

Beyond the loss of lives and properties: Uncovering the impacts of land conflict in Oyo State, Nigeria

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SUMMARY

Land constitutes man's identity and a means of livelihood for humanity, especially in rural areas where the customary land tenure system is still practised. Also, land seems to contribute to economic growth and development and reduce poverty in the country. Despite its significance, land is increasingly becoming a source of conflict in Nigeria and Africa. Its usage and demands for various uses by stakeholders lead to competition. These competitions often result in conflicts, and the impacts of the conflicts are beyond the loss of lives and properties. Hence, the study investigates land conflict's impacts on residents and the economy in Oyo state, Nigeria.

The study adopted a mixed method of data collection. Key informant interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaire were used to obtain primary information from the land conflict stakeholders in four selected zones in Oyo state. This is complemented by reports from the Oyo State Technical Committee on Administrative Boundary Conflicts, National Boundary Commission, and Nigeria Watch (IFRA-Nigeria), which served as secondary data. Thematic, narrative, mean ranking and principal component analysis were employed for data analysis.

The findings show the number of lives lost through land conflict in Oyo State over the years. Beyond the loss of lives and properties, the impacts of land conflicts, such as sour relationships among conflicting parties and age-long hostilities/hatred/grievances among individuals/communities, are more grievous, leading to new conflict and reoccurrence of land conflicts. The impacts need to be paid additional attention to while making decisions on the land conflict management strategies for effective land conflict management. The impacts of land conflict are evidenced in individual households, families, communities, and the country's economy. The impacts of land conflicts were grouped into *social, economic, cultural, market, and governance impacts*. The study provided insights and information to consider when designing a framework for land conflict management in Nigeria. By way of recommendation, the inputs from the study could be helpful to both government and other land conflict management in making decisions on land conflict management. Also, the insight from the study could be used in designing a framework for land conflict management in Oyo State.

Thereby reducing land conflicts, managing land conflicts successfully, and enhancing a good land administration system in Oyo State, Nigeria.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Access to land seems to bring prosperity and development and reduce poverty in society. Any nation's economic growth and development depend largely on land-based activities, and this portrays the importance of land to humanity. This importance depicts why people demand land. Nevertheless, the competition over land by individuals, families, and communities often results in land conflict.

Land conflict, a disagreement over the use or access to land, is evident in terms of social, cultural and economic impacts. In recent years, land conflicts have become increasingly violent and have negative impacts on individuals, families, communities and even the nation's economy (Wehrmann, 2017). The impacts are more evident in developing countries where the framework for land conflict management is not put in place. According to Gyamera et al. (2016), land conflicts have several impacts on a country's urban, peri-urban and rural areas, and the impacts could be economic, socio-economical, environmental, socio-cultural, political, demographic, and psychological.

In Nigeria, Oyo State inclusive, the economic significance attached to land indicates that land creates wealth, is an agent of development and reduces poverty. In addition, the identity of people are determined by the land they occupy and possessed (Abegunde et al., 2020; Abegunde, 2011). Hence, people attached different values to land. The significance and value attached to land have increased the competition for land in society. The competition for land, together with the interests in securing, owning and developing land, usually results in land conflict due to the fixed nature of the land. The land conflict, which usually starts with a dispute, degenerates into major land conflicts and sometimes claims lives and properties (Agheyisi, 2019).

Meanwhile, socioeconomic problems in society seem to contribute to land conflict when not properly managed (Onono, 2016; Wig & Kromrey, 2018). This is evident in the form of the loss of lives and properties, violence, and reduction in investment, among others. While Bruce (2013) identified the displacement of people and land grabbing as one of the impacts of land

conflict in the society, Deininger & Castagnini, (2006), asserted that group marginalisation was also a result of land conflict. Most of the time, these impacts give rise to new conflicts and continuity of land conflict. Moreover, when there is land conflict, the cost of managing it or the cost of litigation is sometimes higher than the value of the conflict land (Moore, 2010). This indicates that land conflicts require higher costs for management or litigation, the cost that would have been used for another thing or saved. Apart from these, land conflict leads to violence and displacement of people from their land and community (Mugizi & Matsumoto, 2021). The households that were displaced to other locations far from their land, which is their identity, usually result in a new land conflict to regain their identity and land.

In addition, land conflicts have a negative effect on agricultural productivity; the farmers are unable to go to the farm for their farming activities, and this hinders local and national development (Deininger & Castagnini, 2006; Essel, 2018; Sabogu et al., 2020). Also, people's social interaction and relationships are affected by intra or inter-community land conflict (Mugizi & Matsumoto, 2021; Siyum et al., 2015). The affected relationship sometimes continues from generation to generation, deterring the growth and development of the communities and leading to the reoccurrence of land conflicts.

Furthermore, land conflicts and their reoccurrence lead to the vulnerability of political life (Handoko, 2020). The harmony between individuals, groups, and communities is affected whenever there is land conflict, sometimes resulting in loss of livelihoods, violence among groups, and political instability. The study by Wehrmann, (2008) submitted that land conflicts affect the livelihood of different people notwithstanding levels, class and sex but further asserted that the effects are more evident on the poor than the rich.

In Nigeria, land conflicts take different dimensions. It has a social effect on people (Chukwu et al., 2022; Omotara, 2016). These manifest in hostilities, hatred and lack of trust among individuals, groups, families and communities. The social interaction and peaceful co-existence of people are terminated, leading to mistrust. Also, agricultural productivity is affected by land conflict, especially when the land conflict is between farmers and herders (Ofuoku & Ewrierhurhoma, 2018; Salau et al., 2020; Shiyambola et al., 2024). Both farmers and herders are adversely affected by land conflict. Farmers encroach on water holes and block cattle paths while herders overgraze on farm crops, and this is the aftermath of conflict over land use and results in another land conflict. Similarly, the impact of land conflict on people and the economy is enormous; it leads to loss of lives and properties (Conroy, 2014; Daodu & Igbekoyi, 2020; Salau et al., 2020), slows down investment (Okorji, 2021), and displacement of people (Anierobi et al., 2024). The above social and economic impacts of land conflict are usually evident in rural and urban residents, but the severity differs based on location.

The severity and extent of the impacts of land conflict are determined by the interests and the roles played by the stakeholders and the causes of land conflict. Despite the increasing incidences of land conflicts, extant studies focused more on the loss of lives and properties as the main impact of land conflict, neglecting other impacts which could have more adverse effects. The study is based on the observation that land conflicts have other impacts than the loss of lives and properties that need to be unfolded. Hence, this study.

Therefore, it is important to examine the impacts of land conflicts holistically to provide insights on how to effectively manage land conflict and provide information that could help in effective land conflict management and preventing future impacts, thereby leading to effective land conflict management and enhancing the land administration system. The paper examines and assesses the impacts of land conflict beyond the loss of lives and properties in Oyo State, Nigeria, and it is divided into four sections. Section one is the introduction, followed by materials and methods; section three focuses on findings and discussion; section four is the conclusion.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The qualitative methodology using a case study approach was appropriate for this research because it investigates social, community-based problems and a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context (Burge, 2015; Yin, 2003, 2013).

The frequency of land conflicts in Oyo State, Nigeria, is alarming; hence, four out of the seven (7) administrative zones in the state were selected as case study areas. Apart from that, the diverse natures of the land conflict in the state with many rural areas and the inability to successfully manage various land conflicts make the state suitable for the study (InsideOyo, 2021; Oluwalana, 2018).

A mixed method of data collection was adopted to obtain information from the stakeholders (the stakeholders include the actors, managers, professionals and academics who have been involved or knowledgeable about the Oyo state land conflicts) of land conflicts. The mixed method assessed information from different perspectives and improved the reliability of the data collected (Arko-Adjei, 2011; Bowen, 2009).

Two fieldworks were conducted using a case study approach. The purposeful and snowballing techniques were employed to select two (2) traditional rulers and four (4) directors in the Oyo State Ministries and parastatals (Lands, Justice, Surveyor-General, and Housing Corporation) for the key informant interviews (KII). In addition, the National Boundary Commission director and the Oyo State High Court Chief Judge were also interviewed. Also, a snowballing technique was employed to select three (3) heads of landholding families, one (1) community leader, one (1) Seriki-Fulani (Herder), and the Chairperson of the Community Development Women Association (CDWA) for interviews.

The interviews were complemented by four (4) focus group discussions (FGD) with the family heads in each selected zone and one with the CDWA in one (1) zone. Women were included to accommodate their opinions, perspectives and experiences about land conflicts. The number of participants in each FGD averaged 10. This is in line with the recommendation of Nara (2021) that the number of people in a focus group should be between 8 and 12. Altogether, thirty-eight (38) KIIs and five (5) FGDs were conducted with the selected stakeholders to obtain primary information in the first fieldwork. These stakeholders were involved in the land conflict and its management at Oyo State. In addition, the 2005 and 2022 Oyo State Technical Committee on Administrative Boundary Conflicts, 2021 National Boundary Commission reports, and Nigeria Watch (IFRA-Nigeria) reports served as secondary data.

KII and FGD recordings recorded in other languages were first translated into English, and all the KIIs and FGDs were then transcribed. The KII, FGD, and secondary data transcripts were analysed using the ATLAS.ti version 22 software with open coding. KII and FGD were analysed using thematic and narrative analysis

The impacts of land conflict in Oyo state, discussed by the stakeholders, were extracted from the KII and FGD conducted during the first fieldwork and from secondary data. These impacts were used to prepare a questionnaire for the second fieldwork. The questionnaire was structured into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire focused on data from the respondents, while the second part focused on the impacts of land conflict. To confirm if the impacts identified by the stakeholders were correctly captured, the questionnaire was administered to the thirty-eight (38) land conflict stakeholders interviewed during the first fieldwork to rank the level of the impact. In addition, ten (10) professionals who are knowledgeable and have experienced land conflict or have been involved in land conflict management were identified and purposefully selected. So, a questionnaire was administered to ten (10) lawyers, estate surveyors, and valuers (land administrators), as well as land surveyors and academics, each for validation purposes. These professionals had over ten (10) years of experience in land management or transactions. Altogether, a total of seventy-eight (78) questionnaire were administered, out of which seventy-two (72) were retrieved, analysed and used for this study. This amounts to a 92.3% response rate. The questionnaire was designed on a 5-point Likert scale for land conflict stakeholders, professionals, and academics to rank land conflicts' impacts on people and the economy.

Data collected through the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistical methods such as mean ranking, standard deviation (Std. Dev) and Principal Component Analysis. The mean score for each impact was obtained by summing all scales and dividing by the maximum rating of 5 through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A benchmark of 3 $(1+2+3+4+5)/5$ was used to determine the level of impact. It is a method used in previous studies of Chileshe & Kikwasi, (2014); and Ikediashi & Okwuashi, (2015). In other words, any impact with a benchmark mean value of ≥ 3 is significant. The following range/classes were used as determinants of the significance and usage levels: 5.00 - 4.50 = Very Highly Impact, 4.49-3.50 = Highly Impact, 3.49 - 2.50 = Moderate Impact, 2.49 - 1.50 = Low Impact and 1.49 - 1.00 = No Impact.

Also, it is pertinent to ascertain the correlation patterns within the data scale because interrelated variables in a scale might be correlated. The study carried out factor analysis based on the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) extraction method. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was based on the correlation matrix displaying a correlation coefficient $r = 0.3$ or coefficients exceeding 0.3 and KMO values being ≥ 0.6 . As well as significant Bartlett Test of Sphericity values ($p < 0.000$). These are requirements stipulated for ascertaining the factorability of variables (Pallant, 2010).

Like other research, the study faced scepticism from some stakeholders. However, this drawback was overcome with the support of some educated people in the study area zones, who said the exercise was for research purposes. This was also supported by the letter indicating the exercise was for research purposes. Thereafter, they exercised no fear of speaking. Also, ethical

advice and clearance from the ITC Ethics Committee of the University of Twente was obtained to ensure ethical compliance, and the consent of all the respondents was obtained before they participated in the study.

3.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

This sub-section presents the results of the fieldwork with the stakeholders in Oyo State.

3.1.0 Impact of Land Conflicts

Land conflict stakeholders were asked about their experiences in the first fieldwork on the impacts of land conflict on the individual and economy; the results are presented in this section.

3.1.1 Loss of Lives and Properties

All the key informants interviewed shared that when land conflict reaches its peak, it leads to losing lives and properties. People defend their land from being encroached on or taken away by others who do not have rights to it, and through that, all protective measures are being employed by stakeholders to achieve this means. In the process of defending their land rights, stakeholders submitted that several lives were lost and properties were destroyed. Sometimes, the number of deaths and the value of destroyed properties are not adequately reported. See excerpts from stakeholders below.

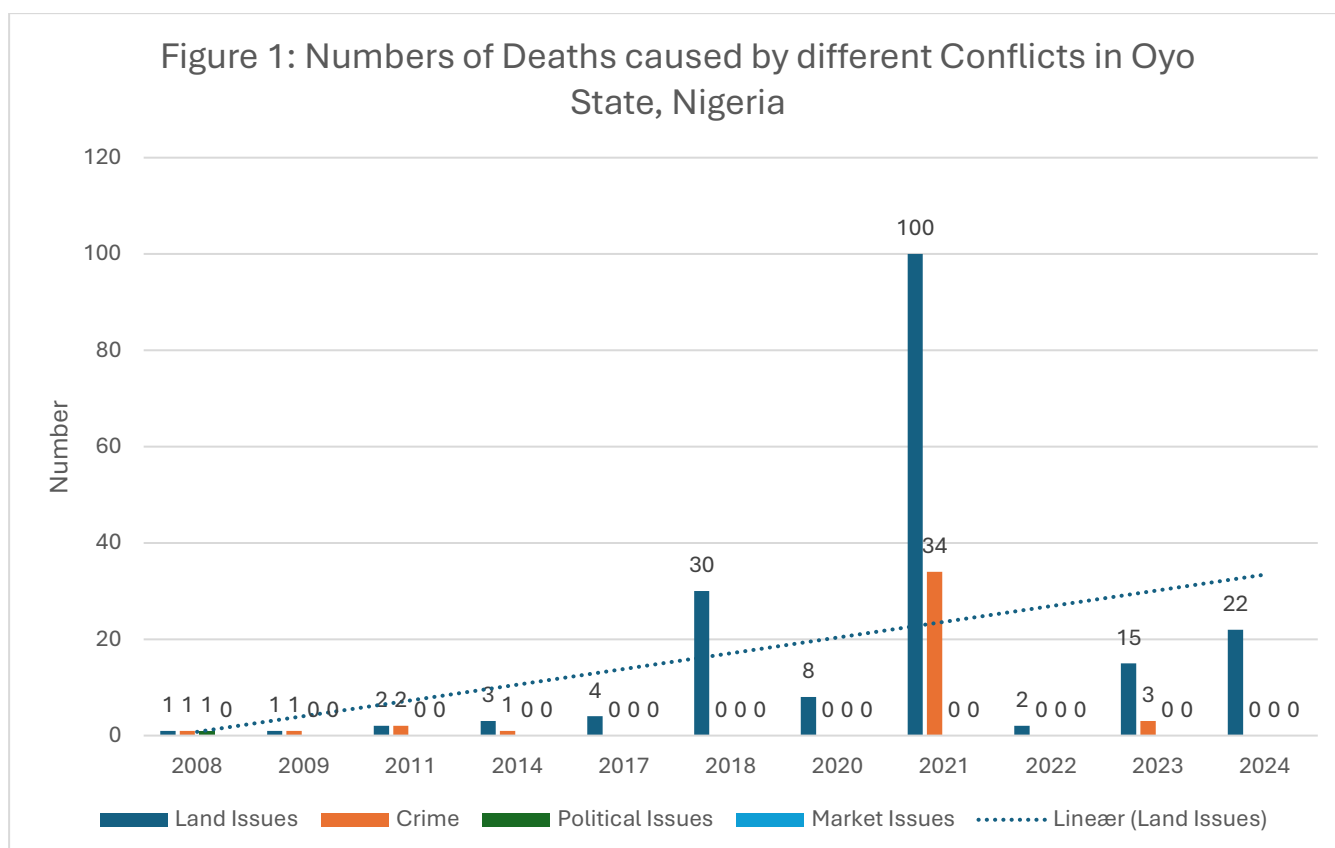
“...we were forced to face them when we were cheated and called fools. Though we lost two members of our family in March this year, I know next time they will not try it with us again.

“ the number of deaths recorded is more than three (3) that was reported. We lost more than ten (10) people from the two communities.”

“ More than five (5) acres of land of my cashew plantation were destroyed by them, even though they are our tenants.”

In addition to the information provided by the key informants and during FGD, the yearly overview of the numbers of deaths recorded in all conflicts according to press and police reports was also extracted from the database of Nigeria Watch (IFRA-Nigeria), a French institute for research in Africa located at the University of Ibadan, Oyo State; the result is presented in Figure 1.

The figure shows the number of deaths recorded in Oyo State due to the various conflicts. From the year 2008 to date, land-related conflicts, which include farmer-herder or cattle-rearing conflicts, have the highest number of deaths. Also, the trend over the years indicates an increasing number of deaths resulting from land conflicts. This indicates that land conflict results in the loss of lives and properties.



Source: Nigeria Watch (IFRA-Nigeria)

3.1.2 Sour Relationship among Conflicting Parties / Age-long hostilities/hatred/grievances among individuals/communities / Lack of Trust among Conflicting Parties

The analysis from FGD indicates that land conflict begets sour relationships among the actors, individuals and communities. Some communities do not encourage their children to marry from the other communities just because of the sour relationship that land conflict has created. This sour relationship over the years has developed into hatred among individuals and communities that ought not to have been if the land conflict had been managed effectively. This sour relationship that land conflict has created has eroded individuals, families, and communities' trust in themselves.

3.1.3 Stalled Development / Reduction in Investment / Loss of Investors Confidence

It was evident that land conflicts stall all developmental activities and reduce the number of people who like to invest in most conflicting areas for fear of losing their investment. Stalled development is evident in zones like Ibarapa and Oke-Ogun due to incessant land conflict in some communities. Previous land conflicts in these zones have destroyed people's property. See excerpts from one of the key informants:

“ ... Our children are even afraid of investing resources at home for fear of being destroyed one day by people”.

Land conflicts in these zones have reduced the number of intending investors willing to invest for fear of losing their investment during land conflicts or other communal conflicts with an element of land.

3.1.4 Tenure Insecurity / Limited Access to Credit Facilities

Land conflict in most zones of Oyo State has increased tenure insecurity. People are always afraid of conflicts that may arise in the future. Due to the insecurity of tenure of the land in most of the selected zones in Oyo State, most landowners have not been able to process or obtain governor consent or certificate of occupancy (C of O) on their land. One of the government officials who is a key informant said, *“We have not been able to process most of the applications on C of O due to conflicts on the subject property”* Inability of people to obtain C of O on their land has also limited their access to credit facilities. C of O is one of the necessary prerequisites for obtaining credit facilities while using property as collateral.

3.1.5 Termination of Peaceful Coexistence / Eruption of Violence / Displacement of People Loss of Cohesion and Political Instability

Through peaceful coexistence, a stable and sustainable environment could be created. The study indicates that land conflicts in the study area have resulted in the eruption of violence, degenerated into cohesion, caused political instability and eventually displaced many people from their place of abode. For example, farmers-herders conflicts sometimes lead to violence and termination of the peaceful coexistence that has existed between Yorubas and Fulanis for time immemorial. Violence erupts between farmers and herders due to the herders' overgrazing of cattle on farm crops and acts of encroaching on water holes and cattle paths by the farmers. This action sometimes results in the displacement of farmers and herders.

3.1.6 Loss of Cultural Heritage / Loss of Sacred Sites and Identity

The cultural heritage, synonymous with people's identity, is destroyed during land conflict without considering the future implications. Most sacred sites have been sold to avoid occasional land conflict, leading to perpetual land conflict in some areas.

3.1.7 Insecurity

Most of the insecurity experienced in parts of the study area was traced to the incessant land conflict, which some disgruntled societal elements took advantage of and degenerated into insecurity. Here follows a comment from one of the key informants.

“... None of us could farm on the land again; apart from the fact that the land is under litigation, the fear of being killed or kidnapped did not allow us to go there.”

3.1.8 Low Agricultural Productivity and Increase Poverty

During a land conflict between families, communities or farmers and herders, farm produce is destroyed, cattle are positioned or killed, and the aim of generating income from farming activities or rearing of animals is defeated, thereby increasing poverty levels in the society. An excerpt of the interview with a key informant is below:

“... What do you expect? Our cattle were killed and poisoned, and you want our people to be looking, no, no, ooo.”

3.1.9 Increased Cost of Managing Land Conflicts and Increasing Corruption

Whenever land conflict involving loss of lives and property ensues, the government sets up an inquiry committee to investigate the remote and immediate causes. A considerable amount of money is being spent, which should be used for development projects. In the process, some individuals in the civil service and even the government took advantage to inflate the cost, thereby increasing corruption.

“...We do not have enough money to go around and appeal to people on all land conflict in Oyo State. The funniest thing is that the amount allocated for the committee on paper differs from the cash released to us. Can you see the civil and public service bureaucracy?”

3.1.10 Land Speculation and Land Grabbing

FGD indicates that some influential people took advantage of the land conflict to buy parcels of land at a cheaper cost and sell them later to make more profit. It was surprising to find out that sometimes the government and some traditional rulers took advantage of land conflicts to grab people's land to bring peace. All these acts continue to aggravate land conflict in the area. An excerpt from one of the key informants is below.

“...Our traditional rulers are our problems. Some of them used the advantage of the conflict to take over our land for their benefit; we will not agree. The era of Oba lo ni ile (King owns the land) has gone. Our land is our land. We would take our land back.”

3.1.11 Group Marginalisation and Increased Inequality

The study found that the outcome of land conflict sometimes leads to the marginalisation of groups, thereby resulting in increasing inequality in the area.

3.2.0 Level of Impact of Land Conflict Impacts in Oyo State

This section explains the level of impact of land as ranked by land conflict stakeholders in Oyo State, as explained in the methodology section. The ranking was based on the mean ranking analysis carried out. The mean ranking was done to determine the level of the impact, and the higher the mean value, the higher the level of the impact. The standard deviation (Std. Dev) helps rank the variables (impacts) with the same mean. The lower the Std.Dev, the higher the level of the impact. The result of the analysis is presented in Table I.

Table 1: Level of Land Conflicts Impact

Impacts of Land Conflict	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Rank
Eruption of Violence	72	4.46	0.691	1
Sour Relationship among Conflicting Parties	70	4.43	0.734	2
Age-long hostilities/hatred/grievances among individuals/communities	71	4.42	0.647	3
Loss of Investor's Confidence	71	4.42	0.690	4
Loss of Lives and Properties	72	4.42	0.783	5
Stalled Development	69	4.39	0.691	6
Insecurity	71	4.37	0.779	7
Tenure Insecurity	72	4.36	0.718	8
Land Speculation and Land Grabbing	72	4.33	0.787	9
Termination of Peaceful Coexistence	71	4.32	0.732	10
Displacement of People	71	4.28	0.796	11
Reduction in Investment	70	4.26	0.793	12
Lack of Trust among Conflicting Parties	72	4.25	0.835	13
Increased Cost of Managing Land Conflicts	71	4.21	0.791	14
Low Agricultural Productivity	71	4.21	0.844	15
Increase Poverty	70	4.13	0.883	16
Loss of Cohesion	70	4.01	0.825	17
Loss of Cultural Heritage	71	4.00	0.926	18
Increasing Corruption	68	3.99	0.889	19
Limited Access to Credit Facilities	71	3.97	0.941	20
Group Marginalization	72	3.94	0.748	21
Political Instability	71	3.94	0.908	21
Loss of Sacred Sites and Identity	72	3.92	1.017	23
Increased Inequality	72	3.88	0.963	24

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The analysis in Table I shows the perception of the levels of impact of land conflict as ranked by stakeholders in Oyo State. Land conflicts show high levels of impact in various forms on individuals, communities and the economy, with the mean value ranging between 4.46 and 3.88, above the benchmark of 3.0. However, the level of impact varies, but the analysis confirms the KII and FGD carried out in the first fieldwork. It is also evident that there are other high impacts of land conflicts beyond the loss of lives and properties (4.42), such as the eruption of violence (4.46) and sour relationships among conflicting parties (4.43) in Oyo State.

3.3 Grouping of the Impacts of Land Conflict in Oyo State, Nigeria

Arising from the fact that the mean rating may not display appropriately the inter-relationship among items in a scale. Also, several dependent variables may be correlated and have similar underlying impacts; exploratory factors analysis using PCA was used to group the impacts of land conflict. The PCA summarises the impacts of land conflict into a few groups to understand

and interpret the combination of the underlying relationships and patterns of the original variables.

The mean rating of 24 variables was subject to PCA, and the factorability criterion was applied to ascertain the data's suitability for PCA. The result showed a KMO value of 0.821, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant at $p = 0.000$. The parameters indicate the suitability of the data for factor analysis (Field, 2005; Pallant, 2010; Williams et al., 2010)

The total variance explained is presented in Table 2. The four (4) groups extracted explained 70.456% of the variance. The four (4) components were identified, and the components were 1, 2, 3 and 4, with Initial Eigenvalues of 46.928%, 10.514%, 8.205% and 4.809%, respectively, before rotation. After the rotation, the four factors, components 1, 2, 3 and 4, explained 20.776%, 18.123%, 18.102% and 13.456%, respectively. This shows that four (4) significant components explain the impacts of land conflict. The purpose is to present results better and reduce the dimensionality of a dataset by identifying principal components.

As revealed in Table 3, the factor loading of items was grouped under the four identified components. The outcome of the variance of the identified factors reveals that nine, seven, four and four factors were loaded in components 1, 2, 3 and 4 with a variance of 20.776%, 18.123%, 18.102% and 13.456%, respectively. The four components were grouped and named in line with the factors constituting the group, as presented in Table 3 as the impact of land conflict in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 2: Total Variance Explained of the Impact of Land Conflict

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation	Sums	of	Squared
							Loadings			
	Total	%	ofCumulative	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative	Total	%	ofCumulative	
1	11.263	46.928	46.928	11.263	46.928	46.928	4.986	20.776	20.776	
2	2.523	10.514	57.442	2.523	10.514	57.442	4.349	18.123	38.898	
3	1.969	8.205	65.647	1.969	8.205	65.647	4.344	18.102	57.000	
4	1.154	4.809	70.456	1.154	4.809	70.456	3.229	13.456	70.456	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix of the Impact Land Conflict and their Grouping

Variables	Component				
	% of Variance	1	2	3	4
Displacement of People		0.854			
Loss of Lives and Properties		0.831			
Insecurity		0.770			
Low Agricultural Productivity		0.650			
Reduction in Investment	20.776	0602			

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Political Instability		0.601	
Loss of Cohesion		0.568	
Increase Poverty		0.552	
Stalled Development		0.508	
Sour Relationship among Conflicting Parties			0.854
Eruption of Violence			0.712
Lack of Trust among Conflicting Parties			0.652
Age-long hostilities/hatred/grievances among individuals/communities	18.123		0.591
Group Marginalization			0.579
Termination of Peaceful Coexistence			0.556
Loss of Investor's Confidence			0.550
Loss of Sacred Sites and Identity			0.852
Increased Inequality			0.843
Loss of Cultural Heritage	18.102		0.749
Tenure Insecurity			0.608
Increased Cost of Managing Land Conflicts			0.756
Limited Access to Credit Facilities			0.676
Increasing Corruption	13.456		0.624
Land Speculation and Land Grabbing			0.512

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

3.2 Discussions on the Impacts of Land Conflict in Oyo State, Nigeria

The sub-section discusses the results of the impacts of land conflicts in Oyo State, Nigeria

3.2.1 Impact of Land Conflicts in Oyo State, Nigeria

The findings indicate that land conflict has occurred and is re-occurring in Oyo State, Nigeria. This is undoubtedly evident in the number of deaths caused by land conflicts, as the Nigeria Watch (IFRA-Nigeria) recorded. This suggests a lack of a framework to manage land conflict in Oyo State. The finding is akin to that of (Shiyanbola et al., 2024), who confirmed the presence of land conflict and the need for an effective framework to manage land conflict in Oyo State. Also, the findings align with studies of (Conroy, 2014; Daodu & Igbekoyi, 2020; Salau et al., 2020; Wig & Kromrey, 2018), who identified the loss of lives and properties as one of the impacts of land conflicts.

Also, it could be deduced from the findings that land conflicts result in frequent violence, loss of cohesion, and political instability/violence. This could result from sour relationships, aged-long hostilities, and hatred that land conflicts have created among individuals, families and communities over the years. Even surprisingly, hatred/hostilities usually persist from generation to generation. Similarly, the lack of trust among conflicting parties (individuals, families and communities) could also be responsible for incessant violence in the study area. This could have been one of the reasons why some family members and community members do not marry from other families and communities. The finding is in line with the studies of (Chukwu et al., 2022;

Mugizi & Matsumoto, 2021; Omotara, 2016; Siyum et al., 2015), who identified the eruption of violence, sour relationships, and political instability as impacts of land conflict.

In addition, land conflict seems to be one of the underlying factors responsible for underdevelopment in some parts of Oyo State. No rational investor would want to invest in areas where he could not recoup his investment. Any investor aims to maximise profit and minimise cost, so the fear of losing investment, especially in the rural areas of Oyo State, could be responsible for stalled development, loss of investor confidence, and reduction in investment. This suggests that for any meaningful development to occur, land conflict has to be reduced to the minimum levels, and effective management strategies have to be implemented to manage land conflict whenever it erupts. This will serve as an assurance to an intending investor that his investment will be recouped. The result confirmed the studies of (Okorji, 2021; Onono, 2016; Wig & Kromrey, 2018) who asserted that land conflicts stalled development and contributed to reduced investment.

Moreover, the findings suggest that recent and long-term land conflict could have been responsible for increasing insecurity, termination of peaceful co-existence, displacement of people and group marginalisation in Oyo State see (Deininger & Castagnini, 2006; Mugizi & Matsumoto, 2021). Recent evolving kidnapping in some areas of Oyo State could be attributed to the aged-long land conflict that usually occurs between farmers and herders, which has resulted in violence and displacement of some herders to other places but comes back to kidnap farmers and other people in exchange for ransom as a retaliation for their cattle that were killed or poisoned and sending them away. It is surprising to note that an area that has been enjoying peace without violence could be experiencing incessant insecurity that makes people live in fear.

Similarly, low agricultural productivity in the Oke-Ogun zone of Oyo State, known and called the “Food Basket of Oyo”, seems to result from conflict over land use by farmers and herders. Both farmers and herders fight over the use of land for the sustenance of their livelihoods. Farmers block cattle routes and poison water; herders destroy crops and kill or injure farmers. The findings of Shiyambola et al., (2024) have attested that an attempt to block peoples’ means of their livelihood leads to land conflict. The low agricultural productivity could be responsible for decreased household income, increasing cost of food items, and an increasing poverty level among people whose main occupation is farming in rural areas of Oyo State. The findings align with the studies of (Essel, 2018; Ofuoku & Ewrierhurhoma, 2018; Sabogu et al., 2020), who have identified low agricultural productivity and poverty as impacts of land conflict.

Besides, the loss of cultural heritage, sacred sites, and people's identity indicates the frequent occurrence of land conflicts in Oyo state. Apart from this, the finding confirms the evolution of land grabbing and multiple sales of land in Oyo State, which the study of (Shiyambola et al., 2024) has asserted. Land grabbing may continue if a pragmatic measure is not taken to curb incessant land conflict. This will continue to lead to the destruction of cultural and sacred heritage and loss of identity. Any attempt to make people lose their identity always leads to conflict.

Also, despite the Land Use Act of 1978 (LUA of 1978), which governs the use and management of land in Nigeria, the customary land tenure system is still being practised. This could have also contributed to the increasing land conflict in Oyo State, which is evident in various impacts identified by the findings. The customary land tenure system and several land litigations on most of the land due to land conflict have hindered the successful registration of land in the rural areas of Oyo State. This suggests why investors, farmers, and others cannot process the certificate of occupancy (C of O) on their land, the highest title in Nigeria. The C of O could have been used as collateral, a prerequisite to access credit facilities. Hence, tenure insecurity, increasing poverty level, underdevelopment and reduced investment are impacts of land conflict in Oyo State.

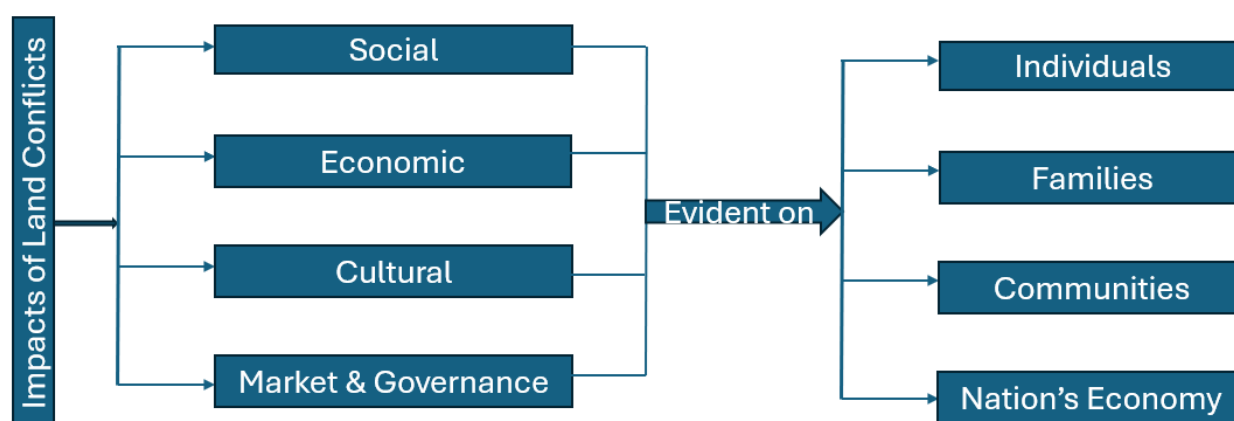
Likewise, the increased cost of managing land conflicts could be due to the increasing number of land conflicts in the courts, which requires conflicting parties to employ the services of lawyers and pay for these services. Also, a lot of money is required for logistics for government officials to travel to any part of Oyo State whenever land conflicts erupt. Considering the bureaucracy involved in government activities, the amount used for land conflict management could be inflated if not adequately monitored, leading to corruption.

Furthermore, contrary to the expectation, governments at various levels and some traditional rulers take advantage of land conflict to take over people's land. The act could be referred to as land-grabbing. Instead of looking inward and looking for an effective strategy to manage land conflict, land grabbing is being used, and this seems to contribute to inequality, incessant land conflicts, and the reoccurrence of land conflicts. This indicates the need for an effective framework to manage land conflict instead of taking over people's land in the name of managing land conflict. This could be an invitation to another land conflict.

Nevertheless, beyond the loss of lives and properties, the study has shown that other impacts that could not be quantified monetarily have several implications that usually result in new land conflicts. The implications of these impacts can be evident in individuals' daily lives or nations' economies. The study goes on to reveal other impacts of land conflict contrary to extant studies on the impacts of land conflicts that focused on the loss of lives and properties and less attention is paid to the impacts land conflict has on individual households, communities, and the nation's economy beyond the loss of lives and properties. The findings suggest that the impacts of land conflicts go beyond the loss of lives; there are other impacts that individuals and government do not pay attention to, which are more grievous and cause the reoccurrence of land conflict.

Therefore, according to the principal component analysis, the impacts of land conflict can be categorised into four groups: *Social, Economic, Cultural, and Market & Governance Impacts*. The impacts can be evident on individuals, families, communities and the nation's economy. Figure 1 depicts the summary of the impacts of land conflicts and how they are evident.

Figure 1: Grouping of Impacts of Land Conflicts



Source: Authors' Concept

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has examined the impacts of land conflicts. The results indicated that beyond the loss of lives and properties, other impacts of land conflicts are more grievous and need to be paid attention to in managing land conflicts effectively. The impacts, such as sour relationships among conflicting parties and age-long hostilities/hatred/grievances among individuals/communities, may not be easily evident or tangible, like the number of lives lost and properties destroyed during land conflict. However, they contribute primarily to new land conflicts and the reoccurrence of the conflicts. Knowing that there are other intrinsic impacts of land conflicts in Oyo state, Nigeria, it is crucial to pay additional attention to many of such impacts while making decisions on the strategies to employ to manage land conflict as well as considering them in designing a framework for land conflicts management in Nigeria.

The study further provided insights into the impacts of land conflicts and how they are evident in various forms. The evidence could be in individuals, families, communities, and the nation's economy. These pieces of information could provide insights and help design a land conflict management framework. The impacts of land conflicts were categorised into four groups: social, economic, cultural, market, *and governance impacts*. This suggests that the impacts of land conflicts are beyond economic or social impacts, and not paying appropriate attention to them seems to be responsible for continual land conflicts. The study has provided insights into the impacts of land conflict beyond the loss of lives and properties.

Given the forgone, government and other land conflict management stakeholders need to pay proper attention to other impacts of land when making decisions on land conflict management. The insights from this study could also be inputs in helping design a framework for land conflict management in Oyo state. This would help reduce land conflicts or manage land conflicts successfully, thereby reducing the impacts of land conflict on people and the economy and enhancing a good land administration system in Oyo State, Nigeria.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Robert Ereola Shiyanbola is a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), University of Twente, Enschede, Netherlands. He holds a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Estate Management from Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Robert teaches land-related courses at the Department of Estate Management of Obafemi Awolowo University in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. He has also been a guest lecturer for a land governance course in the Land Administration GIMLA master's program at the University of Twente's Faculty of ITC in the Netherlands. His research interests include land conflict management, land administration and management, land governance, and housing provisions. He has published articles in both local and international journals. Robert is an associate member of the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers and a registered member of the Estate Surveyors and Valuers Registration Board of Nigeria. He has also presented papers and posters at various local and international conferences.

Dimo Todorovski is a senior lecturer in Land Administration and Land Governance and a member of the Management Team of the PGM department at the Faculty of Geo-information Sciences and Earth Observations - ITC as a Portfolio Holder Education. He obtained an MSc degree in Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation at ITC in 2006 and bagged a PhD from the University of Twente in 2016. In 1992, he started a professional career at the Geodetic Authority in the Republic of North Macedonia. Over the 19 years of professional engagement (1992-2011) in the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre (same authority, new name), the last 12 years were in different managerial positions (Digitizing cadastral maps, GIS and Geo-ICT

departments), and the final year he was Head of the Department for International Cooperation and European Integrations. Since 2011, Dimo has worked on his PhD research project until 2016 and has continued as a lecturer and master specialisation coordinator of Land Administration (since 2020, new name: Geo-information Management for Land Administration GIMLA) until today. Regarding research, he is a daily supervisor for 2 PhD Candidates, supervised more than 20 MSc students, and (co) authored over 40 papers in land administration, geo-information management, curriculum development/revision, and education topics. His research interests focus on professional education, land administration, land governance, and land administration in post-conflict contexts. He participated in project proposal writing (2019), Erasmus + writing Edu4PAK for Pakistan (CDHE), and project proposal writing (2022), Erasmus + writing DIDACTICA (CDHE), and project leader Lund University from Sweden. Dimo contributed as a co-author of one of the six modules of the eLearning platform of the UN-Habitat GLTN project called Teaching Essentials for Responsible Land Administration (<https://elearning.glt.nu/>). He developed the Latin America Land Administration Network (LALAN) of universities from 9 countries in that region. Internally participated in Curriculum revision and development of the Master's Specialization LA/GIMLA mentioned higher in this document. About international exposure and activities, an example is the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), where Dimo is a Chair of FIG Commission 2 – Professional education (2023-2026).

Jaap Zevenbergen is a full professor in land administration and management at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and Geoinformation Management (PGM). He graduated in 1990 from the then Faculty of Geodesy Delft University of Technology (geodetic engineering) and in 1992 from the Law Faculty of Leiden University (Dutch administrative law). He bagged his PhD in systems of land registration at the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Geosciences at the Delft University in 2002. In 1990, Jaap started to move through the academic ranks at Delft University, becoming an associate professor in 2003 and then moving to the University of Twente as full professor (part-time in 2008 and full-time in 2010). He teaches courses such as Responsible Land Administration, Policy and Law in the Built Environment, and Land Governance. Vice-dean for education from 2015 until 2018; Head of Department PGM since 2015. Chairperson of the Board of Appeal for Exams of the University of Twente (since 2019). Supervised over 25 PhD students and acted as external examiner on 50+ at 20 different universities on land administration and geoinformation topics. Jaap's advisory services extended from land parcel-related components of the Dutch SDI (Spatial Data Infrastructure) to cadastral projects in Eastern Europe. Additionally, he contributed his expertise to land administration initiatives in Kosovo, Uganda, and Ethiopia. Recently, Jaap's focus has shifted towards more normative work with UN-Habitat. His efforts involve addressing land administration challenges with enumerations, post-disaster, post-conflict scenarios, and transparency. Moreover, he has been actively involved in reevaluating and reimagining land registration systems. His exceptional contributions in the field of land administration and geo-information continue to make a significant impact on research and practice. Jaap is a member of the Dutch Council for Real Estate Assessment (Waarderingskamer)

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