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Theoretical and methodological aspects of the identification of agrarian reforms

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► **Abstract.** The relevance of the article lies in the absence of a systematic approach to identifying reforms in terms of their genuineness and success. Accordingly, the objective was to undertake a theoretical examination of the parameters shaping the conceptual framework of reforms and to provide a methodological justification for the indicators and criteria used in their identification. The research employed expert-analytical methods to examine the conceptual landscape of reforms, as well as their essence and content, based on the established indicators and criteria. The principal outcomes of the study include the formulation of parameters for determining the authenticity of reforms – distinguishing them, on the one hand, from revolutions and, on the other, from incremental improvements. As a result, the following indicators for identifying reforms were proposed: receptivity, scale, fundamentality, radicality, complexity, sociality, and effectiveness. The criteria for evaluating these indicators were substantiated using analytical data, comparative assessments across countries, expert evaluations, and factual analysis. The proposed theoretical and methodological framework was tested using case studies of agrarian reform in Ukraine, post-socialist states, post Soviet countries, China, and Japan. The practical significance of identifying reforms is highlighted, particularly in determining and characterising their genuineness and success through international and historical comparisons

► **Keywords:** reform; receptivity; scale; fundamentality; radicality; complexity; sociality; effectiveness

► Introduction

In recent decades, reforms have become a frequent feature of political and social agendas. The issue of reform is widely discussed across all segments of society. Those implementing reforms often overestimate their significance, even when such changes are merely marginal improvements. Consequently, alongside genuine reforms,

experts frequently encounter "quasi-reforms". A similar phenomenon occurs in international comparisons: leaders in certain countries portray their reforms as substantial while undervaluing those undertaken elsewhere. The same applies at the level of companies and corporations, where considerable subjectivity is involved. This situation

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largely stems from the absence of a methodology for objectively assessing the authenticity and effectiveness of reforms – an issue particularly pertinent to the agricultural sector. Therefore, the need to identify reforms based on their authenticity and success is both pressing and timely. This necessitates rigorous theoretical inquiry and the development of suitable methodologies.

The notion of reform has existed since the formation of states, social systems, and human institutions. A major turning point in the history of reform came with the transformational changes of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The experience of these reforms has become the subject of substantial research and academic discussion. V. Zhuk *et al.* (2025) analyse contemporary models of land use and agricultural policy in Ukraine, comparing them with the experiences of other countries. Mechanisms for adapting to reform and opportunities for integrating European approaches are explored. S. Ibatullin *et al.* (2024) conduct an in-depth examination of the functioning of the land market following its liberalisation, including restrictions on ownership of up to 10,000 hectares, price trends, and the risks associated with land concentration. N. Zabolotna & E. Paliy (2024) explore the legal foundations of land reform, addressing legislative developments after market liberalisation and the legal risks that have emerged. B. Wilmsen *et al.* (2024) analyse recent reforms in rural China, particularly land rights reform and its impact on small farms. Their research demonstrates how large countries undertaking agrarian reforms maintain production and land balances. It highlights challenges similar to those faced by reforms in other countries – including deregulation, consolidation, and the preservation of small farms. B. Zia (2025) provides a tool for assessing the effectiveness of agricultural reforms and their resilience to global challenges, and emphasises that reforms concern not only land but also climate risks, international cooperation, and economic sustainability.

S. Demianenko (2024) analyses the initial phase of agrarian reform in Ukraine in the late 20th and early 21st centuries following the country's independence, concluding that agrarian transformations proceeded relatively slowly compared to those in Eastern European countries. One reason for this situation was the low efficiency of the state management of the reform process. In particular, this relates to land reform, which served as a key factor in all agrarian transformations. Only after the widespread implementation of land reform and the restructuring of collective agricultural enterprises in the early 2000s did a rapid increase in both the volume and efficiency of agricultural production begin. The long-standing moratorium on the sale and purchase of agricultural land – lasting over 30 years – was based on political rather than economic considerations.

Meanwhile, Yu. Lupenko (2018) provides a thorough and systematic examination of the evolution of management forms in Ukraine's agricultural sector, highlighting the critical transition from collective to private ownership and its significant impact on production structures and efficiency. The author critically assesses the main challenges facing agrarian reforms, including inadequate institutional support, limited access to financial resources, and persistent legal barriers that hinder the development of small and

medium-sized agricultural enterprises. Adopting a holistic, systemic approach, Yu. Lupenko *et al.* (2022) propose targeted strategies to overcome these challenges, such as legislative modernisation, the promotion of cooperative movements, the strengthening of institutional infrastructure, and the implementation of innovative management practices – all designed to enhance the sector's competitiveness and sustainability amid ongoing market transformations.

However, the vast majority of studies focus on describing the preconditions, organisation, technologies, and outcomes of land and agrarian reforms. At the same time, it has been observed that, as of 2025, the issue of identifying reforms according to specific standards remains inadequately addressed in academic research. As a result, not only politicians and government officials but also scholars often refer to minor improvements as reforms. However, such improvements cannot be equated with fundamental changes such as land privatisation or the replacement of state farms with privately owned enterprises. This underscores the relevance of the theoretical and methodological investigations into the identification of reforms, to which this article is dedicated. Based on an analysis of the conceptual environment surrounding the essence and content of reforms, this article aimed to formulate parameters for assessing the adequacy of interpretations of socio-political and economic changes as reforms and to justify the indicators and criteria for identifying the authenticity and success of reforms, using the agricultural sector as a case study.

► Materials and methods

In the course of the research, general scientific methods – including analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, and analytical grouping – were employed, alongside specific methods such as abstraction, forecasting, and statistical analysis. The empirical basis of the study included the studies of O. Reyent *et al.* (2000) and V. Yurchyshyn (2001). In order to develop a system for identifying reforms in terms of their authenticity and success, it was necessary to determine relevant indicators for evaluating reform processes. Based on reform characteristics, the following indicators were formulated and applied in the research: 1) receptivity; 2) scale; 3) fundamentality; 4) radicality; 5) complexity; 6) sociality; 7) effectiveness. These indicators collectively reflect the key aspects of reform genuineness and success. Using these indicators and the corresponding criteria, a formalised assessment of reform authenticity and success was conducted.

In this context, the following criteria were applied. The first is the maximum statistically possible value for a given country. For instance, in assessing the extent of land privatisation, the total area of a country's land may serve as the benchmark. The second criterion is the highest value among a comparative group of countries. For example, the proportion of farmers involved in land privatisation in the country with the highest participation rate can be used. The third criterion involves expert assessments for indicators that cannot be quantified directly – such as reform complexity, radicality, and comprehensiveness – based on factual analysis.

To enable the identification of reforms and facilitate cross-country comparison, it was necessary to formalise evaluation according to these indicators and criteria.

For this purpose, a five-level scale and five-point rating system were applied: high – 5 points; above average – 4; average – 3; below average – 2; low – 1 point. This approach enables the quantitative calculation of comprehensive assessments of reforms in terms of their authenticity and success. The validity of the reform identification indicators formulated above was demonstrated using the example of agrarian reform in Ukraine. Based on the findings, a matrix of reform assessments was also developed.

► Results and discussion

A key foundation for the theoretical and methodological analysis of reform identification lies in understanding their conceptual environment. Thorough investigation of this environment enables the identification of essential parameters characterising reforms. The main principles are as follows: reforms are not revolutions that destroy not only the fundamental structures of society but also the material, spiritual, and legal values of citizens; rather, they are progressive transformations aimed at advancing civilisational development (Nesenenko, 2021). Reforms are not trivial improvements but fundamental changes that affect the core principles of social relations, are orientated towards social and democratic progress, and do not result in destabilisation, societal degradation, suppression of rights and freedoms, or deterioration of socio-economic conditions and political status (Baltserovych, 2000). Reforms are not inventions or whims of politicians, but rather essential measures designed to protect countries from revolutionary and socio-political upheaval, to enable the progressive transformation of social institutions, and to eliminate, in a timely manner, the obstacles hindering social development (Miklos & Kukhta, 2019; Yakushyk, 2019).

The validity of the reform identification indicators formulated above can be demonstrated using the example of agrarian reform in Ukraine.

1. Acceptability refers to a society's readiness and willingness to implement reform. This indicator reflects the reformability of the national context. On one hand, it denotes the maturity of society for reform; on the other, it reflects the complexity of the reform's implementation. High acceptability implies ease of implementation, whereas low acceptability signals high complexity. Therefore, the complexity indicator serves as an antonym to acceptability. The criterion in this case may be an expert assessment based on factual analysis.

In Ukraine during the 1990s, receptivity to agrarian reform was low, and, as a result, implementation was highly complex. This is evidenced by the failure to enact two parliamentary resolutions (Resolution of the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR No. 10, 1990; Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine No. 25, 1992), despite the fact that neither resolution proposed radical reform measures. Subsequently, the reform process was compelled to proceed in three distinct phases: 1) small-scale privatisation of individual land plots; 2) large-scale privatisation of commercial agricultural lands; 3) comprehensive reorganisation of collective and state farms into private, marketorientated structures. The low level of public acceptance of agrarian reform in Ukraine stemmed primarily from socio-political factors. At the same time, the high complexity of its implementation elevated the importance of other reform indicators.

2. Scale refers to the extent of coverage – both in terms of the objects and subjects affected by the reform. The broader the absolute and relative number of entities impacted (e.g. through privatisation), the more extensive the reform. The criterion for this indicator may include statistical data, particularly the proportion of land and rural population affected by the reform.

In Ukraine, the small-scale privatisation of individual land plots (homesteads, gardens, summer cottages, garages, etc.) encompassed almost 9 million hectares of land and 19 million recipients across all 30,000 cities and villages in the country. The large-scale privatisation process concerned extensive land areas – approximately 28 million hectares – as well as a significant number of rural residents: 6.8 million individuals. It also included all agricultural enterprises, totalling 12,000. In total, the land reform affected around 38 million hectares of agricultural land, or approximately 85% of the national total, and involved 26 million recipients – about half of the adult population and nearly all rural inhabitants (Kyrylenko, 2008; Romanovska, 2017). Therefore, the Ukrainian agrarian reform was, in both absolute and relative terms, one of the most extensive.

3. Fundamentality refers to the depth of change and its impact on the foundational principles of the economy – namely, forms of ownership and the nature of business entities. If reform does not affect these foundations, it cannot be regarded as sufficiently fundamental. The criterion for this indicator may be the extent of agricultural land privatisation and the level of peasant participation in that process.

In Ukraine, land reform was entirely centred on altering the ownership structure: transitioning from state to private ownership. The full-scale privatisation of land was the clearest indicator of the reform's fundamentality. It also manifested in the transformation of management forms. All 12,000 state and collective farms were replaced with private farming structures. In their place emerged approximately 10,000 joint-stock and commercial companies, over 40,000 family farms, and around 5 million individual peasant farms, typically ranging from 0.25 to 2 hectares in size (Yakushyk, 2019).

4. Radicality refers to the determination and efficiency with which changes are implemented. The more swiftly and comprehensively reforms are introduced across time and space, the more radical the reform. The aim of radicality is to avoid procrastination and prevent a decline in reform effectiveness due to delays. The criterion for this indicator may include the reform's duration and the degree to which it is concentrated or extended over time and across regions.

In Ukraine, land reform unfolded in two main phases: the first involved small-scale privatisation; the second, large-scale privatisation. This sequencing was tactically sound, taking into account the acceptability of each phase. Successfully implementing the more socially acceptable small-scale privatisation significantly improved the receptivity to large-scale reform. The former, despite its scope, was executed largely within a three-year period (1992-1994). The latter, although highly politicised and extensive, was implemented over four years (1995-1999). While these timelines may not appear exceptionally short, they represent the best achievable outcomes under the prevailing conditions (Boiko & Teremets, 2013).

The economic reform was also delayed for nearly a decade. It was necessary to pass through an intermediate stage – from collective and state farms to private farms – via collective agricultural enterprises (CAEs). Only after the Decree issued by President L. Kuchma on 3 December 1999, this process was significantly accelerated. By the first half of 2000, the vast majority of collective and state farms had been transformed into private, market-orientated structures. By the end of that year, the reorganisation was virtually complete. This transition occurred without any organisational or economic losses; on the contrary, agricultural production in 2000 increased by 19% compared to 1999 (Boiko & Teremets, 2013).

5. Comprehensiveness refers to the inclusion of a complete and coordinated set of reform measures. Its aim is to ensure the effectiveness of reform by minimising the risk of disruption or failure. The criterion for this indicator may be based on expert assessment supported by factual analysis.

In Ukraine, comprehensiveness was primarily reflected in the integration of land and agrarian reform initiatives. Each reform area involved a distinct series of measures, implemented in a coherent sequence. In particular, the land reform comprised: 1) privatisation of individual land plots; 2) normative monetary valuation of agricultural land; 3) shareholding of commercial agricultural land; 4) privatisation of land shares; 5) introduction of land lease and other rights; 6) consolidation of land shares; 7) establishment of a land share market. These measures were implemented as a coordinated whole, albeit sequentially, and in line with technological and institutional capacities (Boiko & Teremets, 2013).

The agrarian reform included the following key components: 1) reorganisation of state and collective farms into collective agricultural enterprises (CAEs); 2) introduction of shareholding mechanisms for CAE property assets; 3) corporatisation of CAEs into private, market-orientated entities based on lease agreements for land and property shares; 4) development of an agricultural market; 5) cancellation of debts held by restructured farms and their financial rehabilitation; 6) implementation of incentive-based systems for taxation, credit provision, and investment (Sabluk, 2011).

6. Sociality refers to the extent to which reforms are directed towards the interests of rural populations. This criterion is essential for the political acceptability, success, and effectiveness of reforms. It may be assessed through indicators such as the share of rural residents engaged in the reform process, their participation in reform activities, and the outcomes they receive.

In Ukraine, the land and agrarian reform process demonstrated a high level of social orientation. Approximately 26 million individuals became landowners – representing more than half the adult population and nearly all rural residents. Nearly 7 million rural residents received land shares totalling 28 million hectares, with an average plot size of four hectares (Gaidutskyi, 2025). Furthermore, both small-scale and large-scale privatisations were carried out free of charge.

During the reform years, private-market principles were established to guide the social development of rural areas. Approximately 10 million rural residents became

landowners, each receiving plots exceeding one hectare. While the majority became landlords, many also pursued livelihoods as private entrepreneurs or farmers. Over a 15-year period, the total rental income received by land-owning farmers increased by a factor of 100, reaching 11.4 billion UAH. It is worth recalling that, in Europe, it was traditionally believed that a peasant who owned one morg (0.56 ha) of arable land could not be considered poor (Lupenko, 2018).

7. Effectiveness refers to the degree of measurable improvement in socio-economic indicators following reform, both in terms of agricultural sector performance and farmer well-being. The criterion for evaluating effectiveness may be derived from statistical indicators.

In Ukraine, reforms in the agricultural sector led to the cessation of economic decline and marked growth in production. Between 2000 and 2004, the average annual rate of agricultural output reached 6%, while the food industry grew by 16% annually. The proportion of barter transactions in agriculture decreased tenfold, lending expanded tenfold, and investment in fixed capital grew sixfold. In 1999, only 2% of agricultural production costs were covered by loans, whereas by 2004, this figure had risen to 32%. The financial condition of the sector also improved considerably: the transition from operating at a loss to profitability was achieved. The proportion of profitable enterprises increased fivefold, while the volume of taxes paid grew seventeenfold. Furthermore, state budget debt write-offs ceased, and foreign investment inflows into the sector increased (Lupenko, 2018).

Given the statistical evidence, facts, and arguments presented above, the majority of indicators related to Ukraine's agrarian reform merit high evaluation. A somewhat lower score may be assigned to the fundamentality of the reform, as Ukraine was neither able – nor, in practical terms, permitted – to carry out land restitution (i.e. the return of land to its former owners). A similar adjustment may apply to the radicality of the reform, due to its protracted implementation over a decade (1991–2000) and its division into three stages, which resulted from limited public receptivity and the overall complexity of the process.

Based on the methodology formulated and tested through the case of Ukraine's agrarian reform, similar analyses and evaluations should be conducted in other countries where significant reforms were implemented. In the post-socialist nations of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), including the Baltic States, agrarian reforms demonstrated a number of distinct features. In these countries, the level of agricultural sector collectivisation was substantially lower, which led to broader public acceptance and smoother implementation of reforms. The complexity of reform implementation was relatively low, as political and socio-economic receptivity to reform was quite high. In most of these countries, rural residents eagerly anticipated land redistribution and the dissolution of state farms and cooperatives – developments that were generally supported by policymakers (Nesenenko, 2021).

The scale of reform in these countries was also limited, as small-scale private farming had already been relatively widespread prior to the transition from socialism – ranging from 30% in Hungary to 90% in Slovenia. In Poland, for example, under the socialist regime, only 10% of land

held by large landowners (latifundists) was nationalised, while approximately 75% remained under the control of small- and medium-sized farms. Across these countries, 20% to 40% of the land was transferred to rural residents, and several hundred state farms and cooperatives were dismantled. Following the reforms, the average share of privatised agricultural land reached 84%, approximately the same level as in Ukraine (85%) (Kadeniuk, 2018). However, in Ukraine, this figure was achieved entirely as a result of reform, whereas in the aforementioned countries, no more than one-third of the total was attributable to reform processes. Therefore, the fundamentality of reform in these countries may be assessed as below average. That said, given that these countries undertook land restitution (i.e. the return of land to former owners), the rating for fundamentality may reasonably be raised to an average level. Meanwhile, the radicality of the reform – reflected in the determination with which changes were implemented – may be assessed as above average.

At the same time, in these countries, market relations in agriculture, along with small-scale private landownership, were largely established even prior to the reform. This included a degree of economic freedom: the ability of rural residents to manage their property and products, set prices, purchase production inputs, access credit, and more. As such, the complexity of reform implementation was limited, and this indicator may be assessed at an average level. With regard to sociality, these countries already exhibited considerable diversification of land ownership before reform. For instance, 54% of the population were agricultural landowners, a figure comparable to Ukraine's. However, in Ukraine, this indicator was achieved almost entirely due to reform, whereas in these countries, only around a third of the outcome resulted from reform. Therefore, the sociality of reform in these countries may also be rated at an average level. A similar assessment may be applied to effectiveness. Between 2000 and 2004, the average annual growth in agricultural production in these countries was 1.9%, compared to 6% in Ukraine (Demianenko, 2024). Accordingly, the effectiveness of agrarian reform in these countries may also be rated at an average level. In the post-Soviet states – excluding Ukraine and the Baltic countries – agrarian reforms had their own specific features. However, in general, the complexity of reform implementation was somewhat lower than in Ukraine. Many of these countries were governed by administrative regimes capable of enforcing top-down reforms decisively, which arguably made the implementation process easier. Nevertheless, the decisive factor was the political will of national leaders and their awareness of the necessity for reforms – qualities that were often lacking (Lupenko *et al.*, 2022).

The scale of agrarian sector reform in these countries was also lower, for various reasons, than in Ukraine. In particular, the extent to which reform encompassed both the objects and subjects – especially regarding the completeness of agricultural land privatisation – was significantly more limited. For instance, in Russia, following the reform, only 39% of agricultural land was under private ownership, compared to 85% in Ukraine. In the CIS countries, the proportion was even lower, at 32%. In many of these states, rather than granting full ownership rights, intermediate forms of land tenure persisted for an extended

period, including “lifelong inherited ownership”, “lifelong use”, “short-term use”, and “land leasing from state and local authorities”. As a result, the fundamentality and radicality of reforms in these contexts can be rated at an average level. In the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, the state was unable to provide smallholder family farms with a comprehensive package of support measures to ensure reform comprehensiveness. In contrast to Ukraine, these countries lacked incentive-based preferential mechanisms for taxation, credit access, investment in modernisation, and other forms of institutional support. The social orientation of reform in these countries was also weaker than in Ukraine. For example, in Russia, only 38% of the population were agricultural landowners, compared to 57% in Ukraine, 54% in Central and Eastern European countries, and 26% across the CIS overall. In several countries, particularly Russia and Kazakhstan, land consolidation and the emergence of latifundia became widespread during the reform process, significantly undermining its social character. The same applies to the effectiveness of reforms, which proved to be markedly lower than in Ukraine. Between 2000 and 2004, the average annual growth rates of agricultural production were: Ukraine – 6%, Russia – 3.1%, Belarus – 4.4%, and Kazakhstan – 3.3% (Gaidutskyi, 2019). Consequently, the evaluation of reforms in these countries across the relevant indicators would be lower than in Ukraine.

The Chinese agrarian reform was among the most widely cited within the then socialist bloc. However, in practice, its scope was more limited. The main measures of reform included: decommunisation, the introduction of family-based tenancy contracts, the establishment of peasant and communal (“village-hair”) farms based on land leasing, partial liberalisation of product sales, input procurement and pricing, and restrictions on the state procurement system for agricultural products (Mochernyi, 2000). The acceptability of agrarian reform in China – particularly after the Maoist era, which was characterised by the extreme collectivisation of the peasantry – was relatively low. For these reasons, the complexity of implementing the reform considered be might initially high. However, given the early and deliberate narrowing of the reform's parameters (primarily to family contracting and leasing), the actual complexity within this limited framework was not substantial. Therefore, an average rating for complexity is appropriate. Meanwhile, the broad participation of both peasants and agricultural land in the reform justifies a high assessment of its scale.

This also resulted in lower scores across several indicators, particularly in relation to fundamentality, radicality, and complexity. For instance, the Chinese agrarian reform did not involve a change in land ownership structure – state ownership was not replaced by private ownership. Only the management system of the commune was restructured, shifting to family-based farming units. Therefore, the fundamentality of the reform cannot be rated highly. Similarly, the low radicality of the reform – evident in its partial implementation and prolonged timeline – is clear. This also explains the relatively low complexity of the reform. Despite some liberalisation, the system of state contracting, price regulation, provision of inputs, and regulation of product sales remained largely

intact. Consequently, the trade, financial, and credit relations between the state and peasant farms were limited and far from fully market-orientated.

While legal access to land was extended to all peasants (approximately 800 million), and this encompassed most agricultural land, Chinese peasants were not granted full property rights. Instead, land was allocated on a leasehold basis, meaning peasants could neither own nor freely manage their plots, become landlords, nor receive rental income. However, the scale of participation – a uniquely massive mobilisation of the rural population – raises the rating of the sociality of the reform to above average. A similar conclusion applies to the assessment of effectiveness. Between 2000 and 2004, China's average annual growth in agricultural production was 3.7%, notably lower than Ukraine's 6% (Khodakivska & Mohilnyi, 2018; Nesenenko, 2021). Nonetheless, the transition from communal to family- and village-contracted farms produced significant improvements in agricultural output and overall sector performance. Therefore, the effectiveness of China's agrarian reform may be rated as above average.

The Japanese agrarian reform entailed the state purchase of land from large landowners (latifundists) – those holding more than 5 hectares – and its redistribution to peasants at a fixed, minimal price, with 30-year instalment plans. The keywords here – “purchase” and “sale” – highlight the distinctive character of this reform and its divergence from post-socialist transformational models. The individual land plots allocated to peasants were very small (0.5-1 ha), and the total landholding per farm was capped at 3 hectares, with the average amounting to only 1.8 hectares. As a result of the reform, both the number of peasant landowners and the total area under their ownership doubled. Concurrently, the government invested

heavily in rural infrastructure and provided extensive subsidies, grants, loans, and other support to small, newly established farms. Owing to this reform, agricultural output increased by 3% annually between 1955 and 1970. Despite only 13% of Japan's territory being suitable for agriculture, the country managed to produce 90% of its food needs by the 1970s. Several other nations – Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam – pursued similar paths (Mochernyi, 2000).

Based on the methodology for assessing the indicators of reform identification, the characteristics in this case may vary. Indeed, the acceptability of the reform was high, as it was implemented under pressure from the occupation regime, particularly through the purchase of land from large landowners demoralised by the war. Therefore, the complexity of implementation can be assessed as below average. The coverage of land and the rural population reached approximately half of the total, so the scale of the reform may be rated above average. However, during the reform, the form of ownership remained unchanged – it was private both before and after – and only the subjects of ownership and management changed, on a purchased basis. As a result, the fundamentality of the reform may be considered below average. At the same time, the radicality of the reform and the scope of measures to support newly established farms merit high ratings. Furthermore, as the number of peasant landowners doubled, the sociality indicator may also be assessed as above average. The same applies to the effectiveness of the reform: although the average annual growth in agricultural production was 3%, which is half the rate recorded in Ukraine, the indicator still warrants an above average rating. Based on the research conducted, a matrix of agrarian reform assessments was developed (Table 1).

Table 1. Matrix of agrarian reform assessments

Indicators of identification	Ukraine	Post-socialist countries of CEE	Post-Soviet states	China	Japan
1. Receptivity	5	2	4	3	2
2. Scale	5	3	3	5	4
3. Fundamentality	4	3	4	3	2
4. Radicality	3	4	3	3	5
5. Complexity	5	3	3	3	5
6. Sociality	5	3	3	4	4
7. Effectiveness	5	3	4	4	4
Total	32	21	24	25	26

Notes: data are averaged across country groups

Source: authors' compilation

Based on the qualitative characteristics and the formalised assessment, the composite score for the agrarian reform in Ukraine was the highest. This has also been affirmed by numerous scholars, including A. Aslund (2015) and I. Miklos & P. Kukhta (2019). Notably, among contemporary scholars, serious critical remarks concerning the Ukrainian agrarian reform are virtually absent. Some researchers underscore the importance of implementing reforms not as superficial formalities, but as deep, systemic transformations that affect the core structures of socio-economic relations and reflect a social-democratic orientation. They emphasise that the success of reforms

is contingent upon their social acceptability, the scale and depth of change, and the speed and consistency of implementation (Kyrilenko, 2008). This viewpoint resonates with the findings of other scholars, such as D. North (1990), who underscores the importance of institutional change as a driver of sustainable development, and D. Rodrik (2007), who highlights that the legitimacy and inclusiveness of reforms are crucial for long-term success.

Moreover, O. Khodakivska & O. Mohilnyi (2018) and V. Yakushyk (2019) emphasise the necessity of considering the purposeful nature of reform processes during evaluation and identification, which helps to minimise the

influence of random political impulses. This aligns with insights from M. Grindle (2004), who argues that political will and strategic leadership are critical for steering reforms away from short-term political fluctuations and ensuring their continuity. Special attention must be paid to balancing the gradual implementation of changes with their effectiveness, in order to prevent social destabilisation and ensure sustainable economic development. This perspective fully aligns with the author's proposed approaches. At the same time, it remains crucial that reforms do not result in destabilisation or the deterioration of the socio-economic situation, echoing the warnings of W. Easterly (2001) about the risks of reform failures leading to economic setbacks and social discontent.

In light of the above, the success of reforms in Ukraine's agrarian sector depends not only on the internal consistency of changes but also on external conditions and the development potential of the industry. Therefore, when considering the future prospects of the agricultural sector, it is important to take into account natural resources, market conditions, and the socio-economic challenges facing the country's agriculture. Ukraine, which benefits from favourable natural conditions for agricultural development and has already established the foundations of a market economy, holds significant potential for successful growth. However, it is impossible to ignore the ongoing challenges facing the sector. Even its current record performance indicators do not fully reflect the industry's existing potential, particularly when compared to those of Western European countries. The priority areas for sectoral development include overcoming the consequences of war and economic crisis, ensuring financial recovery, accelerating economic growth, and promoting innovation and social progress. It is essential to strengthen the social infrastructure in rural areas – including housing, education, healthcare, culture, and sport – by addressing key issues such as transport connectivity and employment opportunities for the rural population. This is supported by both post-war European experience and Ukrainian regional practice. A key issue is increasing wages for rural workers, as farmers and entrepreneurs in the countryside also face a shortage of labour, which in turn slows the development of their enterprises.

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► Conclusions

The study of the conceptual environment of reforms has outlined the parameters of their definition and characteristics, substantiating that reforms are neither revolutions that dismantle fundamental socio-political systems nor minor improvements. Reforms represent a set of fundamental and farreaching changes characterised by scale, fundamentality, radicality, complexity, sociality, and efficiency. Based on an analysis of extensive international reform practices, a set of indicators for their identification and evaluation has been formulated. These include: 1) receptivity; 2) scale; 3) fundamentality; 4) radicality; 5) complexity; 6) sociality; 7) efficiency. These indicators comprehensively capture the principal dimensions of reform characteristics. On this basis, a methodology for the formal assessment and cross-national comparison of reforms has been proposed. The validity of these indicators and the criteria for calculating evaluations have been demonstrated using the example of Ukraine's agrarian reform. According to both qualitative assessments and the formal evaluation framework, the overall indicator of the authenticity and success of Ukraine's agrarian reform was the highest among post-socialist, post-Soviet and other studied countries. A new phase of agrarian reform began with the opening of the land market in 2021, allowing the purchase and sale of land by individuals and, in the future, by legal entities and foreign investors. This opens up new prospects for scientific and applied research. It is essential to investigate the impact of the land market's liberalisation on land value, agricultural productivity in both crop and livestock sectors, business profitability, investment in research and development, and the optimisation of business processes.

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Теоретико-методологічні аспекти ідентифікації аграрних реформ

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► **Анотація.** Актуальність статті зумовлена відсутністю системи ідентифікації реформ на предмет їх справжності та успішності. Тому метою стало теоретичне дослідження параметрів понятійного середовища реформ та методологічне обґрунтування показників і критеріїв їх ідентифікації. В процесі дослідження використані експертно-аналітичні методи вивчення понятійного середовища реформ, їх суті і змісту за сформульованими показниками та критеріями. Основними результатами дослідження є сформульовані параметри визначення справжності реформ, які, з одного боку, відрізняють їх від революцій, а з другого – від дріб'язкових удосконалень. В результаті дослідження сформульовано показники ідентифікації реформ: сприйнятність; масштабність; фундаментальність; радикальність; комплексність; соціальність; ефективність. Обґрунтовано критерії оцінки показників на основі аналітичних даних, порівняльних оцінок окремих країн, експертних оцінок та аналізу фактів. Здійснено апробацію відповідних методологічних та методичних розробок на прикладі аграрної реформи в Україні, постсоціалістичних країнах, пострадянських країнах, Китаї та Японії. Розкрито практичне значення ідентифікації реформ насамперед для визначення і характеристики їх справжності та успішності, в тому числі на основі порівняння між країнами та різними історичними епохами

► **Ключові слова:** валова продукція; інвестиційна діяльність; диверсифікація культур; страхування врожаїв; структура посівів