

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-57869

Title: CARACTERISATION DES DYNAMIQUES DE LA PRESSION FONCIERE DANS LA COMMUNE DE ZE AU SUD DU BENIN,

**Recommendation:
Accept after minor revision**

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓,		
Techn. Quality		✓,		
Clarity	✓,			
Significance	✓,			

Reviewer Name: Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The manuscript titled "CARACTERISATION DES DYNAMIQUES DE LA PRESSION FONCIERE DANS LA COMMUNE DE ZE AU SUD DU BENIN" presents a spatial and socio-economic analysis of land pressure dynamics within the peri-urban commune of Zè in southern Benin. The scope of this study investigates how rapid population growth, accelerating urbanization, and infrastructure expansion from major nearby centers (such as Cotonou and Abomey-Calavi) alter local land administration, deplete agricultural areas, and trigger land speculation.

By evaluating these factors, the paper highlights a common territorial issue in sub-Saharan Africa: the transformation of rural agricultural land into residential plots, which threatens local food security and creates ongoing land conflicts.

Methodology and Spatial-Demographic Findings

The research utilizes a mixed-method approach combining quantitative demographic data, spatial analysis, and qualitative sociological field surveys. The findings detail several key structural changes in the region:

- **Demographic Acceleration and Urban Sprawl:** The study tracks Zè's population growth, noting how its position as a peri-urban corridor has led to a major increase in non-agricultural residents and real estate purchasers.
- **Reduction of Agricultural Land:** Field data illustrates a clear reduction in available farming land. Traditional smallholders are increasingly selling their plots to urban investors, leading to fragmented farming lands and a shift away from subsistence agriculture.

REVIEWER'S REPORT

- **Speculation and Conflicting Land Tenure:** The manuscript documents rising land prices and widespread real estate speculation. This unregulated commercialization has created a rise in boundary disputes, inheritance conflicts, and multiple sales of the same plots.

Analytical Depth and Scholarly Contributions

The manuscript provides a helpful overview of peri-urban land transformation in West Africa. Rather than looking only at demographic data or satellite imagery, the author connects spatial changes directly to the socio-economic realities of local farmers who lose their primary means of livelihood.

The primary scholarly contribution of this work is its detailed look at the shortcomings of local land management policies under Benin's national land regulations. By showing that local authorities in Zè struggle to manage rapid real estate expansion, the paper offers a useful case study for urban planners, geographers, and policymakers working to balance urban growth with agricultural preservation in developing nations.

Suggestions for Improvement

- **Structure the Manuscript with Standard Academic Headings:** The text is currently organized using a mix of narrative blocks and non-standard sections. Reorganize the paper using formal, standard academic headings—such as "Introduction," "Theoretical Framework," "Methodology," "Results," "Discussion," and "Conclusion"—to improve scannability and match international journal formats.
- **Incorporate a Visual Land Pressure Dynamics Flowchart:** Add a structural diagram showing the causes and effects of land pressure. The flowchart should visually map out how primary drivers (population growth, peri-urban migration) feed into immediate effects (land speculation, agricultural sales), leading to long-term systemic challenges (food insecurity, tenure conflicts).
- **Introduce a Structured Methodological Matrix Table:** Include a comprehensive summary table detailing the data collection process. The matrix should match each research objective with its corresponding data source (e.g., municipal demographic records, satellite maps, individual interviews), sample size, and analytical technique.
- **Provide Quantified Spatial Data and Mapping Figures:** The paper describes land changes textually but lacks specific numbers. Incorporate actual percentage values for the loss of agricultural land cover over the last decade, and include geographic maps of Zè showing urban expansion and shifting land usage.
- **Elaborate on the Impact of National Land Legislation:** Deepen the discussion on how Benin's formal land laws (such as the *Code Foncier et Domanial*) apply at the local level. Explain why

REVIEWER'S REPORT

formal registration tools have not fully prevented speculative sales or informal transactions in the peri-urban zone.

- **Detail the Socio-Economic Profile of the Surveyed Population:** Expand the methodology and results sections to explicitly state the demographics of the field interviewees. Provide a clear breakdown of the participants by occupation (e.g., traditional farmers, real estate brokers, municipal officers) and gender to ground the qualitative findings.
- **Formulate an Explicit Limitations and Future Research Section:** Add a distinct subsection addressing the boundaries of this study. Discuss any limitations encountered during data collection, such as incomplete local real estate registries or difficulties tracking informal cash-based land sales, and suggest areas for future research.
- **Conduct a Complete Technical Editing and Typographical Pass:** Review the manuscript to fix minor layout and formatting fragments, such as the incomplete word break on line 12 ("par- / tuellement") and occasional missing periods at the ends of sentences.
- **Standardize In-Text Citation Formats:** Review all references within the text to ensure they consistently follow a single, standardized citation manual (such as APA 7th edition), correcting minor styling variations found throughout the text.
- **Complete Missing Bibliographic Metadata in the References Section:** Check the final bibliography to ensure all entries are complete. Update references—such as entry 1 (Ballo 2025) and entry 3 (Grenouillet 2015)—to ensure they consistently include publisher names, institutional departments, complete page ranges, and active Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) where available.

Recommendation for Publication

I recommend this manuscript for **publication with major revision**. The paper examines a highly relevant and pressing urban planning challenge in southern Benin, offering useful insights into how peri-urban growth affects rural agricultural communities. The qualitative findings are well-stated. However, to meet the standards of high-impact international journals in geography and land use policy, the author must add quantitative spatial data, organize the text into standard academic subsections, include a structured methodology table or flowchart, and thoroughly correct the citation and bibliographic formatting. These improvements will significantly enhance the empirical depth and scholarly value of the study.