



Tensions and Conflicts in the Socio-land Arenas of the South of Bougouni and Yanfolila, in Mali

Abstract: Cohabitation between natives of Bougouni and Yanfolila and non-natives is increasingly deteriorating due to a combination of factors. This article examines the causes of conflicts among the various actors in the socio-land arenas of Bougouni and Yanfolila. Quantitative data were collected from 240 randomly selected heads of agricultural production units (UPA) and 27 semi-structured interviews with resource people. The results reveal several causes of conflict, including pressure on agricultural, pastoral, and forest lands; the establishment of monetized royalties for non-natives; the massive influx of farmers from the Koutiala region; the return of Malians repatriated from the Ivory Coast; and the emergence of cashew cultivation. Indeed, the management of this migratory flow generates conflicts between natives and hosts, as well as within the native collective.

Mohamadine Asseydou ¹

Affiliation

¹ Mohamadine Asseydou, Enseignant-Chercheur à l'IPR/IFRA de Katibougou, Mali.

Corresponding Author

Mohamadine Asseydou*: mo.asseydou@gmail.com

Article History:

Received Date : Jan 27, 2026

Revised Date : Mar 12, 2026

Accepted Date : Mar 12, 2026

Published Date : Mar 24, 2026

Keywords

Conflicts, Autochthon, Non-Native, Natural Resources, Socio-Land Arena.

1.Introduction

Land tenure is a cross-cutting issue that affects food security, sustainable natural resource management, democratic governance, peacekeeping, and economic growth (A. Mansion & C. Broutin, 2013). However, its governance generates controversies and contradictions between various stakeholders. In a context of scarcity of fertile agricultural land, farmers are moving in search of opportunities for abundant farmland.

Indeed, the areas of Bougouni and Yanfolila, due to the availability of natural resources, have become receiving centers for internal migrants, especially from Yorosso and Koutiala. Thus, in the early years, the arrival of foreigners aroused a feeling of sympathy and hospitality. The natives were proud to see their brothers from other localities of the country come to settle on their lands. It was in this euphoria that the foreigners ceded land without conditions. However, the conditions for access to natural resources remain unclear, with legal pluralism, standards, and practices coexisting. Similar to what is happening in Côte d'Ivoire, according to A. Toh (2011): "The recurrence of land conflicts in western Ivory Coast clearly shows that local processes of reform of standards of access and land management have not been without crisis."

Furthermore, the first arrivals, thanks to this easy access to fertile land, quickly prospered. The favorable response from the latter encouraged other nationals from these vulnerable localities to swell the ranks of migrants. Like the snowball effect, before the start of each agricultural season, a new contingent arrives in the reception sites, creating competition around natural resources. In the same dynamic, Doeveenspeck (2004) notes that in Benin, "the analysis of the



acquisition of land by the non-native population can lead to a revitalization of the institutional rules of traditional land law as well as the explosion of latent conflicts between the inhabitants of different indigenous villages." The confluence of several factors lies at the root of the escalation of tensions and land conflicts among actors in the socio-land arena in the arrival areas.

These tensions and land conflicts noted between indigenous people and agricultural migrants are part of a dynamic of social change. These antagonisms have economic, social, and political implications for the different actors. Even more so in rural Africa, there is legal pluralism of rights (customary law, national legislation, and Islamic principles) that coexists alongside a panoply of actors and land regulatory bodies, often making land disputes difficult to resolve. The objective of this article is to explain the conflictual interactions between landowners and non-indigenous people in the socio-land arenas of Bougouni and Yanfolila

2. Methods

This research was conducted in the current Bougouni region of southern Mali, in the Yanfolila (Wassoulou) and Bougouni districts in their southern part, bordering Côte d'Ivoire. Data collection took place between March and June 2019. This study adopted a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative). For the quantitative approach, the main targets were the heads of non-native Agricultural Production Units (APUs). These individuals are intended to provide information on the recurrence of land conflicts in the survey targets.

The criteria for choosing villages consisted of identifying localities that host a significant number of internal migrants and where socio-land tensions are resurgent between new arrivals and their guardians. This explains the

selection of the extreme south of these border circles, along the northern border of Côte d'Ivoire, which attracts Malian agricultural migrants seeking natural resources (see Table 1).

To obtain a representative sample for extrapolation to the entire survey universe, 240 UPA leaders were randomly selected. They are distributed among eight villages from four communes, or two villages per commune. Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire sent to each UPA leader. After establishing their list, a simple random selection was used to select the respondents per village. While the qualitative method was used to collect the opinions and perceptions of resource persons through the interview guide, the final method was direct observation to immerse oneself in reality. The choice of the qualitative approach included resource persons and local people. The intention is to compare the various versions of the actors. This approach made it possible to obtain discursive registers to compare with the quantitative. To do this, semi-structured interviews were carried out with resource persons (customary authorities, griots, representatives of women and youth, heads of technical services, non-native leaders).

Table 1: Villages surveyed in the study area

Reception areas	Circles	Communes	Villages
	Bougouni	Sibirila	Ouogona et Kodonoun
		Yinindougou	Manfala et Solakoroni
	Yanfolila	Gouanan	Kokoun et Guélékétigouila
		Koussan	Sandougoula et Kouralami ni



3. Results

3.1 Causes and manifestations of conflicts

Indeed, the causes of conflicts between different categories of actors are diverse. These include agricultural land, different water uses, the introduction of monetary royalties, foreign status, the massive influx of migrants, and the return of Malians repatriated from the Ivory Coast from host areas, the emergence of cashew cultivation, the withdrawal of fields, the expulsion of agricultural migrants, etc. Tensions crystallize around these factors.

3.2 Massive arrival of migrants

Table 2: Respondents' Views

Arrival of Foreigners	Number	Percentage
Yes	53	22,1
No	187	77,9
Total	240	100

Field data, 2019

Looking at the table, only 22.1% of those surveyed identified the massive influx as one of the causes of tensions between migrants and their guardians. This low rate is because the question was addressed directly to the non-natives surveyed, who tried to minimize it. However, this figure is significant; it is an indicator of the current situation and the prospects in these areas, which are beset by the significant migratory flow in search of fertile land. On the other hand, the natives strongly emphasize the massive influx of migrants as a factor of pressure on natural resources, leading to tensions. This notable native, S. N., attempts to highlight the situation prevailing in the arrival areas: *"Given the wealth of our area, we are invaded by foreigners who come looking for agricultural land and others for pasture. Increasingly, there is competition and even conflict between migrants and the local population over these resources."*

Some locals are also resistant to this rush of migrants into their communities and,

consequently, their resources. During field investigations, it is common to hear that the refusal to accept foreigners is due to their areas being saturated. Landowners are trying to withdraw their fields that have already been allocated to newcomers. This is also a source of conflict between the various stakeholders. Since their arrival, other issues related to the exploited resources have been uncovered, generating significant enthusiasm. Landowners are increasingly engaged in agricultural activities. Beyond the economic issues, there are social and political implications that encourage the emergence of deterrent measures against newcomers.

3.1.2 Competition for agricultural land

Table 3: Access to agricultural land from host areas to host areas

Agricultural land	Number of people	Percentage
Yes	203	84,6
No	37	15,4
Total	240	100

Field data, 2019

When interviewed, 84.6% confirmed that there is strong competition for agricultural land. Land is a strategic issue that fuels tensions between the various stakeholders in the land arena. The fundamental reason driving this significant migratory flow to host sites is the availability of fertile land. This massive influx of migrants seeking land has led to near land saturation in these localities. Rural immigrants, mostly farmers, have contributed to land development. As such, they have boosted agricultural production in these host areas, particularly cotton growing. This has led the local population to withdraw their land from agricultural migrants. The introduction of cashew plantations has accelerated land competition. As this village chief, B. D., puts it:



People here didn't know that we could develop their land and succeed here. The boom in cashew nut prices, which sell for between 700 and 800 CFA francs per kg, is leading landowners to remove cashew trees and turn the land into orchards. This is one of the factors that has generated significant enthusiasm for the land.

The guardians of agricultural migrants decided to impose an annual fee ranging from 17,000 to 20,000 CFA francs, or its value in kind, for the exploitation of 5 hectares per non-native family. The withdrawal of land rights and other restrictive measures against new arrivals was noted. Agricultural migrants strongly contested this tax. Its application leads to disputes and clashes. The illustrative case is that of the village of Solakoroni, where expulsions and departures of agricultural migrants contributed to a deleterious atmosphere among the actors in the socio-land arena of the locality.

Indeed, the withdrawal of land by farmland owners creates significant tensions between the various stakeholders in the socio-land tenure arena, often leading to violence. However, the land reclamation process is gaining momentum. These non-native farmers are also adept at extensive agriculture, which consumes space. This, in effect, creates competition among the various stakeholders over farmland. Land is a driver of conflict between the two stakeholder groups. This is how agricultural migrant D. K. recounts his misadventure: *"The problem was when our guardians wanted to withdraw our fields. We fought all the way to the judge in Yanfolila; we are Malian like them. We explained the problem to the judge. He ordered us to occupy the premises. If there's a problem, let him know."* It is worth noting that traditional mechanisms for settling land disputes are considered biased by newcomers. There is a crisis of confidence in these bodies when it comes to disputes between non-natives and

natives. This explains this recourse to positive law to resolve matters.

3.1.3 Tensions over pastoral and forest resources

Table 4: Tensions over pastures and forests

Tensions	Number	Percentage
Yes	91	37,9
No	149	62,1
Total	240	100

Field data, 2019

Table 4 shows that 37.9% affirm competition over these resources, compared to 62.1% who deny its existence between the different actors. This overlap of activities and uses is not without problems between the different actors. This rate of 37.9% can be partly explained by the flow of pastoralists and agropastoralists heading towards these areas with abundant natural resources. However, according to local logic, their areas are exclusively agricultural, which can justify their intolerance towards herds, especially foreign ones. As this indigenous woman, K.S., laments:

The animals ravaged our garden during the night, not far from the village. No one knows who their owners are. There is suspicion among transhumant Fulani. That is why in our region, we are wary of the arrival of the herds. We informed our husbands, but there was no follow-up.

Like most localities, relations between farmers and herders are generally conflictual. This is all the more understandable given that these activities overlap in the same area. For local people, the damage caused by transhumant herds is cited as a loss of income. Concerns are very palpable at this level.

On another level, the management and use of forests and the emergence of new uses with the arrival of transhumant herders and foreign farmers are also becoming problematic. Transhumant herders because of their rich



fodder resources, and on the other, by agricultural migrants who clear them for fields, covet these forests, on the one hand. Moreover, these new uses contrast with forestry policy and with local people's hostility toward the newcomers.

Some indigenous leaders, in their speeches, attempt to calm things down by justifying the new measures introduced (the reduction of land areas for non-natives) by a problem beyond their control, namely the construction of classified forests three kilometers from villages. Agricultural migrants, who see them as a strategy to drive them out, reject these arguments. This contributes to the escalation of crises and tensions between migrants and their property owners. Beyond that, some agricultural migrants report the inhumane treatment they often endure on both sides. Like this non-native leader, Mr. S, who deplores the attitude of his guardians towards him:

The neighbors (towards Wassoulou) mistreat our animals when they arrive at their house, smashing their heads as if they were destroying their crops. Instead of demanding a fine, they brutalize our herds. Then, the water and forestry agents also beat and hit our shepherds for no valid reason. Are we in a country governed by the rule of law? We are being left behind in Maliba.

In the same vein, D.K., a newcomer, denounces the behavior of the Water and Forestry agents in these terms:

I, personally, am harassed. Only three days ago, the Water and Forestry agents came to look for me. However, they reported me absent. After cross-checking, the agents are accusing me of building a small house in the classified forest, and part of my field is within it. My guardian is angry with me; moreover, he is inciting the agents against me. However, it is he himself who allocated me the place. Now, he wants to get rid of me.

These kinds of remarks are rife among newcomers, who openly accuse their guardians and the technical service agents responsible for natural resource management. In their speeches, the establishment of forests as wildlife reserves is used as a ploy to withdraw the fields already granted by their "*Diatigui*."

According to them, there are other implications behind these new attitudes toward them. According to foreigners, the Water and Forestry Service is in the pay of village authorities. Regardless, forest resources are a major issue in this new dynamic; everyone has their own logic. For agricultural migrants, they represent spaces to be transformed into agricultural fields. The Water and Forestry Service emphasizes protecting threatened or endangered resources.

On another level, there is low-intensity competition over harvested products (shea, néré, etc.) between the natives and their hosts. This is due to the arrival of migrant families, which has led to increased food needs. It mainly involves women, for whom this activity is exclusively reserved. These practices spark speculation about these products, leading to overbidding. Non-native women are often criticized for failing to respect harvesting periods in accordance with the clauses that protect community forests. These anomalous behaviors also contribute to this deleterious atmosphere.

3.1.4 Foreign Status

Table 5: Foreign Status of Newcomers

Status	Number	Percentage
Yes	187	77,9
No	53	22,1
Total	240	100

Field data, 2019

The table shows that 77.9% of respondents feel stigmatized by the host population. Their status as foreigners places them at the bottom



of the ladder in the host society. As S.K., a migrant head of household, explains:

Here, we're not considered full citizens. We do not have the freedom to decide for ourselves. Rather, we are at the disposal of our guardians. When they have work to do, without warning or considering our schedules, they summon us. As a result, we are forced to drop everything, to stop all business, to do what they want. We have the status of a slave here. When they move, we follow them.

This attitude is very unpopular with non-natives, who feel enslaved by their guardians. Thus, they believe that the host population fosters stereotypes and preconceived notions about them. According to them, this negative perception manifests as mistrust, a sense of social juniority, and a lack of consideration. It effectively results in social differentiation and unequal treatment within the host society. Through this excerpt, the status of foreigners is portrayed as second-class. The new situation is very difficult for newcomers to digest.

Furthermore, the massive arrival of rural migrants intensifies feelings of rejection towards them. This renewed interest in arrival sites is beginning to be thwarted by locals in agreement with their elites (the town hall, intellectuals residing elsewhere). Since this migratory phenomenon has economic, social, and political consequences, they are beginning to integrate these factors into their strategies. In some opinions, the intellectuals on these sites are the main instigators of these new measures to deter the migratory phenomenon, or at least to take advantage of this opportunity.

3.1.5 Conflicts within the Indigenous Community

It should be noted that tensions also exist between Indigenous people. These tensions stem from the management of agricultural migrants. However, it should be emphasized

that this situation is mainly encountered in two villages surveyed (Kokoun and Guéletikiguéla). In the other cases, the mechanical solidarity of landowners prevails over other considerations. Nevertheless, this phenomenon has created rifts between the host populations in the villages mentioned. The words of this village chief, B.D., testify to the poisonous atmosphere prevailing in some villages:

Tensions rose between us (Indigenous people) to the point that I went to notify the relevant authorities (Town Hall, Justice). They assured me and asked me not to summon my parents, to drop the matter. If they harmed someone (non-Indigenous), they would intervene and enforce the law." Cohabitation is still difficult because they are hostile to foreigners. However, the situation is starting to calm down. We are in a Cold War situation.

Indeed, the management of this migratory flow has sparked open conflicts among locals. Several factors contribute to this escalation of tensions between them. First, the sharing or capture of the migratory rent between the different categories of the village. Some protagonists accuse the village authorities of collecting the benefits related to the settlement of agricultural migrants on their own. It should be noted that agricultural migrants are required to pay 20 kg of cotton per ton for the AV, in addition to other gestures and assistance to the guardians. In addition, the management of this windfall divides the landowners.

As for the customary authorities, they speak of embezzlement by the former managers (nationals of these villages) of funds from agricultural migrant royalties. This has crystallized tensions between the various village stakeholders, leading to a crisis of trust. As was the case in this example recounted by this host village chief, L.D.,

Everything was going well until we noticed grain being stolen from the store. After the



investigation, it turned out that the perpetrators were locals. As village chief, I decided. Since it is the newcomers who contribute a lot, I authorized them to create their own Village Association (VA). The disgruntled villagers are asking the Minyankas (the majority ethnic group in Koutiala and Yorosso) to leave the village. I say no. This is the problem that divides us.

This denotes a challenge to or the obsolescence of the local conflict resolution institution. This institution is often deemed partisan and partial in its decisions, as the regulators are also actors in these conflicts. A portion of the population accuses them of using this migratory flow for profit. Beyond economic issues, those accused of embezzlement play on another level, power relations, given that they are natives of the village. This primary occupation is a source of prestige and confers legitimacy in rural areas, which is why they demand the expulsion of migrants. This situation, within a certain framework, gives the impression that social norms are upside down. In such circumstances, the perpetrators must be stigmatized and rejected by the community in accordance with traditional African values.

The settlement of non-natives in host communities presents several challenges coveted and disputed by various local stakeholders. One of these is the migratory income. Alongside this, there is labor, since they assist the guardians. The beneficiaries of this income are generally the notables. This distribution of wealth frustrates other social groups excluded from it. Then there is social prestige; having a certain number of migrants confers respectability and social consideration. Lineages that own large areas of land are more sought after and respected by the newcomers, to the detriment of the rest of society. This results in a significant number of debtors owing them money.

Thus, the return of some nationals from these areas who lived in Côte d'Ivoire in the wake of the 2002 crisis that raged in this country. This return creates a growing need for land resources. All of this amplifies the competition between non-natives and Ivorian returnees from these localities, most of whom worked on Ivorian plantations. With the experience acquired abroad, these returning migrants are reproducing the same practices in their native lands.

3.1.6 Removal of fields from non-natives

Table 6: Removal of fields

Removal	Number	Percentage
Yes	123	51,2
No	117	48,8
Total	240	100,0

Field data, 2019

Looking at the table, more than half of the respondents (51.2%) state that they have been victims of or witnessed this phenomenon. By corroborating the quantitative data with the qualitative data, some of the statements made by the various stakeholders interviewed support this theory, even if the respondents' versions differ. A certain dichotomy emerges in these discourses. According to the non-natives, the withdrawal of the fields occurs amid tension between the natives and their hosts. The words of the young non-natives, J.G., who was forced to become a mechanic, are quite illustrative of the local realities in these areas receiving agricultural migrants:

Before our arrival, cotton growing was marginal. We were the ones who initiated the cotton business. At first, I was allocated 32 hectares. For the past two years, part of the allocated field has been taken away from me; it has remained vacant, with no one cultivating it. I consider it selfishness but thank God I have succeeded in other ways in my life.

As part of the renegotiation of non-native access rights to agricultural land, fields that



have already been allocated are being withdrawn. They are thus classified as village heritage. Thus, according to the logic of local decision-makers, the allocation of natural resources must consider the new conditions of access and exploitation that only apply to non-natives. Among agricultural migrants, a different discursive register is mobilized. They believe that they are beginning to prosper in their host sites, and the motivations for withdrawal lie elsewhere. Thus, their success arouses jealousy. They believe their guardians have become aware of the potential of their previously neglected resources. This is a desire to slow their momentum of work and wealth. As explained in the excerpt from this interview with S.K., a young non-native:

I was given a field for a few years, I developed it elsewhere, and it has just been taken away from me. Just when I'm starting to earn money." The new land I have been assigned requires significant effort. It seems as if, as soon as you start to succeed, they throw a spanner in the works.

This practice is perceived by migrants as a strategy to curb their activities, a perpetual cycle. This may be motivated by those in charge of natural resources to eliminate the influence of non-natives and possible domination over their own lands. Agricultural migrants are increasingly asserting their influence within host communities through their efforts and actions. They see themselves as vectors of local development. This underpins the potential competition at the local level. There is a whole host of economic, social, and cultural issues behind the withdrawal of fields from non-natives. The new measures also constitute a strategy to protect against the latter's land occupation. Thus, relations between newcomers and natives are essentially based on a sense of guardianship. This places the former in a relationship of allegiance to their benefactors. Any attempt to free themselves from this system of guardianship is seen as a

transgression of local social norms that cannot be tolerated. The removal of fields may be motivated by this desire to annihilate non-natives who pose a threat to their privilege. In the systems of thought, foreigners must be subservient to their property owner. Moreover, the village association is one of the village's flagship organisations. The creation of a non-native AV (Village Association) is poorly understood and poorly received by the village's first occupants. It is strategic in the village; it is the public treasury. To atone for this affront, it was necessary to remove the fields that constitute the economic lungs. It is inconceivable in rural areas that foreigners claim the same rights as landowners. In the discourse cited above, the autonomy of foreigners is only the tip of the iceberg. Economic, social, and political issues are at the heart of these misunderstandings. However, they also use artifices to get rid of their hosts who have become a burden to them.

On the indigenous side, a different story is heard. The apparent causes cited include the return of some of the sons of the village of adventure, especially in the wake of the Ivorian crisis, the establishment of wildlife reserves by the state in certain villages, the land needs of different indigenous lineages, the failure to respect social norms, and misunderstandings between landowners and agricultural migrants.

On another level, the conflict is taking on new dimensions, particularly intra-community or intra-family. In some cases, it pits indigenous people against each other. In other words, there are those who are fiercely hostile to the presence of non-natives and those who openly protect and support them after several years of cohabitation. This is the case in the villages of Kokoun and Guéletikiguéla in the Yanfolila district, after several years of cohabitation. The two respective village chiefs and some of their relatives are allies of the non-natives. They support them against all odds, much to the dismay of other landowners who are hostile to



their presence in their villages. The atmosphere has become so poisonous that landowners opposed to the new arrivals have withdrawn their fields to force them to leave their localities. The two excerpts from interviews with these two village chiefs are quite illustrative of the situation prevailing in these two villages mentioned and, by extension, in the migrant reception areas.

L.D., village chief of Guéletikiguéla, is quite illustrative:

The villagers, unhappy with the creation of their AV, are asking the Minyankas to leave the village. I say no. We were the ones who asked them to come and help us pay the loan. They removed that thorn in our side. We're asking them to leave now; it's too ungrateful, unworthy of us, if we proceed like this.

B.D., village chief of Kokoun:

These days, I'm the only one who agrees to welcome foreigners against the wishes of the other villagers. They must have regretted their presence in our village out of selfishness. Then, they demanded that the non-natives leave the village, and I opposed it. My brothers and I opposed the wishes of the other villagers who were demanding our departure. They took away their fields. It is not humane. They no longer want to feel like foreigners in our village. I refused to expel foreigners; we are all Malians.

For two years, tensions have been running high between the natives and their hosts. Thus, the lesson learned from these interviews is that the management of foreigners divides the natives, with one party supporting them and the other against them. The issue of migrants is disrupting social relations between the original inhabitants by creating a bipolarization between the two pro- and anti-non-native camps. The real causes lie in the capture of migratory rents. In the socio-land arena, the consensus is that the pro-native camp captures royalties and other related benefits, such as labor, to the detriment of the anti-native camp, which believes it is being harmed in the distribution of rents. This conflict of interest

undermines social cohesion and good cohabitation among the different actors. Moreover, in other cases, the conflict pits natives and newcomers against each other over the allocation of natural resources.

On the other hand, there are examples of populations coexisting harmoniously. They maintain that they are not victims of this withdrawal of the fields granted since their arrival, i.e., 48.8%. This part of the respondents maintains that they retain the ceded lands. However, in their speeches, most respondents at this level state that they face withdrawal if they do not adhere to the new conditions imposed on them. These threats are symptoms of the deterioration of relations between the different categories of actors. In the logic of the non-natives, these measures are perceived as a strategy to expel or economically destroy them.

4. Discussions

4.1 Causes of Conflicts

The bitter conflict in Solakoroni is related to the implementation of an annual monetary fee, along with conditions such as reducing the area allocated to foreigners to 5 hectares. The results revealed protests by non-natives over monetary or in-kind fees. The findings of Kadjo et al. (2019, p. 116) in Côte d'Ivoire are consistent with the data from this research. They believe that, under the influence of certain social elders and through contagion, land is losing its divine value and becoming a commodity. Money is entering the land relations that now link natives and migrants. In the host areas studied, there is an emergence of market transactions to the detriment of the symbolic. This also results in tighter conditions for access to natural resources. This situation has exacerbated tensions between foreigners and landowners who are trying to change the rules of the game.

4.1.1 Foreign Status



The foreign status of newcomers places them at the bottom of the ladder in the host society. Agricultural migrants believe that their success fuels feelings of rejection among some guardians. J.P. Chauveau & S.K. Bobo (2005, p. 250) argue that: *"foreign migrants, particularly Burkinabe migrants, have found themselves particularly stigmatized by their relative economic success during a period of crisis in the cocoa and coffee sector."* Most non-native interviewees attribute the exacerbation of tensions in the socio-land tenure system to their economic advancement, which they say poses threats or leads to land seizures. However, it should be remembered that the Ivorian example has been revived by the various political crises the country has experienced.

4.1.2 Massive Arrival of Migrants

It has been observed that the proportion of migrants exceeds that of natives in some host villages. This is perceived as a threat to local power. Similarly, V. Bonnetcase (2001, p. 08) noted the same situation in his work:

"This increase in migratory flows is particularly noticeable among the Baoulé in the Center-West. This migration reaches such proportions that it is common to see migrant populations exceed native populations in certain areas. This is particularly the case in the Gouro region."

The demographic weight can disrupt the balance of power between non-natives and their hosts.

The return of Malians from these localities in Côte d'Ivoire following the Ivory Coast War and cashew cultivation are among the causes of tensions between actors in the socio-land arena, as well as the economic advancement of migrants. These data are consistent with the findings of J.P. Chauveau & P. Richards (2008, p. 134), who assert that:

In Côte d'Ivoire, structural adjustment policies: the major role of foreigners in socioeconomic

differentiation was precisely one of the main reasons for the hostility of young Gban towards them... However, young people's resentment is also directed at heads of families who have ceded land to foreigners and are often seen as being in collusion with them. The crisis has thus rekindled intra-family tensions.

4.2 Conflicts between the different actors in the socio-land arena

Among the causes of tensions or land conflicts, land occupies a prominent place. Land is a strategic issue that crystallizes tensions between the different actors in the land arena. Thus, with the significant migratory flow towards host sites, this has generated enthusiasm and increased the value of land resources in the host areas. D.M. Amalaman et al. observe this situation (2020) in Côte d'Ivoire in an article:

This conflictual debate around the 'Goin Dèbé,' whose main belligerents are the indigenous Guéré, the non-native Baoulé and Agni, and the non-native Burkinabé Mossi and Lobi, has revealed the extent to which land still constitutes the sole subsistence resource in rural Ivorian areas today.

The issue of foreigners and agricultural land fuels land conflicts in rural Africa, especially in a context of pluralistic rights. There is a strong relationship between the emergence of land tensions or conflicts and the arrival of non-natives.

Similarly, it has been observed that there are links between ethnicity and land conflicts across Africa. The findings of this article revealed this reality during open conflicts between non-natives, mostly of the Minyanka ethnic group, and indigenous people of Bambara or Malinke culture. Conflicts also take on ethnic and identity dimensions that can lead to inter-ethnic conflicts. Mudinga (2012) supports these findings in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He believes that ethnic conflicts between Rwandophones and



indigenous people in eastern DRC (Kivu) in 2012 were rooted in land issues. According to the author, conflicts are first a problem of land control before being a political matter.

Indeed, there is a complex combination of factors that contribute to the deterioration of relations between landlords and non-natives. This results in factors of social change induced by this migratory movement. They are mostly linked to the management and use of natural resources. These resources carry economic, socio-cultural, and political issues. At the forefront, agricultural land is cited as one of the main factors of tension or conflict between agricultural migrants and natives.

Thus, François. & Anselme (2016) analyses land conflicts between natives and foreigners in the West of Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in the regions of Guémon and Cavally. They conclude that the progressive reduction of arable land, illegal occupation of land, violations of plot boundaries, and questioning of transaction contracts were the factors generating these conflicts.

Conflicts between landowners and non-natives generally revolve around the allocation of natural resources. They are subject to social stigma in this regard. As Komona (2014) states: *Southwest Côte d'Ivoire, to which the Taï region belongs, is an immigration region where non-natives (Ivorians from other regions) and non-natives from neighboring countries have settled since 1965 to engage in cash-crop farming. This has led to land scarcity, which has transformed into permanent land conflicts between natives and immigrants, thus creating a climate of mistrust between the communities.*

Contrary to this author's findings, the situation pits national and non-national actors against each other. This Malian migration, also studied, is relatively recent compared to the Ivorian case discussed.

5. Conclusion

In light of the empirical data, it appears that a combination of factors fuels conflicts between the various actors in the socio-land arena. The massive influx of agricultural migrants has led to near-land saturation at the arrival sites. Thus, the worsening of conflicts is linked to this intense competition over agricultural land, according to the respondents (84.6%). Added to this are the return of Malian repatriates from the reception sites following the Ivorian crisis, the success of cashew cultivation, and the practice of extensive, land-consuming agriculture. With the experience gained abroad, these returnees have reproduced the same practices in their native lands. As a result, strong social pressure has been exerted on lineage leaders, who have distributed land to non-natives. Foreigner status was also a cause of tension among the different categories of actors. According to Table 3, 77.9% of non-native respondents reported that the host population stigmatized them. The feeling of stigmatization is highlighted as a factor that hinders their full integration into the adoptive society. Behind these conflicts lies a tangle of economic, social, and political issues. These include, among others, the capture of royalties by indigenous lineage leaders, the monetization of relationships between guardians and hosts, and the threat to local power through the influence of certain non-natives. Finally, land is a source of issues that both build and break relationships.

Conflict of Interest. The authors declare there is no conflict of interest

Funding.

The project received no funding from the government, organisations, or institutions. Authors sponsored this project.



References

- [1] Amalaman, D. M., Mian, B. J. F., & Kone, G. (2020). Conflit foncier du Goin-Débé à Guiglo en Côte d'Ivoire : Fantôme ethnicisé de la guerre post-électorale ivoirienne de 2010. *European Scientific Journal*, 16(10), 362–375.
- [2] Bonnacase, V. (2001). Les étrangers et la terre en Côte d'Ivoire à l'époque coloniale. *IRD, Travaux et Documents RÉFO*, 2, 1–57.
- [3] Chauveau, J.-P., & Bobo, S. K. (2005). Crise foncière, crise de la ruralité et relations entre autochtones et migrants sahéliens en Côte d'Ivoire forestière. *Outre-Terre*, 2(11), 247–264.
- [4] Chauveau, J.-P., & Richards, P. (2008). Les racines agraires des insurrections ouest-africaines : Une comparaison Côte d'Ivoire–Sierra Léone. *Politique africaine*, 3(111), 131–167.
- [5] Doevespeck, M. (2004). Migrations rurales, accès au foncier et rapports interethniques au sud du Borgou (Bénin) : Une approche méthodologique plurielle. *Africa Spectrum*, 39(3), 359–380.
- [6] François, K. N., & Anselme, N. B. (2016). Conflits fonciers intercommunautaires et fracture sociale dans les régions du Guémon et du Cavally à l'Ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire. *European Scientific Journal*, 12(14), 240–261.
- [7] Kadjo, A., Yoro, A. E. N., & Traoré, K. M. (2019). Analyse des interactions foncières conflictuelles à Fengolo dans l'ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire. *Kafoudal : Revue des Sciences Sociales de l'Université Peleforo Gon Coulibaly*, 2, 109–128.
- [8] Komana, B. K. (2014). Recompositions de l'espace Taï et gouvernance du parc national dans un contexte de crise (Sud-Ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire). *Éthique et économique/Ethics and Economics*, 11(1), 127–144.
- [9] Mansion, A., & Broutin, C. (2013). Quelles politiques foncières en Afrique subsaharienne? : Défis, acteurs et initiatives contemporaines. *Le Déméter*, 169–180.
- [10] Mudinga, E. M. (2012). Conflits fonciers à l'Est de la RDC : Au-delà de la confrontation entre rwandophones et autochtones à Kalehe. *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs, Annuaire 2012–2013*, 195–218.
- [11] Toh, A. (2011). Crise militaro-politique et « milicianisation » des ressources foncières en Côte d'Ivoire : Enjeux fonciers et mobilisation des organisations paramilitaires. *KASA BYA KASA, Revue d'anthropologie et de sociologie*, 19, 96–111.