“If you have not eaten rice, then you have not eaten”: Unpacking *Berasisasi* in Maluku Tenggara Barat, Indonesia.

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List of Acronyms

BIMAS  Bimbingan masal (A mass guidance program)
BKP  Badan Ketahanan Pangan (Food Security Agency)
BULOG  Badan Urusan Logistik (National Logistics Agency)
DEPTAN  Dinas Pertanian (Department of Agriculture)
DINSOS  Dinas Sosial (Department of Social Services)
DJTP  Direktorat Jenderal Tanaman Pangan (Directorate General of Food Crops)
EIP  Ecologically Integrated Paradigm
FAO  Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD  Focus Group Discussion
KNIL  Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army)
MKB  Metikei Besar
MKK  Metikei Kecil
MT1  Musim Tanam 1 (First planting season)
MT2  Musim Tanam 2 (Second planting season)
MTB  Maluku Tenggara Barat
OECD  Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
P2BN  Peningkatan Produksi Beras Nasional (National Rice Production Improvement Program)
PMD  Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa (Department of Rural Society Empowerment)
PSEKP  Pusat Studi Ekonomi dan Kebijakan Pertanian (Centre for Socio-Economics and Agriculture Policy of Indonesia)
REPELITA  Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun (The Five-Year Development Plan)
Ricification  Refer to berasasisi
RPJMN  Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah National (Middle Term Development Plan)
TNI  Tentara Nasional Indonesia (The Indonesian National Armed Forces)
UDHR  Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UPSUS  Upaya Khusus (Special Effort Program)
# Glossary of Indonesian Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Arin</em></td>
<td>A polyculture field consisting of various plant commodities dominated by food crops and owned by several farming households</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bakar batu</em></td>
<td>A traditional local food cooking activity that uses stones stacked on a hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Berasisasi</em></td>
<td>A phenomenon where various local food widely consumed by the people in particular places are being replaced by rice, as well as the conditions where rice has become the main staple food consumed by people throughout Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mabela</em></td>
<td>Members of <em>mamuna</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Mamuna</em></td>
<td>Someone who is elder such as traditional leader or the head of a farmer group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Metikei Besar</em></td>
<td>A long dry season period between MT2 and MT1 happens around October – November and the time for harvesting the rest crops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Metikei Kecil</em></td>
<td>A rain-free period between MT1 and MT2 happens around May and the time for harvesting rice and sweet potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nawa Cita</em></td>
<td>Nine priority agenda of the current President of Republic of Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Raskin</em></td>
<td><em>Beras Miskin</em> (Rice-for-the-poor program)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rastra</em></td>
<td><em>Beras sejahtera</em> (Wealth-rice, to replace raskin term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sopi</em></td>
<td>A bottle of local drink in MTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Uluhasil</em></td>
<td>An after-harvest worship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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First of all, I would like to thank the almighty Allah Subhanahu wa ta’ala. Without Allah’s blessing and guidance, I would not be here to achieve my dream.

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Abstract

This paper discusses berasisasi, the ‘ricification’ of Indonesia where various local food-based consumption patterns are giving a way to a diet where rice has become the staple food. By problematizing ricification, the questions lay on why and how ricification could happen, and impacts caused by ricification on Maluku Tenggara Barat community. Adopting qualitative methods within case study design equipped with primary and secondary data, this study found that Indonesian rice-oriented food policies have triggered the occurrence of ricification across Indonesia. It is argued that the policies taken do not regard to the local context and the needs of the local community. Other findings are, first, ricification causing impact on local food system being threatened since the community no longer rely on it. Second, the community food sovereignty and food security became vulnerable after ricification. Lastly, ricification impacted on local culture as the community begin to abandon local food farming practices in which local culture attached to it. Aside from the impacts, here also presented the possibility of local food to get revived and what local people’s aspiration towards local food.

Relevance to Development Studies

There are three points of relevance for development studies proposed by this paper. The first one is, this paper may enrich the discussion on changes in food consumption pattern particularly from local food to rice and the involvement of government in the process. The second is about the impact of such changes itself, there is still a few who analyse its impacts on the community local food system and local culture. Hence, this paper tries to contribute by providing more insights to those issues. Lastly, this paper proposing a new concept namely ricification, considering the changes in food consumption pattern happens in some other places so this paper hopefully can contribute to scholarly research on the same topic.

Keywords

Food consumption pattern, local food, rice, local food systems, local culture, power, berasisasi, and ricification.
Chapter 1 Introduction

Food is one of the components of human rights as declared in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which asserts “the right of everyone to… adequate food” and “the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.” Article 21, 39(a) and 47 oblige the state to ensure the actualization of this right and set the policy towards the fulfilment of the fundamental right—food for everyone (Karan and Kapur 2014: 42). Therefore, every government that has endorsed this must fulfil the basic need of their citizens, through regulations, programs, or other means where the operationalisation will be different from one country to another, as in Indonesia.

However, national food policy sometimes cannot be implemented very well due to different socio-economics, culture, and natural conditions of each region. Particularly for a country as diverse as Indonesia, the government carries out its duties in providing citizen’s basic needs in effective and efficient ways. Nevertheless, the government also disregards the local context of each region, neglects what the people exactly need, and ignores the long-term impact that will affect them. According to the government, they believe that their policies is suitable to be implemented across Indonesia, but in fact, the result is not be optimal in some places, and the initial intention to achieve a common goal has failed and turned out that there were communities who bear the burden resulted from the policy.

1.1 Background

The diversity of agroecosystems, environment, and cultures of various tribes that inhabit the archipelago make the types of food consumed by the Indonesian people very distinct. Based on data from the Direktorat Jenderal Tanaman Pangan (DJTP, Directorate General of Food Crops) (2017), Indonesia has 77 types of food sources of carbohydrates, 75 types of fat sources, 26 types of nuts, 389 varieties of fruits, 228 types of vegetables, and 110 varieties of spices. From the 77 types of food sources of carbohydrates, only three types of them are widely known and consumed namely rice, maize and types of tubers. However, rice production far exceeds maize and tubers even only various kinds of rice are being grown. It depicts the simplification of food as there is decline in the food varieties provided by nature (Winson and Choi 2017: 566; Ariani 2010: 66).

According to Badan Ketahanan Pangan (BKP, Food Security Agency) (2010), back in 1954, rice consumption was only 53.5 percent while cassava and maize were 22.26 percent and 18.9 percent respectively. This figure grew in 1999 at 88.07 percent for rice consumption, while cassava and maize consumption decreased to 8.83 percent and 3.1 percent respectively. Furthermore, in 2008, rice consumption reached 104.9 kg per person which is 36.2 times greater than maize consumption, 8.1 times cassava consumption, and 37.5 times sweet potato consumption (Ariani 2010: 69). This is also supported by the statement of BKP (2018) on its website that approximately 97 percent of Indonesians consume rice as their main staple food.

Because of the explained occurrence, Indonesia has undergone berasisasi. Berasisasi is a term formed by Indonesian scholars whose research focused on rice policy. It is generated from two words in Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian national language): beras (rice) and the suffix -isasi (process, effort, activity). Berasisasi refers to a phenomenon where various local food widely consumed by the people in particular places are being replaced by rice, as well as the condition where rice has become the main staple food consumed by people throughout Indonesia (especially in a number
of areas that are not rice-based) (Lakitan 2014: 2-3, Riawanti 2015: 26). The term can be translated into English as *ricification* which means a similar thing with *berasiasi* (explained further in sub-chapter 2.1). The changes in food consumption pattern is compounded by the concept of “eating” in Indonesia through a popular statement that says, “if you have not eaten rice, then you have not eaten” (Swanson 2012, Kinseng 2011: 52).

**Problematization**

Among 34 provinces in Indonesia, people who lived in provinces located in the eastern parts such as Maluku, Papua, and East Nusa Tenggara used to consume their local food such as sago, cassava, and sweet potato as their main staple food. However, this consumption pattern has changed after the 1970s where people have been consuming rice more than their local food (Ariani 2010, Ariani 2016). This is particularly true in the Maluku Province, where food consumption patterns have changed from local food to rice (hereafter referred to as *ricification*). Aside from this, Maluku is often missed or disregarded by the government in policy formulation due to its quite remote location.

The Department of Agriculture of Maluku Province in Maluku Food Balance Sheet reports that the rice supply in Maluku in 2004 was 179,876 tons; 36,148 tons are self-produced and 143,728 tons are imported. This number indicates that rice import is almost four times greater than local production (Adam 2008: 8). Another research in 2014 shows that, changes in consumption patterns of Maluku people increased by 35 percent compared to the previous years. Whereas in the past, the consumption of rice was only 80 kilograms per capita per year, it has now increased to 108 kilograms. What makes it even worse is that rice production in Maluku can only meet 40 percent of rice needs, while the rest must be imported from outside (Liur 2015). It means that the fulfillment of staple food should no longer rely on rice since its local production is far below the demand rate.

The high growth of rice consumption compared to other crops cannot be separated from the direction of the food policy that is overly rice-oriented. The rice self-sufficiency program through the implementation of the green revolution in around the 1960s began to reduce local staple food consumption in Indonesia (Winson and Choi 2017, Trisia et al. 2016, Swastika 2011, McCulloch and Timmer 2008, Simatupang and Timmer 2008). Rice has always been placed as the primary commodity in the implementation of Indonesian food policy (Ariani 2010: 66, Suryana 2008, Suryana et al. 2009: 8). To define food security as merely the achievement of rice self-sufficiency is a long-standing mistake. This, in turn, makes rice as Indonesia’s most politically sensitive agricultural commodity (Liddle 1987: 129).

The government focused on rice “at all cost” while other crops such as cassava, sago, sweet potatoes and sorghum became secondary in terms of research and development of various innovations on-farm and off-farm (Khoduri 2010: 217). It illustrated that the government disregard the culture of each region in which will cause damage to the culture of local food (Ariani 2003: 554). Therefore, *ricification* is influencing not only Indonesian food politics but also severe nutritional outcomes due to only one single staple food is regularly consumed (Kuhnlein and Receveur 1996: 436, Mintz 1995: 3-4).

Few are aware that behind the agricultural development project, there is a cost to be borne by the Maluku people. Not only their consumption pattern has changed, but also their local food system being impacted consequently. Moreover, cultural elements have not been widely discussed, whereas, cultural aspects, and traditional practices and values can notify the extent to which such changes in food consumption pattern occurs (Mintz 1995; Mintz and Du Bois 2002: 104). Therefore, the government’s programs on food and agriculture, at some point and certain places do not work optimally in achieving food security, it leads to food vulnerability instead.
1.2 Research question and objectives

Why and how rice has become dominant staple (*ricification*) displacing traditional local food in Indonesia?

**Sub-questions**

a. Why is rice being promoted? What has been the role of the state in accelerating *ricification*?

b. How does *ricification* affects Maluku Tenggara Barat (MTB) local food system, affecting their everyday diet?

c. How does *ricification* affects community food sovereignty and food security, and local culture in MTB?

**Objectives**

Firstly, this research aims to analyse Indonesian food policy on how it causes *ricification*, how the policy was applied, who actors involved and what is the politics behind them. Secondly, several studies on food consumption pattern have focused on its relation with nutrition, but few have explored the resulting impact on socio-cultural condition of a community. Therefore, this paper also tries to fill the gap by examining the implications of *ricification* on the community’s local food systems as well as their culture of local food. The graph below depicts the idea of this paper (Figure 1.1).

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**Figure 1.1 Structure of the idea**

Analyzing the cause of *ricification* (examining Indonesian food policy) → *ricification* → Its impact on:
- Local food system
- Food sovereignty and security
- Culture of local food

*Source: Author 2018.*

1.3 Organisation of the research paper

This paper is structured into six chapters. Chapter 1 explains the introduction of the paper including the research question and objectives. Chapter 2 provides the analytical frameworks of the research that will be used to analyse and answers the research question in Chapter 4 and 5. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology that adopts qualitative methods within case study design equipped with primary and secondary data equipped with secondary data. Chapter 4 addresses the first research sub-question which focuses on how *ricification* occurs. Chapter 5 answers the second and third research sub-questions on the impacts of *ricification* on Maluku Tenggara Barat community regarding their local food system and local culture, also the possibility of local food to get revived and participants’ aspiration on local food. Finally, Chapter 6 provides the conclusion of the paper and present a recommendation that might be useful for further research related to similar topic and also for the development of agricultural and food sector particularly in Indonesia.
Chapter 2 Analytical frameworks

I assembled concepts and theories which will elaborate, examine and analyse the consumption pattern issue as well as address the research question. This chapter starts with the explanation of ricification term. Subsequently, explores the reason for using the concepts and theories of state in society, power/knowledge, local food systems, food paradigm, and food sovereignty and food security.

2.1 Ricification

The term berasisasi is mentioned in some articles written by Indonesian scholars such as Lakitan 2014, Riawanti 2015, Kinseng 2011, and Ariani 2003. As written in sub-chapter 1.1, the term is created from a combination of two Indonesian words: “beras” (rice) and the suffix “-isasi” (process, effort, activity). Accordingly, berasisasi is refers to the condition where food consumption pattern has shifted from various local food to rice as the main staple food across Indonesia. For an English translation, I used the term ricification. The word does not exist in the English dictionary, but it is generated from “rice” and the suffix “-fication” which means making or causing. Given that the coined word has a similar meaning with berasisasi, I decided to use ricification to explain the phenomenon of berasisasi in Indonesia. Besides that, by bringing up a new word, this paper tries to contribute to the literature by adding a new concept. This term can be modified into another berasisasi-like phenomenon, through replacing with other crops (maize, for example) as long as the essence is the change in food consumption pattern. Therefore, hereafter term ricification is used to refer berasisasi.

2.2 State in society

Shils (1975) mentioned that the state is “amalgamates the numerous institutions of which the performers are members and on behalf of which they exercise authority, into an image of a dominant and single centre of society.” Another definition comes from Weber’s widely quoted statement is “a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (Gerth and Mills, as cited in Migdal 2004: 13). Migdal (2004: 10-11) concluded from Weber that state is goal-oriented autonomous organisation with various purposes but extraordinary means (the use of force for instance) to dominate.

I integrated from several scholars such as Reuschemeyer and Evans (1986) and Mann (1989) (as written in Migdal 2004: 110-111), that state is a set of organisations equipped with authority in making decisions juridically within state’s territory where force can be applied if necessary. Hence, a state is considered as power organization that institutionalized in many aspects of social relation. The state has the capacity to perform political decisions across territories and/or penetrate the decisions through activities of civil society or known as infrastructural power (Mann 1984: 190). Back to the first paragraph about definition of state, the state has the legitimation to carry out its goal through various means with domination as one of them. Patterns of domination include the

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1 After having a discussion with supervisor and co-supervisor, and also with a master student taking linguistics study.
use of violence, threats, and other ways to make people comply with the rules imposed by the authority. Migdal (2004: 10) explains that to understand domination and change by the state in society we should look at multiple sides, such as those rules and which ideas should dominate in which may explain more about domination and change. The state in society theory could help in analysing the role of government critically since it is involved intensively in ricification through the rice-oriented Indonesian food policy.

2.3 Power/knowledge

There is various definition of power conveyed by many scholars. Bachrach and Baratz (as cited in Lukes 1974) came up with two different types of power. The first one is “all forms of successful control by A over B” and B comply to A’s order which known as general definition of power. The second, threat of sanctions is applied in the process of exercising, and therefore it is more known as “coercion.” Then power embodies several typologies such as coercion, influence, and authority—for instance, when the people comply and acknowledge that the command from the government.

Besides the different conceptualisation of power, Foucault describes that power is exercised not by itself but by concurrence with knowledge: “it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power”. Thus, knowledge is not dissociated with power, but rather, it depends on each other. This is what he termed as power/knowledge. He is concerned with how the process of the establishment of a fact or knowledge which includes equally existing valid statements of facts that have to be discredited and denied in order to establish new facts or something as a true or knowledge (Foucault, as cited in Mills 2003: 67-69).

Along with the theory of the state in society (sub-chapter 2.2), power/knowledge assists in understanding the way government controls the agricultural sector through several means such as coercion and knowledge. The government claims that their knowledge is the most appropriate. Through penetration of knowledge, they can control society and conceptualise their development program. This theory of power helps in understanding how ricification happens, how food system change, and how government, which in this theory has a role as the exerciser of power over the community, controls which types of a commodity they grow in particular way of production and what kind of food is available to the society.

2.4 Food security and food sovereignty

Food security term has been popular and the definition has been reframed many times since the end of the 1970s. The current definition of food security by World Food Summit 1996, “Food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO 2008: 1). However, many scholars and activists critique the concept of food security since it only promotes a market-based approach, i.e. lack access to food. This approach induces food insecurity instead, because it does not regard the structure and rural livelihoods as well as its environment (Akram-Lodhi 2015: 565).
Even though there are refinements in the definition of food security where access is currently included as part of the concept, there is still critique that food security prioritises food production over access. Aside from that, other scholars such as Jarosz and Clapp argue that neoliberal trade and market orientation are implicit in the concept of food security (Clapp 2014: 208). Consequently, food sovereignty emerged as an alternative to tackle this limitation and challenge the idea of food security, particularly the neoliberal component. In 1996 La Via Campesina’s declaration on food sovereignty, pointed out that food sovereignty is a “precondition to genuine food security”, bolstering agrarian and food rights particularly for peasants across the world (Clapp 2014: 207-208) and the smallholder farming as an “incubator” of food sovereignty (Akram-Lodhi 2015: 566). It further elaborated the term at the 2007 Nyéléni Forum for Food as:

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations (Nyéléni 2007).

Food sovereignty reckons human relations such as cultural diversity, mutual dependence, and environment which are neglected by the food security concept. Since food security fails in indicating where the food should come from and how it should be yielded (Patel 2009), food sovereignty offers a “different way of thinking about how the world food systems can be organized” (Akram-Lodhi 2015: 564). According to Akram-Lodhi (2015: 568), two pathways towards food sovereignty are agroecological farming and local food systems. In this paper, I centered local food systems as it also highlighted by Clapp (2014: 209) as a component of food sovereignty.

2.5 Food paradigm

Food policy is a top-down process arranged and set by the government. Internal and external factors, and stakeholders shape the food systems, how it is being operated and controlled. Lang and Haesman (2015: 12) stated in their paper that food policy and its making process form the food culture and food supply chain of who produces and who consumes. Global food policy is experiencing a transition from a food policy driven mostly by farming and agriculture to agribusiness and commodity style production are driven by consumption. This trend is linked with corporations that manufactured and retailed the food, which is also called the “Food Wars.” In their Food Wars book, Lang and Haesman (2015), referred to the transition of food systems. They use the term “food paradigm” which was first popularised by the Austrian philosopher Thomas Kuhn, to “indicate a set of shared understandings, common rules and ways of conceiving problems and solutions about food.” Food paradigm shows what kind of food policy is controlling the food systems both today and in the future. Lang and Haesman recognise three different paradigms: Productionist Paradigm, Life Sciences Integrated Paradigm, and Ecologically Integrated Paradigm. In this research, I will emphasize the concepts of productionist paradigm and ecologically integrated paradigm.

Productionist paradigm is being widely used in many countries which reflect in many countries’ food policy in solving food problems. The paradigm emerged two centuries ago in the era of industrialisation of food along with advancement in agricultural practices such as the usage of chemical substance and agricultural technologies. It is believed that this paradigm can produce more food to feed the growing world’s population. The problem is only certain kind of crops (e.g. rice, corn and ground nuts) are being produced massively. Food production is greatly boosted while
ignoring the possible impacts that will emerge such as social, health and environmental degradation, and threatening biodiversity. As such, a new paradigm is needed to overcome the problem and failure of the productionist paradigm. As aforementioned, there are two alternatives namely Life Science Integrated Paradigm and Ecologically Integrated Paradigm (EIP) (Lang and Haesman 2015: 12). Between these two, EIP is more relevant to be discussed in this research.

EIP emerged to overcome the shortcoming of productionist paradigm. EIP resemble the main focus of food sovereignty which is social and ecology problems as well as fight for marginalised people’s right in the food systems (Voletta 2016: 8). Therefore, this paradigm is considered to be more integrative particularly of health, socio-economics, and preservation of ecological diversity and culture. Concerning culture, this paradigm values the local knowledge and ecosystem. Besides that, EIP states to minimise extensive monoculture and enhances biodiversity to optimise productions for the long-term (Lang and Heasman 2015: 27 & 32).

Documents of Indonesian food policy seem more inclined to the productionist paradigm by pushing agriculture production and implementing top-down regulation without considering the uniqueness of each region and emergence of socio-economic problems from the policy such as the Maluku people being threatened with food insecurity. The food paradigm helps in analysing food policy on how the Indonesian government frames food systems.

2.6 Food systems

According to Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 1981), agro-food systems is “a set of activities and relationships that interact to determine what, how much, by what method and for whom food is produced and distributed” (Whatmore, as cited by Gregory et al. 2011).

Current food systems are inevitably derived from the system applied after World War II. The world needs to produce sufficient food to cover the increase of people’s demand for food, and therefore the solution was to produce more to avoid famine and rising prices. The Green Revolution was launched in 1965-1966 to address the increased food needs but this system is considered as unsustainable since it negatively impacted on human health and environment, and failed to reduce rural poverty in developing countries (De Schutter 2017: 705-707). Therefore, there is a need to find an alternative to current food systems to overcome the issue.

As mentioned in sub-chapter 2.3 that local food system is part of food sovereignty (Clapp 2014: 209). This necessitates defining local food systems. There are two similar terms to this: traditional food systems and local food systems. Kuhnlein and Receveur (1996: 418) used traditional food systems to indicate “all food within a particular culture available from local natural resources and culturally accepted.” On the other hand, Feenstra (1997: 28) stated that local food systems “are rooted in particular places, aim to be economically viable for farmers and consumers, use ecologically sound production and distribution practices, and enhance social equity and democracy for all members of the community.” As these definitions can complement each other, I decided to integrate them as follows: a local food system indicates food availability from local natural resources, rooted in specific places and culturally accepted where it aims to benefit farmers and consumers. Further, production and distribution are economically and ecologically safe, and promote social equity for community members. Alongside that the system includes the sociocultural meaning, traditional processing technique, nutritional outcomes and balanced diet gained from food diversity.
The political economy is also analysed, wherein its definition is borrowed from FAO (2017): “relating to social, economic, cultural and political factors that structure, sustain and transform constellations of public and private actors, and their interests and power relations, over time”. For political economy of food, I adapted Bernstein’s work (2010: 1) wherein political economy in agrarian study investigates “the social relations and dynamics of production and reproduction, property and power in agrarian formations and their process of change, both historical and contemporary”. From these definitions, I focused more into power relation and the interests that are involved in the process of change, i.e. who loses and who benefits.

**Concluding remarks:** This chapter has explained the analytical frameworks of this research. The term *ricification* will be used in this paper to refer to *berasisasi*. The theories of state in society, power/knowledge and food systems will be used to examine critically the Indonesian food policy, its history and implementation. Meanwhile, food sovereignty and food paradigm (together with food systems and power/knowledge) will be used to analyse the effect of changes of food consumption pattern or *ricification* towards the MTB community.
Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology applied in this research. It starts with the description of Maluku Tenggara Barat (MTB). This is followed by the case study design explanation consists of primary data collection such as focus group discussion (FGD), semi-structured interview and participant observation, and secondary data through various related documents. This chapter also contains the challenge, limitation, ethics, and the writer's positionality and reflexivity.

3.1 Study area and participants

Maluku Province is located in the eastern part of Indonesia (with the red sign on Map 3.1) consisting of 2 cities and 9 regencies. One of the regencies is Maluku Tenggara Barat (MTB) located in the southern part of Maluku province (Map 3.2). The MTB regency is chosen because its people used to consume various local food such as cassava, sweet potato, *kembili*, yam, taro, maize and sometimes sago (Figure 3.1). These food crops, in this paper, are hereafter referred to as local food. However, the MTB community is currently experiencing *ricification*. Actually, rice has been in MTB for a long time, but not the white rice and the variety is limited to red and black rice due to its environmental conditions. The landscape of Maluku is composed of hilly land areas and the lack of water are constraints to expanding irrigated rice field in the area while local food grows abundantly and naturally fit the landscape of Maluku (Wardis 2014: 101).

---

2 Indigenous tuber of MTB.
Map 3.2 Map of Tanimbar Islands of MTB

Source: Badan Informasi Geospasial (2017b)

Figure 3.1 Local food in MTB
A. Indigenous sweet potato, B. Taro, C. Kembili, D. Sweet potato, E. Banana, F. Petatas

Source: Fieldwork (Laidalam village 27 July 2018).
3.1.1 Selection of area sample

After gathering the information from *Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa* (PMD, Department of Rural Society Empowerment of MTB). Three places were chosen as it could enrich the primary data, the places are Latdalam village (A), Kandar village (B), and Saumlaki city (C) (with a red square on Map 3.3 (edited from Map 3.2)). Because of reasons that will be explained as follows. These specific places where I conducted the fieldwork were chosen due to their different characteristics and other reasons that will be explained as follows.

The three places depicted the stages of changing in food consumption pattern. Firstly, Latdalam village is one of the villages with a bigger population compared to other villages. Latdalam was chosen because almost all of the people work as farmers who grow local food. This village is on the early stage of changing where the farmers are still planting local food but are beginning to plant and consume more rice. Its people feel it themselves that something is changing in their local food systems.

Secondly, Kandar village is recently known as the rice-producing village among the other villages in MTB. Currently, most of them are rice farmers, but they are still planting local food though not as often as they used to. Kandar village is considered as the next stage of changing since most people in the village are planting and consuming more rice, and as a result, local food has been abandoned gradually. From Kandar village, it was sought how the rice-oriented food policy influences the change in agricultural practices from growing local food to expanding rice field, and how it affects their food pattern and preferences. However, I could not visit the village as I was not permitted by the officials due to bad weather during the fieldwork. Instead, I interviewed the selected interviewees through phone.

The next stage after Kandar’s is what has happened in Saumlaki city, the capital city of MTB. Most people work there as government officials, sellers, and small-scale entrepreneurs. Only a contemptibly small number are still farming. Saumlaki has a decreasing population of farmers way back, and as a result, the local food production has declined. Now, they depend entirely on rice production from other places.

![Map 3.3 Fieldwork places in MTB](source: Badan Informasi Geospasial (2017b))
3.2 Case study design

Based on the research problem and question, this research adopted qualitative methods within case study design. As stated by Gerring (2007, 2015: 30), a case study is “observational study of a single case or small number of cases which also promises to shed light on a larger population of cases”, or in other word, a research model to explore a phenomenon through an intensive study of (a) case(s). This paper use case study to examine the way food policy of the state works in an area of Indonesia which still cultivates and consumes local food. In this paper, the area chosen as a place boundary is the Regency of Maluku Tenggara Barat, particularly in three places namely Latdalam village, Kandar village, and Saumlaki city. I found case study as a suitable design since the research topic of changing in food consumption pattern happens as well in other places.

The case study design in this paper is equipped by qualitative methods in order to obtain holistic meaning immerse into their real life and experience the natural setting of the research atmosphere. Therefore, the researcher can acquire a profound understanding of people, places, cultures, and situation of the particular group and place being researched (O'Leary 2010: 114). In case study, the use of multiple sources of evidence is important to strengthens research validity (Yin 2013). The primary data was collected through FGD, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation. All of the methods were conducted using *Bahasa Indonesia*. Field notes were written and every conversation recorded to keep the primary data well documented since it is very imperative in obtaining new and authentic data. Considering the ethics, all of participants’ name were replaced with the pseudonym. I also utilised secondary data, such as literature and related government documents was also utilised to particularly analyse the Indonesian food policy.

**How I approached the study participants**

I used gatekeeper recruitment sampling technique to select interviewees. This was chosen due to the following reasons. First, because I had a little knowledge about MTB, connecting myself with gatekeepers would help in the provision of valuable information. Secondly, MTB has a robust social hierarchy, so it is essential to get the first impression of participant’s trust through gatekeeper (Hennink et al. 2011: 92-93).

I was introduced to the Head of PMD by my former lecturer. Several formal coordination was done with them regarding the research plan and its arrangement in the field. Taking off from that, the Head of PMD (and his staff) became the gatekeepers. They facilitated my entry into several local government institutions and study communities, serving as liaisons with the head of each villages in arranging FGD and interviews. The head of villages then became the second layer gatekeepers, as they assisted with participant recruitment in which the recruitment criteria were shared before. Aside from this, I approached the participants and built rapport with them by myself.

3.2.1 Primary data

**Focus group discussion (FGD)**

Focus group discussion (FGD) was carried out in the first part of data collection since I wanted to gather as many perspectives as the participants can convey regarding the issue. The method also

3 *Bahasa Indonesia* is a national language of Indonesia. The FGD and interviews were conducted in *Bahasa Indonesia*, but infrequently, the participants inserted some *Bahasa Maluku* (local language of MTB) when answering the questions.

4 The use of pseudonym name is related to ethical consideration which explained in sub-chapter 3.4.
allowed me to identify their socio-cultural behaviours and their norms. During the FGD, the participants automatically validate their behaviour or phenomena that occur within their community (Hennink et al. 2011: 138). It helped in investigating the core of this research, which is how the food consumption pattern has been changed or how *ricification* takes place. Also gathered were the impacts of the change on their local food systems, how they experience this, and what their aspirations are regarding the issue. The other important reason why FGD was used is to establish rapport between the participants. I got to know the participants and their characteristics, so that when the interviews were conducted, I learned their general view of the issue.

FGD was conducted in Latdalam village only due to the condition, accessibility, and permission from local government. Participants were selected from different categories. The procedure went as follows. First, the list of prospective participants to be invited in the FGD was given to the head of the village. The list of the desired detail of participants such as categorisation of gender, age, and occupation. I proposed balanced gender (5 male and 4 female), diverse range of age (from 25 to 70 years old), and various occupation (from local food farmer, rice farmer, fisheries, civil servant, trader to housewife). I planned to invite 9 people to be present in the FGD, but 15 people came with relatively the same job. Most of them are male local food farmers with small scale of land possession, with average age range from 35-65 years old. It is quite difficult to get diverse participants since the village composition is somewhat homogenous. They came partly because of their interest in the topic and their willingness to help me get the data. Table 3.1 shows the list of FGD participants in Latdalam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sasongko</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Susilo</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dodo</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jatmiko</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Argono</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Asmadi</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yanto</td>
<td>±50</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rahayu</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tuti</td>
<td>±60</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lestari</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Seller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sri</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Seller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bambang</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Yanto</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Wiyati</td>
<td>±40</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Jasmadi</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.1 List of FGD participants (held in Latdalam village)**

*Semi-structured interview*

After conducting the FGD, interviews were carried out to get deeper opinions from selected participants. I successfully interviewed 15 participants from Latdalam village, 3 participants who live in Saumlaki city, and 3 participants from Kandar village which was carried out by phone. The interviews lasted up to one hour and a half each person. In general, I explored their opinions on *ricification* based on their experience and their culture in terms of farming and eating. I also obtained explanation of the changes of consumption pattern after analysing their answers. In addition, I gathered information on how they dealt with and what their aspirations are to changing food
consumption patterns. Tables 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 gives the list of interview participants in Latdalam, Saumlaki, and Kandar respectively.

**Table 3.2 List of interview participants in Latdalam Village**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sasongko</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Susilo</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Local food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dodo</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Local food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jatmiko</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Local food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Argono</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Local food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Asmadi</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Local food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Yanto</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Local food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rahayu</td>
<td>±60</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Local food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tuti</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Seller</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lestari</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Seller</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sri</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bambang</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Local food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Jasmadi</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Aswono</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Local food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Tono</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of the village</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.3 List of interview participants in Saumlaki City**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rukmi</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pandji</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Civil servant (staff)</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wening</td>
<td>±50</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.4 List of interview participants (telephonic) in Kandar Village**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wahyu</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of village</td>
<td>Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Retno</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Local food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yoto</td>
<td>±50</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Local food</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, local government officials were also interviewed from different departments since the issue intersects and relates to the chosen departments: *Dinas Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa* (PMD, Department of Rural Society Empowerment of MTB), *Dinas Pertanian* (DEPTAN, Department of Agriculture of MTB), *Dinas Sosial* (DINSOS, Department of Social Services of MTB), and *Badan Ketahanan Pangan* (BKP, Food Security Agency of MTB). At the national level, I interviewed a senior researcher from *Pusat Studi Ekonomi dan Kebijakan Pertanian* (PSEKP, Centre for Socio-Economics and Agriculture Policy of Indonesia) to get a scholar’s view and one person from the BKP of Indonesia. A lecturer from Universitas Pattimura was also involved as a resource person.

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5 Number 1 to 13 are the participants who participated in the FGD.
6 Number 14 and 15 only participated in interview not in FGD.
7 The interview conducted through email and read his article published on the internet.
Table 3.5 presents the list of interview participant with background in government and academic. They were asked to elaborate their opinion on how the change is happening specifically from the lens of policy makers. Their answers were analysed on how policy causes *ricification* eventually. In total, 36 participants were interviewed in this research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Initials</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adianto</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Department of Rural Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Empowerment of MTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wanto</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of Division</td>
<td>Department of Rural Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Empowerment of MTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bagio</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of Division</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture of MTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jatiaidi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Secretary of department</td>
<td>Food Security Agency of MTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Banyu</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of Division</td>
<td>Food Security Agency of MTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yani</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Head of Division</td>
<td>Food Security Agency of MTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>haryono</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of Division</td>
<td>Food Security Agency of MTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Yowati</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Department of Social Affairs of MTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Eko</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of Division</td>
<td>Department of Social Affairs of MTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Andani</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Expert staff</td>
<td>MTB Regency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ismaya</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>Statistics of MTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Martini</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Statistics of MTB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Hartati</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Senior researcher</td>
<td>Centre of Socio Economic and Agricultural Policy of Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Bagus</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Head of Division</td>
<td>Food Security Agency of Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Anggoro</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Lecturer and Maluku’s figure</td>
<td>Universitas Pattimura</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participant observation**

Along with FGD and interview, observation is another essential tool for qualitative research. Observation provides corresponding data regarding the issue. Observation allows “researchers to obtain a detailed description of social settings or events in order to situate people’s behaviour within their own socio-cultural context” (Hennink et al. 2011: 170).

I lived with and observed 2 families. The first one was in Saumlaki city where I lived in for 3 weeks; with a female teacher-headed big family. This family consists of 1 middle-aged lady\(^8\) as head of the family, her mom and dad (above 70 years old), the daughter’s husband (around 30 years old) with 3 children (all below 5 years old), and 1 daughter in law (24 years old) with 2 children (all below 5 years old). This family was chosen for observation because it is a big family with variation of age and gender. The second one was in Latdalum village for 3 days. I have lived with a female farmer-headed small family of 2; herself\(^9\) and her granddaughter (17 years old—high school student). The two families were observed on what is their food preference; how they get and prepare the food for breakfast, lunch, and dinner and also food for snack time.

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\(^8\) Number 14 was interviewed through email and read his article on internet.  
\(^9\) She is the same person with initial Wening in Table 3.3.  
\(^{10}\) She is the same person with initial Rahayu in Table 3.2.
3.2.2 Secondary data

The secondary data was obtained from government documents related to Indonesian food policy such as the *Roadmap Diversifikasi Pangan* 2011-2015 (Roadmap of Food Diversification 2011-2015), *Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah* (RPJMN, Middle Term Development Plan) particularly in food and agriculture sector, Food Act Number 18 of 2012, and *Upaya Khusus* (UPSUS, Special Effort Program) among others (see Appendix 1). Alongside that, other official documents were included such as statistics and other data gained directly from the local government in MTB. This research also used articles, books, and discussions related to the research topic in order to make the arguments strong, well directed and developed. Secondary data enrich the data gathered in the field. It helped me to improve my analysis further especially regarding the rice policy that has been occurred since past decades and analyse the effects of the changes food consumption pattern or *ricification* towards the community.

3.3 Data analysis

I went through several steps and principles according to the book of Hennink et al. (2011) in analysing empirical data. Verbatim (word-for-word) transcripts in Bahasa Indonesia were done to help me getting the views of participants in their own words within specific context. Verbatim was done for some data while important points for the rest. After transforming all the data into writing and highlight substantial narratives, I put them into tables (manually made) of different categories based on their identities, opinions, facts, idea, and other issues. During transcribing and categorising, the process helped in building understanding of the issue as a requirement to the theory development inductively, and searching for explanations for incorporation to the paper contextually. All interview quotes presented in this paper were translated from Bahasa Indonesia into English. Besides analysing primary data, secondary data was also analysed to answer policy-related questions and to complement analysis of empirical ones.

3.4 Limitation, challenge, and ethics

There were problems in interpreting the meaning of the answers the interviewees gave because they sometimes inserted their local language (Bahasa Maluku) in the conversation. However, I tried to understand their answers from the whole context being discussed, or by asking them to repeat what do they meant. Secondly, the location of the villages is far apart and there was no public transportation to the village, so I use the limited time to collect all the data that needed. Kandar village which is located on a small island, was not possible to be visited due to bad weather. Therefore, interviews had to be conducted through phone. Also, it was quite difficult for me to look for representative interviewees there. Moreover, the phone signal in MTB is quite terrible and this became another obstacle in carrying out the interview. However, in the end, I was able to surpass these difficulties and conducted the data gathering accordingly.

In addition to the challenges, there are also some limitations of this research paper. For example, there is a lack of intergenerational aspects. The youngest interview respondent was 24 years old. I did not have sufficient time to get study participants who are teenagers and children. However, fortunately, the two families I lived with had teenagers and children so I was still able to obtain data even though they were not interviewed directly.
Alongside these challenges and limitation, this paper also complies with ethical principles in research. Some participants did not give their consent about their name written in this paper, but most allowed to include their names. In the end, I decided to cover the identity of all the participants to protect their confidentiality. I used the typical name of central Javanese as participants’ pseudonyms because it is very different with Moluccan’s name. Another ethical consideration is in gathering the primary data, every discussion was recorded with participants and all of them gave permission to record their sessions.

3.5 Positionality and reflexivity

Haraway (1991: 193) explained about “position” where positioning is a key practice. Similarly, Madge (1993: 296) argued that positionality in terms of race, age, gender, social and economic status, and others might influence data collection. I agree with Haraway (1991) and Madge (1993) that positionality is very important in knowledge production. In this sub-chapter, I explain about my positionality as to how it matters to this research. It is better for a researcher to be reflexive about it, particularly in situating knowledge to avoid “false neutrality” (Rose 1997: 306). My multiple identities as a central Javanese, as a holder of a bachelor’s degree in agricultural sciences, as someone educated in a foreign institution, and as a student who collaborates with a university’s research institution have situated me in different positions during the research.

Before I eventually chose MTB as fieldwork area, as describes in sub-chapter 3.2, I was introduced by my former lecturer to the Head of PMD who later helped in arranging the fieldwork in MTB. When the local government learned that I am pursuing study in The Netherlands, they welcomed me warmly. Later on, I found that in 1951, a lot of Maluku people who worked as Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger (KNIL, Royal Netherlands East Indies Army) migrated to The Netherlands because they wanted to have their independence and refused to unite with Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI, The Indonesian National Armed Forces). Thus, when I conducted research, some study participants reminisced their history in relation to The Netherlands. Somehow, that history proximity and gatekeepers’ assistance helped in building rapport with them. As a result, they lent their hands in answering the interview questions and attending the FGD invitation. However, it leads to my fear that my positionality as a student researcher and foreign-educated individual could influence participants’ expectation towards the research and discharges what solution I can offer.

Positionality as mentioned earlier shaped my position in this research. Since this research is about rice, local food, and its dynamics and politics, I considered my identity as a Javanese and a youth who has a bachelor’s degree in agriculture. The Javanese are identified as heavy rice eaters. It is supposed to make me as a proponent of the government in promoting of rice consumption, but actually, it was the contrary. Even though I am Javanese, I have another positionality that is as a former student in agricultural sciences which taught me that rice production utilises chemical inputs, high-yield seed and mechanisation. Indeed, it is suitable for improving production but not for the environmental sustainability and for the farmers themselves since the program does not benefit them but agricultural and related companies. Not to mention farmers’ health is being threatened because of their exposure to the chemical substance. In addition to that, since I am being

11 People who have root in central and east Java province which located in Java Island.
12 Maluku people.
13 One of the tribes in Indonesia who live in Central Java. It located approximately 2,339 kilometers to Maluku Tenggara Barat.
taught in an institute with critical social studies, this has led me not to accept something as it is, but rather think and question critically why things happen or exist the way it is.

These last two identities shape my subjectivity which influences the development of the research. Therefore, when it comes to this research paper, I already have a stance in mind. However, I tried to be objective and neutral in every step I have taken in conducting fieldwork and this research in general.

**Concluding remarks**: This chapter explained the way the research was carried out. The methods of FGD, semi-structured interview, and observation complemented each other in obtaining primary data to answer the research question, specially to answer second and third sub-questions. The use of secondary data such as government’s documents is helpful to infer the Indonesian food policy chronologically and to answer first research sub-question regarding food policy. Challenge, limitation, and ethics were included under one sub-chapter. Alongside that, I also embraced my positionality to make me reflexive in producing knowledge.
Chapter 4 Indonesian food policy: towards *ricification*

This chapter tries to address the first research sub-question on why rice is being promoted and what the role of government is in escalating *ricification*. The first sub-chapter presents a brief history of Indonesian food policy that contributes in accelerating *ricification* such as program on improvement of rice production, rice-for-the-poor program, and rice as a part of civil servant’s salary. In the next sub-chapter, I analyse why *ricification* happens using the state in society theory and in relation to power/knowledge. The political economy of *ricification* also included in this chapter.

4.1 Rice-oriented food policy

4.1.1 Program on improvement of rice production

Most of the interview participants who work for government mentioned that rice-oriented food policy is one of the reasons why rice becomes dominant as a main staple food in Indonesia, as explained in Chapter 1, also known as *ricification*. They shared the information on how the food policy operates at the ground level. Having received general ideas from their answer, primary data was complemented using secondary ones, particularly literature review related to Indonesian rice policy with the following explanation.

If one were to trace back the history of rice and why it became dominant in Indonesia, one will find that the culture of planting rice actually existed since the beginning of the century, particularly in Java island where rice farming was practiced traditionally. The Dutch then colonised Indonesia in the sixteenth century and Java became the centre of the colonial government. They applied *cultuurstelsel* through enforcement planting where farmers (and all people basically) were forced to plant cash crops such as coffee, spices, and sugar to be exported to The Netherlands. Since rice had been planted by farmers as their daily food, the colonial regime started to consider rice as the main food crop by increasing its production even though the yield was still unstable. Departing from that, can be argued that rice production began to be raised in the colonial regime because they considered that rice was quite important food for the Javanese at that time. Because Java was the centre of government, all attention went to this region, including eating habits (Mudiyono and Wasino 2017: 38 & 41). So that, rice began to be popular both in Java and outside Java. Another reason is drawn from the statement of Bantacut (2003: 4) about rice and the use of carbohydrates for human body. Carbohydrate is essential as the primary source of energy for humans to carry out activities and rice is known as a high-carbohydrate containing agricultural commodity. Therefore, besides the legacy of the colonial regime, rice is prevalent in Indonesia because of its carbohydrate content.

From a glimpse of the history of rice above, rice began to dominate since the colonial era (Van der Eng 2000, Reid 1984), particularly around the 1930s when the colonial government have stimulated domestic rice production. In 1939, rice production was intensified to secure food supply in anticipation of the war. Farmers then planted the superior variety of rice which better in production

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14 Twelve out of fifteen interview participants (in Table 3.5, participants no. 1 to 8, no. 10 and no. 13 to 15) (interviews conducted on 28-29 July 2018 in Saumlaki).
15 Dutch language for cultivation system.
capacity. It made Indonesia self-sufficient in rice in 1941, but the rice supply declined partly due to the of World War II and Japanese occupation (Van der Eng 2000: 604).

After independence, Indonesia was led by President Sukarno during the Demokrasi Terpimpin era (Guided Democracy 1952-1964). Rice development became the focus of government through land use intensification and expansion. Bimbingan masal (BIMAS, a mass guidance program) was formed by the government as a mediator to distribute aid, circulate information and assist farmers. The government intervened in the rice market and the floor and ceiling price fixing. It highlighted that rice has been the main focus at the expense of other food crops (Van der Eng 2000: 605-606).

Rice-oriented policy was emphasized in the Orde Baru (New Order 1969-1998) era of President Suharto through green revolution program 1970s where the following were implemented: procurement of high-technology machine, production of high-yield rice varieties, subsidising of inputs (chemical fertiliser, seed, and pesticide), construction of irrigation, expansion of field, strengthening the extension system, and farm financing and incentive. When oil and gas prices resulted in good revenues, the government invested these to the development of the agriculture sector among others (Van der Eng 2000: 606). Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun (REPELITA, The Five-Year Development Plan)\(^\text{16}\) had launched to support green revolution program. The government had the power to decide what types of seed to be planted, the variety of fertilizer, pesticides, and all things related to crop production to be used. Farmers only had to comply with the rules set by the government, as farmers were not allowed to make any decisions. Since the government had invested considerably in the green revolution program, rice production increased rapidly, resulting in Indonesia successfully achieving rice self-sufficiency in 1984 (Simatupang 1999: 3, Van der Eng 2000: 606).

After President Suharto stepped down from power, the government was rolled out to the next president, B.J. Habibie (1998-1999). He also put rice as the main agricultural commodity even to the point that when President Habibie (1998-1999) sold the Indonesian aircraft\(^\text{17}\) to Thailand, payment was in the form of rice (akin to a barter). This illustrated how important rice is for Indonesians. Subsequently, the next president after President Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2000), President Megawati (2000-2004) conveyed her statement that confirmed the role of rice, “Tidak ada pilihan lain kecuali swasembada” or “No other option but self-sufficiency” (Lassa 2005: 5). In 2008, when President Yudhoyono was in power (2004-2014), Indonesia achieved its second rice self-sufficiency given the support from the government through the program of Peningkatan Produksi Beras Nasional (P2BN, National Rice Production Improvement Program) in which technology was much involved in the implementation (Swastika 2011: 107).

To draw from the past history, those programs (green revolution, BIMAS, REPELITA, and P2BN) contributed to the increase in rice production from 53.3 percent in 1945 to 78.04 percent in 2010 with fluctuation in between which indicates that rice has been dominating the staple food of Indonesians (Food Security Agency, as cited in Trisia et al. 2016: 50). The government perceived that growth in rice production is the key to guarantee national food security and marked the development of agriculture in Indonesia. As a result, rice has become a strategic commodity and as an indicator of successful government regime, making rice a politically sensitive commodity.

In President Joko Widodo’s era (2014-present), the rice tradition continued. A program named Upaya Khusus (UPSU, Special Effort Program) (Kurniawan 2016) was implemented as part of the President’s Nawa Cita\(^\text{18}\), and along with Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah (RPJMN, Middle

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16 The Five-Year Development Plan (REPELITA) was a planning unit created by the New Order government.
17 Aircraft made by Industri Pesawat Terbang Nusantara (IPTN, Indonesian Aerospace).
18 Nine priority agenda of the current President of Republic of Indonesia (2014-2019).
Term Development Plan) emphasized to increase the production of several strategic commodities namely rice, maize, and beans. These recent policies rather heightened the importance and the prioritisation of rice production. As Banyu said, “[the] UPSUS program is one of the programs that promote rice intervention since this program boosts rice production and two other commodities.” Through the green revolution and various production improvement programs, the government frames Indonesian food policy towards a productionist paradigm since it is believed that the paradigm can produce more food to feed the growing population (in this paper, produce more rice to feed all citizens). Production is intensified while ignoring the future possible negative impacts such as socio-cultural, health, and environmental degradation. In addition, the productionist paradigm threatens local food systems and biodiversity as only certain commodities are being urged under unsustainable way of production.

The current law is Food Act Number 18 of 2012 has been released as a replacement of Food Act Number 7 of 1996, and serves as the foundation of food policy implementation. The new Act offers both food security and food sovereignty concepts and mentions that the state is obliged to realise the availability, affordability, and fulfilment of sufficient, safe, quality and nutritious food, to individuals both at national and local levels throughout time by utilising resources, institutions, and local culture. This is a very comprehensive concept of the right to food adapted by the government. Nevertheless, as research conducted by Voletta (2016), it revealed that Food Act Number 18 of 2012 in practice has no difference with previous regulations. Indonesian food policy still focuses on rice production and availability. Actually, the food diversification program started since 1969 (BKP 2012). Banyu said that a local food (specifically tubers) development program was implemented during 2001-2017 in MTB, but it did not work optimally (interview, 25 July 2018).

Following up the statement from Banyu, I found government documents explaining that there are efforts in promoting local food-based diversification to avoid dependency on single staple food—rice. For instance, these are stipulated in the Presidential Decree Number 22 of 2009 on local resource-based diversification of food consumption acceleration policy, and the Ministerial Regulation Number 43 of 2009 which highlighted 36 local food commodities as an alternative to rice (Trisia et al. 2016: 51). However, as Banyu said that the program has insignificant result, at least in MTB. This is due to the focus on rice provision in Indonesian food policy through P2BN and UPSUS without adequate consideration for increasing food production based on local resources such as tubers which contain complete nutrition. It is argued that the two kinds of policies (rice intensification and food diversification) contradicts each other. As rice is considered as a politically sensitive commodity, rice production and provision has been related to national stability. Hence, it is quite challenging to suppress rice production and get over local food gradually. Another additional reason is that to change the habit that has been done for years is very difficult (Bagus, interview 16 August 2018).

4.1.2 Rice-for-the-poor program

Alongside the programs mentioned in sub-chapter 4.1.1, Beras Miskin (Raskin, Rice-for-the-poor program) is part of the Indonesian food policy in general. This is explained separately since it contributes significantly to ricification. Raskin often appeared in the interviews since all participants, from citizens to government officials, said that raskin is very close to their life. So to speak, raskin is one of the platforms which led to ricification in MTB.

The monetary crisis in 1998 was the beginning of raskin implementation that aimed to strengthen (particularly) poor households’ food security in dealing with the crisis. From the information gathered from interviews, every household gets 15 kg rice per month with subsidized price
around IDR 3,000 per kilogram\(^1\). The distribution of *raskin* highly escalated from around 1.48 million tons to 2.77 million tons during 2001-2014 (Nuryanti et al. 2017: 160). *Badan Urusan Logistik* (BULOG, National Logistics Agency) delivers *raskin* to over 50,000 distribution points across Indonesia. In MTB itself, 11,748 households were receiving *raskin* in 2015 (Eko, interview 30 July 2018). Currently, *raskin* has expanded its function from becoming a social safety net to becoming one of the largest household-based social assistance programs in terms of government spending (*Tim Nasional Percepatan Penanggulangan Kemiskinan* n.d.).

In 2015, the name was changed to *Beras Sejahtera* (*Rastra*, wealth-rice) to change the idea that previously the rice was to help the poor, but now the government subsidized rice to improve people’s lives more “prosperous” (Arief 2015). However, the aim of the program is still the same: as assistance to maintain rice price to be affordable for the poor or low-income people. Even in 2018, they no longer have to pay for *rastra*\(^2\) (Yowati, Head of DINSOS of MTB, interview 30 July 2018). This program is supported by President Instruction Number 3 of 2007 on Rice Policy. It regulates seven main points of national rice policy, but the one related to *rastra* is point number 5 in which the government provides and distributes subsidized rice for the poor and food insecure groups.

The distribution of *rastra* starts from the central government (particularly Coordinating Minister for People’s Welfare and Poverty Eradication, and BULOG) to the provincial government. Afterward, rice is passed to city or regency government, and kept in the warehouse before being distributed to the beneficiaries in every sub-district. Ideally, *rastra* is distributed once a month, but in MTB, due to the condition and very scattered location of villages, *rastra* arrives at sub-districts every three months (Yowati and Eko Staff of DINSOS of MTB, interview 30 July 2018). Since people get *rastra* routinely, it has become a habit and has led to rice replacing previous staple foods gradually. Moreover, with lower price than the market price, *rastra* is more affordable for low-income people. Therefore, they do not have to grow local food, or in other words, rice is more efficient. However, one of the study participants, Eko, argued that *rastra* is not a cause of *ricification*. He assessed that *rastra* would not become a habit as he said:

[…] it will not change the habit. They only get 15 kg a month. You can imagine if one household has 5 members, 15 kilograms maybe will run out within less than a week. It will not have much effect. (Eko, interview 30 July 2018).

When I got his answer, it seemed plausible that *rastra* probably will not affect the change significantly. However, while going through the interviews with the farmers in the village, I learned that even though the *rastra* amount is not that much, they receive it constantly and thus, they become dependent on rice eventually: “[…] Yes… I always buy rice. I save some money before in order to buy rice” (Yanto, interview 27 July 2018). That kind of answer always emerged every time questions about *rastra* were asked. They admitted that despite the below standard quality of *rastra*, they never pass up on *rastra* distribution.

### 4.1.3 Privilege of “the privileged ones”

In Indonesia, particularly in the regional level, being a government official is seen as a prestigious profession through the privileges obtained such as allowances on living cost, education and pension fund. This is on top of another incentive which is receiving rice as part of their salaries when Guided Democracy (Lassa 2005: 4) and New Order eras (Lassa 2005: 4, Liddle 1987: 130) were in

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\(^1\) It is approximately equal to 0.17 Euro per kilogram (rate per 23 October 2018) from normal price around IDR 12,000 – 15,000 per kilogram (equal to almost 1 Euro).

\(^2\) Hereafter I use the term *rastra* to refer to rice-for-the-poor program.
power. As Sri said “Because my parents were government official, they got rice as part of their salary. So, I am used to eating rice since my childhood,” (interview 27 July 2018).

This policy made it convenient for government officials across Indonesia to consume rice, and it was indirectly encouraged the high consumption of rice from time to time. Entering the 1990s, the availability of rice began to be threatened, as the policy was abolished, but it already gave adverse impacts on society: people’s food preference has changed into rice and rice has more social value than other food commodities. Such perception was formed by itself since only privileged people could relish rice without bothering to plant it. With privilege status attached, it means that they were wealthier compared to farmers as dominant livelihoods at that time. What can be inferred from this policy is that this led to the formation of perception that rice is superior since it is consumed by the wealthy. As a consequence, local food is negatively perceived as the inferior one.

To conclude this sub-chapter 4.1, a similarity between all government regimes from the beginning of independence until the present is the commitment to achieve rice self-sufficiency at the national level. Indonesian food policy has philosophically the same basic framework since long ago and is expected not to change in the upcoming 15-20 years (Suryana 2008: 4). Based on the explanation, a graph of the Indonesian food policies (processed from various scholars mentioned above) can be seen in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 History of Indonesia’s food policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colonial Era</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colonial era is the period before independence in 1945.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Along with cash crops, the colonial started to consider rice production.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Around 1930s: Government stimulated domestic rice production.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939: Rice production intensification was to secure food supply in anticipation of the war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941: Indonesia reach its rice self-sufficient, but then the rice supply declined in 1943, partly because of World War II and Japanese occupation.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Guided Democracy and New order Era</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Guided Democracy (1945-1965) and New Order (1966-1998), rice became the focus of agricultural development through land use intensification and expansion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960s: Implementation of green revolution, BIMAS, REPELITA, to boost rice production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984: Indonesia reach its rice self-sufficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice was part of government officials’ salary until before 1990s.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Reform Era</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-Reform era is the period from 1998-present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food crisis in 1998 where rice-for-the-poor program first launched.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Until 2005 the rice production was fluctuating.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Around 2008 (President Yudhoyono): Indonesia reach its rice self-sufficient through P2BN program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Joko Widodo’s era (2014-present): UPSUS program which prioritize three commodities (rice, maize, and beans).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author 2018.
4.2 How power of government plays a big role in ricification

As said by Reuschemeyer and Evans (1986) and Mann (1989) in sub-chapter 2.2, the state is a set of organisations equipped with authority in making judicial decisions. Indonesia as a state certainly has the authority in determining policies to be implemented, including food policy. In addition, Migdal (2004) said that Weber’s assumption of state is as a goal-oriented organisation. The goal is designed and implemented by the government who act as the dominant actor and has the legitimacy to do anything such as coercion or imposition of sanctions in policy implementation. The goal of the government of Indonesia is to achieve food security for all its citizens even though they have to take any means in order to materialize it.

In accordance with the definition of power from Bachrach and Baratz (as cited in Lukes 1974) where A controls over B, the Indonesian government exercises its power through the set of policies that explained in previous chapter (green revolution, REPELITA, P2BN, and UPSUS) were set to achieve the goal of national food security. The government controls the commodities to be planted, in this case, is rice with a specific way of production using chemical fertilizer, high-yielded seed, and mechanization, especially at the time when green revolution was promoted. Those programs fulfil one of the points that must be covered in analysing power relations, namely “the means of bringing power relations into being” by Foucault (1982: 792) where threat or word, technology or other control mechanisms are used for exercising power. That strategy was applied by the New Order era in executing green revolution as President Suharto, who adopted authoritarian system in carried out his administration, often used military forces to threaten farmers if they refused the government’s order (Simatupang 1999: 4). So to speak, it was hard for people to oppose the ruling government at that time. Farmers inevitably were pushed to produce rice under the instructions and rules that have been determined, even though it might be not in line with their will (Simatupang 1999: 8-9). Moreover, the government stipulated rice production as one of key performance indicators in the national and district levels, which depicts of what Mann (1984: 190) mentioned that the state has the capacity to undertake political decisions.

The “toughness” of the government paid off when President Suharto was given an award by international communities and institutions such as FAO for achieving rice self-sufficiency in 1984. A critique towards it is that the objective of the policy was not purely meant to fulfil basic human needs, rather it was a personal obsession of President Suharto to maintain political and economic stability, and for the survival of the New Order era (Simatupang 1999: 2-3). Nevertheless, after 1990, rice production was still increasing but with slower rate of growth. Due to the demand for rice over domestic production, some of the needs were met through import. It indicated that the rice self-sufficiency program was unsustainable, as it triggered resorting to imports to fulfil rice demand.

Recently, even though the military force is no longer available, there is another subtler form of force in rice production. In Kandar village, farmers receive aid in the form of agricultural inputs and agricultural machines such as tractor and rice mills. With little power farmers have, they could not refuse the introduction of machines and inputs, particularly seeds. Surprisingly, the farmers are enthusiastic in accepting the aid when Retno, a wife who helped his husband in the farm, said that the machine helps to improve rice productivity so that they could obtain more income (interview 2 September 2018). They thought that the exposure to technology means they find themselves levels ahead compared to their ancestors. I assumed that somehow it is a natural response to something new that could help their lives easier, but what needs to be considered is that hopefully, this is not a pragmatic attitude or indifference to the situation.
Exacerbating this problem is based on the information from Wahyu, head of Kandar village, Kandar’s farmers receive assistance from the government in the form of chemical-based inputs such as herbicides, chemical pesticides, and fertilizers. This practice will indirectly change the way farmers grow plants, as attested by one interviewee, “Yes… now, when we plant rice, before we plant, we apply herbicide first to the field” (Yoto, interview 2 September 2018). The thing is, when asked whether the herbicide makes his field conventional, he said that his field is still organic. Whereas, in fact, it is not, the herbicide he used is surely chemical-based. I recognized the brand when he said “the brand of the herbicide is Rentakil®.” It assumed that farmers do not know and are not given prior proper knowledge about the input they received. The government only provide a picture that what it orders is proper and is new knowledge for the community. That condition reflects what was mentioned by Foucault that power is exercised not only by itself but also in conjunction with knowledge: the Indonesian government penetrates its program as a modern and appropriate knowledge. As a result, the local knowledge such as traditional local food cultivation began to be neglected. This is due to the condition that to establish a fact or knowledge, other facts have to be discredited (Foucault, as cited in Mills 2003: 67-69).

In addition to abovementioned improvement programs, ricifikasi progressed more obviously when the government launched rastra program (see Chapter 4.1.2). This can be inferred from the statement of Wahyu, wherein he had refused rastra to be distributed in Kandar village, but his effort has failed since rastra was already allocated by the government to each village:

I once refused to receive rastra, but I could not do it [...] because they still give us rastra. They said they already allocated rastra for Kandar Village. I never refuse again ever since (Wahyu, interview 10 August 2018).  

It is evident that the government, again, exercises their power, and shows their dominance as a state which indirectly allow ricifikasi to be running smoothly. In addition, an opinion which supports the dominance of government is conveyed by Bagio, that central government often gives aid for social safety nets, crop failure or food crisis in the form of rice.

In fact, we have to see what happened on a scale. If the occurrence is still on a small scale, it can be overcome by our internal program, [...] no need to be directly given rice assistance by the central government. We can take advantage of other tubers (Bagio, interview 25 July 2018).

It is then not only creating people’s dependence on rice, but also generating bias on food policy. With the enactment of rastra regulation, the government shows its dominance because its ideas and rules must be appropriately applied. Government programs with all the mechanisms analysed above, indirectly make the people accustomed to consuming rice so that a mindset of eating must be with rice. This is apparent in the statement circulating that “if you have not eaten rice, then you have not eaten.”

4.3 Political economy of ricifikasi

Initially, rastra aimed to overcome the crisis that happened in 1998. However, it still being implemented because of the lobbying of some “actors.” In fulfilling rastra demand, Indonesia still needs

21 Worldwide pest control company.
22 Which initial program’s name was raskin (see sub-chapter 4.1.2). I decided to use rastra term hereafter to indicate rice-for-the-poor program.
23 Interview is carried out by phone.
to import. As FAO (2017) defines political economy where there is “[…] constellation of public and private actors, and their interest […]”, it is probable that many reap benefits from the program, for instance, petty bureaucrats who work with rice importers. Moreover, intriguing data from the study of Sumarto et al. (1998: 6-7) show that the actual condition of Maluku’s food security was not severely affected by the 1998 crisis but the *rastra* program was still continued and distributed to the area. Therefore, the community becomes dependent on *rastra* ration. Not only depend on *rastra* program, but the community also begin to depend on regular white rice that sold in the market.

The problem is, local rice production is inadequate to fulfil the demand. Hence, MTB should “import” rice from other places such as Surabaya and Makassar (Adianto, Bagio, and Banyu, interview July 2018). It is interesting to see then who benefits from this dependency. Surprisingly, during the process of “import,” businessmen are involved more than the local government itself.

Those who supply rice to MTB are businessmen… businessmen… even though the government also fulfil rice demands. We still need businessmen to meet the needs… (Bagio, the local government official on 25 July 2018).

The businessmen or the Saumlaki-based “rice exporters” collaborate with businessmen in Surabaya-East Java and Makassar-South Sulawesi to supply rice which is then sold in MTB’s market. Rice is sent through the Sea Toll Road24 that was recently built by the government to support the development and connectedness particularly in the eastern part of Indonesia. The “rice exporters” then receive the rice in the Saumlaki port. Afterward, they unpack and sell them in their wholesale store. The rice is bought by the small traders and is sold back to smaller groceries in the villages. This is the reason why rice is now readily available and accessible to everyone in MTB25. The thing is, they become dependent on rice but they could not produce rice themselves. This, is something that one must be cautious about because this will ruin the existing local food systems, and in the end, the community will suffer.

It is not only importers and exporters who get benefits from *ricification*, but also other agriculture-related sector companies, e.g. chemical fertilizers and seed companies that are either public or private (such as *Rentokil*). As Hendrickson (2015: 418-419) revealed, in the last 150 years, agribusiness firms have controlled the production of the food. It affects the resilience of existing local food systems because they have more power than farmers, workers and even consumers in deciding what food is produced and eaten by whom. Therefore, the leading actor is no longer the farmers, but businessmen and traders taking over in providing food supplies. They are the ones who gain from community dependence on rice.

Moreover, the farmers are not aware (yet) of the rationale behind the subsidy program and the repercussions in the future if the government stop in giving the aid or subsidy. They will have to buy inputs and maintain machines by themselves, which is pretty costly but could not be avoided since they are already accustomed to this particular aid.

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24 Which connects Jakarta’s seaport of Tanjung Priok and Surabaya’s Tanjung Perak in East Java with major ports in Maluku and Papua, in the eastern part of the country, and in Riau Islands. Sea toll road makes transportation more efficient through sea.

25 But now, government began to function their body that deals with logistic including rice, BULOG, to be involved in provision of rice for people in hopes that the price of rice could be reduced much cheaper.
**Concluding remarks:** In this chapter, I was explained in detail which policies took part in *riification*. Afterwards, I was analysed how the policies are being implemented using theories of power/knowledge and state in society. Departing from that, the role of the government is to strongly accelerate *riification* as they have the legitimation as a state to achieve what the government perceived as common goals. Rice is not only as a tool to maintain power by the regime(s) but also as a tool for some “actors” to benefit from the occurrence of *riification*. 
Chapter 5 The impact of *ricification* on MTB community

This chapter answers the second and third research sub-question on the impact of *ricification* on the MTB community. The first two sub-chapter provides an analysis on the local food system, and how the community perceives local food, and the local culture attached to it. The next sub-chapter examine and analyse the impact of *ricification* on community’s food sovereignty and security. I will also present community’s aspirations regarding their local food in the last sub-chapter.

5.1 Threatened local food system

The MTB community has their own local food systems since the time of their ancestors. They rely on local food to meet their daily food needs, plant what are suitable to be planted and eat what food are abundantly provided in nature.

As for the history of food in MTB, we consume local food since long time ago, and we have local wisdom as well. The commodities they plant are tubers since the environmental condition is more suitable for tubers (Banyu, interview 25 July 2018).

The local food system supports food availability for the majority of the population in MTB. They have a local food system which in accordance with Kuhnlein and Receveur (1996) and Feenstra (1997) definition of (local) food systems that it is to indicate food available from local natural resources, processed traditionally, produced and distributed ecologically, and culturally accepted (see sub-chapter 2.6). Based on interviews with the farmers and government officials, I gathered the information regarding the local food systems in MTB as follow.

I begin with the explanation of farming practices in MTB. Farming land in MTB is known as *arin*, a polyculture field consisting of various plant commodities dominated by food crops and owned by several farming households. Cropping patterns in *arin* are mixed and sequential. When I lived in Latdalam village, I had the opportunity to see Rahayu’s *arin* where she grows local food (pictured in Figure 5.1, *arin* managed by Rahayu and other women. At the time I visited, they were planting cassava which is still in the early stage).

![Figure 5.1 Arin field in Latdalam Village](image.jpg)

*Source: Fieldwork (Latdalam village 27 July 2018).*
There are two periods of planting season in MTB. The first period is known as *Musim Tanam* 1 (MT1, first planting season) from December/January to April/May. Farmers grow almost all crops such as local food and types of rice (red, black, and white rice) during this period. The second period is called *Musim Tanam 2* (MT2, second planting season) from April/May to June/September, when beans and cassava are planted. The crop cycle then goes back to the beginning of the MT1. Between MT1 and MT2 is a rain-free period called *metikei kecil* (M KK). MKK happens approximately in May. This is a short period when rice and sweet potatoes are ready to be harvested accordingly, and harvested seeds are available to be stored for the next planting season or food reserves. Between MT2 and MT1 around October-November, is a long dry season period called *metikei besar* (MKB). Besides harvesting time for the rest crops, MKB is also a long lead time before entering MT1 (the primary sources obtained from interviews and supported by the article of Patitselano et al. 2015: 130-132). The harvest is used for daily needs and managed for consumption for the following months. If the harvest yield is excessive, it is sold at the nearest traditional market in Saumlaki. They have never bought any food for household needs, as all can be fulfilled from farming by themselves.

However, for the past 40 years, rice which was produced massively began to dominate as a main staple food across Indonesia without regarding the local food system that exists in some places, including MTB. *Ricification* more or less changed the local food system in MTB. In Saumlaki, this caused the number of people who grow local food reduce as they prefer rice since it is widely available in the market. Aside from that, being the capital city of the regency, Saumlaki has people who prefer to be government officials or traders; therefore, the population of farmers is decreasing. As a consequence, they need to buy daily food at the nearest market because they could not fulfil their needs by themselves. From people whose food was once available by nature and who were able to meet their own needs, they no longer rely on their own local food system and they have now become consumers of rice obtained from other regions.

The condition is not much different in Kandar village where the farmers who initially grew local food, now begin to expand their field for planting white rice and receive all agricultural assistance from the government. Kandar’s farming system is shifting gradually into conventional one where farmers are directed to boost rice production so that they can produce an abundant yield. Their *arin* field where polyculture was implemented, has progressively turned into a monoculture field by planting white rice only (Figure 5.2).

**Figure 5.2** Rice field in Kandar village

*Source: The documentation from one of government officials (Kandar village, August 2018).*
Fortunately, Latdalam village has a better condition compared to the two previous villages. Many Latdalam people still perceive that agriculture is their main livelihood and therefore they are still growing local food (and indigenous red or black rice in small scale). However, they were inevitably affected by ricification as they frequently have to buy rice because their rice production level is still less than of consumption.

5.2 Local culture on farming and eating

In farming practices, there are traditions carried out before planting and when harvesting. Susilo, who has been the farmers group leader since 1972, shared the story of the local culture. There is mamuna who is the elder such as the traditional leader or the head of a farmer group, and there are mabela, who are the members. Mamuna was required to pray first before planting, either praying at home, in the field, or in the church. After that, mamuna pours a bottle of a local drink called sopi on their field as a symbol of tribute to their ancestors. Mamuna has to plant first before the mabela. Similarly, during harvest time, mamuna is welcome to harvest first, then continued by mabela. The difference is, during harvest time, the pastor is invited to lead the prayer called ulahasil worship. Susilo gave an example where if on Saturday they harvest the yield, then on Sunday morning, they bring some of the yields to the church to be blessed as an expression of gratitude.

It was inferred from FGD and interviews, that local food was always the main menu before ricification. At breakfast time, boiled or fried bananas are served together with the tea or coffee. When I stayed at Rahayu’s house, the local food is the main menu. At breakfast, she cooked fried sweet potatoes, cassava and bananas served with tea (pictured in Figure 5.4, this menu was also served when guests visit). During the day, cassava is boiled and served with vegetables and fish, or other complementary food such as chicken. Cassava is also sometimes hung with yams or taro, depending on each household’s local food stocks. At night, they usually consume menu that is not much different with daytimes.

Figure 5.3 Breakfast menu at Rahayu’s house

Source: Fieldwork (Latdalam village 27 July 2018).

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26 His statement also supported by Bambang and Rahayu.
27 The information gathered from interviews, FGD, and observation.
Besides mamuna, mabela and ulahasil practices, another eating culture is bakar batu. The bakar batu is a traditional cooking activity that uses stones stacked on a hole that has been dug in a certain diameter. Local food such as cassava that has been mashed and wrapped with banana leaves or coconut leaves are placed on the burned stone. After neatly arranging these, these are covered again with a stone heated with fire (captured in Figure 5.3). The participants mentioned that the ancestors had given them the knowledge of planting and farming culture that must be preserved.

**Figure 5.4 Bakar batu tradition**

![Bakar batu tradition](image)

Source: Fieldwork (Ladtalam village, 27 July 2018).

**Local culture at stake**

Kuhnlein and Receveur (1996: 417) assert that changes in food pattern is apparently happening worldwide and it indirectly threaten traditional knowledge. The Indonesian government only focuses on fulfilling food demand and are not aware of what happens afterward as well as the dynamics in each region. Ricification that has been occurring in Indonesia and particularly in MTB will gradually eliminate the culture of eating local food. Since the rice invasion, nearly 50 percent of the people interviewed chose rice for their daily meals even in Ladtalam where local food is abundant. Of note, the shifting preference in Ladtalam may not be too significant as they still combine rice with local food. Nonetheless, in the rice-producing Kandar village, and especially in Saumlaki, rice is now the main menu during the day and night.

The reason why some farmers prefer to plant rice, is the shorter planting period compared to local food which can reach almost 6 months up to 1 year depending on the type of tubers (FGD result on 26 July 2018). In addition, chemical inputs for rice are subsidized by the government and can be easily accessed at agricultural stores in Saumlaki. Moreover, rice mills already exist in some villages for post-harvest processing provided by the government as an implementation of the agricultural development program. The ease of access makes farmers easier to grow rice than local
food. Non-farmer communities generally prefer rice because it is easier to cook, tasty, and suitable to be juxtaposed with any side dish. As said by Lestari, who has a small groceries shop, “Yes ... because rice is easier to get, I can just simply buy it at Saumlaki market. The cooking is also easy and within a short time.” Likewise, Wening, a teacher, cooks rice for breakfast to dinner as the main menu (captured in Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 Lunch menu of Wening’s family

Source: One of the participants (Saumlaki, 30 September 2018).

As people in Latdalam village still farm local food, the culture that is attached to local food such as mamuna, mabela dan ulubasil is still practiced in the village. Unlike Latdalam, such traditions have begun to fade in Kandar village because recently they have been planting more rice in quite a large scale wherein mechanisation is gradually involved. The worst condition is in Saumlaki where traditions no longer exist and are not practiced since the people switched their consumption from local food to rice and no one grows local food anymore. Meanwhile, sometimes forgotten is, the culture actually has meaning and values. Cultural practices of mamuna and mabela teach people as human beings, they must help one another and respect older people (and their ancestors) because of their services and wisdom. Ulubasil’s lesson is that people must be grateful to God for the sustenance gained from the farm. Bakar batu has the values of a spirit of togetherness because its implementation involves many people so that it can become an arena of socialization and bonding among villagers. If ricification continues to occur and expands to other areas, it will not be a surprise that local food will eventually declining because people no longer grow and preserve them. As another consequence, the culture that attached to local food will also disappear.

Disappearing local food is compounded by the negative perception circulating in society that rice is superior and local food is inferior. The statement “If you have not eaten rice, then you have not eaten” more discredits the position of local food and encourage people to consume more rice. This is supported further by relating the after effects of rice policy as one of the components of government officials’ salary in the past government (see sub-chapter 4.1.3). Because the position as a government official was considered more bona fide at the time, they were regarded to be more prosperous. Consequently, when they eat rice, it is depicted that rice is the food for the wealthy. Another reason is that the green revolution policy also contributed to the formation of such perspective. Rice is produced through the green revolution which involved the utilisation of

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28 Housewife, seller, government officials, and especially people who live in Saumlaki city.

29 However, the interviewees who prefer rice admitted that they still consume local food although they cook it only for snack time.
mechanisation, superior seeds to produce plentiful yield, and chemical fertilisers produced through sophisticated manufacturing. By looking at the way rice is produced, it is seen that rice is identified with modernity which is then associated with development and progress.

From above explanation, all are rooted in the power that penetrates knowledge that rice is much better, tastier, more practical and more advanced. When the government gave the subsidy to the farmers and introduced them to the new way of farming (see 4.2), along with the power was exercised, knowledge also transferred as what Foucault stated. Knowledge and power are inalienable in the dominant system. It generates imbalances where the dominant one is legitimate, and the local ones are delegitimised. The dominant scientific knowledge hinders local knowledge to develop and ruins local knowledge’s existence. Therefore, local knowledge will disappear. This is opposed to the fact that the local people have their own local knowledge which might be actually better than the dominant one. Local knowledge in this paper is referred to not only the local food system, but also the local culture attached to it such as mamuna, mabela, niubasil, and bakar batu which will disappear gradually. As Kuhnlein and Recever (1996: 434) argued, the disappearance of local food system would negatively impact food diversity and it will lead to the decreasing culture-specific food activities or tradition, for instance, the local knowledge of food planting, harvesting, and preparation. With the exposure of each village to ricification, the farming culture gradually disappears. The more the village interacts intensely with power (government and/or market) and the newer knowledge penetrates them, the faster the local culture might change—or disappear.

5.3 Food sovereignty and security after ricification?

I prefer to eat local food because I produce it myself, I know what I plant, so I also know how the quality is. [...] Imagine the rice that is sold in the shop. We do not know either who planted it or how it is being produced. They are certainly using pesticides and chemical fertilizers in the process. It is not fresh anymore because the rice has been transported from Java and stored in the warehouse. Not healthy. It is better to eat local food that we planted ourselves. We know the quality, and we do not need to spend our money on buying rice, isn’t it? (Bambang conveyed his opinion in FGD on 26 July 2018).

In the words of Bambang above, it can be said that even though the MTB community does not deeply understand the literal concept of food sovereignty, they have applied in practice its principles as well as the ecologically integrated paradigm at the same time. They know the benefits of applying these principles, in which one of them is getting ecologically produced healthy food. However, the current food system that is focused on massive production for the fulfilment of the need of increasing human population is apparently unsustainable since it uses chemical and other external inputs. It does not only affect local food system, but also results in high dependency on one staple food that can really be vulnerable for community food sovereignty and food security.

In 2007 Nyéléni Forum for Food, it is stated that food sovereignty has the principle of giving people the right to define their own food and agriculture systems. As an example, the condition in Kandar village where the government ordered to apply chemical inputs to their rice field is far from food sovereign condition since the farmers are guided by the government to plant rice in a predetermined way that they cannot refuse or even negotiate. This can occur due to the remnants of past policies. One of which is the Act Number 5 of 1979 on Village Governance which increasingly narrows the space for rural community’s actualisation. Farmers were required to use modern farming methods with the application of chemical input and mechanisation (Riawanti 2015: 32 and see

33
Fieldwork results revealed that MTB has not achieved food sovereign. It is because as highlighted by Clapp (2014: 209) and Akram-Lodhi (2015: 568), that local food system is one of the components or pathways towards food sovereignty, while, MTB local food system is being changed and threatened after ricification. And because of the food sovereignty has not been reached, consequently, MTB has not achieved its food security as well, as stated by La Via Campesina in 1996 that food sovereignty is a “precondition to genuine food security” (Clapp 2014: 208). Instead, MTB is threatened from food insecurity given how ricification controls the food systems, and the occurrence of rice scarcity explained as follows.

Recently in March 2018, there was a rice scarcity happened in Saumlaki city which lasted about a month. Pandji, one of the study participants who live in Saumlaki told me this story. People had difficulty to buy rice since the stock in most of the stores run out. He went around the city to look for rice left some in the store. When he found one store that sells it, the price soared, and the quality was not satisfactory, “The price was IDR 150,000\(^{30}\) per kilogram, it was like more than ten times usual price, and then the quality was like rastra,” he said. It depicted that people in Saumlaki already depend on rice and it cannot be avoided, especially when it happens in a city where farming is no longer their main livelihoods. It is confirmed by the official, Banyu who also mentioned the same thing stating that he regretted this happened (interview 25 July 2018).

The biggest problem very likely to occur is that if rice production in the MTB regency decreased and rice stocks are depleted, the community will struggle to meet their basic food needs. This is, because local food is thinning since it is not preserved. Food security will not be obtained merely by increasing production if people are still neglecting who is in control of the food systems. Instead, it can create food insecurity, hunger, and impoverishment even worse (Lappe and Collins, as cited in Anderson and Cook 2000: 229).

5.4 Is there hope for local food to get revived?

As mentioned in sub-chapter 4.1.1, the government is trying to get revived the prestige of local food so that food diversification can be achieved through applicable laws and regulations, e.g. Presidential Decree Number 22 of 2009, Ministerial Regulation Number 43 of 2009, and Food Act Number 18 of 2012 (see appendix 1). It is seen that there is an effort carrying out by the government to shift the paradigm from a productionist to ecologically integrated paradigm by focusing on local, diverse, and environmentally friendly production. However, this change requires a long process. Even though there are regulations regarding food diversification and increasing local food production, the results still show the insignificance (see sub-chapter 4.1.1 paragraph 9-10). Moreover, if the government still issue the contradictory policies and does not take these seriously, the productionist paradigm will remain dominant.

There is no significant resistance or movement either to reduce ricification or to promote local food consumption by the MTB community. They seem to be pragmatic in accepting the change:

In my opinion, that is a natural thing because of changes in the outside world too. […] Rice has started to be consumed a lot by the people in this village, especially young people have lived in the city so they are used to eat rice (Yanto, interview 27 July 2018).

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30 It is equal to approximately 8.57 Euro per kilogram (rate per 23 October 2018).
Notwithstanding this, some people still perceive local food as their identity. The argument conveyed by the proponent of local food is as follows:

I prefer to eat local food because it is a culture of our ancestors that must be preserved… (Rahayu, shared her thought in FGD on 26 July 2018).

Besides the reason of cultural identity, local food must be revived because it is advantageous on health as Susilo mentioned:

Local food is healthier, and makes me and my family have a strong body. The proof is my relative died when he was 103 years old. […] Besides, the tubers itself can be eaten. Its boiled water is also very nutritious and good for health (Susilo, interview 28 July 2018).

The proponents of local food, mainly female participants, shared that they aspire to preserve local food with new methods such as obtaining training on how to process local food to be more tempting and to upscale its level. They argue that local food, other than being a merely staple food, can also be processed into other forms of food such as chips or various kinds of foods.

It is understood that in order to convey a stance or specifically disagreement with something does not need to be merely through “resistance movements”, but also through alternative ways. Of course, the government must be present to support this. From conversations with several participants, it can be concluded that the government should provide assistance that is appropriate and in accordance with the needs of local communities, for example, by providing assistance for improving local food production in sustainable way and promoting local food consumption. In addition, the government can develop the facilities and provide training to local people on how to process local food products to add to their knowledge treasure. In other words, the government should implement the food diversification polices as well as possible.

Therefore, there is hope for local food to be revived as long as there is an intention from the local community to preserve its food culture and collaborate with the government that is supportive to the needs of the community to create sustainable food systems.

**Concluding remarks:** In this chapter, I presented how the community perceives their local food and the local culture which attached to it. Using the theories and concepts mentioned in Chapter 2, I addressed the impacts of ricification on the MTB community. First, I analysed how ricification affects local food system, the result revealed that local food system is being threatened and the people are no longer rely on it. Another finding is that community food sovereignty and security became vulnerable because of ricification. Furthermore, the local culture in terms of farming practices and eating local food being threatened to disappear if no efforts have taken to reduce the ricification pace and to preserve local food. I also explored the aspirations of the people on local food wherein some of them still want to preserve their local food and culture but more innovatively without disregard their culture, so their local food and local culture can still exist.
Chapter 6 Conclusion

Almost 97 percent of Indonesians consume rice as their staple food. This is a condition where various local food is being replaced by rice or also known as *berasiasi*. In sub-chapter 2.1, it has been explained that the term *riceification* is used to refer to *berasiasi* because of their similar meanings. This study set out to explore the occurrence of *riceification* by taking a specific case of Maluku Tenggara Barat (MTB). This paper questioned why rice is being promoted and what is the role of the state in accelerating *riceification*. These questions then led to whether *riceification* has an impact on the MTB community, specifically, this impact is explored on the effects of *riceification* to local food system, food sovereignty and security, and their local culture in terms of farming and eating.

Based on primary data obtained from FGD, interviews, and direct observation and also secondary data from several government documents within case study design, this study reveals that government policy is the major cause of *riceification* throughout Indonesia. Some highlighted policies are rice production improvement programs such as green revolution, P2BN, and UPSUS. Rice-for-the-poor program and rice as part of government officials’ salary in the past time also compounded people to get used to consuming rice. This shaped people’s mindset on staple food and from that, the statement of “if you have not eaten rice, then you have not eaten” emerged. These policies illustrated that the government has a definite role in expanding *riceification* through exercising their power and penetrating through dominant knowledge (see sub-chapter 4.2). Then it led the analysis to the political economy aspects of *riceification* which disclose that there are parties who benefit from this phenomenon, for instance, petty bureaucrats and businessman.

Another finding is that *riceification* has impacts on the MTB community. *Riceification* threatens the existence of a local food system in MTB community. They used to depend on their local food system where they can meet their own needs by planting local food that is ecologically and culturally appropriate. As this is no longer happening in their village, Saumlaki fulfils its food supply from other regions. In Kandar, agricultural patterns have changed gradually into mechanised monoculture practices from traditionally polyculture ones. As compared, Latdalam has quite a better condition where the community still relies on local food system even though sometimes, they need to buy rice because of insufficient supply from their own field. The increase in rice consumption and people’s preference for rice not only has an impact on decreasing consumption of local food but also on the culture inherent in the local food. Based on data in the field, MTB has a local culture in terms of farming and eating, namely mamuna, mabela, uababas, and bakar batu. However, if *riceification* continues, this culture will disappear soon because local knowledge is being phased out.

*Riceification* also has an impact on community food sovereignty and food security. Farmers in MTB no longer apply the principles of food sovereignty as they are not independent in determining their own food system. They were dictated by the government on how to produce food, among other things, such as what kind of plant they should grow, how to farm and for whom it is produced. The condition is different in each village, but in general, food sovereignty in MTB is vulnerable after *riceification*. As stated by La Via Campesina in 1996 that food sovereignty is a “precondition to genuine food security” (Clapp 2014: 208), because of the food sovereignty has not been reached, consequently, MTB has not achieved its food security as well.

This paper also presented the possibility of local food to get revived and aspirations of local people regarding their local food. There are two different stances; people who prefer rice and people who prefer local food. Those who prefer local food said that the government should assist such as training on how to increase local food production and also how to make it better than rice.
According to the fieldwork and analysis results, there needs improvement, especially policy, given the main causes of *ricification* is government policies. Agricultural planning has been based on perceptions of the central government only. Therefore, as a consideration for national policy recommendation, policy should not be generalised, rather it should look more at the local context. As well as with pure intention in implementing policy to make the life of the society better, and not running the government as business as usual. Since the Indonesian government has made a food diversification policy, so it must be implemented properly, especially in regions where the culture of eating local food still exist, so the pace of *ricification* can be reduced.

After doing this research, I wondered whether the government actually made *ricification* as a goal, so that some “actors” could get benefits, or, *ricification* became something they also did not expect to happen. If viewed from history, the past government indeed has politicised the food sector, especially rice, to perpetuate power and benefit various parties. However, it cannot be predicted whether the same thing also happened in the current government because it needs another focused research. In addition to the government side, the community side is also one of the things that I concern about. Some questions emerging include: do people care about this issue? Do they realize that there are negative impacts resulting from *ricification*? To answer these questions emerging from this research, in-depth research is needed. Hence, it hoped that this paper can be a trigger to conduct other more well-developed novel research.
Appendices

Appendix 1 The list of government documents

The list of government documents that written in the paper (with reference):

a. **Food Act Number 18 of 2012**


b. **Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah (RPJMN, Middle Term Development Plan)** particularly in food and agriculture sector


d. **Upaya Khusus (Special Effort Program)**

   As a part of nine priority agenda of the current President of Republic of Indonesia (2014-2019).

e. **President Instruction Number 3 of 2017**

On rice policy.

Accessed on the website of Kementerian Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia (Ministry of Justice and Human Rights), a portal to access Indonesian policy and regulations. The policy can be accessed through <http://peraturan.go.id/inpres/nomor-3-tahun-2007-11e44c4e36383ce089ad313231323332.html>.

f. **Act Number 5 of 1979**

The policy is about village governance.

Accessed on the website of Kementerian Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia (Ministry of Justice and Human Rights), a portal to access Indonesian policy and regulations. The policy can be accessed through <http://peraturan.go.id/uu/nomor-5-tahun-1979.html>.

g. **Presidential Decree Number 22 of 2009**

The policy is about accelerating local resources-based food consumption.

Accessed on the website of Kementerian Hukum dan Hak Asasi Manusia (Ministry of Justice and Human Rights), a portal to access Indonesian policy and regulations. The policy can be accessed through: <http://peraturan.go.id/perpres/nomor-22-tahun-2009-11e44c4ecd300a0b63f313231363435.html>.

h. **Ministry of Agriculture Regulation Number 43 of 2009**

The regulation is about the movement to accelerate the diversification of food consumption based on local resources.

References


