

## Public Perception on Land Reclassification and Implementation of Zoning Ordinance in the Municipality of Binmaley

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Land use management is a critical component of local governance, as it determines how land resources are allocated, developed, and preserved to promote sustainable growth. One of the key instruments for managing land use is the zoning ordinance, which regulates the classification of land according to its designated purposes, such as residential, commercial, agricultural, or industrial use. In the Municipality of Binmaley, land reclassification has been implemented to support economic development and urban expansion. However, these changes have also raised concerns among residents regarding their environmental, economic, and social impacts.

This study was conducted to determine the public perception of land reclassification and the implementation of the zoning ordinance in the Municipality of Binmaley. Specifically, it aimed to (1) determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, nature of employment, number of years of residency in the barangay, and average household monthly income; (2) assess the residents' perception toward land reclassification; (3) identify the challenges encountered by the residents following land reclassification; (4) identify the areas and properties that were officially reclassified; and (5) determine the current status of implementation of the zoning ordinance in the municipality.

This research utilized a Sequential Explanatory Design, which is a form of mixed-method research that combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. The researchers selected this design because it allows quantitative findings to be supported, explained, and deepened by qualitative insights, leading to a more complete interpretation of the results.

The quantitative phase focused on gathering numerical data regarding the respondents' profiles, their perception of land reclassification, and the challenges they encountered as residents of affected barangays. A survey questionnaire was used as the main instrument for quantitative data collection. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: the first part gathered demographic information; the second assessed perceptions of land reclassification; and the third identified the problems or challenges experienced by the respondents.

To complement and elaborate on the quantitative results, the researchers conducted a qualitative phase through document analysis and interviews. Document analysis was used to determine which specific lands in Binmaley had been reclassified. This process involved a systematic review, interpretation, and organization of existing records and documents from the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator (MPDC) and the Office of the Municipal Assessor. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted using an interview guide to gather information on the status of implementation of the zoning ordinance, particularly from key officials, including the Municipal Zoning Administrator.

The study was conducted in the Municipality of Binmaley, Pangasinan. The researchers employed purposive sampling, selecting respondents from barangays where land reclassification had taken place. This ensured that participants had direct experience or knowledge of the phenomenon being studied.

According to data obtained from the MPDC in 2022, the total population of the target barangays was 8,786. Using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, the researchers computed a sample size of 382 respondents. These participants represented a cross-section of residents from affected areas, enabling the researchers to capture diverse views regarding the impacts of land reclassification.

Three primary instruments were utilized to collect data: (1) Survey Questionnaire – used to gather demographic data, perceptions on land reclassification, and challenges encountered, (2)

Interview Guide – used during interviews with local government officials to assess the extent and effectiveness of the zoning ordinance’s implementation, and (3) Document Analysis – employed to identify lands that had been reclassified and to validate the information gathered from the residents and officials.

The survey questionnaire was developed based on the study’s objectives and was subjected to content validation by field experts to ensure accuracy and reliability. It was designed to provide quantifiable data to address the first three research questions. The document analysis and interviews, on the other hand, provided qualitative data supporting the fourth and fifth research questions.

The study revealed several important findings concerning public perception, encountered challenges, and the implementation of the zoning ordinance. Most respondents had been long-term residents of their barangays, with many living there for over ten years. The majority were middle-aged, and their occupations varied, including both agricultural and non-agricultural work. Household incomes generally reflected lower to middle-income brackets, indicating that many residents were directly dependent on land and agricultural activities for their livelihood.

#### Public Perception on Land Reclassification

The findings showed that residents held mixed perceptions regarding land reclassification. While some viewed it positively as a sign of progress, modernization, and economic development, others expressed concerns about its long-term effects on the environment, agriculture, and community welfare. A notable number of respondents worried about the loss of farmlands, displacement of agricultural workers, and increase in property taxes following land conversion.

The study identified several major challenges resulting from land reclassification. One of the primary issues was environmental degradation due to the alteration of natural waterways. The conversion of agricultural land for residential and commercial use led to the obstruction of drainage systems, resulting in flooding and stagnant water in some areas. Another key concern was that deforestation and removal of vegetation to make way for construction contributed to climate change-related hazards, such as higher temperatures and increased risk of soil erosion. Moreover, agricultural productivity decreased because farmland areas were reduced and fewer residents engaged in farming activities. This shift not only affected local food production but also disrupted the livelihoods of farmers who relied on agriculture as their primary source of income.

Through document analysis and interviews, the researchers found that while the zoning ordinance was being implemented, there were inconsistencies and gaps in monitoring and enforcement. Some reclassified areas lacked proper environmental safeguards, and not all residents were adequately informed about the process and its implications. It was also noted that coordination between government offices and local residents could be improved to ensure transparency and community participation in land use decisions.

The study concluded that while land reclassification in the Municipality of Binmaley aimed to promote urban development and economic progress, it also posed significant challenges to environmental sustainability and agricultural productivity. Residents perceived the process as both beneficial and problematic—acknowledging its potential to bring modernization but expressing concern over the ecological and social consequences. The implementation of the zoning ordinance was found to be functional but in need of stronger oversight, community consultation, and environmental consideration. Effective communication between the local government and residents must be strengthened to ensure that land reclassification aligns with sustainable development principles and community welfare.

In response to the findings, the following recommendations were made 😊 (1) Environmental Management: The local government should conduct regular cleaning and dredging of canals to prevent flooding and remove accumulated waste caused by land development activities, (2) Tree-Planting and Conservation Measures: Implement strict regulations on tree-cutting, particularly in protected areas, and introduce reforestation programs to mitigate the environmental impact of land reclassification., (3)

Support for Agricultural Productivity: Establish partnerships with non-profit organizations that can help sustain and revitalize agricultural production, especially in areas such as Barangay Gayaman, which are heavily affected by land conversion, and (4) Public Awareness and Education: Conduct annual educational seminars on the implementation and importance of the zoning ordinance to ensure that residents are well-informed about the processes, benefits, and consequences of land reclassification. By implementing these measures, the Municipality of Binmaley can balance urban growth with environmental preservation, ensuring that development remains sustainable and inclusive for all its residents.