

International Journal of **Conflict Management** (IJCM)

**Socio-Economic Implications of Land Conflicts on the Livelihood of
Communities in Dodoma City, Tanzania**



CARI
Journals

Socio-Economic Implications of Land Conflicts on the Livelihood of Communities in Dodoma City, Tanzania

 ^{1*}Magdalena Mwaruanda Adwell, ²Dr. Laurent Kaburire

¹Post Graduate Student: Institute of Development Studies

St John's University of Tanzania

<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-7821-815X>

²Lecturer, Institute of Development Studies

St John's University of Tanzania



Accepted: 30th Sep, 2025, Received in Revised Form: 19th Oct, 2025, Published: 8th Nov, 2025

Abstract

Purpose: The study assessed land conflicts and their socio-economic implications on communities living in the Dodoma City Council, whereby Nzuguni Ward was selected as a case study.

Methodology: The study used a mixed method, which accommodated a case study research design. Structured questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data involving a total of 98 respondents randomly selected from the study area. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive analysis, while qualitative data were analysed using the content analysis method.

Findings: The study revealed that land conflicts have resulted in various socio-economic implications, such as loss of property, forced relocation, reduced income opportunities, and increased household poverty among the victims in the study area.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: There is a need for policy interventions to address the loss of property, forced relocations and increased poverty connected to land conflicts. Furthermore, the study recommends for strict anti-corruption measures, improved land tenure security, community empowerment, and policy reforms to mitigate land conflicts. Focusing on the Conflict Theory, the findings provide evidence that powerful actors persistently expropriate resources from vulnerable individuals, thereby intensifying the social and economic implications. Regarding the Institutional Theory, the findings demonstrate that institutions entrusted with the protection of property rights have only partially addressed land conflicts. By addressing these challenges, stakeholders can promote sustainable land management and socio-economic stability in peri-urban areas like Nzuguni.

Keywords: *Socio-economic, Implications of Land Conflicts, Livelihood of Communities*

1.1 Introduction

Land conflicts globally result in significant socio-economic challenges. Adam (2020) emphasizes that such disputes disproportionately affect marginalized groups, exacerbating poverty and overwhelming public services. In Cross River State, Nigeria, Olagbemi et al. (2022) observed that farmers experienced crop destruction, stream contamination, and land overgrazing due to land conflicts, further undermining livelihoods and food security. These global findings illustrate how land conflicts disrupt economic activities, displace vulnerable populations, and create long-term social instability. Rapid urbanisation across the globe has a diverse impact on development and economic disparity. Land shrinkage in urban areas inevitably leads to conflicts arising from competing demands for land use (Smith, 2020; UN-Habitat, 2022; Olagbemi et al., 2022).

Across Africa, socio-economic impacts of land conflicts manifest in disrupted livelihoods, diminished agricultural productivity, and weakened social cohesion. Okonkwo, et al. (2023) found that in Obudu LGA, Nigeria, majority of respondents identified land-use disputes as central to communal conflicts, severely affecting food security and agricultural land access. Similarly, Esteves et al. (2024) found that land disputes resulted in economic losses, displacement, and fatalities, exacerbating poverty in affected communities. Adelaja et al. (2020) observed similar patterns in Ogun State, where conflicts disrupted farming activities, reducing productivity and incomes. These findings emphasize that unresolved land disputes significantly undermine economic growth and exacerbate social inequality across the continent, with marginalized groups often bearing the worst of the impact. Dodoma, a growing urban area in Tanzania, has experienced conflicting land use issues ever since it was designated the capital city, but these have become more pronounced in the past fifteen years due to the government's decision to relocate the capital city.

However, the rationale behind these changes lies in the rapidly growing population and expanding economic activities, which are inextricably linked to land exploitation. The relocation of the Tanzanian Central Government from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma has placed increased pressure on land resources, triggering disputes over ownership and land use. With a population density of 27,097, Nzuguni ward faces significant challenges, such as unclear ownership rights, competing land uses, and limited public awareness (TCGR, 2022). These disputes have far-reaching socio-economic consequences, including displacement, reduced agricultural productivity, and environmental degradation (Mwamlangala, 2020).

In Tanzania, however, land conflicts persist despite various government initiatives to resolve them. In Dodoma, the country's administrative capital, these conflicts are particularly acute due to rapid urbanization and increased land demand. According to Urio (2016), the city's transformation has intensified disputes over land ownership, boundary demarcations, and illegal settlements. For example, informal settlements encroaching on public land have led to forced evictions and displacement, disproportionately affecting low-income households (URT, 2017;

Malima, 2021). Corruption and inefficiencies in the land allocation process have further compounded the issue, resulting in mistrust and a rise in illegal land transactions (World Bank, 2014). These conflicts undermine social cohesion and access to secure housing, creating barriers to equitable development. The National Land Policy of 1995 was introduced to address issues such as equitable land distribution, security of tenure, and improved land governance.

The impacts of land disputes in Dodoma are significant. Prolonged conflicts delay infrastructure development and urban planning initiatives, obstructing projects designed to accommodate the city's rapidly growing population. Additionally, economic insecurity has increased as residents, particularly those reliant on land for housing or small-scale businesses, face uncertainty and financial losses (URT, 2017). The persistence of these challenges underscores the need for effective land governance and fair dispute resolution mechanisms to support sustainable urban growth. Although studies have explored land conflicts in Tanzania, existing research studies focus on rural areas or specific regions such as Ngorongoro and Mvomero (Olengurumwa, 2019; Maksi, 2020). There is limited information on the socio-economic implications of land conflicts in urbanizing areas like Dodoma City, particularly in Nzuguni ward. This study seeks to address this knowledge gap by examining the socio-economic implications of land conflicts in the Nzuguni ward and proposing evidence-based strategies to mitigate them.

2.1 Statement of the problem

Land conflicts have long attracted scholarly attention, with research often centered on their causes, legal frameworks, and political dynamics. Notable studies by Shah (2017) and Urio (2016) have explored land tenure, governance challenges, and dispute resolution mechanisms in various rural and urban contexts. However, much of this literature emphasizes the legal and administrative dimensions of land conflicts while overlooking their broader socio-economic implications, particularly in urbanizing settings. For instance, Eliza (2015) assessed land conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in Tanzania, yet her work did not explore the socio-economic consequences within urban areas like Dodoma City. While land conflicts are well-documented, there are limited research findings on how these disputes affect the livelihoods, income stability, and social fabric of affected urban communities, especially in peri-urban environments undergoing rapid transformation.

The need to examine the socio-economic impacts of land conflicts in Dodoma is increasingly urgent, as urban expansion continues to intensify land competition and displacement. Scholars such as Nyakamwe (2021) and Benjaminsen et al. (2012) have emphasized how land disputes can deepen poverty, disrupt local economies, and lead to social exclusion, yet their work has largely focused on rural contexts or large-scale land acquisitions. The World Bank (2014) calls for integrated approaches that address not only land ownership but also how conflicts affect wealth distribution, economic opportunity, and social cohesion. Despite evidence linking land disputes to economic hardship and social fragmentation, there is limited empirical evidence on the direct socio-economic impacts of such conflicts in urban Tanzania. This study seeks to fill

that gap by exploring how land conflicts in Nzuguni Ward, Dodoma City, affect income, livelihoods, social stability, and community cohesion—offering insights essential for shaping inclusive and sustainable urban land governance.

3.1 Literature reviews

3.1.1 Theoretical review

This study integrates Conflict Theory and Institutional Theory to provide a comprehensive analysis of land conflicts in Nzuguni Ward. Conflict Theory, which is based on Karl Marx's 19th-century critique of social stratification, offers a valuable framework for examining the socio-economic aspects of land conflicts. It posits that society is fundamentally divided by inequalities in power, wealth, and access to resources, engendering conflict between dominant and marginalised groups. Marx emphasised how ruling classes maintain control over the means of production and resource distribution, systematically oppressing subordinate classes. In this study, the conflict theory was applied to capture the socio-economic implications of land conflicts on the living conditions of Nzuguni residents.

The institutional theory, developed by Douglass North in the early 1990s, explores how formal institutions (laws, policies, and regulations) and informal institutions (norms, traditions, and social practices) shape human behaviour, social interactions, and economic outcomes. Institutions serve as the 'rules of the game' that govern land ownership, use, and distribution, thereby influencing the dynamics of land conflicts. From this perspective, land disputes often emerge from institutional deficiencies, such as ambiguous land tenure systems, weak enforcement mechanisms, and inequitable governance structures, which can lead to socio-economic instability. In this study, the institutional theory was applied to document potential strategies used by Dodoma City Council to address land conflicts in the study site.

3.1.2 Causes of land conflicts

Despite studies having been conducted on the drivers of land conflict around the world, the existing documentation is insufficient to explain the situation in Tanzania, particularly in the peri-urban areas. In Tanzania, land conflicts have long been a critical issue, particularly in rural, urban, and peri-urban areas. Msuya (2009) highlights that in the Same District, farmers and pastoralists have clashed over land use since the 1970s, mainly due to competing demands for farming and grazing land. Farmers accuse pastoralists of allowing their cattle to graze on crops, while pastoralists claim that farmers destroy grasslands needed for their livestock. These conflicts have led to environmental degradation, including soil erosion, water pollution, and damaged infrastructure (Msuya, 2009). Mbonde (2015) identifies similar challenges in Mkoka and Songambele, where land disputes stem from land grabbing, demarcation disputes, and double leasing. These conflicts result in violence, loss of livelihoods, and reduced agricultural productivity, illustrating the broad socio-economic impact of land disputes across Tanzania.

Kironde (2019) highlights that in Dodoma, speculative land acquisitions due to the city's rapid expansion as Tanzania's administrative capital have displaced vulnerable populations, creating further tensions over land ownership and use. Speculative land grabbing, unregulated urban expansion, and governance weaknesses are key to disputes in Tanzania. Kironde (2019) notes that Dodoma's administrative transition has intensified land disputes by displacing vulnerable populations and creating tensions over ownership. Similarly, Mbonde (2015) highlights competing land-use demands in rural areas, where environmental degradation and unplanned development exacerbate community conflicts. This study was designed to identify various factors influencing land conflicts in Dodoma City.

3.1.3 Common Strategies Used to Mitigate Land Conflicts

Globally, several countries have implemented legal and policy frameworks to regulate land ownership and mitigate disputes. One of the most effective approaches is the formalization of land tenure through systematic land registration and cadastral mapping (Wit, 2021). Countries such as Rwanda and Thailand have successfully reduced land conflicts by implementing nationwide land titling programmes, which provide legal recognition of ownership and reduce uncertainties over land claims (Ali et al., 2019). Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms, including mediation and arbitration, have proven effective in resolving land-related disputes outside of lengthy and costly litigation processes (Ali et al., 2019).

For instance, in Colombia, land mediation programmes have helped de-escalate conflicts and provide fair solutions for displaced communities (World Bank, 2020). In Africa, land conflicts are often linked to weak governance, overlapping tenure systems, and historical grievances. Several African nations have adopted land tenure reforms to address these challenges. Similarly, Ghana's Customary Land Secretariat (CLS) initiative integrates traditional leaders into the formal land governance framework, ensuring that local communities have a voice in land administration while improving dispute resolution mechanisms (Boone, 2020). Despite these efforts, implementation challenges remain, particularly in cases where corruption and elite land grabs undermine reform initiatives (Akinwumi, 2020).

Participatory land conflict resolution, that is, encouraging public involvement in the planning of cities, was also pinpointed as a key approach for avoiding land disputes, with emphasis placed on ensuring that all voices are heard in the decision-making process. Watson (2021) emphasises that engaging residents in zoning and urban planning processes promotes transparency and mitigates grievances concerning land. However, the implementation of participatory planning has been inconsistent, with some communities successfully engaging in planning processes, while others have been excluded due to bureaucratic barriers. Strengthening mechanisms for community participation is therefore essential to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice, as this can reduce feelings of disenfranchisement and contribute to more sustainable urban development outcomes. Rweyemamu (2020) supports this observation, arguing that inclusive governance is key to effective land dispute resolution.

Studies in Uganda (Lwanga, 2018; Kansiime, 2019; Nakayiza, 2019; Ndangiza and Turyamuhweza, 2020; Wamala, 2020; Kairuki and Daaki, 2020) agree that community-based mediation is pivotal in effectively addressing land tenure disputes, focusing on locally owned approaches through the integration of traditional practices that encourage dialogue. Furthermore, the studies agree that mediation promotes understanding and fosters peaceful coexistence in rural environments, strengthening ties between communities while addressing historical grievances to enhance ownership and security of tenure. A study by Omondi and Ochieng (2022) found similar results concerning the resolution of land conflicts. The study found that, when resolving land conflicts, the government approached local customs and traditional leaders to facilitate the mediation process.

Mediation and arbitration have emerged as the most widely used strategies for resolving land disputes, with local leaders often playing a crucial role in facilitating negotiations before formal legal action is taken. This approach aligns with the views of Best (2022) in a study in Africa, who emphasises the importance of community-based dispute resolution mechanisms, particularly within the context of land governance in Africa. Local leaders, such as traditional elders, are often trusted by the community, making their involvement crucial in fostering amicable settlements. However, the absence of formal training for mediators can limit the fairness and consistency of these resolutions, suggesting that capacity-building programmes for local leaders could improve outcomes.

A study by Watson (2021) in Africa highlights the effectiveness of utilising established community structures to resolve conflicts. The author argues that it is important to ensure that mediators are adequately equipped to handle disputes impartially and consistently. In the case of legal and policy frameworks, these were considered important, but they face significant challenges in enforcement, primarily due to corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies.

In Tanzania, various strategies have been implemented to manage land disputes, but challenges persist due to rapid urbanization and competing land uses. The National Land Policy of 1995 sought to address land governance issues by promoting equitable access to land, security of tenure, and legal recognition of customary land rights (URT, 2017). Additionally, Tanzania has established land tribunals and decentralized land dispute settlement bodies to provide accessible conflict resolution mechanisms. However, studies indicate that these tribunals often suffer from inefficiencies, inadequate resources, and corruption, limiting their effectiveness (Mafuru, 2020). The government has also promoted participatory land-use planning in rural and peri-urban areas, aiming to involve local communities in decision-making processes to prevent land encroachments and disputes (Malima, 2021).

Furthermore, the integration of technological solutions, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and blockchain-based land registries, has been proposed as a way to enhance transparency and reduce fraudulent land transactions. Countries like Kenya and Ghana have begun experimenting with digital land records to improve accountability and minimize conflicts arising

from unclear land ownership (Tadesse, 2021). Tanzania could benefit from similar innovations to streamline its land administration system and improve tenure security in rapidly urbanizing areas like Dodoma.

3.1.4 Socio-Economic Implications of Land Conflicts

Land conflicts globally result in significant socio-economic challenges. Adam (2020) emphasizes that such disputes disproportionately affect marginalized groups, exacerbating poverty and overwhelming public services. In Cross River State, Nigeria, Olagbemiro et al. (2022) observed that farmers experienced crop destruction, stream contamination, and land overgrazing due to land conflicts, further undermining livelihoods and food security. These global findings illustrate how land conflicts disrupt economic activities, displace vulnerable populations, and create long-term social instability.

Across Africa, socio-economic impacts of land conflicts manifest in disrupted livelihoods, diminished agricultural productivity, and weakened social cohesion. Okonkwo, Uyang et al. (2023) found that in Nigeria, majority of respondents identified land-use disputes as central to communal conflicts, severely affecting food security and agricultural land access. Similarly, Esteves et al. (2024) found that land disputes resulted in economic losses, displacement, and fatalities, exacerbating poverty in affected communities. Adelaja et al. (2020) observed similar patterns in Ogun State, where conflicts disrupted farming activities, reducing productivity and incomes. These findings emphasize that unresolved land disputes significantly undermine economic growth and exacerbate social inequality across the continent, with marginalized groups often bearing the worst of the impact.

A review study by Schlimmer (2021) in Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Benin, and Morocco found that rapid urbanisation and population growth created pressure for land in peri-urban areas. The study found that the rapid population growth resulted in increased land values and growing speculative purchasing. The increased pressure on land resulted in the marginalisation of poor rural dwellers who sold their land to meet their immediate economic needs. Meanwhile, investors with significant resources gained from the increase in land values.

A study by Adam (2020) in Ethiopia, which focused on investigating conflicting interests in peri-urban areas, documented similar socioeconomic implications of land conflicts. While recognising the importance of land issues in peri-urban areas, particularly for informed decision-making and well-managed urbanisation, the study found that the exploration of land issues was largely politically driven. The findings also revealed that the stakeholders, including the state, the community, and the private sector, were the three key players with competing interests in peri-urban land, which had consequences for farmland and housing property within the area. The government expropriated land in favour of infrastructure development and revenue collection. However, a lack of clarity and overlap in land tenure and a lack of strong governance frameworks in urban areas have become the key reasons for land conflicts. Such conflicts result

in insecurity of tenure and hinder sustainable development due to undefined land subdivision, boundary conflicts, inheritance issues, and land use.

In Tanzania, the socio-economic implications of land conflicts are evident in rural and urban contexts. Kironde (2019) notes that land disputes disrupt livelihoods in Dodoma, reduce access to affordable housing, and weaken social cohesion. The city's rapid expansion has led to unplanned urban growth, exacerbating environmental degradation and straining public infrastructure. Mbonde (2015) found that rural land disputes in Mkoka and Songambe 2015 caused food insecurity, displacement, and income loss due to the destruction of crops and livestock. These conflicts also contribute to social tensions and hinder community development, particularly for vulnerable populations who lack secure land tenure or access to legal recourse. This underscores the widespread socio-economic toll of land conflicts in Tanzania and highlights the urgent need for equitable and effective land governance. In Nzuguni Ward, urban land conflicts have profound socio-economic implications, driven by rapid urbanization and speculative land acquisitions.

Similarly, a study by Kaganga (2023) in Tanzania focusing on land conflicts and livelihoods found a close relationship between the two. The study revealed that land disputes had a negative impact on livelihoods in peri-urban areas by destroying assets. Many residents lost land they previously owned, while others suffered disproportionately from its transformation into commercial land with assigned goods and services. However, a lack of knowledge and skills remains a key constraint to benefiting from the opportunities created by land use transformation in urban areas. The significant effect of land conflicts emanated from communities' failure to transition from nature-based to economy-based livelihoods, and the study therefore urged relevant urban authorities to address livelihoods inclusively and sustainably.

Preliminary reports indicate that land disputes have led to displacement, loss of livelihoods, and increased social tensions (Kironde, 2019). Vulnerable groups, including low-income households, face heightened risks of eviction and loss of access to land for agriculture or housing. Environmental issues, such as soil erosion and water contamination, further compound the socio-economic challenges, undermining food security and community well-being (Smith, 2020; UN-Habitat, 2022). These impacts align with broader national and continental trends, reflecting a systemic failure to address land governance and tenure security.

Guided by Conflict Theory, these disputes can be understood because of competing resource demands. At the same time, Institutional Theory highlights the role of weak governance in perpetuating inequities and unresolved conflicts. Addressing these challenges requires robust land policies, inclusive planning, and accessible dispute-resolution mechanisms to support sustainable urban development. This study aims to investigate the socio-economic implications of land conflicts on communities in Dodoma City.

4.1 Methodology

The study was conducted in the Nzuguni ward of Dodoma City in Tanzania. Nzuguni is a peri-urban area undergoing rapid urbanisation as a result of Dodoma being designated as Tanzania's administrative capital. This transition has intensified competition for land, leading to disputes over ownership, access to, and use of land. The study employed a case study research design to explore complex real-life phenomena. This design enabled an in-depth examination of the causes of land conflicts and strategies for addressing them in Nzuguni ward. The study population comprised all households directly or indirectly involved in, or affected by, land conflicts in Nzuguni ward. It also involved ward executive officers, street chairpersons, members of land tribunals, and community development officers based on their role in, or stake in, land conflicts. Data were collected from 98 randomly selected households using a semi-structured questionnaire, while in-depth information was gathered from the ward executive officer, four street chairpersons, four members of land tribunals, and one community development officer. The interview guides varied slightly based on their respective roles in resolving land conflicts. Descriptive analysis was used to analyse quantitative data gathered through questionnaires, while qualitative data gathered from key informants and documentary reviews were analysed using the thematic analysis method.

4.1.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Regarding the demographic profile of 98 respondents involved in this study, findings indicated that, in terms of gender, about 53.1% of the respondents were male, while 46.9% were female, demonstrating a fairly balanced distribution. In terms of age, about 32.7% of respondents fell in the 26-35 years old age bracket, followed by 25.5% in the 36-45 years old. The younger participants aged between 18 and 25 years old made up 18.4%, while 15.3% were aged between 46-55 years old, and the remaining 8.1% were 56 years of age or older, reflecting strong involvement from both youth and adult populations.

Educationally, about 30.6% of respondents attained primary education, while 28.6% possessed secondary school education, followed by 18.4% who hold diplomas or higher qualifications, and 12.2% who had no formal education. Besides, the remaining 10.2% of respondents completed vocational or technical training, suggesting a relatively high literacy rate among the respondents involved. Occupation-wise, data revealed that about 35.7% identified themselves as farmers, while 20.4% identified themselves as informal sector workers, followed by 18.4% who are civil servants, and about 13.3% were unemployed. Only 12.2% were private sector employees.

Finally, regarding land ownership, the majority, accounting for 30.6% of respondents, owned land with a formal title deed, while 25.5% owned land without a title deed, and 18.4% rented land. Additionally, estimated 12.2% were landless, and 8.2% utilized family-owned land. This distribution highlights disparities in land ownership among the respondents.

These findings imply that, firstly, with the majority of respondents aged between 26–45 years, Nzuguni Ward's community consists of a productive and economically active population, suggesting rising land demand that could potentially increase competition and potential conflicts if not properly managed. Secondly, most of the respondents involved have at least primary or secondary education, which suggests that awareness campaigns and land policy sensitization can be effectively communicated. Thirdly, most respondents in Nzuguni identified themselves as farmers (35.7%) or informal sector workers (20.4%), which demonstrates strong dependence on land for livelihoods. This underlines the need for secure land tenure systems and sustainable land-use practices to decrease vulnerability and conflicts.

Finally, the variation in land ownership, ranging from those who hold land titles (30.6%) to landless individuals (12.2%), highlights the existing disparities in access and tenure security. These differences may contribute to increasing land conflicts and alienation of certain groups from land-based economic opportunities. Overall, the findings suggest that land governance interventions in Nzuguni Ward should emphasize youth and women inclusion, tenure regularisation, livelihood diversification, and awareness programs for the residents of the area to promote equitable and sustainable land management.

4.1.2 Socio-economic implications of land conflicts on communities in Nzuguni ward

This study was designed to examine the socio-economic implications of land conflicts on communities living in Nzuguni ward. Through this study, four different socio-economic implications resulting from land conflicts in Nzuguni Ward were identified. Table 1 represents the figures on the prevalence and magnitude of socio-economic implications of land conflicts in Nzuguni ward.

Table 1: Socioeconomic Implications of Land Conflicts on Communities in Nzuguni Ward

Implication	Frequency (n=98)	Percentage (%)
Loss of property	66	67.35
Forced relocation	50	51.55
Decline in income opportunities	64	65.31
Increased household poverty	67	68.37

Source: Field Data

The findings revealed that the socioeconomic implications of land conflict are increased household poverty, which scored 68.37% of total respondents, the loss of properties, which scored 67.35% followed by the decline in household income opportunities, which scored 65.31% and forced relocation of citizens, which scored 51.55%. These findings indicate that land conflicts have caused various socio-economic implications on the living conditions of communities living in Nzuguni ward.

The findings from this study concur with those from other scholars who carried out similar studies. Reported implications of land conflicts include loss of property, forced relocation, reduced income opportunities, and increased household poverty. However, these socio-economic implications disproportionately affect the well-being of marginalised members of society in varying ways. For instance, a study by Kombe (2019) found that the most severe consequence of land conflicts was the loss of property. Many individuals reported demolitions and illegal seizures, as evidenced by testimonies from affected communities in Dar es Salaam.

This finding is consistent with the results of wider studies on land disputes in urban Tanzania, where forced evictions often take place without due process or fair compensation (Shayo, 2021). As reported by displaced individuals, the loss of property goes beyond physical displacement, creating a deep psychological toll and a loss of trust in government institutions, as noted in a 2020 Human Rights Watch report. Families that have been displaced feel abandoned by the systems meant to protect them, exacerbating feelings of vulnerability and injustice (Mbunda, 2018). The emotional trauma associated with losing one's home is often compounded by the lack of legal recourse, leaving victims with no means of redress (URT, 2022).

Furthermore, the economic instability caused by such displacements pushes affected families into poverty, as they lose not only their homes but also their livelihoods (Shao, 2020). This cycle of displacement and impoverishment underscores the urgent need for policy reforms to protect vulnerable populations (Kombe, 2019). Without intervention, the long-term social and economic impacts of these conflicts will continue to destabilize communities. The psychological toll of land conflicts is further exacerbated by the lack of transparency in land allocation processes, which often favours wealthy elites over low-income residents (Kironde, 2020).

Studies have shown that the emotional distress caused by forced evictions can lead to long-term mental health issues, including anxiety and depression (WHO, 2021). Many displaced individuals report feeling a profound sense of betrayal, as they perceive the government as complicit in their suffering (Shayo, 2021). The erosion of trust in public institutions undermines social cohesion and hampers efforts to resolve land disputes amicably (URT, 2022). Additionally, the illegal seizure of land disproportionately affects women and marginalized groups, who often lack the legal knowledge or resources to challenge such actions (Mbunda, 2018). This systemic injustice perpetuates inequality and reinforces existing power imbalances in society (Kombe, 2019).

Addressing these issues requires not only legal reforms but also community-based initiatives to empower affected individuals (Shao, 2020). Without such measures, the cycle of displacement and disenfranchisement will persist, further entrenching poverty and social unrest. For the case of forced relocation, a key informant interviewed in Nzuguni ward reported that the socio-economic impacts of land conflicts are far-reaching, with many families losing their livelihoods due to forced relocations.

During data collection, one of the key informants provided the opinion that, "Families who have been displaced often face difficulties in rebuilding their lives. It becomes especially hard for those who have lost their farmland, as they now struggle to find new income sources." (Key informant, Nzuguni Ward, May 2025). Another key informant argued that, "The financial strain on households is immense when people are forced off land that was once their primary means of survival. The loss of property and increased poverty were consistent themes in the responses". (Key informant, Nzuguni Ward, May 2025). These findings emphasize the severe and multifaceted impacts of land conflicts, which affect not only the economic well-being of individuals but also their mental and social stability. Forced relocation is another significant impact of land conflicts, compounding the difficulties faced by displaced families, as reported by relevant studies. According to UN-Habitat (2022), involuntary displacement often results in families being forced into informal settlements where living conditions are poor and access to essential services is limited. The lack of proper resettlement plans leads to long-term instability and marginalization, as displaced communities struggle to rebuild their lives without adequate support (Amnesty International, 2021).

Research by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2023) shows that forced relocations disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, including women, children, and the elderly, who face heightened risks of exploitation and violence. Additionally, the World Bank (2022) highlights that displaced families often lose their livelihoods, as relocation severs ties to agricultural land or urban employment opportunities. The psychological toll of forced displacement is also severe, with studies linking it to increased rates of depression and anxiety (Psychologists for Social Responsibility, 2021).

Furthermore, the Brookings Institution (2023) notes that inadequate compensation for lost property exacerbates poverty cycles, leaving families without the resources to recover. This systemic neglect perpetuates social inequality and undermines human rights, as documented by Human Rights Watch (2022). The consequences of forced relocation extend beyond immediate displacement, creating ripple effects that destabilize entire communities.

About 68.37% of total respondents confirmed that land conflicts reported in Nzuguni wards have resulted in increased household poverty. A study by Deininger (2020) highlights that when families are forcibly evicted from their land, they often lose access to farming, rental income, and small businesses, which are critical for their survival. Without these livelihood options, many households struggle to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and education, further entrenching them in poverty (FAO, 2019). The absence of compensation or alternative land allocations exacerbates their plight, leaving them with no means to rebuild their lives (World Bank, 2021).

Additionally, displaced families often face discrimination in labour markets, limiting their employment opportunities and perpetuating economic instability (ILO, 2020). The psychological toll of displacement further hinders their ability to seek new income-generating activities,

creating a vicious cycle of deprivation (UNHCR, 2019). Children in these households are particularly vulnerable, as poverty often forces them to drop out of school and engage in child labour (UNICEF, 2020).

Studies have shown that without legal recognition of their land rights, these families remain vulnerable to further displacement and exploitation (USAID, 2021). Women and children are particularly affected, as they often bear the brunt of economic instability and reduced access to resources (UN Women, 2020). The loss of communal land also disrupts social networks that traditionally provided mutual aid, leaving families isolated and unsupported (IFAD, 2019). In urban areas, displaced families frequently end up in informal settlements with poor living conditions and limited access to services, further deepening their poverty (UN-Habitat, 2021). The long-term economic impacts of land conflicts can span generations, as children inherit the disadvantages faced by their parents (OECD, 2020).

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive policies that include land restitution, financial support, and social protection programs to break the cycle of poverty (World Bank, 2021). In terms of decline in income opportunities, resulting from land conflicts disproportionately affects farmers and small traders, who often rely on land as their primary economic resource. When disputes arise, many lose access to their farmland or trading spaces, leading to a sudden drop in productivity and income (Collier, 2021). In peri-urban areas, where agricultural land is increasingly contested, farmers face reduced yields or complete displacement, leaving them with few viable alternatives (Deininger, 2020).

The transition from farming to wage labour, often in informal sectors, typically results in lower and irregular earnings, exacerbating financial insecurity (World Bank, 2019). Small traders, who depend on local markets, also suffer when land conflicts disrupt supply chains or displace communities (FAO, 2022). Women, who constitute a significant portion of small-scale farmers and traders, are particularly vulnerable, as they often lack access to alternative livelihoods (UN Women, 2021). The cumulative effect is a deepening cycle of poverty, with households struggling to meet basic needs (Oxfam, 2020).

Without intervention, these economic setbacks can persist for generations, perpetuating inequality (IFAD, 2023). Land conflicts also disrupt local economies by reducing investment and stifling entrepreneurial activities, further limiting income opportunities. Investors often avoid areas with unresolved land disputes due to perceived risks, leading to fewer job opportunities and stagnant economic growth (Collier, 2021). Small businesses, which rely on stable land tenure, face closures or relocations, resulting in lost income for owners and employees (De Soto, 2020). In rural communities, the loss of farmland forces many to migrate to urban centers, where competition for low-skilled jobs drives wages down (ILO, 2022).

Additionally, youth who might have inherited family farms are particularly affected, as they are pushed into precarious employment with little upward mobility (UNDP, 2021). Additionally, the erosion of social cohesion due to land conflicts weakens community-based support systems,

leaving affected individuals with fewer safety nets (OECD, 2020). Government programs aimed at livelihood restoration often fail to reach the most vulnerable, further marginalizing already disadvantaged groups (World Bank, 2023). Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive policies that secure land rights and promote inclusive economic recovery (FAO, 2023).

5.1 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1.1 Conclusion

Land conflicts had profound and far-reaching socio-economic consequences, severely disrupting the lives and livelihoods of Nzuguni residents. A primary impact observed in the study area is the widespread loss of property, as families were forcibly evicted without adequate compensation, leading to homelessness and informal settlements lacking basic amenities like clean water, sanitation, and healthcare. Farmers are suffering devastating economic setbacks from the destruction of crops and livestock, while informal sector workers experience the dismantling of their businesses, pushing many into unstable, low-income wage labour. These conflicts persistently cause cycles of poverty and widen inequality, disproportionately impacting women and marginalised groups with fewer recovery resources. Furthermore, children's education was often interrupted due to displacement and unaffordable fees. Beyond material loss, land conflicts have eroded social cohesion, sparking violent confrontations that fracture communities and families, hindering collective recovery. Forced displacement has disrupted local markets and supply chains, reducing access to essential goods and inflating prices. Mismatched skills in new environments have affected their employment, and the psychological toll exacerbated stress and mental health issues. As a consequence, Government resources are diverted from development to conflict management, stifling regional economic growth. Ultimately, land conflicts have weakened the socio-economic fabric of entire regions, diminishing the community's confidence to venture into long-term investments and limiting development opportunities, leaving long-lasting scars on communities and economies.

5.1.2 Recommendations

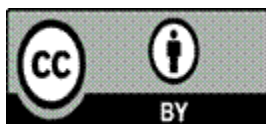
To mitigate the prevailing socio-economic impacts of land conflicts in Dodoma City, the Government and relevant authorities are urged to establish a transparent, accessible, and fair land governance system. Furthermore, they should strengthen the existing legal frameworks for protecting land rights, ensure effective and adequate compensation for displaced victims, and prevent forced evictions. Investing in a conflict resolution system is of paramount importance. Key strategies would include promoting community mediation and legal aid services to restore social cohesion. Support services such as livelihood restoration, psychological and continued access to education by children of evicted families should be integrated in land conflict resolution programmes to minimize the impact of land conflicts on the lives of victims.

References

- Adelaja, A., George, J., Jayne, T., Muyanga, M., Awokuse, T., Aromolaran, A., & Liverpool-Tasie, L. S. O. (2020). How Conflicts Affect Land Expansion by Smallholder Farmers: Evidence from Nigeria. APRA Working Paper, 47.
- African Union. (2023). *Gendered burdens of displacement: Women's challenges in post-relocation contexts* (Report No. AU/PDD/2023/04).
- Collier, P. (2021). *Land disputes and economic shocks* (Policy Brief No. 2021/03). International Growth Centre.
- De Soto, H. (2020). *The economic costs of insecure land tenure* (ILM Report No. 2020-1). Institute for Liberty and Democracy.
- Deininger, K. (2003). *Land policies for growth and poverty reduction*. World Bank Publications.
- Eliza, M. (2015). *Assessing the impact of land conflict between farmers and pastoralists in Tanzania: A case of Ulanga District, Tanzania* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Esteves, A. M., Gouley, C., Konstantinidis, A. M., & Carroll, B. (2024). Livelihoods and social impact assessment. In *Handbook of Social Impact Assessment and Management* (pp. 377-400). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- European Commission. (2022). *Education in displacement: Barriers and solutions for displaced children* (Report No. EC-2022 EDU). https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources/displaced-children-education_en
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). (2007). *Land tenure and rural development*.
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2023). *Global report on internal displacement 2023: Disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations*. <https://www.internaldisplacement.org/global-report/grid2023>
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. (2023). *Urban informality and health risks: Infrastructure gaps in informal settlements* (Report No. IFRC-2023-URB). <https://www.ifrc.org/report/urban-informality-health-risks-2023>
- Kironde, J. M. L. (2019). *Land conflicts in Tanzania: Causes, impacts, and policy responses*. Mkuki na Nyota Publishers.
- Kombe, W. J. (2015). *Urban land conflicts in Tanzania: The case of Dar es Salaam*. UN-Habitat.
- Malima, A. (2021). *Land governance and conflict resolution in Tanzania*. University of Dar es Salaam Press.

- Mbonde, F. J. (2015). *Assessment of land–use conflict in Tanzania: A case study of Songambe and Mkoka villages in Kongwa district, Dodoma* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Mbunda, R. (2018). *Psychological and legal impacts of forced displacement in Tanzania* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam].
- Mwamlangala, H. (2020). Land tenure and conflict in Tanzania: A historical perspective. *African Review*, 47(1), 89–104.
- North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, institutional change, and economic performance*. Cambridge University Press.
- Norwegian Refugee Council. (2023). *Barriers to justice: Legal obstacles for displaced families reclaiming land* (Report No. NRC-2023-LAND). <https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/barriers-to-justice-2023/>
- Nyakamwe, A. W. (2021). *Implications of Urban Land Markets On Emerging City form of Dodoma National Capital City* (Doctoral dissertation, Ardhi University).
- Okonkwo, E. R., Chris, U. C., & Udegbuma, I. P. (2023). Evaluating the socio-economic implications of inter-communal conflicts between farmers and herders on food security in Nigeria. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 12(1), 111-114.
- Olagbemiro, M. F., Ojedian, J. T., Oladipupo, O. K., & Ezekiel, A. A. (2022). Farmers-Herdsman conflicts: Effect of Resilience Strategy on Arable crop Productivity in the Ogbomoso Agricultural Zone of Oyo State.
- Oxfam International. (2022). *Breaking the cycle: Policy solutions to address forced displacement and poverty* (Briefing Paper No. 2022/05). <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/breaking-cycle>
- Shao, I. (2020). *From eviction to destitution: Tracing livelihood losses in urban Tanzania* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Town].
- Shayo, R. (2021). Forced evictions and procedural injustice: A study of urban displacement in Tanzania. *Habitat International*, 112, 102361. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2021.102361>
- Smith, L., & Jones, P. (2018). *Land conflicts and socio-economic development: A global perspective*. Routledge.
- Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics (TCGR). (2022). *The 2022 population and housing census: Administrative units population distribution report; Tanzania, December 2022*.
- UN Women. (2020). *The gendered impacts of economic instability on displaced women and children* (Report No. UNW/2020/ED/001). [https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/\[year\]/\[exact-title\]](https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/[year]/[exact-title])

- UN-Habitat. (2022). *Global trends in land conflicts and urbanization*. United Nations Human Settlements Programme.
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2020). *The impact of displacement on child labor and education* (Report No. UNICEF/2020/EDU/001).
[https://www.unicef.org/reports/\[exact-url\]](https://www.unicef.org/reports/[exact-url])
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2008). *Post conflict land administration and peacebuilding: A case of Rwanda*. UNDP.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Managing relocation risks: Preventing secondary conflicts between displaced and host communities* (Report No. UNDP-2022-CPR). <https://www.undp.org/publications/managing-relocation-risks>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2019). *Mental health and livelihoods in displacement: Breaking the cycle of deprivation* (Report No. UNHCR/2019/PH/001).
- United Republic of Tanzania (URT). (2017). *National land policy of Tanzania*.
- Urio, P. (2016). Land conflicts in Tanzania: The case of Dodoma. *African Studies Quarterly*, 16(3), 45–60.
- World Bank. (2010). *World development report 2010: Development and climate change*. The World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-7987-5>
- World Bank. (2014). *Tanzania land governance assessment framework*. World Bank Group.
- World Bank. (2021). *Institutional reforms for equitable land governance* (Report No. 123456). World Bank Group. <https://doi.org/10.1596/XXXXX>



©2025 by the Authors. This Article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)