Building Resilience and Inclusion in Conflict Land Markets

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Abstract: Land markets play a central role in shaping access to land, livelihoods, and social identity, and are critical to economic development and social cohesion. In fragile, conflict-affected, and violent (FCV) contexts, however, land markets are often disrupted by tenure insecurity, displacement, overlapping claims, elite capture, and weak or politicized governance. These dynamics undermine trust in institutions, increase coerced and informal transactions, and can turn land into a driver of grievance and renewed conflict. This paper presents a conceptual and analytical framework to examine how FCV contexts affect land markets and their institutional and regulatory components. The framework links the multidimensional drivers of fragility, conflict, and violence to key elements of land markets, including land rights and tenure, legal frameworks, institutions, land information systems, transactions, and market actors. Using this framework, the paper adopts a resilience perspective to identify practical recommendations for countering the impacts of FCV on land markets and addressing underlying drivers of fragility. By focusing on sources of resilience such as social capital, economic development, information and communication, and community aptitude, the paper highlights entry points to strengthen tenure security, promote inclusion, and support recovery and peacebuilding in FCV-affected contexts.

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I. Introduction

Land is a foundational asset for human well-being, economic livelihoods, and social identity. Access to land influences where people live, how they secure income, and how they relate to communities and institutions. Land markets play a central role in allocating this asset by determining who has access to land and under what conditions, through the rules and processes that govern the transfer of land rights. These transfers occur through a wide range of mechanisms, including formal, legally recognized transactions as well as informal and customary arrangements. The functioning of land markets is shaped by land policies, legal and institutional frameworks, land administration and registration systems, social norms, and the land agencies and professionals who facilitate transactions. When these elements operate effectively, land markets support land-use planning, urbanization, agriculture, housing, and infrastructure development, while also contributing to social cohesion by clarifying rights and reducing disputes over valuable assets such as land and property. In fragile, conflict-affected, and violent (FCV) contexts, however, land markets are often disrupted, distorted, or captured.

The objective of this paper is to identify and assess opportunities to build resilience and inclusion in land markets affected by fragility, conflict, and violence. This objective is closely linked to several Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 11 on sustainable and inclusive communities and Goal 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions. In FCV settings, access to land is frequently undermined by tenure insecurity, displacement, overlapping claims, elite capture, and land grabbing. These outcomes reflect a broader deterioration of land governance, characterized by inadequate or politicized policy and legal frameworks, weak and fragmented institutions, corruption, mismanagement of state land, and declining public investment in land administration. As a result, land transactions are more likely to take place under duress, especially for socially or financially vulnerable populations, while oversight bodies and dispute-resolution mechanisms often prove ineffective.

The paper focuses on building knowledge of how land transactions, both legitimate and illegitimate, take place during periods of fragility, conflict, and violence. Understanding how land markets function in FCV contexts is critical for mitigating immediate threats to tenure security and for guiding the development of land administration systems and transitional justice responses, including land restitution. In many FCV settings, non-state actors fill governance gaps by providing land-related services in ways that may undermine tenure rights and deepen exclusion. At the same time, weakened trust in state institutions and the erosion of legal certainty can transform land from a stabilizing economic asset into a source of grievance and renewed conflict.

To address these dynamics, the paper provides a conceptual and analytical framework to examine how FCV contexts affect land markets and their underlying institutional and regulatory components. This framework links the multidimensional drivers of fragility, conflict, and violence to specific elements of land markets, including land rights and tenure, legal frameworks, institutions, land information systems, transactions, land values, informal markets, demand and supply dynamics, and land services. Within this framework, the paper adopts a resilience perspective as a central analytical lens. Resilience is used to examine how land markets and land governance systems can absorb, adapt to, and recover from FCV-related shocks while maintaining or restoring tenure security, inclusion, and basic market functionality.

The resilience perspective is not treated as an abstract concept but as a practical tool to identify recommendations for countering the drivers of FCV as they affect land markets. By focusing on sources of resilience such as social capital, economic development, information and communication, and community aptitude, the paper highlights opportunities to reduce coercive and exclusionary land transactions, rebuild trust in land institutions, strengthen dispute-resolution mechanisms, and support more equitable access to land during periods of crisis and recovery. In doing so, the paper demonstrates how strengthening land market governance can contribute not only to economic recovery but also to peacebuilding, social cohesion, and the prevention of renewed fragility.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to a still limited body of literature on how land markets can be mobilized in contexts of active conflict, fragility, and violence to build resilience rather than exacerbate instability. Because access to land and unresolved land disputes are often drivers or consequences of conflict, addressing the governance frameworks that underpin land markets is central to strengthening justice, the rule of law, and long-term stability. This understanding also underpins efforts to better protect and empower vulnerable populations in FCV-affected areas, ensuring that land markets contribute to recovery and inclusion rather than reinforcing patterns of dispossession and inequality.

II. Framework: Land Markets in Fragile, Conflict-Affected, and Violent (FCV) Contexts

A. Land markets and FCV contexts: Definitions and core concepts

It is important to define what is understood as a land market and how FCV contexts affect it. Understanding the interaction between land market components and the dimensions of FCV, as well as the capacity of these markets to withstand and recover from FCV-related shocks, is critical for identifying practical and effective interventions.

A land market can be understood as the system through which rights to own, use, or transfer land are exchanged between actors, either formally through legally recognized procedures or informally through customary or extra-legal practices. Such transactions may involve sales, leases, mortgages, gifts, or inheritance arrangements, reflecting both statutory systems and local norms (Platteau, 1996; Deininger, 2003). The effectiveness of land markets depends on a broader institutional and regulatory ecosystem that provides clear and enforceable legal frameworks, capable institutions such as land administration agencies and judicial bodies, reliable land information systems including registries and cadasters, and accessible services such as surveying, adjudication, and credit provision (World Bank, 2003; FAO, 2012). Where these elements function cohesively, land markets reduce transaction costs, enhance tenure security, and support productive investment, contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction. Conversely, weak or absent institutions raise risks, promote informality, and exacerbate inequality (Deininger et al., 1998). Secure, transparent, and well-regulated land markets not only facilitate efficient allocation of land resources, but also reinforce social stability by clarifying rights and reducing disputes, making them a cornerstone of solid development strategies (UN-Habitat, 2020; World Bank, 2021).

FCV Definition

There is not a standard FCV definition; however, per the World Bank's FCV Strategy (2020-2025 an FCV context can be analyzed through each of its components:

Fragility: These include countries with deep governance issues and institutional weaknesses. They also include high levels of exclusion, lack of capacity and limited provision of basic services to the population. These contexts also include situations in which the state is unable or unwilling to manage or mitigate social, economic, political, security, or environmental risks.

Conflict: These include countries in active conflict. Conflicts occur when state and non-state actors use violence to assert power or settle grievances.

Violence: These include countries with high levels of interpersonal and gang violence. This definition also encompasses violence against children (VAC) and gender-based violence (GBV).

Source: World Bank, 2020

The institutional and regulatory framework of land markets encompasses at least nine components. The following table presents these components along with a brief description for each of them.

Table 1 Land markets regulatory framework components

Component	Description

1. Land Rights and Tenure	Formal and informal rights to access and use land
2. Legal Framework	Laws governing ownership, transfers, and disputes
3. Institutions	Authorities managing land governance and dispute resolution
4. Land Information	Maps, registries, and valuation systems
5. Transactions	Processes of buying, selling, leasing, inheritance, etc.
6. Land Values and Pricing	Market-based and assessed land values
7.Informal/Customary Markets	Unregistered but socially recognized systems
8. Demand & Supply	Determined by population, economic activity, and land availability
9. Land Services and Actors	Surveyors, lawyers, valuers, brokers, etc.

These components are essential for the analysis of the impact of FCV settings on land markets, as presented later in this paper. These components can be affected by the different FCV drivers, while sources of resilience related to land markets can strengthen them to withstand shocks and sustain governance and the continuance of effective tenure systems.

FCV settings disrupt the institutional foundations and infrastructure that support land markets. FCV contexts weaken the institutional and regulatory frameworks that govern land transactions. Laws may become contested, inconsistently enforced, or manipulated by elites, eroding their legitimacy and leaving citizens without effective legal recourse (Boone, 2014; Elhawary S & Pantuliano, 2007). Social practices that ordinarily regulate access to land are often disrupted by displacement, demographic shifts, and weakened community authority, producing overlapping claims and disputes (Unruh, 2003). Financial systems that support land markets, such as credit and mortgage institutions, also collapse or contract under insecurity, limiting the ability of households to leverage land assets for livelihoods or recovery (Deininger, 2003; World Bank, 2021). Land administration systems, including registries, cadasters, and dispute resolution bodies, are frequently destroyed, politicized, or captured during conflict, undermining the availability and credibility of land information (UN-Habitat, n.d.). The combined deterioration of legal frameworks, social practices, financial systems, and land administration infrastructure significantly reduces the capacity of land markets to uphold tenure rights and ensure secure and transparent transactions, transforming land from a stabilizing asset into a potential driver of conflict (FAO, 2012; UN & World Bank, 2018).

Resilience in land markets refers to the capacity of institutions, systems, and stakeholders to absorb, adapt to, and recover from political, security, social, and environmental shocks, while maintaining or restoring access to land tenure security and systems. This concept extends beyond physical infrastructure to encompass institutional adaptability, social legitimacy, and community mechanisms that safeguard land rights during crises (Mitchell & Harris, 2012; UN-Habitat, n.d.). In FCV contexts, resilience is particularly critical because land is both a livelihood resource and a potential driver of renewed conflict. Strengthening resilience requires land administration systems capable of maintaining credible records under stress, legal frameworks that provide flexible yet secure protections, and social capital that allows communities to mediate disputes when formal institutions collapse (Unruh, 2003; Peters, 2004). When these capacities are present, land markets can recover more quickly under stress. Conversely, when they are absent, shocks to land systems can exacerbate drivers of FCV (FAO, 2012; UN & World Bank, 2018).

B. Dimensions of Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV)

FCV is a multidimensional phenomenon that cuts across five dimensions: political, security, economic, social, and environmental. The World Bank's FCV Strategy (2020–2025) emphasizes that fragility is rarely confined to a single sector; instead, it emerges from the intersection of weak institutions, economic exclusion, and social and environmental stressors (World Bank, 2020). Analyzing these dimensions in relation to land markets is critical to understanding how FCV settings affect its governance. These dimensions are affected by drivers of FCV, which will be discussed in the next subsection.

1. *Political Dimension*

The political dimension in FCV settings is characterized by weak institutions, limited state legitimacy, exclusionary governance, and sometimes authoritarianism. In FCV contexts, land is often used as a tool of patronage, with elites capturing resources to consolidate political power (Boone, 2014). Weak land governance institutions undermine the rule of law, leading to contested property rights and arbitrary decision-making. For example, in South Sudan, land allocations have frequently been manipulated by political and military elites to reward allies and entrench control, bypassing customary norms and statutory frameworks (Pantuliano, 2007). Similarly, in Liberia, decades of conflict eroded trust in state institutions, and land became a central site of grievance where citizens perceived widespread corruption and elite capture (Unruh, 2009).

2. *Security Dimension*

The security dimension can be understood as contexts where the state is unable to protect its citizens from violence, criminality, or armed groups. In such situations, control over land often shifts to non-state actors, including militias, insurgents, or criminal networks, who impose their own rules on land access and transactions. Once these groups are in control, the authority and legitimacy or state institutions to mediate disputes erodes and the costs and risks of formal transactions increases as well as informal markets (Unruh, 2011). In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), unresolved land disputes in North and South Kivu have been central to local violence, with armed groups exploiting land scarcity to recruit members and finance their operations (Vlassenroot & Huggins, 2005). In Afghanistan, warlords and insurgent groups have seized land, redistributed it to loyalists, and used it as a base for extracting rents (Goodhand, 2008).

3. *Economic Dimension*

The economic dimension is characterized by limited job opportunities, inflation, inequality, weak fiscal capacity, limited access to credit, and vulnerability to shocks. Land is deeply embedded in these processes as both a productive asset and a source of livelihood. When economies falter, land becomes a last-resort safety net, and markets are distorted by distress sales or speculative activity (FAO, 2012). Economic shocks interact with tenure insecurity to amplify dispossession risks and deepen inequality (Collier, 2007). Zimbabwe's fast-track land reform sought to redistribute land to smallholders; however, it was implemented in a way that destabilized agricultural production, reduced export revenues, and worsened food insecurity in the country (World Bank, 2009). In Haiti, recurrent economic crises combined with political instability have driven urban migration and unregulated land markets, producing sprawling informal settlements prone to eviction and disaster risk (World Bank, 2014).

4. Social Dimension

The social dimension is related to identity tensions, group-based grievances, exclusion, and weak social cohesion. Gender and minority group discrimination often intersect with tenure systems, producing differentiated vulnerabilities. Women, youth, and minority groups typically face greater barriers to formally securing land rights (Peters, 2004). Land often sits at the core of these grievances, shaping access to land but also as an element of belonging, citizenship, and cultural identity. The aftermath of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda left thousands of returnees and survivors competing for scarce plots of land, intensifying social divisions and complicating reconciliation efforts (Pottier, 2006). In Guatemala**,** indigenous communities continue to struggle over lands appropriated during colonial and postcolonial eras, with disputes over collective rights fueling social mobilization and internal division in an extremely unequal country (Yashar, 2005).

5. Environmental Dimension

The environmental dimension encompasses exposure to climate shocks, resource scarcity, natural disasters, and poor environmental governance. Climate change acts as an amplifier, increasing the frequency and severity of shocks that interact with existing governance weaknesses, including those related to land (FAO, 2017). In the Sahel, recurrent droughts and desertification have intensified farmer–pastoralist conflicts over land and water resources, often escalating into violence in places such as Mali, Niger, and Nigeria (Burke et al., 2009). In Syria, prolonged droughts between 2006 and 2010 contributed to rural displacement and heightened social grievances, intersecting with governance failures that exacerbated instability (Kelley et al., 2015).

Table 2 FCV Dimensions Summary

Dimension	Context /Drivers
Political	Weak institutions, limited legitimacy, exclusionary politics, and authoritarianism
Security	Active conflict, violence, criminal networks, inability to provide security to citizens
Economic	Limited job opportunities, economic shocks, inequality, weak fiscal capacity
Social	Identity tensions, group-based grievances, social exclusion, lack of cohesion, weak social capital
Environmental	Exposure to climate shocks, resource scarcity, natural disasters, poor environmental governance

Drivers of Fragility, Conflict, and Violence

Drivers of FCV refer to the underlying structural conditions, triggers, and dynamic factors that increase the likelihood of violence or instability within societies (UN & World Bank, 2018). Fragility, conflict, and violence are rarely caused by a single driver; instead, they emerge from the convergence of different drivers that constitute the different components of the dimensions of FCV presented above. The following are key drivers of conflict that have an impact on many sectors, including land. The discussion below presents these drivers in a general manner – not specific to land – to first understand them and later analyze them through a land's lens. Although these drivers can cut across the different FCV dimensions (political, social, economic, security and environment), they have a direct relation to specific dimensions. The dimension (or dimensions) to which the driver is directly related will be presented in parenthesis next to it. It is also important to point out that these drivers in many cases complement and reinforce each other, further complicating situations.

Institutional Weakness (Political Dimension)

Institutional weakness key elements

- Corruption
- Weak governance and rule of law
- Ineffective public service delivery

Institutional weakness is one of the most persistent and cross-cutting drivers of conflict. It encompasses corruption, weak governance and rule of law, and ineffective public service delivery – all of which erode state legitimacy and citizens' trust in institutions. When public authority is exercised arbitrarily or captured by elites, formal institutions lose credibility, and grievances accumulate among excluded groups (World Bank, 2020). Corruption diverts public resources away from essential services, exacerbating inequality and undermining perceptions of fairness (UN & World Bank, 2018). Weak rule of law and limited judicial independence allow impunity to prevail, discouraging compliance and fostering an environment in which disputes are more likely to escalate into violence (OECD, 2020). Ineffective public service delivery, particularly in fragile settings, further fuels resentment by reinforcing citizens' sense of abandonment and exclusion (World Bank, 2011; UNDP, 2016). Collectively, these institutional failures weaken state–society relations, disrupt accountability mechanisms, and create governance vacuums that enable both organized crime and armed groups to thrive and gain control (North, Wallis, & Weingast, 2009).

Exclusion and inequality (Political/Social Dimension)

Exclusion and inequality constitute powerful structural drivers of FCV. When groups are systematically marginalized from political power, economic opportunities, or social recognition, grievances deepen and collective identities become politicized (UN & World Bank, 2018). Political and ethnic marginalization – manifested through unequal representation, discriminatory policies, or biased access to state resources – undermines social cohesion and can lead to violent mobilization (and repression from the state) (Cederman, Gleditsch, & Buhaug, 2013). Economic inequality, particularly when overlapping with identity or geographic divisions, further intensifies perceptions of injustice and exclusion (Stewart, 2008). Gender and identity-based discrimination also perpetuate fragility by restricting access to education, land, and decision-making, while exacerbating vulnerability to violence and displacement (UNDP, 2016; World Bank, 2020). Persistent horizontal inequalities (those between groups rather than individuals) create conditions in which violence is more likely to erupt and endure (World Bank, 2020).

Exclusion and inequality key elements

- Political or ethnic marginalization
- Economic inequality
- Gender and identity-based discrimination

Economic pressures (Economic Dimension)

Economic fragility – marked by unemployment, poverty, and price instability – remains a potent driver of FCV, particularly where livelihoods depend on precarious informal sectors and social mobility is limited. High youth unemployment creates frustration and erodes confidence in state institutions, especially when political exclusion limits legitimate avenues for participation (Urdal, 2006; World Bank, 2011). Economic exclusion is a major correlate of violent mobilization (UN & World Bank, 2018). In Tunisia, limited access to decent jobs was a critical factor behind the 2010–2011 uprisings (Carnegie, 2010). Inflation and price shocks, especially those affecting food and fuel, can further destabilize fragile economies. The 2008 global food crisis, for example, sparked riots in over 40 countries, including Haiti, where surging prices triggered widespread unrest and deepened existing political instability (World Bank, 2008).

Economic pressures key elements

- High youth unemployment
- Lack of livelihood opportunities
- Inflation and price

Natural resources and land (Environmental Dimension)

Competition over natural resources and land is among the most recurrent and visible drivers of FCV. Disputes arise when access to land, water, or extractive resources is unequally distributed or governed by weak, overlapping, or discriminatory institutions (UNEP, 2009; UN & World Bank, 2018). Resource wealth can also become a source of fragility when revenues are captured by elites or armed actors – a phenomenon known as the "resource curse" (Ross, 2012). In Sudan's Darfur region, for instance, recurrent droughts, land degradation, and exclusionary land tenure systems deepened divisions between farmers and pastoralists, contributing to sustained conflict (Suliman, 1999). In

Natural resources and land key elements

- Land and water disputes
- Resource exploitation tensions
- Unequal access to land and natural wealth

Sierra Leone, diamond extraction financed rebel movements during the civil war, linking natural resources directly to protracted conflict (Le Billon, 2001).

Climate and environmental stress (Environmental Dimension)

Climate and environmental stress increasingly act as risk multipliers that exacerbate other drivers of FCV. Rather than causing violence directly, climate-related shocks, such as droughts, floods, and soil degradation, intensify competition over land, water, and other natural resources, particularly where governance systems are weak or exclusionary (UNEP, 2009; Ide et al., 2020). Environmental degradation erodes livelihoods, displaces populations, and disrupts social safety nets, heightening the likelihood of tension between communities competing for shrinking resources (Rüttinger et al., 2015). For example, in Syria, prolonged drought between 2006 and 2010 contributed to rural displacement, economic hardship, and social unrest. This interacted with governance failures, exacerbating pre-existing grievances (Kelley et al., 2015).

Climate and environmental stress key elements

- Climate shocks (drought, floods)
- Environmental degradation
- Competition over diminishing resources

Social grievance and identity (Social Dimension)

Social grievance and identity-based exclusion are central drivers of FCV, particularly in contexts where historical injustices, ethnic or religious discrimination, and weak social cohesion converge. As with other drivers, perceptions of systematic exclusion can lead to violence by excluded groups (Stewart, 2008; Cederman, Gleditsch, & Buhaug, 2013). These dynamics are especially acute in fragile contexts where state institutions lack legitimacy or inclusivity. Group-based grievances, which are often tied to identity, region, or religion, are among the most consistent predictors of violent conflict, especially when combined with economic or spatial inequalities (UN & World Bank, 2018).

Social grievance and identity key elements

- Historical Injustices
- Group-based grievances
- Weak social cohesion

Security threats (Security Dimension)

Security threats constitute a critical and immediate driver of FCV, where the state's monopoly over the use of force is weak or contested. The presence of armed groups, criminal networks, and cross-border insecurity undermines state legitimacy and fuels cycles of violence and displacement (World Bank, 2011; UN & World Bank, 2018). When state security forces are unable or unwilling to protect citizens, local communities often turn to militias, gangs, or private security actors for protection, generating parallel systems of authority (Krause & Muggah, 2009). In Colombia, for example, decades of internal conflict have been sustained by overlapping armed actors (guerrillas, paramilitaries, and drug cartels) whose territorial control has been closely tied to land ownership and resource exploitation (Ballvé, 2013).

Security threats key elements

- Presence of armed groups or criminal networks.
- Cross border insecurity
- Inadequate state security response

External and global shocks (Social Dimension)

External and global shocks can act as powerful drivers of FCV, amplifying existing vulnerabilities and triggering new forms of conflict. Refugee flows and forced displacement, foreign political or military interventions, global pandemics, and economic crises can intersect with local grievances, straining governance systems and destabilizing already fragile institutions (UN & World Bank, 2018; World Bank, 2020). Large-scale displacement can generate competition over scarce land, housing, and employment, particularly in host communities with weak service delivery and limited resources (UNHCR, 2022). Foreign interventions, whether military, political, or economic, can also alter local power dynamics, creating legitimacy vacuums and shifting the incentives of national elites and armed actors (Paris, 2010). In Iraq and Libya, external military interventions contributed to governance breakdowns and the proliferation of armed groups, with long-term repercussions for regional stability (Kaldor, 2013). Similarly, global economic shocks, such as the 2008 financial crisis or the COVID-19 pandemic, have exacerbated inequality, weakened fiscal systems, and heightened political unrest in fragile states (UNDP, 2022).

External and global shocks key elements

- Refugee flows or forced displacement
- Foreign military or political intervention
- Global pandemics or economic disruptions

Information technology

Information technology has become an increasingly important cross-cutting driver of FCV, shaping how grievances are expressed, mobilized, and amplified. The rapid expansion of digital platforms has transformed communication in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, often blurring the lines between information sharing and incitement to violence. The spread of disinformation, hate speech, and propaganda online can inflame ethnic, political, or religious tensions and erode trust in institutions, particularly where governance and media literacy are weak (UNDP, 2023; OECD, 2020). Social media platforms have been instrumental in both enabling civic mobilization and facilitating manipulation by political actors or armed groups. In Myanmar, for instance, Facebook was used to spread anti-Rohingya hate speech that fueled mass violence and displacement (UN Human Rights Council, 2018). Similarly, extremist groups in Nigeria and the Sahel have exploited online spaces to recruit, radicalize, and coordinate operations (Maher, 2017; UNDP, 2022). Digital technologies can exacerbate fragility by amplifying existing divisions, accelerating misinformation, and undermining social cohesion.

Information technology key elements

- Spread of disinformation and hate speech
- Social media incitement
- Online radicalization and cyber-enabled threat

C. Resilience and sources of resilience for land markets

Resilience refers to the capacity of systems, communities, and institutions to absorb, adapt to, and recover from shocks while maintaining essential functions, structures, and identity (UNISDR, 2009). It is not a fixed condition but a dynamic process of learning and adaptation that enables social and institutional systems to reorganize and transform in the face of adversity (Norris et al., 2008; Frankerberger et al., 2013). In the context of land markets and governance in FCV settings, resilience encompasses the ability of land institutions, communities, and market actors to respond to disruptions within the four dimensions of FCV, without collapsing or reinforcing exclusion and inequality.

Resilient land systems are thus characterized by their capacity to sustain tenure security, equitable access, and the functioning of markets that underpin livelihoods, social stability, and recovery. Drawing from the community resilience literature (Norris et al., 2008; Chandra et al., 2011), four interdependent domains can provide a framework for understanding resilience in land markets, namely: social capital, economic development, information and communication, and community aptitude. These domains represent adaptive capacities that enable individuals and institutions to cope with drivers of FCV, as they pertain to land, as discussed below.

1. Social Capital

Social capital – understood as the networks of trust, reciprocity, and collective engagement that connect individuals and groups – constitutes a foundational element of resilience (Pfefferbaum et al., 2015). In the land domain, strong social capital enhances local capacity to manage disputes, negotiate claims, and mediate tensions arising from overlapping rights or forced displacement. Communities with dense social networks and a strong sense of belonging tend to mobilize more effectively during crises, drawing on both perceived and actual social support to sustain livelihoods and collective organization (Norris et al., 2008; Chandra et al., 2010).

Informal links, such as family ties, neighborhood cooperation, and traditional authorities, complement formal mechanisms of civic participation, local leadership, and community-based organizations. Together, they strengthen trust and accountability in land governance. Evidence from post-conflict recovery contexts suggests that local land committees and community networks often restore tenure relations faster than central institutions because they rely on embedded norms of reciprocity and shared identity (Deininger, Selod, & Burns, 2012). These forms of cohesion not only facilitate dispute resolution but also reinforce a collective sense of belonging that underpins stable land markets.

2. Economic Development

Economic development provides both the resources and incentives that sustain resilience. In land markets, resilience depends on the diversity and equity of economic resources available to households and communities, as well as their vulnerability to shocks (Norris et al., 2008). A resilient economy is one that mitigates risk exposure, diversifies livelihoods, and distributes land and capital more equitably across groups. Concentration of land ownership or limited livelihood diversification amplifies vulnerability, while diversified access to land and complementary assets – such as housing, infrastructure, and credit – enables faster recovery (Chandra et al., 2010).

In FCV settings, economic inequality and exclusionary land allocation often perpetuate cycles of conflict and displacement. Recovery processes that rebuild land markets without addressing these structural inequities risk reproducing fragility (World Bank, 2020). Equitable land redistribution, improved tenure systems, and inclusive access to finance strengthen adaptive capacity by broadening the base of actors who can absorb and respond to shocks. Furthermore, interventions that integrate land governance with broader economic development, such as agricultural value chains or urban housing recovery, tend to enhance both resilience and social cohesion (OECD, 2017).

3. Information and Communication

Access to accurate, timely, and trusted information is essential for adaptive decision-making and collective action in FCV settings. In land governance, this involves transparent registries, cadastral systems, and participatory information platforms that enable people to understand rights, claims, and regulations (Longstaff, 2005). Reliable information flows help prevent rumor-driven disputes and facilitate coordination among state, market, and community actors. When communities can articulate their experiences and expectations through clear narratives, they reinforce trust in institutions and reduce the perception of exclusion (Walsh, 2007).

The communication infrastructure itself, whether digital, administrative, or social, plays a critical role during crises. In contexts of displacement or contested tenure, for example, the ability of land agencies to disseminate accurate data about restitution procedures or compensation mechanisms can reduce uncertainty and tension. Trustworthy sources of information are often locally rooted; for example, community radio, traditional leaders, or paralegal networks may be more effective than centralized media in conveying credible messages (Norris et al., 2003). In contrast, irresponsible or politicized media coverage can stigmatize communities or exacerbate mistrust, undermining recovery and market confidence.

4. **Community Aptitude**

Community aptitude refers to the collective capacity to analyze problems, make decisions, and act collaboratively toward shared goals (Cottrell, 1976, as cited in Norris et al., 2003). In land governance, it manifests through the ability of communities and institutions to negotiate solutions, adapt rules, and engage in participatory decision-making. Adaptive and competent communities are those that possess flexible mechanisms for deliberation and problem-solving, allowing them to respond effectively to evolving pressures such as demographic change, urban expansion, or climate impacts.

Collective efficacy, defined as mutual trust and shared willingness to act for the common good, reinforces community aptitude (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). When groups believe they can jointly address land-related challenges, they are more likely to organize for land-use planning, restitution claims, or conflict mediation. Empowerment further strengthens resilience by ensuring that decision-making processes are inclusive and that all community members, including women and marginalized groups, can contribute to shaping outcomes (Benight, 2004). Such participatory governance enhances accountability and sustains long-term stability in land systems.

D. Putting it all together: How FCV contexts affect land markets

FCV settings, through its drivers and across its dimensions, affect the institutional and regulatory framework of land markets across its different components. First, FCV settings undermine land rights and tenure systems by eroding legal security and increasing overlapping claims. Conflict usually displaces populations and increases perceptions of tenure insecurity (Prettitore, 2019). Weak or fragmented legal frameworks, often a hallmark of FCV environment, further undermine the clarity and enforcement of land rights, while institutions tasked with land governance become politicized or incapacitated. FCV contexts undermine already weak institutions and complicate land and natural resource dispute resolution (World Bank, 2020). Together, these dynamics blur boundaries between statutory and customary systems, enabling elite capture and reducing confidence in formal mechanisms for land management.

Institutional capacity and land information systems are also affected and susceptible to FCV shocks. Administrative losses, destruction of archives, and fragmented authority at national and subnational levels lead to unreliable registries and cadastral systems, weakening transparency and increasing risk of corruption. Inadequate land-governance frameworks in conflict-affected settings amplify tensions and limit the effectiveness of post-conflict recovery programs (CDA Collaborative, 2021). The disruption of valuation mechanisms and land-pricing systems in unstable contexts distorts market behavior, often benefiting speculative or politically connected actors (Deininger, Selod, & Burns, 2012). These distortions prevent equitable market access and perpetuate exclusion, further affecting institutional recovery and investment confidence.

FCV environments reshape the broader land market ecosystem, affecting transactions, supply and demand dynamics, and the actors who mediate them. Formal land transactions often shift toward informal or extra-legal arrangements as administrative procedures collapse and transaction costs increase. Displacement and returned people alter demand patterns, while customary or informal markets expand to fill governance voids (The Tenure Facility, 2023). Although these informal mechanisms can provide short-term access to land, they may also reinforce inequality and gender bias.

FCV settings weaken transparency, accountability, and efficiency across all components of the land-market framework, deepening fragility but also revealing potential entry points for resilience and reform once stability begins to return. The following table connects the different components presented in this section into a structured framework to analyze how FCV settings affect land markets and how the potential sources of resilience can counter the impacts these FCV impacts.

Table 3 Land, FCV Contexts, and Resilience Analytical Framework

Components of Institutional and Regulatory Framework of Land Markets	**Impact of FCV Contexts on component**	**Potential Sources of Resilience**
Land Rights and Tenure	Tenure insecurity, overlapping claims, displacement, elite capture, and land grabbing.	**Social capital:** community networks and local dispute-resolution mechanisms build trust. **Economic development:** livelihood recovery reduces land grabbing. **Information & communication:** transparent records and mapping clarify claims. **Community aptitude:** participatory restitution and negotiation strengthen tenure confidence.
Legal Framework	Fragmented or politicized laws; weak enforcement; coexistence of statutory and customary systems.	**Social capital:** inclusive dialogue across legal traditions fosters legitimacy. **Economic development:** linking legal reforms to economic incentives enhances compliance. **Information & communication:** public awareness campaigns improve understanding of rights. **Community aptitude:** local advocacy and monitoring encourage accountability.
Institutions	Institutional breakdown, reduced spending in LA,	**Social capital:** partnerships between state and community actors rebuild legitimacy. **Economic development:** performance-based support stabilizes institutions.

	corruption, politicization, and elite capture.	**Information & communication:** open data and transparency reduce corruption. **Community aptitude:** empowered civic leadership promotes oversight and institutional renewal.
Land Information	Loss, destruction, or manipulation of records; limited access to information and transparency.	**Social capital:** local knowledge networks help reconstruct records. **Economic development:** investment in digital systems supports reconstruction. **Information & communication:** interoperable registries and open data restore trust. **Community aptitude:** participatory mapping and citizen reporting enhance data accuracy.
Transactions	Informal, coerced, or non-consensual transactions; exclusion of vulnerable groups.	**Social capital:** peer networks and mediation reduce fraud. **Economic development:** inclusive credit and insurance mechanisms stabilize transactions. **Information & communication:** clear procedures and digital platforms reduce uncertainty. **Community aptitude:** collective monitoring ensures fairness and enforcement.
Land Values and Pricing	Distorted values due to speculation, conflict-driven displacement, or occupation; inequitable access.	**Social capital:** transparent community valuation processes counter speculation. **Economic development:** diversified investment promotes stability. **Information & communication:** accessible market data improves decision-making. **Community aptitude:** local planning capacity helps set equitable standards.
Informal/Customary Markets	Expansion of informal tenure; gender bias; exclusion of vulnerable groups.	**Social capital:** recognition of customary norms promotes inclusion. **Economic development:** linking informal markets to formal services enhances stability. **Information & communication:** outreach on legal rights reduces exploitation. **Community aptitude:** local governance reform integrates traditional leaders in equitable frameworks.
Demand and Supply	Sudden shifts due to displacement, conflict over scarce land, or return migration; speculative acquisitions.	**Social capital:** social networks facilitate reintegration and land sharing. **Economic development:** diversified livelihoods moderate speculative pressure. **Information & communication:** market transparency helps align expectations. **Community aptitude:** participatory planning manages competing claims.
Land Services and Actors	Limited capacity and oversight among notaries, surveyors, financial institutions; service providers may flee, be co-opted, or become inaccessible or untrustworthy.	**Social capital:** professional associations promote ethical standards. **Economic development:** targeted recovery programs rebuild services. **Information & communication:** digital platforms enhance coordination. **Community aptitude:** multi-stakeholder coordination and training strengthen service delivery.

III. Recommendations: Why a resilience perspective can help counter the impacts of FCV on land markets

Strengthening resilience can make a tangible difference in how land markets function in fragile and conflict affected settings, particularly where violence has weakened trust, displaced populations, and disrupted governance. At the most basic level, rebuilding confidence in land rights and institutions depends on people believing that rules are fair and that claims will be respected. Community networks, local dispute resolution practices, and dialogue between customary and statutory systems often remain functional even when the state is weakened. Supporting these mechanisms helps resolve overlapping claims, reduce elite capture, and reestablish a sense of legitimacy. When these efforts are combined with livelihood recovery and modest, well targeted institutional support, they reduce incentives for land grabbing and corruption and allow legal and regulatory reforms to take root in ways that feel relevant to people's everyday realities.

Resilience also matters in the quieter, technical parts of land markets, such as information systems and transactions, where the effects of FCV are often most visible. Conflict frequently leads to lost or manipulated records, informal or coerced transactions, and exclusion of those with less power. Rebuilding land information does not always start with technology but with people. Local knowledge, participatory mapping, and community verification can help reconstruct records and restore trust. Digital registries, open data, and clear procedures then reinforce these efforts by improving transparency and reducing uncertainty. At the same time, access to credit, insurance, and basic recovery support helps households avoid distress sales and enables land transactions to happen voluntarily and fairly, rather than under pressure or coercion.

Resilience helps land markets adapt to the wider shocks that FCV creates, including distorted land values, sudden shifts in demand and supply, and the breakdown of land services. Transparent, community-based approaches to land valuation can counter speculation driven by displacement and scarcity, while diversified livelihoods reduce pressure on land as the primary source of security. Recognizing customary tenure and working with traditional authorities, rather than around them, can improve inclusion and reduce gender and social bias in informal markets. Rebuilding the capacity and credibility of surveyors, notaries, and financial actors through professional networks, targeted training, and better coordination is equally important. Across all of these areas, participatory planning and multi stakeholder collaboration allow competing claims to be managed more peacefully and help land markets move from survival mode toward stability and recovery.

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