

The Concept of Conflict Trilogy: (Conflict Management, Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation) Including Peacemaking, Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding, Reconciliation, and Transitional Justice

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ABSTRACT

Conflict is an inherent part of human societies, emerging due to divergent interests, values, and aspirations. This study explores the Conflict Trilogy, comprising Conflict Management, Conflict Resolution, and Conflict Transformation, alongside complementary approaches such as Peacemaking, Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding, Reconciliation, and Transitional Justice. The research critically examines these interconnected concepts from a global perspective, evaluates their application in Africa, and highlights their relevance in addressing conflicts in Nigeria. Findings reveal that conflicts in Africa are primarily driven by historical, socio-political, economic, and resource-based factors. In Nigeria, ethno-religious conflicts, insurgencies like Boko Haram, and resource disputes in the Niger Delta exemplify the region's complex conflict landscape. Strategies such as mediation, negotiation, military interventions, economic initiatives, and community-led peace efforts have been employed to address these conflicts, with varying degrees of success. The study underscores the importance of shifting from reactive conflict management to proactive conflict transformation, which involves addressing structural inequalities, fostering reconciliation, and strengthening governance institutions. The integration of peacebuilding initiatives and transitional justice mechanisms is crucial for sustainable peace and development.

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INTRODUCTION

Conflicts are prevalent and unavoidable in any human civilization. Conflicts arise all around the world because society is made up of people with opposing interests and ideals, it arises in most civilizations when parties in a state of independence perceive opposing views or believe that their aspirations or aims cannot be met simultaneously (Brecher, 2018; Caranti, 2018). As a result, it is only logical that when there is inequity in access to natural resources and political power, there will be discontent, dissent, and controversy. An attempt to comprehend the dynamic and diverse nature of conflict has led many scholars and authors to develop various frameworks in order to develop disputes and promote sustainable peace. The concepts of conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation are

central to these frameworks, and complementary practices that include peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, reconciliation, and transitional justice enrich our understanding of conflict dynamics. The essence of a comprehensive exploration through this study is to examine these interconnected concepts from both global and African perspectives, with a particular focus on Nigeria, discovering how much they are been utilized in Nigeria.

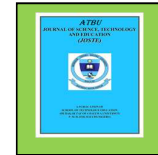
Rahim (2017) opines that conflict management refers to the ability to limit the negative aspect of conflict while intensifying the positive aspect to improve learning and group outcomes through reconciliation. This entails designing an effective strategy to minimize the possible damage of conflicts without necessarily solving the underpinning issues. Aghaei et al.,

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(2022) argued that conflict plays a crucial role in promoting idea-sharing, brainstorming, and effective decision-making among states, families, organizations, and individuals irrespective of their dispute. Controversially, he further asserts how important it is to adopt an appropriate approach to manage and maintain a certain level of conflict to foster human agility and national strength. Henry, (2023) in his study concurs by stating that Conflict management as a concept implies how we detect and resolve issues equitably and effectively to reduce the possible negative consequences of disagreements while increasing the likelihood of a successful outcome. The concept of the Conflict Trilogy—encompassing conflict management, resolution, and transformation—provides a comprehensive framework for addressing the socio-cultural and political challenges posed by groups like the Islamic fundamentalist group in Afghanistan, as explored by Ibe, Iroye, and Ibebunjo (2022), highlighting the importance of peacebuilding, reconciliation, and transitional justice in reframing societal values to foster sustainable peace.

To improve the outcomes of learning and collaboration, including effectiveness or performance among different nations, organizations, groups, and individuals, conflict management is pertinent. This is the approach of reducing the adverse effects of conflict while boosting the beneficial components that come from any conflict (Kwofie et al., 2023; Greer & Dannals, 2017; Lee et al, 2018). Conflict management done precisely can improve group outcomes and introduce positivity. It is vital to know that good conflict management begets conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution, on the other hand, tries to address the basic causes of conflict, to find mutually acceptable solutions that fix the underlying difficulties (Fisher, 2016). This approach often involves open communication, negotiation, and problem-solving techniques to reach an agreement that satisfies all parties involved. Razi et al. (2019) argued that conflict resolution is characterized as the means and activities involved in supporting the peaceful resolution of conflict and retribution. Individuals or groups engaged try to resolve their

disagreements by actively conveying information about their opposing intentions or views among themselves or with the help of a mediator. The concept of the Conflict Trilogy—encompassing conflict management, resolution, and transformation—provides a comprehensive framework for addressing protracted violence, as seen in the Rwandan genocide. According to Ibe, Iroye, and Ibebunjo (2023), the interplay of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding, alongside reconciliation and transitional justice, is critical in fostering sustainable recovery and preventing future atrocities in post-conflict societies like Rwanda.

Furthermore, the dimensions of resolution often parallel the dimensions of conflict in terms of how the conflict is resolved. Cognitive resolution is the way disputants comprehend and perceive the issue, including their beliefs, perspectives, understandings, and attitudes. Emotional resolution refers to how disputants feel about a problem or their emotional energy. The behavioral resolution reflects how the disputants act and their behavior (Razi et al., 2019; McKibben, 2017; Foncubierta-Rodríguez et al., 2021). A clear illustration is regarding international relations, conflict resolution most times entails diplomatic negotiations to settle territorial disputes between nations. Pertinent to know is that a good conflict resolution can lead to conflict transformation.

Conflict transformation extends beyond resolution by focusing on changing the underlying social structures, relationships, and dynamics that lead to conflict (Lederach, 2023). This approach emphasizes systemic change and the promotion of social justice to create sustainable peace. This is made evident in post-apartheid South Africa, where efforts to transform societal structures and promote equality were essential components of the peace process. Jereny (2024) in his view states that Conflict transformation is a proactive and holistic method. It starts with recognizing the potential of conflict to bring about positive change. This perspective does not just aim to resolve the immediate problem but to harness the energy of the conflict to rebuild relationships and systems more constructively.

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However, Peacemaking involves diplomatic efforts to bring hostile parties to a negotiated agreement, often involving mediation and negotiation (United Nations, 2018). Peacekeeping involves the deployment of international personnel to maintain peace and security in emerging conflict areas (Bellamy & Williams, 2013). Peacebuilding focuses on addressing the root causes of conflict, promoting social justice, economic development, and reconciliation to prevent violence recurrence (Galtung, 1996). Reconciliation and transitional justice aim to repair relationships and build trust among former adversaries, fostering healing and mutual understanding (Bloomfield, 2016), while Transitional justice involves judicial and non-judicial measures to redress human rights abuses, such as criminal prosecutions and reparations programs (Teitel, 2020).

Globally, conflicts have evolved in complexity, encompassing interstate wars, civil wars, and asymmetric warfare involving non-state actors (Kaldor, 2023). The causes of conflict are multifaceted, including political, economic, social, and environmental factors. A clear example is the Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011 and has roots in political repression, economic disparities, and social grievances (Kaldor, 2023).

Africa as a continent, has experienced a range of conflicts, from interstate wars to intrastate conflicts characterized by ethnic, religious, and resource-based tensions (Williams, 2019). The causes of these conflicts are complex and often rooted in historical injustices, colonial legacies, and socio-economic disparities. This is evident in conflicts like the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, which was fuelled by deep-seated ethnic tensions between the Hutu and Tutsi populations, exacerbated by colonial policies that favored one group over the other (Mamdani, 2021; Prunier, 2015). Similarly, the conflict in Darfur, Sudan, has been driven by ethnic divisions and competition over scarce resources.

STUDY AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This study aims to critically examine the concept of the Conflict Trilogy, comprising; Conflict Management, Conflict Resolution, and

Conflict Transformation and its interconnected practices, including Peacemaking, Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding, Reconciliation, and Transitional Justice.

LITERATURE REVIEW CONFLICT

Conflict as a phenomenon evolves around the world; within ethnic groups, communities, families, associations, individuals, and countries, which makes the study of conflict more intricate. Many would take the conflict to be a disagreement within an individual or even two or more in society. Many believe that conflict arises when matters lead to arguments between two or more people when there is awareness of thought, deceit, and even injustice among others (Razi et al., 2019; Caranti, 2018). According to Greenwood & Haar (2017), Conflict, in any context, is an inevitable and natural part of human interaction. It can break forth in any given time, condition, situation, basically, any given setting. It can take place in personal relations between people and their various publics, places of work, communities, race, gender, age or peer groups, and even between countries and continents. Conflict is seen as disagreement, tension, or opposite points of view that can bring about violent acts (Greenwood & Haar, 2017). The concept of the Conflict Trilogy encompassing conflict management, resolution, and transformation provides a comprehensive framework for addressing protracted conflicts, as highlighted in the study of the Gaza conflict, which underscores the importance of integrating peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding strategies to achieve sustainable reconciliation and transitional justice (Ibe, Iroye, & Ibebunjo, 2023).

To understand conflict trilogy, there is a need to know the types of conflict. The types of conflict are grouped into two; basic conflict, and in-depth conflict. The basic conflict is further broken down into five categories:

- a) **Intrapersonal Conflict:** This occurs within an individual's conscience due to psychological conflicts and confusions. It refers to the internal struggle or tension that an individual experiences. It involves opposing thoughts, values, feelings, or wants, which causes tension

and confusion. This conflict occurs when a person is faced with difficult decisions, conflicting goals, and inner turmoil, and is obliged to make only one decision with no other options (Raiz et al., 2019).

- b) **Interpersonal conflict:** In their study, Razi et al. (2019) opines that this happens between two or more people who have different philosophies, interests, needs, and perspectives. It occurs when two or more individuals disagree on their thoughts, aims, beliefs, ideologies, needs, interests, and values. This type of conflict can emerge in a variety of circumstances, including personal relationships, workplaces, communities, and even society. It is usually caused by miscommunication, opposing interests, personality differences, unmet expectations, or a lack of understanding and patience.
- c) **Organizational conflict:** According to Greenwood and Haar (2017), organizational conflict occurs when goals, priorities, or organizational styles differ. It refers to a dispute between individuals or groups within an organization. It happens as a result of various points of view, expectations, interests, values, etiquettes, aims, and requirements. It can also happen at multiple levels, including interpersonal, interdepartmental, and team. Although conflict is viewed negatively, it can lead to positive outcomes such as innovation and upgrades if handled properly. Meanwhile, bad conflict resolution can reduce productivity and organizational efficiency.
- d) **Intergroup or societal conflict:** This refers to organizations or communities coming into conflict with one another because of ideological differences, ideals, or competition for resources. It refers to a conflict between individuals or a group of people (Greenwood and Haar, 2017).
- e) **International Conflict:** This is described as a conflict situation that involves two or more sovereign states. Issues involving two or more states may bother on boundary issues as in the case of Nigeria and Cameroun over the disputed oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula. It can also be precipitated by a breakdown of diplomacy or diplomatic channels between two or more states. The imposition of a compulsory £3000 visa bond on Nigerians traveling to the United Kingdom by the British Government has

recently provoked diplomatic rows between Nigeria and Britain. Nigeria and South Africa also had a similar experience recently when the South African government denied some Nigerians entry into their country despite their possession of valid travel visas. Furthermore, there are other instances where some seemingly internal or national conflicts have an international dimension people (Greenwood and Haar, 2017). For instance, the Boko-Haram insurgencies and the Niger Delta crisis in Nigeria have since been internationalized. In the two instances, there has been evidence of foreign interests, especially concerning arms importation and in the cases of perpetration of genocide against the civilian population. And of course, many foreign nationals have either been kidnapped or killed in those crises.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

The concept of conflict management is typically taken to be conflict restraint. It is perceived as the process of handling ongoing conflicts, most particularly, in a way that avoids intensification, curtails the possibility of harm, and deals with tensions. It recognizes that conflict may never be fully resolved. It is often more about controlling and guiding the conflict, rather than settling it. It involves various tactics, such as compromising, intervention, or even enabling dialogue, to aid opposing parties to coexist in tranquility or avert further violence (Greer & Dannals, 2017). According to Aghaei et al. (2022), in their study assert that conflict management theorists see violent conflicts as an inextinguishable outcome of differences in values and interests within and between communities. The theorists saw the resolution as an unrealistic act, rather, what should be done is to control and repress them, and afterward, attain a compromise where violence would be placed aside for a while. Conflict management requires the view of a "Third-party", who is the mediator, advisor, manager, supervisor, and so on. This mediator helps to assist both conflict parties. Although, a mediator is not always needed to aid in managing the conflict. Sometimes, both parties arrive at a compromise or a consensus without any foreign help employed (Aghaei et al., 2022).

According to Alhyari et al. (2020), conflict management involves limiting the harmful impact of conflict through various measures and collaboration with all interested parties. It addresses good conflict resolution at all levels, including proactive conflict prevention measures. Conflict management aims to prevent and regulate conflict escalation. The term refers to direct involvement in a persistent problem to keep it under the control of the persons involved, rather than resolving it. Adeola & Chux (2023) in their study assert that the concept of conflict management is an acknowledgment by peace practitioners that not all disputes can be settled and that new approaches to handling them are consequently required. Conflict management often involves three basic mechanisms. These conflict management techniques include;

- i. **Avoidance:** Men's innate tendencies frequently make them desire to stay out of arguments at all costs. The idea behind the avoidance technique for conflict management is to distance oneself from the conflict and all of its consequences. People are typically warned to stay out of trouble by avoiding confrontations. Also, many people adhere to the Bible verses that exhort Christians to constantly forgive their offenders under all circumstances, persons who avoid conflict are therefore viewed as pious or virtuous. It is also common for parents, guardians, and elders to advise their children or wards to stay out of trouble at all times. However, when parties do not already have a connection or expect to build one in the future, avoidance as a conflict management tactic may become helpful. When parties avoid conflict, it is logically true that all the underlying issues would have been left unaddressed or swept under the carpet and parties would have lost all the benefits that are associated with it.
- ii. **Confrontation:** This is another conflict management technique that uses force to get things done in conflict circumstances. Certain individuals believe that because of their wealth or position of authority, they should force their will or choice on others. Instead of interacting with others to resolve

problems, those in privileged situations frequently choose to rule over others. Law enforcement officials frequently employ this to carry out specific state directives. In their relationships, bullies and haughty people are never willing to compromise and always turn to conflict. However, confrontation techniques may yield short-term gains, but they often result in disastrous long-term consequences for both individuals or groups involved. Confrontation can strain relationships and result in either a win/lose outcome.

- iii. **Joint problem-solving approach:** According to the cooperative problem-solving approach to conflict management, disagreements are inevitable and parties should work together to find a solution that benefits both of them. The benefit of this strategy is that, depending on the type and severity of the conflict, parties can use techniques like facilitation, mediation, conciliation, negotiation, and so forth. The parties respect and understand one another, and they collaborate to find solutions that will benefit both of them. Conciliation or mediation can provide a third-party alternative dispute resolution process in cases where bargaining is unsuccessful. The problem-solving approach to conflict management is still the best method for successfully resolving disputes, although it can be laborious and time-consuming. Amila (2020) asserts that the joint problem-solving approach 'is done in a manner that enables the conflict parties to work together towards generating a lasting solution to the problem'. It is not surprising, therefore, that this approach is favorably disposed towards a win/win outcome.

Avoidance

Confrontation

Joint problem-solving

Source: Researcher (2025).

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Most scholars would agree that letting conflict be after it has been managed is enough. Most times, this ideology is true, but what if the conflict that has been properly managed manages to rekindle? Now the question that comes to mind is, "Is it enough to manage conflict, or should more actions be taken?". Because of this question, constant meditation wanders in the minds of people, conflict resolution is yet another arm under the trilogy of conflict.

What then is conflict resolution? It is referred to as the process of sorting out a dispute, quarrel, or disagreement between two or more entities in such a manner that attends to their needs or concerns. The main aim of conflict resolution is to proffer a solution that is agreed upon by all that are involved, thereby, lessening tension and promoting cooperation.

Conflict management and resolution are two different things, although, they work hand-in-hand. The differences between both have always been present, even though they are often unified and used as the same thing. But Zartman has brought to light that both the resolution and management aspects are essential in conflict. Both aspects are "both ends of the same stick" (Amila, 2022), while one aims at solving absolutely, one aims at solving partially. If conflict is not resolved, the system cannot function efficiently. Jeremy (2024) states that the main objective of conflict resolution is to eliminate any conflict in an amenable and obvious process in line with legal principles. Conflict resolution tends to point out ways and techniques that could be used to find an outlet from the destructive nature of the conflict and get a proper solution that appeals to all parties involved in the dispute.

Conflict resolution has various tools that aid in achieving a successful resolution process. These tools are the basic ways to ensure proper resolution. These tools include:

Negotiations:

Negotiations may be the initial attempt towards conflict resolution. When parties willingly submit and avoid conflict by agreeing to demands, and victory is ascertained through violence, it is near impossible to think

that negotiation is not essential. Negotiations encourage dialogue between conflicting parties so they to attain a feasible solution that will be beneficial to both parties. According to Fisher et al., (2011), negotiation is a process in which entities with contrary interests attempt to search for common ground or a grey area and try to get a solution that is in the interest of all parties involved. This tool is essential especially when confrontation may intensify the situation or cause a break in the relationship, which may be more harmful for one party than the other. An advantage of this tool is that it is primarily focused on mutual benefits. Fisher et al. (2011) emphasized the concept of "principled negotiation". This principle aims at providing solutions that are agreed upon by all parties, instead of being selective in victory and leaving the other party in loss. This tool promotes cooperation instead of competition and prevents destruction in the course of conflict. Negotiation does not seize the control of resolution, nor does it impose resolution. It rather grants both parties a chance to make a choice and influence the situation and its outcome (Caranti, 2018). This approach lessens any feelings or thoughts of antipathy and encourages a long-term solution all parties are willing to allow. Negotiation also consolidates relationships by fostering efficient communication and emphasizing a profound mindset. The flexibility and informality of negotiation make it a preferable tool for conflict resolution (Lewicki et al., 2015). Hence, negotiation is an efficient tool for conflict resolution by encouraging togetherness and interaction and ensuring a more peaceful and involved end to conflict.

Mediation:

As long as mediation presents a channel through which mediation can take place, mediation, simply put, is known as "facilitated negotiation". Since negotiation is the initial attempt towards resolving conflict, mediation is a secondary tool in the process of conflict resolution. Mediation is a basic tool but quite essential. Basic because it is used even in quarrels or arguments between two people in a community. It is a tool used even in political unsettlement, like, a council that listens to both parties and tries to ensure accuracy in

delivering the actions they are expected to deliver. Even though, not recognized, watchdogs in a political system, that is the legislative arm of government are mediators. Mediation is also essential in conflict resolution because of its flexible and accessible nature, and its emphasis on cooperative problem-solving. As a substitute conflict resolution method, it requires an impartial third party to assist conflict parties in recognizing and putting an end to their disputes. It is often characterized by deliberate involvement, discretion, and centeredness on attaining a mutually beneficial result for all parties involved (Moore, 2014). Mediation usually inspires the involved entities to proffer their solutions, thereby creating a sense of ownership, and ensuring contentment with the result. The mediator enables communication, helps to shed more light on issues, and serves as a guide to making a decision that will lead to resolution. The nature of mediation is used in various contexts, from family disputes to workplace to societal to international conflicts (Coben, 2016).

Mediation is like a two-edged sword. On one end is the problem-solving approach of mediation, while on the other end is the transformative mediation.

Problem-solving approach:

This is an approach that intends to find a solution that will satisfy the needs and interests of all parties involved. This method centers on the idea that conflicts do not just arise from competing parties, but from fundamental interests that can be tackled through innovative solutions (Fisher et al., 2011). The process typically involves spotting issues, exploring benefits, generating options, assessing and opting for options, and arriving at a consensus. This approach is vital, not just because it centers on resolution, but also because it aims to build, maintain, and reestablish relationships between and among parties. It can also avert potential disputes in posterity by looking into the root causes of a dispute and obtaining satisfactory solutions to such situations.

Transformative mediation:

Unlike the problem-solving approach, this method focuses on the values of the parties involved. It concerns itself with the advancement and moral development of its involved entities. Formal resolution is its secondary goal. Its primary concern is its disputants experiencing recognition and achieving empowerment. In this context, recognition means individual acknowledgment and empathy for the situations of others, while empowerment means restoring a sense of individual values and strengths, as well as their ability to deal with their life's problems. This method aims to empower individuals or parties to curtail possible future disputes and handle them more effectively (Bush & Folger, 2015). This is achieved through an act that focuses on listening actively, verifying emotions, and altering the nature of communication (Moore, 2014). The role of the mediator is less directive than that in the problem-solving. Rather than proffering solutions, the mediator emphasizes facilitating an innate comprehension of each other's needs, and then, encouraging change. This may lead to a difference in their views of interaction, and gradually, lose the need for a mediator in the future (Bush & Folger, 2015).

Both approaches of mediation are very effective, especially if properly managed or handled. Both benefits offer unique benefits and are chosen based on the nature of the conflict and the interests of the involved entities. Although mediation is not always a remedy, its nature makes it an essential tool in modern conflict resolution.

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Conflict transformation encompasses all the post-conflict activities geared towards sustaining the successes of conflict management and resolution efforts. Lederach (1995) is a key proponent of the notion of conflict transformation, which he defines succinctly as the changes that typically occur after a successful intervention carried out by third parties using any of the cooperative problem-solving procedures. This comprehensive strategy known as "conflict transformation" aims to radically alter the underlying societal structures, connections, and dynamics that sustain conflict in addition to resolving its immediate problems.

This paradigm shift seeks to achieve lasting peace through systemic change, going beyond simple management or resolution.

According to Schirch (2015), conflict transformation entails a shift in the attitudes, behaviors, and structures that perpetuate violent conflict. She claims that this strategy aims to address the underlying causes of conflict and foster relationships among opponents to promote peace. In concurrence, Razi (2019) further defines conflict transformation as a process that sees and responds to the ebb and flow of social conflict as opportunities to create constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and address real-world issues in human relationships. Caranti (2018) emphasizes the connection between human rights and conflict transformation, arguing that addressing grievances connected to rights breaches is critical for long-term peace. She contends that conflict transformation necessitates a comprehensive approach that takes into account the legal, political, and social aspects of the conflict.

Steps in Conflict Transformation:

Kwofie et al. (2023) describe conflict transformation as a multidimensional process that includes several critical steps. These steps include:

- i. **Conflict Analysis:** Understanding the core causes, stakeholders, and dynamics of the dispute is critical. This entails determining the historical context, power dynamics, and cultural variables that contribute to the conflict.
- ii. **Engagement and Dialogue:** Encouraging open conversation between opposing groups promotes trust and mutual understanding. This step frequently incorporates mediators who can provide a secure environment for discourse.
- iii. **Relationship Building:** Creating and sustaining relationships between stakeholders is critical for changing attitudes and decreasing prejudices. This could include joint activities, collaborative problem-solving, and community-building projects.

- iv. **Addressing Structural Injustices:** Recognising and correcting social, economic, and political mechanisms that perpetuate inequality and injustice is critical. This step is intended to build systems that promote fairness and equity.
- v. **Developing Shared Goals:** Encouraging competing parties to collaborate on common goals promotes collaboration and a sense of shared purpose. This can include launching collaborative development projects or community initiatives.
- vi. **Sustaining Peace Efforts:** Implementing mechanisms to maintain peace, such as continuous dialogue platforms, monitoring systems, and peace education programs, ensures the longevity of peace initiatives.

One of the key benefits of conflict transformation is its ability to promote long-term peace. Unlike conflict management, which strives to manage tensions without necessarily resolving them, conflict transformation seeks to change the fundamental systems that cause conflict (Lederach, 2023). Conflict transformation avoids repeated cycles of violence and secures long-term peace by addressing the sociopolitical and economic variables that contribute to disputes (Schirch, 2021). This strategy not only addresses urgent conflicts but also encourages structural improvements that foster peaceful cohabitation.

Additionally, conflict transformation empowers communities by including local stakeholders in the peace process. It emphasizes participatory involvement, in which those affected by conflict actively shape solutions (Parlevliet, 2010). This inclusion generates a sense of ownership and accountability, which improves the effectiveness and sustainability of peacebuilding initiatives. Dialogue programs, mediation procedures, and local peace committees are examples of community-driven activities that develop links and improve societies' ability to manage conflicts autonomously (Schirch, 2022). As a result, communities develop the ability to resolve future problems without the need for external intervention.

Moreover, the emphasis on relationship-building among opposing parties is a significant aspect of conflict transformation. This strategy lowers antagonism and mistrust by encouraging discussion, reconciliation, and mutual understanding (Maiese, 2023). Facilitated communication allows stakeholders to identify each other's grievances and collaborate toward common goals (Lederach, 2023). This approach not only reduces antagonism but also fosters social cohesion, which is critical for societal stability and development. When individuals and groups form trusting and cooperative connections, the likelihood of conflict reappearance decreases substantially.

It is vital to note that conflict transformation is inextricably tied to social justice since it seeks to address the underlying inequities and injustices that feed conflict (Parlevliet, 2010). By recognizing and correcting oppressive mechanisms, this strategy fosters justice and equal access to resources, political representation, and human rights. Structural reforms, such as equitable policies and inclusive governance, guarantee that marginalized groups' concerns are heard and addressed, lessening the likelihood of conflict. As a result, societies grow more just and inclusive, creating a culture of peace and equality.

Conclusively, another key advantage of conflict transformation is its ability to strengthen society's resilience to future disputes. This strategy improves the ability of individuals and communities to handle conflicts constructively by providing them with conflict resolution skills such as negotiation, mediation, and peace education (Lederach, 2023). Institutions and frameworks created through conflict transformation provide mechanisms for early conflict detection and intervention (Schirch, 2021). As a result, cultures grow more competent at proactively managing conflicts, reducing the likelihood of violent escalation.

There are some essential components to further strengthen the conflict trilogy. Each of these components plays a crucial part in finding out and handling the root causes of these conflicts, sustaining peace attempts, and guaranteeing viable and long-lasting peace.

PEACEMAKING:

Amid any form of crisis, there always has to be a proffered solution to ensure the proper handling of such situations. Such solutions lead to what is known as peacemaking. It is the process of bringing conflicting parties to bargain and reconcile their differences. It is concerned mainly with the diplomatic and political attempts aimed at attaining a ceasefire. It often involves mediating parties such as governments, and NGOs. These mediating parties help conflicting entities come to a reasonable conclusion (Bercovitch, 2021). Peacemaking aims at dealing with the root causes of disputes and establishing bases for maintainable peace (Lederach, 2019).

PEACEKEEPING:

It is never enough to establish grounds for peace during an ongoing conflict. The fact that conflict arose in the first place should be enough confirmation that there have to be more steps than peacemaking to ensure peace. Peacekeeping is the deployment of impersonal forces to observe and preserve peace agreements made in peacemaking above. It prevents the reignition of disputes by ensuring both parties abide by truce regulations and providing a stabilizing presence in conflict areas. Peacekeepers also protect vulnerable populations and oftentimes aid in the decommissioning of combatants. Peacekeeping is often perceived as a temporary measure, which focuses on stabilizing a post-dispute situation and generating conditions for further peacebuilding (Hultman et al., 2020).

PEACEBUILDING:

Just as established, making and keeping peace is not enough to ensure continuous growth in society. Due to this apparent reason, peacebuilding comes into the picture. Peacebuilding is the act that focuses on the structural causes of conflict and prevents its recurrence by promoting long-term stability and resilience. This aims to strengthen the social, economic, and political foundations of a society to ensure maintained, resilient, and enduring

peace. It involves promoting human rights, healing societal divisions, and building trust among different groups. Peacebuilding activities usually involve both governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the activities can continue even after the conflict has been resolved (Galtung, 2018). According to Anderson (2021), peacebuilding goes beyond ending violence but also extends to transforming relationships and social systems.

RECONCILIATION:

This involves healing the wounds inflicted by the disputes recently solved. This takes place commonly between individuals, communities, or nations that have experienced conflicts. Reconciliation tries to patchup relationships, encourage trust, and allow individuals and groups to coexist peacefully. Reconciliation is a multifaceted and slow process, entailing individuals and communities to tackle painful histories and strive for a shared future. The process often requires both individual and societal efforts to overcome the emotional scars left by conflict. Scholars highlight the essence of a bottom-up approach of reconciliation, that is involving those at the grassroots and then to the highest level of society (Mendeloff, 2021).

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE:

This refers to mechanisms used to deal with human rights violations that took place in the course of the conflict. It involves trials, truth commissions, reparations, and institutional reforms designed to ensure accountability, justice, and the implementation of the rule of law. The objective of this act is to deal with past atrocities while promoting healing and preventing impunity. Its aim is also to provide justice to victims, hold offenders liable, and establish means to avert future violence. According to Sriram (2012), transitional justice can significantly contribute to long-term peace if it is perceived as legitimate and fair. Transitional justice contributes to societal transformation by encouraging goodwill, enhancing responsibility, looking into past injustices, and rebuilding trust. Recent scholarship emphasizes that transitional justice should be context-sensitive, balancing

justice and reconciliation to promote long-term peace (Roht-Arriaza, 2022).

These concepts work hand-in-hand with each other in a holistic approach to manage, resolve, and transform conflict. These concepts are closely related and often overlap, with each playing a crucial part in assuring the attainment and maintenance of peace in societies commonly affected by feuds. Together, these concepts contribute to the comprehensive management of conflict, ranging from the cessation of hostilities to the transformation of society into peaceful, stable, and just communities.

THE NATURE, CAUSES, AND RESOLUTION STRATEGIES OF CONFLICT IN AFRICA, WITH A SPECIFIC EMPHASIS ON NIGERIA

Africa, a continent rich in cultural diversity and natural resources, has seen various conflicts that have hampered its progress and stability. Understanding the nature and causes of these conflicts is critical to developing effective resolution techniques. This study goes deeper into the numerous facets of African conflicts, with a particular emphasis on Nigeria, exploring their origins, root causes, and possible solutions. According to Henry (2023) in his study, African conflicts are multidimensional, stretching from intra-state to inter-state disputes, and are frequently characterized by ethnic, religious, political, or economic components. These disputes can be broadly classified as follows.

- a) **Ethnic and Tribal Conflicts:** Africa's tremendous ethnic diversity has occasionally resulted in tensions and battles between various tribes. For example, the Rwandan genocide in 1994 was a horrific manifestation of ethnic conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi populations.
- b) **Religious Conflicts:** Differing religious beliefs have also caused conflict. Tensions between Muslim and Christian communities in places such as Nigeria have occasionally turned violent.
- c) **Political Conflicts:** Power disputes, compounded by weak governance frameworks, have resulted in political instability. The civil wars in Liberia and

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Sierra Leone in the 1990s are examples of political disputes turning into military confrontations.

- d) **Resource-Based Conflicts:** Competition for natural resources such as oil, minerals, and arable land has been a major source of conflict. This category is shown by Nigeria's Niger Delta conflict, in which local communities resisted environmental deterioration and marginalization by oil multinationals.

In an attempt to understand the origin and root causes of these conflicts, Razi (2019) asserts that Conflicts in Africa stem from various factors, including the colonial legacy, poor governance and corruption, economic disparities, ethnic and religious differences, and competition for resources. Colonial borders often grouped disparate ethnic groups within single nations, leading to persistent tensions. Poor governance and corruption undermine public trust, fuelling grievances and causing marginalized groups to resort to violence. Economic disparities create fertile ground for conflict, with individuals joining rebel groups in regions with scarce opportunities. Ethnic and religious differences can lead to division and conflict if not addressed, and politicians exploit these differences for personal gain. The "resource curse" refers to the paradoxical use of abundant natural resources to fuel corruption and conflict rather than development.

Narrowing down to Nigeria as a case study, Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, has faced various conflicts that reflect the broader challenges of the continent. According to Jeremy (2024), conflict in Nigeria is predominantly ethnic and religious, with conflicts in the Middle Belt region resulting from land and political disagreements. As previously mentioned in his paper, the rise of Boko Haram in the northeast has resulted in a lengthy insurgency that has killed thousands of people and displaced many more. In the Niger Delta, concerns over oil extraction have resulted in insurgency and infrastructure sabotage. He goes on to say that Nigeria's boundaries include over 250 ethnic groupings, which creates competitiveness and friction. Corruption and political exclusion contribute to frustration

among many groups. Despite Nigeria's oil wealth, economic disparity exists in many places, and it continues to be the source and basis of conflict.

In submission, this study asserts based on this study that addressing conflicts in Africa requires a multifaceted approach, including strengthening governance, promoting inclusive economic growth, promoting social cohesion, and establishing fair and transparent resource management mechanisms. International mediation and peacekeeping can help stabilize regions in conflict. In Nigeria, political reforms can reduce feelings of marginalization by ensuring fair representation of all ethnic groups in governance. Economic initiatives, particularly in the impoverished north, can address economic grievances. Counter-insurgency operations, such as military action and dialogue, have been employed to tackle Boko Haram. The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was established to address the developmental needs of the oil-producing region and reduce militancy. The international community, through organizations like the United Nations and the African Union, can provide mediation and peacekeeping forces to stabilize regions in conflict.

CONCLUSION

The study of conflict trilogy comprising conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation provides a comprehensive understanding of how conflicts emerge, escalate, and can be effectively addressed. The integration of Peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, reconciliation, and transitional justice into conflict intervention frameworks ensures a holistic approach that fosters sustainable peace. Conflicts are inevitable in human society due to divergent interests, values, and aspirations. However, how conflicts are handled determines whether they escalate into violence or lead to constructive change. Conflict management focuses on limiting the negative effects of conflict while enhancing its positive aspects, ensuring that disputes do not spiral into destructive violence. Conflict resolution seeks to address the root causes of disputes, aiming for long-term solutions that satisfy all parties

involved. Meanwhile, conflict transformation goes beyond resolution by promoting systemic change and fostering social justice, ensuring that the structures and relationships that sustain peace are strengthened.

The study highlights that conflict in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, is driven by historical, socio-economic, and political factors. Issues such as ethnic and religious divisions, poor governance, economic disparities, and competition for resources contribute significantly to the prevalence of conflicts. Nigeria, as a case study, has witnessed ethno-religious conflicts, insurgencies like Boko Haram, and resource-based conflicts in the Niger Delta. Various strategies, including regional mediation, military interventions, economic initiatives, and community-led peace efforts, have been employed to address these conflicts, with varying degrees of success. Ultimately, achieving sustainable peace requires a shift from reactive conflict management to proactive conflict transformation. This involves not only resolving disputes but also addressing structural inequalities and fostering reconciliation among conflicting parties. The study underscores the importance of integrating peacebuilding initiatives, strengthening governance institutions, and promoting transitional justice mechanisms to build resilient societies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

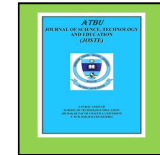
To foster sustainable peace and stability, the following key recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthening Governance and Rule of Law** – Governments must ensure transparent, inclusive, and accountable leadership to address grievances and prevent conflicts.
2. **Economic Development and Equity** – Addressing socio-economic disparities through job creation, infrastructure development, and equitable resource distribution can reduce tensions and prevent conflicts.
3. **Community-Based Peace Initiatives** – Encouraging grassroots peacebuilding efforts, including inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue, can foster social cohesion and reconciliation.

4. **Effective Conflict Resolution Mechanisms** – Strengthening mediation, negotiation, and arbitration frameworks will ensure timely intervention in disputes before they escalate.
5. **Regional and International Cooperation** – Collaborative efforts between national governments, regional bodies, and international organizations can enhance peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies.
6. **Education and Public Awareness** – Promoting peace education and conflict resolution skills at all levels can cultivate a culture of non-violence and tolerance.

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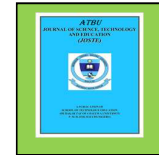
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