The Ongoing Struggle for Agrarian Reform As an Unfinished Agenda? Lessons From Mekarsari Village

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Abstract: Agrarian reform without interaction between the state and society only addresses temporary issues. The implementation of agrarian reform in Indonesia has been overly focused on achieving outputs based on easily measurable quantities, leaving social problems unaddressed. The aim of this research is to elaborate the implementation of agrarian reform, particularly in the management of assets in the Mekarsari Agrarian Reform Village. The method used is a quantitative approach using questionnaires and in-depth interviews with 50 respondents who are beneficiaries of agrarian reform. The data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics method. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of management at the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation stages shows that the interaction between the responsibility of state actors and community participation is low. As a result, the implementation of agrarian reform is still one-way, limited to completing the output targets of land redistribution and granting access decided by the organizers. Without meaningful community participation, it will be difficult for the community to take control to decide on the appropriate use of resources. For this reason, the implementation of agrarian reform in Mekarsari Village still needs to be contested.

Keywords: Agrarian reform, Contested, State-society interaction

INTRODUCTION

Clear land rights provide certainty and security for land utilization. Although the productivity of a piece of land is shaped by various factors such as identity, access to technology, capital, and power (Ribot & Peluso, 2003). The security of land tenure itself is a crucial issue in the process of economic development and land productivity enhancement (De Soto, 2000; Olumba, Garrod, & Areal, 2024). Therefore, governments continue to implement reforms through the provision of land rights to communities over natural resources, especially in developing countries (Aggarwal, Larson, McDermott, Katila, & Giessen, 2021). This trend is driven by the recognition that the state is often ineffective in

managing natural resources at the local level due to limited financial capacity and/or resource management priorities (Agrawal & Ostrom, 2001).

Agrarian Reform (AR) has become an agenda in various countries in response to the inequitable control of agrarian resources. In its implementation, AR faces numerous challenges and often results in new social issues. For example, in Brazil, the government implemented the National Program of Land Credit or the Land Credit, which became highly controversial. While it facilitated access to financing, there was also a risk of debt due to the inability to manage land effectively (Pereira & Mendes Pereira, 2007). In Zimbabwe, the government engaged in land reform to address the legacy of colonial land accumulation through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), but the process of land seizure was often carried out forcefully, leading to social and economic instability (Chavunduka, Dipura, & Vudzijena, 2021; Moyo, 2011; Scoones et al., 2011; Waeterloos & Rutherford, 2004).

Other RA implementations, such as in the Philippines, include the Del Rosario case, where land reform was state-led and shaped the livelihood of communities, though RA subjects often did not receive sufficient technical support (Vista, Nel, & Binns, 2012). A similar situation occurred in India, where the constitution recognizes land reform as a state subject (Besley, Leight, Pande, & Rao, 2016) and it is implemented at the state level (Appu, 1996). However, after land distribution, RA recipients did not receive adequate technical or financial support. The commonality in RA practices across various countries is that they are state-led, with subsequent issues typically related to the preparedness and capacity of RA recipients to utilize the programs provided by the state (whether land assets or access).

In Indonesia, the state has established the fundamental principles of land ownership and use, with the objective of achieving the greatest possible prosperity for the people (UU/5, 1960). However, in reality, land ownership inequality remains relatively high, as indicated by the Gini Ratio of land ownership in 2019, which stood at 0.49. Moreover, 15.8 million farming households (58 percent of the total farming households) control less than 0.5 hectares of land per family (Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency, 2020). his land ownership inequality directly or indirectly affects the living conditions of communities, particularly in rural areas, and influences the nature of social relations within society (Vendryes, 2014). To realize the equitable distribution of agrarian structures (ownership, possession, use, and utilization), the government enacted Presidential Regulation No. 86 of 2018 on Agrarian Reform, which was subsequently replaced by Presidential Regulation No. 62 of 2023 on the Acceleration of Agrarian Reform Implementation.

The regulation defines Agrarian Reform (RA) as the restructuring of land ownership, possession, use, and utilization in a more equitable manner through asset restructuring, accompanied by access restructuring for the prosperity of the people (Presidential

Regulation No. 63, 2023). The objectives of its implementation include: (1) reducing inequality in land ownership and possession to create justice; (2) addressing agrarian disputes and conflicts; (3) creating sources of prosperity and community welfare based on agrarian resources through the regulation of land ownership, possession, use, and utilization; (4) creating employment to reduce poverty; (5) improving public access to economic resources; (6) enhancing food security and sovereignty; and (7) improving and preserving environmental quality (Presidential Regulation No. 86, 2018). Although the definition and objectives of RA implementation are sound in policy terms, its execution has faced various criticisms, as it is deemed not yet to have delivered agrarian justice and shared prosperity (Kusuma et al., 2023; Mahfud, Djohan, & Malik, 2024; Subekti & Usada, 2023; Sutaryono, Junarto, Pinuji, Mahasari, & Mujiburohman, 2024).

The unfulfilled agrarian justice and shared prosperity serve as concrete evidence that the implementation of RA, based on existing regulations, has not yet achieved its intended objectives. One suspected weakness in its implementation is the lack of interaction between the state and the public. Yet, the implementation of RA requires shared responsibility between the government (Widodo, 2017) and active public participation (McCarthy, 2007).

From the various situations described above, the research question is formulated as follows: How does the interaction between the state and the public in the implementation of RA unfold, drawing lessons from the RA implementation in Mekarsari Village, Pandeglang Regency? Therefore, the objective of this research is to identify the interaction between the state and the public in the implementation of RA (asset restructuring), drawing lessons from the RA implementation in Mekarsari Village, Pandeglang Regency.

METHODS

The composition of this article is based on research conducted on one of the RA implementation models in 2018. The study focused on RA objects involving state-owned land (HGU) whose lease had expired and for which no extension or renewal of rights had been requested within one year after the expiration. This research adopted a post-positivist paradigm with a quantitative approach, complemented by qualitative research, to gain a better understanding of the issues and research questions (Creswell, 2016). The quantitative approach followed several stages: conceptualization, research design, data collection, and analysis. Additionally, the article employed a policy content analysis approach to examine the context of RA program implementation in Indonesia, aligning with the policies in effect during the RA execution (Presidential Regulation No. 86 of 2018) for the land redistribution objects that were the focus of the study.

This research utilized two types of data: secondary and primary data. Secondary data were collected from RA program implementation reports, data on land redistribution recipients, and relevant regulatory documents and technical guidelines associated with RA

implementation at the research location. Primary data were gathered through surveys using questionnaires administered to RA program recipients and in-depth interviews with RA program implementers at the field level, such as the Pandeglang Regency Land Office, local government authorities, and village officials who were directly involved in the planning, execution, and monitoring and evaluation of the RA program. Data were also collected through focused group discussions (FGDs) and field observations. Quantitative data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative analysis, presented in tables and graphs.

Operationally, the quantitative method was employed to measure the quality of interactions between the state and society, based on the RA model framework constructed by Borras and Franco (2008). The quality of state-society interactions in RA implementation was measured through public perceptions of community participation levels and their perception of government responsiveness during the preparation, execution, and monitoring and evaluation stages of the RA program, particularly in asset management.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
RA Village Profile in Mekarsari Village

The implementation of RA, now known as RA Village in Mekarsari, is administratively located in Mekarsari Village, Panimbang District, Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province. Mekarsari Village (Figure 1) covers an area of 22,208 hectares. Administratively, Mekarsari Village is bordered by the Sunda Strait to the north, Panimbangjaya Village to the east, Pangkalan Village to the south, and Citeureup Village to the west. Demographically, Mekarsari Village is home to 3,516 households, with the majority of the population engaged in fisheries, agriculture, and livestock farming.

RA Village in Mekarsari was established on former land under the right of cultivation (HGU) covering 49.39 hectares, designated for the following purposes: (1) residential plots, comprising 225 land parcels; (2) agricultural land; (3) land allocated for local government assets; and (4) public and social facilities. The RA beneficiaries consist of individuals from Mekarsari Village (referred to as the local community) and those affected by the Tanjung Lesung tsunami (referred to as the tsunami victims).
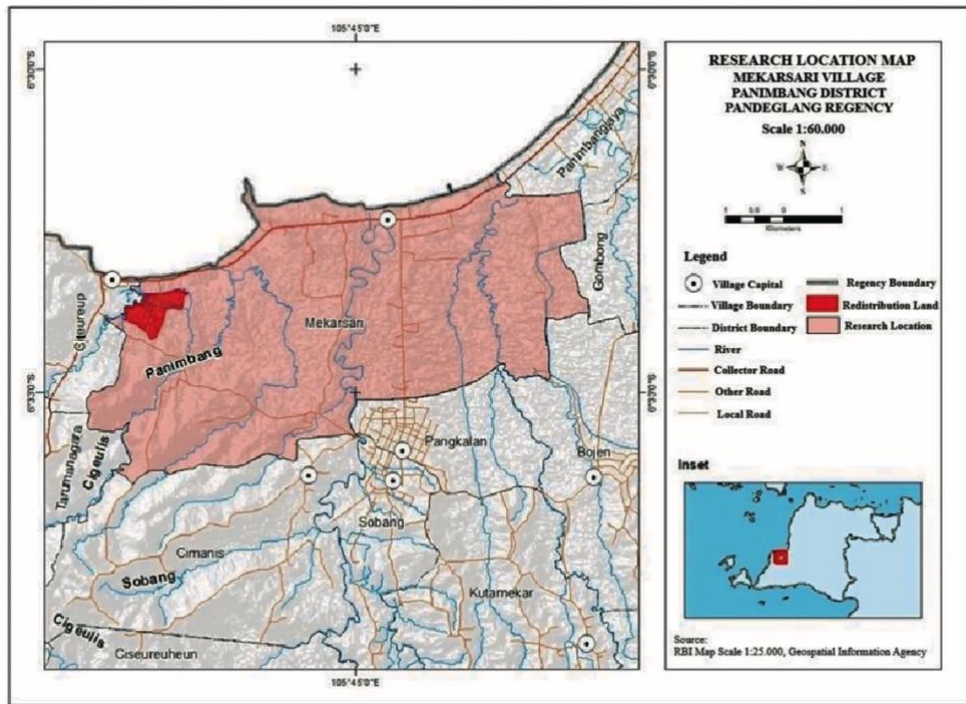
Figure 1. Map of the Research Location in Mekarsari Village, Pandeglang Regency
Source: Processed by the Author, 2024

The RA subjects also include a group in the form of a Village-Owned Enterprise (BUMDes). BUMDes was granted four plots of land under agricultural land management rights. Since the implementation of the RA program, 225 plots of land have been redistributed to 225 households, each with a plot size of 200 m² and a building size of 36 m². Meanwhile, access structuring has been completed with approximately 80% of houses built, along with a community health center (puskesmas), a porang factory, a village meeting hall, a horticultural demonstration plot, and a nursery for seedlings and fruits, managed by BUMDes. Table 1 presents the characteristics of RA subjects and the number of respondents at the time of the research.

Table 1. Characteristics of RA Subjects in Mekarsari Village

Characteristic	Local Community		Tsunami Victims		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender						
Female	24	80	15	75	39	78
Male	6	20	5	25	11	22
Ethnicity						
Sundanese	24	80	7	35	31	62
Javanese	6	20	13	65	19	38
Age						
21 - 34 years	7	23.3	10	50	17	34
35 - 46 years	13	43.3	5	25	18	36
47 - 80 years	10	33.4	5	25	15	30
Occupation						
Unemployed	3	10	3	15	6	12
Farmer/Field Worker	10	33.3	1	5	11	22
Trader	3	10	1	5	14	28
Entrepreneur	1	3.4	0	0	1	2
Fisherman/Sailor	3	10	12	60	25	50
Others/Housewife	10	33.3	3	15	13	26
Income Level (in thousand rupiah)						
Rp 3.100, - Rp9.000	5	16.7	3	15	8	16
Rp 1.100, - Rp 3.000	11	36.7	7	35	18	36
< Rp 1.100	14	46.6	10	50	24	48

Source: Processed by the Author, 2024

The majority of respondents encountered (78%) were women, as men were generally working, either fishing or engaged in other jobs outside of RA Village. Most (62%) of the land redistribution beneficiaries were of Sundanese ethnicity, particularly from the local community, while the remaining 38% were of Javanese ethnicity. The age range of beneficiaries was evenly distributed. The occupations of RA subjects were predominantly as crew members (ABK), with most tsunami victims working in the fisheries sector. In terms of income, 48% of RA subjects earned less than IDR 1.1 million.

Preparation and Planning Process for Asset Arrangement in Mekarsari Village

Technical guidelines have been developed to provide direction to the implementing agents of the RA activities, from the central level to the regional office (BPN provincial office) as well as the land office (kantah) at the district/city level. The technical guidelines in this study are analyzed to understand the context of participation using one of the exogenous variables, namely Rules-in-Form (Ostrom, 2005). Rules-in-Form refer to the rules referenced by implementers/participants when asked to explain and justify their actions. The technical guidelines employed are tailored to the year of RA implementation in Mekarsari Village, Pandeglang Regency.

According to the operational regulations outlined in the Technical Guidelines for the Implementation of Land Reform Activities in 2018, there are four activities consisting of preparation and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. The preparation and planning stage (Figure 2) includes the following activities:

1) Preparation of Operational Activity Guidelines (POK). The POK document contains a description of the work plan and the costs necessary for the implementation of activities as a further elaboration of the Budget Implementation List (DIPA). The preparation of the POK must consider the stages of activities and cost standards in accordance with the relevant region;

2) Coordination of preparation and scheduling of activities. The Head of the BPN Provincial Office, as the person responsible for the activity, leads the coordination meeting attended by all Heads of Divisions, Heads of the Administrative Section, Heads of the Land Reform and Land Consolidation Section, as well as the Sub-Head of the Administrative Section and Heads of relevant sections in connection with land reform activities at the land office. This is conducted to coordinate the implementation of land redistribution activities, which includes determining the location and targets for redistribution at the district/city land office under the coordination of the regional office and scheduling the activities at each district/city land office that has locations for the RA land redistribution;

3) Location determination. Potential redistribution locations are established through a Decree from the Head of the BPN Provincial Office, taking into account agricultural land, in accordance with spatial planning directives and functions, the clean and clear status of the location, prioritizing land objects that have not yet been redistributed, and ensuring that the designated locations do not fall within forest areas or overlap with other land activities;

4) Establishment of the implementing organization, which consists of members from the regional office, the local land office, and/or the nearest land office. The officials responsible for the land redistribution activities are appointed by the Head of the BPN Provincial Office based on proposals from the Head of the District/City Land Office via a decree. Each team/task force comprises members from the outreach team, inventory/identification task force, measurement and mapping task force, selection task force, secretariat, and the land recipient development team. Other components structurally integrate into supporting units with the primary task of assisting the Head of the Regional Office in accordance with the duties and functions of each component.
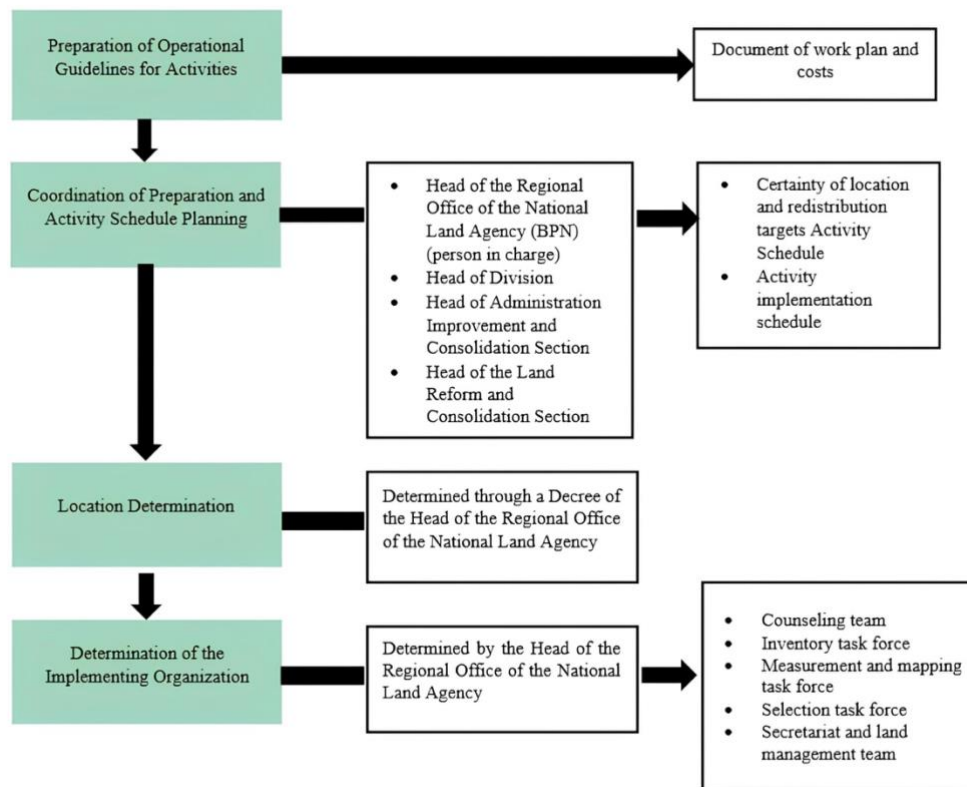
Figure 2. Preparation and Planning Activities for Land Redistribution
Source: Directorate of Land Reform, Directorate General of Agrarian Planning, Ministry of ATR/BPN, 2018

At the practical level, the implementation of land redistribution in Mekarsari Village consists of several stages as follows. *The Application Stage* is marked by the existence of a letter from the Mekarsari Village Government, Number 01/Ds-2009/I/2018 dated January 3, 2018, regarding the Application for the Distribution of Land Formerly Under Cultivation Rights Numbers 1 and 2, as well as State Land in Mekarsari Village, Panimbang District, Pandeglang Regency, addressed to the Head of the Pandeglang District Land Office. The state land includes Cultivation Rights Number 1 covering 28.99 hectares, Cultivation Rights Number 2 covering 11.21 hectares, and State Land (Unencumbered) covering 8.28 hectares. The application is made to ensure that the land can be distributed to residents of Mekarsari Village who do not own land or housing, through a land consolidation process. The Head of Mekarsari Village attached a list of 225 residents proposed as recipients of the RA program.

In his application letter to the Head of the Pandeglang District Land Office, the Head of Mekarsari Village conveyed the following points: (1) the objects in Mekarsari Village include Cultivation Rights Number 1 covering 28.99 hectares, Cultivation Rights Number 2 covering 11.21 hectares, and State Land (unencumbered) covering 8.28 hectares; (2) there

are tenant farmers or permanent farmers in the region; (3) a request for the distribution of land formerly under Cultivation Rights for tenant farmers in the area; (4) the distribution of land is to be carried out through a land consolidation process to ensure that Mekarsari Village has a well-organized settlement with complete facilities; and (5) the provision of supporting materials in the form of an attached list of 225 residents of Mekarsari Village who will receive the land.

The Formation Stage of the Land Consolidation Coordination *Team* was established through the Decree of the Pandeglang Regent Number 590/Kep.191/Huk/2018 dated April 19, 2018, concerning the Establishment of the Pandeglang District Land Consolidation Coordination Team. This team consists of: (1) Director: the Regent of Pandeglang; (2) Chair: the Regional Secretary of Pandeglang Regency; (3) Vice Chair: the Head of the Pandeglang District Land Office; (4) Secretary: the Head of the Land Planning Section, Pandeglang District Land Office; (5) Members include the Head of the Legal Division (Regional Secretariat of Pandeglang Regency), the Head of the Governance Section (Regional Secretariat of Pandeglang Regency), the Head of Physical and Infrastructure Division (Bappeda Pandeglang Regency), the Head of Spatial Planning Division (Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning of Pandeglang Regency), the Head of the Land Division (Department of Housing, Settlement Areas, and Land of Pandeglang Regency), the Head of the Outreach Division (Department of Agriculture of Pandeglang Regency), and the Head of the Village Governance Division (Department of Community Empowerment and Village Governance of Pandeglang Regency).

The Pandeglang District Land Consolidation Coordination Team is responsible for coordinating the implementation of land consolidation, conducting community guidance and exploring agreements, facilitating the establishment of land consolidation participant associations, evaluating and directing the preparation of land consolidation designs, regulating and directing land use for communal purposes, coordinating land consolidation with local government or relevant agencies for infrastructure development, and addressing issues arising in the implementation of land consolidation. The Pandeglang Regent's decision also states that all costs arising from the enactment of this decision shall be charged to the DIPA (Budget Implementation List) of the Banten Provincial National Land Agency Regional Office.

The Preparation Stage for the Socialization of Land Consolidation Activities is marked by the letter from the Head of the Pandeglang District Land Office, Number 158/36.01-400.15/V/2018, concerning the Invitation for the Implementation of Socialization of Land Consolidation Activities for the Fiscal Year 2018. The purpose of the socialization of land consolidation activities is to familiarize stakeholders with the location of the RA program not only from a spatial perspective but also considering demographic, social, cultural, and economic aspects. Participants in the land consolidation socialization include:

(1) Head of the Land Division at Bappeda Pandeglang Regency; (2) Head of the Legal Section, Regional Secretariat of Pandeglang Regency; (3) Head of the Agriculture Office of Pandeglang Regency; (4) Head of the Public Works and Spatial Planning Office of Pandeglang Regency; (5) Head of the Housing, Settlement Areas, and Land Office of Pandeglang Regency; (6) Head of the Community Empowerment and Village Governance Office of Pandeglang Regency; (7) Land Consolidation Implementing Team; (8) Camat (Subdistrict Head) of Panimbang; and (9) Head of Mekarsari Village. The socialization of land consolidation activities is a critical stage, as it serves as a prerequisite for the success of the Banten Provincial BPN Regional Office and the Pandeglang District Land Office in mobilizing participation from various stakeholders, particularly the residents of Mekarsari Village. The socialization was conducted at the Mekarsari Village Hall.

The Formation Stage of the Land Consolidation Implementing Team is marked by the issuance of the Decree from the Head of the Pandeglang District Land Office, Number 75/KEP.36.01-400.10/V/2018, concerning the Establishment of the Land Consolidation Implementing Team of Pandeglang Regency. This team consists of 13 members, including the Head of the Pandeglang District Land Office (team leader), Head of the Land Section (team secretary), Head of the Administrative Subsection, Head of the Land Infrastructure Section, Head of the Legal Relations Section, Head of the Land Procurement Section, Head of the Land Reform and Consolidation Subsection, Staff from the Housing/Settlement Areas and Land Office of Pandeglang Regency, Staff from the Agriculture Office of Pandeglang Regency, Camat of Panimbang, Head of Mekarsari Village, and two representatives from the residents of Mekarsari Village.

The tasks of the land consolidation implementing team include: (1) preparing materials and guidance for community organization; (2) conducting community guidance and organization activities; (3) developing block plans; (4) exploring agreements; (5) collecting legal data for the identification of subjects and objects of participants; (6) gathering physical data through measurements; (7) creating measurement drawings, field maps, land lists, and measurement letters; (8) compiling a list of land parcels that have been recorded; (9) collecting the results of physical and legal data gathering, including initial measurements and subject identification; (10) preparing meeting minutes; (11) designing land consolidation plans; (12) compiling the results of the land consolidation design; (13) assisting the head of the land office with the release of rights on the consolidated land; (14) preparing and administrating documents for the release of rights to the land; (15) collecting and retrieving original documents of land ownership or control and providing receipts at the time of the release of rights to the land; (16) preparing and administrating documents for the issuance of the decree establishing rights to the land; (17) implementing the transfer of land consolidation design; (18) preparing and administrating the issuance of land certificates; and (19) preparing reports on the implementation of activities.

The Stage of Socialization of Land Consolidation Activities is marked by the organization of a socialization event regarding land consolidation. This socialization process serves as a means of transferring knowledge and reinforcing the values and regulations related to the implementation of land consolidation from the land office officials and relevant institutions to the community and other stakeholders.

The Stage of Determining the Location for Land Consolidation Implementation is marked by the issuance of the Decree of the Pandeglang Regent, Number 590/Kep.215-Huk/2018, concerning the Designation of the Location for Land Consolidation Implementation in Mekarsari Village, Panimbang Subdistrict, Pandeglang Regency, for the Fiscal Year 2018. This decree also specifies the area designated for land consolidation, which measures 48.48 hectares, divided into 235 land parcels. Furthermore, the decree stipulates that during the land consolidation process, landowners are prohibited from transferring their land rights to other parties and/or erecting structures on the designated land without written permission from the Regent.

The Stage of Signing the Agreement on the Results of Subject and Object Identification for Consolidation is marked by the preparation of an agreement outlining the results of the consolidation, which includes a list of subjects and objects of land consolidation for residential purposes, totaling 225 parcels, as well as four parcels for agricultural business activities and six parcels for social and public facilities. The consolidation agreement is conducted through deliberation.
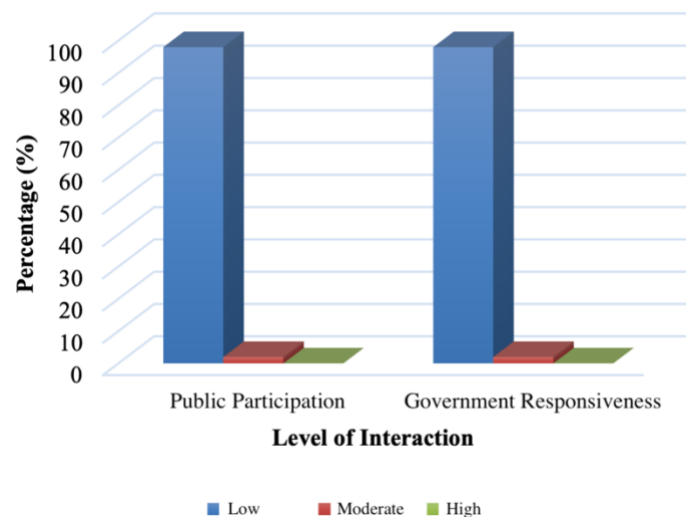

Figure 3. Levels of State-Society Interaction during the Planning Stage
Source: Processed by Author, 2024

In general, the stages of asset management planning between the rule-setting level and the implementation level are not significantly different. Although the implementation team includes community representatives, namely the Head of Mekarsari Village and two representatives from Mekarsari Village residents, the planning process does not appear to

involve substantial interaction between the state (land redistribution administrators) and the community (the beneficiaries of the redistributed land), particularly in decision-making processes. This is further supported by survey results regarding respondents' (RA beneficiaries) perceptions of state-society interaction, which were rated as low (Figure 3). The involvement of RA beneficiaries was limited to the submission of requirements during the data collection process.

The Land Redistribution Process in Mekarsari Village

Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency, 2018 The implementation stage is divided into two parts: the distribution of land that has already been cultivated, either with or without affirmation, and land that remains uncultivated (has not been utilized). Figure 4 illustrates the stages of activities for both cultivated and uncultivated redistribution objects, based on the 2018 technical guidelines (the operational policy in effect at the time of the RA process).
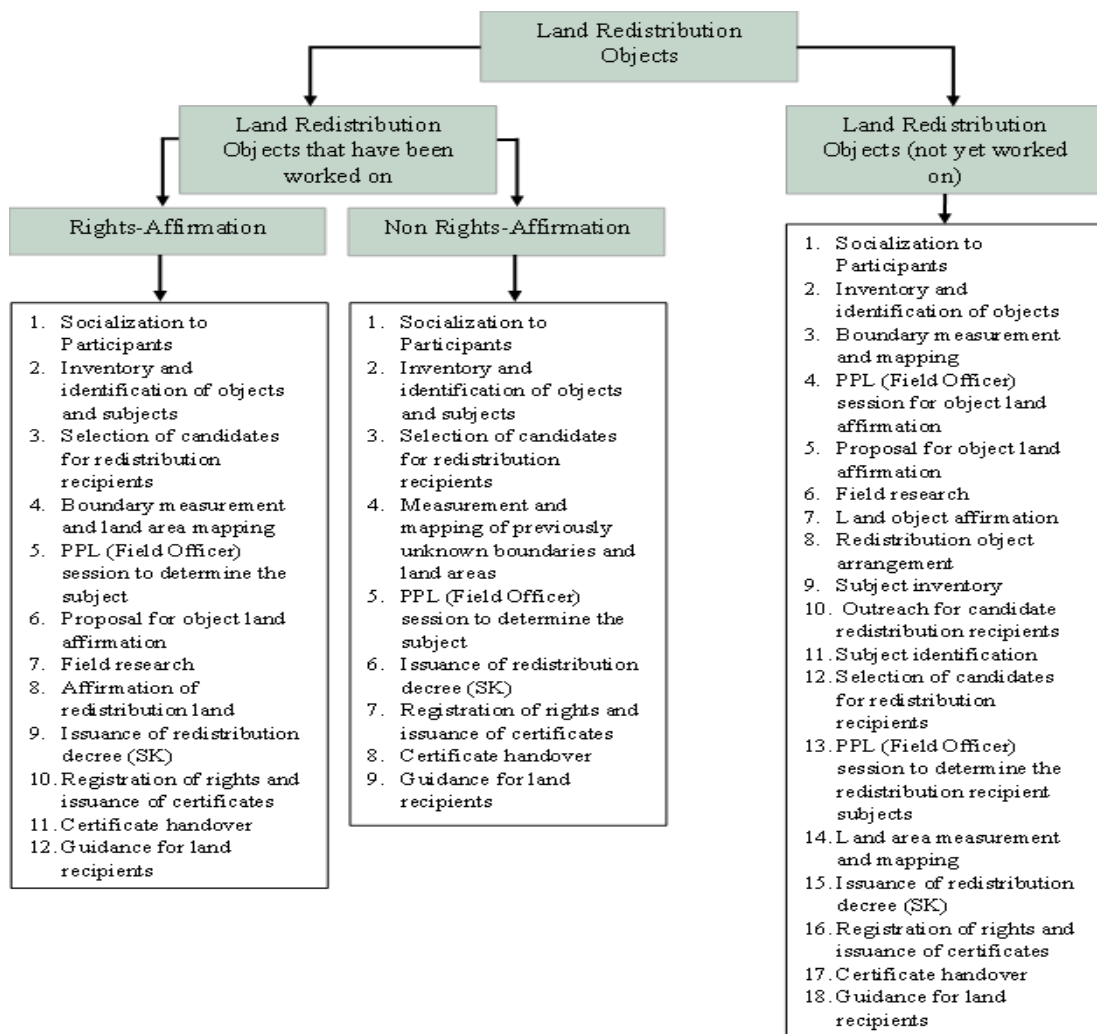

Figure 4. Stages of Land Redistribution Activities
Source: Directorate of Land Reform, Directorate General of Agrarian Management,

In the context of land redistribution implementation in Kampung RA Mekarsari, the detailed execution is as follows: (1) A survey for transferring the land consolidation design to the field, involving measurements and the placement of boundary markers for 225 plots for residential use, 4 plots for agricultural use, and 6 plots for public and social facilities; (2) Confirmation of state-owned land as the object of land consolidation, as formalized by the Decision of the Head of the Regional Office of ATR/BPN of Banten Province, Number 91/Kep-36.12/VII/2018, which designated 48.48 hectares in Mekarsari Village as the object of land consolidation; (3) The transfer of the land consolidation design to the field, evidenced by a report from the land consolidation implementation team, confirming that measurements and the placement of boundary markers were carried out in accordance with the land consolidation design. It also noted that the allocation of land parcels was conducted by the Head of Mekarsari Village, the land consolidation implementation team, and the recipients of the redistributed land; (4) The granting of land rights, marked by the issuance of the Decision of the Head of the Pandeglang Land Office, Number 78/Kep-36.01400.2/VII/2018, on the Granting of Land Rights for 235 land parcels, of which 8 parcels were allocated for educational facilities, the BUMDes office, a football field, a park, a cemetery, a mosque, land managed by BUMDes, and a business service center; (5) The issuance of land ownership certificates for 235 parcels of land, with 4 parcels granted to BUMDes Jaya Mekar (established based on the 2017 Village Regulation), 6 parcels to the Pandeglang Regency Government, and 225 parcels to the land consolidation participants. The distribution of land certificates took place in 2019.
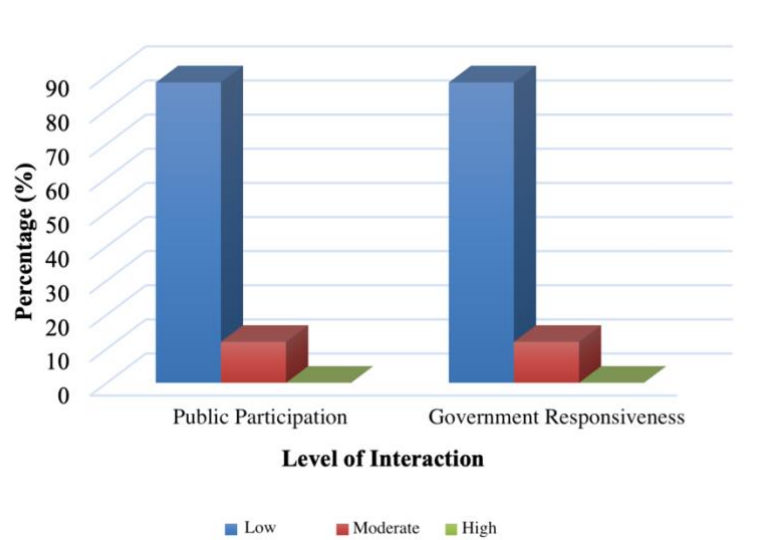

Figure 5. Levels of State-Society Interaction during the Implementation Stage
Source: Processed by Author, 2024

At the implementation level, state-society interaction in asset management in Mekarsari Village was low (Figure 5), both in terms of community participation and the responsiveness of state actors. RA beneficiaries who were not part of the land consolidation team were unaware of the process of determining the allocation of plots and their recipients. Generally, RA beneficiaries were involved only during the socialization phase and the receipt of land ownership certificates.

Monitoring and Evaluation Process of Land Redistribution in Mekarsari Village

Monitoring and evaluation are activities aimed at overseeing the implementation of land redistribution to ensure that it adheres to the norms, standards, and procedures established by the applicable legal framework. According to the 2008 technical guidelines, monitoring and evaluation include the following: (1) The alignment of the Regional Office's POK preparation with the SBK for land redistribution activities; (2) The fulfillment of requirements for redistribution beneficiaries, conducted through sample tests of cultivators based on the confirmation proposals submitted by the head of the land office in the redistribution area; (3) The fulfillment of requirements for the object to be confirmed, carried out by verifying the data recorded in the Regional Office's RDP; and (4) The consistency of the object and subject in the confirmation decree, the land redistribution decree, and the land ownership certificates.
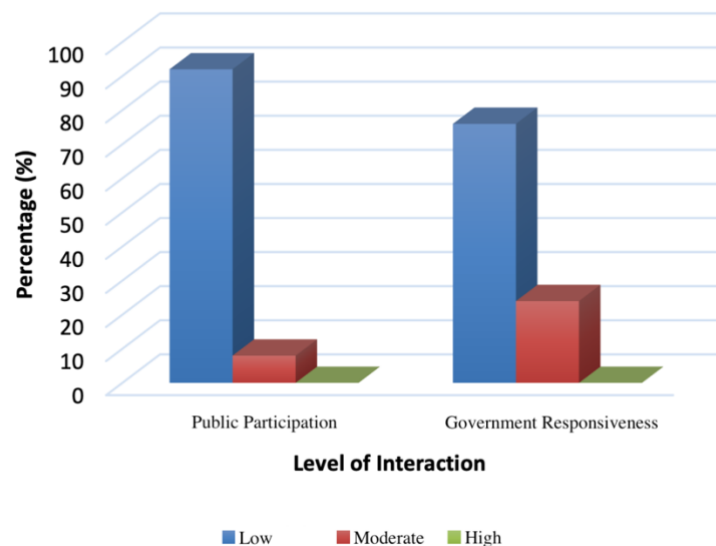

Figure 6. Levels of State-Society Interaction during the Monitoring and Evaluation Phase
Source: Processed by Author, 2024

In practice, the respondents rated the interaction between the state and society as low during the monitoring and evaluation phase of asset management in Mekarsari Village (Figure 6). Beneficiaries of the RA who were not part of the land consolidation team had

limited engagement with state actors responsible for asset management. RA beneficiaries felt hesitant to voice their concerns or aspirations regarding the implementation of asset management. Among the concerns raised were the distribution of benefits from the utilization of BUMDes assets and the presence of non-RA beneficiaries building homes on BUMDes assets.

Contested Agrarian Reform Based on State-Society Interaction

This study develops a typology of RA implementation, measured by the level of interaction between community participation and state responsiveness (see Figure 7).
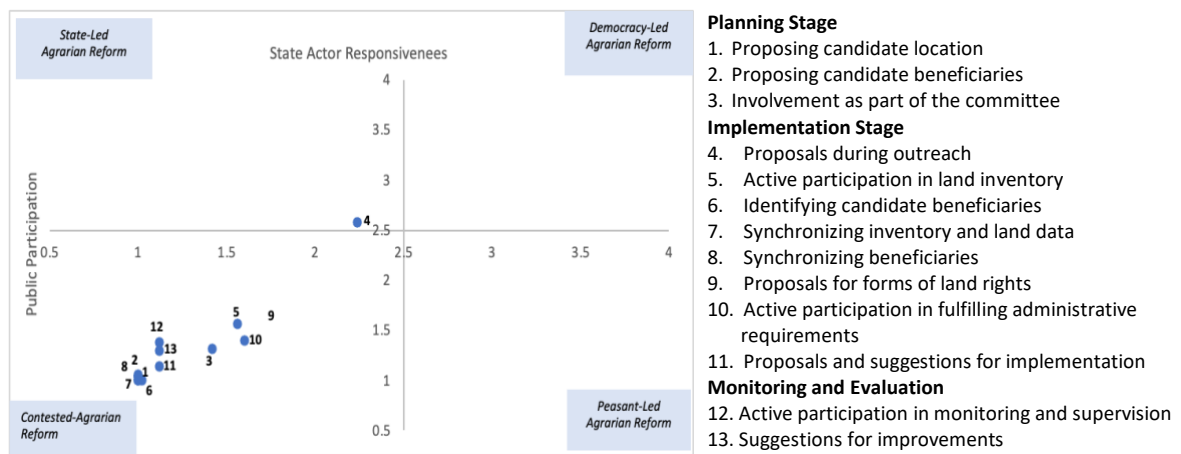

Figure 7. State-Society Interaction in RA Asset Management in Mekarsari
Source: Processed by Author, 2024

In Quadrant I, where both state actor responsiveness and community participation are high, the model is termed *Democracy-led Agrarian Reform*. In Quadrant II, where state actor responsiveness is high but community participation is low, it is referred to as *State-led Agrarian Reform*. In Quadrant III, where state actor responsiveness is low and community participation is high, it is termed *Peasant-led Agrarian Reform*. Finally, in Quadrant IV, where both state actor responsiveness and community participation are low, it is labeled *Contested Agrarian Reform*.

The implementation of RA in Pandeglang involves the agency of state actors at the local, regional, and national levels. At the local level, the *jaro* (village head) plays a significant role in RA implementation. Regional-level state actors include actors from district and provincial administrations, with key agencies and local governments supporting access management. At the national level, the key state actor is the National Land Agency (BPN), with involvement from the Ministry of Public Works and Housing (PUPR), the National Disaster Management Authority (BNPB), and the National Program for Community Empowerment (PNM).

The implementation of RA in Mekarsari Village, Pandeglang Regency, based on the typology of RA developed in this study, falls under Quadrant IV, which represents the *contested agrarian reform* type, across the stages of planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (see Figure 7). The RA recipient community directly received redistributed land but did not play an active role in determining the location or participating in other planning processes. The asset management was primarily undertaken by village elites, particularly the *jaro* (village head). Consequently, the community did not engage directly with state actors responsible for RA implementation at the local level.

Although the community (represented by respondents) perceived the interaction between state actor responsiveness and community participation as low, observational results indicate that the RA village has achieved rapid output growth. From the commencement of asset distribution planning in 2018 to the issuance of land certificates in 2019, and through to the research conducted in 2023 (approximately five years), the RA Village has experienced significant physical development and economic activity. A visit to Mekarsari RA Village would reveal well-organized settlements comprising houses for land redistribution recipients, roads, agricultural land for horticultural crops, coconut plantations managed by the BUMDes (Village-Owned Enterprises) for collective benefit, small shops, household businesses, a public health center that has opened to receive patients, and a mosque under construction.

However, the implementation of RA in Mekarsari Village has not yet fully optimized efforts to improve welfare. One issue found is that RA recipients are highly dependent on assistance provided by state actors. While land for settlement and agricultural activities has been made available, the community has yet to cultivate agricultural land optimally as they await capital assistance. The agricultural land, which contains coconut tree assets as capital, was handed over to the BUMDes for management. However, the benefits from this management have been minimal or even nonexistent for RA recipients. Weak managerial capacity within the BUMDes, coupled with a tendency to exclude other RA recipients from decision-making, has contributed to the uneven distribution of benefits.

These post-asset management situations indicate that RA implementation has not yet fostered *meaningful participation*. When community participation is genuinely realized, the community will be able to take control of local decisions regarding the use of available resources (Pretty, 1995). Although RA implementation has not yet fulfilled its constitutional mandate to maximize the people's prosperity, it has at least provided land tenure security for RA recipients. Securing land rights is a critical starting point for RA implementation. Therefore, the contested agrarian reform characterizing RA in Mekarsari Village, as identified in this study, should be viewed as an ongoing struggle, as the implementation of RA remains incomplete.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of RA, particularly in asset management through land redistribution in Mekarsari Village, Pandeglang Regency, demonstrates a process that adheres to the applicable technical guidelines (rules-in-form). However, the land distribution process—from the stages of planning, implementation, to monitoring and evaluation—still reveals low interaction between state actor responsiveness and community participation. The implementation of RA tends to be one-directional (top-down) from the RA organizers. While the community is involved, it is not within the context of *meaningful participation*. Consequently, the RA implementation process in Mekarsari Village falls under Quadrant IV, or the *Contested Agrarian Reform* type. This typology indicates that the community perceives both state actor responsiveness and public participation in RA implementation as low. Nevertheless, the RA implementation has made an important initial step by providing land tenure security. Therefore, such RA implementation is viewed as an ongoing effort, meaning the RA process in Mekarsari Village is not yet complete.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RA Village Mekarsari still requires various efforts to enhance the productivity of land assets through the provision of access support by RA organizers. It is hoped that future processes will reflect *meaningful participation* from the community, with the aim of allowing the community the freedom to determine how to utilize the resources under their control.

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