

ASSESSMENT OF CRIME AND OFFENCES ASSOCIATED WITH LAND ADMINISTRATION: THE CASE OF OGUN STATE, SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

In Nigeria, land has become a sensitive matter that threatens the security of the nation. People have acquired land illicitly by forgery, forced eviction, land grabbing, among others criminalities perpetrated by individuals, groups of individuals, cooperate organizations, and public agencies. This study examines patterns of land associated crimes in Obafemi-Owode Local Government Area of Ogun state, Nigeria. Data was collected from 334 respondents in the study area using simple random sampling and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and likert scale rating. Findings show that all the land associated crimes were above average in the study area with land fraud and exploitation (CRI = 3.25/5.00) as the most common: majority of respondents (38%) had been victims of this particular crime. The major cause of land associated offences was land grabbing (20%) while the key perpetrators were “omo-onile” (25%), land cartels (18%), and self-centered community, elites and political leaders (18%). Among others, findings indicate loss of livelihoods, and increased poverty and hunger (SRI = 3.63/5.00) as the most significant consequence of these offences. The study concluded that land associated crimes have become a widespread occurrence in the study area with far-reaching socio-economic, environmental and political significance. Policy and future research implications are discussed.

Keywords: Land governance; Land associated offences; Ogun State, Nigeria

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Introduction

Land is a key factor for economic growth and development of any state. It is the foundation for basic human need: food, cloth and shelter. Besides, it is the source of revenue and indisputable source of employment, fortune, prosperity and wealth. It is generally indestructible, inexhaustible yet inelastic (Ukaejiofo, 2010). It constitutes the foundation of the societies, cities and all economic, social, cultural, physical and political activities. Land has historical, cultural, social and spiritual significance to the communities and to individual holders, particularly in Africa. Land is a fundamental production factor and essential for the provision of housing, infrastructural and production of agricultural goods. This perhaps explains why regulations, policies, laws, conventions, and even beliefs held in respect of land keep on emerging from time to time (Ozigbo, 2012).

Over the years, land has remained the principal matter in the governance of any nation (Agheyisi, 2020). Globally, many of today's challenges like human insecurity, climate change, deforestation, rapid urbanization, increased demand for natural resources, food, water and energy insecurity, natural disasters, climate change and violent conflicts have a clear land dimension (Palmer, 2014). This is clearly stated in the words of Deininger and Enemark that, "...the key challenges of the new millennium have been clearly articulated. They relate to climate change, food shortage, energy scarcity, urban growth, environmental degradation, and natural disasters. All these issues relate to governance and management of land..." (Deininger, & Enemark, 2010: 1). It is therefore evident that the place of land in modern day governance cannot be overemphasized as it touches the very fundamental fabric of every society. Besides, land is an enabler in the Nigeria government development plan which includes poverty reduction, access to affordable and decent housing, basic and universal health care as well as food security, production and manufacturing (Aluko, 2002).

As a source of wealth and platform for all human activities, land administration is very complex, demanding cautious handling in order to avoid socio-political violent conflicts (Stanfield, *et al.*, 2008). In fact, land is a very sensitive issue in Nigeria because it is a vital factor in many areas of micro- and macro-economic development as well as agricultural production. The land question has repeatedly become a delicate subject in the country that sometimes appears to threaten the security of the nation. For instance, the farmers-herders conflict which has killed thousands of people and displaced many households is land based. As at 2018, the farmers-herders' crisis is already six times deadlier than Boko Haram's insurgency. In Nigeria, people largely perceive land as affluence. Hence, the ceaseless and aggressive competition for land and its resources. Many individual, land dealers, groups of individual and real estate firms have acquired landed properties illegally through various criminal doings, including threats, forgery of title deeds, land grabbing, boundary alteration

and illicit acquisition of land resources meant for public goods and interest. In addition, the management of land suffers from questions of corruption, and transparency.

While many studies in Nigeria and abroad have assessed different aspects of property crime and offences like burglary, house break-ins, arson, vandalism and shoplifting/shop break-ins among others (e.g. Han, *et al.*, 2013; Badiora, *et al.*, 2017; Borg, & Svensson, 2022; Mwangi, *et al.*, 2022), researchers rarely examine crime and offences associated with land management and administration, especially, as it relates to purchase, acquisition, ownership transfer, sales and re-sales as well as mortgage of landed properties. Whereas, land associated crime and offences abound everywhere, and particularly, in Nigeria. They have become a prevalent occurrence with far-reaching socio-economic and political complications within kinsfolks, communities, towns, cities and the country at large.

Sales of land, for instance, have led to several hostilities and court cases because the landowners sold the same parcel of land to different individuals simultaneously; conceal from the purchaser instrument material to the title, or any encumbrance; falsified pedigree on which the title depends; and make false statement as to the title offered. Besides, issues have risen when families/individual claim the same portion of land already sold, mortgaged or transferred as having been allotted to them by the head of family and/or community. Also, the country has witnessed several family and inter-communal violent land crises because of boundary issues. There are Iperu-Remoland, and Ogere intercommunal crisis in Ogun State, Tiv and Jukun clashes in Taraba and Benue states, Ife and Modakeke intercommunal conflict in Osun State, Ebom and Usumutong communities violent conflict in Cross River State and the border communities between Benue and Ebonyi States which always pitch the Agila against Ngbo people over disputed lands. Although many of these fights happen periodically, they are usually deadly in most cases, and also lead to homicides, destruction of properties and displacement of people.

No doubt, crime and offences associated with land administration have impacted the country negatively (Ugonabo, *et al.*, 2019). With a population of more than 200 million people and significant reserves of natural resources, Nigeria has the potential to build prosperous economy and well-functioning and highly integrated town and cities. That is, city systems characterized by strong formal and informal relationships among its component parts. However, these violent crimes and conflicts in the land administration represent significant constraints on the country's ability to realize its full socio-economic potential in Africa and the World at large. These offences have contributed to various degrees of injuries, loss of lives and properties as well as economic fortune. In some cases, they have caused politically induced violet conflicts, stalled the implementation of critical development projects and activities crucial to the socio-economic prosperity of Nigeria. Hence, crime and offences associated with land administration are serious threats to the realization of Nigeria's vision 2030 (to move not less than 100 million Nigerians out of

poverty by year 2030) and the current government dream of growing the national economy, fighting the daunting challenge of hunger and poverty, improving access to quality education, healthcare, national security and the fight against corruption.

Using Mowe and Ibafo towns in Obafemi-Owode Local Government Area (LGA) of Ogun state as a case study, this study explores the dynamics of the problem of crime and offences associated with land administration which have continued over time in this area. This study area was purposely selected due to the large volume of construction projects and development activities ongoing in there. Accordingly, this study provides answers to the following questions: What are the forms of crime and offences associated with land administration in the study area? To what extent are these offences and crime victimization? What are the causes and who are the perpetrators? What are the consequences of these land associated crime and offences? In a novel approach, this study will provide insights into land associated crime victimization experiences and patterns among households in the study area with a view to providing information regarding some of the challenges in the study area. Besides providing an outlook of Nigeria regarding crimes associated with land administration in the international debate, this study is also helpful in contributing to the literature on a rarely considered research area in property crime and offences, particularly, in the sub-Saharan Africa. This study is expected to inform reform programmes on global land administration generally, and particularly in Nigeria.

Contextual settings

In this section, contextual information of the study area, salient issues on land use rights, privileges and background to land associated crime practices in Nigeria, and that of the study area are discussed.

Background to Land associated Crime in Nigeria

Nigeria is a country in West Africa at the Gulf of Guinea. It shares land borders with the Republic of Benin to the west, Chad and Cameroon to the east, and Niger to the north. Its coast lies on the Gulf of Guinea in the south and it borders Lake Chad to the north-east (*see figure 1*). The country has a total land area of 923,770 km² (356,669 mi²) and a total coastline of 853 km (530.0 mi). Nigeria is the 14th largest countries in Africa and the 32nd biggest nation in the world. Nevertheless, the country is the biggest country in Africa in terms of population. Nigeria is a federation of thirty-six (36) states with governors as the states executive heads, one Federal Capital Territory (FCT) located in Abuja, and 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in total.

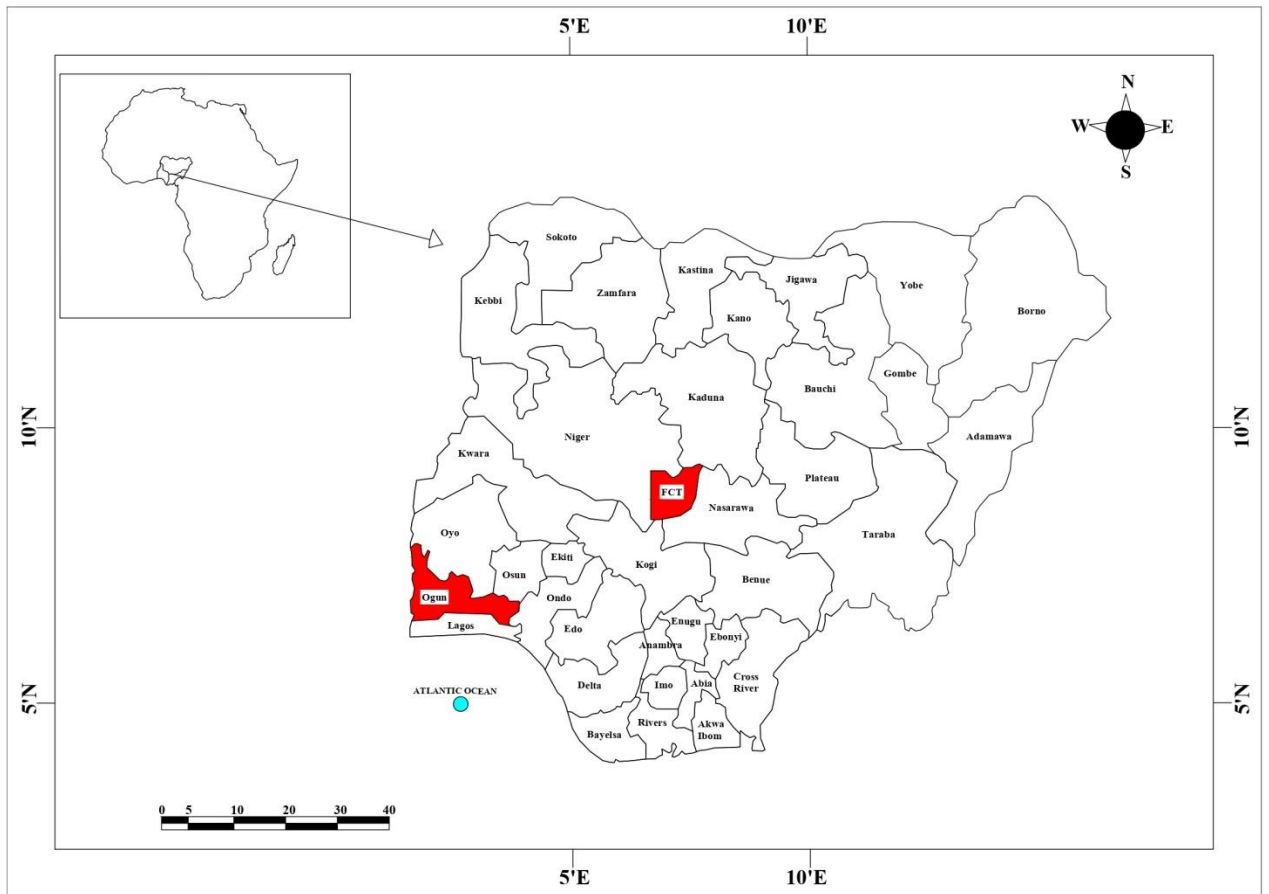


Figure 1: Map of Africa indicating Nigeria, thirty-six states and the FCT.

There are various laws governing land use in Nigeria. However, at present, land matters and issues in Nigeria are essentially overseen by the Land Use Act. It is the principal law regulating all land dealings in the country, and also specifies the procedure and details of dealing on land in both urban and rural areas of the country. The act was enacted in 1978 with the aim of energizing economic development by ensuring effective and equitable utilization of land and land resources in the country. In a bid to retain the law in the statute books, the Obasanjo-led Supreme Military Council (SMC) made the Land Use Decree an integral part of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Since then, subsequent constitutions particularly, the current 1999 Constitutions have the law duly recognized.

The Land Use Act bestows all land in the territory of each state of the federation (except land vested in the Federal Government or its agencies) in the governor of that state and requires that such land shall be held in trust and administered and managed for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians in accordance with the provisions of the Land Use Act. In accordance with its provisions, section 2(1) provides that all land in the urban areas and

cities shall be under the administration and management of the state governor, while the local governments assume the responsibility over land in rural areas.

Section 5(1) of the Act permits the governor to grant statutory right of occupancy to any person, groups of individuals or corporate organizations or government agencies for all purposes in respect of land, whether in urban or rural areas and issue a Certificate of Occupancy (C-of-O) in proof of such right in accordance with the provisions of section 9(1). In section 6, a parallel power is granted to the local government to grant customary right of occupancy over land in rural areas within its jurisdiction to any person, groups of individuals or corporate organizations or government agencies for agricultural, residential and other purposes. According to the Land Use Act (section 51), statutory right of occupancy is a right granted by the governor under for a maximum holding period of 99 years. This is subject to the payment of ground rent fixed by the governor throughout the holding period while customary right of occupancy is the right of a person/community to lawfully use or occupy land in accordance with customary law and includes a customary right of occupancy granted by a local government under the Land Use Act.

Furthermore, Sections 21 and 22 of the Land Use Act prohibits alienation by assignment, mortgage, transfer of possession, sublease or otherwise howsoever of customary or statutory rights of occupancy in Nigeria without the consent of the Governor where such right of occupancy was granted or the approval of the appropriate local government. Section 28(1) empowers the governor to revoke any right of occupancy for overriding public interest subject to the payment of compensation for the unexhausted improvements based on the provisions of section 29(4) of the Act. Section 45 permits the governor to delegate any of the powers conferred on him by the Land Use Act to the state commissioner in charge of Land and Physical Planning who shall act on his behalf. In this regard, whatsoever the commissioner does is assumed to be done by the governor.

It is important to note that before the enactment of the Act, control over some land was subject to customary law and vested in families, clans, villages and communities in Southern Nigeria. Under the traditional or customary agrarian land tenure system, individuals did not have complete control over the land and the sale of land was hardly possible. Individual occupants of land were identified by the right they hold rather than by actual possession of land. In Northern Nigeria, the ownership and control of land was vested in the state government under the Land Tenure Law of 1962. Nevertheless, the systems of agricultural organization and production were similar to the structure prevailing in the southern Nigeria. But the Act was to abolish all these as it vested all lands in a state in the governor and in the hands of a few people who are well connected with government, while depriving the small-scale farmers of land; causing delays in securing Certificate of Occupancy from government.

Therefore, the practice in certain quarters was for the land owning families or traditional rulers to either lease the same under a tenancy system while still maintaining, and exercising control over the tenant's land or alienate the same out rightly. While the Act is an integral part of the constitution, at that time, some land owners were holding the government to ransom by refusing to give up their land. Thus, while the Act was intended to amend this traditional land tenure structure, in actuality practice, it created a dual structure of land administration: the customary systems and state structures. Hence, the creation of double purchase and/or sales from the customary owners, land/estate companies and even the state. This situation has deleteriously impact on securing access to land in different parts of Nigeria. The Act is seen as one of the biggest obstacles to converting land into individual wealth as it hinders transferability of ownership rights in landed property without state interfering. Over time, buyers, and developers have had to part with some form of payment to the previous land owning families in order to develop/construct on land. It is a common practice for land buyers, and developers to first settle various criminal groups, including among others, land grabbers, "omo-onile", and crooks in the area before any work can commence on the land. The unpleasant activities of these criminals which also include forcefully disinheritng lawful land owners of their landed properties and in some instances selling a particular parcel of land to several persons has become a common feature in the procurement of land in many Nigerian states (Ugonabo, *et al.*, 2019).

The Ogun state case

Fondly called "*the Gateway State*", Ogun is one of the 36 states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The state was carved out of the old Western Region of Nigeria and named after the Ogun River on the 3rd of February, 1976. It has a total land area of 16981.26 square kilometers. Lying between Latitude 6.2°N and 7.8°N and Longitude 3.0° E and 5.0°E, the state is bordered to the East by Ondo state, in the North by Oyo and Osun states and in the South by Lagos state and the Atlantic Ocean and in the West by the Republic of Benin (*sees Figure 2*). For the purpose of physical development and planning as well as other land administrative matters, Ogun state is structured into twenty LGAs.

The 2006 Census puts the population of Ogun state at 3.95 million making it the 16th most populated state in Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2007). With a growth rate of 3%, the population estimates of Ogun State in 2011 was 5.86 million (Omole, & Isiorho, 2011) while the population was projected at 6.275 million in 2016 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). In terms of landmass, Ogun is the 24th largest state in Nigeria (Omole, & Isiorho, 2011). Because of the shared boundary with the Lagos- the nation's commercial capital, physical and industrial developments as well as rapid population growth have extended to towns in Ogun state such as Akute, Alagbole, Agbado, Olowora, Ibafo, Mowe, Arepo, Banku, Magboro, among other border towns between Lagos and Ogun states. The state is now notable for having a high concentration of industrial estates and gradually becoming a major manufacturing hub in Nigeria. Besides, it provides accommodation for many

working population of Lagos state, who could not afford accommodation cost in the metropolitan Lagos. Consequently, rapid population growth and demand for housing and developments pose increasing demand on the state landmass.

Being the principal legislation regulating all land transactions in Nigeria, Ogun state is largely governed by the Land Use Act. Further to this however, the state has enacted various laws to regulate the acquisition and disposal of land within the state, including the Prohibition of Forcible Occupation of Landed Properties and Related Offences Law 2016. The most recent being the Administration of Physical Planning and Urban Development, Slum Regeneration and Building Production Management Law, 2022. Nevertheless, the unwholesome activities of criminals who acquire land through illicit and illegal means have remained unchecked over time in most urban centers in Ogun state. These illicit activities have contributed to various degrees of injuries, and loss of properties. Besides, this trouble has sent many innocent people to early grave. Furthermore, they have stalled the implementation of critical development projects crucial for the socio-economic prosperity in the Gate way state. Furthermore, these have resulted in loss of confidence by real estate investors, and made some land investors, and developers to consider relocating.

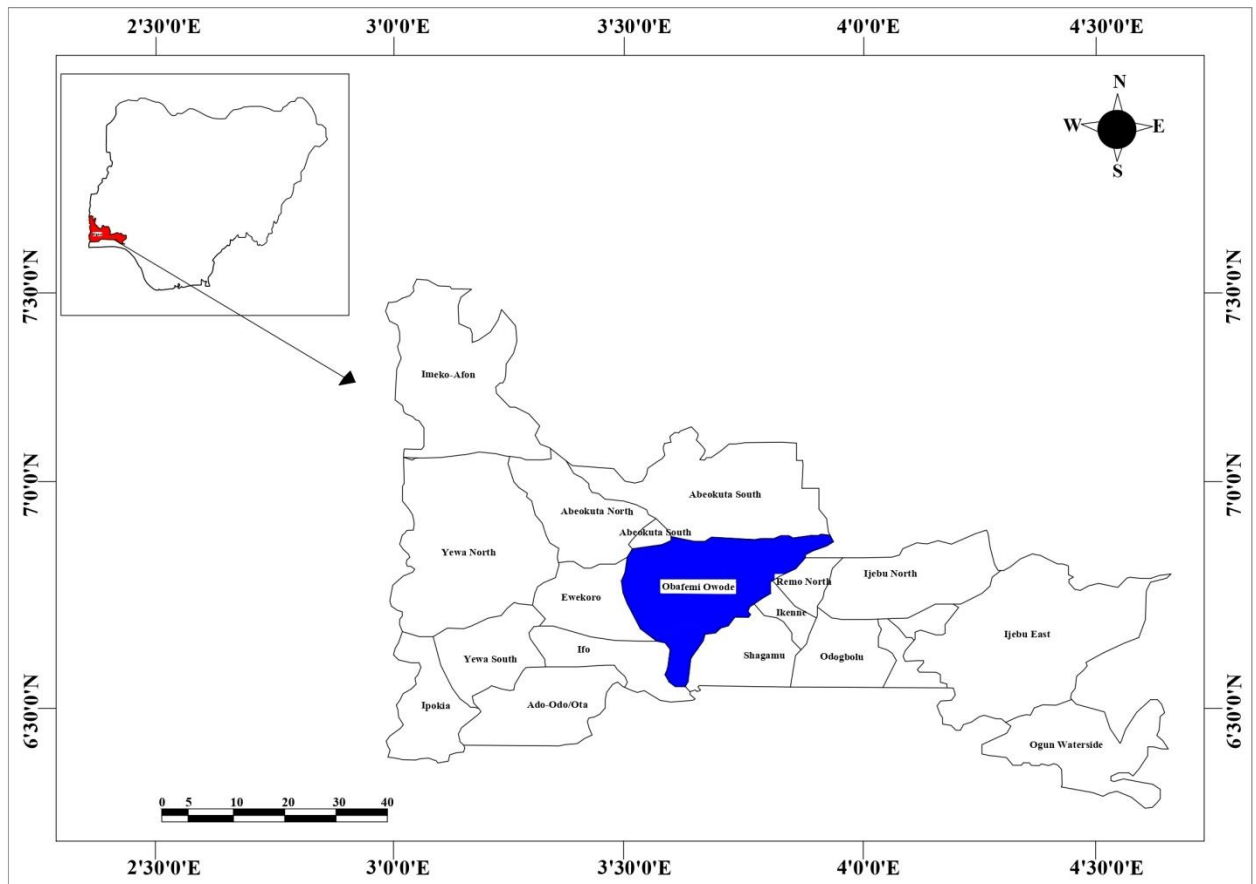


Figure 2: Map of Ogun State indicating the LGAs and the study area.

In Ogun state, access to land and legal security of tenure are strategic prerequisites for the provision of adequate housing and development of sustainable human settlements for the growing population and industries, however, in most towns in the state, certain persons and organizations have made it their business to acquire land through unlawful means. The activities of land grabbers, and scam agents are some of the biggest challenges in legitimately and successfully acquiring a land in the state. These criminals have formed powerful groups that harass and disturb developers from carrying out development. Their acts have been noted among others in places like Adekoyeni, Ilewo Alaga, Abule Tisa and Ajambata, as well as Onibuku, Baba-Ode, and neighboring communities in Atan area, Ado-Odo/Ota Local Council of Ogun State; Yakoyo in Ifo Local Government Area of Ogun State; Ewu Oje, Ewu-Lisa, Ewu-Losi, Dodogiri, Amiteku and Kaniyi in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State. It has lamentably become “normal” for land developers to pay for same land as many times and give various dues to “criminal gangs” before they can peacefully commence work on their land, and even at various stages and phases of the development (such as foundation, lintel, roofing, fencing stages among others). They also threaten developer continued use of the land if they fail to meet these terms and conditions.

The land criminals sometimes referred to as the *Omo-onile*’ (son-of-the-land) and “*Ajagungbale*” (land grabbers) at times work with powerful community people, elites, political figures and government officials. They employ force and physical threat to ensure that developers comply with their illicit demands. In many cases, people have been grievously injured and/or killed. Besides, developers have had their structures damaged, and construction materials destroyed by the criminals. In some cases, and with the aid of dishonest public officers, parcels of land are sold to several developers simultaneously with forged title documents, eventually leading to physical assaults, maiming or killing as the case may be. Personnel of the state agencies have been seen sided with land criminals, revoked land, demolished properties and displaced several residents without notice. It has been alleged that hoodlums, suspected to be land grabbers used a powerful name in the country and in the state to terrorize and seize lands in the state (Ogunnaike, 2022). There have been many instances in Ogun state where developers paid for plots of lands only to be told to pay again to reclaim the same land. It is disheartening that there are various distinct criminal groups operating in the same area to the effect that if a group is settled today, another criminal group will surface the next day. This hostile situation is affecting investment and industrial development in the state. The situation has degenerated that this has become serious business, with some persons titled as expert in land crime and offences.

It is in the light of these damaging effects of land criminals’ actions that the state parliament had in 2016 passed the bill on the Prohibition of Forcible Occupation of Landed Properties, Armed Robbery, Kidnapping, Cultism and other Anti Violence and Related Offences Law

2016 of Ogun State into law and it was assented to by the then governor, Ibikunle Amosun. However, land surveyors in the state have described Ogun State's anti-land grabbing law as useless and ineffective (Olatunji, 2022). Instead, crime and illegalities continue to fester by land grabbers and illegal land speculators in the state. Besides, the law allows the law enforcement agencies, especially the police, to extort developers and building professionals (Olatunji, 2022). It is in the view that this study explores the dynamics of the problem of crime associated with land administration in selected cities in Ogun State with a view to evolving measures for mitigating them. Two major cities of Ogun state, namely: Ibafo and Mowe, in the Obafemi Owode LGA formed the study area. The selection is due to the large volume of construction projects and development activities ongoing in these areas.

Methodology

This section discusses the technique used to study the dynamics of the problem of crime and offences associated with land administration in the study area.

Data collection

Data were collected in August 2021 through questionnaires. Using a qualitative and survey research design, a structured questionnaire survey with some set of variable measures on constructs of land associated crimes, extent of victimization on land associated crimes, causes of land associated crimes, perpetrators of land associated crimes and modus operandi as well as challenges in addressing land associated crimes were extracted from literature.

To test the instruments, a pilot study was conducted on twenty (20) developers from a conveniently available pool of residents/developers in the study area. The rule of thumb is to test the survey on at least 12 to 50 people prior to full-scale administration (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Feedback was obtained about the length of the instrument, the format of the scales, content validity, and peculiarity of the study area as well as question ambiguity. The instrument was revised and further administered to another twenty (20) residents and developers. Before its application, a researcher and expert in land administration checked the developed questionnaire. Improvements were made on the overall style of the instrument. With his expertise, only relevant and necessary questions were retained. The questionnaire length was also shortened to reduce respondent's burden and ensure the seamlessly flow of the instrument from one questions to the next. For analysis of the internal reliability of the items in the questionnaire, Cronbach's *alpha* values were tested with a cut-off value of .79 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Reliability analysis has revealed the instrument used is acceptable (alpha coefficient: .87) which exceeded the recommended satisfactory level of .70 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

To collected data, land-owners, developers and/or property-owners in the study area were targeted. This is to ensure that first-hand knowledge and experiences about land crime and

offences in the study area. It is important to bear in mind that being a developer, and/or property-owner will guarantee direct experiences and ability to talk about land crime and offences. Buildings and/or plot of lands with on-going projects were selected using simple random sampling from the streets in the study area. At least, a building, or plot of lands with on-going project was selected on every street in the study area. A questionnaire was administered on developers and/or property-owners or his representative person (who must not be less than 18 years old so as to provide respected information for understanding the extent, trends and patterns of issues in the study area) of the selected buildings, or the plot of lands with on-going projects. In all, 334 respondents answered questions relating to socio-economic characteristics, land associated crimes, extent of victimization on land associated crimes, causes of land associated crimes, perpetrators of land associated crimes and modus operandi as well as challenges in addressing land associated crimes.

To reduce respondents' predisposition, closed-ended questions were preferred (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). Respondents answered to the questionnaire in a private environment mode. The questionnaire was in the English language. Nonetheless, our approach allowed participants to further discuss peculiar experiences which were documented, and transcribed (using abbreviations and/or word-for-word) particularly when respondents give their opinion or provide important clarification. This study upholds avoidance of harm, confidentiality and informed consent during data collection. Respondents' personal data were treated anonymously. All respondents were acquainted as to the aim and objectives of the study, and given the opportunity to partake and withdraw their participation whenever they want.

Data analysis

The data analysis was done using statistical package of SPSS 16.0 [IBM 22] (Dennis & Cramer, 2008). Descriptive analysis was used to summarize variables. While some variables were summarized using frequency counts and percentages (e.g. causes of land associated crime and offences), some were rated using likert scale (e.g. forms of land associated crime and offences) and corresponding indexes were generated.

To generate indexes from the likert scale (e.g. for forms of land associated crimes), respondents were asked to rank, on a scale of 1 to 5, forms of land associated crime and offences (e.g. interfering with land boundaries, trespass, land fraud and exploitation, forcible entry and land associated forgery, among others) in the study area where 1 = not at all frequent to 5 = very frequent". Mean scores were then calculated using summation of weight value which is the addition of the product of the number of responses to each variables and the respective weight value attached to each rating. The mean for each variable was arrived at by dividing the summation of weight value by the total number of responses.

In few instances where respondents shared their experiences and/or commented on their responses, these were analyzed deductively, by extracting the underlying themes inherent in their reactions, behavior and responses using a narrative technique of reporting. The research findings are discussed as follows. Unless where otherwise stated, the tables through which information are summarized are the products of the survey carried out by the authors in August, 2022.

Findings

In the final sample, 87% of the respondents were male while 91% were of Yoruba ethnic group. This is expected in the Nigerian culture where a male enjoys better right and privileges regarding land. As well, the study area is in the southwest zone where Yoruba ethnic group is dominant. While all the respondents had a formal education, some 69% had attained a post-secondary school education. Whereas majority of respondents (62%) were between 41 and 70 years of age, respondents who were civil and public servants (46%) were more compared with owners of business and professional services (13%) as well as those employed in private businesses and professional services (29%). Majority 74% of respondents earned more than the national minimum wage of ₦30000.00k (50USD) as some 40% had their monthly income above ₦200000.00k (278USD).

Results showed that 42% of respondents were Christians and 40% Muslims. In addition, about 62% of the respondents had been residing in the study area for more than five (5) years. Hence, respondents have required knowledge about land associated crime pattern in the area. These are good indications for the reliability of data used for this study. Besides, none of the socio-demographic and economic characteristics variables were alike in proportions. This gives the impression of no problem with skewness. Thus, socio-demographic characteristics seemed to be normally distributed. In other words, the sample used in this study was found to be broadly representative of the overall residents' characteristics (e.g., *gender, age, and income level, and education level among others*). We thus assume that the data include all relevant variables.

Presented in Table 1 is the summary of land associated crime rate of occurrence indices in the study area as perceived by the respondents. Findings show the gravity of crime and offences associated with land administration as all the types listed were above average. The most frequent of them all is land fraud and/or exploitation (CRI = 3.25/5.00). Next to this was forcible entry into landed properties (CRI = 3.14/5.00) while the least occurring of these crime types was destruction, and vandalism of, and on land (CRI = 2.81/5.00). A respondent narrated a case in 2012 where one "omo-onile" and his criminal cohorts forcefully entered a land in the study area, demolished an on-going structure and sold the land to some other persons. He said, "*...it was a neighbor, and I woke up to discover that a bulldozer came into the site under the pretext that they the site contractors of the construction work going on and within few minutes, I saw that the on-going had been*

pulled down. That action latter became a serious violent conflict...” (Male/65-year-old/Entrepreneur).

Table 1: Forms of land associated crime and offences in the study area

<i>Land associated crime</i>	<i>Rating and weight value</i>						<i>CRI</i>
	<i>VF (5)</i>	<i>F(4)</i>	<i>JF (3)</i>	<i>NF (2)</i>	<i>NAF (1)</i>	<i>SWV</i>	
Land fraud and/or exploitation	40	121	87	54	32	1085	3.25
Forcible entry into landed properties	41	113	93	47	20	1050	3.14
Land associated forgery and falsification	31	87	111	78	27	1019	3.05
Trespass, and encroachment	25	94	114	68	33	1012	3.03
Interfering with land borders and landmarks	20	116	69	76	53	976	2.92
Destruction, and vandalism of, and on land	24	75	98	86	51	937	2.81

Note: *Very frequent (VF), Frequent (F), Just frequent (JF), Not Frequent (NF) and Not at all Frequent (NAF).*

CRI – *Crime Rate Index*

When probed further on the extent of victimization on land associated crimes in the study area, it was established that that majority of the respondents had been victims of land fraud and/or exploitation (38%). A respondent said “...*I have been a victim of property fraud. I did not do the necessary due diligence in the process of bargaining. A person sold government land to me. I have to forfeit that land, and I’m yet to recover my money from the fraudster...*” Furthermore, some 35% of the respondents have been victim of forcible entry or land grabbing while 12% and 10% have been victims of trespass and land associated forgery respectively. A respondent said “...*if you measured my land, it is incomplete and this is because my powerful and influential neighbor has forcefully encroached on my land and interfered with land borders. For the past six years now, the matter is still in court. I know that the matter is being delayed deliberately to frustrate me. But I have made up my mind to fight this injustice, even for the rest of my years here on Earth. Even if I die in the process, my children will continue. They are all well-informed...*” (Male/53-year-old/Civil servant).

Table 2: Causes of land associated offences in the study area

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Land grabbing	334	20.0
Landlords’ greediness	300	18.0
Corruption and wickedness of people in the study area	275	16.0
Burdensome bureaucracy in issuance of title deeds	213	13.0
Fraudulent multiple sales of land	189	11.0
Disputes around land succession	122	07.0

Economic recession/difficulties	098	06.0
High unemployment rate among youth	098	06.0
Customary land regularization	056	03.0
Total	*1685	100.00

*Note: * - More the total (334) because of multiple responses*

Results show that multiple reasons are blamable for land associated crime in the study area. Presented in Table 2 is the summary of findings. Respondents were allowed to pick as many options as possible. Findings show that land grabbing accounted for 20% of all the causes of land associated crime in the study area. While 18% of the causes were as a result of some land-owners' greediness, results show that 16% of land associated crime causes were accrued to corruption and wickedness of people/public officials in the study area. A respondent recalled contacting the land administration department for buying and selling of land and faced with bribery and corruption from the officials. He said "...there are bad eggs in the state land department. They are misusing official position and accumulating personal assets instead of facilitating land transactions among members of the civil society. They even go to the extent of sexual advances. Land grabbing has continued in this area because of these corrupt officials because if the omo-onile and some greedy family members are not getting their support, all these nonsenses would have stopped..." (Female/43-years-old/ Private professional services).

Furthermore, findings show that burdensome bureaucracy in issuance of title deeds accounted for 13% of all causes of land associated crime while 11% of the causes were as a result of fraudulent multiple sales of land in the study area. Results show that 7% of land associated crime causes were as a result of disputes around land succession in the study area. Besides, economic recession/difficulties (6%), high unemployment rate and inequality among youth (6%) as well as customary land regularization (3%) were listed among the causes of crime and offences associated with land in the study area. A respondent said "...I have witnessed a violent case of land grabbing before, here in Mowe. I can boldly say that many of the hoodlums use by land cartels and families to cause violence are idle youth. They are young people who have lost hope in the system of this nation. They are frustrated youth who I think are unable to secure employment and now take to the underground economy and engage in illicit activities, including land crime and violent conflicts..." (Male/57-years-old/ Civil servant).

Table 3: Perpetrators of land associated crime in the study area

Perpetrators	Frequency	Percentage
Land owners family members (Omo-Onile)	299	25.0
Land brokers or cartels	214	18.0
Self-centered political, and community leaders	214	18.0
Unemployed youth	198	17.0
Land officials with private cooperate organizations	150	13.0

Land officers with government agencies and ministries	118	10.0
Total	*1193	100.00

*Note: * - More the total (334) because of multiple responses*

As presented in Table 3, it is evident that multiple perpetrators were responsible for land associated crime in the study area. Nonetheless, findings show that the most prominent perpetrator was land owners family members, popularly called “Omo-Onile” in the study area. They accounted for one-quarter of all the perpetrators of land associated crime in the study area. Next to this were land brokers and cartels who accounted for 18% of all the perpetrators. Besides, results indicted self-centered political leaders on land associated crime in the study area. Also, unemployed youth (17%) were among perpetrators of the crime as well. As explained by a respondent, most times, many of these unemployed youth have become hoodlum used by land owners’ family members, land brokers and self-centered political leaders to cause violent conflicts on site. In a brief engagement with one of the miscreant-youth (*a senior street gang member*) who supposedly work for land grabbers and speculators in the study area, we were made to realise that for the youth-miscreants who follow after land grabbers, the pressure of surviving and the necessity of succeeding in the study area were particularly pronounced among them who earned a living through land crime and violent conflict.

Furthermore, respondents indicted land officers with government agencies (10%) on land associated crime in the study area. It was explained that, most times, they aid and abate land associated crime. It was said during the interview that personnel of the state land agencies have been seen several time sided with “Omo-Onile”, land cartels, and self-centered political leaders, revoked land, demolished properties and displaced several residents without notice, and “...many of these cases are still pending in court...”, (*Female/60-year-old/ Entrepreneur*). Although reluctant to give comprehensive details, some respondents noted instances where law enforcement officers, top civil-servants were caught in the web of land-grabbing.

Presented in Table 4 is the rating of consequences of land associated crime and offences in the study area as perceived by the respondents. It is evident from the results that crime and offences associated with land administration are having serious economic, political and environmental consequences in the study area as all listed possible consequences and impacts were above average. The most important of them all is loss of livelihoods, and increased poverty (SRI = 3.63/5.00) among the people of the study area and the immediate environment. Respondents unanimously grieve-over cases of destruction of farm land (causing food insecurity), demolition of on-going buildings and development (rendering many construction workers unengaged) as well as unutilized land due to fear of attacks by the hoodlums. Some respondents explained their loss of livelihood in terms of monetary

income. Surprisingly, respondents have lost between #50,000 (91USD) to #100,000,000 (182000USD) due to these crime and offences in the study area.

Table 4: Significance of land associated crimes in the study area

<i>Consequences</i>	<i>Rating and weight value</i>						
	VF (5)	F(4)	JF (3)	NF (2)	NAF (1)	SWV	SRI
Loss of livelihoods, and increased poverty	90	129	52	26	37	1211	3.63
Infliction of physical injuries	59	113	84	57	21	1134	3.40
Damaging of property	53	81	94	59	47	1036	3.10
Displacement of people	39	90	100	62	43	1022	3.06
Hostility between families and communities	39	77	87	105	26	1000	2.99
Food insecurity	44	70	92	71	57	975	2.92
Loss of life	15	88	110	80	41	958	2.87
Land associated domestic violence issues	38	72	73	80	71	928	2.78
Land associated electoral violence and conflicts	24	74	89	69	78	904	2.71
Land degradation and environmental pollution	13	69	101	85	66	880	2.63

Note: Very frequent (VF), Frequent (F), Just frequent (JF), Not Frequent (NF) and Not at all Frequent (NAF).

SRI – Significance Rate Index

Results also show that these crime and offences have inflicted physical injuries (SRI = 3.40/5.00) on people. Respondents unambiguously said that many on-site construction workers have suffered permanent physical injuries in various parts of their body due to sudden invasion of land by the thugs. A respondent said ...*I know of a man, Mr. xyz. He is just a middle aged man who lost his right hind leg when hoodlums invaded the site where he was working as a site manager. Up till now, the man is less useful to his family...* (Female/56-year-old/ Civil Servant). Next to this was destruction of properties (SRI = 3.06/5.00). Besides, respondents rated displacement of people as the fourth most severe consequences of land associated crime in the study area. They also confirmed that many promising life has been lost due to these crime and offences. While some political consequences, including hostility between families and communities as well as land associated electoral violent conflicts were noted by the respondents, the least consequences of these offences was environmental (SRI = 2.63/5.00), that is, land degradation and environmental pollution.

Conclusion, policy and future research implications

The study explores the dynamics of the problem of land associated crime and offences in Nigeria, using Mowe and Ibafo townships in Obafemi-Owode LGA of Ogun State. The

study ascertains the forms; explores the extent of victimization; establishes the causes; identifies the perpetrators and determines the consequences of land associated crime and offences in the study area.

Findings established that the most prevalent land crime type was land fraud, or exploitation. This study also found out that the main cause of land associated crimes was land grabbing. Findings show that land associated crime and offences have become a prevalent occurrence in the study area with far-reaching socio-economic significances, emotional, psychological, and environmental impacts as well as political consequences within families, the community and the study area at large. For instance, these offences have contributed to loss of livelihoods, and increased poverty as well as displacement of people, hostility between families and communities, and food insecurity in the study area. These are serious threat to the realization of the country's vision 2030 aim at moving 100 million Nigerians out of poverty, hunger and homelessness by year 2030. Stakeholders and general public must therefore support concerted efforts to combat these crime and offences and put the study area, Ogun state and the country at large in pathway for socio-economic prosperity.

The study therefore recommends that developers should take due diligence while dealing with land. Today, there are all kinds of land scammers, not only in the study area but also in Ogun State and the country at large. There is increased rate of cyber-crime targeted at land buyers, home buyers and renters. Thus, a careful background checks about the land and the environment the property is located, is an excellent attempt to finding out challenges associated with such landed property.

The Ministry, Department or Agency (MDA) in-charge of Lands and Physical Planning should develop a systematic programme to map land across the study area since land fraud was the most prevalent type of crime. The MDA should enhance the efforts of issuance of title deeds to all mapped-out lands and provide machineries to conduct land conflict resolution for non-mapped land in the study area. Furthermore, the police should work closely with MDA in identifying the land criminals and their cohorts, conduct arrests and prosecute them regardless of their social status and rip to shreds, the set-ups of land cartels in the state and the study area. This may require deploying police force with a specialty in land crime and offences. The MDA should adopt multi-agency partnership of land stakeholders. Particularly, they should come up with needed measures and approaches to deal with corruption in their land administration process and conniving public officials in land transactions. For instance, stern punishment of corruption will be a vital component of any effective anti-land related crime and offences effort. Besides, computerization of all land transactions should be prioritized by MDA. Fundamental land administration activities such as land registration, sales, transfer, mortgage, and all other land administration undertakings should be completely computerized while government

provides regulations for monitoring and evaluation. This will reduce attempts to lobby for bribes by corrupt land administration officials. Many countries have completely moved to E-Land administration using state-of-the-art technologies to make land administration more effective. Hence, Ogun state should also prioritize computerizing land administration process. In addition, the MDA should consider conducting public enlightenment on land related matters, such as land rights, and land transactions processing, how to carry out due diligence when buying or selling land, among others. This will help minimize cases of forgery of land documents, and swindling of land buyers while improving community awareness of land rights.

The government should vigorously implement the existing land grabbing and related offences laws, by making a scape-goat among these criminals. This will send a good signal to land grabbers about the readiness of government to deal with convicted offenders. Moreover, unemployed youth were indicted in these land associated crime and offences. Thus, these crimes may continue until youth unemployment is addressed. Thus, the state governments should work on development framework to articulate and pursue a robust development plan for the study area. This should include targeted empowerment programmes and life-skills acquisition for unemployed and marginalized youths to minimize their vulnerability to engagement by land criminal's networks. Many of these "bad boys" could be de-radicalized, and trained to use their own local knowledge to help to curb land related crime and offences in the study area. This will typify the "Yoruba" proverb that says "It is only the thief who can know the footpaths of another thief on the rock."

While this study is a preliminary effort toward understanding crime and offences associated with land administration in the study area, there are a number of limitations that suggest avenues for future research. The current study only focuses selected towns in Ogun State, Nigeria. Besides, it focuses on the Sub-Saharan African context of a rapidly developing state in Nigeria. The findings might be different in other Nigerian cities and countries with similar issues. Hence, a good area to expand this research is the development of more case studies. This single case study does not allow a comparative analysis of issues among residents. The comparison of these cases in other geographical settings will provide a better understanding of this subject matter. Also, the current study seeks not the opinions of stakeholders. Therefore, the opinion of government agencies, non-governmental and private agencies regarding these crime and offences could be explored in future analyses. There is also the need for more interdisciplinary, holistic research that looks at broader regional, and/or temporal contexts and the inclusion of more evidence-based data on this subject matter.

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