

Relational and Hybrid Peacebuilding: Traditional Institutions and the Transformation of Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Jos, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines how traditional institutions can be leveraged to resolve conflicts in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. A place characterized by ethno-religious tensions and communal conflicts. Since time immemorial, local chiefs, elders, and other community leaders have been the custodians of peace, utilizing traditional values and practices to resolve conflicts. The paper draws from Relational Conflict Theory and Hybrid Peacebuilding Theory to analyze the social processes and interpersonal relations that perpetuate these conventional processes. The data were collected through a mixed-methods approach, involving the collection of data from traditional rulers, chiefs, and community members in the selected communities. The results indicate that, prior to the emergence of formal institutions, disputes were usually resolved through mediation by elders, intervention by clans or families, spiritual ceremonies, and adjudication by royalty. Nevertheless, conventional systems have become increasingly limited by political interference, a lack of enforcement authority, deteriorating public confidence, and duplication with the state judicial system. This paper proposes that the government should be more conscious and policy-enabling to make traditional institutions more legitimate and efficient. It also requires legal systems that can strengthen their mediation and arbitration systems, whereby

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the traditional leaders must put in place early warning mechanisms to identify and resolve arising conflicts before they grow out of proportion.

Keywords: mediation, reconciliation, farmers, herders, military intervention

Introduction

Traditional African societies have continuously relied on well-established cultural norms and community values that shape their governance, social behaviour, and conflict resolution mechanisms (Orenge, 2024). These practices were the basis of authority and leadership in pre-colonial Nigeria and formed the basis of political and social organisation (Adewale & Schepers, 2023). The traditional institutions served as the custodians of justice, arbiters of conflicts, and protectors of cultural and religious practices. They respected contracts, administered justice, maintained communal resources, and created social stability in their territories (Orji, 2022). Therefore, these native systems played a central role in averting violence and peace talks whenever conflicts were about to disrupt the communal peace (Ekwenye, 2023).

Jos, the capital of the Plateau State in central Nigeria, has experienced repeated socio-political and ethnic conflicts over time. The multifaceted demography of the city, which consists of different ethnic groups, including the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere, has frequently created friction and resource competition, identity, and political representation (Umoh & Nwinkol, 2024). The power struggle and the availability of economic resources have constantly led to violent confrontations that have derailed social cohesion and endangered the stability of the region. The youths especially have often been the centre of these outbursts, thus increasing the insecurity and social disintegration in the region (Abdulyakeen & Mumun, 2024).

In the past, traditional rulers served as the political, socio-economic, and moral custodians of their communities (Aidelokhai et al., 2015). These leaders had sovereign power before the colonial rule, and they ensured law, order, and justice as per the

indigenous practices. With the introduction of the British colonial rule, this power was reorganised and the traditional governance was subordinated to the interests of the imperialists. The British used the indirect-rule system to depend on the traditional rulers as the mediators of implementing colonial policies and consolidating their power over the local populations (Zik et al., 2023). According to Abdullahi (2015), indirect rule is a governance system that is based on native chiefs and custom laws. According to Adika (2021), the British officials used native courts to manipulate the appointment and dismissal of chiefs to maintain the dominance. This process undermined the independence and authority of traditional institutions, re-establishing their position in the changing politics of Nigeria.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, when ethno-religious and communal tensions in Jos broke out, the weakness of state-centric conflict-management strategies became evident (Adamu, 2024). Sani (2021) notes that the early use of military intervention by the government was not very effective because the military forces were not properly financed, coordinated their intelligence, equipped, and had no contextual knowledge of the communities in need. These flaws were exacerbated by corruption and bad leadership, which impeded the peacebuilding process in the long term (Abayami, 2023). Conversely, the traditional institutions in Jos have remained resilient and legitimate in settling disputes within the community. Adebayo (2024) posits that indigenous authorities can provide culturally based and socially credible systems of dealing with the complex security issues in Nigeria.

However, Berebon (2024) notes that the current literature on conflict resolution in Jos has paid more attention to the history of the traditional rulers without sufficient emphasis on their present strategies, operational problems, and the overall impact on the peacebuilding process. This gap highlights the need to have a new academic investigation on the emerging functions of the traditional institutions in the present conflict settings. The current study will

be informed by the Relational Conflict Theory and the overall Hybrid Peacebuilding theory, which will be applied to discuss the process through which traditional rulers establish relationships and rebuild trust in the community where ethno-religious violence takes place. These theories provide a multidimensional approach to the possibility of transforming conflicts by locally authorized actors through dialogue and culturally inculcated reconciliation rather than coercion.

Based on these lines of thought, the proposed research will be designed as a mixed-method study that will integrate the survey and interviews with the key informants to gain insights into the experiences and perceptions of the traditional leaders, community elders, and residents. It is important to note that it studies the mechanisms that initially predetermined the emergence of traditional institutions as conflict-resolution mechanisms, evaluates the problems and consequences of their activities, and discusses how to avoid future conflicts in the region. Through these goals, the study will help advance the debate on indigenous governance and hybrid peacebuilding globally by placing the Jos experience in the context of wider discussions on how the traditional systems of authority can be used to supplement formal state institutions in post-conflict societies. Thus, the article provides both empirical and theoretical input by showing that traditional institutions are still necessary to the grassroots peacebuilding and the promotion of a framework of incorporating indigenous mechanisms into the changing conflict-management architecture in Nigeria (Samuel, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the relational conflict theory by Stephen A. Mitchell (1988) and the hybrid peacebuilding theory proposed by Oliver P. Richmond (2011) and Roger Mac Ginty (2011). These frames offer a combined analytical prism of the role of traditional institutions in mediating conflicts in Jos, Plateau State, through

the integration of micro-level relational approaches with macro-level peacebuilding processes.

The relational conflict theory was developed by Mitchell (1988) as part of a larger school of relational psychoanalysis, which holds that human conflicts are not only due to internal drives or unconscious motives as was the assumption of classical Freudian psychoanalysis, but rather due to the dynamic interaction of people in their social and relational worlds. Mitchell is of the view that the self is constantly constructed, sustained, and reshaped through the interactions with others and thus the relationships are the focus of conflict and healing (Mitchell, 1991).

The main idea of the theory is that conflict occurs when the relationships are described as being mischaracterized by miscommunication, identity threat, or emotional disconnection, which results in the destructive cycles of misunderstanding and hostility (Shapiro, 2010). Compared to structural or resource-based theories, the Relational Conflict Theory pays attention to the growing tension caused by the feeling of injustice, the lack of recognition, and the risk of self- or group identity (Oberschall, 2010). It also highlights that sustainable peace should be achieved through regaining mutual understanding and mending broken relationships rather than responding to the superficial political or economic grievances.

In the case of Jos, Plateau State, the theory provides a very good model in explaining how ethno-religious conflict has persisted. The Jos crisis is more complicated, as Abdullahi (2016) observes. It is not only land or political representation issues, but it runs deeper, and the identity-based division between the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere communities, also referred to as indigenes, and the Hausa-Fulani, also referred to as settlers, also play a role. These social categories have long been used to promote exclusion, marginalisation, and mistrust, and thus, cycles of violence have been repeated. The Relational Conflict Theory describes the dynamics of these dynamics, which are based on emotional and

identity-related grievances and which reinforce hostility (Asghar, 2024). Therefore, the resolution of conflicts in this environment should be based on relational healing based on inclusive dialogue, empathy, and restoring trust. The cultural legitimacy of traditional institutions and their accessibility to the grassroots is in a unique position to enable such a relational reconciliation (Mandikwaza, 2022).

Although relational conflict theory is a robust interpersonal and communal approach, it is supplemented with the hybrid peacebuilding theory created by Richmond and Mac Ginty (2011). Hybrid Peacebuilding Theory is an emerging theory based on criticism of liberal or top-down peacebuilding interventions of the late 20th century that holds that sustainable peace is realized when local traditions, customary authorities, and global institutions engage and co-produce context-specific solutions. It dismisses the idea that peace is something that can be imposed and demands a hybrid model that combines indigenous practices and formal mechanisms in a relationship that reinforces each other (Cassin, 2022).

This framework does not view traditional institutions as the remnants of the past but as active hybrid actors mediating between the local and the formal. In the Jos context, the traditional rulers are the people who bridge the gap between the grassroots and the state, as they have their legitimacy based on the cultural norms and the constitutional acknowledgment (Katu, 2023). These actors represent the hybrid logic of peacebuilding in which indigenous wisdom supplements formal governance to bring about long-term stability by filling the gap between relational healing (as theorized by Relational Conflict Theory) and institutional cooperation (as highlighted by Hybrid Peacebuilding).

The combination of the two theories gives a multi-layered explanation of conflict resolution in Jos. Relational Conflict Theory describes the micro-level psychological and interpersonal reconciliation, trust, empathy, and communication. Meanwhile,

Hybrid Peacebuilding Theory deals with the macro-level interaction between local and state actors in maintaining peace. They are combined to form a comprehensive model that aligns with the objectives of this study. Such a synthesis of theoretical perspectives informs the design and analysis of the study by connecting relational dynamics with institutional collaboration. It highlights that the Jos conflict needs to be resolved by mending fractured relationships and institutionalizing hybrid peace arrangements that utilize the moral authority and cultural legitimacy of traditional rulers. Therefore, the combination of theories will strengthen the explanatory capacity of the study and add to the modern discussions on the topic of indigenous governance, relational reconciliation, and sustainable peacebuilding.

Methodology

This paper utilized both quantitative and qualitative research tools as a mixed-methods approach to give a holistic picture of the role played by traditional institutions in settling conflicts in Jos, Plateau State. The mixed-methods design was chosen to enable the possibility of triangulating data, enhance the validity of the findings, and determine the trends that are measured and the contextual realities that are in the depths of communal confrontations. The quantitative component presented the numerical data of the perceptions and patterns of the respondents, and the qualitative component presented the interpretation and explanation through the key informant interviews (Amadi, 2023). The three local government areas in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, were the study area. Kaduna State borders Plateau State to the North, Nassarawa and Kaduna States to the east, Benue State to the south, and Taraba State to the southeast. The state is situated on the territory between the latitudes of 8°24'N and 10°38'E. Jos has traditionally been the epicentre of inter-ethnic and religious conflicts within the state (Nwan et al., 2024). The target population included the members of the Jos Traditional Council of Chiefs,

emirs, and heads of local families because they are considered to be the guardians of community values and are witnesses to the conflict. These participants were selected purposely due to their participation in matters of territorial claims, mediation, and resolutions. The 2023 Nigerian Bureau of Statistics estimates Jos to have between 900,000 and 1.1 million inhabitants of men and women aged 18 years and above (Mazadu, 2021).

Taro Yamane's (1973) sample size formula was used, along with a 95% confidence interval and a 5% error margin, to compute the sample size. The study employed a multi-stage sampling approach. Initially, the purposive selection of two local government areas, Jos North and Jos South, was made due to the history of frequent communal crises in these areas. In the second stage, the snowball sampling method was employed to find the participants who would allow the researcher to define the key members and traditional actors of the community with first-hand experience in conflict resolution. This purposive and snowball combination was suitable for reaching information-rich cases in conflict-prone regions.

The study tools were structured questionnaires and key informant interview guides. The questionnaire was based on the objectives of the study, and it had both closed and open-ended questions. Instrument quality, content, and face validity were determined by having peace and conflict studies scholars review them. To determine the clarity and relevance of items, a pilot study was carried out on 20 participants within a similar socio-cultural background. Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument, and the coefficient was 0.82, which is a high internal consistency. The data collection period lasted six weeks. The questionnaires were administered, and in-depth interviews with key informants were conducted by trained research assistants. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, voluntary participation and confidentiality were strictly followed. The study was clarified to the participants who were assured of anonymity and the right to withdraw at any time

without punishment. Ethical clearance was also obtained with the institutional review board concerned before fieldwork.

The quantitative data was coded, processed and analyzed using SPSS 26. The data were summarized and provided in the form of descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, and charts. The data obtained during the interview were audio-taped, transcribed word-to-word and analyzed thematically through the ATLAS.Ti software. The research objectives and theoretical framework were used to guide thematic coding. The emergent themes were categorized and described using the relational conflict theory and hybrid peacebuilding theory that provided relational and institutional insights into the conflict resolution processes. In both approaches, triangulation of data was used in the interpretation process to support validity and increase the overall strength of the results. Credibility was created through member checking and peer debriefing to ensure trustworthiness of the qualitative aspect, and transferability was achieved by detailed descriptions of the context. A trail of field notes, recordings and analytical memos was maintained to facilitate dependability and confirmability.

Despite these strengths, the research has recognized certain methodological drawbacks. The possible informants were also few since some of the traditional leaders were constrained because of security reasons. In addition, the sensitivity in the field of inter-ethnic relations might have existed and influenced the candor of some answers. Nevertheless, these limitations were mitigated through the appropriate rapport-building and confidentiality assurances in the process of data collection.

Findings

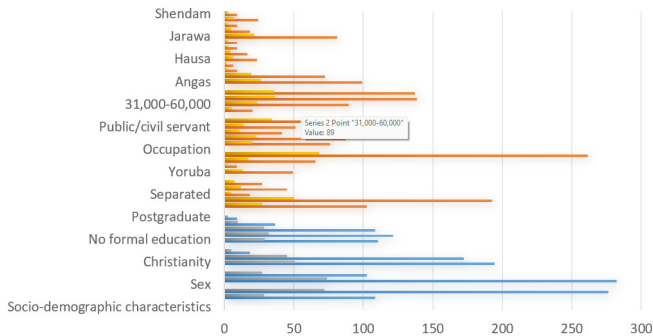


Fig. 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by socio-demographic characteristics. Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Figure 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents in the different variables such as age, sex, religion, education level, marital status, ethnicity, occupation, income level and ethnic group/community affiliation. The age distribution analysis indicates that most of the participants (72) were aged 61 years and above with 28 being between 30-60 years. This means that the majority of the respondents within the study area are older people hence a community with an ageing population.

In terms of gender, the majority of the respondents were males (73%), with only 27% females, implying that there was a significant gender disparity in participation. In terms of religious affiliation, a little over half (51) were Christians, 45 were Muslims and 4 were Traditionalists. This trend corresponds to the religious environment of the Jos Plateau in Northern Nigeria, which is traditionally characterized by the majority of its inhabitants being Christians. Education profile of the respondents indicates that 32 percent of the respondents had primary education, 29 percent had no formal education, 28 percent secondary education and 8 percent postgraduate education. This means that a large percentage of the population is not well educated and this could be indicative of the

wider literacy issue. Regarding marital status, fifty percent (50) of the respondents were married, 27 percent divorced, 12 percent single, 7 percent widowed and 5 percent separated. The ethnic breakdown indicates that 68% were other minority ethnic identities, 17% Hausa, 13% Yoruba and 2% Igbo with a heterogeneous, but largely non-major ethnic representation.

Professionally, 34% of the participants were self-employed, 23% were in business or trading, 20% were not employed, 13% worked in public or civil service, and 12% worked in farming. Income distribution analysis has shown that 36% of the population earned between N61,000-N90,000 or higher N91,000 monthly, 23% earned N31,000-N60,000, and only 4% earned between N61,000-N90,000, indicating that there are significant income differences among the population. In terms of community origin, 26 percent were Angas, 21 percent Jarawa, 19 percent Berom, 6 percent Hausa and Oyo, 5 percent Lantan, 4 percent Ijebu and Fulani 2 percent each. These numbers indicate the ethnic diversity of the study population, showing that there is no dominant group.

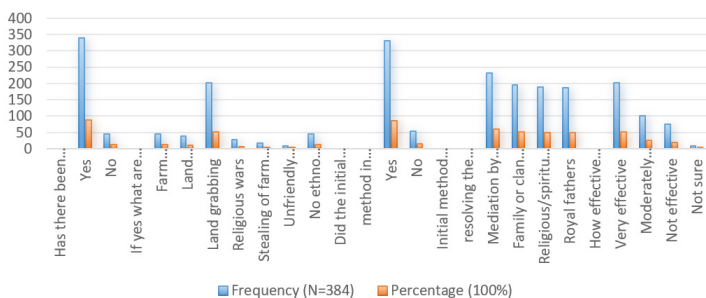


Fig. 2: Percentage distribution of respondents by the methods initially used that necessitated the emergence of the traditional institutions as a conflict resolution group in Jos. Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Figure 2 shows the perceptions of the respondents concerning the prevalence, causes, and conflict-resolution mechanisms of the ethno-religious crisis in Jos. The majority of the respondents (88.3)

admitted that there was ethno-religious conflict in the region, with only 11.7% of them disagreeing. With regards to the perceived causes of the crisis, over half of the respondents (52.3) cited it to land grabbing. This was then succeeded by 11.7% who mentioned destruction of farms by cattle, 10.2% who mentioned land encroachment and 7.0% who mentioned religious wars. Also, 4.7% of the respondents attributed the crisis to stealing farm produce, and a minor percentage (2.3) attributed the crisis to unfriendly attitude of the indigenous people and language barrier.

In answering the question on whether there were other mechanisms that had been used before the introduction of the traditional methods of solving the conflict, 85.9% responded that there were indeed initial strategies which were used before introduction of traditional methods, and 14.1% answered in the negative. When asked about the exact mechanisms that were employed prior to the prevalence of traditional systems, 60% of the respondents mentioned mediation by community elders, 50.8% mentioned family or clan intervention, 49.2% mentioned religious or spiritual rituals, and 48.7% mentioned the role of royal fathers.

These results align with the study by Abejegah (2024) on oil-related conflicts in the Niger Delta that showed that localities with long-standing environmental and socio-economic issues, including land disputes, unemployment, and resource scarcity, tend to have greater communal tension. Like Jos, such conditions tend to foster conflict and necessitate formal and traditional resolution mechanisms to restore peace and social balance.

Extract 1: A key-informant Interview with a chief in Jos North Local Government

Hmm, we have contacted the police and soldiers, and sometimes we used to go together to meet them, but when we got there, they used to be biased in their judgment and settlement, which used to lead to bigger

wahala (KII with a Male, 74years, married, chief in Jos North Local Government, Furaka, Christian)

Extract 2: A key-informant Interview with a chief in Jos South Local Government

We used to run to our Seriki, but he is not fit to do anything each time we meet him. As the problem grows, he says we should be patient. (KII with a Male, 62years, married, chief in Jos South Local Government, Dogo Na-Hauwa, Muslim)

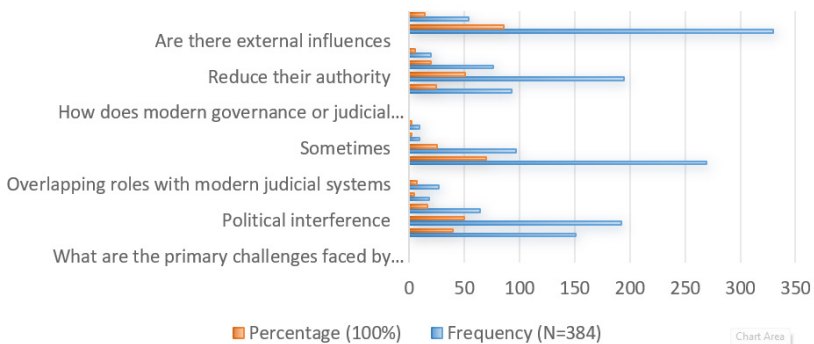


Fig. 3: Percentage distribution of respondents by the challenges faced by traditional institutions in resolving conflicts in Jos. Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Figure 3 identifies the key issues that traditional institutions face in conflict management in the Jos region. The respondents who cited political interference as the greatest hindrance were half of the respondents (50.0%), and those who cited the lack of enforcement authority were 39.3%. Also, 16.7% cited the loss of respect and influence of traditional leaders, and 7.0% cited the overlap of roles of traditional structures and the contemporary judicial system. Regarding the frequency with which traditional institutions engage in conflict resolution, 70.1% of respondents

indicated that such interventions occur frequently, and 25.3% stated that they occur occasionally. In comparison, only 2.3% reported that they rarely or never occur.

Responses varied when questioned about how modern governance and the judicial system affected the functions of traditional institutions. A significant 50.8 percent thought that modern buildings weaken the traditional authority, whereas 24.2 percent thought that cooperation with these institutions makes them more effective. Moreover, 19.8% noted that the coexistence of the two systems is confusing due to overlapping roles, and 5.2% believed that there is no impact of modern governance. Moreover, the results showed that the perception of external influence was dominant in the operations of traditional institutions because 85.9 percent of the respondents agreed that it existed, whereas 14.1 percent were indifferent or uncertain. These findings suggest that although traditional institutions remain relevant in the local management of conflicts, their ability is limited by political, structural and institutional factors especially the intrusion of the modern governance mechanisms.

Extract 4: A key-informant Interview with a chief in Jos South Local Government

The method of approach by the police and army, especially by the army, is usually too harsh and brutal. In the process of maintaining law and order, lives are usually lost. (KII with a Male, 62years, married, chief in Jos South Local Government, Kazong, Muslim)

Extract 5: A key-informant Interview with a Traditional ruler in Jos North Local Government

Saboteurs and those profiting from the conflicts usually frustrate our efforts at attaining peace; they usually instigate a party against another and often divulge secrets and our plans. (KII with a Male,

75years, married, traditional ruler in Jos North Local Government, Zakaliyo, Christian)

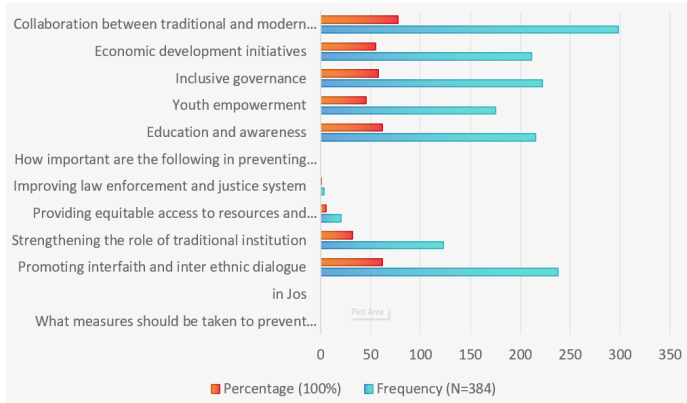


Fig. 4: Percentage distribution of respondents by preferred possible preventive measures to forestall future in Jos. Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Figure 4 presents the measures respondents believe should be implemented to prevent the recurrence of ethno-religious conflicts in Jos. A majority (62.0%) recommended the promotion of interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue as the most effective strategy for fostering mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence. This was followed by 32.0% who emphasized strengthening the roles of traditional institutions in peacebuilding, while 5.2% advocated for equitable access to resources and opportunities. Only a small percentage (0.8) indicated that the improvement of law enforcement and the judicial system would help to achieve long-term stability.

In terms of perceived relevance of the proposed solutions, 77.6 percent of the respondents emphasised the necessity of cooperation between the old and new systems of governance. Also, 62.0% emphasised the importance of education and public awareness campaigns, 57.8% of them highlighted the importance of inclusive

governance, 54.9% of them emphasised the importance of promoting economic development initiatives, and 45.6% of them emphasised the importance of youth empowerment as a preventative measure in the event of future crises.

These results point to the fact that the respondents are highly inclined to a hybrid model of peacebuilding that would combine the indigenous and formal mechanisms to ensure sustainable peace in Jos. This is in line with the claim of Ezekiel and Abdurraheem (2022), who state that the key to long-term peace in plural societies lies in the joint actions of traditional authorities and state institutions that are reinforced through social inclusion and intercommunal dialogue.

Extract 6: A key-informant Interview with a traditional ruler in Jos South Local Government

The leaders of all minority groups must come together and decide how to find a lasting solution to the conflict. (KII with a Male, 53years, married, traditional ruler in Jos South Local Government, Challang, Muslim)

Extract 7: A key-informant Interview with a Traditional ruler in Jos North Local Government

Each group's grievances and complaints should be investigated thoroughly and given adequate attention. For example, the Fulani have come to stay in Jos, Plateau State, so they should be given some land to graze their animals. (KII with a Male, 63years, married, traditional ruler in Jos North Local Government, Rigiza, Christian)

Discussion of Findings

The paper has explored the role of traditional institutions in conflict resolution in Jos, Plateau State, by discussing the

approaches, challenges that are faced, and possible mechanisms of maintaining peace. The results indicated that the resolution of conflicts in Jos was mostly reliant on the indigenous and community-based systems prior to the formal development of organised traditional institutions as mediators. According to the data, 60 percent of the respondents pointed to mediation by elders as the most widespread method, and then there was family or clan intervention (50.8 percent), religious or spiritual rites (49.2 percent), and intervention by royal fathers (48.7 percent). Such discoveries underscore the historical reliance of the Jos communities on the relational and spiritual processes, which are deeply rooted in indigenous governance systems.

This is the same observation made by Jacob et al. (2019) who concluded that the traditional rulers, councils of elders, age grades, and ancestral courts have provided a guideline towards preventing, managing, and settling conflicts through non-violent approaches. The Relational Conflict Theory (Mitchell, 1988) suggests that interpersonal mediation and community dialogue play a very important role in repairing damaged relationships and restoring social balance. This emphasis on older mediation and ritual is also indicative of how conflict in Jos is being understood not necessarily as a political or material conflict, but as a breach of moral and relationship order, which is consistent with the identity, emotional connexion, and mutual recognition in the theory (Shapiro, 2010; Oberschall, 2010).

In regards to the setbacks of the traditional institutions, the paper has established that the political intervention (50%), the lack of enforcing power (39.3%), the declining reverence of the traditional leaders (16.7%), and the duplication of the roles with the modern judicial system (7.0%) are some of the major setbacks. Such findings are consistent with Ojo-Ebenezer (2023), who concluded that the growing encroachment of state structures and political actors has diminished the independence and authority of traditional elders to solve conflicts. This kind of interference in

the Hybrid Peacebuilding framework (Richmond and Mac Ginty, 2011) demonstrates how weak the hybrid governance spaces are, where such integration of local and formal systems is likely to bring about competition and not complement. The lack of respect of the traditional leaders also augers of a shift in culture and a generational shift, which will be a challenge to the continuity of the indigenous peace modes.

Nevertheless, these challenges notwithstanding, the fact that the traditional institutions have endured in Jos is indicative of their flexibility and appropriateness in the hybrid governance institutions. The findings show that the respondents believe that the formal political systems are destroying the authority of traditional rulers, yet they consider them as the legitimate mediators. This strain supports the necessity of more institutionalised hybrid framework, in which traditional structures are working in synergy with modern governance mechanisms and not in parallel competition. The respondents identified a number of important steps in the context of the third objective, which is the potential means of preventing future conflicts in Jos. The most notable one was the encouragement of interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue (62%), enhancing the role of traditional institutions (32%), equal access to resources (5.2%), and better law enforcement and justice systems (0.8%). Also, the respondents highlighted that sustainable peace should be achieved through collaboration between traditional and modern systems (77.6%), education and awareness programmes (62%), inclusive governance (57.8%), economic development initiatives (54.9%), and youth empowerment (45.6%). These observations are in line with Akinwale (2010) who suggested the need to combine traditional and modern conflict management tools as a national peace tool. Theoretically, the results are very close to Hybrid Peacebuilding Theory, according to which lasting peace is a result of co-production of order between native systems and formal state apparatus. The synergy implied by the respondents is an emergent type of hybrid peace, where relational reconciliation

(the focus of Relational Conflict Theory) meets institutional collaboration (the focus of Hybrid Peacebuilding Theory).

In general, the results indicate the presence of traditional institutions playing a central role in peacebuilding in Jos, not as cultural artefacts but as participants in a hybrid government system. They are not dispensable due to their moral legitimacy, local embeddedness and historical continuity. The research paper however also points out the necessity to provide these institutions with additional legal requirements and state support in order to enhance their performance. These findings are externalised to the international discourse on localised peacebuilding that should be concerned with the necessity to embrace and integrate community-based mechanisms in post-conflict reconstruction processes. The Jos experience demonstrates that the relational approach and hybrid models can be used to complement the formal systems to promote sustainable peace in multi-ethnic societies.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that conventional institutions have not become redundant regarding conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. They are the most crucial agents in ensuring social cohesion and communal harmony, as they are the mediators, peacebuilders, and custodians of the cultural values. The results showed that with mediation, arbitration, and spiritual reconciliation, the traditional leaders offer culturally-based methods, which are usually more reliable, effective, and available than legal ones. These results again confirm the hypotheses of Relational Conflict Theory (Mitchell, 1988), saying that restoration of relationships, mutual recognition, and trust is the key point of solving deep-rooted conflicts.

Meanwhile, the research results also capture the spirit of Hybrid Peacebuilding Theory (Richmond & Mac Ginty, 2011) and emphasize the need to create a synergy between an indigenous and a formal system of governance. The continued intervention

of politics, loss of respect for the traditional authority, and lack of coordination of the institutions indicate that the peace processes in Jos cannot be based only on the traditional structures or state-dominant structures. Sustainable peace demands a hybrid form, in which the wisdom of communities and the power of the government work together and not against each other.

Based on this, the paper finds that the integration of traditional institutions in formal peacebuilding and governance structures will increase the sustainability and legitimacy of the conflict resolution processes in Jos and other multi-ethnic societies. To do this, government agencies, policymakers, and civil society organisations should acknowledge and legalise the traditional institutions to enhance their mediation and arbitration roles. The conventional reconciliation techniques must be encouraged as the possible alternative to the formal litigation that is cost-effective. Meanwhile, there should be early warning and response systems that are coordinated by traditional leaders to monitor and de-escalate arising conflicts. These will institutionalise preventive diplomacy and community-based peacebuilding in Plateau State and beyond.

In addition to the Nigerian case, the research adds to the general discussion of indigenous and hybrid peacebuilding in Africa, where the active participation of traditional authorities as legitimate partners of governance is crucial to the achievement of sustainable peace. Relational and hybrid peace approaches integration therefore offers a paradigm through which conflict resolution in Jos can be understood and a model that can be applied in plural societies with intergroup divisions.

Lastly, this study provides a number of research opportunities. Future researchers may want to explore how the authority and legitimacy of traditional institutions in various parts of Nigeria are being redefined by changes in generational shifts, modernization, and political reforms. It may also be possible to conduct comparative studies of how hybrid peacebuilding mechanisms operate in

other post-conflict African societies to expand the theoretical and practical applicability of relational and hybrid peace models. These questions would enhance the comprehension of the coexistence of indigenous systems of governance with the modern state systems to ensure long-term peace and social integration.

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