



REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 58244

Title: LE CADASTRE A L EPREUVE DES PERCEPTIONS STRUCTURANT LA MOBILISATION CITOYENNE A COTONOU.

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision

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

Reviewer's ID: Abdul Haseeb

Detailed Reviewer's Report

Article Overview and Contributions

The manuscript titled “*Le cadastre à l’épreuve des perceptions structurant la mobilisation citoyenne à Cotonou*” provides an insightful qualitative study on land governance and public policy reception in Benin. It addresses the operationalization of the national land registry (cadastre) initiated in 2020 under the Land and Public Property Code (*Code Foncier et Domanial*) in the municipality of Cotonou. The paper explores a critical socio-political paradox: while the state deploys the land registry as a free, institutional mechanism to enhance land tenure security and reduce legal disputes, local property owners exhibit significant reluctance and hesitation to participate in the process.

The main scholarly contribution of this work lies in its application of social representation theory to empirical land administration challenges. Rather than treating public resistance merely as a technical deficit or lack of education, the author reveals how citizens' responses are mentally organized and socially constructed around historical interactions with state authorities. By shifting the focus toward local subjectivities and imaginaries, the article adds valuable depth to the West African land tenure literature, illustrating that technical solutions cannot succeed without addressing the structural trust deficit between citizens and the state.

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The manuscript is well-structured, moving logically from the macro-historical context of land reform in Benin since 2009 to a micro-level socio-anthropological analysis of localized discourse in Cotonou. A key strength of the paper is its clear institutional mapping. It explicitly balances the roles of top-down state structures—such as the *Agence Nationale du Domaine et du Foncier* (ANDF), the *Institut Géographique National* (IGN), and the *Comité Technique de Supervision et de la Réalisation du Cadastre National* (CTSRCN)—with local implementation units, communal land management bodies (*Commission Communale de Gestion Foncière* or CoGeF), and expert surveyors.

Methodologically, the study relies on a solid qualitative design featuring semi-structured interviews and direct participant observation. The use of purposive sampling to interview 21 diverse stakeholders ensures that a variety of institutional and civilian perspectives are represented. Furthermore, the empirical findings are systematically organized through thematic content analysis and validated through data triangulation.

The paper offers a well-balanced binary analysis of local attitudes. It categorizes constructive social representations—viewing the registry as a tool for sustainable land security, a conflict resolution mechanism using Unique Parcel Numbers (NUP), and an inclusive development measure—against defensive counter-representations. This systematic framework effectively links empirical statements directly to structural themes of state surveillance, fiscal containment, and the historical traumas of municipal zoning (*lotissement* and *recasement*).

Recommendations for Comprehensive Revision

To ensure the manuscript aligns fully with the journal the following improvements should be addressed:

The first recommendation is to resolve an explicit reference typo in the literature discussion section. On line 492, the text mentions the "theory of perceptions sociales" (*théorie des perceptions sociales*) to justify its analytical framework. However, in both the preceding theoretical framework section on lines 144–154 and the bibliography under entry seven, the author correctly identifies the framework as the "theory of social representations" (*théorie des représentations sociales*) established by Serge Moscovici and Robert Farr. The erroneous term "perceptions sociales" on line 492 must be corrected to maintain conceptual consistency and theoretical precision.

The second recommendation concerns the missing visual content in the text. Section 2.1.2 explicitly refers to "Figure 2: Processus de réalisation du cadastre" on lines 225–226 to outline the three operational phases of the land registry. However, the corresponding chart blocks displayed on page 6 are entirely

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blank and devoid of text or diagrams. The author must fully populate the graphic elements for the preparatory phase, execution phase, and final phase to match the descriptive narrative in the text, ensuring the layout is functionally sound.

The third recommendation is to deepen the integration of the cited literature within the final discussion section. While the author introduces valuable theoretical concepts—such as Innocent Aboki's culture of trust, Johanna Siméant-Germanos's "moral economy," and Jean-Pierre Jacob's "theory of the fuzzy" (*théorie du flou*)—the synthesis remains somewhat superficial. The discussion would be significantly improved by explicitly linking Jacob's concepts to the structural discrepancies between initial paper registries, actual GPS coordinates, and physical occupancy lines. Similarly, the author should elaborate on how tax evasion operates as a moral economy of resistance for Cotonou residents facing changing fiscal policies.

Finally, the manuscript requires minor copy-editing to eliminate spelling errors and typographical discrepancies. For instance, the section header on line 156 features a grammatical slip ("Resultats ... processus de mis en œuvre") which should be corrected to "mise en œuvre". Additionally, formatting errors in the bibliography—such as the incomplete, truncated publication details for Jean-Pierre Chauveau's 2006 entry—must be thoroughly completed to fulfill academic indexing standards.

Final Review Conclusion

Overall, this manuscript provides a highly relevant and culturally grounded analysis of how state-led land administration reforms interact with local socio-political anxieties in urban Benin. By documenting how civilian cooperation is hampered by fears of taxation and historical mistrust, the paper bridges an important gap between technical engineering designs and actual civic mobilization.

The current deficiencies in the paper do not undermine its core value and can be readily corrected through straightforward textual amendments. Fully restoring the missing schematic content of Figure 2, correcting the conceptual slip on line 492, and refining the ethnographic discussion will elevate the paper to its full analytical potential. Therefore, this manuscript is recommended for publication subject to Minor Revision.