

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR- 58655

Title: Effets sociaux et moraux des pratiques magico-religieuses sur la coh sion des acteurs miniers sur le site d'orpaillage artisanal de M'bunga au Niger,

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision

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

Reviewer's ID: Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

Manuscript Overview

The manuscript entitled "Effets sociaux et moraux des pratiques magico-religieuses sur la coh sion des acteurs miniers sur le site d'orpaillage artisanal de M'bunga au Niger" presents a qualitative socio-anthropological study examining how magico-religious practices shape social cohesion and moral dynamics among artisanal gold miners in M'bunga, Niger. Grounded in Crozier and Friedberg's actor-network/actantial framework, Geertz's interpretative hermeneutics, and Malinowski's functionalism, the authors evaluate how miners navigate economic uncertainty, physical danger, and extreme risk in gold extraction through syncretic practices combining Islamic traditions (*maraboutage*, *Istikhara*, *Rubutu*) and indigenous animist rites (geomancy, spirit invocation, animal and human sacrifices).

Data were collected from 139 mining actors—including native and migrant miners, esoteric knowledge holders (*malam*, *boka*), female sex workers, local traders, and community leaders—via semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and direct field observations. The study demonstrates that while certain rituals foster group solidarity during crisis or illness, the intense pursuit of rapid wealth (*Kuwa* and shift-based *Tour* production) leads to toxic and deviant practices. These include pacts with occult forces (*Dauka/Za jind *), organ trafficking, malicious geomancy, and ritualized sexual practices that subvert traditional moral codes, erode interpersonal trust, and trigger severe community fragmentation.

Detailed Suggestions for Improvement

1. Conceptual and Methodological Refinements

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- **Theoretical Integration:** The theoretical triad (Crozier & Friedberg, Geertz, Malinowski) is listed in the introduction, but its application remains somewhat understated in the empirical section. Explicitly link field observations (e.g., how geomancers act as strategic actors leveraging information asymmetry) back to Crozier and Friedberg's concept of "zones of uncertainty".
- **Methodological Transparency & Sample Nuance:** Clarify the exact demographic breakdown of the 139 participants (e.g., proportion of native Songhai/Zarma vs. foreign migrants from Mali or Burkina Faso) to better illustrate how ethnolinguistic backgrounds influence specific ritual choices.
- **Security Context Impact:** The text mentions incursions by Non-State Armed Groups (GANE) since 2021 in the Liptako-Gourma region. Briefly discuss whether heightened regional insecurity and state absence have directly exacerbated miners' reliance on occult protections and radical survival strategies.

2. Narrative Structure and Language

- **Translation to English:** Since the draft is written in French, preparing an accurate, high-level English translation will significantly increase its international readership and citation potential.
- **Ethics and Legal Caveats:** Given sensitive disclosures regarding human organ trafficking and illegal sacrifices, explicitly state how researcher safety and participant protection/data anonymity were maintained under local institutional review guidelines.

3. Formatting, Text Cleanliness, and Layout

- **Header / Artifact Cleanup:** Remove structural visual artifacts such as the stray word "VAIN" (line 12) and watermarks/placeholders like "UNDER" or "WIN IJAR" (lines 201, 387, 418).
- **Figure and Photo Captions:** Standardize figure and photograph titles (e.g., Photos 1–5 and Figure 1) with complete source citations and standardized font formatting.
- **Typographical Errors:** Fix minor typographical issues, such as duplicate wordings or missing punctuation in paragraph transitions (e.g., lines 167–168).

4. Reference List Standardization

- **Citation Consistency:** Ensure all references listed in the bibliography (lines 531–617) strictly adhere to APA 7th edition formatting.
- **Missing Details:** Provide volume, issue, and complete page ranges for incomplete journal citations (e.g., reference 12, *Coulibaly 2013*, and reference 29, *Mégret 2008*).

Recommendation for the Editor

- **Decision:** Accept with Minor Revisions

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- **Justification:** The manuscript offers rich, high-value empirical fieldwork on a sensitive and rarely documented topic within West African artisanal mining communities. The ethnographic data regarding the moral economy of survival and syncretic occult practices in gold mining are original and well-supported. Granting the authors an opportunity to execute minor textual cleanups, refine the theoretical alignment, and address layout formatting will render the manuscript fully suitable for publication.