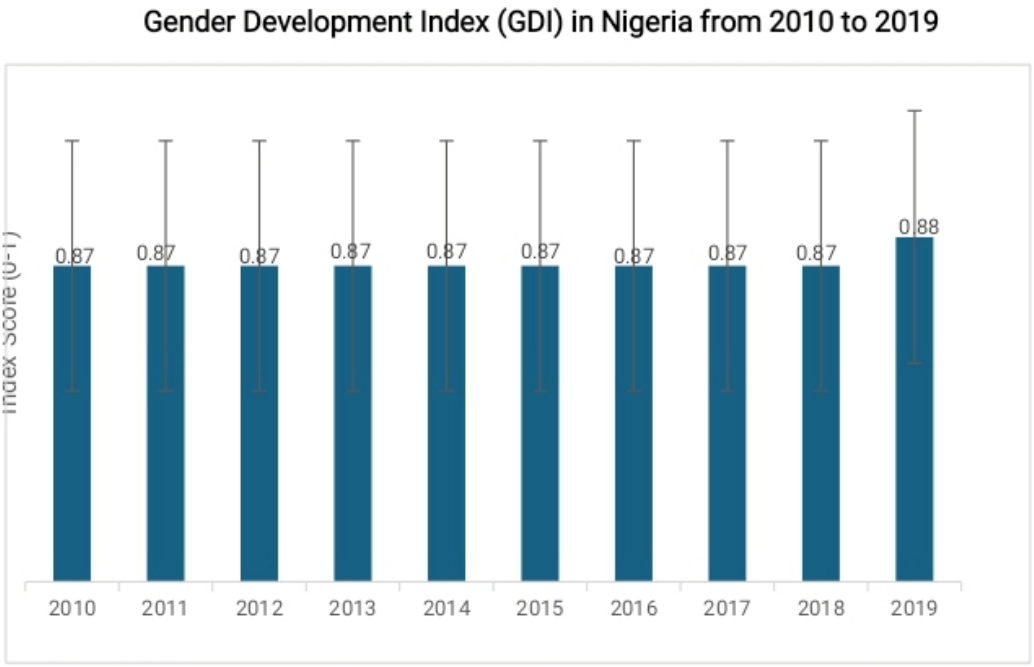
Women's perspectives and needs are often overlooked in policy formulation, leading to policies that may worsen existing inequalities and grievances. Women hold few seats in the National Assembly and state legislatures, limiting their ability to influence policy and decision-making. Only three (3) women were elected to the Senate out of 109 seats (2.7%). In the House of Representatives, 17 women were elected out of 360 seats (4.7%). This brings the total number of women in the 10th National Assembly to 20, representing just 4.2% of the 469-member legislative body. Dataphyte

reported that only 48 women were elected to state legislatures across Nigeria in the 2023 elections. This indicates an extremely low level of representation at the state level. However, the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) noted that no women were elected to the state house of assembly in 15 out of Nigeria's 36 states.

In a 2019 interview with the BBC, Ebere Ifendu, founder of the Women in Politics Forum, stated, *"Women are not just underrepresented in politics; they are actively excluded. The political space is dominated by men who resist sharing power."* Figure 1.1 below shows Nigeria's Gender Development Index (GDI) score (2019) reflected a concerning trend. Despite registering a value of 0.88, this metric indicated a decline in gender parity compared to previous periods. The GDI, ranging from zero (representing perfect equality) to one (indicating complete disparity), assesses gender-based inequalities across health, education, and income. This 2019 score in Nigeria highlights persistent challenges in achieving gender equality within these crucial societal domains (Statista Research Department, 2023).

Thus, gender dynamics is crucial in Nigeria's conflict prevention, management, and post-conflict peacebuilding. As women face unequal access to resources, education, and political participation between men and women, it can contribute to feelings of marginalisation and disenfranchisement, which can act as underlying causes of conflict (World Bank, 2023). Women are often disproportionately affected by conflict, experiencing sexual violence, displacement, and economic hardship (World Bank, 2019). Understanding their experiences is vital for crafting effective peacebuilding strategies. Women can play a critical role in peace processes by fostering dialogue, promoting reconciliation, and advocating for non-violent solutions (African Union, 2023) Including women in peace building efforts can lead to more sustainable peace.

Women's voices are often marginalised in peace negotiations and conflict resolution processes, leading to agreements that may not adequately address their needs and concerns. In a 2017 report by UN Women, it was noted that



Statista, 2024.

women were largely excluded from the peace talks that led to the end of the Biafran War in 1970, and their concerns about security and economic empowerment were not adequately addressed in the post-conflict reconstruction efforts (Usigbe, 2017). Deeply ingrained patriarchal norms that normalise male dominance and female subordination contribute significantly to conflict dynamics. These norms often justify violence against women, creating a climate of fear and insecurity. Violence against women, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, is widespread in Nigeria. This violence is often used as a weapon of war and a tool to control women.

In a 2020/21 report by Amnesty International, it was documented that women and girls in northeastern Nigeria have been subjected to widespread sexual violence by Boko Haram insurgents. Harmful cultural practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, continue to affect the lives of many women and girls in Nigeria. These practices perpetuate gender inequality and can contribute to conflict. In many communities, girls are married off at a young age, often before they are physically and emotionally ready. This can lead to domestic violence, marital rape, and health complications from early pregnancy and childbirth. A case was reported in 2015, a 14-year-old girl named Wasila Tasi'u from Kano State was charged with murder after poisoning her 35-year-old husband whom she was forced to marry. This case sparked a national debate on child marriage and its consequences (Associated Press, 2015). The practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)is extremely hazardous and harmful. FGM has no medical benefits whatsoever. It only serves to harm girls and women physically and psychologically. In a 2018 interview with The Guardian, a young woman who had undergone FGM shared, *"I was cut when I was 10 years old. It was so painful. I bled for days. I still have nightmares about it* (The Guardian, 2018).

FGM can cause severe health complications, including pain, bleeding, infection, infertility, and even death. It can also lead to psychological trauma and long-term health problems. Osun State has one of the highest rates of FGM in Nigeria. According to the 2018 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), 77% of women aged 15-49 in Osun State have undergone FGM. This is significantly higher than the national average of 25%. In 2020, a 14-year-old girl named Fatimah died from complications after undergoing FGM in Egypt. Her death sparked outrage and calls for stricter enforcement of laws against FGM (BBC, 2020).

FGM is a violation of girls' and women's human rights, including their right to bodily integrity, health, and freedom from violence. *"FGM is a cruel and harmful practice that has no place in our society. It is a violation of girls' rights and a form of gender-based violence,"* stated Dr Obianuju Ekeocha, a Nigerian medical doctor and activist, in a 2017 interview with the BBC. FGM is illegal in Nigeria under the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP Act) of 2015. However, law enforcement remains weak, and the practice persists in many communities.

8. Empirical Evidence

There has been a lot of research interest in Nigeria's conflict prevention, management, and post-conflict peacebuilding process and operations. Various scholars have advanced findings that give credence to the significance of gender as a very crucial factor in research. It has been explained that significant conflicts in Nigeria are manipulated with gender symbols of ethnic or inter-ethnic identity for the mobilisation of communal violence. Like Ogbomah (2022) observed from the study of the Enugu/Ebonyi inter-communal conflict how the winner-takes-all factor had created an imbalance of power capabilities, as well as

induced loyalties and antipathies that have intensified bloody ethnic and communal conflicts between communities that culminated after an eight-year conflict into arbitration during the late 1990s.

Using the Niger Delta crisis as another case, scholars like Ibeanu 2006; Kew and Anthony 2008 opined that to avoid conflicts within the Niger Delta area, influential stakeholders should be brought in, and women should be included in conflict and peacebuilding processes. While these studies have appraised the gender dynamics in Nigeria's conflictual experiences and transformation, they addressed a lower dimension of being gender focused. Furthermore, they are primarily expository rather than empirical. Children in conflict situations reflect the deteriorating socio-economic conditions. The study explored field evidence from gendered dynamics of resistance among the people of the Niger Delta in the oil-rich region of Nigeria. The study notes that resistance in the region is also framed in gendered symbols and operates along with the cultural perspectives of the ethnic groups to which the people belong. The efforts to feminise resistance are manifested in the berate system of Ụmụada and Ụmụnna where women go naked to justify the need for support from men to defend themselves when the community is threatened.

The men, in turn, keep their women as the last 'commodity' needed in a community, thereby protecting women. Whenever a community is called to defend, the berate, a subset of the women, tie leaves, and if the threat is severe, they go naked and step out to ask what the men are waiting for (Emeka-Nwobia, 2021).. This brings out the notion of naked women in community insecurity that mobilises men to action. Normative structures over time engender unhealthy societal growth for the future evolution of dynamic and result-oriented paradigms on gender and issues concerning women, peace, and security. Studies and practices carried out in Nigeria on managing and preventing conflict show that manifestations of gender dynamics in conflict prevention, management, and resolution have attended interventions aimed at transforming societal structures and institutions.

9. Gender Mainstreaming in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

It is worthy of note to state that there is a need to understand gender mainstreaming and address the root causes of gender inequality that often exacerbate conflict. In Nigeria, this includes issues like discriminatory laws and customs, limited access to education and economic opportunities for women, and harmful gender norms that perpetuate violence. Thus, gender mainstreaming in post-conflict peacebuilding is not merely a matter of inclusion. It is about recognising how conflict impacts men and women and ensuring peacebuilding efforts address those differences to create lasting stability. Spectrums of strategies are employed to address the gender mainstreaming framework in the peacebuilding context. These include emphasising a stand-alone approach, where separate activities or projects are explicitly designed and directed to address a single gender or women-focused project. For example, programs providing psychosocial support, economic empowerment, and legal assistance to survivors of gender-based violence are essential for their recovery and reintegration. (UN Women, 2015)

Equally important is integrating gender perspectives into all aspects of peacebuilding, from security sector reform and governance to economic recovery and reconciliation. This ensures that all policies and programs consider the different needs and experiences of men and women. (Mazurana & McKay, 2011). Transforming harmful gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices is essential for achieving sustainable peace. This includes promoting gender equality and challenging traditional roles that perpetuate inequality.

(WHO, 2013). There are various examples of countries that have practised gender mainstreaming. For instance, in Sierra Leone, after the civil war, women's organisations played a crucial role in advocating for the inclusion of gender-sensitive provisions in the peace agreement and the establishment of a special court to address war crimes, including sexual violence. (Mazurana & McKay, 2011)

Another example is the Rwandan government's implementation of gender quotas in parliament and local councils, increasing women's representation in decision-making positions. (UN Women, 2018). In Colombia, the peace agreement between the government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-jército del Pueblo (FARC) rebels included specific provisions on gender equality and women's participation in the peace process. (UN News, 2016). Suffice it to state that gender mainstreaming is not an optional add-on to peacebuilding; it is a fundamental requirement for achieving sustainable peace in Nigeria. The significance of addressing the unequal differential impact upon women has created the central imperative that encouraged various peacebuilding programs in Nigeria to focus resources towards enhancing the capacity of local Community-Based Organisations) (CBO) Furthermore, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play vital roles in establishing a framework or model of peace that demotes adverse conflict in the region or in understanding conflict patterns in order to promote acculturation and response towards peace, to create manageable conflict in order to prevent escalation, develop means of curtailing the spiral of conflict to ensure a reduction in its intensity and attempt to restore stability in the region. It bears a socio-economic implication for an institution that provides resources in peacebuilding and sees gender violence prevention strategies as one of the best ways of mitigating post-conflict occurrences and humanitarian crises-survivor inclusion. Efforts address immediate life-changing activities, such as economic-oriented projects, which are to re-establish the social status of women and young girls who are survivors of gender violence occurrences to reintegrate them among their people quickly.

10. Strategies and Approaches

Specific strategies should be adopted when mainstreaming gender issues in post-conflict peacebuilding initiatives. First, engagement with local communities, not just governments, in this planning is essential as it provides a more inclusive framework for developing community ownership and ensuring their sustainability. To ensure broad participation of marginalised groups, especially women, it is necessary to work closely with NGOs that are conversant with women and can reach them. Secondly, there is a need to begin a process of engagement with both the state and society at large, especially with the representatives of the contracting parties between the government and armed opposition groups. Those in control of local government structures are also critical stakeholders in this initiative, just as are their counterparts in the national government, especially those that deal with the Niger Delta. Where feasible, efforts can be made to bring about direct negotiations with the armed opposition group to identify some peaceful processes or frameworks for dialogue.

Where the government has some peace initiatives in place and seeks to mainstream gender by building the capacity of responsible officials working with communities, a typical example of an initiative that has been mainstreamed to include gender issues in peace processes is the case of a program where at the onset, experts trained ostracised communities, including women, in peacebuilding strategies designed to enable community inclusion in the peace-abiding processes. In the 2006 ceasefire agreement, the government and an armed group, with assistance from a women's department, developed a checklist to ensure that gender was included in all agreement

provisions and to monitor its implementation. This set of tools consisted of a gender module based on a Gender Analysis Framework and training for negotiators and civil society in gender in peace processes.

Finally, there is a need to show that women can stabilise in peace processes. Although such programs would involve high production costs, they have the potential to build the capacity of women to engage in peace processes. Participatory approaches help stakeholders in any peace process to benefit from the impact of community ownership through the adoption of strategies such as the involvement of a variety of stakeholders, including women and state/non-state actors who are likely to ensure community ownership success, those who will be involved in regulating economic, social, and political development in the country, individuals who play critical roles in the application of community ownership, organisations, and pressure groups with positions of power within the state, and others. Monitoring systems in community ownership processes may be built by establishing information from the government, NGOs, and institutional partners and as mechanisms to enable stakeholders to access the progress of community ownership based on the final agreement documents and guides developed to monitor the process. Evaluation is a method of systematically assessing the results of implementing the course of action in the light of an established standard for formulating policies and strategies and designing all possible measures to ensure that future actions are brought in line with guidelines on how to guarantee the results better.

11. Challenges and Opportunities

Mainstreaming gender in the peacebuilding process after a protracted violent conflict or post-conflict is not without challenges. Indeed, sociocultural barriers are constantly resisted because they challenge the established gender norms in society. Most women in contemporary conflicts do not have access to their communities; they are secluded in refugee camps and are left with very few options and survival mechanisms, which have impoverished and disempowered them. This, therefore, constitutes a major barrier to their involvement in peace initiatives. It will take a while before such women are assimilated back into their communities, and their ability to participate in peace activities might also remain minimal. Moreover, women who are exposed to violence, such as rape and property grabbing by their rivals and insurgent groups, are themselves so psychologically and emotionally traumatised that they are physically, mentally, and emotionally incapable of participating in peacebuilding programs.

There are also structural limitations to mainstreaming gender considerations in post-conflict peacebuilding programs. The limited resources available for peacebuilding are a significant barrier, and often, women-specific programs consume more resources; the gender-neutral development programs are left to bear the brunt regarding damaged infrastructure, health, and education. The national and state budgets for the peacebuilding process are limited, and the little available is not well expended. Such funds are also wasted on duplicated gender programs with little or no added value. There is also a lack of political will and collaboration between state agencies, NGOs, international organisations, and donor groups.

Some donors see their resources as being wasted by supporting NGOs with peace initiatives. Nevertheless, there are opportunities as well. The National Gender Policy serves as a guide in non-discriminatory areas of intervention in policy and programs. The policy also provides women's protection and empowerment in disaster risk management situations. International organisations addressing gender gaps in peacebuilding have made laudable efforts to support initiatives.

There is increasing awareness of the issues of gender-based violence, which is directly linked to conflict. There are also NGOs working for women's rights and peaceful coexistence who have exhibited this through some peace advocacy programs. Grassroots people's initiatives towards peace are already up in some communities. Advocacy groups emphasise the need for the government to use these strategies already put in place.

12. Gender-Sensitive Indicators and Monitoring Mechanisms

1. There is a need to develop clear and explicit methods and indicators to monitor and evaluate conflict prevention, management, and the effectiveness of post-conflict peacebuilding efforts. Indicators should provide data for measuring duty-bearers commitment to peace in conflicts and entry points to peace and opportunities to sustain peace. They should generate quantifiable data to ascertain the effectiveness of gender-sensitive conflict prevention, conflict management, as well as post-conflict peacebuilding approaches and activities for men and women in conflict and assist officers in gathering both qualitative and quantitative data and responses that will reflect the dynamics of women and men in the conflict. Methodologies for developing such gender-sensitive indicators, which are also appropriate for all stakeholders, should occur. The nature of these indicators would enable easy utilisation by all stakeholders in the project.

2. Systematic data collection should be considered integral to gender mainstreaming in initiatives. Data for effective planning and success of initiatives is crucial. Data collection is particularly relevant in conflict settings as the degree of the conflict's impacts can only be comprehensively understood with vivid data. Accurate data is needed to understand, plan, and implement interventions to address the causes of conflict and the needs of women and men. For all data collection/needs assessment tools, broader expertise should also be identified as caretakers or partners may have expertise in some of the areas of our interest.

3. A monitoring and evaluation mechanism to be developed should clearly outline accountability and transparency for the commitment to integrate gender in all aspects of conflict and conflict prevention efforts. Additional indicators derived from assessing the capacity of applicants and grantees in conflict management and peace should also be developed to allow the monitoring and evaluation of the diffusion of given training to the community through the beneficiaries.

4. It is pertinent that Nigeria develop a comprehensive national peace index (CNPI) dedicated to the multifaceted nature of conflict and peace in Nigeria, including social, economic, and political dimensions. The government must invest in data collection systems and build capacity for conflict analysis and early warning. It must also encourage research on peace and conflict issues and foster collaboration between government agencies, research institutions, and civil society organisations.

5. Especially for framework activities geared at sharing experiences through dialogue, the indicators should measure the effectiveness of cooperation with partners in the mechanisms coordinating local conflict flux and the restitution of success stories, which may play an essential role in promoting and notoriety local conflict management.

13. Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper explored gender dynamics in conflict prevention and peacebuilding across different peace and conflict contexts. The research seeks to fill a gap between theory and practice, suggesting a gendered approach to understanding the needs and roles within communities. The evolving landscape of conflict and peacebuilding has

highlighted the imperative of incorporating gender perspectives to achieve sustainable solutions. This research underscores women's pivotal role in grassroots peace initiatives in Nigeria, demonstrating their agency and resilience amidst conflict. However, deeply ingrained patriarchal norms, economic marginalisation, and limited access to justice continue to impede their full participation in decision-making processes.

Systematic data collection provides an understanding of the conflict's impact on diverse groups, enabling informed planning and implementation of interventions that cater to specific needs. By incorporating expertise from various stakeholders, including caregivers and partners, data collection tools can be further refined to capture a holistic picture of the situation. Moreover, a transparent and accountable monitoring and evaluation framework ensures that gender integration remains central to all conflict prevention and resolution stages. The long-term impact and sustainability of gender-sensitive peacebuilding initiatives can be maximised by developing specific indicators that track the diffusion of training and capacity-building efforts within communities. This data-driven and participatory approach empowers communities to address the root causes of conflict, promote gender equality, and build sustainable peace.

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Examination of the Impact of Identities in the Study of International Relations and Global Security

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Abstract
The study of international relations (IR) and global security has long been a complex and diverse field, with several factors influencing its development. This study, based on Cynthia Enloe's question, "Where are the women?" in her seminal presentation in 1987, titled 'Bananas, Beaches, and Bases,' became a watershed moment in the debate on the role of identities in IR and global security, and the feminism approach and activism became more prominent. The article using a qualitative approach looks at how identities, national, cultural, ethnic, or religious influence the study of international relations and global security. The significance of identities for global security cannot be overemphasized. Identity conflicts have produced several international crises and wars throughout history. Understanding how identities impact security dynamics is crucial for policymakers and analysts dealing with threats to global stability. This demonstrates how gender and ethnicity influence modern mainstream security concerns in international relations. The study relying on secondary data and the imperatives of Realism and Constructivist theory indicated that identity in security concerns is no longer merely a contentious term; it is now a major issue in international relations and associated fields. Identities have a multidimensional impact on the study of international relations and global security, influencing state behaviour, conflict patterns, and security dynamics in significant ways. These tales are headed in the right direction and should be supported by every engaged feminist activist. The study finds that policymakers, scholars, and practitioners can use more nuanced approaches to effectively solved global concerns. Therefore, the study suggests promoting inclusivity and diversity in international relations and global security conversations.

Keywords: Feminism, Global Security, Global stability, Identities, International Relations

Introduction

The study of international relations and global security is a complex field that involves investigating several factors that influence worldwide interactions between states, organisations, and individuals. Cynthia Enloe is a feminist professor known for her research on gender analysis in international politics. Her inquiry might be regarded as an identification question, since she captures her reader's attention to the sphere of international politics in her 1987 landmark presentation titled 'Bananas, Beaches, and Bases' and asks the question "where are the women"? It is safe to

stress that this rhetorical inquiry sparked the debate on the role of identities in international relations and global security.

In response to Enloe's question, Chisem (2011) emphasised that the introduction of critical theory and feminist scholarship into the conventional discourse of International Relations (IR), as well as the ratification of Resolution 1325 by the United Nations Security Council in 2000, emphasizing women's positions within the international security context. Despite this, Chisem (2011, p.1) accuses realism and neo-realism, the theoretical orientations that dominate security studies, of approaching the study of IR "through a male eye and apprehended by a male sensibility," so ignoring the gender dimension. According to Rublee et al. (2020), research on gender representation and experiences in international relations has flourished in recent years. Making Feminist Sense of International Politics," Enloe investigates how gender influences power relations, labour practices, and militarism in a global framework. By asking "where are the women?" she emphasises the significance of including women's views, experiences, and contributions in comprehending international relations, and the women are most likely responding to Enloe's appeal in stages.

Institutionally, the International Studies Association (ISA) assessed its membership three times: in 1995, 2006, and 2015, and the results demonstrate an incremental growth in women's membership in the organisation. And to document and understand differences in the experiences of the organization's male and female members, a survey was carried out through its Women's Caucus for International Studies and Committee on the Status of Women. Collaborating this view Thies (2020) asserts that, there is no doubt that the increased presence of women in ISA has raised the bar of attention paid to sex and gender in international studies scholarship and professional matters. The justification of this point is obvious in the fact that, ISA that was predominantly male about sixty years ago when the association was formed can now boost of 46 percent of female membership strength. Thakur (2021) said in corroborating Thies (2020) that the ISA needs to make space in the survey for encouraging unconscious bias training, racism and anti-racist practices, more active mentorship for diverse communities, and inclusion of practitioners in the association academic forums. It would be helpful Thakur, (2021) maintained to expand the survey undertaken by Women's Caucus for International Studies (WCIS) and the ISA Committee on the Status of Women to comprehend the experiences of diverse communities, who are under represented including those with intersectional identities, so as to have a robust understanding of the state of the discipline. The study is aligning with the debate over the significance of identities in defining the study of international relations and global security seeks to investigate how individual and collective identities impact the behaviour of states, non-state actors, and international institutions in the field of global politics.

The concepts

The three concepts of Identities, International relations and Global security are deeply interwoven on many different levels. Identities are entrenched, in wider conceptions or theories. According to Social scientists, identities, like all facts, are derived from theories that explain why only some of the numerous events that take place should be treated as facts. Certain characteristics of our personal identity include our skin colour, ethnicity, religion, which help shape our values. Often our race and ethnicity play a significant role in how we see ourselves, and feel that we are different from the majority of those who live in the same community. These are not necessarily scientific theories; even in everyday life people use theories that are implicit and only partly articulated, if at all

(Cantor, 2012). Therefore a role identity refers to the goals, values, beliefs, norms, interaction styles, expected traits, and time horizons associated with a particular role. Role identity theory suggests that the greater the commitment to an identity, the higher that identity is placed within that individual's salience hierarchy. There are however, perspective to identity and it asserts that ideas are more important than power or institutions in shaping international outcomes. This perspective laid emphasis on the importance of ideas that define the identities of actors and at the same time motivate the use of power and negotiations by these actors.

International relations focus on the political issues and foreign affairs affecting the world over. International relations are also known as international affairs or global politics, from theoretical perspective international relations attempts to provide a conceptual framework upon which international relations can be study and analyzed (Snyder, 2004). Global security which can also be called International security is a term which refers to the measures taken by states and international organizations, such as the United Nations, European Union, and Africa Union, to ensure mutual survival and safety of global citizens. Global security includes military and diplomatic measures that nations and international organizations such as the United Nations and NATO take to ensure mutual safety and security. A new subject of academic study focused on international security emerged, with the end of the Second World War. It began as an independent field of study, but was later absorbed as a sub-field of international relations. Since 1950s that it started, the study of international security has been at the very core of international relations studies. The study covers areas such as "security studies", "strategic studies", "and peace studies" (Buzan, & Hansen 2009 and Sheehan, 2005).

Theoretical framework

Realism and Constructivism were exploited in this study, Realism theory is a prominent perspective in international relations that emphasizes the importance of power, state interests, and security in shaping state behaviour. It posits that the international system is anarchic, with no overarching authority above states, leading them to prioritize their survival and interests. Identities, such as national, cultural, or religious identity, play a significant role in shaping states' perceptions of interests and interactions with other actors on the global stage. Identities can influence foreign policy decisions, alliances, perceptions of threat, and national narratives. Realism theory acknowledges that identities are not static but evolve over time based on interactions with other actors in the international system. From a realist perspective, global security is primarily viewed through the lens of power dynamics among states, with states prioritizing their own security over other factors. This can lead to behaviors such as arms races or military alliances to enhance their relative power. Constructivism, on the other hand, emphasizes the role of ideas, identities, and social norms in shaping international politics. Constructivist theory provides insights into how states perceive themselves and others, how they construct meaning from their experiences, and how social norms influence their behavior towards each other. By focusing on ideas, identities, and social norms, constructivist theory offers a more comprehensive understanding of international politics than other theories like realism or liberalism alone. Overall, Identities can impact state behaviour by influencing perceptions of threat, defining in-group and out-group dynamics, and shaping national narratives. For example, historical grievances based on identity can fuel conflicts between states. Additionally, shared identities among states can lead to alliances based on common interests or values.

Methodology

The methodology used for this study was primarily qualitative, with data collected from secondary sources such as books, library articles, and online sources to examine and explain the Impact of Identities on the Study of International Relations and Global Security. Scholarly works from qualitative sources were evaluated using descriptive mechanism to extract points made from various viewpoints by scholars in International Relations and Global Security. The use of secondary data in this research work gives various advantages, including cost-effectiveness, time efficiency, and access to large sample sizes, comparative analysis, validation and replication of findings.

The Role of Identities in International Relations

Identity conflicts threaten people's basic needs and very survival. Resolution proceeds by having the party's dialogue about their needs and values. This point of view could be justified once juxtaposed with the geometrical growth rate of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in recent times as the cause is attributable to identity or put differently inferiority complex, that of Rwanda is a clear example. Navigating almost on a similar construct Yacob-Haliso, (2018) asserts colonialism and violent decolonization as part of the causative effects of these conflicts; she further link the conflict to various factors such as; ethnic and other types of communal conflicts; repressive regimes and severe human rights violations; political rebellion and threats to governments; and profound economic depression. And emphasized that, none of these factors leading to the refugee crisis is reciprocally exclusive to many parts of Africa, of which several of these factors forcing people to flee co-exist. Illustrating this point further, Yacob-Haliso (2018) said that decolonisation continued across the continent, thereby solidifying ethnic identity politics at the same time to create governments that appropriated the state in the name of their ethnic group, the aim is to maintained their power government by coercing and suppressing other ethnic groups. In reaction to this political repression, aggression theory steps in, and the oppressed groups will result to taking up of arms to fight the state, this will eventually lead to economic collapse, wars, massive population movements, and DE-development. Alluding to this submission Green (2020) asserts that Presidents or leaders target co-ethnics with privileged access to government jobs, contracts, roads, schools, and hospitals, as evidenced by the literature on ethnic favouritism. This is especially true once viewed from the perspectives of a non-democracy as such administrations do not need to rely on a wide coalition for support and oversight for the public goods. On this one is tempted to disagree with Green as this propensity to target co-ethnics with patronage, is obviously a common phenomenon amongst leaders especially in some Africa countries.

Identities, whether they are national, cultural, religious, ethnic, or ideological, play a crucial role in shaping how actors perceive themselves and others in the international arena. Understanding how identities influence decision-making processes, conflict resolution strategies, and cooperation efforts is essential for comprehensively grasping the complexities of international relations and global security. Identities are central to the study of international relations as they shape individuals' perceptions of themselves and others. National identities, for example, can influence states' foreign policies, alliances, and conflicts. Cultural identities can impact how societies interact with one another and can either facilitate or hinder diplomatic relations. Religious identities have been at the core of numerous conflicts throughout history and continue to play a significant role in shaping geopolitical dynamics. Ethnic identities often intersect with political boundaries, leading to issues related to self-determination, autonomy, and secessionist movements. Ideological

identities such as democracy, socialism, or liberalism can also drive international cooperation or competition based on shared values or beliefs (Bettiza et al., 2023; Ibrahimi, 2023).

Impact of Identities on Global Security

The influence of identities on global security cannot be overstated. Identity-based conflicts have been responsible for some of the most protracted and violent disputes in modern history. The clash between different national has fueled territorial disputes and wars between states. Cultural differences have led to misunderstandings and tensions that have escalated into armed conflicts. Religious extremism has posed significant challenges to global security by fostering terrorism and radicalization (Biwang, 2023; Rothbart, & Korostelina, 2006). Ethnic rivalries have resulted in civil wars and humanitarian crises that threaten regional stability. Gender is categorized and besides its categorization it produces inequalities that interconnect with other social and economic discriminations. According to World Health Organisation WHO Gender denotes the characteristics inherent in or of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. These are norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time (Hannan, 2022). The perspective of identity that asserts ideas, as more important than power or institutions in shaping international outcomes and discuss on the debate, the role of identities in shaping the study of international relations and global security, Eleanor Roosevelt (n d):

> Too often the great decisions are originated and given form in bodies made up wholly of men, or so completely dominated by them that whatever of special value women has to offer is shunted aside without expression.

As Eleanor Roosevelt, a onetime US first Lady and others have observed, international politics is a man's world. It is a world inhabited by diplomats, soldiers, and international civil servants most of whom are men. However, the identity narratives is changing this perception especially when one take it up from Cynthia Enloe, question; “where are the women”? This question no doubt have increase the number of feminism fighters in the global space. As consciousness of the prominence of organizational and corporate identity has increased outstandingly in recent years due to the growth of theoretical and empirical work focusing on defining these concepts and the processes associated with them, as well as the outcomes they can lead in the direction of gender activism, although it is not yet “uhuru”, as most men, especially from the continent of Africa are still connected resolutely to Eleanor Roosevelt quotes. The impact of social media have further invigorated discussions around organizational and corporate identity, as organizations can exist on social media in various ways including official company pages or employees' personal social media profiles (Gioia, et al., 2013). “Conversely, and in spite of the presence of some women in foreign and defense policy leadership positions, the term “woman” is still antithetical to our stereotypical image of a “national security specialist.” (Tickner, 2004, p. 44).

Feminists in IR are worried about the linkages between the everyday subsisted experiences of women and the constitution and exercise of political and economic power at the state and global levels. In the early 1990s, “first generation” IR feminists challenged the masculinity biases of the fundamental assumptions and concepts of the field of IR and demonstrated how the theory and practice of international relations is gendered and masculine centered. They (feminist activist) are investigated how gender and other hierarchies of power affect those at the margins of the system. The Second generation

scholarship has investigated a variety of empirical cases, making gender and women's lives visible. Thereby demonstrating how gendered structures of power inherent in political and economic institutions and structures impacts on the lives of individuals. Claiming that the discipline that analyzes global politics is itself gendered, they are showing how IR is implicated in the reproduction of masculinity in international politics and economics (Hooper, 2001; Keohane, 1998).

Spelke, et al., (1995) and Yahaya, (2012) posited that there are two features of Identity which they named: continuity and contrast; Continuity, to him, means that people can count on you to be the same person tomorrow as always. Obviously, people change but many important aspects of social identity remain relatively stable such as gender, surname, language and ethnicity. Contrast on the other hand means that your social identity differentiates you from other people. An identity is what makes you unique in the eyes of others. In many fields of study, especially in IR, identity differences are seen to be the root cause of conflict. Psychologically, especially from the angle of social psychological explanations of conflict that draw upon social identity theory as one of the primary explanations for conflict. Studies of religion attribute a large part of one's identity to one's beliefs. Identity-based conflicts are based in people's psychology, culture, basic values, shared history, and beliefs. Moreover, identities can also be leveraged positively to enhance global security. Shared identities can foster cooperation among states facing common threats such as terrorism, climate change, or pandemics. Building inclusive identities that transcend traditional divisions can promote peacebuilding efforts and conflict resolution strategies, by shedding light on the role played by identity entrepreneurs, whose stuck in trade is manipulating identities for political gain or strategic purposes for self.

Recognizing the importance of diverse identities within societies is crucial for promoting social cohesion and preventing violent extremism. Identity plays a significant role in international politics, as it shapes how states and individuals perceive themselves and others, influencing their interactions, alliances, conflicts, and policies. In the realm of International Relations (IR) scholarship, the concept of identity emerged as a crucial perspective in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Scholars like David Campbell highlighted that identity is an inescapable dimension of international politics. Ted Hopf emphasized that a world without identities would be chaotic and dangerous due to pervasive uncertainty. Anthony Burke argued that politics cannot exist without identity, emphasizing its central role in the international system, which examines the interactions between states, non-state actors, and international organizations in the global system (Burke, 2006; Campbell, 1992; Hopf, 1998).

Identities, Global Dynamics and Conflict

The Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s demonstrate how ethnic identities may fuel deadly conflict. Nationalist leaders used ethnic divisions to rally support for their agendas, leading to serious humanitarian catastrophes. The intersection of identity politics and state sovereignty called into question global security intervention measures. Identity is critical to understanding terrorism. Groups such as ISIS have used religious identity to recruit followers and justify brutality against perceived adversaries. Understanding these identities enables governments to devise more effective counterterrorism policies that address underlying concerns rather than relying exclusively on military answers. As resource scarcity worsens, identity-based conflicts may arise over access to water or arable land. Indigenous people, for example, are frequently excluded from climate initiatives despite being disproportionately affected by environmental changes. Recognising these identities can lead

to more fair approaches to global environmental governance (Biondich, 2022; Eckert, 2022; Meleagrou-Hitchens, et al., 2021).

In the context of the continuing crisis between Ukraine and Russia, identities play an important role in defining international relations and global security trend. The identities of both governments, as well as those of numerous ethnic and cultural groups inside these countries, have a considerable impact on the character of the war and its ramifications for global security. National identities in Ukraine and Russia are inextricably linked to historical narratives, cultural heritage, language, and territorial claims. Ukraine's status as a sovereign nation seeking and maintain its independence from its Soviet heritage is a key element in the confrontation with Russia. On the other hand, Russia's status as a regional power with historical links to Ukraine influences its strategic objectives in the area (Torbakov, 2017; Wilson, 2024).

Ethnic identities inside Ukraine, such as Ukrainian and Russian ethnic groups, play an important part in the war. The presence of ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine has caused tensions, sparking separatist movements and aspirations for autonomy. These ethnic differences have exacerbated tensions between various groups and have been used by other parties to further their geopolitical goals. Cultural identities, such as language, religion, and customs, exacerbate the conflict between Ukraine and Russia. The language gap between Ukrainian-speaking western areas and Russian-speaking eastern regions reflects larger cultural differences that lead to socioeconomic divisions within Ukrainian society. Cultural narratives are frequently utilised to rally support for rival political sides and shape public perception about the war (Korsakov, 2017; Wilson, 2024). Global Security Implications: The junction of identities in the Ukraine-Russia conflict has serious consequences for global security. The war has called into question territorial integrity, sovereignty, and international legal norms. The presence of foreign entities such as NATO, the European Union, and the United States indicates greater geopolitical interests that go beyond the area. Identities have a diverse role in influencing international relations and global security dynamics in the ranging Ukraine-Russia war. National, ethnic, and cultural identities interact to exacerbate tensions, shape alliances, and impact views of legitimacy in the war. Understanding these complex identity dynamics is critical for addressing underlying causes of conflict and boosting long-term peacebuilding initiatives (Torbakov, 2017; Kulyk, 2023; Wilson, 2024).

Identities in Global Dynamics

Identities influence many elements of international relations. They can serve as conflict drivers, sources of cooperation, components in the development of global government, contributors to global security problems, and are frequently managed by identity entrepreneurs for a variety of goals. Driver of conflict, Identities such as race, religion, nationality, and ideology may be powerful causes of conflict on a global scale. Individuals or organisations that strongly identify with one identity may experience difficulties and conflicts with others who identify differently. Throughout history, identity-based animosities have fueled innumerable confrontations. For example, the ethnic tensions in Rwanda between the Hutus and Tutsis that culminated in the genocide of 1994 illustrate how deeply ingrained identities can spark violent conflicts (Chen, 2024; Nabers, 2011). Source of collaboration; conversely, identities may be used to foster collaboration in global issues. Shared identities can form links between individuals or governments, facilitating collaboration and mutual understanding. Regional organisations, such as the European Union, have been effective in encouraging collaboration among

member states by emphasising a shared European identity in addition to national identities. This shared identity has allowed countries to collaborate on matters like commerce, security, and environmental preservation. Identity plays an important part in the creation of global governing frameworks. International institutions and agreements frequently reflect the identities and interests of their constituent countries. The United Nations, for example, represents the collective identity of its member nations and functions as an avenue for negotiating shared or global challenges. Identity-based alliances and coalitions within international organizations can shape decision-making processes and outcomes for the benefit of members formed on the basis of identities (Berenskoetter, 2010; Bolcu, 2011; Chen, 2024; Nabers, 2011). Smith, (2023) observed that Identity concerns can lead to global security challenges. Conflicts over identification can quickly evolve into full-fledged security crises with far-reaching implications. The growth of nationalist groups that promote exclusive identities has sparked worries about regional instability and dangers to world peace and security. Terrorism and extremism are frequently associated with identity-based grievances, which present substantial obstacles to global security efforts. Identity entrepreneurs are persons or groups who use identities for political or strategic reasons. They use existing identity divisions to gain support for their agendas or further their interests. Identity entrepreneurs may worsen current conflicts by inciting identity-based grievances or spreading exclusivist narratives that demonise other communities. They can, however, have a positive role by fostering inclusive identities that encourage conversation and reconciliation among opposing parties.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from an examination of the Impact of Identities on the Study of International Relations and Global Security revealed that identity-based grievances and perceptions of injustice play a significant role in fueling interstate conflicts, civil wars, terrorism, and other forms of violence in the international system. Findings also showed that shared identities can foster cooperation among states or non-state actors through mechanisms such as identity-based alliances, cultural diplomacy, diaspora networks, or common norms and values.

Findings further highlighted how identities are instrumentalized by the state and non-state actors to legitimize their authority, mobilize support for policies and challenge existing norms within international organizations like the United Nations or regional blocs. And instances where identity crises - caused by rapid social change, globalization, migration flows, or technological advancements - pose challenges to traditional security paradigms based on state-centric approaches or realist assumptions. Fundamentally, the findings shed light on the role played by identity entrepreneurs - individuals or groups who manipulate identities for political gain or strategic purposes - in shaping narratives about threats, enemies, allies, or victims in global security discourses.

Enloe's question challenges the traditional male-centric narratives that dominate discussions in international relations. By bringing attention to the absence or invisibility of women in these narratives, she calls for a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to analyzing global politics. Gender analysis in international relations seeks to uncover how gender norms, identities, and power structures influence diplomatic negotiations, conflict resolution, development policies, and security strategies (Enloe, 2014). Feminist security theory emerged from a cross ideological, trans-epistemological, multi voiced conversational debate among multiple feminisms, including liberal, empiricist, modified standpoint, and

qualified postmodern perspectives, among others. Contrasting in the in-depth field of international relations, relatively little research on gender representation and gendered experiences exists within the subfield of security studies Rublee, et al, (2020).

The goal of theory building for conventional IR, which includes most realists, is basically to generate suggestions that are testable as well as have the capacity to explain the security search of behavior of states in the international system. While to feminists this view of theory appears thoroughly gendered and gendered masculine as most international theorists would deny that their theories have anything to do with gender, since gender is usually assumed to be synonymous with women. Nevertheless, neorealism, the devolution of realism, which is committed to scientific methods, accept as true that theory should be explanatory and separated, as much as possible from norms and political practice. Conversely, and in spite of the presence of some women in foreign and defense policy leadership positions, the term "woman" is still antithetical to our stereotypical image. Rublee, et al, (2020) asserted, "national security specialist." War and national security are areas where it has been presumed that women have little important to say. All of these narratives are taking a positive direction and this direction needs to be sustained by the entire proactive feminist activist who must hold firmly to the identity of self-worth as Cynthia Enloe and co, have set the ball rolling on the debate of the role identities plays in shaping the study of international relations and global security, as perspective to identity have clearly stated that ideas are much more important than power or institutions in shaping international outcomes.

Conclusion

Examination of identities expressively enriches our understanding of international relations and global security dynamics. Through recognizing the multidimensional nature of identity encompassing ethnicity, religion, gender, nationality scholars and policymakers can develop more nuanced analyses and strategies that address contemporary challenges effectively. Identity is a complex phenomenon that shapes global interactions in various ways, including driving conflicts, fostering cooperation, influencing governance structures, and posing challenges to security efforts. It is also subject to manipulation by identity entrepreneurs for various ends. Identity in security issues is now a major topic in International Relations (IR) and related disciplines, both in terms of scholarly research. Identity clause in Global Security is equally very vital in shaping the pattern as well as the direction of the ongoing debate on Gender and Identities in IR and Security Studies. Understanding security as gendered and racialised stand for understanding gender and race as ways of ordering the world that are permeated with power to create, legitimize, and naturalised knowledge. Power dynamics also play a role in identity politics, as states with more power may impose their identity narratives on others, leading to tensions and wars. Therefore, it is essential to thoroughly examine these power relations when researching identity politics. All of these narratives culminate in taking a positive direction and this direction needs to be sustained by the entire proactive feminist activist.

Understanding identities is fundamental in the study of international relations and global security, as it shapes how states interact with each other, how conflicts arise, and how cooperation is fostered. Identities can be based on various factors such as culture, religion, ethnicity, ideology, or national interests. The study therefore, recommends that: Identity is a complex and multidimensional concept that can clash with one another, causing misunderstandings and conflicts among states. It is essential to avoid essentializing identities, which can lead to misconceptions. Embracing

communication among different identity groups can foster mutual understanding and trust, allowing states to work together to resolve disputes peacefully. Addressing identity-based problems is vital for achieving long-term peace and stability, including recognizing minority rights, fostering inclusion, and correcting historical injustices. Identity can be used as a tool for diplomacy and conflict settlement, forming alliances and increasing cooperation. Understanding the identity dynamics at play can help diplomats navigate difficult foreign partnerships more effectively.

There is need to lay emphasis on Inclusive Policies, when developing security and international relations, policymakers should take into account the variety of identities present in their respective communities. As Policies that are inclusive and recognise the existence of many identities can lessen conflict and foster stability.

Promoting communication across identities lines should be encouraged as to promote communication across opposing identity groups is helpful in resolving conflicts. An intercultural awareness initiative has the capacity to help ease tensions brought on by false beliefs or assumptions about other identities. To prevent alienation and radicalisation among marginalised communities, policymakers should engage diverse stakeholders to create comprehensive solutions to global issues such as conflict resolution and climate change adaptation. Promoting education about different cultures and histories can foster mutual understanding and reduce tensions rooted in misperceptions related to identity.

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