INFLUENCE OF DIPLOMATIC STRATEGIES ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN KHATUMO STATE, SOMALIA

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ABSTRACT

Conflict resolution in Khatumo State, Somalia, amidst ongoing strife with Somaliland forces, presents complex challenges fueled by territorial claims and political divisions. The conflict has caused civilian casualties and displacement, with 11 recent fatalities in the Sool region. This study explored the impact of diplomatic strategies—negotiation, mediation, recanalization, and reintegration—on conflict resolution in Khatumo. Guided by Conflict Resolution and Diplomatic Theories, the study employed a descriptive design to investigate these strategies. A target population of 500 diplomats was selected using stratified random sampling, resulting in 222 respondents. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire, validated by pilot testing and assessed for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. SPSS was used for data analysis, which aimed to explore relationships between diplomatic strategies and conflict resolution outcomes. The study reveals that negotiation, mediation, recanalization, and reintegration significantly impact conflict resolution in Khatumo State, Somalia. Negotiation shows the strongest effect with $\beta=0.331$, a p-value of 0.004, and a Beta of 0.521. Mediation ($\beta=0.242$, $p=0.002$, Beta=0.421) and recanalization ($\beta=0.198$, $p=0.000$, Beta=0.362) also play key roles. Reintegration has a $\beta=0.211$, $p=0.001$, and Beta=0.523, demonstrating its importance in fostering long-term peace. In Khatumo State, negotiation, mediation, recanalization, and reintegration are vital for conflict resolution, yet the process remains fragile due to internal and external challenges. The study recommended that, for improved conflict resolution, inclusive negotiation frameworks involving marginalized groups and external mediators should be established. Local leaders should be trained in negotiation, and mediation should be supported with resources for local mediators. Open communication channels should be maintained for recanalization, and reintegration programs should be expanded to provide vocational training, psychological support, and economic opportunities.

Key Words: *Negotiation, Reintegration, Mediation, Recanalization*

INTRODUCTION

Diplomatic strategies play a crucial role in conflict resolution by fostering dialogue, building trust, and ensuring peaceful settlements. Among these strategies, negotiation, mediation, reconciliation, and reintegration have significantly enhanced conflict resolution by addressing the root causes of disputes and promoting long-term stability. Negotiation serves as the foundation of diplomatic conflict resolution by allowing conflicting parties to engage in discussions and reach mutually acceptable agreements. This process helps prevent escalation and facilitates compromise (Fisher & Ury, 2011). Mediation, on the other hand, involves a neutral third party who facilitates dialogue and assists disputing groups in finding common ground. Mediation has been instrumental in resolving both interstate and intrastate conflicts, as seen in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan, where international mediators helped end the civil war (Nathan, 2010).

Reconciliation is another critical diplomatic strategy that fosters healing and cooperation among previously conflicting parties. Truth and reconciliation commissions, such as South Africa's post-apartheid initiative, have demonstrated the effectiveness of reconciliation in addressing historical grievances and fostering national unity (Tutu, 1999). Lastly, reintegration is essential for post-conflict societies, particularly in rehabilitating ex-combatants and displaced individuals. Programs like the United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) initiative have contributed to sustainable peace by reintegrating former fighters into civilian life (United Nations, 2014).

In the study conducted by Muthengi (2021), the focus was on the Korean Peninsula crisis, specifically addressing tensions and nuclear proliferation concerns between North and South Korea. The diplomatic strategies under examination were the Six-Party Talks, involving the United States, China, Japan, Russia, and both North and South Korea. These multilateral negotiations aimed to address the complex issues in the region. The study emphasized the challenges associated with maintaining cooperation among these parties and achieving a lasting peace settlement moving to the Americas, Yashar (2018) study delved into the Colombia peace process, centering on the decades-long civil war between the Colombian government and FARC rebels. Diplomatic strategies were scrutinized, and the study highlighted the intricate negotiations that culminated in a peace agreement in 2016. It emphasized the significance of combining principled stances with pragmatic compromises to ensure the sustainability of the resolution.

In the study by Adebajo (2022), post-war Liberia became the focal point for assessing the effectiveness of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Adebajo emphasized the pivotal role played by tribal elders and peace committees in mediating local disputes. However, the study also highlighted the limitations of these mechanisms when dealing with more extensive political conflicts, showcasing the nuanced dynamics within Liberia's post-war landscape. Khatumo State, also known as the SSC-Khaatumo Administration, is an autonomous region in Somalia that is part of the Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn regions (Abdi, 2023). The conflict is linked to a larger regional conflict involving the SSC-Khaatumo seeking to join the Federal Government of Somalia (SFG), Somaliland, and the SFG. The conflict has led to low-level armed clashes, with the most recent clash reported in December 2023. Tensions remain high due to unresolved territorial claims and differing political aspirations. Civilians are disproportionately affected, facing displacement, insecurity, and limited access to essential services (Hassan, 2023). Casualty figures are difficult to obtain due to the ongoing nature of the conflict and limited reporting. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that over 100,000 people remain displaced due to the conflict in the Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn regions.

Diplomatic strategy in Somalia may be influenced by regional factors such as security concerns, economic relations, and geopolitical objectives. For example, neighboring nations may take diplomatic measures to control refugee flows, stop violence from spreading, and safeguard their own national interests (Almi, 2021). The international community, including the UN, African Union, and regional actors, has urged restraint and dialogue between the two parties. Civil society organizations are working on peacebuilding initiatives and

advocating for the rights of civilians affected by the conflict (UN, 2024), hence the need for better strategies to resolve this conflict. This study aimed to do that by examining the influence of diplomatic strategies on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia. Somalia is grappling with a complex conflict system, with Al-Shabaab, an extremist Islamist group, aiming to establish a theocracy. The Somali Federal Government (SFG), backed by AMISOM, is working to establish control and rebuild the nation. Each state has its own dynamics and security challenges (Hussein, 2022). States with high conflict status include Banadir (Mogadishu), Hiraan, Galmudug, Jubaland, South West, Puntland, and Somaliland (Ali, 2022).

At the local level, historical grievances, ethnic tensions, competition for resources, and political dynamics are some of the variables that impact how diplomatic techniques are used to resolve conflicts in Khatumo State (Almi, 2021). In attempts to promote peace and reconciliation, community members, civil society organizations, traditional elders, and local leaders may be crucial players. In order to achieve diplomatic goals, one may need to mediate ceasefires, address grievances, encourage inclusive governance systems, and assist regional efforts to develop capability. The degrees of support these tactics receive from local stakeholders and their applicability to the local environment determine how effective they are. Yet, there is dearth of empirical studies documenting the current state of the conflict.

Statement of the Problem

The SSC-Khatumo administration is engaged in low-level armed conflict with Somaliland forces, primarily in the Sool region. The conflict is fueled by unresolved territorial claims and political aspirations between the two parties (Ali, 2022). The conflict has resulted in civilian casualties and displacement, with 11 reported fatalities in the Sool region in the past year. Over 100,000 people remain displaced in the region, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (UN, 2022). This has disrupted access to essential services like healthcare and education. The conflict also hinders economic development and investment opportunities, contributing to regional instability in the Horn of Africa. Despite application of different conflict resolution strategies, the volatile situation still remains in place (Mwanza, 2022).

The International Crisis Group (2019) report, while comprehensive, lacks specific emphasis on regions like Khatumo State within Somalia. It offers insights into broader conflict dynamics but does not delve deeply into the unique challenges and dynamics present in Khatumo State. This gap highlights the need for research that focuses specifically on conflict resolution strategies tailored to the context of Khatumo State. Similarly, Farah (2021) evaluation of "dual diplomacy" during the 1990s provides historical insights into managing the Somali conflict. However, its concentration on a specific historical period may limit its applicability to current conflict dynamics, especially in regions like Khatumo State. The study does not directly address the diplomatic strategies needed to resolve conflicts in contemporary Khatumo State, emphasizing the importance of research that addresses current conflict dynamics and diplomatic approaches.

Furthermore, the United Nations (2021) analysis of AMISOM's withdrawal primarily focuses on the role of peacekeeping missions rather than the broader spectrum of diplomatic strategies for conflict resolution. This limitation underscores the need for research that explores a wider range of diplomatic approaches and their applicability to regions like Khatumo State within Somalia. Therefore, there is a clear gap in the existing literature regarding diplomatic strategies specifically tailored to the context of Khatumo State as one of the regions within Somalia facing similar challenges. This study aimed to bridge this gap by examining the influence of diplomatic strategies on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to examine the influence of diplomatic strategies on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia. The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- To examine the impact of negotiation on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia.

- To assess the influence of mediation on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia.

- To examine the influence of recanalization on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia.
- To examine the impact of reintegration on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Game Theory

Game Theory, first introduced by John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern in 1944, provides a mathematical and strategic framework for analyzing decision-making in conflict situations. The theory posits that individuals and groups engage in strategic interactions where each actor aims to maximize their benefits while anticipating the responses of others (Von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1944). Game Theory is particularly relevant in the context of negotiation, as it allows conflicting parties to assess potential strategies and predict possible outcomes, fostering agreements that are mutually beneficial and sustainable (Myerson, 2019).

The major strengths of Game Theory is its predictive capability, enabling parties to foresee the consequences of their strategic decisions and adjust their approaches accordingly. Additionally, it provides a systematic method for structuring negotiations, making it an invaluable tool for mediators and policymakers (Osborne & Rubinstein, 2021). However, a key limitation is its assumption that all actors behave rationally and make decisions based purely on logical calculations. In reality, negotiations are often influenced by emotions, historical grievances, and power asymmetries, which Game Theory does not fully account for (Colman, 2022). Despite this, its structured approach to analyzing negotiation dynamics makes it a valuable framework for understanding and improving conflict resolution efforts in Khatumo State.

Conflict Transformation Theory

Conflict Transformation Theory, pioneered by John Paul Lederach in the 1990s, emphasizes the need to go beyond merely resolving conflicts to addressing their underlying structural and relational causes. Lederach (1995) argues that mediation should not focus solely on short-term agreements but should aim to transform the interactions, perceptions, and relationships among conflicting parties to ensure sustainable peace. The theory posits that effective mediation fosters long-term social change by addressing root causes, power imbalances, and systemic injustices that fuel conflicts (Lederach, 2003).

This theory is particularly applicable to Khatumo State, where mediation efforts have been instrumental in reducing hostilities but have often failed to produce lasting peace due to unresolved underlying tensions. Conflict Transformation Theory advocates for inclusive mediation processes that engage diverse stakeholders, including community leaders, civil society, and marginalized groups, to build trust and reshape adversarial relationships (Ramsbotham et al., 2022). By prioritizing reconciliation and systemic change, mediators can create a foundation for enduring peace rather than merely managing disputes.

Contact Hypothesis

The Contact Hypothesis, developed by Gordon Allport in 1954, suggests that structured interactions between members of conflicting groups can reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations. Allport (1954) proposed that under specific conditions—such as equal status, common goals, and institutional support—intergroup contact can break down stereotypes and foster mutual understanding. This theory is highly relevant to reconciliation efforts in Khatumo State, where historical animosities and social divisions have fueled conflicts and hindered peacebuilding efforts (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2019).

Applying the Contact Hypothesis to reconciliation suggests that carefully designed intergroup encounters can facilitate dialogue, rebuild trust, and promote cooperative relationships among previously opposing factions. Studies have shown that such interactions, when managed effectively, contribute to long-term peace and social cohesion (Dovidio et al., 2021). For instance, community-based reconciliation initiatives that bring together conflicting groups to engage in joint economic or social projects have demonstrated success in conflict-prone regions (Hewstone et al., 2020).

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s, explores how individuals derive their sense of identity from their group memberships. The theory posits that people categorize themselves and others into in-groups and out-groups, leading to in-group favoritism and potential intergroup conflicts (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In the context of reintegration, Social Identity Theory highlights the challenges and opportunities of reintegrating former combatants and marginalized groups into society.

In Khatumo State, the reintegration of former fighters and displaced populations is crucial for sustainable conflict resolution. According to Social Identity Theory, successful reintegration requires redefining group identities to promote social cohesion and reduce intergroup hostilities (Brown & Hewstone, 2022). By fostering inclusive national or community identities that transcend past divisions, reintegration programs can mitigate the risk of renewed violence and promote lasting peace (Hogg, 2020). Programs that emphasize shared community goals, such as economic cooperation and collective security, can help transform adversarial identities into cooperative ones.

Empirical Literature Review

Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

The study by Ogechukwu (2022) examined the role of social media in conflict resolution, specifically the #EndSARS Movement in Nigeria. The mixed-methods approach used case study analysis, surveys, and interviews with participants and users. The research highlights the potential of social media in raising awareness, mobilizing communities, and pressuring governments for reforms, while acknowledging challenges like misinformation and online hate speech. However, the study's limited descriptive statistics and inferential statistics may limit long-term conclusions. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of social media-driven movements on conflict resolution and mitigate potential negative aspects.

Doe (2023) aimed to examine the effectiveness of diplomatic strategies in conflict resolution in Liberia using a mixed-methods approach is used, combining qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was collected through interviews with diplomatic personnel, policymakers, and experts, while quantitative data was collected through surveys. However, limitations included limited access, potential bias due to subjective data, and the study's generalizability to other regions or contexts outside Liberia. Research is needed to identify effective diplomatic approaches that address the unique dynamics and challenges of conflict resolution in these regions, emphasizing the importance of a localized and context-specific approach to peacebuilding efforts.

The study by Abena (2022) focused on the Women's Peacebuilding Network (WPN) in Ghana, highlighting its role in peacebuilding efforts such as conflict prevention, mediation, and reconciliation. The WPN has successfully advocated for women's participation in peace processes and promoting peaceful conflict resolution at the community level. However, the study's limitations include its focus on a specific organization and its lack of generalizability to other women's peacebuilding initiatives in Ghana or elsewhere. Further research is needed to explore the broader impact of women's involvement in peacebuilding efforts.

Mediation and Conflict Resolution

In a notable study on mediation in Asia, authored by Tanaka and Li (2018), the researchers employed a mixed-methods approach. The study focused on the effectiveness of traditional mediation practices in resolving interpersonal conflicts in East Asian cultures. Through surveys and in-depth interviews, the researchers found that mediation, rooted in cultural norms, played a crucial role in fostering resolution. Descriptive statistics revealed a significant positive correlation between adherence to cultural mediation practices and successful conflict resolution. However, limitations in the study included a relatively small sample size and potential cultural biases.

Examining conflict resolution in Nigeria, Ogunjimi and Adewuyi (2017) conducted a qualitative study using case studies and interviews. The research aimed to explore the impact of community-based mediation on resolving disputes in rural Nigeria. The findings indicated that mediation, when facilitated by community leaders, contributed significantly to conflict de-escalation. Inferential analysis demonstrated a strong association between the involvement of respected community figures and successful resolution. The study's limitations included potential response bias and a lack of generalizability due to the specific focus on rural communities.

A study conducted by Appiah-Kubi and Amoako-Adu (2019) delved into mediation strategies within the context of workplace conflicts in Ghana. Utilizing a mixed-methods design, including surveys and case analyses, the research explored the effectiveness of mediation interventions in enhancing employee relations. The inferential statistics revealed a statistically significant improvement in workplace harmony following mediation sessions. However, limitations included the potential influence of organizational hierarchy on participants' responses and the absence of a long-term follow-up to assess the sustainability of conflict resolution outcomes.

Recanalization and Conflict Resolution
In Asia, Sung Chull Kim (2018) delved into the reopening of communication channels strained during conflicts, specifically within the context of the Korean Peninsula. Through qualitative case study analysis, the research explored the pivotal role of reopened channels in reducing tensions and fostering dialogue between North and South Korea. By conducting interviews and analyzing pertinent documents, the study unearthed insights into the effectiveness of communication reopening strategies in conflict transformation efforts. Despite its focus on a specific conflict context, the study shed light on the broader implications of communication restoration in conflict resolution endeavors across Asia.

Okyere (2019 research delved into the reopening of communication channels strained during conflicts, with a specific focus on community-based reconciliation efforts in the Northern Region. Employing participatory action research, the study highlighted the efficacy of participatory approaches, including community forums and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, in facilitating dialogue and reconciliation among conflicting groups. Despite its valuable insights, the study underscored the challenges of sustaining community-led reconciliation efforts over time, prompting the call for future research to explore scalability and sustainability.

In Somalia, Omar (2016) study explored the reopening of communication channels strained during conflicts, particularly within the context of the Somali Civil War and its aftermath. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology, Omar investigated the role of dialogue and negotiation in conflict resolution efforts across various regions of Somalia. The study revealed that reopening communication channels, often facilitated by community elders and traditional leaders, played a crucial role in mitigating tensions and fostering reconciliation among warring factions. Despite the challenges posed by ongoing instability and political fragmentation, the study highlighted the resilience of local peacebuilding initiatives and the potential for dialogue to contribute to sustainable peace in Somalia. However, Omar's study also acknowledged the limitations of its scope and called for further research to explore the dynamics of communication reopening in different conflict contexts within Somalia, as well as the broader Horn of Africa region.

Reintegration and Conflict Resolution
In a comprehensive study on reintegration after conflict in Asia, authored by Chang and Wu (2019), a mixed-methods approach was employed. The research focused on post-conflict societies in Southeast Asia, combining surveys, interviews, and case studies. The findings revealed that successful reintegration programs, emphasizing economic empowerment and community involvement, significantly contributed to sustained peace. Inferential statistics demonstrated a positive correlation between active community engagement and reduced instances of recidivism. However, limitations included potential recall bias in self-reported data and challenges in standardizing measures of successful reintegration.

In a study by Mensah and Amankwah (2020) on reintegration post-conflict in Ghana, a qualitative approach involving participant observations and interviews was adopted. The research focused on the role of traditional reconciliation processes in facilitating the reintegration of individuals affected by historical conflicts. The findings underscored the significance of cultural and traditional practices in fostering social cohesion. While descriptive statistics were not applicable in this qualitative study, limitations included potential subjectivity in the interpretation of cultural practices and a limited scope in assessing the long-term impact of reintegration efforts.

A study by Kariuki and Oloo (2017) explored the reintegration of displaced populations in post-conflict Kenya. Employing a mixed-methods design, the researchers conducted surveys and in-depth interviews to assess the effectiveness of government-led reintegration programs. The findings indicated that targeted interventions, such as housing assistance and community support, positively influenced the reintegration process. Inferential statistics demonstrated a significant correlation between the duration of community support and sustained reintegration success. Limitations included potential response bias and challenges in tracking long-term outcomes due to the transient nature of displaced populations.
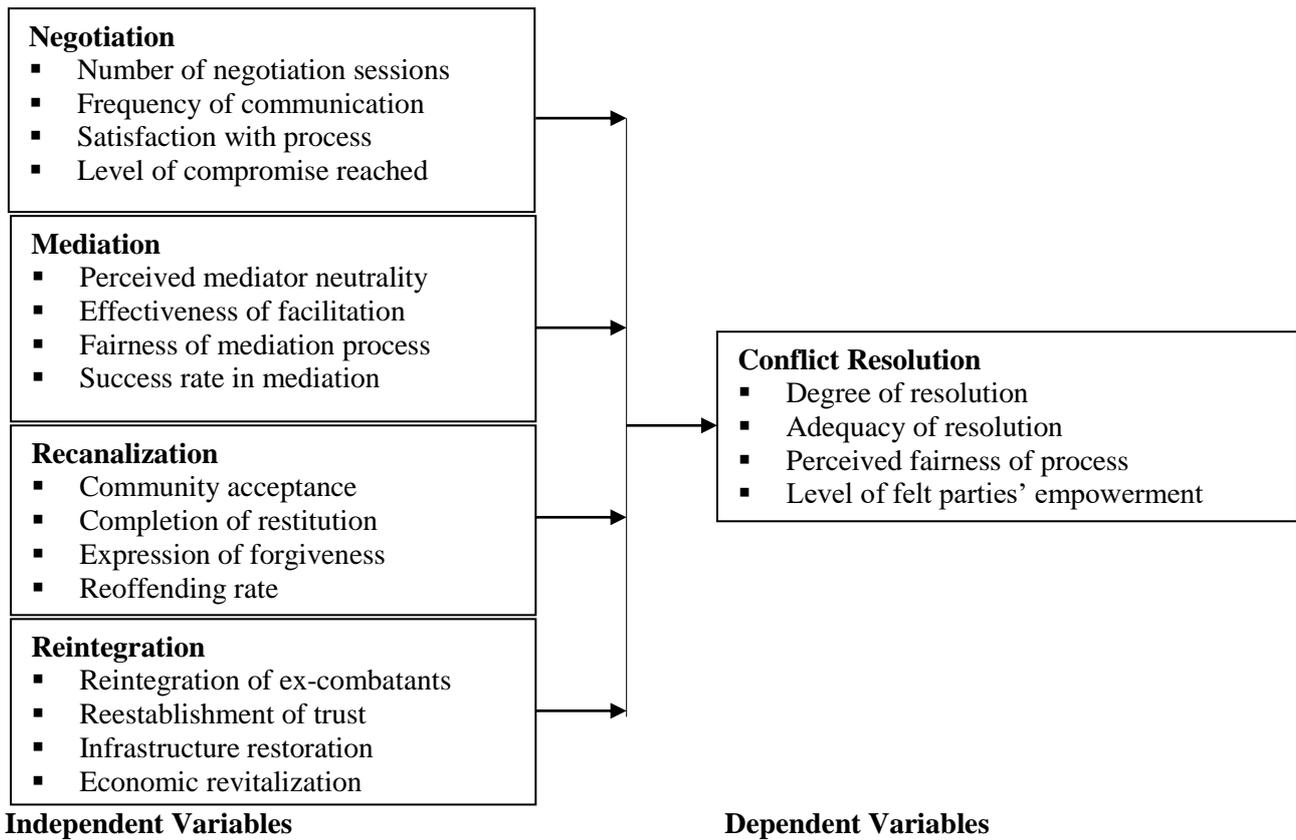
Conflict Resolution

Ibrahim (2022) examined the factors influencing inter-ethnic conflicts in the Niger Delta region and to propose strategies for conflict resolution. The methodology involved qualitative interviews with community leaders, government officials, and members of affected communities. The inferential findings indicated that environmental degradation, resource competition, and political marginalization were key drivers of inter-ethnic conflicts in the region. Descriptive findings highlighted the role of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as community elders and religious leaders, in mitigating tensions. The study's limitations included difficulty in accessing remote communities and the potential for bias in participant responses. A research gap identified was the need for longitudinal studies to assess the long-term effectiveness of conflict resolution interventions in the Niger Delta.

Mwangi (2021) aimed to explore the effectiveness of community-based conflict resolution mechanisms in mitigating inter-ethnic violence between the Turkana and Pokot communities. The methodology involved participant observation, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews in conflict-affected areas. The inferential findings indicated that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as peace committees and elders' councils, played a significant role in de-escalating tensions and promoting dialogue between conflicting groups. Descriptive findings highlighted the importance of cultural norms and shared identity in fostering cooperation and reconciliation. The study's limitations included the potential for observer bias and the limited generalizability of findings to other conflict contexts in Kenya. A research gap identified was the need for longitudinal studies to assess the sustainability of community-based conflict resolution initiatives over time.

Mohamed (2020) aimed to examine the role of mediation and peacebuilding efforts in addressing the protracted conflict in Somalia. The methodology involved a combination of literature review, expert interviews, and analysis of peacebuilding initiatives. The inferential findings revealed that political fragmentation, weak state institutions, and external interventions were major challenges to effective mediation and peacebuilding efforts. Descriptive findings highlighted the role of traditional clan-based reconciliation mechanisms, such as xeer and shir, in resolving disputes at the local level. The study's limitations included the difficulty of accessing conflict-affected areas and the potential for respondent bias in interviews. One research gap identified was the need for further exploration of the role of gender dynamics and marginalized groups in peacebuilding processes in Somalia.

Conceptual Framework

Negotiation
- Number of negotiation sessions
- Frequency of communication
- Satisfaction with process
- Level of compromise reached

Mediation
- Perceived mediator neutrality
- Effectiveness of facilitation
- Fairness of mediation process
- Success rate in mediation

Recanalization
- Community acceptance
- Completion of restitution
- Expression of forgiveness
- Reoffending rate

Reintegration
- Reintegration of ex-combatants
- Reestablishment of trust
- Infrastructure restoration
- Economic revitalization

Conflict Resolution
- Degree of resolution
- Adequacy of resolution
- Perceived fairness of process
- Level of felt parties' empowerment

Independent Variables   Dependent Variables

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a Mixed Research Method Design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of diplomatic strategies in conflict resolution. The qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of diplomatic strategies and their effectiveness, while the quantitative aspect facilitated statistical validation of findings. A descriptive research design was chosen for its ability to systematically assess the current landscape of conflict resolution in Khatumo State without manipulating the study variables.

The study was conducted in Khatumo State, Somalia, due to its persistent conflicts and contested governance. The target population comprised diplomats, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations, international agencies, and community leaders actively involved in conflict resolution efforts in Khatumo State. According to the United Nations (2023), approximately 500 diplomats operate in Khatumo, working in national, regional, and international organizations. These individuals were identified through formal correspondence with embassies, consulates, and international organizations.

A stratified sampling technique was employed to ensure proportionate representation of each category of diplomats. This study adopted the Yamane method of sample size calculation. The sample size was 222 respondents, distributed proportionally across the target groups.

The study utilized questionnaires and interview guide questions to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. A pilot study was conducted with 22 respondents from Puntland, given its political tensions and relevance to Khatumo's conflict dynamics.

The Content Validity Index (CVI) was used to assess whether the questions adequately captured the study objectives. Expert review from the research supervisor helped refine the questionnaire for improved content

validity. Reliability ensures the consistency of research findings. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α) was used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Quantitative data obtained from the structured questionnaires was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22.0. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the data. To establish relationships between the independent variables (negotiation, mediation, recanalization, and reintegration) and the dependent variable (conflict resolution), inferential statistical techniques such as regression analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were applied. The results were presented using tables, bar charts, and graphs for clarity and ease of interpretation. For qualitative data obtained from interviews, thematic analysis was conducted. The responses were transcribed, coded, and grouped into key themes reflecting the study's objectives.

The study adopted ordinary least squares (OLS) estimation to fit statistical models specified to draw conclusions on the study objectives. This study targeted for normality using Shapiro-Wilk test where the residuals of the fitted multiple regression model was considered as not normally distributed if it has a p-value greater than 0.05. The study also used autocorrelation function to detect non-randomness in data among the independent variables, and identify an appropriate time series model if the data is not random. This study employed Breuch-Pagan test on residual terms of the overall model to test for the existence of either heteroscedasticity or homoscedasticity.

FINDINGS

Response Rate
Despite the sample size of 222, not all the respondents managed to successfully participate in the study by filling and returning the questionnaire. This led to a questionnaire return rate of 165, accounting for a response rate of 74%. In all the 4 categories of the respondents, at least 75% of them were able to participate in the study, allowing well-balanced views on the subject of the research.

Descriptive Analysis
This study examined the influence of diplomatic strategies on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia. Specifically, the study was confined to examining the impact of negotiation on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia; assessing the influence of mediation on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia; examining the influence of recanalization on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia; and examining the impact of reintegration on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia. The findings for each of the study thematic areas are presented and discussed in the subsequent subsections.

Negotiation and Conflict Resolution in Khatumo State, Somalia
Regarding the impact of negotiation on conflict resolution in Khatumo State in Somalia, Table 1 presents a summary of the findings.

Table 1: Impact of Negotiation on Conflict Resolution

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Effective communication channels positively influence conflict resolution efforts.	165	3.53	1.488
Open and clear communication enhances the likelihood of successful conflict resolution.	165	3.72	1.114
Willingness to compromise significantly contributes to successful conflict resolution.	165	3.93	1.252
Satisfaction with the negotiation process correlates with positive outcomes in conflict resolution.	165	3.93	1.091
Effective communication channels positively influence conflict resolution efforts.	165	4.05	1.186
Valid N (listwise)	165		

Table 1 indicates that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that effective communication channels positively influence conflict resolution efforts, as shown by the mean of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 1.186. This suggests that respondents viewed communication as a key element in resolving conflicts in Khatumo State, Somalia. The importance of effective communication in conflict resolution is supported by several studies, which argue that open communication helps to clarify misunderstandings and create a mutual understanding between parties in conflict (Rahim, 2002). This aligns with the finding that communication enhances the chances of successful conflict resolution.

The majority also strongly agreed that willingness to compromise significantly contributes to successful conflict resolution, as shown by the mean of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 1.252. This finding reflects the common understanding that compromise is an essential part of resolving conflicts, where each party is willing to give up some of their demands for the sake of a peaceful resolution (Fisher et al., 2011). The respondents' acknowledgment of compromise aligns with conflict resolution theory, which emphasizes the importance of finding middle ground.

The study also revealed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that satisfaction with the negotiation process correlates with positive outcomes in conflict resolution, as shown by the mean of 3.93 and a standard deviation of 1.091. This result is consistent with the idea that if parties involved in negotiation are satisfied with the process, they are more likely to support and implement the outcomes of the resolution (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993). The satisfaction factor is a critical aspect in building long-term relationships and ensuring the sustainability of conflict resolution outcomes.

The respondents agreed that open and clear communication enhances the likelihood of successful conflict resolution, as shown by the mean of 3.72 and a standard deviation of 1.114. This further emphasizes the role of transparency and clarity in negotiations. Clear communication fosters trust and reduces the chances of misinterpretation, which is often a root cause of prolonged conflicts (Lewicki et al., 2015).

From the trends of aforementioned findings, it was indicative that Khatumo State could be facing significant conflict related issues which need to be addressed through negotiation for improvement of peace and general wellbeing of the residents. Asked to provide further information regarding the impact of negotiation on conflict resolution, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms were mentioned as reinforcing strategies for lasting tranquility in the area. For instance, one elder had the following to say:

> *Traditional systems have been used in Khatumo, such as the Xeer (customary law). Clan elders convene to arbitrate disputes, frequently predicated on clan relationships and historical precedents. These procedures may not address the underlying reasons of conflict, but they frequently produce short-term peace agreements.*

The northern Somali state of Khatumo has been embroiled in protracted conflict as a result of clan rivalries, territory control disputes, and political governance issues. Stability and administration have been severely impacted by the region's ongoing conflicts between political factions and indigenous clans. An unstable atmosphere is produced by conflicts that frequently occur between the main clans, such as the Dhulbahante clan in Khatumo and the bordering clans. The study noted that de-escalating tensions has been successful when negotiation efforts involve traditional leaders and clan elders. Land, resource, and political representation concerns are frequently the focus of these discussions. In Khatumo, the use of negotiation as a strategy for conflict resolution has been crucial, especially when it comes to addressing the underlying clan dynamics and political ambitions.

These findings are largely a reflection of several past studies that have emphasized the importance of diplomatic strategies in conflict resolution. For example, Doe (2023) aimed to examine the effectiveness of diplomatic strategies in conflict resolution in Liberia and established that there are effective diplomatic approaches that address the unique dynamics and challenges of conflict resolution in these regions. Like the

current research, the previous study noted the importance of a localized and context-specific approach to peacebuilding efforts. For instance, the socio-political environment of Somalia, especially Khatumo, is centered on clan identity. An unstable environment is caused by conflicts that frequently occur between the main clans, such as the Dhulbahante clan in Khatumo, and the bordering clans. De-escalating tensions has been successful when negotiation efforts involve traditional leaders and clan elders. Land, resource, and political representation concerns are frequently the focus of these discussions.

Furthermore, similar sentiments were echoed in a study by Abena (2022) focusing on the role of women in conflict resolution and peacekeeping in Ghana. Efforts such as conflict prevention, mediation, and reconciliation were effectively advanced through women's involvement in peace processes and promoting of peaceful conflict resolution at the community level. Concerning the current findings, political tension has resulted from Khatumo's position between Puntland and Somaliland, since both governments have claimed portions of the area. Hence, to amicably deal with the tensions, the federal government of Somalia, regional groups, and foreign entities such as Puntland and Somaliland have all participated in negotiations about political representation and territorial authority.

Another previous study, like the current research, that has emphasized negotiation as a recommended conflict resolution mechanism is Mohamed (2018) which examined Somalia's negotiation efforts, focusing on clan conflicts and political tensions. The study established that reopened communication channels facilitate dialogue and negotiation processes. Furthermore, it was noted that addressing grievances and fostering social cohesion need the use of inclusive negotiation initiatives and traditional dispute resolution processes. However, unlike the current research which employed mixed-methods approach, participatory observations and thematic analysis of interview transcripts were two of the qualitative data analysis techniques employed by Mohamed (2018). In light of Khatumo State's existing circumstances, attempts at political discourse have centered on agreements for power-sharing, including Khatumo into Somalia's larger federal framework while honoring the independence and ambitions of regional political groups. However, conflicting interests and a lack of mutual trust have frequently caused discussions to break down.

Mediation and Conflict Resolution in Khatumo State, Somalia

Mediation is also another approach being employed to address conflicts among the communities of Khatumo State in Somalia. The summary of the findings in Table 2 indicates various responses from the research participants.

Table 2: Influence of Mediation on Conflict Resolution

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The perceived neutrality of the mediator influences the effectiveness of conflict resolution.	165	4.04	.999
Effective facilitation by the mediator enhances the efficiency and success of conflict resolution.	165	3.96	1.304
A fair mediation process promotes trust and cooperation among parties, facilitating conflict resolution.	165	3.79	1.107
Satisfaction with the mediator's intervention correlates with positive outcomes in conflict resolution.	165	3.87	1.250
The perceived neutrality of the mediator influences the effectiveness of conflict resolution.	165	3.83	1.167
Valid N (listwise)	**165**		

Table 2 indicates that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the perceived neutrality of the mediator influences the effectiveness of conflict resolution, as shown by the mean of 4.04 and standard deviation of 0.999. This suggests that respondents believe that the impartiality of the mediator plays a critical role in resolving conflicts effectively, emphasizing the importance of neutrality in maintaining fairness throughout the mediation process. Other studies, such as those by Bercovitch and Houston (2000), support this

finding by highlighting that a mediator's neutrality fosters trust among parties and helps ensure that the conflict is resolved equitably.

The majority also strongly agreed that effective facilitation by the mediator enhances the efficiency and success of conflict resolution, as shown by the mean of 3.96 and standard deviation of 1.304. This implies that respondents recognized the importance of the mediator's active involvement in guiding the process and facilitating communication. This finding aligns with the work of Wall and Callister (1995), who noted that successful mediation often relies on the mediator's skill in managing the conversation and ensuring that all parties are heard, which leads to more successful outcomes.

The study also revealed that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that a fair mediation process promotes trust and cooperation among parties, facilitating conflict resolution, as shown by the mean of 3.79 and standard deviation of 1.107. This supports the idea that fairness in the mediation process is essential for building mutual trust and cooperation. These results echo the findings of Moorman and Grover (2009), who found that when parties perceive the mediation process as fair, they are more likely to cooperate and accept the outcome, ultimately contributing to the resolution of conflicts.

The respondents agreed that satisfaction with the mediator's intervention correlates with positive outcomes in conflict resolution, as shown by the mean of 3.87 and standard deviation of 1.250. This indicates that the respondents value the mediator's performance and are more likely to view the conflict as resolved positively when they are satisfied with the mediator's actions. This finding is consistent with the work of Pruitt and Carnevale (1993), who emphasized that satisfaction with the mediator's role leads to greater commitment to the resolution process and its outcomes.

The respondents also agreed that the perceived neutrality of the mediator influences the effectiveness of conflict resolution, as shown by the mean of 3.83 and standard deviation of 1.167. This reaffirms the significance of neutrality as a key factor in the success of mediation, which is again supported by various studies, including those by Fisher and Ury (1981), who stressed the importance of impartiality in enhancing the credibility and effectiveness of the mediation process.

Additionally, the study established that mediation continues to serve a very significant part in Khatumo State. Given the strongly ingrained clan dynamics and political issues in the region, mediation has proven to be an important method of conflict resolution in Khatumo State, Somalia. The goals of mediation efforts have frequently included lowering violence, promoting communication between parties in conflict, and laying the groundwork for long-lasting peace. As noted by one of the respondents who is a local NGO representative:

> The clan system is the cornerstone of social and political life in Khatumo, as it is in most of Somalia. Clan elders are crucial in settling conflicts between competing clans or sub-clans. These mediations usually adhere to the Xeer, a system of customary law that regulates relations between clans. Clan elders negotiate settlements on matters like property disputes, cattle raids, and retaliation killings, which as are frequent sources of strife in the area. Through Xeer, elders' mediation efforts cannot be ignored in the conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes.

Conflicting parties gather together to resolve complaints through clan-based or traditional mediation, which is frequently carried out in the form of peace talks (shir). Because they are founded on common cultural norms and respect for elders, these conversations have effectively defused localized confrontations in Khatumo. Political mediation has also been critical in peace processes. For example, to further securely integrate Khatumo State into the federal system, the Somali Federal Government have been involved in mediation efforts in the region. This is especially true in relation to its territorial issues with Puntland and Somaliland. Through its mediation efforts, the Federal Government hopes to unite the region under a single national political framework by providing political recognition in return for cooperation and peace.

These finding are in tandem with a number of previous researches on peacebuilding and conflict resolution through local mediation efforts. For example, Ogunjimi and Adewuyi (2017) carried out a qualitative study utilizing case studies and interviews to investigate conflict resolution in Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to investigate how community-based mediation affects conflict resolution in rural Nigeria. The results showed that mediation greatly aided in the de-escalation of conflicts when it was led by community leaders. The current study further noted that in addition to clan elders, religious authorities have also played a significant role in mediation procedures. They can use their moral authority to emphasize the value of peace and reconciliation while appealing to opposing sides from a religious standpoint. Religious leaders are frequently able to work beyond clan boundaries, which makes them useful as mediators in the frequent inter-clan disputes that occur in Khatumo.

Additionally, according to Mohamed's (2017), reopened communication channels promote conversation and reconciliation in Somalia's mediation efforts, including political tensions and clan conflicts. For resolving disputes and fostering social cohesion, conventional dispute resolution procedures and inclusive mediation programs are essential. These sentiments were further echoed in the current research in Khatumo State. Community-based organizations have participated in peace mediation through grassroots peace initiatives, with an emphasis on inter-clan communication and reconciliation. These mediations have involved women's groups, youth groups, and civil society organizations, with an emphasis on social cohesiveness and nonviolent dispute settlement mechanisms. These grassroots initiatives frequently collaborate with religious and traditional authorities to resolve disputes before they turn violent.

Another study by Nyamweya and Mokua (2016) looked into the function of official mediation in resolving ethnic disputes in Kenya. By utilizing both historical analysis and interviews, the study clarified the effects of formalized mediation procedures. Descriptive statistics showed that in areas where formal mediation procedures were put in place, the frequency and intensity of confrontations gradually decreased. These views were reiterated in the current research. For instance, the mediation attempts in Khatumo have also been assisted by regional and international organizations. For example, the UN and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have been a part of larger peace-building thesiss in Somalia, mediating disputes between local and regional actors. The mediators frequently concentrate on long-term solutions, such as economic growth and governance changes, in the hopes that they will deal with the underlying causes of conflict.

Despite different mediation approaches applied by different players in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts in Khatumo State, it was apparent that mediation has been extremely important in Khatumo State for settling disputes, especially when those efforts are led by communities and clans. However, while these initiatives have frequently been successful in reducing tensions, political division, external factors, and the intricate clan dynamics in the area make long-term peace difficult to maintain. Generally, the study established that mediation is still a crucial tool for resolving disputes since it frequently provides a productive and culturally acceptable way to settle disputes.

Recanalization and Conflict Resolution in Khatumo State, Somalia
Besides negotiation and mediation, recanalization is a vital element in conflict resolution in Khatumo State, Somalia. The summary of the findings in table 3 indicates various responses from the research participants.

Table 3: Influence of Recanalization on Conflict Resolution

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Completion of restitution measures demonstrates a commitment to repairing harm caused by conflict, laying the foundation for reconciliation.	165	4.06	1.208
Expression of forgiveness signifies a willingness to move beyond past grievances and build new relationships based on trust and understanding.	165	3.80	1.216
Successful reintegration of ex-combatants into society requires comprehensive support systems and opportunities for socioeconomic inclusion.	165	3.89	1.054
Rebuilding trust between former adversaries is essential for sustainable peace and social cohesion in post-conflict settings.	165	3.79	1.171
Completion of restitution measures demonstrates a commitment to repairing harm caused by conflict, laying the foundation for reconciliation.	165	4.04	1.064
Valid N (listwise)	165		

Table 3 indicates that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the completion of restitution measures demonstrates a commitment to repairing harm caused by conflict, laying the foundation for reconciliation, as shown by the mean of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 1.208. This suggests that the respondents perceive the completion of restitution measures as an essential step toward reconciliation, emphasizing the importance of reparations in building trust and moving forward after a conflict. Similarly, other scholars, such as Lederach (1997), argue that restitution plays a critical role in healing societal wounds and fostering long-term peace in post-conflict settings.

The majority also strongly agreed that the expression of forgiveness signifies a willingness to move beyond past grievances and build new relationships based on trust and understanding, as shown by the mean of 3.80 and a standard deviation of 1.216. This aligns with findings by Harris and Reilly (2004), who highlight the role of forgiveness in transforming relationships between former adversaries, noting that it is a key component in rebuilding trust and ensuring a sustainable peace process. The study also revealed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that successful reintegration of ex-combatants into society requires comprehensive support systems and opportunities for socioeconomic inclusion, as shown by the mean of 3.89 and a standard deviation of 1.054. This underscores the importance of not only providing physical security but also addressing the economic and social needs of ex-combatants, a view shared by scholars like McMullin (2016), who emphasize the need for integrated reintegration strategies to foster stability and prevent the recurrence of conflict.

Furthermore, the respondents agreed that rebuilding trust between former adversaries is essential for sustainable peace and social cohesion in post-conflict settings, as shown by the mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.171. Trust-building is critical in any post-conflict society, as reflected in the work of Putnam (2000), who stresses that the restoration of trust is a foundational element in the peacebuilding process, facilitating cooperation and social cohesion in the aftermath of conflict. The respondents also agreed that the completion of restitution measures demonstrates a commitment to repairing harm caused by conflict, laying the foundation for reconciliation, as shown by the mean of 4.04 and a standard deviation of 1.064. This reiterates the importance of restitution in the peacebuilding process, as identified by scholars such as Walzer (2004), who argue that addressing the wrongs of the past is crucial for laying the groundwork for lasting peace and social harmony.

There were additional views regarding the influence of recanalization on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia. As a process of reopening or restoring channels of communication between parties involved in conflict in the context of peacebuilding and conflict resolution, recanalization is essential for promoting communication, creating confidence, and laying the groundwork for long-term peace in areas like Khatumo State, Somalia, where protracted wars are frequently caused by territory claims, political disagreements, and

clan rivalry. The influence of recanalization on conflict resolution was summed up by one of the diplomats representing national governments as follows:

> *Clan rivalries and physical altercations are the main causes of strife in Khatumo, especially between the ruling Dhulbahante clan and nearby communities. Reopening communication channels between these clans, which have been cut off owing to violence or mistrust, is a common goal of recanalization initiatives. In these attempts, traditional elders, religious leaders, and community mediators have played a crucial role by utilizing their social power to persuade warring clans to engage in negotiations.*

Recanalization has been accomplished by creating official and informal forums for discourse where rival clans can air concerns and provide solutions. These forums frequently take the shape of local councils or traditional assemblies (shir), where debates on topics like resource sharing, land conflicts, and compensation for lost life or property are governed by customary law (Xeer). It was further noted that communication failures have been a constant challenge in Khatumo due to political conflicts, particularly the competition between Puntland, Somaliland, and local political factions. In this setting, efforts at recanalization entail resuming political discussions, which are frequently facilitated by the Federal Government of Somalia or external parties such as the UN or IGAD. In order to ease tensions, resolve claims of autonomy, and negotiate political power-sharing agreements, these communication channels must be restored.

These finding closely resonate with some of the previous studies on the role of recanalization in conflict resolution among warring communities. Sung Chull Kim (2018) examined the reopening of communication channels that were strained throughout conflicts in Asia, with a focus on the Korean Peninsula. By means of qualitative case study analysis, the study investigated the crucial function of reopened channels in mitigating tensions and promoting communication between North and South Korea. The study revealed information about the efficacy of techniques for communication reopening in attempts to defuse conflicts. The study illuminated the wider significance of communication restoration in conflict settlement efforts throughout Asia, despite its special focus on a particular conflict scenario. On a similar note, political debates have frequently become refocused on Khatumo's place in Somalia's federal system. Maintaining communication between local leaders in Puntland, Somaliland, and Khatumo has been essential to managing territorial claims and achieving agreements on the political future of the region. By giving local players the chance to participate in decision-making processes rather than resorting to armed conflict, these dialogues also aid in defusing tensions.

In Nigeria, with an emphasis on community-based reconciliation initiatives in the Northern Region, Okyere (2019) delved into the reopening of communication channels that have become stressed throughout conflicts. Through the use of participatory action research, the study demonstrated the effectiveness of participatory techniques in promoting communication and harmony between opposing groups. These approaches included community forums and conventional conflict resolution processes. Notwithstanding its insightful observations, the study highlighted the difficulties in maintaining community-led reconciliation initiatives over an extended period of time.

Consistent with the aforementioned views by Okyere (2019), the results of the current study demonstrated that disarmament and demobilization initiatives in Khatumo depend on the reestablishment of communication channels between armed groups and government forces, as well as between fighting clans. Although reopening communication makes it possible to negotiate on conditions of disarmament, fighter reintegration, and security assurances, trust is a fundamental obstacle to these efforts. Parties are more likely to agree to the terms of disarmament and lay down their weapons when they can speak with one another.

Omar (2016) investigated the reopening of communication lines that were strained during conflicts in Somalia, specifically in relation to the Somali Civil War and its aftermath. Unlike the current research which adopted a mixed-methods approach, Omar used a qualitative study methodology to examine how discussion and

negotiation function in efforts to resolve conflicts in different parts of Somalia. The study found that reducing tensions and promoting peace between rival groups depended heavily on restoring avenues of communication, which were frequently assisted by community elders and traditional leaders. The report emphasized the possibility of dialogue to support long-term peace in Somalia as well as the tenacity of regional efforts aimed at promoting peace.

Although the sentiments by Omar (2016) were largely echoed in the current study, new revelations emerged, especially owing to the use of both quantitative and qualitative data. In light of the current research, when communication channels are restored, armed conflicts between opposing factions tend to decrease because parties have more chances to settle their differences amicably. Recanalization activities have proven essential in Khatumo in lowering the level of violence and creating avenues for sustainable peace agreements. Recanalization, or the resumption of dialogue, has proven to be an essential part of Khatumo State's efforts to resolve disputes. This approach has opened the door for peace talks, disarmament, local government, and development thesiss by reestablishing communication between warring clans, political groups, and outside parties. However, persistent mistrust, the dispersion of armed groups, and inadequate governance mechanisms pose serious obstacles to these attempts. Despite these challenges, regional and local recanalization initiatives are continuously essential to maintaining peace in Khatumo.

Reintegration and Conflict Resolution in Khatumo State, Somalia
The study further interrogated the impact of reintegration on conflict resolution in Khatumo State, Somalia. The results presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Impact of Reintegration on Conflict Resolution

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reestablishment of trust among communities and former combatants is essential for successful reintegration and reconciliation.	165	3.47	1.476
Providing opportunities for education, employment, and social participation facilitates the effective reintegration of ex-combatants into society.	165	3.59	1.538
Addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting social justice are crucial for sustainable peacebuilding and reintegration efforts.	165	3.61	1.434
Community involvement and inclusive decision-making processes enhance the success of reintegration programs and long-term stability.	165	4.02	1.189
Psychosocial support and trauma healing initiatives are essential for reintegrating ex-combatants and fostering peaceful coexistence.	165	3.58	1.570
Valid N (listwise)	165		

Table 4 indicates that the majority of the respondents agreed that the reestablishment of trust among communities and former combatants is essential for successful reintegration and reconciliation, as shown by the mean of 3.47 and a standard deviation of 1.476. This finding suggests that the respondents recognize the importance of trust in the reintegration process. Similarly, scholars such as Carter (2014) argue that rebuilding trust between former adversaries is essential for peacebuilding, as it fosters cooperation and social cohesion, which are critical for sustainable reconciliation. The majority also agreed that providing opportunities for education, employment, and social participation facilitates the effective reintegration of ex-combatants into society, as shown by the mean of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 1.538. This aligns with the work of McMullin (2016), who emphasizes that socioeconomic integration is a key factor in the reintegration of ex-combatants, as it offers them the means to rebuild their lives and contribute to the society they are reintegrating into.

The study as well revealed that the majority of the respondents agreed that addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting social justice are crucial for sustainable peacebuilding and reintegration efforts, as shown by the mean of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 1.434. This finding is consistent with the view of

scholars like Licklider (2001), who argue that addressing underlying grievances, such as inequality and injustice, is vital for long-term peace. The respondents agreed that community involvement and inclusive decision-making processes enhance the success of reintegration programs and long-term stability, as shown by the mean of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 1.189. This suggests that inclusive approaches to decision-making are highly valued by the respondents, reflecting the findings of studies like those by Sandole (2001), which show that involving communities in decision-making processes strengthens the legitimacy of peace initiatives and increases the likelihood of their success.

The study also revealed that the majority of respondents agreed that psychosocial support and trauma healing initiatives are essential for reintegrating ex-combatants and fostering peaceful coexistence, as shown by the mean of 3.58 and a standard deviation of 1.570. This is supported by the work of van der Merwe (2008), who stresses the importance of addressing the psychological needs of ex-combatants, as trauma healing is crucial for their successful reintegration and the restoration of peaceful relationships in post-conflict settings.

Further revelations were made regarding the impact of reintegration on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia. In the context of conflict resolution, reintegration is the process of reintegrating displaced people, marginalized groups, and former combatants into society with the aim of promoting social cohesion and enduring peace. Given the history of inter-clan violence, political unrest, and the presence of armed organizations in the area, reintegration initiatives are crucial to ending protracted conflicts in Khatumo State, Somalia. These views were summarized by a diplomat from an international organization who has been involved in reintegration process, as follows:

> *Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants is a common first step in reintegration efforts. The implementation of such programs is crucial in Khatumo, as there have been numerous militias and clan-based armed organizations active in the conflict. These programs aim to decrease violence and stop hostilities from resuming. A successful reintegration process can keep people from joining armed groups or committing crimes.*

In Khatumo, economic reintegration is a crucial part of conflict settlement. Former fighters and marginalized groups must be able to support themselves if peace is to last. In Khatumo, initiatives to facilitate the reintegration of former combatants and internally displaced individuals frequently center on offering vocational training, generating job opportunities, and enhancing access to resources such as land and water. Since most people in Khatumo are from pastoralist backgrounds, attempts to facilitate economic reintegration frequently center on helping people reintegrate into the livestock and agriculture industries. By helping displaced individuals and former fighters reconstruct their life, programs that supply cattle, seeds, and agricultural tools can lessen the chance of war reoccurring.

The findings related closely with past researches on the role of reintegration in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. Examining the reintegration of ex-combatants in Nigeria, a study conducted by Oluwole and Adebanwi (2018) utilizing qualitative methods highlighted that programs addressing education and vocational training played a crucial role in successful reintegration. Descriptive statistics illuminated the overall improvement in participants' socio-economic conditions after reintegration. However, the current study noted that reintegration in conflict resolution and peacebuilding goes beyond just economic empowerment of the ex-combatants and marginalized groups.

In Khatumo, reintegration involves social reconciliation in addition to political and economic engagement. Rebuilding relationships between clans is essential to successful reintegration, as clan rivalries are at the heart of the conflicts in the area. Customary law, or Xeer, is one of the traditional conflict settlement processes that has been crucial in bringing communities together and reintegrating former fighters. These initiatives are

frequently led by elders and religious figures, who settle conflicts and reintegrate former combatants into their communities through customary reconciliation rituals.

Mensah and Amankwah (2020) used a qualitative technique that included participant observations and interviews in their study on reintegration following conflict in Ghana. The study concentrated on how customary reconciliation procedures aid in the reintegration of those impacted by past conflicts. The results emphasized how important cultural and traditional behaviours are for promoting social cohesiveness. Unlike the current study which triangulated quantitative and qualitative data, the qualitative study by Mensah and Amankwah has certain limitations, such as the possibility of subjectivity in the interpretation of cultural practices and a narrow scope for evaluating the long-term effects of reintegration efforts. Hence, the findings of the current research provided a more comprehensive understanding of the role of reintegration in addressing conflicts among warring communities.

Conflict has resulted in a great deal of displacement in Khatumo, and stabilization depends on the reintegration of internally displaced people (IDPs). Land conflicts, persistent security fears, or a lack of essential services make it difficult for many IDPs to return home. Making sure IDPs have access to housing, healthcare, education, and other necessities is the main goal of reintegration initiatives. Furthermore, as land ownership is frequently a source of conflict in the area, addressing land issues is essential to the successful reintegration of displaced populations. In Khatumo, political reintegration is still another crucial component of conflict resolution. Marginalized groups, such as displaced populations and former fighters, must be included in political processes for peace to be sustained. Political reintegration aids in resolving complaints about marginalization and exclusion, which are frequently the causes of violence in Khatumo. Like this current research, the significance of reintegration in fostering discourse and reconciliation among marginalized groups was also highlighted by Ahmed Ali (2019) in a study on reintegration efforts in Somalia, which concentrated on the aftermath of the civil war.

Dynamics of Diplomatic Strategies and Conflict Resolution
The overall objective of the study was to understand the influence of different diplomatic strategies on conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia. The findings are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Dynamics of Conflict Resolution

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The degree to which conflicts are resolved effectively influences long-term peace and stability.	165	4.33	.608
Addressing underlying issues adequately is crucial for sustainable conflict resolution efforts.	165	4.32	4.072
Participants' satisfaction with the fairness of the resolution process impacts their willingness to adhere to the outcome.	165	4.05	.861
Empowering all involved parties enhances the likelihood of successful conflict resolution.	162	4.29	.737
Mediation by neutral third parties increases the effectiveness of diplomatic strategies in resolving conflicts.	165	4.08	1.169
Valid N (listwise)	162		

Table 5 indicates that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that the degree to which conflicts are resolved effectively influences long-term peace and stability, as shown by the mean of 4.33 and a standard deviation of 0.608. This finding highlights the importance of effective conflict resolution in ensuring lasting peace. Other studies, such as those by Zartman (2008), suggest that resolving conflicts in a manner that addresses the root causes and ensures all parties' needs are met is essential for fostering long-term stability.

The majority also strongly agreed that addressing underlying issues adequately is crucial for sustainable conflict resolution efforts, as shown by the mean of 4.32 and a standard deviation of 4.072. This result

emphasizes the need for addressing the root causes of conflict, rather than just surface-level symptoms. In line with this, scholars like Lederach (1997) argue that conflict resolution strategies that consider the underlying structural, political, and social issues are more likely to result in sustainable peace.

The study also revealed that the majority of respondents strongly agreed that participants' satisfaction with the fairness of the resolution process impacts their willingness to adhere to the outcome, as shown by the mean of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 0.861. This finding is consistent with the work of Fisher (2011), who notes that the perceived fairness of a resolution process directly impacts the likelihood of parties accepting and adhering to the outcome, as it fosters trust and a sense of justice.

The respondents agreed that empowering all involved parties enhances the likelihood of successful conflict resolution, as shown by the mean of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 0.737. This reflects the findings of Mitchell (2002), who advocates for inclusive approaches in conflict resolution. Empowering all parties allows for more balanced negotiations, helping to ensure that all perspectives are considered and increasing the chances of reaching a durable agreement.

The respondents also agreed that mediation by neutral third parties increases the effectiveness of diplomatic strategies in resolving conflicts, as shown by the mean of 4.08 and a standard deviation of 1.169. This supports the findings of Bercovitch (1996), who highlights that neutral third-party mediation often leads to more successful conflict resolution, as it helps maintain impartiality and builds trust between conflicting parties.

Additionally, in providing further information regarding conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia, the study revealed that there were several different dynamics surrounding conflict resolution, especially at community levels. In Khatumo State, Somalia, where clan rivalries, territory conflicts, and conflicting political interests have contributed to protracted instability, diplomatic tactics are essential to the conflict settlement process. In order to mediate conflicts, promote communication, and strive toward a peaceful resolution, diplomatic interventions, both internal and external, have proven critical. These include local diplomacy and clan-based mediation, regional diplomacy and cross-border cooperation, and peace agreements and ceasefires, among others. Some of these views were expressed by a local community leader as follows:

> *Traditional clan elders are very powerful in Somali society and have always been key players in resolving disputes. Clan-based diplomacy is crucial to the settlement of conflicts in Khatumo State, especially when there are warring clans such as the Dhulbahante. Using Xeer (customary law), elders frequently mediate disputes, placing emphasis on restitution, reconciliation, and shared responsibility. Elders use their status as respected members of the community and their understanding of customary laws to help expedite negotiations. They mediate property disputes, negotiate terms for prisoner exchanges, blood compensation (diya), or restitution for violent crimes, and broker peace deals.*

Local diplomatic endeavors frequently take the shape of shir, or traditional clan conferences, whereby clan elders convene to deliberate and settle conflicts. These gatherings give disputing parties a forum for communication and are a crucial instrument for reducing hostilities. These conferences result in enforceable agreements that are frequently supported by clan leadership, which makes them essential to preserving local peace. These findings echo different revelations by previous studies. For example, Ibrahim (2022) examined the factors influencing inter-ethnic conflicts in the Niger Delta region and to propose strategies for conflict resolution, with the findings indicating that environmental degradation, resource competition, and political marginalization were key drivers of inter-ethnic conflicts in the region. The role of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as community elders and religious leaders significantly featured in mitigating tensions.

Abreha (2019) analyzed the dynamics of ethnic conflict between the Oromo and Amhara ethnic groups and identified primary drivers of conflicts as historical grievances, economic disparities, and political marginalization. The findings highlighted the role of government-led peacebuilding initiatives and community dialogue forums in fostering reconciliation. In relation to Khatumo State in Somalia and in light of the current research, the federal government of Somalia has made an effort to mediate conflicts between the authorities of Khatumo and surrounding states like Puntland and Somaliland in particular. The federal government's intervention in negotiations is frequently intended to prevent violent disputes and ensure that the region remains part of Somalia's federal system, given Khatumo's contentious political status.

It further emerged that in Khatumo, diplomatic tactics have occasionally led to short-term truces between opposing groups. A common objective of agreements has been to put an end to hostilities, make it easier for displaced people to return, and let humanitarian aid into areas affected by conflicts. Several localized peace agreements in Khatumo, where local leaders and clan elders agree to end hostilities, have resulted from diplomatic efforts. Although these agreements are frequently fragile, they serve as a starting point for more diplomatic efforts and discussions about long-term solutions. These sentiments reflected an earlier research by Mwangi (2021) that explored the effectiveness of community-based conflict resolution mechanisms in mitigating inter-ethnic violence between the Turkana and Pokot communities. The findings indicated that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as peace committees and elders' councils, played a significant role in de-escalating tensions and promoting dialogue between conflicting groups. Furthermore, cultural norms and shared identity were critical in fostering cooperation and reconciliation

Despite concerted diplomatic efforts to address conflict in Khatumo, there are still several challenges that tend to hamper the process. For example, fragmentation of armed groups hampers the process of diplomatic negotiation in Khatumo. It is challenging for diplomats to involve all pertinent parties in peace talks because of the several militias operating in the area, each with their own objectives and allegiances. The fragmentation causes difficulties in enforcing peace deals and hinders ceasefire agreements.

The above sentiments were also captured in a past research by Mohamed (2020) examining the role of mediation and peacebuilding efforts in addressing the protracted conflict in Somalia. The findings showed that political fragmentation, weak state institutions, and external interventions were major challenges to effective mediation and peacebuilding efforts. Furthermore, the role of traditional clan-based reconciliation mechanisms, such as xeer and shir, in resolving disputes at the local level was significantly underscored. In Khatumo, diplomacy is always hampered by the political rivalry between Puntland, Somaliland, and Khatumo's government. Every entity has its own political goals and demands, which results in a cycle of agreements and recurrent conflicts. Resolving conflicts over the long term may be difficult unless diplomatic actors often strive to strike a balance between these conflicting interests.

Pearson Correlation Analysis
The Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used to assess the relationship between diplomatic strategies (Negotiation, Mediation, Recanalization, Reintegration) and conflict resolution in Khatumo state, Somalia. The coefficient ranges from -1 to 1, indicating strong positive, negative, or no linear relationship between the variables (Table 6).

Table 6: Pearson's Coefficients Correlation Analysis

		Conflict resolution	Negotiation	Mediation	Recanalization	Reintegration
Conflict resolution	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	165				
Negotiation	Pearson Correlation	.631**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004				
	N	165	165			
Mediation	Pearson Correlation	.525**	.633**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000			
	N	165	165	165		
Recanalization	Pearson Correlation	.591**	.132**	.428**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	165	165	165	165	
Reintegration	Pearson Correlation	.683**	.533**	.459**	.460**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	.000	
	N	165	165	165	165	165

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Conflict Resolution vs. Negotiation

The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.631 between conflict resolution and negotiation suggests a strong positive relationship. Other studies, such as those by Fisher and Ury (2011), support this finding, emphasizing that negotiation is a key diplomatic strategy in conflict resolution. They argue that negotiations foster mutual understanding and enable conflicting parties to find common ground, which is essential for resolving disputes. Similarly, Mwangi (2021) in their research on the Turkana and Pokot communities highlighted that negotiation efforts directly contribute to peaceful resolutions, thus supporting the significance of this finding in the context of Khatumo State.

Conflict Resolution vs. Mediation

The correlation of 0.525 between conflict resolution and mediation demonstrates a moderate to strong positive relationship. According to Bercovitch (2009), mediation serves as an essential tool in conflict resolution by facilitating communication between parties and helping them reach mutually agreeable solutions. His work shows that mediators can guide conflicting parties to a sustainable agreement, improving conflict resolution outcomes. Furthermore, Mwangi (2021) found similar results in Kenya, confirming that mediation strategies significantly enhance the prospects for lasting peace. This supports the positive correlation found in this study.

Conflict Resolution vs. Recanalization

A correlation of 0.591 between conflict resolution and recanalization indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship. Recanalization, which refers to reopening diplomatic channels, is supported by studies like those of Zartman (2005), who found that re-establishing communication between conflicting parties leads to de-escalation and the potential for peaceful solutions. In conflict-prone regions, the restoration of diplomatic ties is often a critical step in resolving conflicts, as highlighted by Zartman (2005) and echoed in the findings of this study. This shows that recanalization plays a vital role in facilitating peace processes.

Conflict Resolution vs. Reintegration

The correlation of 0.683 between conflict resolution and reintegration highlights a strong positive relationship, indicating that efforts to reintegrate individuals or communities' post-conflict are vital for lasting peace. According to Lederach (1997), reintegration is essential in rebuilding societies after conflict, as it addresses both individual and collective healing. Reintegration processes help to reinstate social harmony, thereby reducing the likelihood of future conflicts. This finding is consistent with studies like those of Bloomfield et al. (2003), who argue that reintegration strategies contribute significantly to sustainable peace by promoting reconciliation and social cohesion, further justifying the positive relationship observed in this research.

Model Summary

As illustrated in table 7, the coefficient correlation R and coefficient of determination (R^2) were calculated to establish the fit of the model in explaining the relationship between diplomatic strategies and conflict resolution.

Table 7: Coefficient of Correlation (R) and Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Model	R	R Square (R^2)	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.654[a]	0.495	0.541	4.021

a. Conflict resolution

The coefficient of correlation R (0.654) is more than negative 1 (-1) and close to 1, indicating a positive linear relationship with the dependent variable, conflict resolution. This implied that diplomatic strategies significantly influenced conflict resolution. Moreover, the coefficient of determination (R2) was 0.495, implying that 49.5% of conflict resolution was explained or as a result of the diplomatic strategies.

ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

The ANOVA was carried out in order to determine if the regression equation adequately explained a significant variation in the outcome (dependent variable), in this case conflict resolution.

Table 8: ANOVA

Source	Degree of Freedom (df)	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F calculated	P-value
Model Regression	5	599.0	119.8	17.3	0.001[b]
Residual	159	1,101.0	6.9		
Corrected Total	164	1,700.0			

a. Conflict resolution

b. Predictors (negotiation, mediation, recanalization, reintegration)

As indicated in the ANOVA summary above, the P-value was 0.001 and the F statistic (5, 164) at 95% level of confidence (1-α) was 6.9, which was less than F calculated (17.3). Since the p-value was below the level of significance (α) (0.001<0.05), this implied that diplomatic strategies significantly influenced conflict resolution. Therefore, the regression model was significant in predicting diplomatic strategies (predictor or independent variables) on the conflict resolution, which was the outcome of the study, or the independent variable of the study.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Negotiation has been a crucial instrument for resolving disputes in Khatumo. Negotiation has made ceasefires and peace deals possible by facilitating dialogue between political groupings and clans. However, long-standing rivalries, lack of trust, and outside meddling frequently make negotiations less successful. The maintenance of sustainable peace requires ongoing participation from regional leaders and impartial mediators who are aware of the sociopolitical dynamics of the area.

In Khatumo, mediation has been essential to settling conflicts and promoting peace. It has been used mostly by religious authorities, traditional elders, and external peace actors, such as international organizations. Customary law-based traditional mediation techniques have assisted in lowering tensions and facilitating the negotiation of agreements between disputing parties. But occasionally, armed groups and external political influence tend to compromise the mediation process, making it more difficult for neutral parties to gain acceptance and legitimacy from all key stakeholders.

Reduced miscommunication and increased discourse in Khatumo have been made possible by recanalization, which entails restoration of communication channels between formerly hostile factions or communities. Through this process, hostile parties get an opportunity to define problems, defuse tensions, and create a harmonious coexistence by reestablishing contact and encouraging dialogue. But in order for this process to be successful, it is necessary to keep channels of communication open and constantly ensure that everyone is prepared to engage in good faith.

Reintegration has been adopted to address the social and economic components of post-war recovery, which has made a substantial contribution to conflict settlement in Khatumo. The possibility that displaced people and former fighters may revert to violence has decreased as a result of their effective reintegration. Social acceptability, political inclusion, and economic possibilities all tend to contribute to stability in the region. However, obstacles including scarce resources, enduring clan rivalries, and the accessibility of illicit weapons still pose a threat to the overall effectiveness of reintegration initiatives. In order to sustain peace through reintegration initiative, there is need for continued funding and policy support.

Establishing more organized and inclusive frameworks for negotiations that involve all relevant parties, including marginalized groups and external mediators, is recommended for improving effectiveness of negotiations in Khatumo. Frequent training in negotiation skills for local leaders and the establishment of neutral platforms for dialogue would foster confidence and lessen the influence from external actors capable of messing up peace initiatives. To strengthen mediation, the emphasis should be on giving local mediators, such as religious leaders and clan elders, resources and official backing from national and international peacebuilding organizations.

Maintaining and institutionalizing open channels of communication between disputing parties is essential for the successful recanalization process. With the support of regional authorities and international peace actors, communication hubs or regular inter-clan meetings can be established to guarantee continued contact and dialogue. In addition to offering former combatants and displaced individuals vocational training, psychological support, and sustainable economic opportunities, reintegration programs should be strengthened and expanded. Additionally, community-based reintegration should be adopted as a key component that fosters social cohesion and lessens stigma associated with reintegrated individuals.

Recommendations for Further Research
Future research may focus on sustainability of long-term peacebuilding initiatives in Khatumo State, with an emphasis on the interplay between customary dispute resolution mechanisms and modern administrative frameworks. This could involve an in-depth analysis of the ways in which formal state-building initiatives interact or conflict with customary laws, clan-based mediation, and local leadership.

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