

Research Paper

Transformative Pathways of Agrarian Reform: Comparative Bibliometric Insights of Southeast Asia and Indonesia Cases

Dewi Gafuraningtyas^{1*}, Raldi Hendro Koestoer², Hafid Setiadi³, and Mohammad Ridwan Lessy⁴

¹Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency, Jakarta, Indonesia

²School of Environmental Sciences, University of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

³Department of Geography, University of Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia

⁴Department of Arts and Society, Charles Darwin University, Australia

*) Corresponding Author: dewigafura@gmail.com

Abstract

Agrarian reform is recognized globally as a solution for reducing land ownership inequality. Many countries, including Indonesia, are still working to enhance its implementation. This study examines global agrarian reform research trends over the past decade, focusing on Southeast Asian (SEA) nations, particularly Indonesia. The methodology involved conducting a bibliometric analysis using RStudio and adhering to the PRISMA framework. The result of our analysis, which included 248 articles, reveals a trend of increasing interest in agrarian reform. Among the 20 selected articles, we observe that agrarian reform success in Europe, especially in Scandinavia, correlates with democratization. Conversely, Latin America contends with personal agenda challenges, while Africa faces issues of inclusivity and gender. SEA nations employ diverse approaches: Vietnam boosts productivity with private farming, Thailand enhances revenue through agrotourism, but Timor-Leste and the Philippines face managerial and credit access hurdles. Indonesia integrates asset and access management, yet access issues persist.

Keywords: agrarian reform; bibliometric; Indonesia; policy; Southeast Asia.

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Phone: +62 21 31928280/3192828

Fax: +62 21 31928281

E-mail:

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1. Introduction

In the era of globalization and ongoing modernization, social and economic changes have significantly impacted the agricultural and rural sectors across various countries, leading to phenomena like deagrarianization. Deagrarianization is the process whereby rural areas shift from agriculture-centered economies to diverse non-agricultural activities, influenced by various factors and exhibiting regional and national variations (Majumdar, 2020). As Suharjito (2018) notes, deagrarianization is a consequence of rapid development, which unfortunately does not always translate into benefits for farmers, particularly in developing nations. The process of deagrarianization has notably reduced employment opportunities in the agricultural and rural sectors, prompting a predominant response in the form of migration (Resosudarmo et al., 2019). Rural migration involves farmers and residents seeking better opportunities outside agriculture due to limited local resources, reflecting economic adaptation efforts in rural areas (Widodo, 2017). Despite the economic adaptation efforts reflected in rural migration, there are adverse consequences, including escalating poverty levels in rural areas (Al-Maruf et al., 2022).

Poverty in rural areas is closely intertwined with restricted access to land, stemming from limited land ownership, insecurity, and disputes over land rights (Bennewitz, 2017). Land ownership serves not only as an asset or investment but also as an indicator of well-being, manifesting as private ownership that influences social interactions (Widodo, 2017). Individual land ownership is the primary determinant of the success or failure of agricultural production, as the stability of land rights is expected to encourage families to invest effort and implement agricultural technology in land management (Bui & Preechametta, 2016). While securing land ownership status is a crucial step, in the agricultural sector, land ownership alone is insufficient (Mizero et al., 2018), as legal guarantees for land do not directly enhance the “productive value” of land (Widodo, 2017). Consequently, various countries are taking proactive measures to enhance the structure of agricultural land use through agrarian reform programs.

When discussing agrarian reform, it is essential to consider its inseparable relationship with land reform. Agrarian reform shares a similar objective with land reform, namely the equitable redistribution of land control in a socio-political context (Sadyohutomo, 2018). As defined by King in his book “Land Reform: A World Survey,” land reform refers to changes typically overseen by the government, primarily focusing on transforming existing land ownership to expand wealth distribution and enhance production capacity (Isnaeni & Suratman, 2018). Land reform entails restructuring land ownership, tenure, and administration to address inequities and promote social justice, including redistribution, restitution, tenure, and administrative reforms (Home, 2022). Successful land reform increases access to land for marginalized populations, improves land tenure security, promotes social equity, enhances agricultural productivity, and strengthens governance (Hull, 2019).

Definitions and interpretations of agrarian reform may vary depending on experts’ and academics’ backgrounds, ideological perspectives, and socio-economic contexts. For instance, in 1969, the Special Committee on Agrarian Reform, appointed by the Director-General of the FAO, defined agrarian reform as encompassing “all aspects of the progress of rural institutions and covering mainly changes in: tenure, production and supporting service” (FAO, 2003). In alignment with a neutral perspective, the United Nations (UN) document characterizes agrarian reform as “an integrated programme of measures designed to eliminate obstacles to economic and social development arising out of defects in the agrarian structure” (Milošević, 2022). Agrarian reform embodies a comprehensive approach, encompassing not only land redistribution but also state support, credit provision, seed distribution, and broader agricultural development initiatives, distinguishing it from the predominantly land-focused term of land reform (Lanzona, 2019; Botella-Rodríguez & González-Esteban, 2021). These definitions collectively convey that agrarian reform encompasses a comprehensive transformation to overcome impediments to economic and social agricultural development, encompassing changes in ownership, increased production, and state-supported initiatives.

Many countries have employed agrarian reform, which often leads to a new land system as part of broader agrarian and economic reforms (Rogatnev et al., 2021). Achieving success in agrarian reform necessitates changes in people’s behavior, so tangible outcomes often take a generation or roughly a decade to materialize (Merl, 2020). Moreover, effective cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration among stakeholders play a pivotal role in ensuring the success of agrarian reform (Widodo, 2017). Nevertheless, in government politics, the extent of land redistributed is often considered an indicator of

program achievements (Lanzona, 2019). Unfortunately, the lack of community empowerment, particularly among farmers enrolled in agrarian reform programs, can hinder their ability to utilize the redistributed land fully.

Agrarian reform continues to be a topic of enduring interest among researchers due to its varied implementation across countries. Data from the Scopus database, as of July 27, 2023, reveals the identification of 3,366 documents related to agrarian reform, spanning from 1922 to 2023. This fact underscores the enduring relevance of this issue and its enduring appeal to researchers worldwide for over a century. This study aim to analyzes global agrarian reform research and development trends over the past decade. Through examining these documents, this study seeks to elucidate how attention to agrarian reform has evolved and identify prevalent themes frequently discussed in academic literature. Furthermore, this study will explore implementing agrarian reform across various continents and Southeast Asian (SEA) countries, focusing on comparisons. Particular emphasis will be placed on Indonesia, an ASEAN member nation with a rich and diverse history of agrarian reform implementation. By comparing the execution of agrarian reform in diverse countries, this study aspires to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the successes, challenges, and influencing factors in agrarian reform implementation. Such insights are crucial for policymakers and stakeholders in Indonesia to design and implement effective agrarian reform policies tailored to the country's unique context, ultimately promoting equitable land distribution, sustainable agricultural development, and socioeconomic progress.

2. Methods

This research constitutes a systematic review, following the explicit methodological approach defined by the Cochrane Collaboration. The Cochrane Collaboration is characterized by its systematic review methodology, which involves rigorous identification, selection, critical evaluation, and analysis of data from relevant research inquiries with clearly articulated criteria (Shaheen et al., 2023). The research employs well-defined and structured procedures at each stage, meticulously addressing potential biases, encompassing the search, identification, assessment, synthesis, analysis, and study summarization (Mengist et al., 2020). The research leverages the Scopus database to source articles pertinent to the keyword “agrarian reform.” The initial search using these keywords was subsequently expanded based on the chosen database (as detailed in Table 1) and guided by predetermined criteria (as outlined in Table 2).

Table 1. Query used in data search

| Database | Limitation |
|----------|---|
| Scopus | TITLE-ABS-KEY (agrarian AND reform) AND PUBYEAR > 2013 AND PUBYEAR < 2024 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SRCTYPE , "j")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , "final")) AND (LIMIT-TO (OA , "all")) AND (EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA , "IMMU") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA , "PHAR") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA , "HEAL") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA , "NURS") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA , "BIOC") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA , "COMP") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA , "PSYC") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA , "VETE") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA , "ENER") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA , "DECI") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA , "ENGI") OR EXCLUDE (SUBJAREA , "MEDI")) |

Source: (Author’s processing, 2023)

The query results, as outlined in the limitations detailed in Table 2, yielded a total of 248 articles concerning agrarian reform over the past decade. These articles encompassed bibliographic data, including citation information, bibliographical details, abstracts, and keywords, all of which were formatted in BibTeX format. Subsequently, this bibliographic data was utilized for bibliometric analysis.

Table 2. Criteria used in data search

| | Criteria included | Criteria excluded |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| 1 | Document type: Article | Articles published under 2014 |
| 2 | Publication stage: Final | Subject areas that are not relevant to the topic and theme: medicine, nursing, immunology, energy, veterinary, and others |
| 3 | Articles in English | |
| 4 | Open Access | |

Source: (Author’s processing, 2023)

2.1 PRISMA Framework

Conducting in-depth content analysis to examine various agrarian reform policies begins with applying the PRISMA Framework. According to [Sohrabi et al. \(2021\)](#), the PRISMA framework outlines a systematic approach for conducting and reporting systematic reviews, consisting of several key steps. Researchers begin by planning the review, defining the research question and eligibility criteria, and developing a protocol. They then systematically search for relevant studies, screen retrieved records, and extract data from included studies. Quality assessment is conducted to evaluate the methodological rigor of the included studies, followed by data synthesis to analyze and summarize the findings. If applicable, meta-analysis is performed to generate pooled effect estimates. Dissemination of the review findings through publication and other channels ensures that the results are accessible and contribute to evidence-based decision-making. Adhering to the PRISMA framework enables researchers to mitigate bias during systematic reviews, enhancing confidence in the research outcomes.

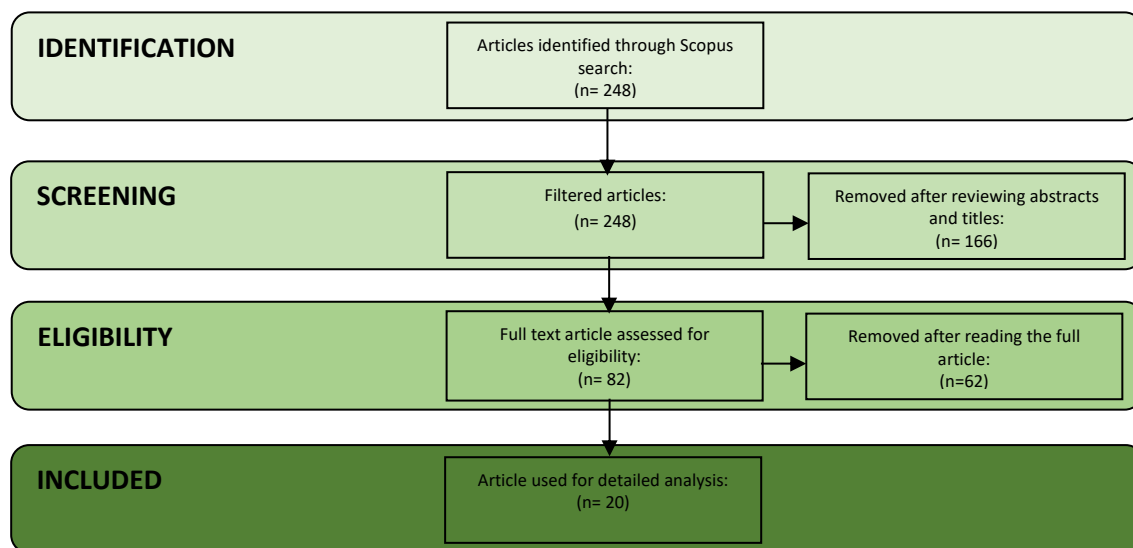


Figure 1. The PRISMA framework in determining articles for in-depth content study

Source: (Author's processing, 2023)

In the initial stage, the selection of articles adhered to predefined criteria (Table 2). Following the literature search using the predetermined query, 248 articles were initially retrieved. Subsequently, these articles underwent a filtering process based on evaluating their titles and abstracts, resulting in the selection of 166 articles (see Figure 1). The remaining 82 articles then proceeded to full-text eligibility assessment, culminating in the identification of 20 articles suitable for inclusion in the literature review. Of the 62 articles that were excluded, the reasons for their exclusion are as follows: 1. did not focus on agrarian reform policies, 2. the scope of the research was deemed too narrow, and 3. lacked comprehensive explanations of the socio-political conditions surrounding the implementation of agrarian reform.

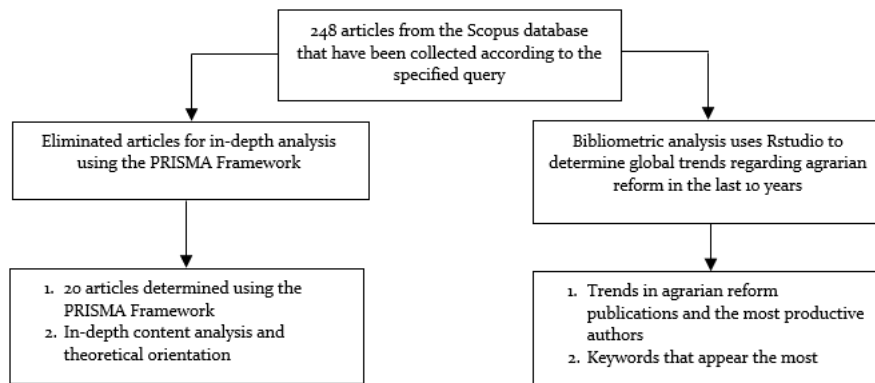


Figure 2. Workflow
Source: (Author's processing, 2023)

2.2 Analysis

The selected initial articles, determined according to the query, were subjected to analysis using Bibliometrix on Biblioshiny, accessed through RStudio. This analysis encompassed various data points, including annual scientific production, country scientific production, author most cited countries, word cloud, and most cited documents. In the subsequent stage, a descriptive analysis was conducted on the 20 articles that had been chosen based on the PRISMA Framework. Additionally, several other pertinent national publications related to agrarian reform in Indonesia were included in this analysis (see Figure 2). This step aimed to gain insights into the diverse agrarian reform policies implemented worldwide, with a particular focus on Southeast Asia. Furthermore, during this phase, a comparative analysis was performed to discern differences, similarities, challenges, and successes that have emerged in implementing agrarian reform in Indonesia and neighboring countries.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Global Trends in Agrarian Reform Research

From the 248 documents identified, it is evident that research on agrarian reform has witnessed a significant upswing in the past decade (please note that the data for this article was collected in July 2023, which means that the data for the year 2023 includes data from the first half of the year only). This surge reflects a heightened interest among academics and researchers in agrarian reform. The analysis results highlight that 2021 marked the zenith, with the highest number of studies, totaling 39 articles (Figure 3). This upward trajectory in research output over the last decade underscores the salience of agrarian reform within social, economic, and political contexts. This trend may be attributed to various factors, including a growing awareness of socioeconomic disparities in the agricultural sector, the impact of climate change on food security, and the imperative to seek solutions to the issue of unequal land ownership.

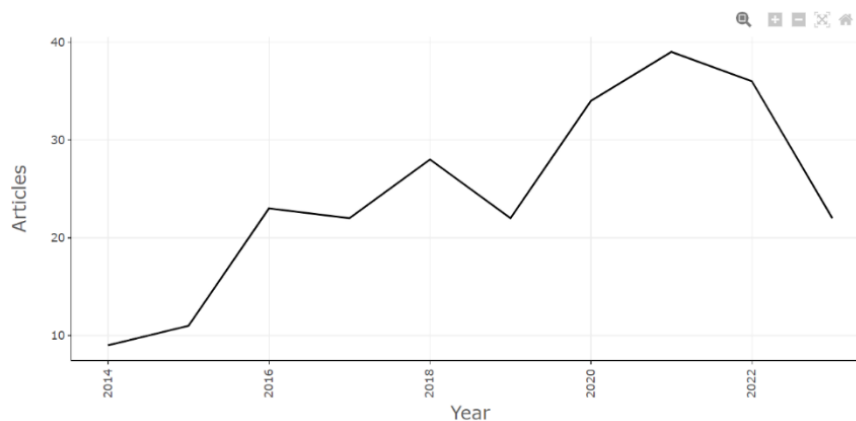


Figure 3. Annual scientific production
Source: (Author's processing, 2023)

In total, articles on agrarian reform have received contributions from 623 authors from various countries. Among these contributions, those from the United Kingdom, Brazil, the USA, South Africa, and the Netherlands were the most dominant. Notably, authors from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands emerged as the most frequently cited in this research field (refer to Figure 4), underscoring their considerable influence and contribution to the scientific literature on agrarian reform. Furthermore, when examining authors from the Asian region, Indonesia and Japan stand out as representative authors with significant citations. It underscores that research on agrarian reform in Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Japan, has garnered noteworthy attention from researchers and academics. Their contributions are of the utmost relevance and importance in advancing the body of knowledge on this critical issue.

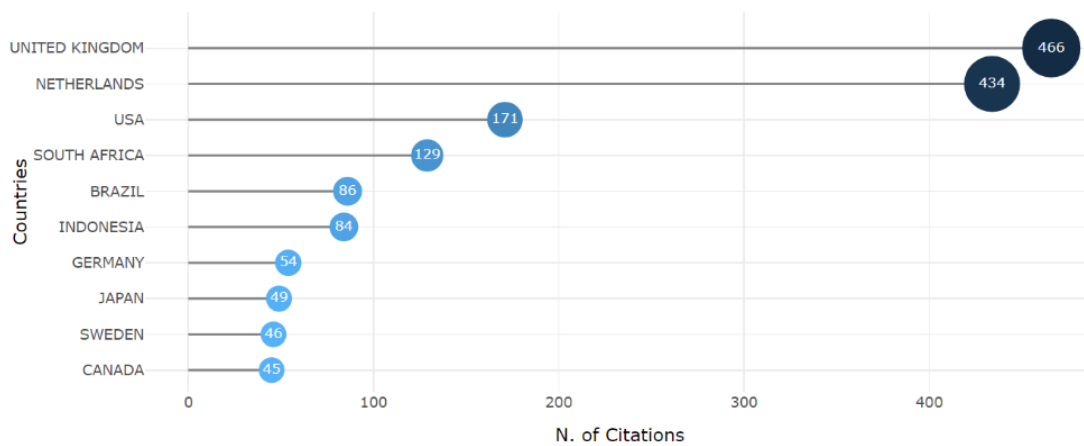


Figure 4. Author most cited countries
Source: (Author's processing, 2023)

The word cloud (Figure 5) illustrates the frequency of word repetition in agrarian reform studies, shedding light on prominent keywords within this research field. Notably, several keywords surface with higher frequency. These dominant keywords signify the central issues that hold a primary focus in agrarian reform studies. "Land reform" underscores the significance of altering land ownership and distribution to attain social justice and foster sustainable agricultural development. "Agrarian change" and "agricultural development" accentuate transformations and advancements related to agrarian reform in the agricultural sector. "Political economy" and "rural policy" highlight the critical role of political and policy dimensions in the execution of agrarian reform in rural areas. "Social movements" underscores the activism and social movements advocating for the rights of farmers and other rural community groups. Keywords like "deforestation," "land use," and "indigenous population" indicate concern for environmental issues and safeguarding the rights of indigenous groups residing in agricultural regions. Attention to economic matters and capitalism within the agricultural and land ownership context represents an analysis of the influence of the capitalist economic system on agrarian reform and the agricultural sector as a whole. Various other words encompass an array of additional topics, emphasizing the intricate and multifaceted nature of the agrarian reform issue.

In addition to the previously mentioned keywords, some keywords correspond to the names of several countries, including Brazil, Indonesia, Zimbabwe, India, China, and Ecuador. It underscores the close connection between agrarian reform research and the experiences of these countries in confronting agricultural challenges and striving for social justice in agricultural regions. Keywords associated with these countries may pertain to case studies, policy analyses, or assessments of agrarian reform implementation. Each of these countries presents distinct challenges and characteristics in the execution of agrarian reform, and their experiences serve as valuable references in shaping policies and best practices within the agricultural sector. Researchers can direct their attention toward case studies and comparisons among relevant nations by featuring keywords associated with these countries in the Word Cloud.



Figure 5. Word cloud
Source: (Author's processing, 2023)

3.2 Experience of Agrarian Reform in Various Parts of the World

3.2.1 Europe

Europe's diverse environmental, social, and economic landscape has been a prominent focus for in-depth research on land-related issues, particularly land ownership and redistribution, amid the backdrop of world wars and political debates. Based on research conducted by [Jepsen et al. \(2015\)](#), there are three primary driving forces behind land use change in Europe: technology (related to advancements in agricultural production methods), institutions (influenced by various organizational entities at different levels), and economics (directly impacting prices or production methods). Within the institutional category, land reform emerges as a pivotal driving factor. It encompasses policies aimed at transferring land ownership from nobles, the state, or large landowners to previously landless farmers or individuals who were resettled due to regional boundary changes.

According to [Khristoforov \(2022\)](#), there have been variations in land reforms across various European nations and historical eras along three essential dimensions. First, some reforms eased property transaction rules, allowing tenants, villagers, and sometimes landlords to acquire previously collectively owned land. Second, certain reforms mandated the redistribution of land from landlords to peasants. Additionally, there existed a more limited form of reform that conferred hereditary rights upon peasants as cultivators of the land while retaining primary ownership with the landlord. Third, reforms often emancipated peasants from manorial dues and bestowed various civil liberties, including mobility and physical integrity. [Jepsen et al.'s \(2015\)](#) research results give a full picture of how land was managed in Europe from 1800 to 2010. They divide this time period into seven different regimes, each of which was made to fit the way implementation worked in each country (Figure 6).

1. **Peasant Era:** During this era, feudal structures predominantly characterized land management.
2. **Innovation and Rights:** This phase witnessed the strengthening of peasant rights to land ownership following the abolition of serfdom. Land was allocated to peasants from state estates, monasteries, churches, and noble families.
3. **Intensification:** Building upon the previous regime, this period involved state expropriation of clerical and manorial property, which was subsequently transferred, leased, or sold to small farmers, often in parcels of less than 10 hectares.
4. **Industrialization:** Under this regime, agriculture transformed into a large-scale commercial enterprise focusing on global markets. This led to significant alterations in the agricultural landscape.
5. **Collectivization:** Centrally planned economies drove the implementation of land management systems resembling industrialization in Eastern Bloc nations from 1945 to 1991, including Slovenia and Albania. This phase featured the seizure and redistribution of agricultural land from large owners, along with the establishment of collective farms. In contrast, the Western Bloc adopted market-oriented approaches and institutionalized economic incentives.

6. **De-intensification and commercialization:** Following the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in 1989, socialist countries witnessed substantial changes in their land systems. State and collective farms were disbanded, and land reform initiatives were implemented to return land ownership to agricultural workers or the previous owners.
7. **Environmental awareness:** Since 1990, there has been a greater understanding of how agricultural production affects the environment. Policies addressing agricultural environmental concerns were introduced to mitigate emissions and production surpluses.

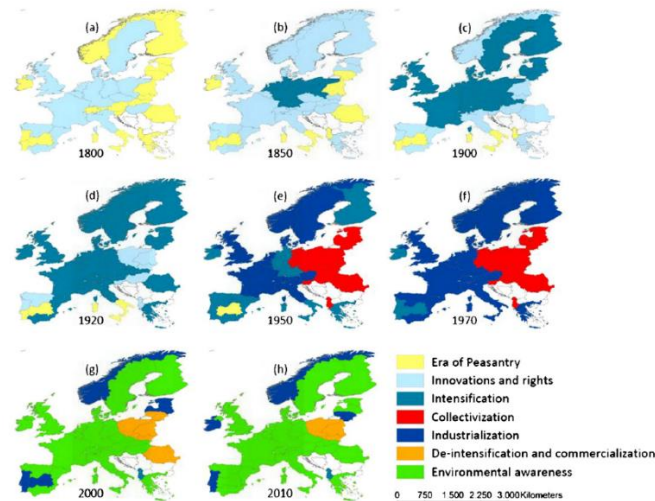


Figure 6. Distribution of land management regimes in the period 1800-2010
Source: (Jepsen et al., 2015)

In Europe, notable success in implementing agrarian reform was observed in Scandinavian countries, closely linked to their democratization processes. [Khristoforov \(2022\)](#) presents (Figure 7), which summarizes the execution of agrarian reform in Scandinavian nations, represented by Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, compared with France and Prussia. Scandinavia achieved substantial progress in liberating peasants and distributing land on a large scale, whereas Prussia remained stagnant and France grappled with widespread revolution. In Sweden, conflicts between the crown and nobility were generally resolved peacefully, with few exceptions, such as the assassination of King Gustav III in 1792. In Denmark, peasant strikes became more frequent from the 1760s onward but rarely escalated to physical violence. While Norway was part of the Danish kingdom until 1814 and did not directly benefit from Danish reforms, the Danish government implemented reforms that indirectly influenced rural institutions in Norway. Under Danish rule, Norway expanded peasant rights and diminished aristocratic power without significant conflict. France's lack of agrarian reform implementation played a pivotal role in fomenting the French Revolution. Peasant rebellions increased during the 1780s, culminating in the storming of the Bastille in 1789. In Prussia, agrarian reform remained limited, with the first serious attempt occurring through the Stein-Hardenberg reforms in the early 19th century.

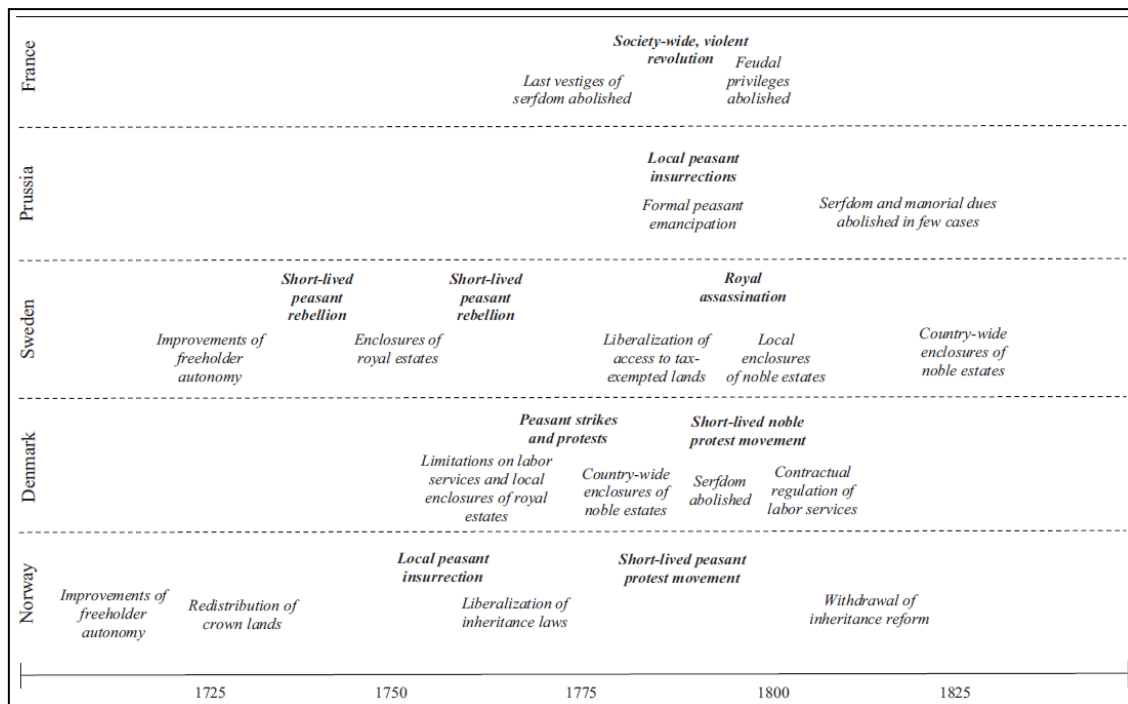


Figure 7. Agrarian Reforms, Backlashes, and Related Violence
 Source: (Khristoforov, 2022)

When Europe was engulfed in political turmoil and conflict, Yugoslavia, which has since been divided into several countries, also had a historical record of implementing agrarian reform to address land inequality. According to Milošević (2022), an unresolved issue during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1919–1941) was the right to register land ownership, which was suspended until full payment was made to the previous owner. This process was further delayed due to the outbreak of World War II. The reforms during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia were fraught with abuses, legal confusion, and ethnic inequalities, with Serbs enjoying the most privileges while Albanians and Germans faced the most discrimination. Unfortunately, the outbreak of World War II interrupted these reforms, and they were ultimately eradicated during the war. In contrast to the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia’s agrarian reform from 1945 to 1948 focused on consolidating small and medium landholdings into private ownership, equalizing agricultural income with wage levels, and almost completely abolishing land rent. Yugoslavia provided significant protection to private property early in the reform process, including issuing title deeds in individuals' names, albeit with certain restrictions, notably a twenty-year moratorium on property sales acquired through the reform.

In Russia, the journey of agrarian reform has witnessed three significant phases that reflect profound changes in approach and outcomes. Merl's (2020) article provides an in-depth exploration of these pivotal periods in the history of agricultural reform in Russia. From 1856 to 1928, the focus was on liberating the peasantry and fostering a new agricultural structure based on market principles and skills, which led to significant modernization and growth in the agricultural sector. Stalin’s era from 1929 to 1987 brought forced collectivization and stagnation, with declining productivity and the Soviet Union becoming a major grain importer. However, from 1987 onwards, a market-oriented approach empowered farmers, dismantled the state command system, and attracted investment, increasing productivity and modernization, and reducing the development gap with more advanced countries.

Europe’s rich history has shaped diverse land management regimes over time, with variations in the implementation of agrarian reform across countries and eras. Issues related to property rights, land distribution, and social conflicts have often been central to land use changes in Europe. Regime changes have been associated with transformations in supra-national institutions, the adoption and diffusion of innovative technologies across Europe, and land reform initiatives (Jepsen et al., 2015). Scandinavia’s state control and meritocratic approach supported greater neutrality and peaceful agrarian reform, while diverse interests and the influence of civil servants and experts protected against manipulation by landlords or peasants (Khristoforov, 2022).

3.2.2 America

From Europe, the focus shifted to the Latin American region, which was the location of agrarian reform with varying levels of implementation. In Latin America, except Nicaragua, countries have generally struggled to implement agrarian reform due to the pervasive influence of private elites, resulting in states lacking autonomy and often acting against the goals of land reform (Botella-Rodríguez & González-Esteban, 2021). Similar to the elite control in Russia, in 1856, Alexander II expressed his intention to end serfdom before the Moscow nobility, but they rejected the plan and offered no alternative suggestions, hoping to prevent its implementation (Merl, 2020). In Prussia in the 1810s, substantial agricultural reform driven by central government meritocracy was hindered by long-standing landowners with administrative power and local authority (Khristoforov, 2022).

Based on document identification results, Brazil stands out as one of the South American countries with a significant number of documents related to agrarian reform. In his work, Robles (2018) explains that dating back to the colonial era, Brazil has grappled with profound disparities in the distribution of agricultural land. This inequality can be attributed to the latifúndia system, which refers to large plantations initially introduced by Portugal in the sixteenth century. Since the 1930s, governments have consistently faced obstacles in pursuing agrarian reform due to the persistent influence of powerful landowning elites, despite varying ideologies. This influential faction, led by a member of Congress named Ronaldo Caiado (from the PSD party, later renamed PFL), was the driving force behind the formation of the União Democrática Ruralista (Rural Democratic Association, UDR). Their primary objective was to block progressive land-related legislation (López, 2023), ensuring that agrarian reform initiatives never succeeded.

When discussing agrarian reform in Brazil, it is essential to consider the significant role played by the MST organization (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra), also known as the Brazilian Landless Peasant Movement. This social organization actively advocates for and represents the primary driving force behind agrarian reform in Brazil. In the late 1980s and 1990s, Latin America saw the emergence of alternative movements like the Zapatista uprisings in Mexico and the MST in Brazil in response to the embrace of neoliberal policies in the region (Bennewitz, 2017). The MST has engaged in various struggles in its history, including collaborating with other organizations to pressure for the establishment of the Programa Nacional de Reforma Agrária (PNRA) in 1985 under Sarney's leadership, although this program's ambitions to assist 1.4 million landless farmers (see Table 3) were ultimately unrealized (Robles, 2018). The MST's public support grew significantly following the mid-1990s massacre of farmers (López, 2023). During Cardoso's presidency, in response to the massacre and as part of the Agrarian Reform program "Compromisso de todos" (Agrarian Reform is Everyone's Commitment), the MST carried out extensive land occupations. This initiative led to Cardoso reallocating 20 million hectares of land to resettle 540,704 landless farming families, averaging around 67,588 families per year (Robles, 2018).

Table 3. Number of Official Agrarian Reform Recipients
Brazilian Government, 1964-2013

| Period Military and Democratic Regimes | Number of Peasant Families Settled | Set Target | Total Area (Millions hectares) Approximate | Number of Peasants Families Settled Average Per Year |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| Military (1964-1984) | 77.465 | N/A | 13.8 | 3.873 |
| Sarney (1985-1990) | 89.950 | 1.4 Million | 4.5 | 17.990 |
| Color and Franco (1990-1994) | 60.188 | N/A | 2.3 | 15.049 |
| Cardoso (1995-2002) | 570.704 | N/A | 20.8 | 67.588 |
| Lula (2003-2010) | 614.088 | 400.000 (First Term) | 47.9 | 76.761 |
| Rouesef (2011-2013) | 73.335 | | 2.5 | 25.111 |
| Total | 1.457.730 | | 91.8 | |
| Total (1985-2013) | 1.380.265 | | 78 | |

Source: (Robles, 2018)

In the Latin American region, most countries often find themselves influenced by personal agendas, and they have not attained a level of autonomy comparable to that seen in developing East Asian countries (Botella-Rodríguez & González-Esteban, 2021). Several countries in this region have developed complex agrarian systems that support capitalist-oriented agriculture rather than providing benefits to

farmers (Bennewitz, 2017). While a wave of leftist politics has swept through various countries in the region, only Nicaragua, as part of the “Pink Tide” movement, has distinguished itself by successfully implementing more equitable land distribution policies. In Nicaragua, a significant portion of the territory is controlled by small and medium-sized producers, which differs from the general situation in other countries (Botella-Rodríguez & González-Esteban, 2021). This contrast highlights the varying approaches to agricultural resource management and agrarian politics among Latin American nations.

3.2.3 Africa

Agriculture plays a pivotal role in the economic development of sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in regions like Southern Africa (Ndlovu et al., 2021). Countries like Rwanda (Mizero et al., 2018) and Ghana have prioritized agriculture to achieve food self-sufficiency and drive economic growth since gaining independence (Kugbega, 2020). However, in South Africa, the current approach to agrarian reform treats all beneficiaries as a uniform group of ‘new’ farmers, even though they may be at varying stages of transitioning toward commercial production (Gwiriri et al., 2019). Within land reform initiatives, Joint Ventures (JVs) are commonly implemented as a stepping stone for black landowners to enter the highly competitive dairy industry (Bunce, 2020).

One notable example of agrarian reform in Africa that has garnered significant attention is in Zimbabwe. Historically, in Zimbabwe, individuals who lost their land and lacked adequate access to land often became low-wage migrant laborers on large-scale capitalist farms (LSCF) (Chambati, 2022). Land reform in Zimbabwe unfolded in two main phases. The first stage was the ‘willing buyer, willing seller’ approach (1979–1999) (Gwiriri et al., 2019), followed by the implementation of the fast-track land reform program (FTLRP) in 2000 (Shonhe et al., 2022). These reforms reshaped the agrarian and urban landscapes, restructuring both urban and rural spaces and their relationships, despite limited state investment in infrastructure (Scoones & Murimbarimba, 2021).

Despite the implementation of the FTLRP in Zimbabwe, the country continues to face significant challenges related to its farmers. Research by Chambati (2022) highlights that agrarian reform does not always reach all landless individuals and groups. Even though land has been allocated to land-scarce farmers, the agricultural labor market remains a relevant source of income, and resistance from former large agricultural workers, along with gender issues both within and outside households, still influence the dynamics of rural labor migration. Low wages persist, reminiscent of the previous era of capitalist agriculture, and poverty among agricultural workers remains a serious issue. Additionally, the marginalization of women in the labor market as casual workers has not diminished.

The examples of various countries across continents illustrate that many nations worldwide confront similar challenges concerning inequality in land ownership. Elites or powerful groups controlling extensive land holdings contribute to uneven land concentration. The implications are evident: smallholder farmers often face limited access to productive land, resources, and economic opportunities. This situation can adversely affect food security and community welfare. Additionally, political dynamics play a significant role in shaping the course of agrarian reform. Political interests, power dynamics, and pressure from various societal groups can influence the selection of policies and the execution of reforms. Returning land to small farmers and imposing maximum land ownership limits has been considered a solution to enhance agricultural productivity in several countries. However, implementing this solution is not always seamless across all regions. Factors such as local geography, social structures, and economic conditions also play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of agrarian reform.

3.3 Comparison of the implementation of agrarian reform between Southeast Asia and Indonesia

In diverse Southeast Asian countries, agrarian reform efforts have been marked by instability and conflict. The Philippines, for instance, witnessed the introduction of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) following the 1986 People Power Revolution, aiming at poverty reduction and development (Lanzona, 2019). However, challenges such as landlord conflicts and limited access to support services hindered CARL's implementation (van Es & Bruins, 2023; Drbohlav et al., 2017). Similarly, Vietnam faced resistance to land ownership restructuring post-1975, resulting in low cooperative participation (Bui & Preechametta, 2016). Thailand transitioned to private land ownership in the wake of monarchy dissolution in 1932, initiating agrarian reform under the Agricultural Land Reform Act of 1975 (Swardhana

& Jenvitchuwong, 2023). Timor-Leste's reform journey, hampered by historical complexities, has been difficult and prolonged (Batterbury et al., 2015). Despite varying contexts, acts of violence and unrest have often erupted due to dissatisfaction with reform outcomes, met with repressive measures by landlords and governments (Khristoforov, 2022).

In the Philippines, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER) succeeded the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) in 2009 and introduced provisions for better access to support services, aiming to transform beneficiaries into efficient agricultural producers (Drbohlav et al., 2017). In Thailand, agrarian transformation shifted most of the population, especially farmers, from subsistence farming to a profitable market-oriented approach (Choenkwan & Fisher, 2018). A similar market-oriented approach characterizes current agricultural policies in Timor-Leste (Batterbury et al., 2015). While Thailand has successfully embraced agricultural technology, machinery, and inputs to transform its agriculture over the last three decades, Timor-Leste has faced persistent challenges despite government and aid agency efforts, with surveys in the late 2000s revealing ongoing logistical and economic hurdles (Choenkwan & Fisher, 2018; Batterbury et al., 2015). Conversely, the Philippines grapples with a different issue—a lack of support services and access to credit—, as widely reported by agrarian reform beneficiaries and NGOs. Interestingly, NGOs often provide more support than the government (Drbohlav et al., 2017), suggesting that despite efforts to induce change, structural constraints and operational challenges on the ground may not have been fully addressed.

Transitioning to Indonesia's experience, historical and political influences have shaped its agrarian reform journey. The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) advocated for land democratization during the anti-colonial struggle, emphasizing farmers' role in revolutionary change (Lee, 2022). The adoption of the Agrarian Constitution (UUPA) in 1960 marked a significant milestone, enshrining principles such as individual land ownership, limitations on land ownership, and prohibitions on ownership without a legal basis (White et al., 2023). The coexistence of western and customary law, leading to dualism in land regulation, played a significant role in the development of UUPA (Swardhana & Jenvitchuwong, 2023). However, challenges emerged during the "New Order" era, where land reform initiatives were sidelined in favor of transmigration policies (Salim & Utami, 2019).

Following the "New Order," Indonesia entered a phase of reform, exemplified by the adoption of MPR Decree Number IX/MPR/2001 regarding Agrarian Reform and Natural Resource Management, signaling a renewed commitment to agrarian issues (Zein, 2019). During President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's (SBY) tenure, Joyo Winoto was appointed as the Head of the National Land Agency and played a crucial role in formulating the concept of agrarian reform, emphasizing both the provision of assets and access (Hardiyanto, 2021). Under President Jokowi's leadership, initiatives like the Agrarian Reform Object Land (TORA) and Social Forestry (PS) aim to address land distribution and utilization rights, albeit with challenges in forested areas (Resosudarmo et al., 2019; Salim et al., 2021). Managing land in Indonesia's forested regions is complex due to economic, social, cultural, and political factors, leading to conflicts arising from unclear land status under customary law, while indigenous and tribal communities in Thailand also face conflicts with various stakeholders over conflicting customary land rights (Salim et al., 2021; Swardhana & Jenvitchuwong, 2023).

Despite numerous regulatory changes, active community participation remains crucial. Current efforts by the land bureaucracy, especially at the national level, in collecting and integrating physical and socio-economic land data, including the clarification of existing permits, may still perpetuate disparities in land ownership without active community involvement (Lee, 2022). Therefore, a participatory mapping approach is imperative, involving communities at the village level, to ensure that areas designated for TORA can be appropriately allocated to indigenous communities and impoverished farmers (Purnomo et al., 2020). The experiences of failed land reform and collectivization initiatives in the southern region of Vietnam offer valuable lessons for the agricultural reform process, underscoring the importance of considering local characteristics and involving farmers in decision-making and highlighting the need for locally tailored approaches to agricultural development (Bui & Preechametta, 2016).

In Indonesia, agrarian reform goes beyond mere land redistribution, extending to the provision of economic access for those benefiting (Widodo, 2017), mirroring other countries that also grant access to land reform subjects. Following Presidential Decree 62/2023, access management is executed through social mapping and business assistance. However, in practice, access arrangement still encounters

obstacles in various regions. An example in Aceh illustrates that the local government has offered assistance such as seeds, fertilizer, planting expenses, and business guidance within the agrarian reform program. Nevertheless, program recipients still encounter challenges related to road access, production equipment, and marketing (Tarfi & Amri, 2021). Similar to the findings of Gafurangingtyas et al. (2024) in Foramadiahi Village, North Maluku, subjects of agrarian reform persist in employing traditional agricultural methods, resulting in minimal income growth, due to the absence of assistance in their agricultural endeavors.

Comparisons among Southeast Asian countries regarding agrarian reform, comprising both land reform and agricultural sector transformation, unveil diverse approaches and outcomes. The shift from collective to private farming in Vietnam has substantially increased rice productivity, making it one of the world's top rice exporters (Bui & Preechametta, 2016). In Thailand, introduced in 1999, agrotourism has evolved into a novel agricultural model, significantly contributing to the country's revenue through community-based tourism and private-sector partnerships (Choenkwan & Fisher, 2018). However, despite remarkable progress in some countries, challenges persist, particularly in nations at earlier stages of development and transformation. Timor-Leste's development programs, which address infrastructure and service deficiencies, have encountered slow progress, leading to community dissatisfaction and limited livelihood diversification (Batterbury et al., 2015). In the Philippines, agrarian reform has yielded certain benefits for individual households on a small scale, but broader societal improvements remain unresolved and continue to pose challenges (Lanzona, 2019). In Indonesia, the implementation of agrarian reform is enhanced through a blend of asset and access management strategies. Nonetheless, persistent challenges in ensuring access to land reform subjects continue to pose ongoing issues. Managerial constraints and limited access to credit make it challenging for some agrarian reform beneficiaries to generate sustainable income from their land, potentially driving them to sell their land (Drbohlav et al., 2017).

Conclusion

Agrarian reform has gained significant attention worldwide as a response to structural land ownership problems often perpetuated by elite groups. Its implementation varies across countries due to distinct social, political, and economic contexts. Scandinavian countries are noteworthy examples of peaceful agrarian reform aligned with democratization efforts, showcasing how gradual social and political transformation can facilitate equitable and inclusive land policies. However, numerous countries, particularly those in the developing world, such as those in Southeast Asia, often encountering resistance from influential landowners vested in maintaining the status quo.

Comparisons among Southeast Asian nations illustrate diverse approaches to agrarian reform. Vietnam's shift to private farming boosted rice productivity, while Thailand's agrotourism model contributed to revenue. Challenges persist in Timor-Leste and the Philippines, where reform benefits are limited by managerial constraints and access to credit. Several countries have successfully leveraged modern technology and economic support to transform their agricultural sectors. Nevertheless, barriers like limited technology and capital access and environmental and social issues persist as obstacles demanding resolution. Indonesia's agrarian reform employs a blend of asset and access management strategies, yet persistent challenges in ensuring access to land reform subjects continue to pose ongoing issues. To address these challenges, Indonesia can draw valuable insights from global experiences. Embracing modern technology and fostering partnerships with the private sector can enhance efficiency and productivity in the agricultural sector. Additionally, ensuring equitable access to credit and providing comprehensive support programs for smallholder farmers can facilitate their transition to more sustainable farming practices.

This study has several limitations. Language barriers may limit the inclusion of studies published in languages other than English or Indonesian, potentially overlooking valuable insights from diverse contexts. Additionally, the scope of the review may be constrained by the availability and accessibility of relevant literature, particularly concerning recent developments or localized case studies. Further exploration into the specific challenges faced by countries in implementing agrarian reform, particularly in addressing issues related to access, credit, and environmental sustainability, could provide valuable insights for policymakers and researchers alike.

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