



International Journal of Advanced Research

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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: **IJAR-58244**

Title: "Le Cadastre à l'Épreuve des Perceptions Structurant la Mobilisation Citoyenne à Cotonou."

Recommendation:

Rating	Excel .	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality	✓			
Accept after minor revision.....				
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity		✓		
Significance		✓		

Reviewer Name: Faheem Abdul Muneeb

Reviewer Report

Overall Assessment

The manuscript entitled "Le Cadastre à l'Épreuve des Perceptions Structurant la Mobilisation Citoyenne à Cotonou" examines the role of citizens' perceptions in shaping participation in the implementation of the national cadastral reform in Cotonou, Benin. The study is situated within the broader context of Benin's land governance reforms initiated through the Land and Public Property Code and the ongoing implementation of the national cadastral system. Rather than focusing exclusively on the legal or technical dimensions of cadastral reform, the article adopts a socio-anthropological perspective by investigating how social representations and local perceptions influence citizens' willingness to participate in cadastral operations. This perspective represents an interesting and relevant contribution, particularly because the success of land administration reforms depends not only on institutional capacity but also on public trust and community engagement.

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The paper addresses an important policy issue that has significance beyond the Beninese context. Many developing countries implementing land administration reforms encounter similar challenges relating to citizen participation, mistrust of government institutions, taxation concerns, and competing understandings of land ownership. By examining these perceptions through qualitative inquiry, the manuscript contributes to broader discussions on land governance, public policy implementation, and citizen-state relations. The use of Social Representation Theory as the principal analytical framework is generally appropriate because it allows the author to explore how collective beliefs and shared interpretations shape public behaviour toward government initiatives. The qualitative methodology based on semi-structured interviews, participant observation, purposive sampling, triangulation, and content analysis is consistent with the objectives of the study and provides an appropriate foundation for understanding participants' viewpoints.

The findings are presented clearly and identify two broad categories of perceptions. On one hand, respondents perceive the cadastre as an instrument for land tenure security, conflict reduction, and social inclusion. On the other hand, significant reservations remain due to fears of increased taxation, possible expropriation, administrative opacity, and lack of trust in public institutions. These contrasting perceptions provide a convincing explanation for the uneven civic mobilisation observed during cadastral implementation in Cotonou. The discussion appropriately links these findings to the literature on public policy acceptance and social representations while highlighting the importance of transparency and communication in strengthening citizen participation.

Overall, the manuscript presents a relevant and policy-oriented study that offers useful insights into the social dimensions of land administration reforms. Nevertheless, several aspects could be strengthened before publication. The theoretical contribution could be articulated more explicitly, the analysis could move beyond description toward deeper interpretation, and the discussion could engage more extensively with international literature on land governance and public trust. In addition, several editorial and structural improvements would enhance readability and scholarly impact. These issues, however, are relatively minor and do not undermine the overall quality of the study. Accordingly, the manuscript is suitable for publication after minor revisions.

Strengths of the Paper

One of the principal strengths of this manuscript is its focus on an issue that is both academically relevant and practically significant. While cadastral reforms are frequently examined from legal, technical, or

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administrative perspectives, comparatively fewer studies investigate how citizens perceive these reforms and how such perceptions influence implementation. By concentrating on public perceptions and civic mobilisation, the paper adds an important social dimension to discussions of land governance and contributes to a better understanding of why technically well-designed public policies sometimes encounter resistance during implementation.

Another notable strength is the appropriateness of the qualitative research design. The use of semi-structured interviews and participant observation enables the author to capture the experiences and viewpoints of multiple stakeholders involved in cadastral implementation. The purposive selection of twenty-one participants representing national institutions, municipal authorities, local actors, service providers, and landowners provides diversity in perspectives and allows the study to identify the different narratives surrounding the cadastral reform. The use of triangulation and content analysis further strengthens the credibility of the qualitative findings.

The theoretical framework based on Social Representation Theory also constitutes a positive aspect of the manuscript. The author successfully employs this perspective to explain how collective beliefs regarding taxation, land ownership, state authority, and administrative transparency influence individual behaviour toward cadastral registration. Rather than treating resistance as merely irrational or uninformed, the paper demonstrates that these perceptions emerge from broader historical experiences and institutional relationships between citizens and the State. This theoretical perspective enriches the discussion and provides an appropriate lens for interpreting the empirical findings.

The organization of the results is another strength of the article. The distinction between positive and negative perceptions provides readers with a coherent understanding of the competing viewpoints surrounding cadastral implementation. The inclusion of verbatim quotations from respondents strengthens the authenticity of the analysis and allows participants' voices to be represented directly. Similarly, the diagrams illustrating stakeholder roles and the three-phase cadastral implementation process improve the clarity of the institutional context and help readers unfamiliar with the Beninese cadastral system understand the administrative framework within which the study is situated.

Finally, the practical recommendations emerging from the study are realistic and directly linked to the empirical findings. The emphasis on strengthening public awareness campaigns, improving institutional transparency, increasing communication through community media and traditional leaders, and promoting public trust provides useful guidance for policymakers responsible for implementing cadastral reforms both in Benin and in similar contexts elsewhere.

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Areas to be Improved

Although the manuscript presents an interesting qualitative investigation, the theoretical contribution could be articulated more clearly. While Social Representation Theory is introduced as the principal analytical framework, the discussion primarily uses it to classify positive and negative perceptions rather than to explain the broader mechanisms through which these perceptions are socially produced, transmitted, and transformed. The manuscript would benefit from a deeper engagement with the theory by demonstrating more explicitly how collective representations influence public policy implementation and civic mobilisation beyond the immediate case of cadastral reform. This would strengthen the originality of the article and provide greater analytical depth.

The methodology is generally appropriate; however, additional methodological detail would improve the transparency of the research. Although the paper states that twenty-one participants were selected through purposive sampling, further information regarding participant characteristics, selection criteria, interview duration, and procedures for achieving data saturation would enhance the methodological rigor of the study. Similarly, a brief explanation of how the coding process was conducted during content analysis would enable readers to better understand how the identified themes emerged from the qualitative data. Another aspect that deserves attention concerns the analytical depth of the findings. Several sections of the results provide extensive descriptions of participants' perceptions accompanied by interview quotations. While these descriptions are informative, the interpretation could be developed further by explaining why particular perceptions emerge and how they relate to broader questions of governance, institutional legitimacy, and historical experiences of land administration in Benin. The discussion would become more persuasive if it moved beyond describing perceptions toward analysing the social and political processes that generate them.

The literature review would also benefit from broader engagement with recent international scholarship. The manuscript appropriately discusses Beninese land reforms and incorporates relevant francophone literature; however, it engages only minimally with comparative studies on land governance, cadastral modernisation, public trust, and participatory land administration from other African countries or developing regions. Including a broader comparative perspective would better position the findings within international debates and demonstrate the wider relevance of the research beyond the specific context of Cotonou.

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While the discussion successfully links the findings to previous literature on public policy acceptance and social representations, the relationship between positive and negative perceptions could be analysed in greater detail. Rather than presenting these perceptions primarily as contrasting categories, the author could explore how they coexist within the same communities and how they evolve throughout different stages of cadastral implementation. Such discussion would provide a more nuanced understanding of citizen mobilisation and illustrate that public attitudes toward land reforms are often dynamic rather than static.

The conclusion effectively summarizes the principal findings and provides practical recommendations. Nevertheless, it could further emphasise the broader implications of the research for future land governance reforms across Africa. A brief discussion explaining how the findings may inform future participatory cadastral programmes or digital land administration initiatives in other developing countries would increase the international significance of the article and strengthen its contribution to comparative public policy research.

Finally, the manuscript would benefit from careful language editing prior to publication. Although the overall structure is coherent, there are occasional grammatical inconsistencies, lengthy sentences, repetitive expressions, and minor formatting issues that reduce readability. Some sections of the introduction and discussion could also be condensed to avoid repetition of arguments concerning the objectives and importance of the cadastral reform. A thorough editorial revision would improve the overall presentation without requiring substantive changes to the research itself.

Recommendation

The manuscript presents a timely and policy-relevant examination of how citizens' perceptions influence participation in the implementation of cadastral reform in Cotonou, Benin. Its focus on the social dimensions of land governance, supported by an appropriate qualitative methodology and interpreted through Social Representation Theory, provides a meaningful contribution to the literature on land administration, public policy implementation, and citizen participation. While the manuscript would benefit from greater theoretical articulation, deeper analytical interpretation, broader engagement with comparative literature, and minor improvements in methodology reporting and language presentation, these revisions are primarily intended to enhance the scholarly quality of the paper rather than alter its central argument or findings. Therefore, I recommend that the manuscript be **accepted with minor revisions**.

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