

The Impact of Traditional War on Land Development in the Origin and Destination of Some Ousted Communities in Erei; Biase

Ukam, Leonard E, Obongha, Ukpali E.

*Department of urban and regional planning
University of cross river state, nigeria*

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ABSTRACT

War, no matter the type, whether nuclear, religious, or traditional war has always left an unpalatable experience on the defeated communities. This was on the experience of Urugbam and Afono Villages that were ousted by the traditional war in Erei in 2018.

The two communities have had their properties and lives destroyed. They have also abandoned their ancestral homes and farmlands and fled to different places in Ebonyi, Abia state and some to their kits and kin in Abayong Clan. The villages in Abayong Clans that are hosting the ousted communities are Abredang, Abrijang, Abaribara, Abampia and Ijom. As the impact of the war, the host communities have undergone a surge of population where their resources in terms of aquatic resources, further fragmentation of farm lands, low yield and other social vices have now become the order of the day.

The recommendation is for a peaceful and long-lasting resolution.

Keywords: Traditional, War, Land, Development, Ousted, Communities.

I. INTRODUCTION

War, whether traditional, religious or nuclear, always leaves a devastating impact on the environment. This paper intends to assess the impact of the recent traditional war in Erei that ousted two communities (Afono and Urugbam villages) whose inhabitants are now taking refuge with their kits and kin at Abayong Clan, specifically in Abamba, Abaribara, Abredang, Abrijang and Ijom villages.

Though it is not in the scope of this paper to discuss the cause of the war, nevertheless it is important to mention, as a guide that the two, out of the ten villages in Erei that were ousted were

Urugbam and Afono. They were sent packing by Abanwan and Ibini villages, respectively.

The war came at a time when all villages in Erei were experiencing development on land in terms of housing, agriculture and their infrastructural developments. The losses of this war in terms of human and material resources were enormous. The war indeed came at a time when Erei was beginning to experience good infrastructural and structural development.

1.1 STUDY AREA

The study was conducted at the displaced villages of Afono and Urugbam in Erei Clac, Biase Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria who are now referred to as the defeated villages on the western Bank of the Cross River and the destination villages of Abamba, Abaribara, Abrijang and Ijom villages of Abayong Clan on the Eastern Bank of Cross River State in Biase Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Most of the inhabitants combine farming, fishing and trading as a means of livelihood. A negligible few are engaged in civil service job, teaching, etc. These populations also involve themselves in farming and fishing to complement their means of livelihood. Hunting is also practiced by the natives to augment their protein source and to earn income. Amongst the purposes for which land is put is building which is direct development as was noticed before the war broke out.

The major purpose for land in the study is for agriculture. It was even as a result of this that war broke out, which claimed so many lives and destruction of properties.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the study was to assess the extent of the hindrances posed on land by the traditional war at the origin where the defeated communities left.

The objectives will be as follows:

- (i) Access the size of land abandoned by the defeated villages wherein we call the origin.
- (ii) The rate of demand for land abandoned at the destination (where the inhabitant of the defeated villages are taking refuge).
- (iii) Know the total population of the two communities that moved and the population of the indigenous population at the destination.
- (iv) The extent of fragmentation of land at the destination communities to meet demand.

1.3 LITERATURE

As an agrarian society, the value of land in Erei cannot be overemphasized.

Land is an important factor of production. It is an asset that permits development whether agricultural, physical or otherwise to take place. Though land is not a limiting factor of production or development, war, whether traditional, religious or nuclear can limit its proper development so long as that war subsists.

Land as defined by Omole in Ukam (2021) in its simplest term as the ways in which land is occupied or owned.

The customary tenure is the cornerstone of landholding in Nigeria, under which land is held on community basis in trust by the family, the village or the clan and the individual right to use the land based strictly on being a member of that community. Non-indigenes can only use the land by the special permission from the head of families. Individual ownership of land is also recognized in this community where the individual is the first person to clear the portion of the land from premerial form.

In this part of the world, land under this customary ownership is merely usufructory Udo (1990), rightly observed that land is seen as belonging to the living members of the community as well as to those who are dead and buried in the land and equally those members of the community who are yet to unborn.

The conception of land in Erei is not only a source of but also a symbol of power (politics), religion, prestige and social standing is responsible for the various land tenure systems which recognizes different interest held in land (Ukam, 2021). The different interest tend to delay or even hinder the execution of development projects as all persons who lay claims on a parcel of land have to be duly consulted to give their consent for the use of the land. On many occasions, land developers have met with uncoordinated decision by members of a family, community or title societies who have interest in a particular parcel of land. This, in some

situations resulted in crisis like the case under research.

Though the study does not intend to investigate the cause of the traditional war in Erei, nevertheless it was discovered that the crisis in Erei, where two villages (Afono and Urugbam) were sacked came as a result of an oil palm plantation sited in the land belonging to Egbor where Ekoli Edda in Ebonyi State and Urugbam one of the 17 villages in Erei intended to take by force from Egbor, the rightful owner. This led to the crisis in Erei where on the 4th of December, 2018, there was violence between Urugbam, Egbor, Ipene and Abemwan. Many people lost their lives. (Tribune Online: <https://tribuneonlineng.com.bisho>).

A repeat of the attack on Urugbam on the 24th February, 2019 led to the destruction of virtually every living thing as well as abandonment of many projects (The Cable: www.thecable.ng) (<https://www.google.co>) this led the Urugbam people to desert their communities.

This crisis extended to Afono community who were confused by Urugbam community to be used as a station to attack Ibini, one of the Erei villages. In defense of Erei land, Ibini community had to resist the attack ousted Afono community on the 19th of May, 2020 where lives and properties were lost and farmlands, projects abandoned.

Suffice this preamble given in the literature to mean that war has a very big negative effect on communities wherever it breaks out. These two communities (Urugbam and Afono) had to desert their home and fled to neighbouring villages at Abia and Ebonyi States and more to their kits and kin at Abayong Clan on the eastern flank of the Cross River in Biase Local Government Area of Cross River State. Over 9,000 people deserted Urugbam community and over 3,000 people deserted Afono community, making a total of 12,000 people who were rendered homeless (refugees).

1.4 MATERIALS/METHODS

A survey inferential research design was adopted for the study. Two hundred questionnaires were administered to indigenes of the study area to elicit information on their impression about the state of resources in the area. Those who constituted the population were randomly selected adult male and female of the host communities who engage in farming, fishing, hunting or some combination of these.

Other information obtained included farm size, farm output, fish catch (measured in basins of size 60m³), fishing materials as well as past and present

population figures of the study area from national population commission in Calabar.

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

- 1) There is no significant relationship between population and marine resource depletion.
- 2) There is no significant relationship between farm size and farm output.
- 3) There is no significant relationship between physical development of the village and the types of tenure operating in the village.

The first step in data collection was the administration of two hundred copies of questionnaires to household heads of the host communities. Each host community represented a stratum where the household heads were chosen. Questionnaires were administered to only male household heads for the fact that they are land owners or they can obtain land from other families, villages or individual by virtue of their position as household heads.

Two sets of questionnaires were prepared, one for farmers and the other on the village. The two sets of questionnaires were similar in some aspect for the fact that certain things happen to the individual land owners as well as the village as a whole. Of the two hundred questionnaires given out to respondents only one hundred and fifty were returned.

Farm sizes were measured by the researcher using only tape and ranging rods. The length and width of farms were measured. The strata were based on different farm sector,

cultivated according to fallow years (7 years). An average of fifty (50) farms was measured. The result shows that a single piece of farm planted by a farmer was 81.72 by 9.21 meter squares, giving an area of 752.6412 meter squared. This is equivalent to 0.07 hectares. The farm size was measured to show that the small farm size cultivated by a farmer as shown by this study is an indication that the increase in population in host communities, coming from the refugees has caused further fragmentation of land. There is also the problem of land tenure which has limited the use of land for an extensive agricultural venture that would have been better yields, more income for the farmer and other things (land fertility, the health of seeds, method of planting) being equal.

Also, that there is little or no land for other development project since agriculture which is the mainstay of the rural people do not have enough land. Let alone providing land for tourism activities which is alien to the people.

The average number of seeds of yams in a yam barn was calculated using the stratiged random sampling and the researcher arrived at 4,500 seeds of yams of difference sizes being the capacity or volume of a yam barn.

The essence of calculating the number of yams in a yam barn was to see the effect of land fragmentation on output as a result of increase in population. All other things (fertility of land, available technology for land improvement, healthy seeds =, etc) being equal.

Table 1: Age Distribution of the Sampled Population

AGE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
0-9	35	23.33
10-20	30	20.00
21-30	25	16.67
31-40	25	16.67
41-50	20	13.33
51-60	10	6.67
61 and above	05	3.33
	150	100.00

SOURCE: Researchers Field Survey 2022.

From Table 1, it is clear that the ratio of dependents to the working class is quite high, considering the age brackets 0-20 years and 61 and above. These two groups from 46.66% (70 respondents) of the total sampled population. Also, considering the fact that the traditions of the areas in question maturity from the age of 24 years after celebrating the chronological age naming ceremony (Ukam, 1987) the situation indicates pressure on the working class (rural workforce) with a resultant

effect on the rate of exploitation of the rural resources to meet the need of the people. This is reminiscent of host communities like Abamba, Abredang, Abapia, and Ijom where the displaced people of Afono and Urugbam are residents.

The recognition of maturity from the age of twenty-four (24) when such individuals will be allowed access to parcels of land for agriculture as well as engage in fishing and hunting activities means that every year there will be additional

group of people who will begin to make direct demands on the environment (land) since people

will be attaining this age every year. The consequence is further depletion of the resources.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Population in Biase Local Government Area

Age Distribution (in years)	Population
0-9	44,572
10-19	40,024
20-29	30,019
30-39	20,554
40-49	15,338
50-59	8,787
60-69	5,185
70-79	2,185
80 and above	1,450

SOURCE: 2006 projected population 2016 (National Population Commission, Cross River State).

Table 2 shows the respective population of age distribution of population in Biase Local Government Area where the ousted villages (Urugbam and Afono) and the host communities (Abampia, Abaribara, Abredang and Abriyang)

belong. It is therefore commonsense that it will not be in the interest of any host community if the displaced persons have to add their population to that which already exists in the host communities.

Table 3: Possible Reason for Decline in both Agricultural and Marine Resources

Items (Reasons)	No of Respondents	Percentage
1. Traditions are no longer obeyed.	30	20.00
2. Lawlessness on the part of the youth	10	6.67
3. Modern method of fishing is harsh.	20	13.33
4. Christian religious belief against tradition	20	6.67
5. Western education has no regard for custom	05	3.33
6. Traditional land tenure system inhibits	20	13.33
7. Lack of modern method of agriculture	15	10.00
8. Lack of alternative occupation to agriculture	10	6.67
9. Over population	30	20.00
	150	100.00%

SOURCE: Researcher's Field Survey.

It was asserted that Christian religious belief against tradition of the people also gives some people a very daring impetus to penetrate those areas that were forbidden by tradition.

10 respondents, representing 6.67% agree with this. The above findings confirm that fact that some traditional and customary practices in the rural areas are environment friendly and therefore essential for environmental resource management.

It is no wonder therefore that many authors agree with the fact that conservation is as old as man. Ogeibu (1990) asserts that many basic conservation ideas were put into practice long before the dawn of written history. He observed

that ancient man often view the earth and its life as gods who had to be worshipped and cared for. For instance, the early hunters do not kill animals for pleasure.

Prehistoric farmers realized that: it was better for the land to lie fallow and uncultivated from time to time, as a way of restoring the soil to its natural fertility. The researchers agrees with those views equally to show that even the materials and methods used in the exploitation of resources can hasten the rate of depletion especially those of the marine. The use of poisonous leaves, nylon nets of various mesh sizes, gamalin 20 and explosives

that kill fishes in masse, no matter where they are hiding is more destructive than the native nets.

Of all reason given for the decline of rural resources, population is the most serious. It is as a result of the increase in population in the host communities to the refugees (Urugbam and Afono) that has resulted in over exploitation of resources of both aquatic and terrestrial habitats.

Unfortunately, while resources in the host communities are being depleted by increased demand, in the deserted communities as a result of

war (Urugbam and Afono), land and other rural resources are abandoned and left to lie fallow because of the risk it poses should anyone go in there to farm, hunt or do fishing. Suffice this to mean that while resources in the deserted communities of Afono and Urugbam are recuperating, the resources in their destination or host communities are being depleted.

To push this study further, the researchers decided to use surrogate to test the hypotheses as stated earlier.

Hypothesis 1_(H0): There is no significant relationship between population and marine resources.

Apply the formula: $r = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{n \sum x^2 - \sum x^2} \sqrt{n \sum y^2 - \sum y^2}}$

$$r = \frac{1575600}{\sqrt{8870285} \sqrt{750000}} = 0.77$$

Table 4: Population and Estimated Annual Fish Catch (60cm³) Basins.

Years	Population	Estimated	X ²	Y ²	Xy
1963	395	400	156025	160000	158000
1980	599	500	358801	250000	299500
1981	614	300	376996	90000	184200
1982	630	400	396900	160000	252000
1983	645	200	416025	40000	129000
1991	1753	200	3073009	40000	350600
1996	2023	100	4092529	10000	202300
TOTAL	Σx = 6659	Σy = 2100	Σx² = 8870285	Σy² = 750000	Σxy = 1575600

To test for the degree of association, apply the formula

$$tc = r\sqrt{n - 2}$$

$$1 - r^2 \quad tc = 4.22$$

When tested at 0.05 level of significance and at 5 degrees

$$tt = 2.577$$

Statistical decision: The null hypothesis is rejected showing that there is a significant relationship between population and resources depletion. S

Conclusion: The rapid of population increases is responsible fir the wanton exploitation of rural resources.

Hypothesis 2_(H0): There is no significant relationship between farm size and farm output.

Apply the formula: $r = \frac{1/n \sum (X - x)(Y - y)}{rx \quad ry}$

$$= 0.82$$

This shows that there is a significant positive relationship between farm size and farm output in Erei.

To test for the degree of association, apply the formula:

$$tc = r\sqrt{n - 2}$$

$$1 - r^2$$

$$tc = 16.83$$

Table 5: Farm Size and Average Annual Output

No. of Respondents	Average farm size x	Annual average output (y)	X - x	Y - y	(x - x) ²	(y - y) ²	(x-x)(y-y)
18	0.52	2.0	0.48	1.7	0.23	2.89	0.82
6	0.52	1.5	0.48	1.2	0.23	1.44	0.58
12	0.52	3.0	0.48	2.7	0.23	7.29	1.30
9	0.52	4.0	0.48	3.7	0.23	13.69	1.78

6	0.52	5.0	0.48	4.7	0.23	22.09	2.26
3	0.52	6.0	0.48	5.7	0.23	32.49	2.74
6	0.24	0.5	0.20	0.2	0.04	0.04	0.04
12	0.24	1.0	0.20	0.7	0.04	0.49	0.14
21	0.24	1.5	0.20	1.2	0.04	1.44	0.24
18	0.24	2.0	0.20	1.7	0.04	2.89	0.34
6	0.24	3.0	0.20	2.7	0.04	7.29	0.54
3	0.24	5.0	0.20	4.7	0.04	22.09	0.94
6	0.24	6.0	0.20	5.7	0.04	32.49	1.14
9	0.08	0.5	0.04	0.2	0.00	0.04	0.01
6	0.08	2.0	0.04	1.7	0.00	2.89	0.07
141	$\Sigma x = 4.96$ $x = 0.04$	$\Sigma y = 43.0$ $y = 0.3$			$\Sigma(x-x)^2$ $Sx = 0.11$	$\Sigma(y-y)^2$ $Sy = 1.03$	$(x-x)(y-y)$ $= 12.94$

SOURCE: Ukam (1987)

This is to let us know that these are existing farm sizes in Erei. If for any reason the population increases, these farm sizes will be fragmented further.

When tested at 0.05 level of significance and 14 degrees of freedom, using student's "t" distribution table i.e. tabulated $t = 1.76$.

Statistical Decision: Since tabulated "t" is greater than calculated "t", the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted that there is a significant positive relationship between farm size and farm output.

The implication of this is that small farm sizes, all things being equal, do not produce large quantities of yams or other agricultural products. Few barns of 4,500 seeds of various sizes of yams were realized. The small farm sizes were results of over fragmentation due to increase in population. The above sizes of farm are the ideal in Erei, but this have been further fragmented because the war situation as described.

Hypothesis 3 (H0): There is no significant relationship between physical development of a village and the types of tenure operating in that village.

To test this hypothesis, villages were ranked according to available infrastructure and social amenities. Villages were also ranked according to

predominant land tenure. The researcher used ordinal scale of measurement to assign numerical values to land tenure in respect of the ease with which land could be acquired in such land tenure system(s) for development projects. The numerical values were assigned in descending order (from 4 – 1) beginning with the most problematic.

- (i) Individual land ownership = 4
- (ii) Family land ownership = 3
- (iii) Compound land ownership = 2
- (iv) Communal land ownership = 1

On the other hand, villages were ranked according to the number of infrastructural and social amenities available. The ranking was in ascending order (from 1 – 10). The village with the highest number of infrastructure assigned "I", while the village with the least number of infrastructures was assigned "io".

Furthermore, villages with land tenure system where acquisition of land was easiest was ranked "one". This was followed by other villages with land tenure(s) that do not easily make for the acquisition of land as the first and so on.

After this, the correlation was calculated between rank of villages according to infrastructure and ranks of villages according to predominant land tenure using Spearman's rank order correlation method.

Table 6: Result of Correlation Analysis Showing Relationship Between Physical Development of Village and Type of Land Tenure System in Erei.

Variable	No. of Villages (N)	d^2	r	t-value
Physical development of village (No. of Infrastructures)	10	65	0.61	7.75s

Type of Land Tenure System	10			
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Source: Ukam, L. E. 2021.

Table 6 shows the calculated $r = 0.61$. This shows a strong positive relationship between land tenure system and the level of development (measured according to number of infrastructure). This led the researchers to reject the null hypothesis that there is no positive relationship between land tenure and physical development of villages.

1.6 DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

A lot of the discussions were based on the use of surrogates to assess the essence of losses. At the origin (Afono and Urugbam) that is the ousted communities, very many losses were incurred in terms of houses and the abandoned farm lands and oil palm plantations.

However, at the destinations (Abamba, Abaribara, Abiyan, Abredang and Ijom) in Abayong Clan where these two communities are taking refuge, there is the problem of accommodation, further fragmentation of farm land resulting in smaller farm size, poor yields and poor outputs. This is as a result of increase in the population of the host communities. There is shortage of food and other social vices.

It is possible that the tradition and custom of the host communities may be jeopardized, though there is no such reports at the moment.

The best recommendation for this study is for these ousted communities to resolve this dispute with the other eight Erei villages (Abanwan, Edu Egbor, Etana...Ibini, Ipene, Obum and Umuolo) to enable them return back to their ancestral homes which they are missing.

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