

ACTORS OF LAND SAYING BYE TO FARMING: A GLOBAL REVIEW ON DE-/RE-PEASANTIZATION AND ABSENTEE LANDLORDS

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ABSTRACT

This scholarly review delves into the intricate phenomenon of depeasantization and absentee landlordism, defining distinctive trends characterized by a diminishing interest in farming practices. Depeasantization marks the departure of farmers from agricultural endeavors, while absentee landowners, detached from arable land and derive revenue from tenant farmers. These shifts in recent times pose significant food security concerns. Academic scrutiny of the global food crisis highlights its emergence as a critical concern for the global community. The study investigates factors triggering these trends, including the forced occupation of agricultural land by state authorities for development projects, resulting in a scarcity of arable land. This landscape is further complicated by issues such as mounting credit debts, escalating input costs, strained intra-family relationships, exorbitant land rents surpassing land earnings, and financial crises. These adversities ensnare agrarian societies in distress, anxiety, depression, and manifest in extreme cases as agricultural suicides. Notwithstanding ideological disparities, both agrarian political economists and classical economists converge on the notion that the logic of accumulation and development induces a progressive disconnection of rural populations from the

land. This process, once initiated, whether through dispossession, capitalist expansion, or coerced demographic shifts, perpetuates a detachment of rural communities from agriculture. The review also scrutinizes the intensification of global competition, akin to a 'race to the bottom,' within rapidly transforming food retail patterns witnessed in supermarkets. It explores deliberate shifts in agricultural practices through the lens of 'multifunctional farming' and re-evaluating the farm as a nexus. Cases from Netherlands, rural Europe, and certain regions of the United States highlight the proliferation of high-tech agronomic practices and the integration of agriculture with activities like agro-tourism and quality production this lead economies of scope over scale. Policy initiatives to integrate ecosystem valuation, leading to a paradigm of re-peasantization. Van der Ploeg's conceptualization of transforming human capital into agroecological capital echoes the potential for policy-driven re-peasantization.

Keywords: Peasants, De-/re-peasantization, Absenteeism of landowners, food security, Dynamics, Debate, Policy Initiative.

JEL Classification: Q12 Q15 Q18 P32 N50 D13 R14 O13

1. Introduction

The concept of peasantry is dynamic and intricate, interwoven with diverse forms and extents of conflict and interaction, enabling a spectrum of autonomy. Peasantization signifies an occurring progression, encompassing for both adaptation and resistance. Importantly, as with any societal construct, peasantry flourishes as an unceasing and evolving voyage (Shanin 1966). In contemporary times, particularly from the 1990s onwards, the study of peasants has persistently illuminated the insufficiency of binary and static concepts in comprehending the intricacies challenges faced by agrarian and rural populations. Instead, rural populations can be understood as the result of a continuously evolving agrarian labor process accommodating perpetually shifting factors such as climatic variations, market fluctuations, state impositions, political frameworks, technological advancements, demographic changes, and environmental shifts. Consequently, these rural communities gradually form their peasant identity and might relinquish it only after extended periods (Bryceson, Kay, Mooij et al. 2000). Absentee landlords are also not engaging themselves with agricultural practices and collecting revenue from farmers at their habitat. They are living far from farm and not even well connected with farmers tenants by identifying all these factors, we can develop policies and initiatives that promote sustainable agriculture practices, foster inclusive economic growth, and support rural development. The objectives of the study to analyse the historical and contemporary drivers of de-/re-peasantisation, including globalization, technological advancements, urbanization, and government policies. Overall, the study wants to review factors driving depeasantization and their impacts on rural communities, food systems, modernization influenced by the process of

agrarian society erosion. By doing so, it can inform policy and practice aimed at promoting equitable and sustainable development in rural and urban areas as well.

From a food security perspective, both depeasantization and absenteeism of landowners share similar characteristics, suggesting a notable shift in agricultural dynamics. This trend has led to a concerning situation where farmers are increasingly exiting from the agricultural sector, and absentee landowners display diminished interest in food production. Consequently, a pressing question arises: who will undertake the responsibility of food production? Depeasantization refers to the process by which traditional marginal & small farmers, often called as peasants, are compelled to leave their agricultural activities, either voluntarily or due to external pressures. Factors contributing to depeasantization may include land consolidation, migration towards urban areas from rural, changes in market dynamics, and the allure of non-agricultural livelihood opportunities. Other than this, absenteeism of landowners indicates to the situation where individuals who own agricultural land do not actively participate in its cultivation. Instead, they may lease out the land to other farmers or simply leave it unused, possibly due to a lack of personal interest, urbanization, or investment diversification. The convergence of these trends poses significant challenges for ensuring food security. With fewer farmers engaged in food production and absentee landowners disinterested in farming, there is a risk of reduced agricultural output, leading to potential food shortages and price fluctuations. Furthermore, the shift away from traditional farming practices may also impact food diversity and the preservation of indigenous crops and local agricultural knowledge.

The present review study delves into the habitat and societal position of peasants. The phenomenon of farmers transitioning from the farm to non-farm sector for alternative livelihoods is referred to as depeasantization (Singh, S. et al., 2014). Peasants hold a crucial role in safeguarding food security and remain indispensable to the economy. Nonetheless, delving into the causes of depeasantization aims to attain a more profound comprehension of the forces propelling the shift away from conventional rural ways of life and economies. Exploring the trends & process of Depeasantization is the key to this analysis and their impacts on the livelihood security. Food security mainly depends on the wellbeing of farmers labours force who seasonally or permanently engaged in cultivation of soil.

Material and Methods used: A comprehensive search was conducted across various academic databases including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar etc., to identify relevant scholarly articles, research papers, and reports pertaining to the themes of de-/re-peasantization, absentee landlords, and global agricultural transitions. Primary focus was placed on peer-reviewed research articles, review papers, and reports published in English. Relevant data, including theoretical frameworks, empirical findings, and policy implications, were extracted from selected articles and organized thematically.

1.1 Peasantry: a global issue

In regions such as Africa and other areas of Southern hemisphere, agriculture, which constitutes under structure of the society of rural livelihoods, is encountering escalating challenges and limitations stemming from land concerns, conflicts, and unpredictable markets. Consequently, rural-to-urban migration transpires as individuals seek supplementary income to sustain their rural households. Extensive literature on the Global South has documented this trend (Bryceson, 1996, 2002a, 2002b; Bryceson and Jamal, 1997; Francis, 2000; Ellis, 2000a, b; Bryceson et al., 2000; Rigg, 2005, 2006; Zoomers, 2001; Hirsch, 2012; Rigg et al., 2016). However, a complete disconnection from the rural base does not take place, as rural populations continue to engage in various activities and forms of agriculture (Reenberg and Rasmussen, 2015; Dzanku, 2015). These endeavors, in conjunction with the socio-material interactions in which they are entrenched, are not well understood and require adequate conceptualization. This special issue explores these land-use practices based on research conducted in Zimbabwe (Easter Chigumira), the Philippines (Will Smith, Wolfram Dressler, and Marvin Montefrio), Turkey (Murat Öztürk, Joost Jongerden, and Andy Hilton), South Africa (Sheona Shackleton and Paul Hebinck; Paul Hebinck, Nosiseko Mtati, and Charlie Shackleton), Japan (Shuji Hisano, Motoki Akitsu, and Steven McGreevy), and the Netherlands (Henk Oostindie). The case studies presented in this issue demonstrate the robustness and dynamism of these practices. The researchers posit that these practices should not be solely interpreted as indicative of deagrarianization, refraining from categorizing them strictly as either a structural inevitability or a deliberate aspiration. Although the concepts of re-agrarianization or repeasantization might not neatly align with the conventional Rostowian stages of economic growth and might appear counterintuitive, the empirical evidence from various countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, the Netherlands, Turkey, the Philippines, and Japan vividly demonstrates their tangible existence. The research papers delve deeply into the intricacies of ruralization processes and the intricate social-material connections that rural inhabitants cultivate. As a result, a comprehensive notion of the "new peasantry" comes to the fore, one that is grounded in family-run farms yet frequently encompasses wage labor arrangements and extends beyond the traditional rural-urban dichotomy due to its involvement in activities beyond agriculture alone. The emergence and evolution of this "new peasantry" take place on a translocale scale to an increasingly significant degree.

1.2 Peasants and their Society

Agrarian economist and rural sociologist Alexander V. Chayanov (1888-1937) from Russia did English translation of two texts and published in 1966, highlighted on the latest study of peasant studies and ignited fresh debates concerning the essence of peasant societies (Kerblay, Thorner, Smith, in 1966). Chayanov's seminal works, 'Peasant agro farm organization' and 'On the theory

of non-capitalist Agro systems,' penned during 1925, serve as a repository of his fundamental concepts. He contended that traditional economic constructs like wages, rents, and profits are insufficient in revealing the economic conduct of peasants. The non presence of wage labor or a labor market, combined with the prevalence of a distinct rationale governing the balance between household consumption and labor, the peasant farm stands apart from capitalist production entities. Chayanov perceived the rural economy as a distinct subsystem like production mode within the broader national economic framework, firmly rooted in fundamentally non-capitalistic tenets. He defined a peasant based on the family unit, which functions as a combined production/consumption entity, characterized as the "economic unit of a peasant family that does not engage paid laborers" (Chayanov 1966). Chayanov's work prompted debates that challenged prior ethnographic views of peasant societies as uniform, primitive, and unchanging. Starting from the 1970s, a series of 'local,' 'micro,' and 'village' studies emerged, aiming to fathom the internal dynamics of survival within historical and contemporary peasantries. However, the division between non-capitalist and capitalist economies, defined through a formal distinction, persisted in the overarching narrative. During the same era, Eric Wolf an anthropologist published his influential booklet 'Peasants' as per Wolf 1966, wherein he rejected a binary and ahistorical interpretive model by situating the peasantry within an evolutionary timeframe. Wolf also elaborated definition of peasants as "rural cultivators whose surpluses are transformed to a dominant group of rulers that uses the surpluses both to underwrite its own standard of living and to distribute the remainder to groups in society that do not farm but must be fed for their specific goods and services in return" (Wolf, 1966). By showing that peasants had to balance their private familial needs with communal requirements, he transcended the dichotomy of whether peasants were naturally conservative or risk-taking, market-oriented maximizers. Wolf introduced the concept of 'peasant rationality,' which manifested differently depending on agricultural and village contingencies, as well as insider and outsider connections with local and vast markets (Scott 1998).

2. Pitfall of depeasantization and absenteeism of landowner

The intricate relationship between depeasantization and absentee landlords within agrarian societies. Depeasantization refers to the process of rural transformation that leads to a turn down in the number and significance of small-scale farmers family. Simultaneously, absentee landlords are individuals or entities who own agricultural land but do not reside on or directly manage the land. The transformation of agrarian societies subject of scholarly interest for decades. Among the various phenomena that have shaped rural landscapes, depeasantization and the presence of absentee landlords stand out as critical factors influencing land ownership, raising question mark on food security and farm practices as well. This review seeks to explore the interconnected nature of these phenomena and their implications for agrarian societies. After reviewing quality

papers questions arises that who is cultivating and getting benefit from the farm. The roots of depeasantization and absentee landlordism can be traced back to historical land tenure systems and agrarian transformations. Throughout history, changes in land ownership patterns, colonial influences, and land reforms have contributed to the emergence of absentee landlords and the fragmentation of land holdings. Evidence indicates that the existence of landlords who are absent is connected to a decrease in local employment rates (see Bawa, S.G., 2021) Whereas the real phenomenon of employment and food security is increasing instead of declining interest towards agriculture sector. An absentee landlord enjoys a systematic financial edge over resident landlords, as illustrated through a customized rent control approach designed to attract middle- and working-class homeowners to underprivileged neighbourhoods. The study aims to question the prevailing notion that rent control solely serves the purpose of lowering tenants' rents, and endeavors to highlight the unintended effects stemming from the absentee landlord industry (Elorza, J.O., 2007). Indeed, for say Land Tenure Systems and various factors can significantly influence the labor force in the agriculture sector, and labor laws governing agricultural work can vary from one country to another. It is important to consider the rights of landless farmers as well, as this is closely linked to securing the livelihoods of peasants. By addressing these factors comprehensively, we can work towards ensuring the sustainability and prosperity of agricultural communities. Prashanth, D.'s 2022 research map provides evidence showcasing the concentration of land characterized by absentee ownership within dominant castes and the phenomenon of fallowisation. This underscores the argument for facilitating land ownership by the cultivator, with the aim of attaining equity, efficiency, and sustainability in the realm of agriculture. In the contrast of lower and middle casts are suffering more or can say small and middle farmers have to exit due to several obstacles faced by peasants.

2.1 Contemporary Relevance:

In the modern era, the process of depeasantization continues to be shaped by many factors but some are important such as rural-urban migration, globalization, and changes in agricultural policies. These mechanisms frequently result in the consolidation of land ownership under absentee landlords, exacerbating issues related to land access and control for small-scale farmers. These are some Implications for Agrarian Communities with respect to interconnectedness of depeasantization and absentee landlords has significant implications for rural livelihoods and agricultural development. Small-scale farmers often face challenges in accessing land, resources, and credit due to the influence of absentee landlords. Moreover, the detachment of absentee landlords from local communities may lead to limited investments in agricultural infrastructure and technology, hindering agricultural productivity and competitiveness.

2.2 Who will step forward to bear the mantle of sustenance?

From a food security perspective, both depeasantization and absenteeism of landowners share similar characteristics, suggesting a notable shift in agricultural dynamics. This trend has led to a concerning situation where farmers are increasingly exiting from the agricultural sector, and absentee landowners display diminished interest in food production. Consequently, a pressing question arises: who will undertake the responsibility of food production? Published As per the report findings, the majority of leased farmland is under the ownership of landlords who are not actively engaged in farming. Within this category, a subgroup termed as absent landlords is characterized by their non-residence within the local farming region, residing a significant distance from their agricultural holdings. The linkage between landlord absenteeism and various indicators related to the prolonged economic and agricultural well-being is evident in relation to cash receipts. A heightened presence of absentee landlords correlates with reduced rental rates and land values at the State level, and this connection does not align with recent fluctuations in rents or land values.

The ambiguity surrounding the future of food supply has led to an increasing influx of investors and financial firms acquiring substantial tracts of productive land across numerous developing nations, notably in Africa. This acquisition is geared towards commercial production, long-term investment, or speculative endeavors (Wegner, L.; Zwart, L. 2011).

3. Exploration of the trends & process of depeasantization

Depeasantization denotes the progressive diminution in the scope of peasants' activities or the engagement of small producers in agriculture. It indicates the decline of the agrarian lifestyle that interweaves commercial and subsistence agricultural produce, accompanied by an internal social structure centered around family labour and village community settlement (Araghi, A. Farshad. 2012). Contrary to the notion that urbanization is a definitive sign of the demise of the peasantry, Araghi's work "Global Depeasantization, 1945-1990" challenges this perspective. The endurance and continuity of peasantries within an ever-more globalized and commoditized world have consistently perplexed social scholars. In the face of forecasts proclaiming the demise of peasants by capitalists, intellectuals, as well as national and development strategists, the peasantry has persisted and endured, challenging such assertions from virtually all quarters, except the peasants themselves (Desmarais 2007). Commencing with the foundation that peasants historically formed the predominant segment of agrarian societies, ensuring their own sustenance and continuation while contending with rent and tax extraction by dominant classes and institutions, Henry Bernstein explores the inquiry of how to apprehend peasants as a collective entity within the milieu of modern deruralization (Bernstein 2006). He contests the concept that peasantry can be delineated as a universal social "category" or collective, marked by

unique attributes like household self-sufficiency, communal unity, and societal/ecological equilibrium, distinguishable from other social collectives such as rural laborers and market-driven farmers. This viewpoint, recognized as 'peasant essentialism,' manifests in both historical evaluations, emphasizing vestiges of pre-capitalist structures, and in present-day agrarian populism. Nevertheless, Bernstein underscores that the divergence within the peasantry also encompassed a transition towards petty commodity production, involving diverse levels of initial investment and ongoing expenses. Peasants assume the role of petty commodity producers when they find it unsustainable to subsist beyond the domain of capitalist commodity production, culminating in the integration of these interactions and procedures into their agricultural endeavours (Bernstein, 2003). This framework of peasant differentiation complements the dualistic Marx/Lenin model, progressively assimilating peasantries into a polarized capitalist global economy, where they serve as producers of export commodities, essential sustenance for local markets, and labor sources through free or bonded migrant labor setups. Consequently, this gave rise to varied systems like land tenure and uneven access to land, labor, and credit markets (Bernstein 2003).

In the Indian context, depeasantization manifests as a diminishing presence of farmers in the fields, exerting a substantial impact on the agricultural sector in recent times. By 2020, global agricultural engagement accounted for 26% of the population, a notable decline from the earlier figure of 44% in 1991 (www.agrirs.co.uk). In low-income nations, as much as 80 percent of the workforce is immersed in agri-food endeavors, predominantly within farm settings. In high-income countries, approximately 10 percent of the workforce is associated with agri-food, with over half of them working in the related food industry and services, including many migrant workers (Christiansen, L. et al., 2020). The agri-food system is seen as a crucial avenue for addressing global challenges, such as creating good jobs and reducing poverty. However, India faces a pressing concern in revitalizing its agriculture, which is regarded as the nation's most vital agenda. The future of this primary livelihood activity seems uncertain as there may be a dearth of next-generation farmers. According to the 2011 Census, approximately 2,000 farmers abandon farming every day, and the younger generation within farming communities shows little interest in pursuing agriculture. Even a significant proportion of agricultural university graduates opt for alternative professions, leading to what is termed the "Great Indian Agro Brain Drain." Nonetheless, agriculture remains a pillar of the economy, with 55 percent of the workforce linked to the agriculture sector, despite its role in the gross domestic product (GDP) of country has been on the decline, India still maintains a significant agricultural sector with 14.5 crore farmers and 27 crore farm laborers, encompassing approximately 60 crore individuals engaged directly or indirectly in farming activities. However, when the questions were asked if they want their children to engage in farming, 48 percent of farmers stated they do not wish for the next generation to pursue agriculture. Another 13.9 percent expressed a desire for their children to

engage in farming, but their children were not interested. While 38 percent expressed that both parents and children aspired for the next generation to continue as farmers, the actual situation persists in the form of a gradual decrease in the count of farmers in recent times, marked by a substantial migration of many to urban areas based on the largest rural India survey took place in May across 19 states, involving interactions with over 18,000 respondents.

4. Unravelling the tapestry of depeasantisation

In the agricultural and their allied sector has seen drastic changes in agrarian practices and on the basis of reviewing some research papers on reasons behind depeasantisation, major findings of the study are such as migration from rural to urban areas, materialistic approach, Climatic Changes, less productive land and urbanization, unplanned development, new generation disinterested to work in agricultural sector, different developmental project initiated by the central and state government, which is reported by (War, M.A. 2020) but the fact is lacking some another issues such as less income getting by the farmers on input. did not discussed so that study seems like less effective. 'Crop input credit' in Indian farming activities is one of the major hurdles to farmers exiting from farming (Ahmad, M.I. et. al., 2020) but not discussed about subsidy provided by the state that is impactful to remain stay in farming activities. Study also reveals in kashmir that the main challenges behind erosion of agrarian society was investment is low in Agricultural sector, unavailability of resource, not availability of inputs, yield of the crops is declining, no reliability on water resources and unequal distribution of water and land also causes hindrance, which led to the process of depeasantization not proper irrigation facilities, peasants are facing marketing problem and they do not have crop insurance facility etc. turns farmers towards sift in another occupation (Jefferson, T. 2020). Drawing from both 'push factors' and 'pull factors' that drive the departure from farming, reasons such as diminishing productivity, fragmented land holdings, expensive inputs, and limited profits were prominent. Study also reports that the next generation of the farmer do not want to pursue agriculture as a profession, in future findings made available by (Sharma., P. et. al. 2018). Evidence indicated that a majority of the land has been sold by marginal and small-scale peasants, because of the reasons which is stated by Sharma, P., at.al. study whose findings is indicating that Farmers find it increasingly challenging to maintain their livelihoods through farming and are being compelled to exit the agricultural sector (Hussain, M.; Warr, M.A. 2019). When looks at international scenario of depeasantization, in some areas of the south Africa evidence of the home-gardening in former homelands is dominant over cultivation of land, there is fall down in field cultivation and an upliftment seen in home-gardening (Mkhongi, F.A.; Musakwa, W., 2022). Depeasantization also might be accelerated because of paramilitary violence, forced displacement and land dispossession. Bureaucratic problems, asymmetries of power against opponents, accelerated growth (with the support of the State) of corporate monocultures for export, lack of an

articulation between restitution policy and rural development and continuity of dispossession of land and water are some of the factors analyzed as barriers for an effective restitution of land for rural peasant, evidence of (Bilewicz, A.; Bukraba-Rylska, I. 2021). A study uncovers that deagrarianization is an ongoing process in Africa, leading to a shift in sectors and resulting in a relative decline of agricultural output compared to other segments of the economy. The research is substantiated by the diminishing share of the national population and overall labor engagement in agriculture (Bryceson, F. D. 2018). The authors examine the alteration in the circumstances of post-war peasantries in response to the transformation of the global economy and politics. They emphasize the distinctiveness of economic, political, and ideological advancements within each phase, aligning with the corresponding processes of depeasantization (Araghi, A. Farshad 1999). In a report published by the National Crime Records Bureau of India in 2014, a total of 5,650 farmer suicides were documented, with the highest recorded number occurring in 2004 at 18,241 cases. These suicides can be attributed to various direct or indirect factors. India, with approximately 60 percent of its population reliant on agrarian activities, has witnessed conflicting interpretations from activists and scholars regarding the causes of farmer suicides and the process of depeasantization. These factors encompass elements such as monsoon failures, escalating debt loads, genetically modified crops, governmental policies, public mental health, personal challenges, and familial issues, among various others (Dora, Saraiah. E. 2016). Depeasantization is a complex process that is influenced by a variety of economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors such as push factors interact with each other and can create conditions that make it difficult for rural farmers to maintain their traditional agrarian way of life.

4.1 Impacting Ongoing Squeeze on Agriculture & its implications for food security

The growing control exerted by a limited number of globally operating agro-industrial in numerous locations over the world, it is also a notable consequence of globalization and leaving agriculture farms. The consolidation of power influences both upstream and downstream facets of farming, irrespective of farm type, size, location, or farming methodology. As a result, the generation and distribution of added value within agricultural commodity chains have progressively shifted away from primary production units towards corporate entities involved in both upstream and downstream activities (George, 1979; Bernstein, 1996; Bernstein and Campling, 2006; Patel, 2007; Van der Ploeg, 2008, 2010a, b; Clapp, 2016). Consequently, this process has led to a 'squeeze on agriculture,' signifying an ongoing narrowing of profit margins in primary production. The cost of production continues to rise at a faster pace than the price of farm commodities, resulting in a decline in agricultural incomes worldwide (Marsden, 1998, 2003; Van der Ploeg, 2008, 2010a).

4.2 Livelihood security its impacts on price stability

Trade liberalization policies governed by World Trade Organization agreements transmit the repercussions of reduced agricultural commodity prices on worldwide markets cascade down to domestic markets at the national level. This has further contributed to the decline in agricultural incomes globally. The squeeze on agriculture has also emerged as a major driving force behind continuous scale enlargement in the global North (Lowder et al., 2016), as well as in specific countries of the South, notably the middle-income countries (MICs) and BRICS countries (Edelman et al., 2013; Cousins et al., 2018). The intensification of global competition among producers, regions, and countries, as described by Marsden (2003) in the context of the 'rat race to the bottom,' has amplified processes of social differentiation. Supermarkets are invading as rapid transformations under Food retail patterns. The expansion of 'corporate super farms' has been propelled by the pursuit of increased economic efficiency and shareholder profits (Van der Ploeg, 2008, 2010a, b). 'Networks of preferred suppliers' favored by supermarkets have effectively lowered transaction costs along the value chain and improved supply reliability in terms of quantity, quality, and timing (Lucchesi and Proctor, 2012). These retail networks are generally not embraced by family farms (Weatherspoon and Reardon, 2003; Louw et al., 2007; Reardon et al., 2007, 2012; Manyelo et al., 2015).

5. Capitalist Modernity and Peasantization

Throughout history, the capitalist world economy system has undergone expansion and metamorphosis concurrently with regions of interaction (Hall 2000). These zones, where entities and frameworks ranging from non-integrated to semi- and fully integrated converge, play a pivotal role in fueling the innate expansionist momentum of historical capitalism. The interactions arising from these contacts encounter challenges posed by pressures for integration from the contemporary world-system. These pressures play a role in both standardizing the global system by eroding its boundaries and, simultaneously, diversifying it as reactions prompt the creation or renewal of new frontiers. Across history, rural societies inhabiting geographic peripheries, such as peasant communities, represent dispersed frontier-zones. Consequently, rural populations have perpetually grappled with the influences compelling incorporation since their initial engagement with the modern world system. They devise survival strategies in line with the dynamics of social power relationships such as state, market, class struggle, ethno-cultural identity etc., with which they interact. Across extended durations, the dimensions through which these social power dynamics manifest have not solely broadened and proliferated; they have also grown more intertwined. This phenomenon is evident in the interlinked processes of depeasantization and repeasantization.

During the period of 19th and 20th century modernization theories, the peasant frequently served as the initial point on the evolutionary spectrum, symbolizing the traditional community in juxtaposition to modernity. In this "stationary" society, the economy was primarily based on agricultural subsistence activities, where the output was consumed by the producers themselves rather than being traded. Production relied heavily on labor and utilized limited capital, resulting in low social mobility. Historiography, particularly from a Western perspective, has long portrayed this "anti-modern" model as a "familistic" society, characterized by family-based structures, relatively undifferentiated economies consisting of family farms, rural crafts, and services, and internal social structures such as family, kinship, and village. A distinct "peasant set of values" emerged that resisted the development of a new, open, mobile, individualistic, and market-based society. The success of modernity was contingent upon the prevailing ideology of social relations, which could be based on either familistic or individualistic principles (Schofield, 1989). The peasant's complex relationship with the outside world has led to various interpretations within scientific discourse, often characterized by ambivalence. Market and exchange systems represent the most visible yet challenging aspect of this relationship. Quoting the renowned Fernand Braudel, "The peasant himself becomes a participant in the market when he consistently sells a portion of his harvest and purchases tools and clothing." Nevertheless, when he ventures to the market town to vend a handful of goods - be it eggs or a chicken - with the sole aim of securing a few coins for tax payments or the acquisition of a plowshare, he remains on the periphery of the vibrant marketplace, merely catching a glimpse from the exterior (Braudel, 1977). Rural sociology has historically relied on dichotomies between market and non-market, economic and cultural forms of exchange, thereby perpetuating these conceptual divisions.

5.1 Agro-/Farm-industrialisation/entrepreneurship

The process of agricultural industrialization has led to a deepening Disparity exists between farming, the natural world, and the surrounding local environment (Van der Ploeg, 2008, 2010a, 2016; Gliessman, 2012). Traditional growth stimuli sourced from nature are progressively displaced by artificial components stemming from industrial processes. This shift has resulted in an amplified reliance on external inputs, novel technology, specialized expertise, and industrial and financial resources, engendering a high dependence on these commodified production factors. Consequently, the cost of production rises while simultaneously becoming more rigid, contributing to the compression of profit margins for farmers.

In contrast to family or peasant farming, where control over land, labor, and capital remains in the hands of the individuals involved, corporate structures exert distinct control over these resources (Van der Ploeg, 2010b; Hirsch, 2012). As a result, the reliance on external resources exhibits notable disparities. The proliferation of agro-industrial farming and contract farming has

resulted in the concentration of decision-making regarding the deployment of these production factors in remote boardrooms, separated from the tangible creators and the regions where crops are cultivated and livestock is reared (Van der Ploeg, 2010b; Hirsch, 2012).

6. De-/re-peasantization and Agrarian Reforms: Debates & Critiques

The ongoing debates surrounding de-/re-peasantization and agrarian reforms are of utmost importance in the fields of rural sociology and agrarian studies. Scholars and researchers actively participate in critical discussions aimed at comprehending the intricate processes and implications of these phenomena in contemporary agricultural landscapes. Deagrarianization demand a thorough examination of perspectives that present them as inherent consequences of capitalist development, globalization, and the neoliberalization of the economy. This special issue seeks to gather a collection of papers that adopt a perspective emphasizing the necessity for an open-minded and evidence-based understanding of rural development and agriculture. For the purpose of these discussions, it is suggested to deviate from certain strands of political economy (Bernstein, 2001, 2010; Borras, 2009; Akram-Lodhi and Kay, 2010a, 2010b; McMichael, 2013; Boltvinik and Mann, 2016). Economists specializing in historical events put forth a similar argument, suggesting that the peasantry is gradually disappearing and may soon vanish from society (Wallerstein, 1974; Hobsbawm, 1994; Araghi, 2012; Vanhaute, 2011, 2012; Peemans, 2013). They propose that agro entrepreneurship, a new breed adopting innovative techniques and capable of withstanding global competition for the factors of production, is now replacing the traditional peasantry. Many scholars' express skepticism regarding the role of peasants in global food provisioning (e.g., Bernstein, 2001, 2010, 2014), asserting that the peasant way of life is destined for extinction (also noted by McMichael, 2008, 2012). However, Bernstein rightly argues that this disappearance is not a result of peasant stagnation. Instead, he elucidates that "peasants" transition into petty commodity producers when they are unable to sustain themselves outside the frameworks and mechanisms of capitalist commodity production, which become intrinsic to the organization and operations of peasant farming (Bernstein, 2001: 29). The increasingly diverse nature of rural livelihoods (Francis, 2000; Ellis, 2000; Bryceson, 2002a, 2002b) provides evidence supporting the argument that relying solely on independent reproduction is challenging, and it is crucial for survival to engage in other economic sectors and spaces. Many rural families now heavily rely on migrant income, remittances, and state transfers as their primary sources of monetary income, which have replaced income derived from rural and land-based activities (Eastwood et al., 2006). Deagrarianization and depeasantization are often considered intrinsic to economic development. It is widely acknowledged that (economic) development involves a decrease in the proportion of the workforce and output engaged in agriculture (Eastwood et. al., 2006). This trend appears to be inevitable for economies and societies. Despite differences in ideological perspectives, both agrarian political economists and

classical economists seemingly agree that the logic of accumulation and development leads to the progressive disconnection of rural populations from the land once deagrarianization and the process of depeasantization is initiated—whether through dispossession, competition, capitalist expansion, demographic shifts, or coerced displacements—without any potential for reversing this trajectory.

Despite the prevailing notion that returning to farming or a peasant lifestyle is not seen as a viable option for development, it remains crucial to understand and explore the concept of continuous agrarianization, which emphasizes the ongoing importance of the farming and rural sector for security of rural livelihoods. Experiences in Southeast Asia, as documented by De Koninck and Rousseau (2012), demonstrate that the agriculture sector has retained a significant capacity for maintaining employment over the years. While farming activities alone may not be sufficient to sustain people on the land, there is an increasing prevalence of pluriactivity (also see Kinsella et al., 2000; Oostindie, 2015; Rigg et al., 2016). Interestingly, agriculture has shown remarkable resilience, and the process of deagrarianization in the countryside is not occurring as rapidly and intensely as initially anticipated. Throughout the past five decades, commencing in 1961, Southeast Asia has consistently surpassed global trends in terms of per capita net agricultural and food production indices. Hirsch (2012) also highlights that in India, despite the declining interest of farmers in the farming sector, bumper production has been achieved in recent years, this points to a substantial segment of the populace in Southeast Asian nations retaining a rural presence and upholding an agricultural essence. Furthermore, deliberate shifts, as envisioned by Oostindie in this particular edition as 'multifunctional farming,' call for a re-evaluation not only of classification schemes (such as the definition of a farm) but also of our understanding of agriculture and how farms should be developed. A discernible trend is evident in the Netherlands, rural Europe, and certain regions of the United States, characterized by the proliferation of high-tech agril. Practices like precision farming, high-input approaches, and large-scale agricultural practices that emphasize economies of scale. However, a more significant tendency, both analytically and empirically, is the adoption of multifunctional farming practices by farmers. This involves integrating agriculture with other activities like agro-tourism and quality production in meaningful and coherent ways, often accompanied by cost reduction measures and decreased reliance on inputs with emphasizing on economies of scope rather than scale (Roep and Van der Ploeg, 2003; Oostindie, 2015; Van der Ploeg, 2017). Experiences in Zimbabwe and South Africa demonstrate the emergence of re-agrarianization as a viable and dynamic agrarian pathway, relying on external sources of capital (such as gold panning, migrant wages, and pensions). In many instances, these processes serve to augment agricultural production activities, occasionally leading to expansion, and are often accompanied by a limited role played by the state.

6.1 Identifying agrarian classes

The examination of production and consumption processes, resource allocation, marketing, and land use practices challenges prevailing classificatory schemes in social and natural science literature. These schemes often categorize rural people based on factors such as class, gender, race, or income, while drawing distinctions between agriculture, culture and nature. However, widening these classificatory schemes has implications for how we position rural people within the social order. Is it appropriate to classify agrarian classes according to their access to and ownership of land and capital? (Bernstein, 1994, 2010a, b; Cousins, 2011; Scoones et al., 2012)? This approach might not comprehensively encompass the intricacies of agriculture and rural existence. The focus on class analysis might omit crucial nuances of daily experiences, including unconventional methods, and may not entirely acknowledge the autonomy attributed to rural individuals as they endeavor to sustain themselves amidst the frequently severe circumstances fostered by globalization, competition, and conflict (Long, 2001; Olivier de Sardan, 2006). The dynamics of production (and consumption) within society aren't exclusively dictated by class interactions alone. The approach yielding richer results, as showcased by the articles featured in this edition, involves viewing these interactions as manifestations and results of ongoing processes and individuals' efforts to attain enhanced self-governance, food sovereignty, and overall well-being (see also Van der Ploeg, 2008, 2010b, 2013, 2014; Martínez-Torres and Rosset, 2010; Rosset, 2013;).

6.2 An agrarian reform

Within the articles in this edition, diverse and cohesive conceptual frameworks are employed to interpret shifts in both social and agrarian realms, shaped by the interplay between human and non-human agents, with a focus on structured processes rather than deterministic outcomes. Significantly, assemblage theory accentuates the non-linearity and fluidity that underlie the exploration of interactions between human and non-human assets (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Latour, 2005; De Landa, 2006; Li, 2007, 2014; Umans and Arce, 2014; Woods, 2015). Assemblages are conceptualized as dynamic and perpetually evolving, giving rise to ever-changing socio-material domains where diverse viewpoints emerge and transform. These viewpoints offer distinct visions of the future and the importance of family farming, agriculture, and rural development against the backdrop of globalization and the ongoing trajectory of economic and societal neoliberalization.

Initiated by a range of factors, including the resurgence of interest in land through land reform and resettlement initiatives (Thiesenhusen, 1995; Rosset et al., 2006; Scoones et al., 2010; Mutopo, 2011; Dekker and Kinsey, 2011; Hebinck and Cousins, 2013; Van den Berg et al., 2018), as well as the evolving conception of land prompted by commoditization (Hirsch, 2012;

Borras and Franco, 2013), we are observing the unfolding of reagrarization and repeasantization processes (also explored by Calvário, 2017; Van den Berg et al., 2018; Nelson and Stock, 2018). The articles by Easter Chigumira on Zimbabwe, Henk Oostindie, and Jan Douwe van der Ploeg The Netherlands, Murat Öztürk, Joost Jongerden, and Andy Hilton about Turkey, and Leonardo van den Berg, Dirk Roep, Paul Hebinck, and Heitor Teixeira about Brazil elaborate in detail on how and why continuous agrarianisation and repeasantisation occur. Sheona Shackleton and Paul Hebinck's work on the Transkei in South Africa, and Shuji Hisano, Motoki Akitsu, and Steven McGreevy's research on Japan, disclose the dynamics of continuous agrarianisation in the midst of a deagrarianising landscape. These occurrences are not confined solely to the global South; they also manifest in various guises in Europe and the USA, with or without backing from state and/or societal entities, as exemplified by initiatives such as LEADER programs in the EU and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) endeavors.

6.3 Conclusion, restructuring & constructing the policy frame:

The discussions on de-/re-peasantization and agrarian reforms emphasize the need for a nuanced and comprehensive analysis, acknowledging the complexities and potential variations in these processes across different regions and contexts. The role of agriculture in rural livelihoods remains significant, and the adoption of multifunctional farming practices, along with intentional transformations, highlights the potential for sustaining and enhancing agricultural activities. Experiences in regions like Zimbabwe and South Africa demonstrate the emergence of re-agrarization as a dynamic agrarian pathway, supported by external sources of capital and often resulting in enhanced agricultural production activities, with the state typically playing a limited role. The aim of a counter deagrarianization narrative is to investigate alternative analytical methodologies that transcend mere class differentiations and dichotomies such as "production" and "consumption," or "nature" and "culture." The authors of this specialized edition lean towards an arrangement that comprehends the engagements of the social participants and the unfolding of assemblages, thereby attributing significance to these engagements. Processes of change defy predetermined or linear trajectories; they exhibit heterogeneity, contradiction, and often defy predictability. Similarly, the phenomenon of globalization should not be perceived solely as an authoritative imposition upon individuals and locales. Rather, it is a phenomenon perpetuated through social practices embedded within (trans)local settings. Local entities hold the ability to impact and reshape the outcomes of globalization through active engagement in worldwide networks and procedures, while also forging their own cross-regional connections. They can seize, manipulate, resist, and subvert these processes, thereby engendering novel prospects and results (Tsing, 2000; Arce and Long, 2000; Long, 2001; Cheshire and Woods, 2013; Woods, 2015).

7. Unveiling the Paradigm Shift of De-peasantization & Re-peasantization in Contemporary Agriculture

This prompts us to reconsider how we ought to conceptualize and deconstruct agriculture, or more precisely, activities rooted in rural settings. Should we uphold traditional perceptions of agriculture that align with the belief that contemporary farming depends on external inputs and confines itself solely to the conversion of natural resources into commodities? This perspective is prevalent in *erosion_of_crop_cultivation/deagrarianization/depeasantization* literature, where agriculture is equated with modern, large-scale, and technologically advanced practices, mechanization that aim to achieve the adequate production and productivity increases to feed the world. Agrarian political economists align with this viewpoint alongside numerous economists, plant breeders, and agronomists. Nonetheless, the contributions within this distinct issue counter the inclination to confine the definition of agriculture and rural undertakings. They embrace the notion that it is imperative to transcend a rigid interpretation of agriculture (encompassing solely crop cultivation and livestock rearing) and acknowledge that the demarcations between culture and nature frequently become indistinct through diverse avenues (as also examined by Croll and Parkin, 1992). A growing body of evidence suggests that rural livelihoods are reliant on factors beyond agricultural activities alone (Shackleton and Shackleton, 2015; Vandermeer and Perfecto, 2012; Toledo, 1990). Rural livelihoods are influenced not solely by external income sources such as pensions, remittances, or migrant labor, but also by the utilization of wild resources from the natural environment. Farming, or agriculture, extends beyond the mere cultivation of crops or the rearing of livestock. In their exploration of rural South Africa, Paul Hebinck, Nosiseko Mtati, and Charlie Shackleton delve into the intricacies, unveiling the multifaceted character of farming and rural livelihoods. The papers by Dirk Roep, Leonardo van den Berg, Paul Hebinck, and Heitor Teixeira on Brazil, Murat Öztürk, Joost Jongerden, and Andy Hilton on Turkey, Easter Chigumira on Zimbabwe, and Mikelis Grivins, Talis Tisenkopfs on Latvia and Wolfram Dressler, Will Smith, and Marvin Montefrio on the Philippines. They all underscore the analytical benefit of expanding our comprehension of the concept of a "farm" to encompass the natural environment and its utilization, whether through harvesting or other methods. This viewpoint portrays farming and rural livelihoods as possessing greater resilience, diversity, and potential for long-term sustainability. These land-use approaches, frequently regarded as a safety net against extreme poverty, can also be construed as instances of multifunctional agriculture in the global South. Additionally, the cultural significance that people attach to their environments and its components, such as trees, crops, and seeds, are integral parts of rural livelihood dynamics (see Croll and Parkin, 1992; Hebinck et al., 2015a; Cocks et al., 2012, 2017). Repeasantization and the pivotal role of family farming offer an analytical response to discourses promoting drudgery and the concept of being "efficient but poor," as advocated by Schultz (1964) in the 1950s (Van der Ploeg, 2010a, 2013, 2014). Repeasantization embodies interconnected processes

wherein individuals retain or "revert" to rural and land-based activities. Such reversion can transpire through inheriting land, acquiring private land, or gaining land access via deliberate or unforeseen land reform initiatives like squatting. These processes encompass the reconstruction of a social-material framework that empowers rural producers to engage in farming and establish partially self-sustaining livelihoods. A pivotal facet of repeasantization entails the transformation of human capital into agroecological capital, with a focus on leveraging ecological resources and expertise over financial capital to secure assets and knowledge (Van der Ploeg, 2010a, 2014). The accumulation of agroecological capital is embedded in labor-intensive production processes primarily relying on family labor, which is often intensified over time to enhance the family's livelihood. The family unit serves as the primary social structure for farming, aiming to improve and add value to their resources through their labor. This resource utilization corresponds with the principles witnessed in the process of repeasantization, where ecological resources from the environment are predominantly harnessed, minimizing sole reliance on market transactions. Production predominantly hinges on ecological processes, harmonizing with the notion of "farming with nature," as expounded in this special issue by Leonardo van den Berg, Dirk Roep, Paul Hebinck, and Heitor Teixeira, fostering conditions for self-sufficiency. The linkage between repeasantization and agroecology is frequently examined in scholarly discourse, with agroecology being advocated as a scientific discipline, resistance movement, and social endeavor that champions sustainable and ecologically responsible agricultural practices. Repeasantization constitutes a pivotal facet of rural development processes, leading to augmented rural employment prospects and progressive enhancements in income levels and self-dignity over time. Gradually, it contributes to the broadening of the agrarian economy and the scope of agrarian or agrarian-related undertakings (Milone and Ventura, 2010; Milone et al., 2015, 2018).

Concluding remarks:

In the light of reviewing above findings of the study it has been concluded that absenteeism of landlords & depeasantization is major complication of the agrarian society. Agricultural land forcibly occupied by state authority for the development projects, causes shortage of arable land, and in some areas absentee landlords prevail only to collect revenue from their land. It has been also observed peasant sun happy, fearful and committing suicide only because of distress, depression, anxiety like conditions arises due to burden of credit debt, high input cost, worst internal family relationships, burden of land rent more than earning from that land, financial crisis like so that after leaving/exiting from agriculture farmers realising to get destroy themselves. The impact of depeasantization has been significant, with many rural communities facing challenges such as unemployment, poverty, and social dislocation because of declining agricultural opportunities. However, it is also important to note that depeasantization has brought benefits, such as increased access to education, awareness, upliftment's of living standards,

health care, and other urban amenities for rural populations, and has played a role in reducing global poverty rates also. Policies, initiatives and recommendations for policymakers with Moving forward, it is essential to address the negative impacts of depeasantization that can mitigate the negative impacts of depeasantization and promote sustainable agriculture practices, inclusive economic growth, rural development and leveraging the opportunities it presents. This will require a combination of policies and initiatives like Reassessing the True Cost of Cultivation by Integrating Environmental Valuation of Ecosystems into Agricultural Practices however also it is previously suggested by some research papers. Ultimately, a more equitable and sustainable future for both rural and urban populations will depend on finding solutions that balance the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders.

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