

**THE DYNAMICS OF AGRARIAN POLICY AFTER THE TRANSMIGRATION PROGRAM:
A STRUCTURAL APPROACH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN
NORTH GORONTALO REGENCY**

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to analyze the dynamics of agrarian reform policies in post-transmigration program locations in North Gorontalo Regency using a structural approach and evaluating various indicators that influence the success of its implementation. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and policy document analysis. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify key issues and the relationships between factors affecting the successful implementation of agrarian policies in post-transmigration areas. The findings indicate that, despite the significant potential of agrarian reform policies in post-transmigration locations to improve the welfare of transmigrants, their implementation remains hindered by several substantial structural issues. The primary challenges identified include inadequate infrastructure, unclear land ownership, a lack of legal certainty regarding land rights, and weak regulatory oversight. An evaluation of income distribution reveals that the program has not yet achieved its intended goal of equitable distribution due to infrastructural challenges and land tenure uncertainties. The complexity of land ownership and tenure security is further compounded by bureaucratic inefficiencies and legal uncertainties. The limited availability of infrastructure and support facilities also constrains transmigrants' ability to enhance their livelihoods. Additionally, weak regulatory enforcement exacerbates policy implementation challenges, as poor coordination among institutions and inconsistent law enforcement hinders the program's effectiveness. This article posits the necessity for policy enhancements, encompassing enhanced planning, bureaucratic simplification, and augmented oversight capacity. These measures are intended to ensure the effective functioning of agrarian policies in post-transmigration regions, thereby

achieving their objective of fostering sustainable welfare for both transmigrants and local communities.

Keywords: Policy Evaluation, Transmigration Policy, Land Tenure, Agrarian Reformz.

INTRODUCTION

Agrarian reform is a series of policies aimed at restructuring land ownership and land use to achieve specific social, economic, and political objectives (Benton, 2018). These policies are designed to ensure a more equitable distribution of land ownership among the population and to reduce inequalities in access to natural resources. Agrarian reform is a strategic step in achieving equitable land access and improving community welfare. In Indonesia, the transmigration program is a prominent illustration of this policy, aiming to regulate population density in specific regions while optimizing land potential in others (McCarthy & Dhialhaq, 2022). The country's abundant natural resources and agrarian potential have positioned Indonesia as a significant location for the transmigration program. Agrarian reform policies in Indonesia are primarily aimed at empowering small farmers, who often experience inequality in land ownership, with the objective of enhancing their access to agrarian resources, improving economic welfare, and supporting sustainable rural development (Kühling & Sibhatu, 2022).

The government is responsible for ensuring that land tenure and ownership do not become concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or groups. This is to ensure that the agrarian reform process does not result in the emergence of land oligarchies, which have the potential to exacerbate economic inequality (Kubitza et al., 2018). The formulation of policies should be guided by the principle of ensuring that land is utilized in a productive and sustainable manner, while taking into consideration environmental concerns. The theory of sustainable agricultural development underscores the significance of prudent natural resource management in fostering inclusive economic growth (Suchá & Dušková, 2022). Land access regulation is crucial to ensure that marginalized groups—such as small farmers, women, and indigenous communities—can access agrarian resources (Suchá & Dušková, 2022). Distributive justice theory highlights that fair access to resources is a prerequisite for achieving equitable welfare (Resosudarmo et al., 2019).

Land ownership is a highly sensitive issue in the context of agrarian reform in Indonesia. The government's efforts to implement land redistribution programs, aimed at allocating land to small farmers, have encountered significant challenges, including administrative, legal, and political obstacles. The legitimacy of land ownership remains a contentious issue, particularly in rural areas where many land transactions are not documented (Hutomo, 2018).

Subianto (2020) emphasizes the necessity of a comprehensive evaluation of policies, emphasizing the importance of an in-depth understanding of policy implementation, their impact, and the extent to which they achieve their intended

goals. Four evaluation approaches are theoretically employed to assess policy success: structural, procedural, behavioral, and political approaches. Agrarian reform policies are of particular concern due to their direct impact on community welfare, particularly among farmers and transmigration communities.

This study examines the challenges posed by the transmigration program policy in Indonesia and its relevance to the principles of agrarian reform. A comprehensive analysis of the transmigration program reveals several issues in spatial planning, asset control, asset use, and asset utilization, which often do not align with the intended objectives of the program. Furthermore, there are documented violations of existing regulations, including the sale of transmigration land by settlers who had already obtained land certificates. These settlers sold their land to third parties before the 10-year period required by law and returned to their place of origin. This transfer of land rights has resulted in financial losses for the state, as the government does not receive the full benefits of its investment in the Transmigration Program Policy.

Based on this explanation, this study examines "The Dynamics of Agrarian Policy Post-Transmigration Program: A Structural Approach and Its Implications in North Gorontalo Regency." The objective of this research is twofold: first, to analyze the dynamics of agrarian reform policies in post-transmigration program areas in North Gorontalo Regency using a structural approach; and second, to evaluate the various indicators influencing the success of its implementation.

METHODS

The present study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, focusing on the evaluation of agrarian reform policies in post-transmigration program areas in North Gorontalo Regency. The research process consists of several stages, including the identification of the objectives of policy evaluation, the formulation of research questions, the identification of variables and indicators, the selection of evaluation methods, and the determination of the target groups. Primary data for this research is obtained through observations and interviews with key informants, who are stakeholders in the Transmigration Policy Program. Concurrently, secondary data is collected through document reviews, and the collected data is then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. These techniques are employed to identify key issues and the relationships between factors that influence the success of agrarian policy implementation in post-transmigration program areas.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Evaluation of Settlement Distribution in the Location of Transmigration in North Gorontalo Regency

This study utilizes a structural approach to evaluate land distribution and ownership within the transmigration program implemented in North Gorontalo

Regency. The research employs a multifaceted methodology, incorporating government policies, field implementation, and the socio-economic dynamics of transmigrant communities and local residents. The study was conducted in three transmigration villages: Papualangi Village, Cempaka Putih Village, and Limbato Village in Tolinggula District, North Gorontalo Regency.

An interview with the Head of Papualangi Village (April 2024) revealed that at the initial implementation of the transmigration program in 1985, 500 households were allocated two types of land: residential plots and agricultural land intended for farming. However, despite clear regulations governing land allocation, major issues arose, including the lack of infrastructure and land readiness in the designated transmigration areas. According to local stakeholders, including both the regional government and community leaders, the challenge of preparing land and basic facilities for transmigrants significantly impeded the large-scale relocation from their original regions, such as Java. The limited accessibility and inadequate basic facilities in transmigration sites led to a decline in transmigrants' willingness to participate in the program, resulting in some failing to sustain their livelihoods in the settlement areas.

An evaluation of land ownership and tenure rights reveals that while policies grant land ownership after meeting specific requirements, their implementation is not always smooth. According to the Gorontalo Provincial Department of Manpower and Transmigration, regulations governing land tenure often face obstacles, including conflicts between transmigrants and local residents. In Limbato Village, for instance, land initially designated for transmigrants is now predominantly controlled by local residents, while transmigrants who were granted the land encounter challenges in obtaining land ownership certificates. This phenomenon has given rise to social tensions, resulting in the ambiguity of legal rights over transmigration lands, thereby exacerbating socio-economic conditions in the region.

This study underscores the social and economic ramifications of the discrepancy in land distribution and the absence of clear ownership rights. For transmigrants, the uncertainty surrounding land tenure, particularly in Limbato Village, engenders insecurity in their agricultural endeavors, potentially eroding their economic well-being. This uncertainty can incite social and economic conflicts between transmigrants and local residents, further exacerbating social disparities in the area.

Salim & Utami (2020) contend that agrarian reform also provides legal certainty regarding land ownership. This legal certainty is crucial for encouraging long-term investments in agricultural enterprises, such as acquiring modern farming equipment, high-quality seeds, and other agricultural inputs. Transmigrants with secured land ownership are more motivated to manage their land optimally, leading to increased agricultural income. This rise in income directly impacts their economic well-being, enhancing their access to education, healthcare, and other basic necessities. Agrarian reform policies are frequently accompanied by training and mentoring programs for

land certificate recipients (transmigrants). These programs include modern farming techniques, farm business management, and financial literacy, enhancing the skills and knowledge of transmigrants in managing their land more effectively and efficiently. The growth of the agricultural sector in transmigration areas can also stimulate local economic development. The emergence of local markets for agricultural products, agro-processing industries, and new employment opportunities for local residents fosters a dynamic and sustainable economic environment. Concurrently, Medaline & Moertiono (2023) posit that enhanced income and economic well-being among transmigrants concomitantly lead to improvements in their quality of life, granting them better access to adequate housing, sanitation, clean water, and public facilities. This enhancement in living standards has a favorable impact on the health and overall well-being of transmigrant families.

B. Evaluation of Land Tenure and Ownership Rights in the Location of Transmigration in North Gorontalo Regency

A comprehensive evaluation of land tenure and ownership rights in post-transmigration program areas in North Gorontalo Regency necessitates a thorough analysis of various aspects, including government policies, field implementation, and their impact on transmigrant communities and local residents. The government has promulgated various policies and regulations to support transmigration-related programs, including provisions on land tenure and ownership rights for transmigrants.

The research findings indicate that although the transmigration policy in North Gorontalo Regency grants land ownership rights to transmigrants after fulfilling certain conditions—such as a minimum period of residence and productive land use—its implementation faces significant challenges. According to the Gorontalo Provincial Department of Manpower and Transmigration, some of the main issues encountered are land ownership conflicts between transmigrants and local residents, land monopoly, and the lack of fertile land and adequate infrastructure. This issue is particularly evident in Tolinggula District, where many migrants encounter difficulties in managing their allocated land due to limited accessibility and inadequate supporting facilities, including schools, health centers, and markets.

The study also found that the absence of infrastructure and access to public facilities in transmigration locations contributes to migrants' reluctance to remain. A transmigrant in Cempaka Putih Village cited the poor road conditions—only paved in the last five years—and the lack of public facilities as the primary reasons why many transmigrants decided to return to their original regions. The inability to access essential services, such as healthcare, education, and markets located at a considerable distance, affected their quality of life and led many migrants to abandon the settlement areas.

The intricate dynamics of land tenure and ownership within these transmigration areas have profound social and economic ramifications for both transmigrants and local residents. Legal ambiguities surrounding land ownership engender contentious

tensions between these groups, consequently affecting their economic well-being. The ambiguous status of land ownership hinders effective land management and diminishes the potential income from agriculture, which serves as the primary means of livelihood for migrants. The mismatch between the number of transmigrants accommodated and the available facilities in the transmigration locations have been shown to exacerbate social dissatisfaction, prompting many transmigrants to return to their original homes.

The implementation of the transmigration policy in North Gorontalo Regency is influenced by policy designs formulated at higher levels as well as by field conditions that require adaptation and flexibility. The policy's execution is hindered by several factors, including limited resources, cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, and coordination challenges among institutions. To enhance the effectiveness of the policy, modifications are necessary in the policy design and implementation processes. These modifications should allow for greater local flexibility and expedite complex administrative processes.

C. Evaluation of Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities in the Location of Transmigration in North Gorontalo Regency

The success of the transmigration policy implementation in North Gorontalo Regency is contingent upon the quality of infrastructure and supporting facilities available in transmigration areas. Research findings indicate that inadequate infrastructure and limited supporting facilities pose significant challenges for transmigrants in sustaining their livelihoods and managing the land allocated to them. In this context, infrastructure includes transportation access, the provision of basic facilities such as roads, electricity, clean water, the internet, and social services such as education and healthcare.

The findings of the research indicate that in numerous transmigration areas, particularly in Tolinggula District, inadequate road access constitutes a significant challenge. Several villages, including Cempaka Putih, Papualangi, and Limbato, are confronted with particularly poor road conditions, especially in access roads leading to agricultural lands. The paving of the primary road did not occur until more than 15 years following the implementation of the transmigration program. The absence of paved roads and the presence of challenging access severely restrict the mobility of transmigrants and local residents. As one transmigrant from Cempaka Putih Village articulated,

"Historically, individuals here only ventured to the sub-district center for pressing and significant matters due to the arduous nature of access."

This situation underscores the pivotal function of road infrastructure development in facilitating the success of the transmigration program. The absence of adequate road networks and efficient access to service centers hinders the capacity of transmigrants to undertake daily activities, thereby diminishing their propensity to settle and cultivate the land.

The dearth of social facilities constitutes a salient concern. As another informant asserts, while rudimentary facilities such as health centers and schools are in existence, access remains severely constrained. For instance, in Cempaka Putih Village, the local health center is only available at the village level, with difficult access, and there is only one junior high school (SMP) and no senior high school (SMA) in the village. This situation forces transmigrants to travel long distances to obtain proper healthcare or education services. This situation has led to some transmigrants opting to return to their place of origin, highlighting the challenges they face in accessing basic facilities within the transmigration area. This phenomenon aligns with the assertions of researchers who contend that adequate infrastructure and social facilities are pivotal in achieving the long-term objectives of transmigration policy.

Wang et al. (2023) underscore the pivotal role that infrastructure and supporting facilities play in the success of transmigration programs. The improvement of infrastructure and facilities has been shown to enhance the quality of life among transmigrants (Wang et al., 2023). Furthermore, these enhancements ensure the long-term objectives of transmigration, such as equitable development, poverty reduction, and economic resilience in new settlements. Oktafiani & Yogaswara (2020) emphasize that adequate transportation infrastructure is a pivotal factor in ensuring the mobility of transmigrants and the distribution of goods and agricultural products. The productivity and welfare of transmigrants are hindered when transmigration areas are located in hard-to-reach regions without proper roads (Oktafiani & Yogaswara, 2020).

Basic facilities, such as clean water supply and proper sanitation, are essential needs for transmigrants (Tortajada & Biswas, 2018). A lack of access to clean water or poor sanitation systems can lead to serious health issues, such as waterborne disease outbreaks (Odagiri et al., 2020). Consequently, the provision of infrastructure ensuring access to clean water and adequate sanitation is imperative for the establishment of adequate living conditions for transmigrants (Odagiri et al., 2020). The absence of these fundamental facilities jeopardizes the sustainability of the transmigration program and the well-being of transmigrants.

Cameron et al. (2021) underscore that the presence of healthcare and education facilities in transmigration areas serves as a crucial indicator of the program's success. The provision of adequate healthcare facilities, such as health centers and maternal and child health services (Posyandu), is crucial for ensuring the health of transmigrants, particularly in addressing health concerns that may emerge due to environmental shifts or the adaptation to new occupations. Furthermore, Birawida et al. (2021) underscore the significance of educational facilities, such as primary and secondary schools, in enabling transmigrants' children to receive a comprehensive education, thereby enhancing the future quality of human resources.

D. Evaluation of the Monitoring and Law Enforcement System

The post-transmigration monitoring and law enforcement system plays a crucial role in ensuring that transmigration programs achieve their long-term goals, such as equitable development, poverty reduction, and improved welfare for transmigrants. Effective monitoring and strict law enforcement can prevent various irregularities and inequalities that may harm both transmigrants and the local community. Absent a clear monitoring system and consistent law enforcement, transmigration programs may fail to achieve their objectives and could even lead to new social and economic issues.

Research findings indicate several major challenges, including a lack of coordination between government agencies, budget constraints, and resistance from local communities. Researchers concluded that an ideal structural policy approach to agrarian reform should be driven by inter-organizational networks in the implementation of public policies. However, coordination among agencies often faces obstacles due to differences in goals, priorities, and organizational cultures. Effective cooperation and communication are key to overcoming barriers to agrarian reform in post-transmigration areas.

The Task Force on Transmigration (Gugus Tugas) faces several challenges, including limited budgets, a shortage of experts, and inadequate equipment, which hinder their ability to conduct socialization efforts, outreach programs, and provide necessary services to transmigrants and local residents. Additionally, bureaucratic complexity can slow down decision-making processes and resource allocation, as evidenced by delays in land certificate processing, aid distribution, or infrastructure development due to complicated bureaucratic procedures.

To address these challenges, various agencies involved in the post-transmigration program—such as the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Social Affairs, and the Department of Public Works—must collaborate effectively. However, differences in objectives and priorities among agencies can hinder efficient coordination. For instance, the Department of Agriculture may prioritize food production, while the Department of Social Affairs focuses on the welfare of transmigrants, creating potential conflicts and slowing down implementation. Notwithstanding the constraints imposed by limited resources, intricate bureaucratic procedures, and the challenges inherent in coordination, the Task Force's endeavors are indicative of the local government's earnest commitment to addressing transmigration issues with the utmost seriousness.

The challenges associated with inter-agency coordination, budget limitations, and local resistance in transmigration and agrarian reform policies should not be regarded as mere administrative issues or management failures. These challenges are, in fact, part of the complex dynamics of public policy involving multiple actors and interests. Addressing these obstacles necessitates a holistic approach, which includes the following: (1) Enhancing inter-agency cooperation to align objectives and strategies,

(2) Simplifying bureaucratic procedures to improve efficiency in decision-making and implementation, and (3) Adapting policies to the realities on the ground, ensuring that regulatory frameworks are responsive to the socio-economic conditions of transmigrants and local communities. The implementation of these strategies will allow for the strengthening of monitoring and law enforcement in post-transmigration areas, ensuring that transmigration programs fulfill their intended goals and create long-term benefits for all stakeholders involved.

CONCLUSION

The present study, which is an evaluation of agrarian reform policies in post-transmigration areas of North Gorontalo Regency, has revealed several significant challenges to the implementation of said policies. These challenges are as follows: (1) Settlement Distribution – The results of the program have been suboptimal due to various structural factors, particularly the inadequacy of infrastructure, land tenure issues, and the lack of legal certainty regarding land ownership. The coordination between the central government, local government, and relevant stakeholders should be prioritized to address these concerns. (2) Land Tenure and Ownership Rights – The study reveals ambiguities and irregularities in land tenure and ownership, influenced by socio-economic dynamics. Additionally, complex and lengthy bureaucratic procedures further exacerbate land tenure issues. (3) Infrastructure and Supporting Facilities – The quality of infrastructure remains suboptimal, including transportation networks, access to clean water, sanitation, internet connectivity, and other social facilities. These deficiencies significantly impact the long-term success of the transmigration program. (4) Supervision and Law Enforcement System – The post-transmigration policy framework in North Gorontalo Regency suffers from weak supervision and law enforcement, which serves as a major impediment to the successful implementation of agrarian policies. Despite the transmigration policy's potential to promote equitable development and enhance the well-being of transmigrants, the absence of effective oversight and strict law enforcement has resulted in uncertainty and the potential mismanagement and inappropriate distribution of land and resources.

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