

Food Security or Food Sovereignty?

Questioning the Paradigm of Indonesian Military Involvement in Agriculture

Arry Bainus, Dina Yulianti

Abstract

Indonesian military (TNI) involvement in the agricultural sector had begun since the 1960s when they had a significant role in a global modernization of agriculture project led by the US government and world donor agencies, namely the Green Revolution. In 2015, TNI signed a MoU with the Ministry of Agriculture in a “Special Efforts Program for Accelerating Food Production” which again delivers an important role to the military in the agricultural sector by implementing a Green Revolution oriented farming. This paper, in contrast to some of the previous writings, does not examine the right or wrong of this involvement. This study provides a paradigmatic response to a question, why TNI insists on implementing a program that after 50 years has not proven successful in reaching the target of food self-sufficiency? Based on literature studies and analysis of empirical data, this study suggests that there is a paradigmatic misperception among the policy makers, both civil and military, about food security concept. The authors also offer a new implementation framework based on the concept of food sovereignty that can be performed by policy makers in Indonesia and other developing countries.

Keywords: food security, national security, food sovereignty, national sovereignty, Green Revolution

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Introduction

One of the main national programs of President Joko Widodo's administration is 'food sovereignty'. It set an ambitious target to achieve food self-sufficiency of some strategic food commodities such as rice, corn, soybeans, and sugar by 2017. To bring about this goal, the Ministry of Agriculture requested assistance from the Indonesian military namely Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI). On January 8, 2015, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between TNI and the Ministry of Agriculture authorized TNI to play an active role in the food self-sufficiency project. According to the MoU, within three years TNI will assist the Ministry in exercising some activities, among others providing counseling to farmers, assisting in the procurement of fertilizer, seeds, and pesticides, building irrigation infrastructure, opening new rice fields, distributing agricultural machinery, and arranging the selling of the harvest.

The MoU has been criticized by Indonesia Ombudsman from the point of view that this project goes too far from the competence and scope of work of TNI. According to the Ombudsman Commissioner, Alamsyah Saragih, the program contradicts the rules of TNI which should protect the security of the country from enemy attacks. Another reason is that there are some complaints from farmers about this program, such as a failure of a 300-hectare new rice field opened by TNI in Kalimago Village, Poso Regency, Central Sulawesi, because of the lack of infrastructure. The Rice Cultivation Acceleration Movement Program initiated by West Sumatra Governor Irwan Prayitno in collaboration with the TNI has drawn protests because it allows TNI to take over the land if the farmer does not immediately plant the land 30 days after harvest-time.

The Army Chief of Staff, General Mulyono, answered the criticism by saying, "We help the people. We have 'military operations other than war'. This is one of them."^{1,2}

Observers and activists criticize TNI involvement in the agricultural sector by focusing on these points (1) whether its role is urgent and in accordance with the Law (2) civil-military relations and fears of a return to TNI domination in civilian life as in the New Order era, and (3) negative impacts of TNI's engagement in the food sector^{3,4,5}.

TNI has an assumption that food security is correlated with the national stability⁴. The riots in many developing countries due to the food crisis in 2008, even resulting in the overthrow of Haitian President, and the crisis in 2010-2011 which led to regime change in Tun-

sia and Egypt are empirical evidence of this assumption. However, the Green Revolution oriented agricultural system is still used as the program even though after 50 years of implementation, the system fails to produce the desired results, namely food security and food-self-sufficiency. The authors suggest that the root of the problem is the policy-makers misinterpretation of food security and food sovereignty, which results in the improper agricultural program. Through our analysis, we wish to improve the literature regarding the paradigm adopted by the TNI in its involvement in the food sector.

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The discussion in this article will be divided into three parts. The first one examines the history of TNI's role in the food sector and the Green Revolution. In the second part, we explain the food security paradigm and how its implementation has proven to fail in achieving the targets set by the TNI, namely food self-sufficiency for the sake of national security. The third one will discuss the food sovereignty paradigm. Here, we offered a framework for achieving food sovereignty, to be used by stakeholders in this field. In writing this article, the author uses scholarly sources, media reports, and personal interviews with a number of CSO food activists.

The History of TNI's Role in Food Sector

Both the TNI and the Ministry of Agriculture stated that the collaboration of the two parties in the Special Efforts Program for Accelerating Food Production is in line with the TNI's role in maintaining national security. "This involvement is an integral part of building food security and national resilience. There is nothing wrong in supporting food sovereignty," said Head of Public Relations and Public Information Bureau Ministry of Agriculture,⁶ pointed out that the MoU is in accordance with Law No. 3 of 2002 concerning National Defense and Law No. 34 of 2004 concerning the TNI⁵.

Meanwhile, TNI also uses the Law No. 34 of 2004, especially article 8 which states that one of the army's tasks is "implementing defense on land" as the legal basis for its role in the agricultural sector and the task can be achieved in the form of Territorial Coaching.

"Territorial Coaching is one of the main functions of the Army; it is one of the main activities in achieving the main task of the Army. The task is aimed at winning battles on land and overcoming community difficulties. In winning the battle on land, the preparation of space, tools and fighting conditions are fundamental. One form of these

preparations battles is increasing national food and energy security in the framework of the universal defense. ... because food security will indirectly increase national security. Likewise, if we had food insecurity, the country's sovereignty and stability could be disrupted."^{4,6}

The steps taken by the TNI, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, in increasing food production are the procurement of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and water infrastructure development. These four are the main components in modern farming methods that were introduced globally from the 1960s by the Rockefeller Foundation in collaboration with the US government under the name of the Green Revolution⁷.

The Green Revolution is a term that refers to the renewal of the agricultural system by using high-yield seeds that are engineered in the laboratory and mass produced by multinational seed companies, chemical nutrients (fertilizers), chemical toxic against pests (pesticides), heavily water supply. This new agricultural technology has been developed by the Rockefeller Foundation since 1940 in Mexico and one of the researchers who managed to find high-yield seeds, namely Norman Borlaug, in 1971 received the Peace Nobel prize instead of biology. The dissemination of the Green Revolution program in developing countries by the US government was closely related to efforts of obstructing Soviet Unions' (Communism) expansion in the region.

Cleaver⁸ quoted the sentence on Foreign Affairs (1953) written by John King, "The major problem in the struggle for keeping South and Southeast Asia free of Communist domination is the standard of living of their peoples ... The struggle of the 'East' versus the 'West' in Asia is, in part, a race for production, and rice is the symbol and substance of it." While Patel⁹ quoted Maurin (1949), who wrote: "The only way to prevent a Red Revolution is to promote a Green Revolution."

Mexico was chosen as the pilot project of the Green Revolution with two hidden reasons. First, it was in the interests of Rockefeller's Standard Oil which was seized by the then President of Mexico, Lazaro Cardenas; and second, to prevent the influence of Nazi and the increasing of nationalism in the country. The project was successful since the drastically increment of the wheat production had changed Mexico from a food importer country into a food exporter. Although according to the 2017 study of CNDH¹⁰ 23,3% of Mexico's population still experience food poverty or inability to buy food, in the early years, the Green Revolution has successfully made Mexico a 'less antagonistic neighbor' for the US⁸.

However, Cleaver⁸ also explained that the final target of the agricultural technology reform program is the glory of US capitalism by saying “food was already an old weapon in the anti-Communist arsenal of American capitalism”. Cleaver⁸ argued that the Green Revolution agricultural program is an “integral part of the postwar effort to contain social revolution and make the world safe for profit”. Through the Green Revolution, the US has the opportunity to increase its penetration into the economy of Third World countries by raising their dependency on technology, seed, pesticides, and chemical fertilizers made by US companies.

In Indonesia, the financial benefits achieved by multinational companies in the implementation of this program was also taken by Indonesian military elite as explained by Crouch¹¹ in his book “The Army and Politics in Indonesia”. Patel⁹ wrote, the Indonesian government at that time allocated enormous funds to make Indonesian farmers move from traditional farming methods to the modern methods of Green Revolution, including paying a number of multinational companies of US\$50 per hectare for their services in providing materials such as ‘superior’ seed, fertilizer, pesticides, and counseling of farming management. The funds came from foreign debt and petroleum sales.

The implementation of the Green Revolution program in Indonesia was carried out under the name Bimas (Mass Guidance) and Inmas (Mass Intensification). The two farming programs method were different from traditional farming methods, where farmers usually used their own locally cultivated seeds, organic fertilizers, and non-chemical pesticides. Government efforts to change the way of farming were carried out in conjunction with the political control mechanism, which prohibited village-level mass and political organizations. The election of the village head was replaced by an appointment system, as well as the placement of a military officer at the village level¹². Local government officials, from the subdistrict head until the village officials fully controlled the implementation of this program and took financial benefits from it.

Meanwhile, only 20-30% of farmer’s households benefited from this program, namely those who had extensive land. But they were not independent farmers since they depended heavily on state subsidies; while some of the subsidies funds come from foreign debt. The rest are poor farmers who owe less than 0.5 hectares of land or farm laborers who work in the land of rich farmers^{9,13,14}

The goal of achieving rice self-sufficiency through agricultural modernization can only be achieved in 1984-1986. In the following years, Indonesia became a rice importer country again. Farmers also faced the negative impact of using imported seeds, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides. This was reported, among others, in the 2010 Ministry of Agriculture publication entitled "A Decade of Food Security Institutions in Indonesia":

"... in the long run, these successes [of Green Revolution] have negative impacts that threaten the life of the agricultural sector, such as the command of rice cultivation, the imposition of the use of imported seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides. As a result, in the 1990s, farmers began to face pest attacks. Besides that, soil fertility is decreasing, the increasing use of fertilizer and pesticides are no longer effective, and synthetic chemicals used in agriculture have damaged the structure, chemistry, and biology of the soil."

Although it did not get satisfactory results, the government continue this Green-Revolution oriented project with various names. While the Ministry acknowledged the adverse effects of military-style imposition in the past, it still collaborates with TNI to implement a program that is no different from Bimas and Inmas of the New Order administration. Land Expansion Director's of The Directorate General of Agricultural Infrastructure and Facilities of the Ministry of Agriculture, Prasetyo Nuchsin, said an interesting statement. According to him, the task to open new paddy fields is given to TNI because 'TNI is a discipline [institution] and there is no party who dares to resist the army.'^{1,2}

This statement shows the depth of military influence in Indonesian mindsets. The strong domination of the army during the New Order period has led to the inferiority of the civil society. Jan P Ate¹⁵ argues, this phenomenon is common, 'Indonesia follows the developing country paradigm.' In other words, the military is often assumed to be more professional than a civilian. Civilians in Indonesia generally accept the claim that the military is an integrated part of the society and it has professional values, such as effective, coordinative, and uniformed. This is partly evidenced by the imitation of civil society in the military style, such as military-style uniforms used by various non-military institutions and the use of a curriculum similar to military academies by several civil education institutions¹⁶.

Criticizing the Paradigm of Food Security

By accepting the assumption that the TNI's assistance in food production program is compulsory –because the fulfillment of the people's needs of food correlates with national security— we will meet with the problem of definition and paradigm.

The TNI tends to use the term 'food security' (in Indonesian, this phrase is translated by 'ketahanan pangan'¹⁷ and is often considered synonymous with 'self-sufficiency'). According to TNI, "... the meaning of food security contains several aspects such as availability, diversity, security, equity, access, and feasibility and sustainability [of food]. ... [it is] very closely related to the main task of the TNI in maintaining the integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia."⁴

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Agriculture uses these three terms inconsistently: food security, food sovereignty, and 'self-sufficiency'. In the 2017 Ministry of Agriculture's Performance Report page 12, it is stated that the vision of the Ministry of Agriculture is 'the realization of independent and sovereign Indonesia based on Cooperation'. While on page 13, it is stated that the ministry's target is 'the realization of self-sufficiency in rice, corn, soybeans and increased production of meat and sugar.' But on the next page it is explained that to achieve all these targets, the Ministry of Agriculture compiles and implements 7 Main Strategies for Strengthening Agricultural Development for 'Food Sovereignty'. The seven strategies are indifferent with Green-Revolution project^{18,19,20}.

The problem is that food security and food sovereignty are two concepts whose paradigm is contradictory and the two words are not interchangeable.

This is the definition of food security adopted by FAO²¹ documents (and documents of other UN agencies): *"Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life"*²¹.

The term of food security was first introduced in the 1970s at the World Food Conference with the meaning of achieving conditions of food availability and food stability at national and international levels. WTO²² explained that food security initially connotes 'self-sufficiency' and governments in various countries are trying to achieve it by intervening in their agricultural production systems (i.e., the same agricultural method introduced by Green Revolution). Then, since the 1980s,

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this concept has shifted to the understanding that food production is only one of four food sources; in addition to trade, employment, and food transfers. Thus, efforts to achieve food security in food deficit countries are not solely to boost production but also to facilitate trade access.

This was confirmed in the Rome Declaration released by the World Food Summit in 1996, “We agree that trade is a key element in achieving food security. We agree to pursue food trade and overall trade policies that will encourage our producers and consumers to utilize available resources in an economically sound and sustainable manner.” In other words, food security only focuses on food availability, whether it is obtained through self-production or imports. In line with this, the WTO²² compiled an Agreement of Agriculture (AoA) that reforms trade in the agricultural sector and makes policies in this sector more market-oriented. AoA obliges countries to reduce basic tariffs (import duties) on agricultural imports, limit government subsidies and protection of the domestic agricultural sector, and limit export subsidies²².

Data from FAO²¹ shows global agricultural production has exceeded population growth, so that average per capita food availability is increasing. Globally, food supply per capita has increased from 2200 kcal/day in the early 1960s to more than 2800 kcal/day in 2009²¹. That is, the food crisis is not caused by a lack of food production at the global level but because of the inability of the community to access food which prices are determined by the free market.

In the 2014-2017 period, the Ministry of Agriculture reported that there had been an increase in rice and corn production, while soybeans and green beans had decreased, as seen in the following table.

Food Production (in thousands of tons)				
Commodity	2014	2015	2016	2017
rice	70,846	75,398	79,172	81,382
corn	19,008	19,612	23,188	27,952
soybean	9,55	963	888	542
greenbean	2,45	271	276	244

Table 1. Food Production 2014-2017. Source: *Agriculture Statistic of 2017, Pusdatin Kementan*²³

However, this data was criticized by the Indonesian Farmers' Union^{24,25} in early January 2018 because it was provided by the Ministry itself and was out of sync with BPS and the Ministry of Trade data on rice imports in early 2018 at 500,000 tons (and in May 2018, the government importing another 500,000 tons). Meanwhile, the trend of rice prices on the market shows an increase, as shown in the following table.

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Average rice price per kg, per year (in Rupiah) at the wholesale level					
2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (by July)
8,941.02	9,637.88	10,915.13	11,511.34	11,534.93	12,115.7

Table 2. The trend of Rising Price of Rice 2013-2018

The increase in rice prices is detrimental to farmers because rice farmers are generally consumers who also have to buy rice at a high price. This happens to poor farmers who own less than 0.5 hectares of land because they have to sell almost all of rice they harvested to meet their living needs and farming capital (buying seeds, fertilizers, pesticides). The number of poor people in rural areas in 2017 is 16,31 million (mostly farmers) where the role of food commodities in the poverty line is much greater than the role of non-food commodities (housing, clothing, education, and health).

This condition is in stark contrast to the amount of funds that the government has disbursed to boost food production. In 2017, the government spent Rp. 2,4 trillion seed subsidies and by 2018, the subsidies provided is increased to Rp.5,5 trillion. The vast money is used for buying seeds from corporations, both locally and transnational companies such as Dupont Pioneer, BISI, Syngenta and Monsanto Indonesia (Monagro). Pesticide and fertilizers are also purchased from transnational companies. The total State Budget (APBN) of the Ministry of Agriculture in 2017 is more than Rp. 22 trillion. Thus it can be concluded that the increase in food production and the amount of funds spent by the government in the agricultural sector are more benefited by corporations^{24,25}.

From year to year, Indonesia cannot escape from importing rice and facing the problem of rising food prices. Under these conditions, the target of TNI and the Ministry of Agriculture, both food sufficiency and national security are almost impossible to achieve.

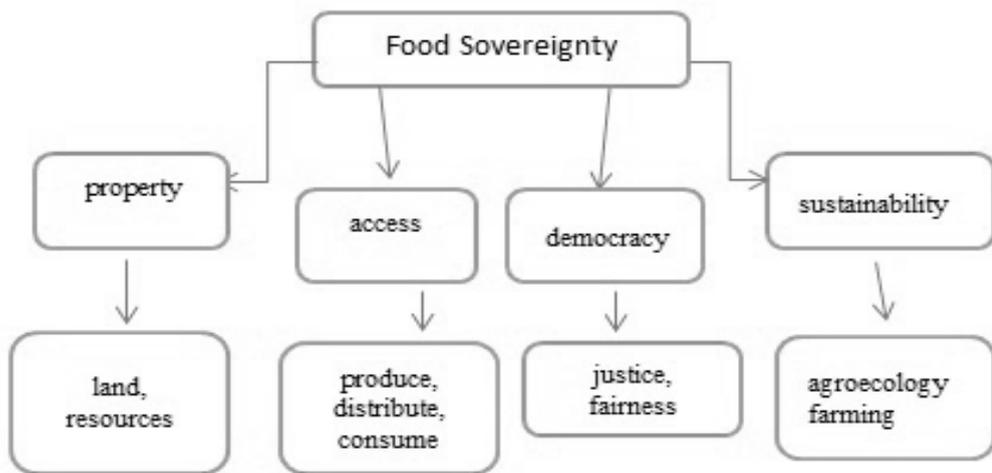
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In contrast, the food sovereignty paradigm is against the Green Revolution oriented farming and the trade-based food supply. The widely used definition of food sovereignty is the definition proposed by the People's Food Sovereignty Network²⁶:

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture; to protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives; to determine the extent to which they want to be self-reliant; to restrict the dumping of products in their markets, and; to provide local fisheries-based communities the priority in managing the use of and the rights to aquatic resources. Food sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production.

There are several basic political concepts that are attached to the word 'sovereignty' regarding 'food', namely: property, access, democracy, and sustainability.



1) Property (ownership)

Food sovereignty is seen as 'ownership' means that food and its production equipment, namely land and resources (water, agricultural equipment, etc.) must be owned sovereignly by the farmers (Indonesian people in general). This is in accordance with the mandate of the 1945 Constitution Article 33 Article 3, "Earth and water and the natural resources are controlled by the state and used for the greatest prosperity of the people."

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Consequently, food sovereignty cannot be achieved when the majority of Indonesian farmers (54.5%) only owns less than 0.25 hectares of land while 60% of the total agricultural land is used by agricultural corporations²⁷.

Food sovereignty also requires resource sovereignty. In Indonesia, many water sources that should be owned by the state and used for agriculture are handed over to corporations. One of the cases is the dispute between farmers in Central Java against a cement company that conducts cement mining in the Watuputih Groundwater Basin, Kendeng mountains, which has the potential to stop the water supply for around 153,402 farmers in the area.

2) Access

Access correlates with purchasing power and trade. Ideally, farmers are able to produce food in surplus so that in addition to meeting their own food needs, they can sell the rest to have economic benefits. Profits will be obtained if the selling price is higher than the farming capital that has been issued. But Green Revolution-style farming methods hinder the benefit because farmers since 1960s are instructed by the state to use high-yield seeds (mostly imported). High-yield seed is a high-feeding seed; that is, the seed can produce optimally when given high-cost inputs, namely chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and a stable irrigation system that requires large costs in its development.

To overcome this problem, farmers must have seed sovereignty. In the past, farmers traditionally saved seeds for farming in the next season as well as having the ability to breed them (to produce superior local-seeds). If the seeds are produced by farmers themselves, the farming cost is much cheaper. Furthermore, local seeds are able to survive in poor conditions or nonoptimal soil quality.

Various civil society organizations have tried to redevelop the ability of farmers to produce superior seeds, such as IF8 [IF Indonesian Farm-

er] corn seed which successfully acquiring a harvest up to 13.76 tons per hectare. But, instead of endorsing this seed sovereignty, the government seems to give more opportunities to multinational corporations to produce GMO corn seeds. One of the corporations is Monsanto Indonesia who claims invested up to Rp 1 trillion per year for research and development programs in producing biotechnology corn seeds²⁸.

3) *Democracy*

Food sovereignty is based on democratic principles, where justice and fairness are upheld to protect farmers and agricultural systems. To achieve this, it is necessary to establish legal rules that are based on the principles of mutual benefit, independence, and social responsibility. Food producers (be it farmers, fishermen, and farmers) must also have access to policy formulation in their fields at all levels (local, national and global).

The struggle of the farmers in Kendeng mountains is one of many cases where justice is not enforced. According to Presidential Decree No. 26/2011, Watuputih Groundwater Basin has to be protected, but the decree is ignored by the local government by giving mining permission to the cement factory in that area. The farmers filed a claim to the court, and finally, in October 2016, the Supreme Court has canceled an environmental permit issued by the Governor of Central Java for PT Semen Gresik, which meant they could not continue the construction of the cement plant. However, the Governor issued a new permit to the same company but has changed its name to PT Semen Indonesia²⁹. This is a form of injustice where the fate of more than 150,000 farmers is sacrificed for a corporation.

The principle of democracy also means the termination of old top-down methods (orders from the state to farmers to use certain systems) and accommodate alternatives offered by civil society.

Board of Sundanese Forest and Environmental Guard (Dewan Pemerhati Kehutanan dan Lingkungan Tatar Sunda - DPKLTS), a local NGO in West Java founded in 2001 is a civil society organization which developing a farming method called "SRI Indonesia". It attempts to revive a farming philosophy of Sundanese ancestors, namely the concept of 'silih asuh' (a mutual love among every creature in the same natural systems). For example, farming with chemical pesticide is not a compassionate attitude toward the land, birds, worms, and many tiny animals. The result of such action is that the land will not give its

compassion toward men so that the crops will decrease gradually. On the contrary, when farmers do the farming compassionately, the crops will increase 3-4 times more than conventional farming (personal interview, 2014).

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4) Sustainability

The program carried out by DPKLTS is related to the concept of sustainability. As acknowledged in one of the reports of the Ministry of Agriculture, Green Revolution oriented farming system degrade the soil quality. Food sovereignty requires production sustainability so that employment of agroecology is a must. Agroecology is a comprehensive agricultural system which protects the environment, health, social, and economic aspects of the agricultural community. This farming system does not use seeds of corporate production, fertilizers and chemical nutrients, but uses self-breeding local seeds, natural fertilizers, and nutrition. With agroecology, the farmers' dependence on corporate products will be stopped, the farmers household will benefit economically and socially, and the environment will be maintained for the sake of next generations^{24,25}.

By implementing this framework of food sovereignty, food self-sufficiency may be achieved, a large state budget for importing inputs can be allocated to other strategic sectors, such as health and education. A sovereign state is a country that does not rely its basic needs on foreign states or multinational corporations, and this is the ultimate goal of the TNI's involvement in the agricultural sector.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to examine the paradigm of Indonesia's military (TNI) in the agricultural sector. In TNI's perspective, food security is a pre-condition for national stability, security, and sovereignty. On that basis, the TNI views efforts to achieve food security is part of its non-military duties. Together with the Ministry of Agriculture in the administration of Presiden Joko Widodo, the TNI ran a Special Efforts Program for Accelerating Food Production which implementing a Green Revolution oriented farming.

The involvement of TNI in the agricultural sector is not new. In the era of President Soeharto, TNI also played a role in 'Bimas' and 'Inmas' program which applied the Green Revolution new farming technology sponsored by the US and the world funding agencies. Until now, this

farming system is still employed in Indonesia even though the result of self-sufficient has never been achieved (except in 1984 and 1986) and the country is forced to import the food to fulfill the domestic needs.

This condition raises a question, why TNI (and the Ministry of Agriculture) keep on implementing this kind of failure farming system while at the same time they set a goal of 'self-sufficiency', 'food security', and 'food sovereignty'? This study suggests that the root of this problem is a paradigmatic misperception of food security dan food sovereignty, thus resulting in improper agricultural program development by the Ministry of Agriculture whose implementation is assisted by the TNI.

For food security paradigm, this condition is considered acceptable since it endorses trade, not production, as the main way to achieve food security. Conversely, food sovereignty rejects trade as the main tool for meeting human food needs. In the view of food sovereignty, food must be produced by a sustainable agricultural system. Therefore the inputs used (seeds, fertilizers, anti-pests) must be organic, not chemical products of corporations.

The authors offer the implementation framework of food sovereignty, which consist of four parts, namely property, access, democracy, and sustainability. Implementing this framework will lead to practical implications, such as changes in agricultural methods and state budgeting. Further quantitative research is needed in analyzing the budget of this changes and the benefits obtained by making a paradigmatic shift in agricultural management.

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