



## Mitigating Property Conflict in Benin City: The Role of Estate Managers

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### Abstract

This paper discusses how the estate managers can reduce conflicts related to property in the city of Benin, Edo State. Due to the swift urbanisation and the conflict between traditional and legal land tenure systems, the ownership, inheritance, landlord-tenant relationships and boundary boundaries disputes are becoming more prevalent within the city. The study employs a descriptive survey of all the estate managers, landlords, and tenants to determine the key triggers of property disputes and assess how the estate managers had dealt with them using their strategies. Research results indicate that mediation, adequate documentation, and cooperation with traditional authorities are the most popular and efficient conflict-resolution scales. Nevertheless, systemic limitations, such as poor land records, ineffective enforcement of the rules and rules, as well as political and traditional interference curtail the effectiveness of these interventions. Based on the Conflict Transformation Theory, the research claims that the estate managers should not be merely regarded as the mediators but as the strategic players who can impact structural changes in the land governance. This paper has determined that sustainable mitigation of conflicts in the real estate sector in Benin City requires strengthening of professionalism, availability of correct land information, and institutions collaboration.

**Keywords:** Benin City, Conflict Resolution, Estate Managers, Land Disputes, Property Conflicts, Tenancy Disputes

### Introduction

Issues related to property are a major problem throughout the urban centers of Nigeria especially in the fast-growing urban centers such as the Benin City, Edo State. Such conflict situations are usually associated with ownership of the land, boundary disputes, tenancy disputes, frauds and poor documentation (Udoekanem et al, 2014; Owei & Ikpoki, 2006; Ezeokoli & Ezeokoli, 2019). The rate and the levels of residential and commercial real estate development increase, which is why the amount and the level of such conflicts only increases (Ojo, 2013; Ibhiedu & Iweka, 2021). Unresolved conflicts may be turned into acts of violence, lengthy court battles, and a lot of economic damages (Agbola & Jinadu, 1997; Ogedengbe & Oyedele, 2006).

The estate managers are a key stakeholder in the real estate system in Nigeria, as they serve as gateway between property owners, tenants, and regulatory bodies. Their roles go beyond maintenance of physical property to encompass the provision of professional advisory services, proper documentation, mediation, and stakeholder involvement (Owei & Ikpoki, 2006; Udoekanem et al., 2014). Estate managers have a unique opportunity to manoeuvre between the two systems in Benin City where customary land tenure frequently conflicts with the law, and peaceful co-existence can be fostered (Ezeokoli & Ezeokoli, 2019; Ibhiedu & Iweka, 2021).

According to Ebinama (2011), there are usually tensions and conflicts between the landlords and their tenants. These conflicts are usually caused by misunderstandings of the lease conditions or informal agreements in particular the case of urban housing multi-unit (Bryks, 2011). In cases where property development is driven by rental income, communication among landlords, tenants and property managers will be very vital. The professional standards need to be high, otherwise property managers can even aggravate the current problems and undermine stakeholder interests.

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Although there are some property owners who hire estate managers early in the property lifecycle, a significant number of property owners hire them in response to major tenant conflicts. In these instances, managers are supposed to jump in with a quick-footed intervention that may be in the form of eviction, without any groundwork or mitigation of conflict. Although the role of the estate manager in the process of preventing and solving property disputes gets increasingly recognised, the strategic aspect of the latter has not been properly examined in literature. The majority of the research highlights legal and governmental avenues of resolving conflict situations, but it does not focus on the practical contribution and constraints of the estate managers.

Conflict is usually described as a scenario whereby two or more parties feel a collision of values, interests or objectives- in most cases accompanied with tensions, dominance seeking efforts and hostilities (Fisher, 1990). The conflicts are usually the result of people or groups of people regarding their needs or goal to be inconsistent and share that information with others concerned. The conflicts related to property are specifically property conflict, i.e. the conflict on ownership of land and buildings, tenancy, boundaries, terms of sales, inheritance and encroachment. In Benin City, Nigeria, these conflicts are frequently related to overlapping of land use, insufficient boundaries, inadequate documentation and co-existence of customary and statutory systems of land tenure (Udoekanem, 2015; Owei & Opuene, 2010). Such conflicts are waged at various levels; they involve interpersonal and family conflicts to a wider communal and institutional tension. Effective resolution is only achievable through a good grasp of their causes, nature and dynamics.

The studies have revealed that urban expansions, poor land control and inability to access formal land registration have contributed to agonies of land disputes throughout Nigeria (Omirin, 2003; Umeokafor, 2020). Moreover, sometimes land conflicts, unscrupulous dealings with land, and various land distributions are the main causes of tension between land owners, tenants, communities, and government bodies (Oladapo & Ige, 2015). Conventionally, conflict was conceptualized as a hostile engagement between the conflicting sides, most of the time encompassing a confrontation or intensification. This point of view has changed, however. The current literature now views conflict as a state based on perceived incompatibility of interests, but not merely a behavior (Bello & Agbatekwe, 2002). Notably, conflict is nowadays recognized not only as something disruptive, but also as a source of innovation and social change to the advantage (Kriesberg, 1998).

According to Adebayo (2013), insufficient centralized, transparent and accessible land registry system in several states in Nigeria is a key cause of conflict since it may give different parties a chance to possess the same piece of land. These conflicts are particularly complicated and common in such cities as Benin where the claims of the ancestral and communal lands often overlap with the statutory rights. In addition to this, urbanization increases land value, which increases the competition and pressure on the acquisition of land. This pressure often leads to informal settlements, encroachment, speculative deals and rampant fraud in land transactions (Omirin, 2003; Nuhu, 2008). Although property conflict and real estate industry is increasingly becoming complex, little attention is given by the academic literature to the role of estate managers beyond their administrative roles. The lack of localized, data-driven research, which assesses the role of estate managers as conflict mitigators and relationship of these systems with legal, traditional, and community-based systems, is present. This research paper intends to bridge this research gap by offering empirical evidence on how, why, and where estate managers find themselves in Benin City in attempts to curb property related disputes.

This paper thus examines how estate managers would help reduce conflict involving property in Benin City. It looks into the origin of such conflicts, the measures used by the estate professionals and the issues that they encounter in ensuring peace and order within the city property sector. Based on the Conflict Transformation Theory, the study will seek to advance knowledge on the role of estate managers in fostering sustainable peace, legal adherence and prevention of conflicts in the growing urban settings in Nigeria. Even though the factors and consequences of property conflicts in urban Nigeria have been widely addressed through available literature, there still exists a significant gap in the empirical studies that specifically point out a strategic and transformative role of the estate managers as mediators and peacebuilders. The vast majority of literature is inclined to concentrate on legal, governmental, or traditional methods of the conflict resolution often neglecting the professional input and constraints of the state of an estate manager in the context of the real estate conflict prevention and resolution. This paper fills that gap by discussing how estate managers can actively contribute to dispute management and what problems of the system restrict their efficiency in the urban environment, such as that of Benin City.

### Aim of the Study

This paper will focus on the importance of estate managers in curbing property-related disputes in Benin City by focusing on the key factors that contribute to conflicts, the approaches employed by resolving them, and the underlying problems that influence effective conflict management.

### Objectives of the Study

- i. To determine the key issues leading to property related disputes in Benin City.
- ii. To explore the conflict-resolution approaches that are used by estate managers and their effectiveness in reducing the property disputes.

### The Role of Estate Managers in Conflict Prevention and resolution

Estate managers (which are also called as estate surveyors and valuers in Nigeria) has a strategic role in property management by protecting the property value, ensuring proper usage, and promoting cordial relations between the parties concerned. They are not only engaged in rent collection and maintenance of facilities but also advisory services, documentation, property valuation, and resolution of disputes (Udoekanem, 2015; Oladapo & Ige, 2015). Estate managers have a crucial and multifaceted role to play towards achieving peace, order and stability in the real estate business in the modern urban setting. In addition to the conventional roles, they perform the functions of mediators, negotiators and professional advisors. In urban areas such as Benin City, where population pressure, escalated real estate requirements, and a system of overlapping land tenures meet, property conflicts are more widespread and complicated than ever. This is because the role of estate managers has been identified as being crucial in preventing and settling such disputes.

Some of the major causes of conflicts include failure to honor tenancy agreements, rent arrears, encroachment of boundaries, poor documentation and absence of transparency in business. Ezeokoli and Ezeokoli (2019) say that one of the most effective methods of avoiding such disputes involves clear and properly structured lease agreements and an accurate record keeping. Estate managers also make sure that such agreements are well written, conveyed, and comprehended among all the parties- thus, minimising chances of misconstructions or re-emerging disputes. In cases where disagreements arise, the estate managers are often the initial line of defense in solving the case before the parties turn into lawsuits and turn aggressive on one another. They are neutral, thereby serving as a mediating force in an objective and professional way. Ibhiedu and Iweka (2021) note that the estate managers tend to use their understanding of the tenancy laws, housing policies, and negotiation strategies in easing dialogue between the landlords and tenants. Such mediation undertakings usually lead to peaceful solutions that save time, money, as well as relationship. The other important area that estate managers cannot be ignored is in the process of negotiating the gap between traditional and statutory landholdings systems. The city of Benin finds itself in numerous disputes over conflicting claims between informal claims on land and formal claims under land registration officers. Estate managers are well versed with both systems and they assist clients in acquiring land, boundary demarcation and clearing of titles (Udoekanem et al, 2014). They are able to interpret the traditional practices in a legal context thereby closing gaps and eliminating conflict.

In addition, estate managers will help in avoiding conflicts by informing property stakeholders including owners and tenants about their rights, responsibilities, and expected behaviors. Trust and an increase in compliance with property laws is achieved through public enlightenment campaigns and regular communication. According to Fisher (1990), a number of conflicts can be traced to the perceived incompatibility of interests. Estate managers are significant in ensuring that these perceptions are identified and corrected before they blow up.

By upholding professional ethics and institutional standards, i.e. institutional standards that have been set by the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers (NIESV), the estate managers are supposed to be transparent, play a mediating role and guard the interests of both the landlords and tenants (Egbu, 2007). They help in ensuring that misunderstandings are minimized and that they escalate to legal disputes because they help in mediating lease agreements, keeping property records and providing expert testimony during litigation. Estate managers also

participate in the peacebuilding of conflict prone communities, working together with traditional rulers, government and security agencies to resolve disputes amicably (Umeokafor, 2020). Their expertise in land law, valuation and conflict resolution mechanisms are invaluable to stability of property and harmony in the city.

In conclusion, the issue of peace and stability in the urban real estate in Nigeria is pegged on the shoulders of the estate managers. Their initiative in education, reporting, communication and mediating supports trust and minimizes conflicts. Their involvement is even more vital with the ongoing rapid urbanization, as they will be involved in ensuring sustainable development and safeguarding property rights.

### **Common Causes of Property Conflicts in Urban Nigeria**

Another aspect that has now become common in urban development in Nigeria is property related conflict. The resulting conflicts over land and property due to the high demand of residential and commercial real estates, a high rate of population growth, and poor city planning. Such conflicts are driven by numerous legal, economic, social and administrative issues. Uncertainty on land ownership and re-selling the same piece of land is one of the most prevalent reasons. The practice of land holding under customary systems and land registration systems that are run under statute tends to create confusion with regard to the status of ownership. This is bi-polar and leads to cases where one piece of land is sold to one or more buyers by other parties who have valid titles (Udoekanem et al., 2014). These problems are aggravated in large cities like Benin, Lagos, and Abuja by sluggish land titling procedures and fraudulent documentation that is extensively used.

Poor or non-existent documentation is another major causative factor. In urban Nigeria, a lot of property transactions are informal and they are made without a written agreement, survey plans, and a registered title. Since the formal documentation is not present, as Owei & Ikpoki (2006) claim, this leaves room to manipulation, misinterpretation and even disputes particularly where the parties involved cannot be consulted to enforce verbal agreements. There are also encroachment and boundary issues. Such frequently occur due to faulty land surveying, overlapped development plans and boundaries. The scarcity of land in overcrowded urban areas tempts people to physically encroach as they seek to utilize the available space (Ibhiedu & Iweka, 2021). Another common property conflict is disputes between landlords and tenants. They are usually concerned with rent arrears, breach of tenancy contracts, illegal evictions, failure to leave the premises even after expiry of lease, and complaint of property conditions. Fisher (1990) points out that these conflicts are mostly caused by having perceived incompatibility of interests and failure of communication and trust. The issue of family succession and inheritance also contributes significantly to the issue of property disputes in urban areas. Disputes among heirs that will divide the land or building often lead to protracted court battles especially when the testator dies intestate (without a valid will) leaving family members to have properties that are not legally clear (Agbola & Jinadu, 1997).

Controversies related to government acquisition and compensation occur when government authorities directly forcefully purchase property so that they can use the property and do not pay proper or prompt compensation. The land acquisition process and associated bureaucracy tend to create a bitter feeling amongst the displaced persons and communities due to their opaqueness (Ojo, 2013). Lastly, real estate dealings in the city of Nigeria are still marred by fraud and impersonation. Rather, unscrupulous agents and impostor use legal loopholes and the lack of knowledge by the buyers to market land that they do not have or to distort the conditions of sale (Ezeokoli & Ezeokoli, 2019). Conclusively, property conflicts within the urban areas in Nigeria are complex and mainly brought about by poor institutional framework, land tenure systems, and incompetence. These issues need to be addressed, which necessitates a strong legal change, extensive social sensitisation, digitization of land records, and take proactive action by an experienced estate manager in all matters that pertain to property.

### **Estate Managers as Conflict Mitigators**

Oladapo & Ige, (2015) and Egbu, (2007) argue that the role of estate managers is preventive and mediatory when it comes to resolving real estate conflicts. Their work experience involves a wide spectrum of work such as:

- Title check and due diligence.
- Writing and implementing tenancy contracts.
- Real estate appraisal and accounting.
- Involvement of the major stakeholders (owners, tenants, developers, and governmental bodies).
- Mediating conflicts and making referrals to the relevant legal avenues.

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Being trained to work under ethical and legal frameworks, estate managers often serve as expert witnesses in disputes related to property appearing at the courts or customary arbitration commissions (Oladapo & Ige, 2015; Egbu, 2007). Their timely intervention is quite often helpful to avoid litigation and create trust between the parties. Also, estate managers often work hand in hand with local government, old organizations, and law enforcement bodies in dealing with trespass, squatting, and forceful eviction. In these respects, they serve as the mediators of peaceful conflict resolution and repossession of property (Nuhu, 2008; Udoekanem, 2015).

### Challenges

Irrespective of the role that they play, the efficiency of the estate managers in Nigeria is affected by a number of persistent challenges that prevent their effectiveness in conflict mitigation Umeokafor (2020):

- i. Poor availability of credible land information and documentation system.
- ii. Laxity in property rights enforcement in the law system.
- iii. Corruption between the traditional rulers and the government.
- iv. Low awareness among the general population about the professional roles and authority of the estate managers.
- v. Overlaps in the jurisdictions of customary and statutory land administration bodies.

According to Umeokafor (2020), numerous properties. The conflicts are aggravated by the failure of parties to consult professional advice of the estate managers in time. Instead, they tend to rely on informal negotiations or traditional authorities- whose intervention, although accepted culturally, may not be a legally binding intervention.

### Theoretical Framework: Conflict Transformation Theory.

The theory used in this study is the Conflict Transformation Theory (Lederach, 1995). Conflict transformation as compared to the conventional approach to conflict resolution is a process aimed at trying to solve the underlying structural, relation and systemic aspects that lead to the occurrence of conflict in the first place.

In terms of the estate management, the theory places the estate managers in a position of long-term peacebuilding agents who could help by:

- Fostering property transaction transparency.\
- Promoting the equitable access to land and property rights.
- Improving the legal awareness of tenants, landlords and buyers.
- Building conflict sensitivity into the estate plans.
- Community-based dispute resolution efforts (either as a leader or participant).

The role of the estate managers within the Benin City is well placed, as they can act as facilitators of peaceful coexistence by proactively approaching various stakeholders and lobbying on a regular basis to find a balanced, legal, and accessible way of land governance systems.

### Methodology

The current research will use the descriptive survey design that will be effective in collecting and analysing data of the estate professionals, landlords, and tenants in a systematic manner. This is to determine the extent to which estate managers can reduce the occurrence of property-related disputes in Benin City. The design suits well in examining the practices, perceptions, and experiences of conflicts in real-world situations as it applies in the frame of an estate management. It was carried out in Benin City, which is the capital of the Edo State, southern Nigeria. Being a historical city and fast developing urban center, Benin City is registering high rates of residential and commercial real estate development. The unique blend of the traditional landholding systems and the contemporary statutory land administration systems in the city often plays a role in property related disputes- making it the best case study to use in this research.

The analysis of the data gathered in the respondents was done through descriptive statistical procedures, including the frequency counts, percentages, and the mean scores. Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used in performing the analysis of these. The SPSS provided the correct computation and presentation of results, especially when ranking the causes of conflicts, strategies to resolve conflicts, and efficacy of the interventions of the estate managers. Tables were created to categorize the population statistics, conflict causes, alternative conflict resolution strategies, and the problems.



## Data Presentation

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of the respondents (N = 100)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Profession	Estate Managers	50	50.0
	Landlords	30	30.0
	Tenants	20	20.0
Gender	Male	63	63.0
	Female	37	37.0
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years old	25	25.0
	5-10 years	41	41.0
	Over 10 years	34	34.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The demographic traits of the respondents are summarized in Table 1. The sample size was 100 respondents (50% of the sample were estate managers, 30% were landlords, and 20% were tenants). This distribution allowed inclusion of the major stakeholders who have direct interests in the property transactions and disputes. The gender division indicates that the male population was 63 percent of the respondents with the female population being 37 percent. This implies that there was a male dominated participation in estate management and property ownership in Benin City. When it comes to experience, forty one percent of the respondents had a work experience of between 5 and 10 years with 34 percent having more than 10 years of work experience. The fact that the respondents are relatively experienced means that the study used people who had a great deal of knowledge of property-related issues, which contributes to increasing the reliability of the results.

**Table 2: Common Causes of Property-Related Conflicts (Responses from Estate Manager and Landlord)**

Causes of Conflict	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disputes over land ownership/title	44	44.0
Inheritance-related property disputes	22	22.0
Tenants-landlords misunderstanding	18	18.0
Multiple land allocations by traditional heads	10	10.0
Encroachment and boundary issues	6	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 summarises the key causes of conflicts on property in Benin City. The most widespread conflict trigger was disputes over the ownership of land and title claims (44%). This observation is consistent with those in the literature that suggest ineffective documentation systems and claims overlap are significant causes of conflicts. Wars over inheritance were also 22% and this indicates the complications brought about by the traditional methods of passing in the form of inheritance and lack of formal wills. Misunderstanding between tenants and their landlords (18%) was also frequent, which allows assuming the lack of clear communication and following tenancy agreements. Several traditional land allocations by the traditional authorities (10%) and encroachment or boundary conflicts (6%) also depict how traditional land administration practices and poor surveying will only lead to conflict in urban regions.

**Table 3: Strategies Used by Estate Managers in Conflict Resolution (N = 50 Estate Managers)**

Conflict Resolution Strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Documentation & title verification	35	70.0
Mediation between conflicting parties	42.0	84.0
Use of legal professionals or court referrals	25	50.0
Engagement with traditional/community leaders	28	56.0
Eviction enforcement of or tenancy renewal guidance	18	36.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

It is evident in Table 3 that the most applied strategy among the estate managers was mediation (84%). This implies that they are the hubs of mediating property disputes. Title verification (70%) and documentation were also commonly practiced, which again emphasizes the need to have proper records so as to avoid conflicts. Over fifty percent (56) of the respondents said that they use traditional or community leaders, and it shows the appreciation of the power of customary leaders in resolving disputes. Legal referrals were utilized by half of the manager of the estates (50%), and 36% of them carried out eviction or gave advice relating to tenancy. Such findings indicate that estate managers use informal and formal processes based on the specifics of each conflict.

**Table 4: Perceived Effectiveness of Estate Managers' Conflict Resolution Method.**  
(Scale: 1 = Not Effective, 5 = Very Effective)

Strategy Used	Mean Score	Interpretation
Mediation between parties	4.4	Very Effective.
Documentation and property verification	4.2	Very Effective.
Legal court Involvement	3.6	Effective.
Traditional leaders' engagement	3.9	Effective.
Eviction/legal action support	3.4	Moderately Effective.

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The effectiveness of conflict-resolution methods employed by the estate managers is shown in table 4. Mediation (mean = 4.4) was found to be the most efficient way, which once again reconfirmed its relevance in solving conflicts in an amicable manner. Verification and documentation of titles to property (mean = 4.2) were also very effective proving the importance of effective keeping of records. The process of utilizing the traditional leaders (mean = 3.9) was considered to be effective especially in the cases of facing conflicts based on the traditional land tenure. The moderately effective ones were the legal intervention (mean = 3.6) and the eviction or legal action (mean = 3.4) due to the fact that formal procedures may be time-consuming and expensive, which makes them less desirable.

**Table 5: Challenges Faced by Estate Managers in the Conflict Mitigation.**

Challenges Identified	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of access to reliable land records	31	62.0
Interference from traditional/political authorities	25	50.0
Inadequate legal framework for enforcement	22	44.0
Ignorance of property laws by clients	19	38.0
Personal bias or corruption in dispute processes	11	22.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 5 draws attention to the significant problems that are facing the estate managers. Inaccessibility to credible land records (62%), which invalidates due diligence, was the greatest challenge and is a factor that contributes to land ownership disputes. It also affected conflict-resolution processes because traditional and political authority (50%) interfered with the process, a bold occurrence of non-formal actors in the issues of land. Lack of strong legal enforcing systems (44%) also made the work of estate managers difficult since in most instances the dispute was not resolved because of delays or inconsistencies in the justice system. Also, the absence of knowledge about property laws among the clients (38%) was also a factor that led to misconceptions and failure to honor agreements. Even though with a lower frequency, personal bias or corruption among the practitioners (22%) was also observed and such a circumstance indicates that the professional ethics should be enforced strictly.

## Results

Table 1 shows the demographic situation of the respondents. The sample size was 50 estate managers (50%), 30 landlords (30%), and 20 tenants (20%). The majority of the respondents are males (63%), and only 37% are females. Regarding professional experience, the majority of them had 5 to 10 years of practice (41%), and 34 percent had more than 10 years of professional experience. These are demographics that demonstrate that the study has involved respondents who are well informed on the issue of property management in Benin City. Table 2 results reveal that the most prevalent source of property related conflicts (44 per cent) were differences in land ownership and title claims.

The disagreements based on inheritance made 22 percent, and the misunderstandings concerning the landlord and the tenant made 18 percent. Several allocations of land by the traditional authorities added 10% and 6% of the reported conflicts were as a result of boundary encroachment. As shown in table 3, most estate managers used mediation as their most common conflict resolution strategy (84%). At 70% documentation and title verification ensued. Those respondents who engaged traditional or community leaders in the process used 56 percent, and 50 percent reported referring cases to legal professionals or courts. Those 36% of the respondents used eviction enforcement or guidance connected to tenancy. As mentioned in Table 4, there were differences in the perceived effectiveness of the conflict resolution strategies. Mediation and documentation and property verification were the most popular (4.4 and 4.2, respectively). The interaction with traditional leaders was considered to be effective (mean = 3.9). In the meantime, interventions on legal basis (mean = 3.6) and the evincive actions (mean = 3.4) were perceived to be moderate in effect. Lastly, Table 5 reveals that most estate managers had the biggest challenge of lack of access to good land records (62%). Intrusion by traditional and political elites explained half of the responses, with feeble application of property rights (44 percent). Lack of awareness by the clients regarding property laws was 38 and 22% of the respondents cited personal bias or corruption as a limitation. The results have shown that the role of estate managers is very important, and multifaceted in the prevention as well as resolution of the property-related conflicts. Their roles, which include documentation, mediation, legal coordination among others, make them critical actors in enhancing peace and order in the urban real estate settings. Their effects are however limited by systemic issues like ineffective land registration systems, jurisdiction, legal pluralism, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. These findings support the topicality of the Conflict Transformation Theory that suggests that it is necessary to focus not only on the superficial conflict but on the structural prerequisites underlying conflict. Stakeholders: with better documentation, stakeholder consultations, and institutional reform advocacy, the estate managers contribute greatly to the long-term peacebuilding in Benin City and other urban areas.

## Conclusion

This paper has examined the importance of the estate managers in alleviating property based conflicts in Benin City, Edo State. It ranked land ownership conflicts, inheritance cases, landlord-tenant conflict, and encroachment as the most frequent conflict drivers- aggravated by lack of proper documentation, coexistence of land authority and lack of legal knowledge. The estate managers were also identified to use a range of conflict resolution tactics, which were in the form of mediation, checking of titles, consultations with traditional authorities and referrals to the law courts. Among them, mediation and documentation were seen as the most effective. Their success is however crippled by systemic barriers including poor land records, political manipulations and lack of public awareness of property rights. The results substantiate the usefulness of the Conflict Transformation Theory, according to which the key aspect is not only the resolution of disputes but also the reorganization of the background institutional structures. There is a unique role that the estate managers can play in facilitating this change; by advocacy, educating the law, community involvement and institutional change- helping to create a lasting peace and sustainable real estate development.

## Recommendations

On the findings, the subsequent recommendations are suggested:

1. **Digitisation of Land Records:** Land records in the Edo state government in partnership with professional institutions like NIESV should be digitized and made available with open and verifiable access to the land ownership information. This would assist in eradicating several claims and land fraud.
2. **Improve Public Education:** The estate managers are advised to collaborate with local governments to conduct regular awareness programs, workshops and trainings to sensitize landlords, tenants and prospective buyers on their rights and responsibilities under the law.
3. **Indeed Enhance Legal Support:** There should be better institutional and legal support of the estate managers especially in situations that involve customary ownership of land. They should have a more solid legal requirement that would provide them with more power and authority in resolving conflicts.
4. **Train in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):** Estate workers need to be trained to mediate, arbitrate, and negotiate with certifications to improve their ability to resolve community level conflicts.
5. **Formalize working relationships with Traditional Leaders:** Estate managers must form institutional relationships with traditional rulers and community leaders to harmonize the informal land use in the area with formalized processes and to solve the conflicts peacefully.
6. **Employ Professional Ethics:** Professional institutions are supposed to ensure that ethical practices are more enforced to curb prejudice, corruption and malpractices among the estate professionals.



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