Dataverse Online Appendix

Impartial Administration and Peaceful Agrarian Reform:

The Foundations for Democracy in Scandinavia

List of contents

Overview of documents 2
Source criticism 3
Case selection 6
The Scandinavian cases 6
Cases to compare with Scandinavia 6
Expanded variable-based analysis 8
The paths of France and Prussia 9
Expanded process-tracing analyses 12
Mechanism 1: Meritocracy and state control produce peaceful agrarian reform 13
Link 1.1.: Meritocracy raises impartial policy-making of agrarian reform 13
Link 1.2.: State control raises impartial implementation of agrarian reform 19
Link 1.3.: Impartial administration of agrarian reform limits landlord resistance 23
Link 1.4.: Impartial administration of agrarian reform limits peasant grievances 27
Mechanism 2: Lack of meritocracy and lack of state control produce violent revolution 32
Link 2.1.: Lack of meritocracy limits agrarian reform proposals 32
Link 2.2.: Lack of state control obstructs agrarian reform negotiations 34
Link 2.3.: Limited agrarian reform proposals increase peasant violence 36
Mechanism 3: Meritocracy and lack of state control produce stalled agrarian reform 38
Link 3.1.: Meritocracy raises impartial policy-making of agrarian reform 38
Link 3.2.: Lack of state control obstructs agrarian reform negotiations 42
Link 3.3.: Lack of state control obstructs agrarian reform implementation 44
Varieties of the Scandinavian path 47
State-building experience 47
Conditions for peaceful agrarian reform 49
Agrarian reform experience 50
Policy-making and implementation of agrarian reform 51
Democratization experience 51
References (neither found in the main paper nor in supplementary materials) 54

Overview of documents

Literature on Scandinavian democratic exceptionalism typically studies single Scandinavian countries (e.g. Eckstein 1966; Tilton 1974; Gundelach 1988; Bengtsson 2019a). A few analyses of early-modern political development, liberalization, or democratization place Denmark and Sweden on separate or more general paths (e.g. Anderson 1974; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992; Ertman 1997; Ziblatt 2017; Acemoglu and Robinson 2019), while a few cross-Scandinavian comparisons focus on developments in governance and social policies occurring after or in tandem with the breakthrough to democracy (e.g. Arter 2006; Sejersted 2011; Knutsen 2017).

This lack of systematic comparisons is even more pronounced for agrarian reform literature. Except for a few Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian accounts with a comparative outlook (e.g. Østerud 1978; Barton 1986; Jones 1990), the native scholarship on agrarian reforms in Scandinavia has lived a life apart from the international literature, though it does constitute a fully developed body of research (e.g. Dyrvik 1995; Gadd 2000; Österberg 2008; Hansgaard 1981; Løgstrup 2015). Generations of Scandinavian historians have capitalized on the fact that 18th-century Scandinavia was one of the most bureaucratized regions of Europe, where negotiations and applications of state policies were documented in writing and where contemporary media, academics, and officials put the question of agrarian reform under intense public scrutiny. Consequently, interested scholars have been able to access extensive local and national archives, which include the documents on which I base my analysis:

- Official laws
- Administrative decrees
- Commission reports
- Private letters from lords and decision-makers as well as a few literate peasants
- Records and narratives of everyday life and living conditions on farms and manors

Source criticism

This set of documents amounts to three historiographies, one for each country (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden), consisting of secondary sources. These secondary sources were accessed through public libraries and online. In searching and selecting them, I took account of three criteria (see Møller and Skaaning 2021):

1. Prioritize those with definitions relatively in line with the definitions of the theory under consideration.
2. Prioritize those that are relatively atheoretical or based on theoretical vantage points that compete with the theory under consideration.
3. Prioritize those that take updated evidence into account.

On the first criterion, I ensured that the sources' definitions were consistent with my main concepts. Terms like "agrarian reform" (typically referred to as *skiftesreformer* or *jordbrukets rationalisering* in Swedish; *landboreformerne* in Danish; no common terms in Norwegian but named after the institution such as *odelsretten*) and "violent conflict" (variations of *våldsam konflikt*, *demonstration*, or *sammanstötning* in Swedish; *voldelig konflikt*, *demonstration*, or *sammenstød* in Danish; *voldelig konflikt*, *demonstrasjon*, or *sammenstøt* in Norwegian) are frequently referred to and firmly defined in most accounts. However, the terms "state control over local administration," "meritocracy," and "impartial administration" rarely occur. Nevertheless, terms like "patrimonialism" (*patrimonialism* in Swedish; *patrimonialisme* in Danish and Norwegian) or "corruption" (*korruption* in Swedish and Danish; *korrupsjon* in Norwegian) often cover substantially the same concepts. In cases where such terms and connotations were not available, I used the (often thorough) descriptions of state and local administrative functions and organizational traits to make a novel assessment.

On the second criterion, I made sure to avoid theoretical bias by using different sources for the analysis of the peacefulness and extent of agrarian reforms on the one hand and the potential explanations on the other. Fortunately, the literature on early-modern state-building (e.g. Maarbjerg 2004; Hallenberg, Holm, and Johansson 2008; Dørum, Hallenberg, and Katajala 2021) is fairly separate from that on the agrarian reforms (e.g. Østerud 1978; Winberg 1985; Gadd 2000; Løgstrup 2015) and violent conflict (e.g. Mikkelsen, Kjeldstadli, and Nyzell 2018). Relevant evidence on impartial administration is, quite naturally, an integrated part of the agrarian reform accounts and analyses. In this case, I checked whether impartial administration of the reforms could be claimed to be exogenous of the reforms themselves by visiting other sources that trace and describe path dependencies in administrative behavior from the 16th through the 18th century (e.g. Johansen 2006; Liliequist and Almbjär 2012). As I point out in the main paper, impartiality generally originated before and continued through the reforms. In addition, I exploited the fact that most accounts accurately describe the modes of administrating the reforms apart from the consequences of the reforms for later administrative modes (e.g. Hansgaard 1981; Dombernowsky 1983; Kjærgaard 1994; Österberg 2008).

In general, very few sources hold impartiality or state characteristics as their theoretical point of view, which drastically mitigates the problem of theoretical bias. I used studies by political or other social scientists with a more deductive approach to verify my own reading of the works of historians in relation to state-building (e.g. Knudsen and Rothstein 1994; Ertman 1997; Teorell and Rothstein 2015). However, none of the works that describe or explain the initiation, implementation, or consequences of the agrarian reforms formulates and tests hypotheses; rather, they use standard historical methodology. They thus seek to interpret evidence within the confines of a more or less explicit theoretical framework. Many are purely atheoretical; in others, theoretical interpretations are implicit or emerge as concluding reflections (e.g. Johnsen 1919; Koht 1926; Jensen 1936; Helmfrid 1961; Baack 1977; Bjørn 1981; Gadd 2000;

Løgstrup 2015). Among those with explicit theoretical frameworks, we find a focus on domestic social forces (e.g. Østerud 1978), political regimes and elites (e.g. Barton 1986), and broader state-society relations (Gustafsson 1994). Relying on these sources may of course bias my reading. Yet the three sources (Hansgaard 1981; Österberg 2008; Løgstrup 2015) that explicitly connect the success of the agrarian reforms with factors equivalent to impartial administration, state control, and/or meritocracy come to their conclusions via an inductive rather than a deductive approach. Beyond these three, I build my conclusions on compiling observable implications from separate sources on state control, meritocracy, impartiality, agrarian reform, violent conflict, and their interrelationships.

On the third criterion, I used, as baseline, the most recent general studies or reviews of the state-building (e.g. Hallenberg, Holm, and Johansson 2008; Teige 2010; Jensen 2013; Bagge 2014; Dørum, Hallenberg, and Katajala 2021), agrarian reform (e.g. Gadd 2000; Österberg 2008; Løgstrup 2015; Bengtsson et al. 2019), and violent conflict (e.g. Mikkelsen, Kjeldstadli, and Nyzell 2018) literatures. Studies solely focused on Norwegian agrarian reforms and modes of administration are generally fewer and older (e.g. Nagel 1985; Dyrvik 1995), but otherwise well covered by the Danish scholarship (e.g. Johansen 2006) or well-respected classic and comparative accounts (e.g. Østerud 1978). Where recent contributions interpret old evidence differently, the main paper explicates uncertainties and disagreements and aligns with the interpretation that has received the most pronounced support, if such clear assessment is possible.

Case selection

This section presents further notes and points of discussion on the selection of cases.

The Scandinavian cases

Throughout the paper, I treat Denmark, Norway, and Sweden as separate analytical entities or cases. Their political developments were clearly interconnected. Most notably, Norway was subordinate to Denmark in a union from 1537 to 1814 and to Sweden from 1814 to 1905. However, Norway also had a very different agrarian history from Denmark and Sweden (Østerud 1978) and preserved most of its local customs and societal characteristics through the periods of subordination (Derry 1979).

In the case of Denmark, I exclude the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein from analysis due to their partial autonomy (see Jensen 1936, 236). In any case, conclusions would not have been substantively different had I included them. Although they came later, agrarian reforms in the duchies were eventually as extensive and peaceful and administered in the same way as in Denmark (Hvidtfeldt 1962; Barton 1986, 208-209).

Cases to compare with Scandinavia

I choose France and Prussia as the most suitable, negative cases to compare with based on the 'Possibility Principle' (Mahoney and Goertz 2004, 657-658). According to this principle, we should include cases with a negative outcome, i.e. the non-occurrence of peaceful agrarian reform. France qualifies through its accomplishment of agrarian reform by violent revolution. Prussia qualifies because agrarian reform stalled. Next, cases should adhere to the rule of inclusion, where at least one independent variable is positively related to the outcome of interest, and the rule of exclusion, where no eliminatory independent variable predicts non-occur-

rence of the outcome. As none of the three alternative theories – agricultural productivity, rural inequalities, and strength of absolutism – is proposed as a theoretically sufficient condition for the non-occurrence of peaceful agrarian reform (indeed, there are countervailing arguments for all three factors, and the theories are formulated in probabilistic terms), only the rule of inclusion is applicable. By this rule, France and Prussia qualify through their shared low level of agricultural productivity. In addition, France qualifies through its low level of rural inequality and Prussia through its strong absolutism.

Alternative cases do not fulfill these criteria as well. British peasants had already escaped serfdom in the 14th and 15th centuries and the Glorious Revolution in 1688 cemented a lasting bourgeois-landlord coalition, which made agrarian reform substantially less salient (Skocpol 1979, 142). Likewise in the Netherlands (Hart 1995, 57-59), i.e. the Dutch Republic before 1795, and Switzerland (Church and Head 2013, 98), i.e. the Old Swiss Confederacy and the Helvetic Republic 1798-1803, where burghers in urban autonomies dominated politics from the early modern period. Feudal society was largely abolished in Northern Italy in 1802, but only through external intervention by the victorious Napoleonic army, while a new aristocratic, landed elite took power in the South (Vanzetti and Meissner 1953: 144). Democracy only came to Portugal after World War I, while agrarian reforms first came after 1974 (Raven 1988). Rural Spain remained backward and never saw any decisive agrarian reform attempts or democratization before the 1930s (Malefakis 1970, 58-62). Finally, Austria experienced some of the most radical reforms in Europe under Joseph II (1765-1790), but most reforms were withdrawn due to contingent, international events (Beller 2006, 101-103), making comparisons with other countries less fruitful.

Expanded variable-based analysis

As shown in Table B1, state control over local administration and central-level meritocracy were each necessary and jointly sufficient for peaceful agrarian reform. Through the logic of comparison, we also see that the lack of state control was relatively more important for explaining the outcome in Prussia, whereas lack of central-level meritocracy was the relatively more important factor in France. This also demonstrates that although state control and meritocracy both contributed to extensive reforms and their peaceful accomplishment, state control was mainly connected with extensive reform, while meritocracy was mainly connected with peacefulness.

Table B1: Variable-based assessment of state control and meritocracy as explanatory factors

	Sweden	*Denmark*	*Norway*	*France*	*Prussia*
Agricultural productivity	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Rural inequalities	Low	High	Low	Low	High
Strength of absolutism	Medium-Low	High	High	Medium-Low	Medium-High
State control over local administration	Strong	Strong	Strong	Medium-Weak	Weak
Meritocratic recruitment to the central administration	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak	Strong
Peaceful agrarian reform	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

The paths of France and Prussia

Based on the process-tracing analyses, Figures B1 and B2 illustrate the paths taken by France and Prussia. In France, patrimonialism affected the policy-making phase in the sense that few reform ideas were developed at the central level of administration. Another consequence of the system of venal office-holding was the frequent replacement of civil servants as offices were sold to the highest bidder, which undermined a stable relationship with the regional, seigneurial stakeholders and thus made the few reform ideas founder. By affecting peasant grievances both directly and indirectly via the problems associated with a lack of state control, the lack of central-level meritocracy was a more important factor than the lack of state control in France. In Prussia, central-level meritocracy existed and, expectedly, created extensive agrarian reform proposals in the policy-making phase. Expectedly, given the similar levels of central-level meritocracy and rural inequalities, these reform proposals resembled those in Denmark. However, the proposals were hollowed out in the policy-making phase and sabotaged in the implementation phase as the landed elites exploited their local administrative powers. Thus, by affecting both the policy-making and implementation phases, the lack of state control was the crucial factor in Prussia.

Figure B1: Explanation of violent revolution in France

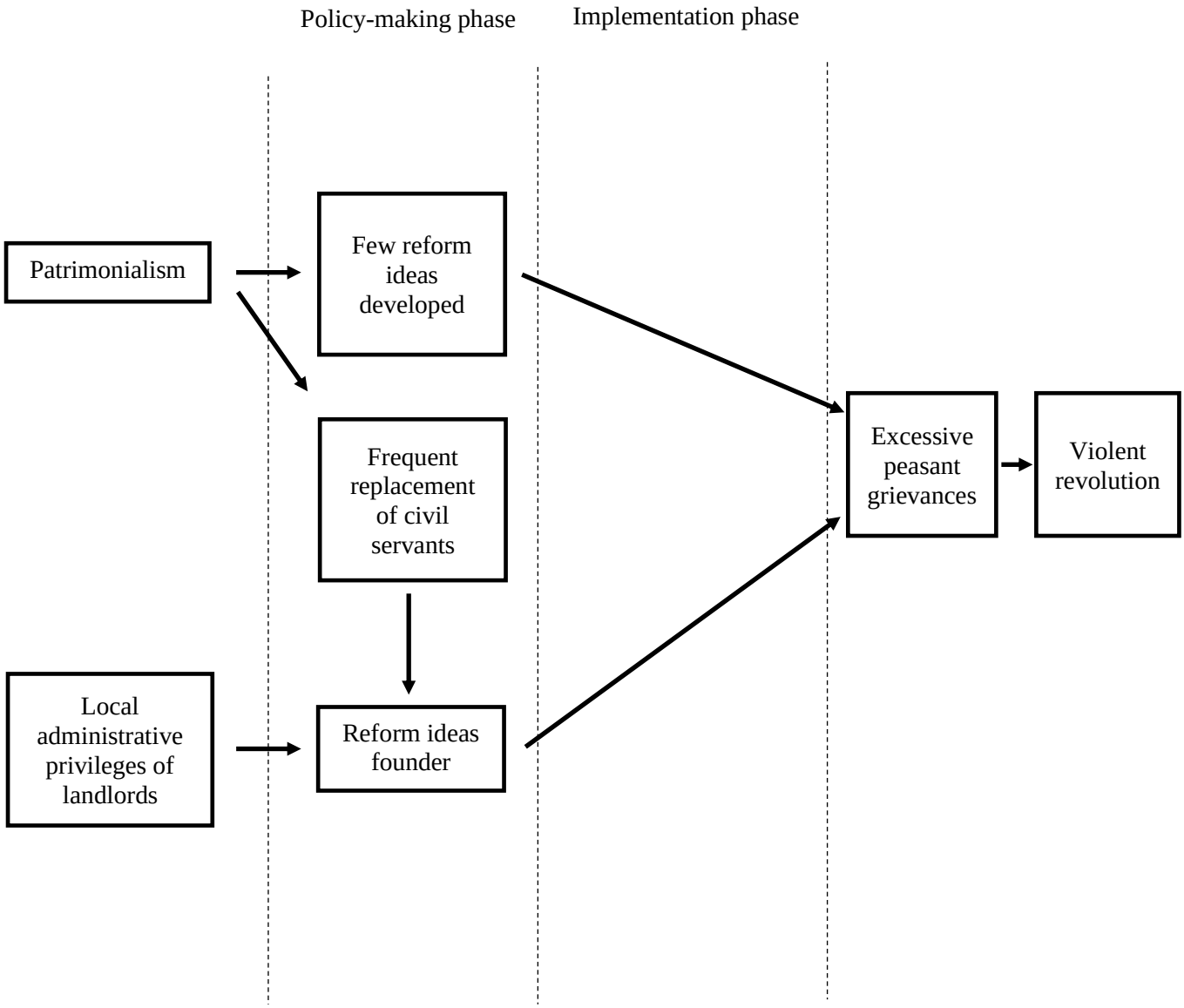
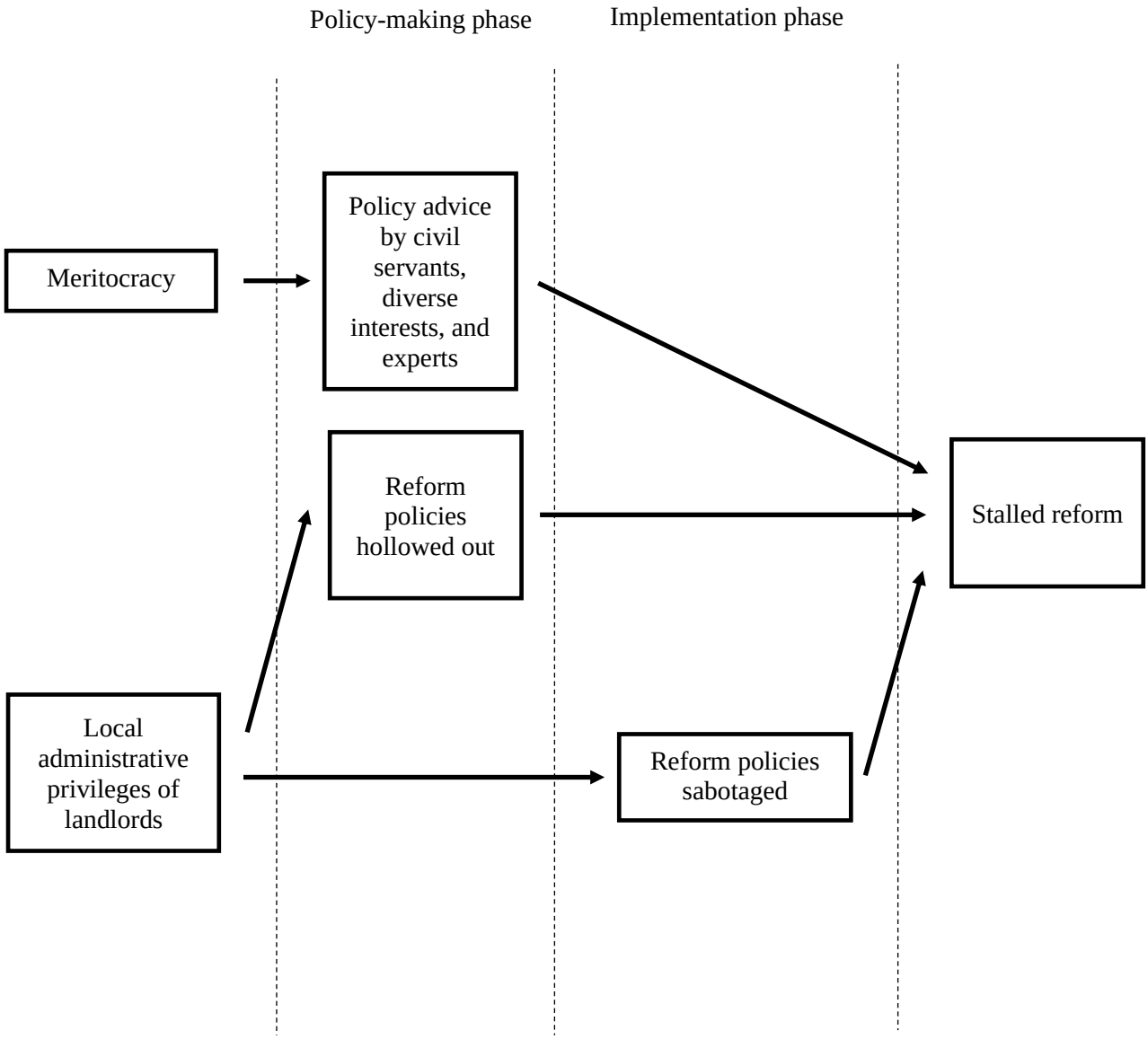


Figure B2: Explanation of stalled agrarian reform in Prussia



Expanded process-tracing analyses

This section presents expanded process-tracing analyses of the five cases, elaborating the observable implications of the mechanisms under study, their inferential strengths, and empirical evidence (see Beach and Pedersen 2013). Based on the general propositions of the existing literature presented on p. 17-18 in the main paper, I theorized a mechanism for each case, corresponding to each combination of the Xs and the Y as given by the variable-based analysis. Thus, one mechanism should lead from meritocracy and state control to peaceful agrarian reform (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden); another should lead from lack of meritocracy and lack of state control to violent revolution (France); and the third and final one should lead from meritocracy and lack of state control to stalled agrarian reform (Prussia). The mechanisms consisted of certain actors transferring causality from one macro-level phenomena to another via their preferences and subsequent behavior on the micro-level (see Hedström and Swedberg 1996).

Each mechanism consisted of multiple links. The links were considered as each necessary and jointly sufficient for the outcome. I then theorized multiple observable implications for each link, moderated to fit the context of state-building and agrarian-reform processes in early-modern Europe. Most notably, this means that landlords occur as either state/local officials or estate owners depending on the observable implication under consideration. The observable implications describe multiple preferences and kinds of behavior that indicate the existence of a certain link. Although behavior often follow from stable preferences, this is not necessarily the case. In turn, I treated the observable implications of each link as interchangeable, implying that empirical evidence for only one observable implication is sufficient to support the existence of the relevant link.

Below, I present the observable implications of each link in each mechanism; I discuss their inferential strength based on the criteria of certainty and uniqueness and grade it on a five-

point scale (low, medium-low, medium, medium-high, high); I provide short descriptions of the observed evidence and potential measurement errors attached to this evidence; finally, graded on a three-point scale (weak, medium, strong), I provide an assessment of the confidence in the existence of each link based on the empirical support for the relevant observable implications. The logic is the following: The stronger the inferential strength of an observable implication, and the stronger the empirical support for it, the larger the confidence in the existence of the relevant link.

In formulating observable implications for my theory, as is also the logic of the certainty and uniqueness criteria, I integrate plausible observable implications of alternative theories. I thus try to build tests that may falsify my theory (as reflected in the certainty score) and verify it (as reflected in the uniqueness score). The latter directly integrates the alternative theories because an observable implication of my theory with high uniqueness would be incompatible with alternative theories.

The results show clear empirical support for the hypothesized links in all three mechanisms. However, not all observable implications are vindicated, mainly because observations of expressions rely on attitudinal data, which in many cases lack or are of questionable reliability.

Mechanism 1: Meritocracy and state control produce peaceful agrarian reform

Link 1.1.: Meritocracy raises impartial policy-making of agrarian reform

Observable implication 1.1.1.: Civil servants, who were recruited on meritocratic criteria, express need for including diverse interests from peasants to lords in negotiating agrarian reform.

Inferential strength is **medium-low to medium**: Certainty is low as impartial administration is about actions and not intentions. Uniqueness is medium-high; on the one hand, observing

such expressions is a strong indication that meritocracy actually instills intrinsic or extrinsic motivation in civil servants for impartial administration because we would expect such motivation to be relatively less frequent in early-modern than in modern times even in meritocratic systems. Also, expressing willingness to include diverging interests likely raised expectations among these groups and was thus not cost-free. On the other, expressing willingness to include diverging interests were potentially shaped by social desirability bias, especially in meritocratic systems.

Evidence:

Denmark:

- All commissions were clearly mandated to negotiate genuine agrarian reforms and membership represented landlords but with a majority of meritocratically recruited civil servants (Løgstrup 2015, 506-514), indicating that commissions would favor impartial policy-making.
- Many commission members were 'city intellectuals' keen on pursuing state interests and inspired by Enlightenment ideas (Baack 1977, 7-8; Løgstrup 2015, 506-514).
- In various agrarian reform commissions, e.g. the Great Land Commission, civil servants like Colbiørnsen expressed the consensus that improving agricultural productivity would also benefit Denmark as nation and country (Løgstrup 2015, 506-514) and the need to use petitions in order to consider both peasant and landlord interests as far as possible (Hansgaard 1981, 108).

Norway:

- In preparing the 1687 ordinance, vicegerent Gyldenløve wrote to the king regarding his concerns for the well-being of the Norwegian peasants (Johnsen 1919, 266-271).

Sweden:

- In a 1746 article, Jacob Faggott, who became head of the Land Board Survey 1749 to conduct the enclosure reforms, wrote of the need to improve agricultural productivity through enclosures inspired by the English precedent (Gadd 2000, 275).
- The work of the Land Board Survey was clearly rationalist and aimed at improving agricultural efficiency (Gadd 2000, 273).

Confidence is **medium**: Empirical support is relatively strong for Denmark but more modest for Norway (only one observation of attitudes regarding only one reform) and Sweden (clear and generally representative attitudes but only on general societal rather than interest group concerns). However, there is no dis-confirmatory evidence.

Observable implication 1.1.2.: Civil servants, who were recruited on meritocratic criteria, include proposals and objections from peasants and lords in policy negotiations.

Inferential strength is **medium-high***:* Certainty is medium-high; on the one hand, impartial administrations concerns certain actions among which we often, or at least more often than in patrimonial systems, find inclusion of diverging interests. On the other hand, inclusion of diverging interests is not an essential feature of impartiality as a decision to exclude all interest groups from policy negotiations would also, at least in principle, be in line with the equal treatment of equal cases. Uniqueness is medium-high; on the one hand, it is highly unlikely to observe patrimonially recruited civil servants favor peasants through policy inclusion as peasants were often poor and almost always much less well-off than landlords. Rather than paid for, peasant inclusion must have been normatively motivated. On the other hand, one could imagine situations where groups of peasants have a specific hold on the relevant civil servants, which would explain the peasant inclusion.

Evidence:

Denmark:

- The permanent college of 1768 and the Great Land Commission used petitions from both landlords and peasants and consisted of landlords but mostly civil servants of bourgeois decent (Jensen 1936, 36-38; Hansgaard 1981, 191; Barton 1986, 144; Løgstrup 2015, 65-66).
- Discussions of the Great Land Commission reveal balanced representation of both landlord and common interests as well as in securing the legal rights of both peasant and lord (Jensen 1936, 148-149; Baack 1977, 7-8; Hansgaard 1981, 108; Løgstrup 2015, 506-514).

Norway:

- Peasants voiced concerns via local courts, *things*, and petitions to the Danish king through the vicegerent, which played a key role in developing reform proposals (Østerud 1978, 202-214; Barton 1986, 150; Sandvik 2018, 167), such as in preparing the 1687 ordinance (Johnsen 1919, 266-271), and the reform of *odelsretten* (Johnsen 1919, 281).
- In preparing the reform of *odelsretten,* the Danish government collected reports from Norwegian officials and eventually went with the majority position (Johnsen 1919, 281).

Sweden:

- Proposals for adjustments of the enclosure reforms came from peasant estate petitions (Barton 1986, 255-256; Gadd 2000, 275).
- Peasants especially used the right of petitioning via the county governors (Bäck 1984, 281-282; Gustafsson 1994, 95).
- Given the political-administrative system, no reform could come about without the consent of the peasantry (Østerud 1978, 146-148).

Confidence is **strong**: Empirical support is uniformly strong in all three countries, although petitions were less used in Denmark and partly provided by diet representation in Sweden.

Observable implication 1.1.3.: Civil servants, who were recruited on meritocratic criteria, express need for including experts to inform agrarian reform.

Inferential strength is **medium-low**: Certainty is low as impartial administration is about actions and not intentions. Uniqueness is medium; on the one hand, observing such expressions is a strong indication that meritocracy actually instills intrinsic or extrinsic motivation in civil servants for impartial administration because we would expect such motivation to be relatively less frequent in early-modern than in modern times even in meritocratic systems. On the other, 'experts' are a less well-defined group with fewer personal interests in agrarian reform. Thus, the costs, in terms of future obligations, of expressing willingness to include expertise were likely quite low and potentially due to social desirability bias, especially in meritocratic systems.

Evidence:

Denmark:

- Commissions were concerned about the well-being of the country and society (see also evidence for observable implication 1.1.1.).

Norway:

- See evidence for observable implication 1.1.1.

Sweden:

- Commissions were concerned about the well-being of the country and society (see also evidence for observable implication 1.1.1.).

Confidence is **weak**: Empirical support is relatively strong for Denmark and Sweden with both specific and broad examples of societal and technical concerns indicating a strong role

for expertise. However, no direct statements were observed, and the examples from Norway are limited to one.

Observable implication 1.1.4.: Civil servants, who were recruited on meritocratic criteria, include expert advice in policy negotiations.

Inferential strength is **medium to medium-high***:* Certainty is medium-high; on the one hand, impartial administration concerns certain actions among which we often, or at least more often than in patrimonial systems, find inclusion of expertise. Indeed, to be able to balance different interests and pursue public goods on complicated matters such as a large-scale socioeconomic reform most often requires information from educated or experienced experts. On the other, inclusion of experts is not an essential feature of impartiality as not all reforms are equally complicated and because civil servants sometimes are also experts themselves. Uniqueness is medium; on the one hand, including expertise provides a risk for patrimonially recruited civil servants that their advice for reform goes against the interests of themselves or their patron. On the other hand, including experts may just as well be used as window-dressing, i.e. an attempt to legitimize the policy-making process while de facto ignoring the advice.

Evidence:

Denmark:

- In all land commissions, landlords were recruited with a double mandate, as representatives of landlord interests but also as experts on landholding and agricultural affairs and business. Those civil servants included were trained in legal or agricultural questions (Løgstrup 2015, 65-66).

Norway:

- As vicegerent, Gyldenløve was treated as expert on the general well-being of the Norwegian people and peasantry (Johnsen 1919, 266-271).
- Likewise, the collection of reports from Norwegian officials preparing the *odelsretten* reform can be seen as use of expertise (see Johnsen 1919, 281).

Sweden:

- The director of the Land Board Survey, Jacob Faggott, was a land inspector, i.e. an expert, himself (Gadd 2000, 275).
- The Land Board Survey used measurement to decide on places for enclosures (Helmfrid 1961, 115). Adjustment proposals were based on assessments by land inspectors and surveyors (Barton 1986, 255-256; Gadd 2000, 275).
- The first and subsequent enclosure reforms were initiated by experts (Gadd 2000, 275, 283).

Confidence is **strong**: Empirical support is uniformly strong for all three countries with numerous specific and broad examples.

Link 1.2.: State control raises impartial implementation of agrarian reform

Observable implication 1.2.1.: Civil servants, who were recruited on meritocratic criteria, express concern for the fairness of and technical expertise in adjudicating claims, in particular regarding the weaker part.

Inferential strength is **medium-low to medium***:* Certainty is low as impartial administration is about actions and not intentions. Uniqueness is medium-high; on the one hand, observing such expressions is a strong indication that meritocracy actually instills intrinsic or extrinsic motivation in civil servants for impartial administration because we would expect such motivation to be relatively less frequent in early-modern than in modern times even in merito-

cratic systems. Also, expressing willingness to include diverging interests likely raised expectations among these groups and was thus not cost-free, even more so because implementation decisions often took place in local settings with more personalized relationship between ruler and ruled. On the other, expressing willingness to include diverging interests were potentially shaped by social desirability bias, especially in meritocratic systems.

Evidence:

Denmark:

- The provisions attached to the early enclosure reforms ensured that county governors and "knowledgeable men" with no landed property led the implementation (Hansgaard 1981, 129), which can be seen as expressing concerns for expertise and impartiality in the implementation process.

Norway:

- Relatively few peasants actually wrote petitions, but the county governors in many cases anticipated peasant complaints over a given policy and asked the Danish government to make amendments (Gustafsson 1994, 65).

Sweden:

- No evidence found.

Confidence is **weak**: Some empirical support for Denmark and Norway but not for Sweden. The evidence for Denmark and Norway is either indirect through the expressed qualifications of implementation agents (Denmark) or rather unspecific assessments of the presentation of peasant complaints by civil servants (Norway). Yet, it should be noted that there is no disconfirmatory evidence.

Observable implication 1.2.2.: Civil servants, who were recruited on meritocratic criteria, allow due process for peasants and lords in court and allow experts to decide on technical matters of distributing land/rights.

Inferential strength is **high***:* Certainty is high since due process is the hallmark of impartial administration, indeed impartiality is by definition the equal treatment of equal cases. Much the same can be said about the use of experts in resolving technical implementation issues, although such technical expertise from people outside the civil service is not always required. Uniqueness is high because including expertise and allowing due process provide risks for patrimonially recruited civil servants that adjudications and expert decisions have negative, distributive consequences for themselves or their patrons. Including experts on technical boards and commissions is also harder to exploit as window-dressing because of the more local and personalized character of implementation processes in which reputation costs are likely higher.

Evidence:

Denmark:

- All technical implementation was conducted by professional surveyors and inspectors (Christensen 1975, 31; Østerud 1978, 142; Barton 1986, 144).
- They were deliberately employed to be neutral in their job (Christensen 1975, 31; Østerud 1978, 142; Barton 1986, 144).
- Settlement commissions were formally institutionalized as part of the labor service reforms of the 1790s to reach agreements in difficult cases outside the regular court system, taking input from each party and independent experts. Cases were moderated by civil servants (Dombernowsky 1983, 186-188; Løgstrup 2015, 448-449).

- Significant amounts of petitions and complaints on the implementation process were sent to the administration. The general assessment is that social status was no guarantee for a successful judgement of petitions and court rulings (Gustafsson 1994, 107-108; Johansen 2006, 165-171; Munck 2018, 384).
- Manorial court decisions were frequently circumvented by higher courts (Munck 2018, 384).

Norway:

- In general, the majority of petitions sent to Copenhagen were processed according to standard rules and often with a positive outcome for the peasant (Nagel 1985, 134; Sandvik 2018, 172).
- During the reform of *odelsretten*, arbitration commissions were established, including civil servants as chairs and peasants as members (Dyrvik 1995, 185).
- The general assessment is that the civil servants did not favor small peasants over large estate owners or other parties (Dyrvik 1995, 183).

Sweden:

- The implementation was carried out by land inspectors and other educated personnel employed by the state (Barton 1986, 255-256; Gadd 2000, 273).
- Information brought about by these civil servants fed into negotiations at the parish level where the priest, a state servant, contributed to making sure that decisions were settled amicably between tenants and proprietors (Helmfrid 1961, 121; Aronsson 1992, 49-50).
- Peasants influenced the practical design and execution of diet legislation, sat as judges and laymen in local courts, and made policy proposals at parish meetings (Österberg 2008, 77; Viitaniemi 2021, 239). However, given the gatekeeper functions of the

county governors, court judges, and state-ordained priests, this peasant influence was just as much channeled by the state as forced upon it (Linde 2000, 26, 82).

- The specific organs implementing agrarian policies functioned effectively and channeled both peasant and landlord demands and complaints regarding county governors and bailiffs (Linde 2000, 92; Österberg 2008, 82).
- The high court and the Chancellor of Justice received substantial amounts of complaints from peasants (Liliequist and Almbjär 2012, 18; Teorell and Rothstein 2015, 224-225), and in turn ruled on the basis of a solid rule-of-law tradition going back to the Svea Court of Appeal (Jägerskiöld 1961, 1080).
- Administrative misconduct was widespread. However, this concerned mistakes, thoughtlessness, and recklessness more than deliberate abuse to favor third parties (Teorell and Rothstein 2015, 224-225).

Confidence is **strong**: Empirical support is strong for all three countries. Although some of the assessments are general in nature, they build on archival research. Moreover, it strengthens confidence that in Sweden, the impartiality of implementation of agrarian reforms was particularly strong relative to a general pattern of administrative misconduct.

Link 1.3.: Impartial administration of agrarian reform limits landlord resistance

Observable implication 1.3.1.: Landlords express satisfaction with the aforementioned agrarian reform proposals and the following adjudication of claims and technical decisions.

Inferential strength is **medium-low to medium***:* Certainty is low as resistance is about actions, not intensions. Uniqueness is medium-high; on the one hand, landlords could have personal and political reasons to express satisfaction officially in order to avoid repercussions, such as royal punishment or exclusion from landlord society, while de facto resisting reform. On the other hand, in a situation where landlords were initially relatively powerful, it seems

unlikely that they would fear repercussions. Rather, they would either be genuinely satisfied and concur with reform or openly disagree and oppose reform. Moreover, expressions of reform satisfaction directly tied to impartiality, which people do not typically connect with civil servant behavior, are generally quite unlikely and thus approaching a 'smoking gun.'

Evidence:

Denmark:

- When disagreements emerged, as during the Jutland landlords' protest in 1790, commissions eventually moderated some of the measures to include proposals of the disgruntled parties while preserving the main reform elements (Jensen 1936, 179-180).
- The outrage among several landlords against Enlightenment reformer Struensee, who secretly reigned by dictatorial means by persuading the insane king from 1770 to 1772, constitutes a clear expression of approval of the normal system at the time, including the entitlement to approaching state officials and respect for them as guarantors of law and justice (Bregnsbo 2011).

Norway:

- The increased opposition to Danish rule such as over the *odelsretten* reform from the 1770s pertained to narrow elites of state officials and burghers rather than landlords (Dørum 2021, 317).

Sweden:

- Intense dissatisfaction was expressed by landlords over the stripping of powers in the 1789 Union and Security Act allowing peasants to buy all lands (Oakley 1990, 373).

Confidence is **weak**: Empirical support is relatively strong for Denmark, but very limited for Norway (although this is logical given the limited amount of landlords and their weak socio-economic position), and the limited evidence for Sweden is dis-confirmatory.

Observable implication 1.3.2.: Landlords encourage support for or build alliances with other landlords and/or peasants for continuing the agrarian reform process.

Inferential strength is **medium-low***:* Certainty is low as it is not necessary to observe cooperation or other positive commitments to reform in order to observe absence of resistance. Uniqueness, by contrast, is medium as it is highly unlikely to observe resistance if we also observe support. Indeed, support is logically opposed to resistance. Moreover, observing support or alliance-building could be due to other factors than impartial administration, such as gains due to the specific content of the reforms, which drastically reduces the uniqueness.

Evidence:

Denmark:

- When disagreements emerged, as during the Jutland landlords' protest in 1790, commissions eventually moderated some of the measures to include proposals of the disgruntled parties while preserving the main reform elements (Jensen 1936, 179-180).

Norway:

- No evidence found.

Sweden:

- No evidence found.

Confidence is **weak**: Some empirical support is found for Denmark but none for Sweden and Norway.

Observable implication 1.3.3.: Landlords abstain from counteracting the agrarian reform process despite obvious losses in terms of land or rights.

Inferential strength is **medium***:* Certainty is low as people's satisfaction with an administration's impartiality should be unrelated to their own losses in terms of land or rights. This is because impartiality is a procedural and not a substantial criterion. Uniqueness is high as

(tacit) support or absence of resistance to reform would seem highly unlikely in case of losses if not for some procedural legitimacy such as from impartial administration.

Evidence:

Denmark:

- There were, generally, very few violent protests and confrontations (only 10 between 1700 and 1830, Mikkelsen 2018).
- Landlords always used petitions, court, or royal audiences to express dissatisfaction with agrarian conditions and reforms (Bregnsbo 1997; Bjørn 1981, 111-112; Løgstrup 2011, 293-294; Løgstrup 2015, 506-514).
- When disagreements emerged, as during the Jutland landlords' protest in 1790, commissions eventually moderated some of the measures to include proposals of the disgruntled parties while preserving the main reform elements (Jensen 1936, 179-180).
- The outrage against and later assassination of Struensee in 1772 were orchestrated by some landlords. Yet, they were not provoked by any agrarian reforms of Struensee whose reforms concerned abolition of censorship and torture and reduction of public expenditures (Bregnsbo 2011).

Norway:

- There were very few violent conflicts, and they never included landlords (Sandvik 2018).
- The increased opposition to Danish rule such as over the *odelsretten* reform from the 1770s pertained to narrow elites of state officials and burghers rather than landlords (Dørum 2021, 317).
- The most recent assessment of reform success in Denmark-Norway concludes that "[a] relatively simple structure of legal institutions, combined with a comprehensive

system to process large quantities of petitions from all parts of society, ensured at least the appearances of concern for consensus decisions" (Munck 2018, 336).

Sweden:

- There were numerous conflicts between crown and nobility regarding the reforms. Most notably, King Gustav III was assassinated in 1792 by a small group of nobles motivated by the king's latest power grab, including his decision to equalize the property rights of peasants and nobles. In general, however, noble-crown conflicts were non-violent and in fact waned quickly after the assassination (Ahlberger and Kvarnström 2004, 147-148).
- The political unrest and royal assassination in 1792 did not lead to violent revolution as in France because of the concessions granted to peasants in 1789, which complicated an alliance between the peasant and noble estates (see Oakley 1990, 373).
- Riots involving noble landlords following the unrest of 1789 and royal assassination in 1792 were quickly resolved through negotiation with police authorities (Berglund 2018, 290-293).

Confidence is **strong**: Empirical support is very strong for all three countries with only one piece of dis-confirmatory evidence (the royal assassination by landlords in 1792 in Sweden).

Link 1.4.: Impartial administration of agrarian reform limits peasant grievances

Observable implication 1.4.1.: Peasants express satisfaction with the aforementioned agrarian reform proposals and the following adjudication of claims and technical decisions.

Inferential strength is **medium***:* Certainty is low as resistance is about actions, not intensions. Uniqueness is high; on the one hand, peasants could have personal and political reasons to express satisfaction officially in order to avoid repercussions, such as royal or landlord punishment or exclusion from peasant society, while de facto resisting reform. On the other hand,

expressions of reform satisfaction directly tied to impartiality, which people, and in particular the typically less educated peasants, do not typically connect with civil servant behavior, are generally quite unlikely and thus approaching a 'smoking gun.'

Evidence:

Denmark:

- Minutes of numerous court cases and the questionnaire of 1768 on improvements to rural conditions show tenant farmers expressing their gratitude to the king for being able to voice concerns (Bjørn 1981, 111-112).

Norway:

- The increased opposition to Danish rule such as over the *odelsretten* reform from the 1770s pertained to narrow elites of state officials and burghers rather than peasants (Dørum 2021, 317).
- Even the Lofthus movement's supplications sent to Copenhagen showed expressions of gratitude to the king for being able to voice concerns (see Sandvik 2018, 175-176).

Sweden:

- Peasants in the *Riksdag* expressed satisfaction with reforms because proposals, disputes, and protests were channeled through local participation organs and county governors (Bäck 1984, 280).
- Parish meeting minutes indicate expressions of patriotism and respect for the state following a more active role of peasant organs from around the 1760s (Viitaniemi 2021; see also Linde 2000, 26-30; Maarbjerg 2004, 412-413; Österberg 2008, 74).

Confidence is **weak to medium**: Empirical support is strong for Sweden but the expressed satisfaction concerned opportunities for voicing concerns more generally and not specifically related to agrarian reforms. Even in Norway and Denmark, there are indications of empirical

support as well. Nevertheless, the evidence here is mainly based on expressions of royal gratitude for being able to voice concerns, which does not necessarily show satisfaction with administration of reforms but may rather reflect strategic communication.

Observable implication 1.4.2.: Peasants encourage support or build alliances with other peasants and/or landlords for continuing the agrarian reform process.

Inferential strength is **medium-low**: Same as 1.3.2.

Evidence:

Denmark:

- No evidence found.

Norway:

- No evidence found.

Sweden:

- Parish meeting minutes show how peasants built alliances and forged compromises in local organs (Viitaniemi 2021; see also Linde 2000, 26-30; Maarbjerg 2004, 412-413; Österberg 2008, 74).

Confidence is **weak**: Empirical support is weak for all three countries. The evidence for Sweden does not specifically concern agrarian reforms.

Observable implication 1.4.3.: Peasants abstain from counteracting the agrarian reform process despite obvious losses in terms of land or rights.

Inferential strength is **medium**: Same as 1.3.3.

Evidence:

Denmark:

- There were, generally, very few violent protests and confrontations (only 10 between 1700 and 1830, Mikkelsen 2018).
- Before the 1760s, there were only sporadic violent conflicts between lords and peasants (Kjærgaard 1994, 217-223). From the 1760s, the number of peasant strikes and protests increased. However, physical encounters very rarely occurred (Bjørn 1981, 93-96). The revolt of Skipper Clement in 1534 was the last major peasant rebellion (Mikkelsen 2018).
- Numerous court cases and the questionnaire of 1768 on improvements to rural conditions show that peasants almost always expressed their dissatisfaction with agrarian conditions and reforms peacefully as they expected some payoff and often got it (Bregnsbo 1997; Bjørn 1981, 111-112; Løgstrup 2011, 293-294; Løgstrup 2015, 506-514).
- Tensions were highest in the early 1790s, when dissatisfaction over labor services mounted among peasants in Jutland. Tellingly, however, peasant dissatisfaction waned and never became systemically violent (Jørgensen 2019, 416-417).
- The quick investigation by a royal commission and subsequent delivery of corn to angry peasants stopped their hunger riot in 1790 (Mikkelsen 2018, 17-18).

Norway:

- There were very few violent conflicts. Tax riots were frequent from 1756 to 1763, but only grew violent on one occasion, when 2,000 peasants gathered in Bergen to confront allegedly corrupt distributions of trading rights (Sandvik 2018, 172).
- Another protest in 1786, the Lofthus movement, comprised peasants but generally remained non-violent (Gustafsson 1994, 140-148; Sandvik 2018, 175). Its main strategy was to send supplications to Copenhagen, and the movement faltered shortly after the

government had appointed a commission to investigate complaints, which led to the dismissal of two judges (see Sandvik 2018, 175-176).

Sweden:

- Apart from a small and failed rebellion in 1766 and the gathering of 1,500 rebel peasants in Klågerup in 1811, large-scale violence was uncommon (Aronsson 1992, 43; Linde 2000, 20-21; Gadd 2000, 213; Österberg 2008, 73; Berglund 2018, 284-289). Most notably, none of the three major enclosure reforms led to significant protests (e.g. Bäck 1984, 280).
- As is generally agreed, the *Storskifte* and subsequent reforms proceeded peacefully, not because of policy agreement between peasants and lords, but because proposals, disputes, and protests were channeled through local participation organs and county governors (Bäck 1984, 280).
- The peasants of the Dalecarlian Rebellion in 1743 at first negotiated peacefully with the government and probably only grew violent after mistaken firings of cannonballs (Berglund 2018, 289).
- The political unrest and royal assassination in 1792 did not lead to violent revolution because of the concessions granted to peasants in 1789 (see Oakley 1990, 373).
- Popular riots in 1789, 1793, and 1799, inspired by events in France, only consisted of townspeople and were quickly resolved through negotiation with police authorities (Berglund 2018, 290-293).

Confidence is **strong**: Empirical support is strong for all three countries. Although a few pieces of dis-confirmatory evidence of peasant violence are present, peasant violence was common in contemporary Europe but exceptionally infrequent in Scandinavia. By contrast, much evidence shows the appeasing role of impartial administration.

Mechanism 2: Lack of meritocracy and lack of state control produce violent revolution

Link 2.1.: Lack of meritocracy limits agrarian reform proposals

Observable implication 2.1.1.: Civil servants, who were recruited on the basis of personal, political, or socioeconomic connections, express concern for their own or their patron's interests over those parties benefitting from agrarian reform.

Inferential strength is **medium-low**: Certainty is low as impartial administration is about actions and not intentions and so is the opposite of corruption or biased considerations. Uniqueness is medium; on the one hand, in many administrative systems of early-modern Europe, including those that de facto functioned according to a patrimonial logic, there were punishments for corruption and officials norms of impartiality. On the other, given that patrimonialism and corruption was the normal situation in early-modern Europe, observing such expressions could reflect a standard reaction, although observing the explicit connection with agrarian reform improves the uniqueness.

Evidence:

- Based on biographies and socioeconomic information on education and income of civil servants, Behrens (1985, 48-51) hold that the typical state official was of noble decent and held no bourgeois (i.e. Enlightenment) values. Rather, the primary motivation of civil servants was to move upwards socially, and they had no sense of public service.
- Generally, governments under Louis XV and Louis XVI do not seem to have been influenced by Enlightenment ideas (Scott 1990, 32).

Confidence is **weak**: There is little empirical support, and the limited evidence is either not specific to agrarian reform proposals or an example of backward deduction from a lack of reform proposals to a lack of reform motivation ('Enlightenment ideas').

Observable implication 2.1.2.: Civil servants, who were recruited on the basis of personal, political, or socioeconomic connections, abstain from proposing agrarian reform despite obvious arguments in favor of reform.

Inferential strength is **medium-high to high***:* Certainty is high because we need to see that civil servants actually abstain from proposing agrarian reform. Uniqueness is medium-high because abstaining from proposing reform when there is a clear socioeconomic need for it is highly unlikely; yet, there could be other reasons than patrimonialism. For instance, other political concerns, such as for national security or certain rights, could simply trump the socioeconomic need for reform.

Evidence:

- Agricultural malaise continued over the 18th century due to vested interests inside the state that made it extremely difficult to innovate and create economic surplus (Parker 1997, Ch. 7). This is generally agreed in French historiography (Giesey 1983, 195).
- The intendants, in particular, could not fulfill their job of proposing reforms. The widespread unreliability, dishonesty and unproductive rivalry of the officeholders explain this as they created an enormous array of responsibilities bestowed on the intendants (Parker 1997, 176).
- Physiocrats, Ministers, and many civil servants saw immense agricultural problems and thus attempted to promote agrarian reform. However, all attempts failed due to vested interests among other civil servants in preserving the existing social system (Behrens 1985, 133-138; Andress 2004, 79-80).
- The *subdélegués* (venal officeholders subordinate to the intendants, who received salary from particular services) often obstructed the building of alliances with regional parliaments (Behrens 1985, 138).

- The chief agrarian reform promoter, Finance Minister Necker (1777-1781), failed in building a coalition among civil servants and intendants (Skocpol 1979, 118).

Confidence is **strong**: Empirical support is strong, including specific examples regarding agrarian reform and general assessments of reform incapability as a function of patrimonialism.

Link 2.2.: Lack of state control obstructs agrarian reform negotiations

Observable implication 2.2.1.: Landlords with local administrative privileges express opposition to ideas of agrarian reform.

Inferential strength is **medium-low**: Certainty is low as the effect of lack of state control is about being able to mobilize administrative resources to obstruct policy negotiations initiated at the central administrative level; what matters for central-level administrators is not expressed opposition of local stakeholders but whether they actually come to the table to negotiate. Uniqueness is medium. Expressing opposition is likely costly politically, administratively, or socioeconomically for landlord administrative elites and thus gives reliable indication that they will later sabotage negotiations. However, expressed opposition can also be used to mark positions and raise concessions in later negotiations.

Evidence:

- Generally, the landlords or seigneurs of the regional parliaments cared little for the administration of villages and common affairs. They saw such tasks as unworthy of their concern (Tocqueville 2011, 53).
- Generally, in the eyes of the seigneur, the intendants were upstarts who commanded no respect (Tocqueville 2011, 42), indicating opposition to ideas of reform, which occasionally came from intendants.

- Seigneurs of the regional parliaments tended to see their own privileges as inviolable and natural rights, as part of a social hierarchy that should be preserved (Mousnier 1971, 3-4).

Confidence is **medium to strong**: Empirical support is strong although it relies on general assessments of all seigneurial privileges and not specific examples of expressed opposition to agrarian reform.

Observable implication 2.2.2.: Landlords use their local administrative privileges to obstruct reform ideas of civil servants.

Inferential strength is **high***:* Certainty is high because we need to see that civil servants actually obstruct reform ideas and not just express opposition. Uniqueness is high because observing landlord use of their administrative privileges for obstruction would constitute a clear connection between a certain actor's instruments of influence and the intended outcome.

Evidence:

- Based on a study of regional parliaments of Provence, Bohanan (2001, 2) finds that the seigneurs hindered a functional or occupational division of labor between them and the royal administration, which instead caused factionalism and patronage-driven politics that sometimes obstructed royal policies.
- There are many examples of successful seigneurial resistance to tax reforms in 15th to 17th century Provence that would have benefitted the rural population at large (Bohanan 2001, 3-6).
- In the 18th century, local judges often mishandled cases and successfully resisted royal punishment when corruption was revealed. Other times, the *subdélegués* contributed to this by colluding with the families of the regional parliaments who could protect the judges (Behrens 1985, 92; Breen 2011, 353, 370).

- Resistance to agrarian reform in parliaments was not unanimous but very substantial and typical. The parliaments often fought to preserve old institutions by exploiting ill-defined competences of intendants and the instability of government where ministers came and went with royal whims and had no provincial officials at their command (Behrens 1985, 138-139). This was, for instance, the fate of ministerial reformers Choiseul and Turgot (Scott 1990, 32-33).
- The chief agrarian reform promoter, Finance Minister Necker (1777-1781), failed in building a coalition among regional parliaments (Skocpol 1979, 118).

Confidence is **strong**: Empirical support is strong and unanimous, relying on general assessments and concrete examples.

Link 2.3.: Limited agrarian reform proposals increase peasant violence

Observable implication 2.3.1.: Peasants express dissatisfaction with the lack of agrarian reform proposals or existing injustices regarding land or rights distribution.

Inferential strength is **medium to medium-high***:* Certainty is medium. On the one hand, given the high level of illiteracy among peasants at the time, it is relatively unlikely that they would express dissatisfaction in words. On the other, petitions (often mediated by the priest) were part of the standard repertoire of voicing concerns for peasants, and it is a requirement to observe dissatisfaction among peasants. Uniqueness is medium-high. The costs of expressing dissatisfaction were likely quite high for peasants, who were often dependent on the goodwill of landlords or authorities in general, and dissatisfaction was thus likely to be genuine and, in addition, likely to be followed by more physical forms of protest. However, violent protest was very costly given that it would likely lead to severe government repression and plausibly death, which in turn makes expressed dissatisfaction an insufficient observation.

Evidence:

- The 'books of grievances' (*cahiers*) of 1789 also included peasants. 70.5 % of all grievances concerned the seigneurial system while 45.4 % of these grievances demanded a complete abolition of the seigneurial system (taxes and political-administrative privileges) as the solution (Shapiro 1998, 257).
- The books of grievances show that peasant grievances were genuine and widespread (Jones 1988, 59).
- The books of grievances weakened the legitimacy and authority of the king among the rural and urban populations at large in 1789 as it made clear to peasants the injustices of the seigneurial tax system (Andress 2004, 101; Hazan 2014, 19).
- Peasants rioting in 1789 did not share a common revolutionary ideology, but were motivated by the abolition of aristocratic villainy, a perceivably unjust tax system, and vague aspirations of justice and liberty (Andress 2004, 103).

Confidence is **strong**: Empirical support is strong, although some analyses of the books of grievances disagree on the amount of peasant grievances expressed.

Observable implication 2.3.2.: Peasants constitute significant parts of violent riots or demonstrations initiated in response to the lack of agrarian reform proposals or existing injustices regarding land or rights distribution.

Inferential strength is **medium-high to high***:* Certainty is high as peasant participation in violence in response to lack of agrarian reform must be observed. Uniqueness is medium-high as agrarian reform was a pressing concern in most European countries of the 18th century and thus likely a highly salient issue. Yet, other kinds of injustices could also have motivated peasants for violent uprisings, such as food shortages or higher taxes to pay for war.

Evidence:

- There were thousands of rebellions among the peasants over seigneurial privileges, jurisdictional malpractices, and food crises throughout the 18th century. The number of these events increased significantly in the last 30 years of the *Ancien Regime* (Behrens 1985, 94; Jones 1988, 45; Tackett 2015, 24).
- The famine of 1788 was the immediate cause of peasant rebellion but it only brought to the surface the underlying revolutionary potential of a deeply dissatisfied peasantry (Moore 1966, 75; Skocpol 1979, 118).
- The dismissal of reformist Necker partly triggered the Storm of the Bastille (Lefebvre 2015, 121).
- Peasant uprisings increased sharply from December 1788 and accelerated after the books of grievances were published in the spring of 1789. Peasants eventually took decisive part in the attack on the Bastille in July (Skocpol 1979, 125; Jones 1988, 67-68). Thus, peasants were first-movers, leading the 'Great Fear,' i.e. the initiation of mass-based political violence, rather than being victims of it (Jones 1988, 71).

Confidence is **strong**: Empirical support is strong and unanimous, relying on general assessments and concrete examples intensifying over the 18th century and culminating in the revolution of 1789.

Mechanism 3: Meritocracy and lack of state control produce stalled agrarian reform

Link 3.1.: Meritocracy raises impartial policy-making of agrarian reform

Observable implication 3.1.1.: Same as 1.1.1.

Inferential strength: Same as 1.1.1.

Evidence:

- In an ordinance of 1808, reformers accused nobles of being greedy and selfish and made clear that "the state has the duty to care for all its citizens" (Eddie 2013, Ch. 7).

In negotiating the amendments of 1811, the reformers stated that the state's most important goal was the fostering of "a powerful, wealthy and satisfied peasantry" (Eddie 2013, Ch. 8).

Confidence is **weak**: There is a clear expression of concern for the well-being of the citizenry around the early 19th century reforms. However, this is the only piece of evidence and it clearly favors peasants at the expense of landlords, which does not qualify as inclusion of diverse interests.

Observable implication 3.1.2.: Same as 1.1.2.

Inferential strength: Same as 1.1.2.

Evidence:

- Time and again, exemplified by the Millers Arnold case (1770-1779), peasant petitions were sent to the royal bureaucracy and, after several attempts, could lead to administrative or higher court decisions favoring peasant causes (Luebke 1999, 381-382).
- The State Minister passed on local messages of peasants' pressured situation in the 1790s. This gave way to reforms on royal domains in 1799 (Clark 2006, 313) and became part of Stein's master plan for the 1807 reform (Eddie 2013, Ch. 7).
- Stein and Hardenberg took inputs from some nobles for the 1807 edict, but there was no systematic inclusion (Eddie 2013, Ch. 7).
- For the 1811 and 1816 amendment processes, noble landlords were integrated systematically based on petitions by landlords such as Count Schlieben filed to Hardenberg (Eddie 2013, Ch. 7).
- Peasant communities made petitions to the reform commission in the process leading up to the 1811 amendment (Eddie 2013, Ch. 8).

- Despite the strong resistance and position of landlord nobles, the 1811 amendment still promised a substantial break with medieval institutions of serfdom and the introduction of commercialized agriculture while keeping most aspects of servitude substantially unchanged (Clark 2006, 330). Based on even more concerted resistance of landlord nobles, the amendment in 1816 replaced the principle of compulsion with a voluntaristic approach to the capitalization of farms, preserved some rights of labor regulation, and distinguished between hereditary and non-hereditary peasants, excluding the latter from the reforms (Berdahl 1988, 56-58, 201, 212; Eddie 2013, Ch. 9).

Confidence is **strong**: Although the inclusion of peasant and landlord interests were not systematic before 1807, bureaucracy showed willingness to seriously consider complaints, and after 1807, there was systematic inclusion of peasant and landlord petitions, which proportionally affected the 1811 and 1816 amendments.

Observable implication 3.1.3.: Same as 1.1.3.

Inferential strength: Same as 1.1.3.

Evidence:

- Numerous accounts of how, in general, the Prussian central-level bureaucracy (the General Directory in particular) from the Great Elector and Frederick the Great in the 1740s, was highly obedient and competent, with civil servants recruited on their expertise in law and state affairs. The king further recruited and built his civil service based on a Calvinist spirit in which discipline and impersonal service to the state were key principles (Fischer and Lundgreen 1975, 510-517; Behrens 1985, 57; Clark 2006, 88-89).

- Stein, one of the key reformers, was educated in jurisprudence and English history and politics from the university. In 1807, he had a long career in the civil service behind him. Hardenberg, the other key reformer, had a similar history in the education and civil service systems (Eddie 2013, Ch. 7). Both facts suggest that they would value expertise.
- Stein and Hardenberg were formed by 'progressive' traditions (Clark 2006, 320).

Confidence is **medium to strong**: Empirical support is fairly strong. Yet, it relies on biographical facts rather than expressions and focus on Stein and Hardenberg as the key reformers whereas the literature also stresses that only parts of the bureaucracy fully appreciated agrarian reform ideas. On the other hand, the way civil servants were recruited and the education they received while in service clearly suggest expertise as imperative.

Observable implication 3.1.4.: Same as 1.1.4.

Inferential strength: Same as 1.1.4.

Evidence:

- Stein, Hardenberg, and other reformers in the bureaucracy forwarded ideas for agrarian reforms in royal domains in the 1790s, e.g. the 1794 *Allgemeine Recht* (Clark 2006, 320). However, it was only after the accession of reformist king Frederick William III in 1797 that the bureaucracy genuinely took up the idea of agrarian reform (Harnisch 1986, 62).
- Through the 18th century, the bureaucracy never neglected agrarian affairs. However, it took the defeat in the battle of Jena in 1806 to make the bureaucracy make drastic proposals (Harnisch 1986, 66).

- The agrarian reforms were motivated by immediate financial needs but also underlying agrarian productivity problems that had worried the bureaucracy for decades (Behrens 1985, 145-146).
- Noble civil servants Stein and Hardenberg initiated the idea for 1807 October Edict and, alongside state councilors and professors, debated and promoted the 1807 edict and the 1811 and 1816 amendments, which were all significant agrarian reform proposals (Clark 2006, 320).
- Professor Kraus played a prominent role in formulating the 1807 October Edict. Later reform proposals by Professor Weber laid the ground for the distinction between hereditary and non-hereditary peasants in the 1811 amendment reform (Eddie 2013, Ch. 7).

Confidence is **medium to strong**: Empirical support is quite strong as professors clearly played important roles in formulating the 1807 and 1811 reforms. The timing of the reforms and earlier abstentions from proposing reforms despite socioeconomic needs speak against bureaucracy's unanimous reliance on expertise, but the role of expertise in the early 19th century reforms is beyond doubt.

Link 3.2.: Lack of state control obstructs agrarian reform negotiations

Observable implication 3.2.1.: Same as 2.2.1.

Inferential strength: Same as 2.2.1.

Evidence:

- Based on biographies, most landlords in the 18th and 19th centuries saw justice as part of their private property, an ancient noble privilege (Wienfort 2016, 208).
- Junker landlords led an aggressive campaign against the agrarian reform proposals of 1807 and 1811 (Hagen 2002, 595). They expressed clear disagreement before 1807

and after in petitions, stating that they disliked the loss of control of non-hereditary and hereditary lands and at least had to be compensated (Eddie 2013, Ch. 8).

- In their argumentation, landlords used provincial law and the preservation of paternalistic traditions to make the 1811 and 1816 amendments (Eddie 2013, Ch. 8). This was also the style of argumentation in their opposition to attempted reforms in 1739, 1748-1749, and 1799 (Berdahl 1988, 56).

Confidence is **strong**: Empirical support is strong and unanimous.

Observable implication 3.2.2.: Same as 2.2.2.

Inferential strength: Same as 2.2.2.

Evidence:

- The process of reform set forth from 1799 quickly showed the limited powers of the central government. They could only regulate matters of the royal estate. Efforts to convince noble estate that feudal dues and serfdom should be abolished in return for monetary payments got stuck already in preliminary negotiations (Harnisch 1986, 64).
- The 1811 and 1816 amendments were based on landlord petitions and complaints (Berdahl 1988, 56-58, 201, 212; Clark 2006, 330; Eddie 2013, Ch. 9).
- In their argumentation, landlords used provincial law and the preservation of paternalistic traditions to make the 1811 and 1816 amendments (Eddie 2013, Ch. 8). This was also the style of argumentation in their opposition to attempted reforms in 1739, 1748-1749, and 1799 (Berdahl 1988, 56).
- The partial retractions in 1811 and 1816 were necessary to appease noble powers in the national assembly and provinces (Berdahl 1988, 144-146; Eddie 2013, Chs. 8-9).

- Essential link between landowning elite and conservative elements of government, including king, was preserved in 1815-1822 constitutional struggle. Yet provincial diets were created (Berdahl 1988, 198).
- Many landlords welcomed the agrarian reform proposals (Clark 2006, 330).

Confidence is **strong**: Although some landlords favored the reform proposals, there is clear evidence that landlords used their political-administrative powers to force through the 1811 and 1816 amendments.

Link 3.3.: Lack of state control obstructs agrarian reform implementation

Observable implication 3.3.1.: Landlords with local administrative privileges express dissatisfaction with agrarian reform decided by central-level civil servants.

Inferential strength is **medium-low***:* Certainty is low as resistance and non-impartial administrative behavior is about actions, not intensions. Uniqueness is medium; on the one hand, landlords likely face some repercussions, such as royal punishment or exclusion from landlord society, if expressing dissatisfaction with reform, indicating that expressed dissatisfaction is likely genuine and would lead to actual sabotage. However, actual sabotage comes with its own costs; thus, expressed dissatisfaction far from guarantees later sabotage.

Evidence:

- See evidence for observable implication 3.2.1.
- In 1822, a large group of financially broken landlords in East Elbia formally asked the Ministry of Internal Affairs for a delay of the 1816 reform and thus for abstaining from contractual payments to their tenants (Berdahl 1988, 269).

Confidence is **strong**: Empirical support is strong and unanimous concerning the 1807 and 1811 edicts, which were formally agreed and legalized policies set for implementation. There

are fewer observed expressions of dissatisfaction with the 1816 reform, but this is only logical given that it reflected most of the demands of the landlords.

Observable implication 3.3.2.: Landlords use their local administrative privileges to manipulate judges and technical staff or divert the impact of their reform implementation regarding distribution of land or rights.

Inferential strength is **high***:* Certainty is high since the use of administrative privileges to sabotage reform is the hallmark of a non-impartial administration, in this case a local administration working relatively autonomously of the central-level administration and controlled by landlords who most likely oppose reform. Uniqueness is high because manipulating judges and technical staff are very accurate observations of biased implementation of agrarian reforms specifically.

Evidence:

- See evidence for observable implication 3.2.2.
- Over several decades, the Millers Arnold, who complained over rural labor duties, were ruled down in local, patrimonial courts. The case was only concluded with the king's and royal bureaucracy's intervention to secure individual rights, which were eventually set down in the *Allgemeine Recht* (1794) (Luebke 1999; Hagen 2002, 525).
- Pressure from landlords on central-level bureaucrats made sure that they preserved the majority in the new provincial diets of 1823, which administered local public goods like roads, thus ensuring the predominance of the manorial rights system (Berdahl 1988, 215).

- The proposal to the Ministry of Internal Affairs for delaying payment dues and other consequences of the 1816 reform was accepted. In turn, the General Commission was ordered to release staff and slow down work (Berdahl 1988, 269).
- From the 1820s to 1840s, by far the most noble landlords actively worked to delay peasant emancipation for various reasons, most notably fear of losing their labor and losing traditional rights (Berdahl 1988, 286-287).
- The commissioners of the General Commission, set to intervene and settle disputes between lords and peasants, often ruled in favor of the lords. Commissioners were often lords themselves, and while conducting investigations, they had to take leave in the manor house, living off the lord's food and drinks and general accommodation (Berdahl 1988, 288).
- In 1830s and 1840s, landlords used their control of manorial courts controlling 62 % of the Silesian rural population, 40 % of Pomeranians, and 31 % in the province of Brandenburg on, altogether, more than 6000 estates (estimates of 1845) to bias rulings on lord-peasant disputes over taxes, dues, and manorial services in favor of the lord (Wienfort 2016, 209, 215).
- Generally, despite complaints by the Ministry of Justice, manorial courts neglected law enforcement regarding timber theft and steeling of grass and moss, which hit peasants hard (Wienfort 2016, 213-214).

Confidence is **strong**: Empirical support is strong and unanimous.

Varieties of the Scandinavian path

This section explicates the main varieties of the Scandinavian path as summarized in the main paper and elaborates some of the related discussions. This includes how, across Scandinavia, the different regimes and sociopolitical settings created different political dynamics around state-building and agrarian reform; how policy-making and implementation differed; how agrarian reforms differed in type and extent; and how, in turn, peasants played different roles in democratization. The point is that these differences only accentuate the importance of state control, meritocracy, and impartial administration as the common factors explaining the similarly peaceful agrarian reforms, and the subsequent auspicious state-society relations as the common factor explaining stable democratization. Table B2 below summarizes these points.

State-building experience

The paths to modern states were different and relied on different social groups across Scandinavia, yet they were all triggered and fundamentally shaped by contingencies related to war. In Sweden, the process of building a bureaucratic state administration based on meritocratic principles of recruitment throughout the territory was a prolonged period from around the breakup of the Kalmar Union in the 1520s to the 1680s and the consolidating reforms of King Charles XI. The equivalent processes in Denmark and Norway started later and were much more abrupt. In Denmark, the most important first reforms took place within a couple of decades from the 1660s to the 1680s. As a result of Denmark's supremacy in the union, these reforms immediately changed governance structures in Norway as well. Some local administrative institutions were kept in place in Norway but only as far as they worked within the Danish state-building framework.

The periods of state-building can be fruitfully analyzed as critical junctures across Scandinavia. Few would have predicted that some of Europe's most penetrative bureaucratic state

apparatuses developed in Scandinavia. The rivalry between Sweden and Denmark is key to understand how this could happen. The ambition of enabling Sweden to balance the power of Denmark and bolster its claim to independence was a major motivation behind Gustav Vasa's first attempts at state-building (Hallenberg, Holm, and Johansson 2008, 251). Likewise, successive wars with Sweden and the final catastrophic losses codified in the Treaty of Roskilde in 1658 pushed King Frederick III of Denmark to reorganize the state administration and military organization in order to secure against future annihilation. Norway was not as directly involved in these wars, but the mechanisms of war worked indirectly in Norway through the reforms initiated from Denmark.

The king was not a clear winner emerging from the breakup of the Kalmar Union in Sweden. Therefore, Gustav Vasa constantly had to negotiate with the existing estates. Because of the lack of a feudal system, the king could negotiate directly with peasants in order to mobilize an army and raise taxes; following financial crises at the end of the 16th century, merchants in the cities also had to be satisfied to raise taxes (Hallenberg, Holm, and Johansson 2008, 251); and the church gained final jurisdiction for minor offenses (Liliequist and Almbjär 2012, 12). In turn, peasants, nobles, and priests preserved some of their offices, albeit under the principle of merit competition. In Denmark, the break with the past was more complete as the delegitimized nobility enabled the king to almost completely overhaul the existing institutions of the royal-noble regime (*dyarki*), except the nobility's manorial possessions and courts (*birkeretter*). In Norway, where there was only a small and insignificant landed elite and a more autonomous peasantry, the Danish state-building reforms came to partly rely on existing peasant institutions for local administration.

As different social groups shaped state-building across Scandinavia, we should treat the sociopolitical setting as 'Descriptive Context' rather than 'Critical Antecedents' (see Slater and Simmons 2010, 890). Instead, responses and outcomes of war better explain the remarkable

similarities in the installation of central-level meritocracy and state control over local administration. Across Scandinavia, the initial elites – be they nobles, clergy, or peasants – lost vital powers of administration to the state, which became an impersonal structure setting the stage for how to administer the entire territory.

Conditions for peaceful agrarian reform

While Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were all backward agrarian economies characterized by relatively low levels of agrarian productivity, lord-peasant relations in Sweden and Norway were relatively more equal than in Denmark, and absolutism was relatively stronger in Denmark and Norway than in Sweden. In turn, from a purely economic point of view, there was an equally strong need for reforming the agrarian sectors across Scandinavia. However, the peasant grievances and conflict around reform were potentially larger in Denmark than in Norway and Sweden, whereas peasants were better positioned to improve their socioeconomic position in Sweden than in Denmark and Norway.

Thus, the difficulty of imposing reforms obviously differed across Scandinavia, especially between Denmark and Sweden. Nevertheless, the particular details of the two countries yield no clear expectations. On the one hand, Danish peasants had stronger incentives to push for socioeconomic improvements, and the king had better opportunities to push through with Enlightenment ideas without a (violent) landlord intervention. On the other hand, landlord incentives to maintain status quo were stronger in Denmark, while the Swedish peasants were arguably better positioned to push through reforms simply because less improvement was needed for them to reach an acceptable amount of rights and wealth. Moreover, while there was obviously room for improvement for both Danish and Swedish peasants, different sources of conservatism also dampened their demands: Danish peasants, as typical of those living in semi-feudal settings, found a comfort and social security in existing village life under the protection

of the manor; the same can be said for the Swedish tenant farmers, while the Swedish peasantry was already represented through the diet estate.

Agrarian reform experience

The policies implemented in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden can be characterized as agrarian reforms by the definition spelled out on p. 7 in the main paper. Of the three dimensions – liberalization of property transactions, forced redistributions, and peasant emancipation – the reforms in Sweden and Norway mostly adhered to the first. Given the semi-dependent status of Norway, the Sweden-Denmark contrast is particularly pronounced: While reforms relied heavily on forced redistributions and peasant emancipation in Denmark, the Swedish nobility was left untouched by many of the reforms and never really challenged noble powers (Gary and Olsson 2017, 166-167). Furthermore, the reforms of 1789 (and 1809), while taking away noble monopoly on tax exempted lands, de facto ended up increasing the value of noble lands such as by selling to commoners through the 19th century (Winberg 1985, 199-201; Norrby 2005; Bengtsson et al. 2019, 30), and strict vagrancy laws ensuring compulsory labor service remained in place at least until the late 19th century (Johnsson 2016, 14). Agrarian reforms in this way split the peasantry in those wealthy freeholders, who benefitted from reforms by acquiring lands through the enclosures and liberalization of property rights, on the one side and smallholders, tenants, and those with medium-sized farms and insufficient capital to buy lands on the other (Bengtsson and Olsson 2020, 575). Thus, reforms were certainly more far-reaching in Denmark and different in nature from those in Sweden and Norway. This supports that the initially lower rural inequality in Sweden and Norway played a part by decreasing demands for reform. Nevertheless, reforms were all far-reaching and clearly contrast the lack of reform in Prussia and France.

Policy-making and implementation of agrarian reform

Different initial conditions affected the type and extent of reform in Scandinavia but also the way they were agreed and implemented. National-level parliamentary deliberation played a larger role in Sweden simply because there was no diet in Denmark-Norway, and because there was a peasant estate in Sweden, which occasionally had substantial influence on policy-making. Thus, the Swedish path is characterized by a mix of peasant influence in local and national-level administrations and political organs whereas the Danish and Norwegian paths are relatively more dominated by local channels of influence and petitions and relatively more restricted to administrative influence.

However, even in Sweden, as in Denmark and Norway, meritocratically recruited bureaucrats led the processes of formulating and implementing agrarian reforms, demonstrating the dominance of impartial administration across Scandinavia. Despite different degrees of peasant influence in politics and administration, impartial administration fundamentally played the same positive role for peaceful agrarian reform.

Democratization experience

The less extensive agrarian reforms with less redistribution from lords to peasants in Sweden also meant that estate society could continue many more years than in Denmark and Norway because the noble and peasant estates became more protective of the existing political order (Bengtsson 2019a; Christensen 2006): The estates-based assembly remained in place in Sweden until 1866 (Denmark and Norway went from absolute monarchy to democratic constitutionalism in 1849 and 1814, respectively), and parliamentarism was only installed in 1917 in Sweden (Denmark in 1901 and Norway in 1884) (see Skaaning 2021). Likewise, although the agrarian reforms helped build more economically autonomous and politically conscious

groups of peasants across Scandinavia (Nielsen 2009, 18, 61-79, 222) compared to, for instance, Prussia (Sheehan 1989, 426, 475-476), peasant civil society generally developed later in Sweden than in Denmark and Norway. In Denmark and Norway, peasants were the primary social group driving democratization whereas this role was mainly played by industrial workers in Sweden (Rothstein and Trägårdh 2007).

Despite the different roles played by social groups and the different rates of democratization across Scandinavia, generations of researchers on Nordic associationalism and political development over the long 19th century unanimously point to the importance of auspicious state-society relations as a common factor explaining Scandinavia's stable democratization (e.g. Nielsen 2009; Alapuro 2010; Stenius 2010; Stråth 2018). As suggested, state support characterized the way both peasants' and workers' civic associations and parties were treated, which meant that they were more inclined to seek influence within the existing political institutional framework and abstain from violent rebellion. In turn, in what became a virtuous cycle, state authorities (and conservative political elites) were less inclined to repress associations and parties violently.[1] Thus, the point is that political openings towards democracy, whenever circumstances allowed them to occur, tended to be less violent and negotiated with the existing elite, which made democracy more sustainable.

[1] On workers in Denmark, see e.g. Bryld (1992, 447-450); on peasants, see e.g. Gundelach (1988, 74). On workers in Norway, see e.g. Kuhnle and Selle (1992); on peasants, see e.g. Kuhnle and Selle (1992) and Dyrvik and Feldbæk (1996, 131-133). On workers in Sweden, see e.g. Micheletti (1995, 32-33, 38) and Rothstein and Trägårdh (2007, 231-235); on peasants, see e.g. Johansson (1985, 86), Micheletti (1995, 32-33, 38), and Rothstein and Trägårdh (2007, 231-235).

Table B2: Varieties and commonalities of the Scandinavian path

	Denmark	*Norway*	*Sweden*
State-building experience	Weak estate influence **War as trigger** Abrupt initiation, short process **State control and meritocracy**	Weak noble influence **War as trigger** Abrupt initiation, short process **State control and Meritocracy**	Strong estate influence **War as trigger** Prolonged process **State control and meritocracy**
Conditions for peaceful agrarian reform	**Backward agrarian economy** High rural inequality Strong absolutism	**Backward agrarian economy** Low rural inequality Strong absolutism	**Backward agrarian economy** Low rural inequality Medium-weak absolutism
Agrarian reform experience	**Transformation of rules for distributing land and rights between peasants and lords** Primarily forced redistribution and emancipation **Relatively peaceful accomplishment**	**Transformation of rules for distributing land and rights between peasants and lords** Primarily liberalization of property transaction **Relatively peaceful accomplishment**	**Transformation of rules for distributing land and rights between peasants and lords** Primarily liberalization of property transaction **Relatively peaceful accomplishment**
Policy-making and implementation of agrarian reform	Limited peasant influence, only through local administration and petitions **Impartial civil servants dominate**	Limited peasant influence, only through local administration and petitions **Impartial civil servants dominate**	Substantive peasant influence, including through diet **Impartial civil servants dominate**
Democratization experience	**Auspicious state-society relations** Peasants as primary pro-democratic actor Early democratization **Stable democratization**	**Auspicious state-society relations** Peasants as primary pro-democratic actor Early democratization **Stable democratization**	**Auspicious state-society relations** Industrial workers as primary pro-democratic actor Late democratization **Stable democratization**

Note: Commonalities marked in bold.

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