

Toponymy and the Impact of Unregistered Lands on Sustainable Development: Case of Tlemcen

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research work is to investigate how unregistered lands can affect sustainable development in Tlemcen. Unregistered lands are ones which have no official copies that prove one’s ownership. The investigation interests are to see whether naming the land forms part of the registration process; whether being unregistered leads to any consequences; if these lands have an impact, be it of any sort, on sustainable development; and what solutions can be suggested to the problem at hands. By recognizing the importance of registered lands, the study is supposed to label one of the impediments that hold the country’s economic sustainability back.

Keywords: Sustainable development - Unregistered lands – Agriculture - Land surveying-Toponymy – Impediments - Tlemcen.

1. Introduction:

Toponymy is the study of place names, their origins, meanings, and usage. It encompasses a variety of disciplines, including linguistics, history, geography, and cultural studies. Toponymy examines how places are named and the reasons behind those names, shedding light on the cultural, historical, and geographical contexts of the places they represent. It often involves researching the etymology of place names, tracing their linguistic roots, and analysing how they have evolved over time. Toponymy offers valuable insights into a region's history, settlement patterns, indigenous cultures, and language dynamics.

Toponymy plays several important roles in sustainable development. Firstly, it helps to preserve and promote cultural heritage by documenting and protecting indigenous place names. Indigenous communities often have deep cultural connections to the land, and preserving their traditional place names can help to maintain their cultural identity and knowledge. Secondly, it raises

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awareness of environmental issues. Place names often reflect local geographical features, ecosystems, and natural resources. By studying toponymy, researchers and policymakers can gain insights into the environment and its significance to local communities. This understanding can inform sustainable land management practices and conservation efforts.

2. Community Engagement:

Involving local communities in the documentation and preservation of place names can foster a sense of ownership and stewardship over the land. This engagement can lead to collaborative efforts to protect natural resources, promote eco-tourism, and implement sustainable development initiatives. Toponymy provides valuable information for spatial planning and land use management. An understanding of the historical and cultural significance of place names can assist policymakers in making informed decisions about development projects, infrastructure planning, and zoning regulations that respect local identities and values.

3. Promotion of Indigenous Languages:

Many place names are derived from indigenous languages, reflecting the linguistic diversity of a region. By preserving and promoting indigenous place names, toponymy contributes to the revitalisation of endangered languages and the preservation of linguistic diversity, which are important aspects of sustainable development. Overall, toponymy contributes to sustainable development by promoting cultural diversity, environmental conservation, community engagement, and informed decision-making in land use and resource management.

4. Toponymy plays several important roles in sustainable development:

4-1. Cultural Preservation: Toponymy helps preserve and promote cultural heritage by documenting and protecting indigenous place names. Indigenous communities often have deep cultural connections to the land, and preserving their traditional place names can help maintain their cultural identity and knowledge (Honegger, 2013, pp. 19-40)

4-2.Environmental Awareness: Place names often reflect local geographical features, ecosystems, and natural resources. By studying toponymy, researchers and policymakers can gain insights into the environment and its significance to local communities. This understanding can inform

sustainable land management practices and conservation efforts. (Zimmermann & Sloane, 2008, pp. 1233-1245)

4-3.Community Engagement: Involving local communities in the documentation and preservation of place names can foster a sense of ownership and stewardship over the land. This engagement can lead to collaborative efforts to protect natural resources, promote eco-tourism, and implement sustainable development initiatives. (Slettol & Terje, 2007, pp. 156-178)

4-4.Spatial Planning: Toponymy provides valuable information for spatial planning and land use management. Understanding the historical and cultural significance of place names can help policymakers make informed decisions about development projects, infrastructure planning, and zoning regulations that respect local identities and values. (Schmid & Felix, 2015, pp. 163-173)

4-5.Promotion of Indigenous Languages: Many place names are derived from indigenous languages, reflecting the linguistic diversity of a region. By preserving and promoting indigenous place names, toponymy contributes to the revitalization of endangered languages and the preservation of linguistic diversity, which are important aspects of sustainable development. (Grenoble & Lindsay, 2006)

Sustainable development is a very much discussed topic. The fact of giving it such attention is because of its great importance in satisfying some of the needs of the people, and guaranteeing the liveliness of future generations as well (D. Mazilu, 2006). Also known as *durable development*, it is both a way of understanding the world and a method for solving global problems (J. D. Sachs, 2015). Many world summits were held in favor of this issue. In this respect, a framework was put forward by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) in which they stressed the importance of having access to information, access to decision-making, and access to justice (Executive Committee, WBCSD, 2002). Another framework was put forward during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3rd to 14th June, 1992, where the Agenda 21 was adopted; a document which states the key principles of durable development. At the same time, the Business Council for Sustainable Development, in 1992, called for a new framework that could push the United States' economy in the right directions if supported by the government.

Among the many problems which can prevent sustainability from taking place is the issue raised in this work: how can unregistered lands affect the sustainable development as a whole, and Tlemcen in specific? The researcher hypothesized that, for an agricultural land to be registered, it needs to be given a name that is going to differentiate it from others. Additionally, any unregistered land is suspect to slow down its activity and, therefore, provides poor or no sustainability. Moreover, lands lacking legal documentation are a source of conflict between people as the latter will fight to take control over it.

The results of the investigation show that, in Algeria, it is not required to name one's land to have it registered. Still, other important evidence has to be provided so that the registration process is completed. It has been noted that in Tlemcen almost, if not all, lands have a register. The second hypothesis has been adopted. The person does not have a legal proof for his ownership and is, therefore, unmotivated to work the land. This causes a poor contribution to the economy. The consequence stated in the third hypothesis is confirmed as well. Many conflicts, in addition to the already stated one, have been reported. It has been found that if well taken care of, the agricultural sector in Algeria will be the answer to many problems the country's economy is facing.

5. Method:

5-1.Participants

In the present study, two male persons were interviewed. The participants were from the cadastral office. They occupied different positions identified as the Chief Surveyor- General and the General Council. Each of them was qualified to answer to the questions providing full information. The informants did not fail to answer the questions so no one was excluded during the process of interviewing.

5-2.Materials:

The participants responded to all questions asked to them throughout the interview. The data was gathered using a structured interview. To get accurate and reliable information, the researcher asked direct questions regarding the issue. The stimulus included raising existing problems related to the theme.

Each respondent received questions according to what his position in the cadastral office. The interview included questions concerning naming the lands as part of registration. The answers were recorded in addition to note taking.

5-3. Procedure:

The interview happened in the interviewees' offices that were sufficiently quiet and equipped with the cadastral archives to provide necessary evidence. Upon arrival, the informants were introduced to the issue of the present study. They gave, later, verbal consent to take part of the investigation process. Each was interviewed independently from the other. The Chief Surveyor- General's turn was first. The latter received three questions that included whether it is necessary to give a name to the land to be registered, the percentage of unregistered lands in Tlemcen, and the consequences of being unregistered. The second informant received the same other three questions in addition to solutions suggested to solve the problem and the benefits obtained from registering the agricultural lands. The interview lasted for six to ten minutes each. Once done, the participants were thanked.

6. Results:

The findings of this research work show that for a land to be registered in the cadastral plan, it does not need a have a name. Seemingly, an appellation of the land is not the one which determines its belonging to one person or the other. Thus, as far as the documents required for land registration are concerned, each agricultural land is supposed to have documentation which shows who owns it; how many square meters in the area are; the land's sketch; and whether it is permitted to have dwellings built on it. In addition, it has been found that almost, if not all, lands in Tlemcen are legally documented and, therefore, have their land register. If not, downsides would be noted and serious problems would be reported. Leaving the land undocumented led people to fight over it and, in some times, commit a murder. Many related cases include a fight in Sheshar and Babar townships in Khanshla; Tousmoulin township in Elbaïad; Bir Hammam in Sidi Belabes; Ghardaia; and in Leghouat. The reason behind such problems goes back to the inattention of the government to the fact that the administrative division of these lands during the French colonialism is different than that of nowadays.

All these form great impediments to the country's economic sustainability. The solutions suggested are that all lands need to be registered in the cadastral plan; a land survey should be run and a scheme should be provided to each. Also, facilitating the delivery of the land register upon completion of the registration process is strongly encouraged. If rights are procured and the law is applied, conflicts between family members or neighbors, as well as crimes, would be reduced. Hence, the focus of the land owner would be on working the land by providing high quality goods to attain self-sufficiency, contribute to sustainable development of the country and export the surplus production to foreign countries. This is seen to help develop Algeria's economic status and avoid its reliance on oil and petroleum exportation only. Equally important, a registered land is sold two times the price of an unregistered one. This makes it an individual profit for the former owner and pushes the new one to work hard on a land on which he spent a good deal of money.

7. Discussion:

The research problem discusses the impact of unregistered lands in Tlemcen on the sustainable development of the area. The aim was to see whether it is important to provide agricultural lands a title and what impact unregistered lands have on the sustainable development of Tlemcen wilaya. Results show that the law does not include naming the land part of the process. As a result, it does not form part of the registration process. Moreover, problems may arise when these are not registered. To mention, conflicts and crimes were committed when fighting over the property.

Data collection for this research work was limited to interviewing personal in the cadastral office of Tlemcen only. If the researcher investigated with the cadastral office in Oran, additional data could have been revealed. Besides, if more research instruments, like questionnaires and observation, were included, findings could be richer and results could have contributed to raising new research questions. Further, the lack of numbers and percentages caused the complete absence of tables and figures; essentials of enhancing the level of understanding.

8. Conclusion

Studying the importance of land registration and its contribution to the economic sustainability of the country is important as it sheds the lights on a crucial yet neglected element to Algeria's economic strength. By spotting and solving problems holding back the growth of the agricultural sector in the country, the government would have ensured the present and future needs of its citizens and next generations. Leaving any land unregistered displays many problems which can be avoided if strict measures are imposed and followed. Other research works may conduct and replicate this study, by adding what it missed, in other wilayas of the country. This will contribute to raising other important issues as well as providing a general account of unregistered lands in Algeria; thus, working on solving the source of difficulty.

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