Empowering communities for peace: Multitrack strategies for sustainable peacebuilding in Africa

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Abstract

The paper discusses approaches and analyzes strategies that has the potential to effectively address the root causes of conflicts and promote long-lasting peace in Africa. The study utilizes the concept of multitrack diplomacy theory to explore various interventions and strategies that might contribute to the transformation and prevention of conflicts. It emphasizes the importance of comprehensive approaches that involve citizen diplomats, political elites, religious leaders, NGOs, the media, conflict resolution educators, and traditional rulers. The paper underscores the need to involve and empower local communities to give them a sense of ownership and authority over peacebuilding initiatives. Storytelling, interfaith activities, legal accountability, and education are recognized as useful methods for promoting reconciliation, preventing trauma, and developing the ability to resolve conflicts. The literature indicates that adopting a relationship-focused strategy, bolstered by multitrack diplomacy and local empowerment, can play a role in achieving lasting peace in Africa and other regions. The paper offers pragmatic insights for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders engaged in peacebuilding endeavors. It emphasizes the significance of promoting conversation, harmony, and shared comprehension while taking into account the specific requirements, objectives, and resolutions of the local community. By employing these tactics, individuals or groups with a vested interest in a particular issue can actively strive to bring an end to harmful disputes and facilitate inclusive processes of change that foster positive and enduring peace.

Contents

Contribution of this paper to the literature
The importance of inclusive approaches that engage a wide range of stakeholders is highlighted, acknowledging their potential contributions to peace processes. This contribution adds value to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting the active role and involvement of local communities in shaping their own peacebuilding efforts.

1. Introduction

The building of peace that is sustainable through theory, research, and practice is at the heart of Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS). PACS brings together theories from different fields to discover ways of knowing through indigenous means (McDonough, 2013). The scholarship in this field involves conflict analysis geared towards peaceful, positive, and sustainable peace. Since the end of the Cold War, the international community has been faced with challenges in trying to ensure a world peace order. The ideological confrontation between the West and East was generally viewed as a major barrier to attaining political and economic stability, especially in the global south (Sandole, Byrne, Sandole-Staroste, & Senehi, 2009). However, this was not the case, as many countries became engulfed in identity-based conflicts. Its pervasiveness drew the attention of the international community and scholars to do critical studies of the underlying causes and propose ways to enhance effective conflict transformation (Reimer et al., 2015). Through these critical studies, it became evident that addressing root causes such as inequality, discrimination, and historical grievances was essential to preventing and resolving conflicts. By promoting dialogue, reconciliation, and mutual understanding, the international community could work towards building sustainable peace and stability. It became increasingly clear that a comprehensive and holistic approach was needed to address the complex nature of conflicts in the global south and beyond. As a result, efforts were made to implement conflict resolution mechanisms and peacebuilding initiatives that focused on long-term solutions (Sandole et al., 2009). This paper therefore draws on "multitrack diplomacy theory" in discussing a range of interventions and measures that could help in transforming and preventing conflicts from further escalation to enhance sustainable peace in Africa and beyond. Multitrack strategies involving a diverse range of stakeholders in conflict resolution efforts, such as citizen diplomats, political elites, religious leaders, NGOs, the media, conflict resolution educators, and traditional rulers, are discussed.

2. Multitrack Diplomacy

Multitrack diplomacy involves approaches that are multidisciplinary in nature and are used in the transformation of the underlying antagonisms of a conflict to improve relations between the parties and enhance positive change in individual attitudes and behaviours to foster and build a peaceful society (Barua & Vij, 2018; Byrne & Senehi, 2012; Chrismas, 2012; Dudouet & Dressler, 2016; Effendi, 2015; McDonald, 2012). Diplomacy refers to the activity and process of negotiating, discussing, and meeting between recognized officials of nations and multilateral bodies (Asare, 2011). The growing notion of diplomacy led to a shift from diplomacy that focuses on the activities of government and non-government actors to a more inclusive track, herein referred to as multitrack diplomacy or intervention (Effendi, 2015). The concept is premised on the idea of enhancing relationships between parties in the system by targeting levels of society and decision making concurrently in a way that is well coordinated and interconnected (Dudouet & Dressler, 2016). The building of strong relationships and dealing with the power dynamics at play in conflict require different approaches, resources, and perspectives (Byrne & Senehi, 2012). The sustainability of the peacebuilding interventions is highly dependent on the participation and ownership of the local people (Creary & Byrne, 2014; Galtung, 2011; Thiessen, 2011). Therefore, multitrack diplomacy as an intervention, prevention, and transformative approach to addressing conflicts in Africa has the potential to open the door for the local people to own the peace process. This would give them a sense of agency (Mac Ginty, 2014). Various actors would therefore have to play a variety of roles as an intervention strategy in working towards the achievement of a sustainable peace. Based on this the range of actors are discussed below.

3. Peacebuilding Actors and Strategies

3.1. Citizen Diplomats/Local People

The core of citizen diplomacy is to offer opportunities for conflicting parties to cooperate and work together, which will ultimately create a "culture of peace" by transforming the conflict. The people at the grassroots who would want to make a difference engage themselves in the peacebuilding process (Lederach, 2005). Local individuals could engage in this process by joining peace advocacy groups or multicultural conflict resolution groups that enable and generate dialogue amongst the various groups (Byrne & Senehi, 2012). This would be able to foster the broken relationships that exist in society. Relationships between the elites and the non-elites would be fostered. Relationships are at the heart of every community. For there to be development, the people must come together to build their community. The citizens who have the will to pursue this course of peace must embrace the "principle of solidarity" (Chinn, 2013). This solidarity unites the group and also gives a clear distinction and similarities with regards to what they all honor or not. This kind of union bonds them together, which eventually develops into a community. Humans like a sense of belonging and identity, a place where they will feel safe. In modern cultures, for a group to function effectively, cohesiveness and diversity must be adhered to (Chinn, 2013). Thus, members of the group, while working to maintain their commonality, also do well to respect individual differences without the differences ruining the relationship. In effect, acknowledging diversity and cohesion in the group helps all to appreciate that everyone has a different perspective and a different way of looking at issues, which paves the way for divergent ideas and opinions. Respecting each other's opinion and working together towards a mutual resolution of differences. There can be said to be peace when a group has achieved harmony, trust, and constructive solutions to problems. The empowerment that peace enhances is phenomenal. Empowerment for (Chinn, 2013) comes from real solidarity. Thus, when people are united toward a common goal, they become empowered. Therefore, active engagement with others who share a common value propels

empowerment. The citizen diplomats could also employ the ARIA model to bring together the conflicting parties to dialogue in their quest to mend the broken relationship that had existed over decades (Rothman, 2012). ARIA represents four conflict intervention categories that correspond to distinct forms of conflicts: Action, Resonance, Antagonism, and Invention. It offers a structured approach to encourage productive interaction, deepen understanding, and facilitate beneficial transformation in situations of conflict. When parties that are in antagonistic situations come together in a process that facilitates listening and understanding, they can truly begin to create solutions. The ARIA model gives equal and fairgrounds to bring all the conflicting parties to the mediation table and enables communication between them. There is an eventual realization of the problem and the available options after going through each stage. They will then be able to come up with a road map that will guide them to ending the conflict. The brain behind the entire process is to facilitate the togetherness of the parties for an effective resolution of the conflict. A thorough examination of the antagonistic and reflexive frameworks would enlighten us to recognize that even in issues of protracted conflict, both parties wanted harmony (Rothman, 2012).

Additionally, peacebuilding in conflict societies must be premised on the idea of local participation, ownership, and control of the processes involved (Creary & Byrne, 2014; Galtung, 2011; Liaga, 2019; Thiessen, 2011). Thiessen (2011) argues that the theory of local participation focuses on emancipating and encouraging the pursuit of justice for all, both state and non-state actors (p. 118). Thus, it calls for a grass-roots approach where the voice of the masses or voiceless could be heard in the peacemaking processes. The peacebuilding process must take into consideration what the local people need and aspire to while rejecting the centralization that stems from the neoliberal approach as the "objects and subjects of peace" (Thiessen, 2011). There is a high propensity for sustainability, attainability, and responsivity when the peace processes take into consideration local needs, goals, and solutions (Creary & Byrne, 2014). This therefore calls for the creation of a space for the local people to take part in the peace processes. To be able to take possession, control, and participate fully in the peacebuilding process, Thiessen (2011) contends that there should be a bottom-up approach that engages the locals who are involved in the conflict, right from identifying the root cause of the conflict, the needed interventions, and their implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Identification of all stakeholders, which will provide a fair system for people's participation, would enhance ownership. The success of even international peacemaking programs is dependent on local participation, ownership, and control of the process (Creary & Byrne, 2014). Stroschein (2013) argues that various factors exist in local settings, and as a result, the international community, which may want to intervene, must engage in an approach that focuses on inclusiveness in the "local ecosystem," taking into consideration the different dynamics at play. In line with the above, the conflicting factions must consider bringing the locals on board to settle their differences in identity in terms of religion, ethnicity, or politics. The convergence of the voices of the locals would go a long way toward ceasing fire, and hence, peace would prevail.

3.2. Political Elites

The constructive or destructive mode of ethnopolitical conflict is premised on the quality of leaders (Byrne, 2017). These leaders ought to promote intervention measures that give the various groups a voice. This will foster togetherness among the various groups in conflicting societies to ensure peace (Lederach, 1997). The political and ethnic leaders in societies plagued by conflict must work to get all members of their group to participate in the process geared towards the creation of new ideas of cooperation that are all inclusive. Thus, in an attempt to come up with new policies devoid of discrimination, the various leaders must urge the full participation of all members. Group member participation would not allow only the elites or leaders to make decisions for the whole group (Boudreau, 2011). Participation in the form of dialogue would help transform the underlying understanding behind the conflict and, hence, acknowledge the other groups or all parties involved (Fisher & Shapiro, 2005; Fisher, 2009). The political elites can work towards the achievement of peace by ensuring that all the different ethnic groups and minorities have a fair share of the national cake in terms of resources, jobs, etc. It has to be noted that human wants are many, but the resources for satisfying those needs are limited. Amidst the scarcity of resources, the sharing of the limited resources is likely to generate conflict. As a result, the political elites must manage the conflict by giving all citizens equal access to these limited resources. There should be an equitable distribution of resources by these elites, which would go a long way toward ensuring tranquilly in conflicting societies. Elections must also be organized devoid of rigging and must be free and fair to all contesting parties (Paris 2004, as cited in Byrne and Senehi (2012)). A political system where the elites work together with the minority groups paves the way for fairness because the political elites are restricted from exploiting the minority groups for their own gains (Türkmen, 2018). In the case of countries with diverse ethnicities, the elites are able to work together to share power with the aim of upholding democratic principles and ensuring the protection of the dignity and rights of all citizens. The citizens cultural, political, social, and economic rights are all upheld by the elites in such a democratic terrain (Türkmen, 2018). The middle level elites can play a role in educating the national and community level parties during the peace process in such societies. Education can take the form of bringing to the fore issues that were hitherto not acknowledged by the top elites to be addressed (Byrne & Senehi, 2012). Through the organization of problem-solving workshops, they can participate and pave the way for individuals to informally represent the parties in conflict so that they can examine the problems shared in common. This allows the conflicting parties to have a direct interaction while developing alternatives and new options for the amicable resolution of the conflict (Sterio & Levy, 2020).

3.3. Religious Leaders

The role of religious leaders in the resolution of conflicts cannot be ignored (Babalola & Onapajo, 2018; Silvestri & Mayall, 2015). The various religious leaders in the conflict society could use their position to call the conflicting parties to the peacemaking table to have a discussion on the way forward to dealing with the menace. They can work towards reconciliation and forgiveness (Ramsbotham, Miall, & Woodhouse, 2011). Looking at how religious leaders are revered in African societies for their non-compromising attitudes coupled with their level of integrity, they are likely to gain the trust of all groups in their quest to mediate conflicts. Their positions place them at an advantageous point in promoting tolerance in society centered on their religious beliefs, values, and ideals (Babalola & Onapajo, 2018). Interreligious activities like the celebration of holidays and ceremonies can be a

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starting point for transforming the sour relationships that exist among the different religious groups and identities (Babalola & Onapajo, 2018; Byrne & Senehi, 2012). For instance, the celebration of Christmas and Ramadan together could be encouraged by the religious leaders, and this has the potential to change the behaviours of the groups by seeing others as inimical to their progress.

The religious leaders must continue to preach forgiveness, tolerance, and unity to the political leaders so they can pass it on to their followers, acknowledging that the national interest is what matters (Babalola & Onapajo, 2018). Therefore, the groups should put aside their differences, come together, and fight towards a common goal of eradicating poverty and underdevelopment that have engulfed the country for a better future. Smock succinctly highlights the above position by noting that "the use of rituals and symbols, scriptures, and text allows for a deeper and more meaningful engagement" by religious leaders through interfaith dialogue groups to nonviolently "promote understanding and reconciliation," compassion, and tolerance, to improve, repair, and restore relationships (Smock 2002, cited in Byrne and Senehi (2012)). For instance, the religious leaders in Africa could learn from the expertise of Desmond Tutu, who championed the course of truth and reconciliation in South Africa, to facilitate the peacebuilding process to deescalate and ceasefire completely. Also, during the conflict in Northern Ireland, the Christian movement was able to advocate and bring people together to realize their common goals (Byrne, 2001). The religious institutions must therefore equip and build the capacity of the religious leaders to handle these kinds of conflicts to ensure sustainable peace. This can be achieved through training programs, workshops, and dialogues that focus on conflict resolution, reconciliation, and mediation skills. By empowering religious leaders with the tools and knowledge necessary to navigate and resolve conflicts peacefully, they can play a crucial role in promoting unity and understanding within their communities. Ultimately, investing in the capacity building of religious leaders can contribute to the long-term stability and peace within societies affected by conflict.

3.4. Nongovernmental Organizations

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been recognized as key actors championing human rights, humanitarian action, development, the environment, and many other areas of public action (Lewis, 2010). They also play a key role in restoring relationships. Generally, NGOs work at the grassroots to examine the underlying causes of conflict so as to work on appropriate measures or put tools in place to transform the conflict and restore broken relationships (Bartoli, 2009). NGOs have served as valuable allies for both national governments and multinational diplomatic and dispute resolution organizations (Carment & Schnabel, 2010). Most often, due to the slower nature of intergovernmental organizations in intervening in issues of conflict, as was seen in the case of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, it is expedient that the NGOS, who work closely with the local people, intervene to restore order before things get out of control (Byrne & Senehi, 2012). They can intervene by monitoring the conflicts, trying to prevent arms from being delivered into the country, and also making attempts to make sure the existing government institutions, if any, are strengthened to deal with issues of human rights violations and atrocities perpetrated by people (Byrne & Senehi, 2012; Lewis, 2010). They can also promote dialogue between the conflicting parties and groups in such societies while addressing the existential economic, social, political, and cultural inequalities. Through their activities, people would gain confidence and trust to be able to participate, build themselves, and work together to enhance cordial relationships (Fisher, 2009; Lewis, 2010). Most conflict arises as a result of needs or identity issues (Cook-Huffman, 2009). The NGOs could help the people by trying to understand their fears and what they need while sharing with them a sense of hope and optimism. The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Council that happened to restore peace in South Africa could be instituted by NGOs in conflicting societies to help restore peace. The NGOs could act as mediators of the conflict by helping the different ethnic and political groups to express appreciation, build affiliations or alliances, respect autonomy, acknowledge status, and choose a fulfilling role that focuses on how to see oneself in relation to others and vice versa (Fisher & Shapiro, 2005). This act will have the capacity to address negative emotions that emanate from any of the groups. In doing so, they could adopt these tenets of negotiating an agreement by "separating people from the problem, focusing on interests rather than positions, inventing multiple options looking for mutual gains before deciding what to do, and insisting that the result be based on an objective standard (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011). Also, the NGOs can work to address human rights violations in conflict affected societies. Bell (2013) has argued that throughout the peacebuilding process, human rights and law play an important role, whether through limiting current violence, maintaining peaceful relations, establishing frameworks for agreements, or frameworks for human rights and law. Essentially, human rights violations are an important part of the peacebuilding process because they can be the cause of conflict and manifest through conflict (Bell, 2013). In order to have sustainable peace, these human rights violations must be addressed, and there must be ways to regulate and deter future human rights violations. The way this is done is usually through the legal processes, both international and local (Bell, 2013). The intervention to build peace must therefore consider rebuilding and re-establishing the credibility of legal institutions. The main underlying issue in this process is trying to use the law to create peace while trying to re-legitimize the legal system simultaneously (Bell, 2013). This delicate balance requires a careful approach to ensure that justice is served while also promoting reconciliation and healing within the community. It is essential to work towards restoring trust in the legal system, as this is crucial for maintaining peace and preventing future conflicts. By addressing human rights violations through legal channels and promoting accountability, societies can move towards a more just and peaceful future.

3.5. The Media

Media and journalism can be a great help in the intervention and building of peace in Ivory Coast. The media's position in conflict management and intervention continues to evolve, requiring more detailed and general awareness of these dimensions (Ukka & Kombate, 2019). Apart from the distribution of information, the media can help create an environment that accepts varied opinions to achieve symmetry in information. The media that is responsible would stand for truth and fairness in its reporting (Saleem & Hanan, 2014). The local media can broadcast news using the radio stations since they have access to many different areas. In this way, they could address people directly in their own languages and try to spread the message of peace and do away with hate (Savrum & Miller, 2015). The local media typically provide a better view of current power systems, dispute actors,

and developments preceding the eruption of the conflict. The local media can therefore have an influence on the conflict, either before or after. Since the local media is recognized to be part of the society in which the conflict has occurred, they can act positively by reducing or diffusing fears and tensions that have erupted between various political parties and ethnic groups (Savrum & Miller, 2015). They must serve as gatekeepers by serving as watchmen for the government, opposition, and society. They must make sure credible information is being supplied to reach a larger audience. They can continue to preach the tenets of democracy and let the people understand their fundamental rights. They can also encourage reconciliation and societal development to help transform the conflict.

In addition, enhanced peace journalism could play a salient role. Journalists can try to uncover the main reason or causes behind the conflict and try to understand the parties' objectives. With that knowledge, they could institute measures to help solve the menace and also help those victimized. Thus, journalism must be geared towards finding possible solutions that would prevent further escalation of the conflict (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). In culturally diverse societies, the media could engage in educating the people about the different cultural practices as a form of awareness creation to help coexist harmoniously. The media can focus on highly respected individuals in the community to help in the articulation of the peace campaign. This is in line with the notion that it is salient for peace journalism to seek out diverse voices and express a variety of interests in a conflict situation (Galtung & Fischer, 2013; Webel & Galtung, 2007). In the creation of a just and peaceful society, the media plays a critical role in drawing awareness and building multicultural relationships, which enhances de-escalation rather than escalation of conflict (Byrne & Senehi, 2012).

3.6. Conflict Resolution Educators

The field of conflict resolution can deploy experts to offer education to the citizens of conflict affected societies on the skills, theories, and procedures necessary for making peace. Education would help in changing perspectives regarding how conflict is resolved, which would lead to the adoption of innovative measures necessary for ensuring impartiality (Bekerman, 2010). Grassroots mediation centers could educate the people on the various peace management techniques that help boost their confidence to analyze and dissect issues critically, devoid of any political lens (Byrne & Senehi, 2012). Teachers in the various schools can engage in public education where the masses are taught the different types of violence, be they structural or cultural, the propelling mechanisms for the eruption of conflict, and also, when conflict arises, how to handle it (Harris & Morrison, 2012). A safe space must be provided for all students, irrespective of their identity, and as they continue to interact, they will have changed perceptions of each other, which will help them to coexist peacefully. Such students would grow to know that they are all humans, irrespective of their identities, and as a result, they are unlikely to engage in acts of political violence when they grow up. Thus, the educators should teach the children the way they should go so that they will not depart from it when they grow up.

There ought to be an incorporation of peace education and peace literacy in the curriculum from preschool to tertiary level (Maulden, 2013) as well as exploring new ways to meet the legitimate goals of all parties (Galtung, 2011). This education would serve as a source of liberation from the bondage or habit of violence and inequity. It would go a long way toward empowering the populace to deal with conflict when they encounter it (Maulden, 2013). Thus, peace education, whether formal or informal, must empower the citizens to garner the necessary skills and attitude needed to resolve conflicts and enhance harmony and coexistence in the community (Maulden, 2013). The past and the future must inform the peace process (Ross, 2013). The educators can adopt a multidisciplinary approach to understanding peace and peacebuilding. The existence of complexity behooves teachers, researchers, and practitioners to learn about the perspectives of the different disciplines about peacebuilding and how these are interconnected using multidisciplinary studies (Boudreau, 2012). That is, what are their definitions of peace, and how can peace be achieved? In their quest to add their voice, many authors have taken up the challenge of explaining their positions on the different disciplines with respect to peace and peacebuilding. For instance, McKeown (2013) writing on social psychology and peacebuilding, emphasized the position of social psychology by analyzing intergroup relationships that are critical to achieving peace and contending that it is vital to put in place necessary mechanisms that could help improve intergroup relationships. Developing theories that assist in both understanding and improving intergroup relationships is the key function of social psychology in peacebuilding.

Apart from this, educators, teachers, and practitioners of conflict resolution could employ the tactics of storytelling to allow room for the various political parties, ethnic groups, religious groups, and other minorities to tell their stories to enhance understanding of the conflict and help transform the crisis while building relationships as well. Senehi (2019) contends that there is easy accessibility to storytelling because it does not require any special equipment or training and is easily understandable regardless of culture, age differences, etc. For Senehi, storytelling serves as the means through which people enact their past, identify their commonalities, and build bridges for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, especially identity-based conflicts. Similarly, it provides a voice for the voiceless, evokes memory, and provides space for people to emotionally express their feelings of anger and revenge (Senehi, 2019). With storytelling as a method for community building and peacebuilding, it provides the opportunity for the psychosocial aspects of the conflict to be resolved. Storytelling also addresses traumas that have always contributed to the protracted nature of conflicts (Maiangwa & Byrne, 2015; Senehi, 2019). It has to be noted, however, that the narrator may sometimes formulate the story to suit their interests, but it does not debunk the fact of acknowledging certain events and experiences. Storytelling will help us to understand the historical relationship that existed between the parties and how the relationship has shaped the dynamics of conflict (Senehi, 2019). Peace may be enhanced when storytelling takes the form of a dialogue coupled with a mutual acknowledgment that seeks to enhance consciousness devoid of domination. Also, educators could help adopt reconciliation to help those who lost their loved ones in the cause of the crisis recover from the trauma that is likely to resurge a conflict. The continual existence of issues of identity and lack of access to resources, coupled with political issues, makes it necessary for steps to be taken to deal with the crisis.

3.8. Traditional Chiefs to the Rescue

Chiefs are believed to be the custodians of the lands and have the capacity to protect the culture, traditions, and history of the various communities. They are highly revered, especially in African societies. As a result, they have

played and continue to play a salient role in mediating or resolving conflicts that arise in their communities (Marfo, 2019). In Ghana, for instance, there are numerous times where the paramount chief of the Ashanti, Otumfo Osei Tutu, summons all political parties and talks to them when he realizes tensions are boiling up. The traditional authorities in conflict societies in Africa could also employ the same tactics by bringing the conflicting parties together for a dialogue. Through this, the root causes of the conflict would be unearthed, and a solution could be arrived at. This means that the chiefs should help the parties come to the negotiation table to have a solution that would help all to live together in harmony (Issifu, 2015; Nwolise, 2005). The traditional leaders can play a role as mediators between the political parties. The traditional leaders must address the need for justice. This justice must result in a win-win situation where all the political parties feel satisfied. The chiefs can lead the various parties to engage in intercultural dialogue as a way of uniting the various ethnic identities or groups. This can be achieved by addressing issues of emotions and trauma, which play a significant role in protracted conflicts due to the deficiency of intervention strategies to incorporate them into the peacemaking processes (Abu-Nimer, 2013; Thiessen, 2011). People who have experienced grievances will be able to express some emotions about important events that happened, which would be relevant in seeing the way forward to bringing peace. In effect, the significance of a group's collective memory is highly necessary for achieving sustainable peace (Ross, 2013). The inability of intervention strategies to address collective memory has the tendency to create a narrative that is used for the justification and continuation of violence (Ross, 2013). Again, using traditional leaders can be said to be a form of indigenous approach to peacebuilding. Many scholars contend that indigenous approaches in conflict zones are at the heart of the practice of peacebuilding (Galtung, 2011; Rice, 2011; Thiessen, 2011; Tuso, 2011; Wanis-St John, 2013). In culturally relevant ways, the indigenous approaches help resolve conflicts in the locality while managing the social relationships that exist and providing the platform or avenues for forgiveness (Wanis-St John, 2013). The survival of indigenous societies is dependent on the coexistence between humans and their environment, and as a result, indigenous approaches are hinged on the experiences of the locals with their environment (Rice, 2011). The indigenous peacebuilding processes are premised on decisions that emanate unanimously and are geared towards the restoration of a balance in the relationship between humans and the environment (Tuso, 2011). Due to the unintended consequences that emerge when local dynamics are not considered, peacebuilding processes must involve the people of the soil (Stroschein, 2013). Tuso (2011) contends, however, that proper care must be taken so that local structures will not be oppressive, as well as including all genders in the process. Involving the people of the soil in peacebuilding processes ensures that their experiences, knowledge, and needs are taken into account, leading to more sustainable and effective outcomes. By including all genders in these processes, a more inclusive and diverse perspective can be achieved, resulting in solutions that are more comprehensive and representative of the community as a whole. It is crucial to strike a balance between respecting local structures and traditions while also ensuring that they do not perpetuate oppression or exclusion within the community. Ultimately, by prioritizing the voices and agency of the locals, peacebuilding efforts can truly address the root causes of conflict and promote long-lasting reconciliation and harmony.

4. Conclusion

This paper has drawn on the "multitrack diplomacy" theory in discussing a range of interventions and measures that could help in transforming and preventing conflicts from further escalation to enhance sustainable peace. It brought to light some actors and the various roles they need to play in achieving sustainable peace in Africa and beyond. The conflict intervention, prevention, and transformation processes, when harnessed effectively, would go a long way toward ending destructive conflicts while building something more desirable in a relationship-centered manner, which would eventually promote change processes that are constructive and inclusive. It is time African societies moved from violent and destructive patterns of conflict resolution to potential creative, constructive, and nonviolent ways of dealing with conflict. This shift in mindset and approach requires a deep understanding of the root causes of conflict as well as a willingness to engage in open and honest dialogue with all parties involved. It also necessitates a commitment to building trust, empathy, and understanding among conflicting parties in order to create a foundation for lasting peace and reconciliation. By embracing these principles and actively working towards conflict transformation, African societies can pave the way for a more peaceful and prosperous future for all. This transformation process may not be easy, as it requires individuals and communities to let go of deeply ingrained beliefs and prejudices. However, by investing in education, training, and resources for conflict resolution and peacebuilding, African societies can begin to make significant strides towards sustainable peace. It is crucial for leaders and citizens alike to prioritize collaboration and cooperation rather than resorting to violence or aggression in times of disagreement. With a collective effort towards embracing peaceful solutions, Africa can set an example for the rest of the world on how to effectively address and resolve conflict.

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