

A “Matter of Life and Death”? Patterns of Securitisation and Desecuritisation of Food Resilience in Indonesia

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How to Cite: Agastia, I. G. B. D. A “matter of life and death”? Patterns of securitisation and de-securitisation of food resilience in Indonesia. *Journal of ASEAN Studies*, 11(1), 159–189.
<https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v11i1.9143>

Abstract

Food self-sufficiency had been a perennial quest for Indonesian administrations. The research explored two questions. First, how have political leaders securitised the self-sufficiency narrative? Second, is the securitisation of food justified? This research examined the “self-sufficiency” narrative across Indonesian governments and charts the patterns in its securitisation and de-securitisation through the lens of just securitisation theory. The research made two arguments. First, the securitisation of food in Indonesia has not always been for the benefit of the nation, but instead, the political elite. The second argument is the securitisation of food in Indonesia is not always justified, and therefore, necessitates further review of policies related to food security. The findings show that the securitisation of food in general to be unjustified. Therefore, the de-securitising food security and returning it to the realm of normal politics should be the immediate goal for Indonesian administrations, in addition to formulating alternative policies not grounded in the self-sufficiency narrative.

Keywords: desecuritisation, food security, food self-sufficiency, Indonesia, securitisation

Introduction

Food self-sufficiency has been a perennial quest for Indonesian administrations. The notion of food self-sufficiency is closely linked to the idea of independence, of not having to rely on global markets, to fulfil the fundamental need of the nation. This nationalist-protectionist ideal, however, contradicts the interdependent logic of market-driven globalisation, where self-sufficiency is not always a feasible goal, especially if it does not serve

the interests of providing equitable access to food (MacRae & Reuter, 2020). Yet, despite this contradiction, food self-sufficiency continues to be a top priority for Indonesian governments, with some pressing the issue stronger than others, sometimes to the point of representing the issue as a “matter of life or death” to the nation (Neilson & Wright, 2017). From the Suharto to Widodo administrations, Indonesian political leaders have often promoted large-scale agricultural projects aimed at achieving self-sufficiency. Most of these projects have failed, yet these policies continue to remain on the political agenda. From this condition, two questions arise. First, how do Indonesian political leaders frame self-sufficiency in security rhetoric? Second, who benefits from the use of security rhetoric in self-sufficiency?

The research examines how Indonesian governments have securitised the self-sufficiency narrative through the lens of just securitisation theory. The inclusion of normative analysis provided by just securitisation theory allows analysts not just to scrutinise security policies in retrospect, but also inform policymaking by identifying previous transgressions and mitigate future harm. This contribution is arguably important in complementing the corpus of research applying a generally critical lens to the nexus of food and environmental security (Brisman & South, 2017; Sommerville, Essex, & Le Billon, 2014). Moreover, to the best of the author’s knowledge, studies applying securitisation theory in Indonesia specifically have mostly approached securitisation through the classical lens, focusing on securitising moves and speech acts (Isnurhadi, 2018; Kurniawan, 2017; Scarpello, 2018; Taufika, 2020). While these studies are highly informative of the securitisation process, they usually stop short of critical examination of whether securitisation should have been initiated. Thus, this research’s contribution is twofold. First, it seeks to expand the scope of inquiry and present a more critical approach to analysing security issues in Indonesia. To the best of the author’s knowledge, securitisation theory, and just securitisation in particular, has yet to be applied in investigating food security in Indonesia. Second, the research enriches the discussion of just securitisation theory by showing the application of normative analysis in the context of a developing state and in a longitudinal setting.

The research makes two interrelated arguments. First, the self-sufficiency narrative in Indonesia is inherently political. Thus, the securitisation of food does not always serve the benefit of the nation; instead, it mostly serves to benefit political actors who present the issue of food in security language. Following the first argument, the second argument is the securitisation of food in Indonesia is not always morally justifiable, and therefore, necessitates further review of policies related to food security.

To demonstrate the argument, the research proceeds in four sections. The first section elaborates and discusses just securitisation theory, which is used as an analytical framework in this paper. The second section then clears some conceptual ground in the Indonesian food security discourse, specifically concerning the use of the terms “food self-sufficiency”, “food sovereignty”, “food security”, and “food resilience”. Narratives and policies related to food self-sufficiency during the Sukarno, Suharto, Yudhoyono, and Widodo administrations are explored afterwards. These periods were chosen due to the adoption of emblematic narratives and policies which continue to characterise subsequent administrations’ approach to food security. The third section analyses the narratives and policies of these administrations using

just securitisation theory. The conclusion outlines prospects for further research on just securitisation theory in general and more responsible approaches for food security in Indonesia.

Analytical Framework: Just Securitisation Theory

The notion of threat, or the “security-ness” of an issue is not always considered in the objective sense. Though objective threats do exist, other issues only become security threats based on intersubjective agreement. The process of designating an issue as a “threat” is done through a speech act, which the second feature of securitisation theory. In a speech act, ‘by uttering “security”, a state-representative moves to a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it’ (Wæver, 1995). This is further specified as a ‘securitising move’, where a securitising actor attempts to convince an audience that something poses a threat to a referent object. Securitisation is said to have occurred when the audience accepts the speech act, and thus achieving intersubjective agreement. This allows the securitising actor to enact emergency measures to address the threat, even if those measures contravene liberal democratic principles (Buzan, Wæver, & Wilde, 1998).

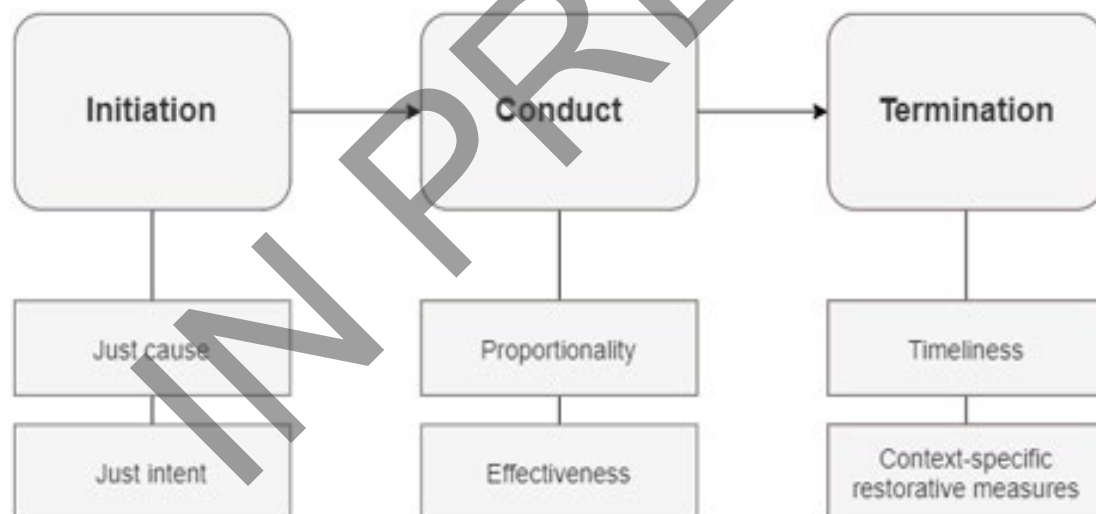


Figure 1 Flow of just securitisation theory (Floyd, 2019)

Source: Author’s own illustration.

Numerous proposals to refine securitisation theory have been proposed. These proposals have attempted to highlight and address important shortcomings of the original securitisation framework proposed by the Copenhagen School (hereafter “classical securitisation”) (Balzacq, 2005; Côté, 2016; Kaunert & Ezeokafor, 2022; Vuori, 2008; Williams, 2003). Among critics of classical securitisation, Floyd’s revision is notable. Floyd’s (2010) critique of classical securitisation centres on “the securitisation theorist’s inability to say something meaningful about the moral value of different securitisations” and “his inability to

theorise why actors securitise.” In addressing the shortcomings of securitisation theory, two important contributions are made: the examination of intent behind securitisation, which has been largely ignored by the classical securitisation; and the normative test, which allows for analysis of whether securitisation is morally defensible (Floyd, 2011). These contributions serve as the basis for just securitisation theory (Floyd, 2019).

Just securitisation theory attempts to establish the justness of a securitisation and de-securitisation in its initiation, conduct, and termination as shown in Figure 1 (Floyd, 2019).

Initiating Securitisation

The initiation of securitisation refers to the act of moving a previously-politicised issue into the a “securitised state of affairs”. Floyd’s formulation of a securitised state of affairs differs from the audience-dependent interpretation of classical securitisation. A sanctioning audience is not necessarily required for a speech act to constitute securitisation. Securitisation occurs when a securitising agent identifies an existential threat to the referent object (securitising move) and then engage in response to the threat (security practice). A securitising move can be generally divided into two moves—a promise to protect or a warning to retaliate—which is directed to the referent object. The security practice can be understood as the policies which the securitising actor enacts in response to the threat they have identified which may take form of the creation of new agencies or the extension of responsibilities to existing agencies (Floyd, 2016).

The initiation of a securitisation requires both just cause and intent. Just cause requires the presence of an objective existential threat to a morally justifiable referent object. An existential threat is understood as threatening the survival and essential properties of a referent object (Floyd, 2019). A threat need not come from an external agent to be existential; agent-lacking and agent-caused threats, such as natural disasters and climate change, may also pose an existential threat to societies. The objectiveness of a threat is based on whether available evidence reliably shows the threat to be real, rather than being perceived (Floyd, 2019). The justness of the referent object is based on whether the referent object provides instrumental value to human life (Floyd, 2011). In this formulation, state and non-state political orders would only be just referent objects if they “satisfy a minimum level of basic human needs of people part of or contained in that order” (Floyd, 2019).

Just intent requires a securitisation to be sincere, which is analysed by comparing what securitising actors say and what they do. An insincere securitisation may be identified by a disconnect between rhetoric and policy practice (Floyd, 2019). Moreover, insincerity may be identified if the main beneficiary of the securitisation is the securitising actor, rather than the referent object (also known as “agent-benefitting” securitisation). A referent object-benefitting securitisation is identified by whether 1) the securitising actor “seriously intends to secure the referent object identified” and 2) the securitising actor “acts to alleviate the insecurity he himself identified”. A discrepancy between the identified threat and the actions taken,

especially when the action serves to benefit the securitising agent, would be an indicator of an agent-benefitting securitisation (Floyd, 2010).

Conducting Securitisation

The conduct of securitisation centres on proportionality and effectiveness. A securitisation is considered proportionate if it seeks to address the causes of the objective existential threat without overstepping. It is considered effective if it limits the amount of harm done compared to if securitisation was not conducted. Moreover, in conducting securitisation, the securitising actor must “respect a limited number of relevant human rights” (Floyd, 2019). To illustrate an example of just conduct, the securitisation of terrorism should result in security measures aimed specifically at mitigating the potential harm of terrorism without resorting to the infringement of civil liberties, e.g., mass surveillance or the subsequent enactment of harsh immigration policies.

Terminating Securitisation or Desecuritisation

De-securitisation is presented as the theoretical opposite of securitisation. Where securitisation is the process of elevating a security issue above the realm of normal politics, de-securitisation is the process of returning the issue into the realm of normal politics (Roe, 2004). The Copenhagen School contends de-securitisation as being a positive process and desirable long-term goal, as “security should be seen as a negative, as a failure to deal with issues as normal politics” (Buzan et al., 1998).

Just securitisation theory similarly views de-securitisation as a process. It defines de-securitisation as a process leading to a de-securitised condition. The de-securitised state of affairs is distinguished by either the return of the previously-securitised issue into ‘normal’ politics (re-politicisation) or its de-politicisation (Floyd, 2010; Floyd, 2019). Re-politicisation is aligned with the Copenhagen School’s definition and desired goal of de-securitisation. In the latter, the issue is discarded from normal politics, meaning the issue is not even discussed by political actors, though it may still be discussed outside of the realm of politics by civil society (Floyd, 2010). This does not necessarily render de-securitisation as politicisation to be just.

Under just securitisation theory, the securitising agent, usually political leaders, generally holds both the power and responsibility to terminate an unjust securitisation. In an ideal situation, this would mean the onus to de-securitise, regardless of whether securitisation was initiated justly or unjustly, would be on the initial securitising agent. In the case where the initial securitising agent no longer occupies the same political position due to succession or other reasons, the onus shifts to the succeeding agent due to their power to undo their predecessor’s securitisation (Floyd, 2019).

Should de-securitisation be attempted, the timeliness and presence of context-specific restorative measures serve as indicators of justness. A securitisation initiated and conducted justly should end the moment the objective existential threat has been neutralised.

Continuation of securitisation in the absence of a just cause renders the securitisation unjust. Moreover, if securitisation was initiated unjustly, it ought to be terminated as soon as possible (Floyd, 2019). The actions taken to terminate securitisation also matter. Securitising agents ought to declare the end of specific securitising actions and terminate the use of security language. This should then be followed by context-specific restorative measures to prevent re-securitisation, and ideally, keep the issue within the realm of normal politics (Floyd, 2019).

Methodology

The research employs a combination of discourse analysis of verbal and written statements, government policy documents, and other publicly available publications related to food policy in Indonesia. In particular, annual State of the Nation speeches, government regulations and policy documents, and statements to the public are scrutinised. Discourse analysis identifies the structure of narratives of food security in Indonesia, which determines patterns and extent of securitisation. This method primarily reveals major securitising agents, securitising practices, and securitising and de-securitising moves, while in a secondary manner, it also allows to probe the intents of securitising agents.

In conducting the normative analysis, the following limitations are observed. Due to the nature of food security, it is difficult to precisely establish whether threats are agent-caused or agent-lacking. This is mainly due to the multifaceted character of threats to food security. However, it is possible to reasonably determine whether threats are objective or perceived based on existing evidence. In analysing initiation, the referent object remains consistent across all administrations, namely the Indonesian nation-state. Thus, the analysis of just initiation will focus on evaluating threats perceived by and intent of securitising agents. It should be noted that intent cannot be precisely established, only probed, especially from public statements. In analysing conduct, space limitations preclude an exhaustive analysis of the implications of every policy made to address food security and possible counterfactuals. As such, only major policies related to food security, and more specifically rice self-sufficiency, are examined due to its central importance in the Indonesian food security discourse.

Rhetoric and Practice of Food Security in Indonesia

Indonesia's concepts of food security might draw from these international influences, but it is moulded to suit nationalist purposes (Neilson & Wright, 2017). In the Indonesian context, the revised Law no. 18/2012 on Food (*Undang-Undang Pangan*; hereafter, Food Law) serves as the authoritative basis for understanding food security. The Food Law distinguishes between food sovereignty (*kedaulatan pangan*), food self-sufficiency (*kemandirian pangan*), food resilience (*ketahanan pangan*), and food security (*keamanan pangan*). Indonesia's notion of food sovereignty closely follows the ideals of La Via Campesina as "the peoples', Countries' or State Unions' right to define their agricultural and food policy, without any dumping vis-à-vis third countries" ("Food sovereignty", 2003). Food self-sufficiency, according to Law no.

18/2012 (hereafter “Food Law”) Art. 1(3), is understood as the “capacity of the state and nation to produce food domestically to guarantee an adequate level of food to for the needs of the individual”. Food resilience and security are particularly distinct, with the former being “the condition of having food needs fulfilled from the state to the individual level” and the latter being “the conditions and efforts required to prevent biological, chemical, and other forms of contamination of food.” To have resilience would not just require adequate production or supply of food, but also guaranteed equitable access to safe and nutritious food, whereas food security is narrowly concerned with practical efforts to prevent hindrances to achieving resilience. In practice, *ketahanan pangan* is often more concerned on food availability (*ketersediaan*) than access. In political rhetoric, *ketahanan* is often conflated with the other terms, and used with the intention of reinforcing the role and function of the state in food policy (Neilson & Wright, 2017).¹

Food Security during the Soekarno Administration

Indonesia’s quest for food self-sufficiency is a constant amidst the variables of Indonesian administrations. Soekarno’s 1952 oration serves as an important starting point for understanding Indonesia’s fixation on self-sufficiency (Soekarno, 1952). The oration, titled *Soal Hidup dan Mati* (“A Matter of Life and Death”), was delivered at the laying of the first stone of the current-day Bogor Agricultural Institute. The threat of food shortages was set on the backdrop of population growth, which, if not met with proportionate production growth, would be catastrophic:

Every year, without exception, without pause, without mercy, this issue of rice will come in a crescendo – greater, more intense, more terrifying – as long as our fast population growth is not balanced by increasing our food supply! (Soekarno, 1952, translated by author)

In line with his revolutionary nature, self-sufficiency was framed as an urgent necessity, especially where dependency was concerned. For Soekarno, achieving food self-sufficiency was part and parcel of Indonesia’s independence. Indonesia should not have to rely on others, especially in the form of foreign aid, to fulfil such a basic need (Weinstein, 2007). Said Soekarno:

Why should we talk about “liberal politics” (*politik bebas*) when we are not independent in rice, when we always have to ask for help from our neighbours? If World War III breaks out, either tomorrow or the day after, and transport between Indonesia, Thailand, and Burma becomes disrupted, where will we get our rice? (Soekarno, 1952, author’s translation)

Soekarno’s rhetoric influenced the policies his administration took to increase production (Table 1). Self-sufficiency, Soekarno believed, was a matter of ensuring a balance

¹Due to the conflation of these terms in Indonesian food security discourse, these terms are also used interchangeably throughout this paper for consistency.

between domestic supply and demand, but supply should ideally come almost exclusively from domestic production. However, these policies largely failed due to limited skills, resources, and political delays, compounded by rising inflation and economic downturn, resulting in several famines occurring throughout the 1950s to 1960s. To be sure, Indonesia was by no means short of foreign aid; however, Soekarno never applied for international food aid. Instead, aid was provided in the form of program aid and scholarships for Indonesian students to study in donor countries, with the hopes of those students returning to build the country (van der Eng, 2014).

Table 1 Summary of rice self-sufficiency policies developed and implemented under Soekarno.
(Adapted from Mears, 1984 and Rieffel, 1969)

Name / Period of implementation	Expectations	Practice
Kasimo Welfare Plan / 1952 - 1956	Aimed for rice self-sufficiency by 1956.	Increased rice production by 6 per cent, but this was disproportionate to 20 per cent population growth which led to more than 800,000 tonnes of rice imports.
Five Year Development Plan [Garis-Garis Besar Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun] / 1956 - 1960	Raise availability of rice through irrigation rehabilitation and use of <i>metro</i> corn variety.	Though rice availability did increase in 1959-1960, this was due to imports. Corn production also increased marginally.
Balai Pendidikan Masyarakat Desa (BPMD)	Establish focal point of development activities at the village level. There would be one per district.	As of 1968, only 12 per cent goal reached due to difficulties in acquiring land and equipment.
Padi Sentra / 1961 - 1964	Establish 500 paddy centres which would provide fertiliser, seeds, and production credit to farmers.	Farmers did not repay credit. Negative production incentive. Centres were not equipped with adequate expertise.
Three Year Rice Production Plan / 1959 - early 1960s	Achieve self-sufficiency by importing fertiliser and organising farmers. A national command and village-level executive teams would be established.	"Too diffused" and suffered from lack of expertise.

Food Security in the Suharto Administration

In contrast to Soekarno's fiery rhetoric positioning self-sufficiency as a "matter of life and death", Suharto's food policy goals had two objectives. First, it was to mitigate food shortages caused by his predecessor's mismanagement, while also accelerating economic development. In creating the first of seven Five Year Development Plans (*Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun/Repelita*), the food shortages of his predecessor were still fresh in

the mind of Suharto and the technocrats in his administration (Thee, 2002). The focus, therefore, was increasing crop yields by introducing technological and administrative fixes. The agricultural sector, specifically rice production, was identified as a priority sector to be developed in the first Repelita. The designation of agriculture as a priority was framed in terms of fulfilling dietary needs and lessening dependence on food imports (Kansil, 1970). Additionally, food production became viewed through a developmental lens. The Suharto administration viewed a stable supply of food, ideally rice, as the basis for industrialisation (Soeharto, 1985b).

Second, the administration sought to use rice production to seek legitimacy. Suharto viewed rice production to serve the larger goal of achieving 'national resilience' (*ketahanan nasional*). The idea of national resilience was central to the administration, affecting the rhetoric of policy (Anwar, 1996). The use of dire rhetoric was particularly evident in his annual State of the Nation address in 1969:

Let us wager everything on the success of development! Prosperity is our goal; development is our responsibility and honour. *If there is any grave danger threatening us, that danger is the failure of our Five-Year Development Plan.* The failure of development does not just result in a loss of confidence in government, but also the destruction of the results of economic progress that we have struggled to achieve to this day. A worsening economy surely results in the return of the PKI [Communist Party of Indonesia] and the destruction of Pancasila." (Soeharto, 1985a; author's translation, emphasis added).

Food security policies hinged on a pilot program known as Mass Guidance (*Bimbingan Massal*/BIMAS) in 1963, which began as a small-scale project designed to provide hands-on training for students at the Bogor Agricultural Institute. The central premise of the program was to have university students guide farmers in using new varieties of rice, fertilisers, and pesticides to improve crop yields. and became the precursor for Suharto's food policies, which centred on "green revolution" technologies, i.e., using new high-yield seed varieties, improved irrigation, and increases use of fertilisers and pesticides (Mears, 1984). These technologies were promoted by foreign companies, and financed by the administration through loans and oil revenue (Patel, 2013). The pilot project eventually became elevated to the level of national policy (Elson, 2001). BIMAS had several variants, with the most controversial being the Gotong Royong variant, which relied on foreign companies to supply high-yield seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides. Military elites would often act as intermediaries, which enabled rent-seeking behaviour (Crouch, 1988).

Despite several episodes of political instability and rice shortfalls which happened during the first Repelita, Suharto continued to focus on managing rice production in the second and third Repelita, with self-sufficiency being the goal (Elson, 2001). The main instrument was the Logistical Affairs Agency (*Badan Urusan Logistik*, /BULOG). The BULOG became the sole state agency (primarily run by the military) that had the power to oversee supply and distribution of rice and had a monopoly on rice imports. This authority allowed the Suharto administration to create national buffer stocks. The agency also had a monopoly

on state imports. Farmers were 'unionised' under a single state-approved national union. Intensification and extensification of farmland continued under the new BIMAS programme (Mears, 1984). Rice self-sufficiency was achieved in 1984 as the sum of these policies. The following year, Suharto was invited to speak at the Food and Agriculture Organisation, where, in a theatrical gesture, he pledged 100,000 tonnes of unhusked rice as aid to Ethiopia, which had been beset by famine (Elson, 2001).

Self-sufficiency, however, was short-lived. Suharto's developmental fervour in Java led to the loss of arable farmland due to land conversions and rapid industrialisation. In addition, rice production experienced a slowdown due to technological and infrastructural limits (Thee, 2002). Coupled with an increase in population, droughts, and rising food prices, by 1995, Indonesia faced looming food shortages. With his political legitimacy on the line, the Suharto administration hastily passed the *Pengembangan Lahan Gambut* (Peatland Development Project, PLG) project under Presidential Decision (Keppres) no. 82/1995. The project was expected to increase production of rice by 5.1 million tonnes annually by converting 5.8 million hectares of peatland to farmland in Central Kalimantan. Suharto insisted the first harvest be ready by 1997, two years after the project began, just in time for the 1997 elections (McCarthy, 2013). PLG, however, failed due to poor planning and corruption. Surveys have shown that peatlands were not suitable for wet rice cultivation, yet the administration insisted on converting the land for rice paddies. The project was designed not by technocrats, but by corporate groups and bureaucrats with close connections to Suharto. Due to this poor design and corruption, the plan failed and was cancelled in July 1999 by Habibie (McCarthy, 2013).

Food Security in the Yudhoyono Administration

The Yudhoyono administration set out their priorities under the Long-Term National Development Plan for 2005-2025 (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Panjang Nasional Tahun 2005-2025*; hereafter "RPJPN"). The RPJPN had identified several challenges to food production, namely droughts and floods due to climate change and the low quality of Indonesian agricultural products compared to the global market. To address these challenges, the RPJPN expects to increase domestic production, stabilise prices, and improve household to food. A system for food resilience would be "directed to preserve food resilience and sovereignty by developing domestic production", which will be "supported by food resilience institutions capable of guaranteeing household food needs..." (Government of Indonesia, 2005). The Middle-Term National Development Plan of 2004-2009 (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional/RPJMN*) pledged to "revitalise agriculture" (*revitalisasi pertanian*) to achieve rice self-sufficiency. The following problems for food security were identified: water availability related to irrigation problems, decline in farmland, lack of access to credit and agricultural technology, lack of diversification due to dependence on rice as a staple food, and problems of food distribution. The administration also identified rice imports as a solution for maintaining supply and accessibility but emphasised its potentially disruptive effects on prices and farmer welfare.

In 2006, under Presidential Regulation no. 83/2006, the Food Resilience Board (*Dewan Ketahanan Pangan*; DKP) was established to advise the president on food security policy. The DKP issued a General Policy on Food Security, which defines the administration's priorities and perception of food resilience.² The DKP understood food security to be fulfilled when 1) food is adequately and equally available for all citizens and 2) all citizens have adequate physical and economic access to nutritious foodstuffs. The DKP then proposed a 14-point comprehensive food security policy based on increasing food production, farmer welfare, developing national and regional food reserves, agrarian and land reform, food diversification, and developing efficient distribution networks (*Dewan Ketahanan Pangan*, 2006). The policy was manifested in the Food Self-sufficient Villages Program in 2006, which aimed to establish food reserves at the village level, thus improving access and resilience during times of shortage (Salim, 2010). Yet despite these plans, in practice, the DKP was primarily concerned with maintaining national food reserves while progress in other policy areas stagnated (Neilson & Arifin, 2012).

During Yudhoyono's first term, rice production steadily increased from 54.5 million tonnes to 64 million tonnes in 2009. This was followed by marginal increases in other foodstuffs as recorded in the Middle-Term National Development Plan 2010-2014, such as corn (from 12 million tonnes to 17 million tonnes), sugar (2.2 million tonnes to 2.9 million tonnes), and soybeans (0.8 million tonnes to 0.9 million tonnes). The increase in production coincided with a decrease in rice imports (Figure 2), with the notable exception of 2007, when the administration imported 1.4 million tonnes.

Despite the global rise in food prices which was immediately followed by the 2008 financial crisis, Indonesia managed to avoid the brunt of the crisis. Thus, in his second term, Yudhoyono set out to improve food production and resilience as one of his eleven priority agendas. These priorities were further elaborated in the Middle-Term National Development Plan of 2010-2014 to comprise of land reform, infrastructure, research and development, investment and subsidies, nutrition, and climate change adaptation measures.

Yudhoyono was worried about the effects of the 2008 financial crisis and sought to proactively seek an "opportunity amidst the crisis". According to then-presidential spokesperson, Dino Patti Djalal, Yudhoyono corresponded with the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, and other heads of state along with the president of the World Bank, conveying his concerns of the effects of the food price hike on lower-income countries. The correspondence also served to highlight Indonesia's increased domestic production, not just in rice, but soybean, corn, and palm oil. This would provide the basis for Yudhoyono's belief that Indonesia could achieve food self-sufficiency, which would in turn, contribute to alleviating the global food crisis (Djalal, 2008).

²This document was released prior to the revisions to the 1996 Food Law, hence the conflation of the terms "food security" and "resilience".



Figure 2 Rice imports and production, 2004-2021.

Source: The National Statistics Agency, Impor Beras Menurut Negara Asal Utama, 2000-2021 [Rice Imports based on Origin Country, 2000-2021] (<https://www.bps.go.id/statictable/2014/09/08/1043/imp-or-beras-menurut-negara-asal-utama-2000-2021.html>); Produksi Tanaman Pangan, 1993-2015 (<https://www.bps.go.id/indicator/53/23/1/produksi.html>) and Luas Panen, Produksi, dan Produktivitas Padi Menurut Provinsi, 2018-2021 (<https://www.bps.go.id/indicator/53/1498/1/luas-panen-produksi-dan-produktivitas-padi-menurut-provinsi.html>). The conversion rate from unhusked dried rice to milled rice is 64 per cent based on the National Statistics Agency, Survei Konversi Gabah ke Beras 2018 [Survey of Conversion of Unhusked Rice to Husked Rice].

Prior to the Yudhoyono administration, the role of BULOG was significantly weakened in part due to conditions of accepting the IMF structural package. During the Megawati administration (2001-2004), based on Presidential Regulation no. 7/2003, the BULOG was restructured as a state-owned enterprise with the duty to secure, manage, and distribute national staple food reserves (*cadangan pangan pemerintah*) and in special cases, stabilise the prices of staple food commodities (Saragih, 2016). The Yudhoyono administration did not make significant alterations to the duties of the BULOG, which was criticised as undermining the agency’s function in providing national reserves (“Mewaspadaai krisis pangan”, 2011). The administration focused instead on enacting protectionist regulations aimed at protecting farmers’ welfare through the imposition of import quotas. These included Horticulture Law (Law no. 13/2010), the Farmer Protection and Empowerment Law (Law no. 19/2013), the Trade Law (Law no. 7/2014), and a revision of the 1996 Food Law (Law no. 18/2012) (Howes & Davies, 2014).

The revised Food Law of 2012 would allow for the creation of a new agency, which would answer directly to the president, to create policies relevant to food security. The agency would also be empowered to coordinate relevant ministries in production, distribution, and stocking of staple food commodities (Art. 126-129). The proposed agency, however, was not established in time and would only later be established in the second Widodo administration in 2021. Additional revisions specify conditions governing imports and exports. Article 36(2) stipulates imports would only be permissible if domestic production and reserves cannot fulfil domestic demands, especially for staple foods; whereas Article 34 stipulates exports of staple food commodities would only be permissible if national reserves and demand have been fulfilled.

It was also during the second term that Yudhoyono set higher ambitions for Indonesia's agricultural output. In April 2008, Yudhoyono called for a joint meeting with representatives from various ministries, state-owned enterprises, KADIN, and key figures in the energy and agricultural industries. A follow-up meeting was conducted two weeks after, and thus the *Komite Aksi Peningkatan Produktivitas Pangan, Energi, dan Mineral* was established, to be headed by Yudhoyono himself. It had the full support of the KADIN. From this meeting, KADIN would organise two "Feed Indonesia, Feed the World" conferences held in 2010 and 2012 respectively. In the first conference, KADIN identified 15 priority commodities, four of which are classified as "strategic", i.e., rice, sugar, soybean, and corn, and presented a roadmap of the necessary procedures that would need to be taken to support Yudhoyono's aspirations (Maulia, 2010).

These ambitions would entail ramping up production significantly, which would be achieved through extensification of farmland. The administration opted to build upon a previously defunct project known as the Merauke Integrated Rice Estate (MIRE) to increase rice production in eastern Indonesia. The administration rebranded MIRE as the MIFEE after a series of deliberations with numerous stakeholders. MIFEE would span 1.2 million hectares of land, but in practice, land concessions reached around 2.1 million hectares. Though the project was designed to bolster food security, in reality, food crops only accounted for 2.8 per cent of the estate with the remainder being planned for cash crops such as sugar cane, lumber, and oil palm (Ito, Rachman, & Savitri, 2014). As a result, it has been criticised as a land grab serving corporate interests instead of improving food security (Ginting & Pye, 2013; McDonnell, 2020). Ironically, this has led to increased food insecurity for the indigenous people in Papua, who have long relied on sago as their staple food (Hadiprayitno, 2017; Neilson, 2013).

Food Security in the Widodo Administration

As part of his 2014 campaign, Widodo pledged to improve *ketahanan pangan* during his first period in office. The pledge was contained in his 2014 campaign manifesto, *Nawacita*, under the promise of establishing economic independence. This would later be used as his policy platform for both administrations. In the manifesto, Widodo viewed economic self-sufficiency as essential for upholding sovereignty. As he claimed, "Political sovereignty will

lose meaning if not accompanied with economic self-sufficiency, which is a precondition for autonomy in national policymaking” (Widodo & Kalla, 2014). To achieve self-sufficiency, Widodo pledged to “foster food sovereignty (*kedaulatan pangan*) based on people’s agribusiness (*agribisnis kerakyatan*)” which would entail eradication of rent-seeking “import mafia”, increasing exports, building agricultural capacity and supporting infrastructure, increasing investment in villages, and enacting agrarian and land reform (Widodo & Kalla, 2014). Widodo also cited Soekarno’s “*soal hidup dan mati*” oration in the preamble of the Food Security and Vulnerability Atlas of Indonesia in 2015, further affirming the nationalist orientation of his food policies (Dewan Ketahanan Pangan et al., 2015). A similar nationalist theme could also be seen in the Agriculture Ministry’s Strategic Plan (*Rencana Strategis*) for 2015-2019. The ministry had identified several challenges for food resilience, i.e., increasing population and climate change, global economic competition, food price hikes, and distribution issues related to lack of infrastructure, illegal stockpiling, and natural disasters. The Strategic Plan lays out several responses to those challenges, namely increasing domestic production of rice, soybean, corn, and beef, and improving access and distribution safety. Agriculture Minister Regulation no. 14/2015 stipulates the goals of self-sufficiency in rice, corn, and soybeans must be reached within three years.

However, the most striking indicator of the Widodo administration’s move towards securitising food can be seen in the inclusion of food resilience into the discourse of national security. The 2015 Defence White Paper does not provide a definition of food resilience; however, it does specify “challenges” – climate change and decreasing food supply – to food resilience in its Strategic Outlook section.³ The document notes the “indirect” effects of climate change on “non-fulfilment [of] human life basic needs”, which will “cause disruption [of] resilience... leading to insecurity”. Interestingly, the document emphasises the effects of population increase, inflation, water crises, and dependency (presumably on imports) on food supply (Defence Ministry of the Republic of Indonesia, 2015).

These outlooks, outlined in national strategic documents, have led to the policies implemented by the administration being mostly focused on increasing productivity through state intervention (Hamilton-Hart, 2019). Joko Widodo viewed the matter as an issue of infrastructure. The administration designated several dam construction projects as ‘nationally strategic’ infrastructure projects and increased funding for villages and rural areas to prepare 9 million hectares of agricultural land and improve local irrigation infrastructure (Salim & Negara, 2018). The Widodo administration also distributed, per 2019, a total of 11 million land certificates to small and middle landowners to ensure the legal status of their land, which in the administration’s view, was as an implementation of land reform (“Presiden Jokowi serahkan”, 2020). The Agriculture Ministry increased fertiliser subsidies, which reached IDR 34.4 trillion in 2019 (“Berhitung uang subsidi pupuk”, 2021).

In addition to infrastructure fixes, the Widodo administration also expanded the remit of state agencies to handle food security. Presidential Regulation no. 48/2016 marginally expanded the authority of the BULOG to manage the prices of rice, corn, soybean, sugar, beef,

³In the official English translation of the Defence White Paper, “food resilience” is used.

and poultry. The administration also passed Presidential Regulation no. 66/2021, which established the National Food Agency (*Badan Pangan Nasional/BPN*). The new agency, which replaces the DKP, is a non-ministerial agency that answers directly to the President. The BPN implements food security policies developed by the Agriculture Ministry for specific foodstuffs, namely rice, corn, soybeans, sugar, shallots, poultry, eggs, beef, and chili. The BPN's remit also allows it to regulate food prices, which was traditionally the domain of the BULOG.

However, the most notable was the close cooperation between the Agriculture Ministry and the Indonesian military (TNI). Since 2015, the Agriculture Ministry and military have signed numerous memoranda of cooperation to achieve the Widodo administration's target of self-sufficiency. Based on Agriculture Minister Regulation no. 14/2015, the military and university students are expected provide guidance and assistance for farmers to reach self-sufficiency goals. Tens of thousands of *Babinsa* (*Bintara Pembina Desa*; non-commissioned officers at the village level) are expected to act as "motivators, facilitators, innovators, and dynamisators [sic]" under the program *TNI Manunggal Masuk Desa* (Solih, 2017). The Agriculture Ministry justified its reliance on military assistance due to their lack of manpower and the tight deadline imposed by the administration; while then-TNI Commander, Gatot Nurmantyo, justified the cooperation on the basis of military operations other than war (Kresna, 2017; "TNI lanjutkan garap", 2017). The results of the cooperation on agricultural output, however, remains questionable. The National Audit Agency (*Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan, BPK*) found the cooperation, dubbed *Program Cetak Sawah Kementerian Pertanian-Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, was riddled with financial mismanagement, resulting in substantial losses ("Program cetak sawah", 2020).

Whether these policies had a positive impact on rice production remains debatable. The National Statistics Agency recorded a decline in production of dried unhusked rice in the same year, from 59.2 million tonnes to 54.6 million tonnes. Since 2018, average production of dried unhusked rice has hovered at around 54 million tonnes. The decline in rice production in 2018 led to the government importing 2.25 million tonnes of rice; however, since 2019, Indonesia only imported an average of 444,000 tonnes (Figure 1). The decline in rice production may likely be attributed to a decline in arable land and unfavourable climate conditions. The Agriculture Ministry has also recorded a steady decline in per capita rice consumption (Figure 3 and Figure 4), which may be attributed to rising real prices resulting in less consumption or a change in dietary preferences attributed to higher household income (Kementerian Pertanian, 2021). In spite of production decline, Joko Widodo received an award from the International Rice Research Institute for achieving rice self-sufficiency, marked by zero imports of rice for consumption – distinct from rice imports for industrial purposes – for three consecutive years from 2019 ("Jokowi highlights zero rice", 2022).

Annual Rice Consumption by Sector

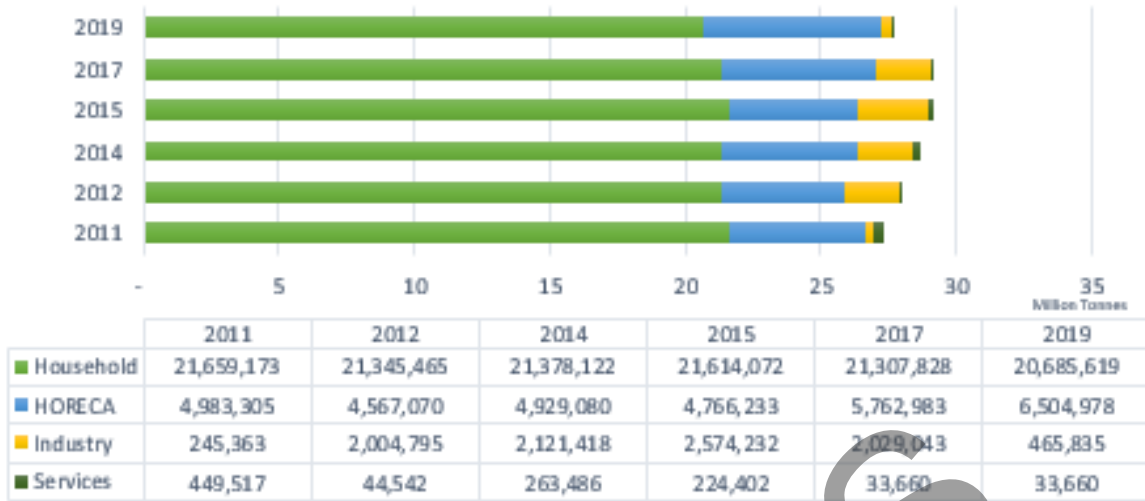


Figure 3 Annual rice consumption by sector. (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021).

Note: Data for 2013, 2016, and 2018 are not reported. HORECA stands for “hotel, restaurants, and cafes”. Industrial consumption refers to the use of rice for industrial purposes, e.g., manufacturing additives, livestock feed, etc.

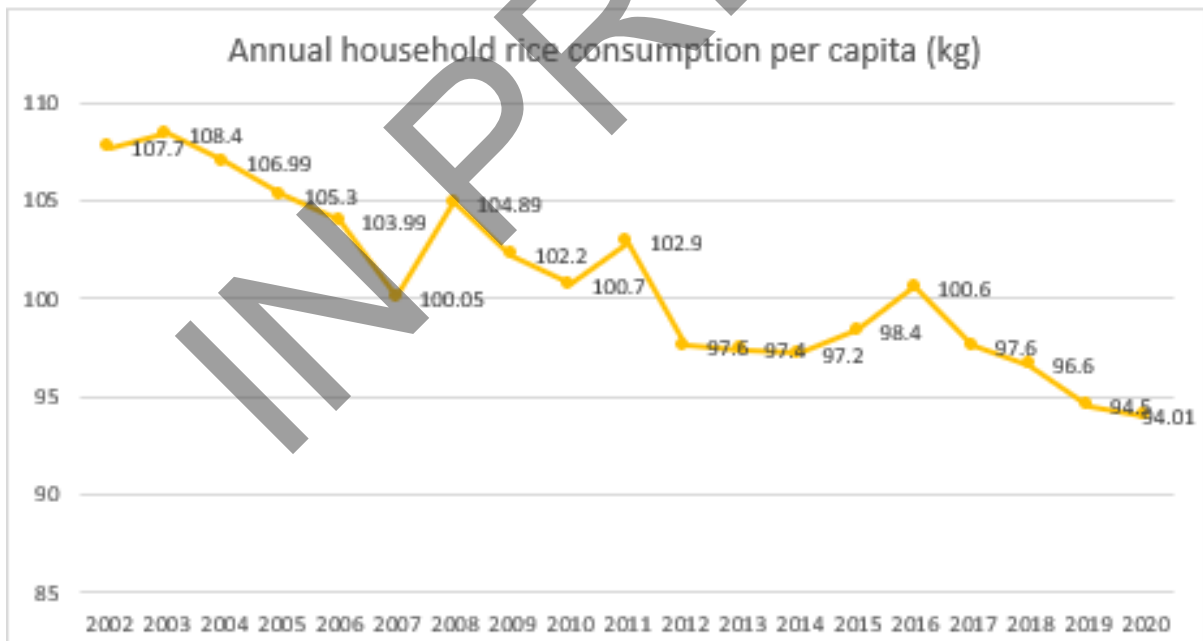


Figure 4 Annual per capita rice consumption for households, 2002-2020. (Kementerian Pertanian, 2021).

Having achieved rice self-sufficiency, it would seem there would be no reason to further intensify measures related to food production. The next step would be to focus on improving

access and bolstering farmers' welfare. However, in the second term, the Widodo administration became concerned of a looming food crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and later, the Russian invasion of Ukraine. On 28 April 2020, Jokowi met with the Agriculture Ministry and ordered extensification of existing farmland to anticipate the upcoming food crisis. In coordination with the SOE Ministry, the Agriculture Ministry expects to open new farmland on peatland in Central Kalimantan ("Kejar target 'sejuta' hektare", 2020a). Leading a limited meeting on the food estate in September 2020, Widodo requested his ministers to prioritise national food reserves in anticipation for a potential food crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, global warming, and an overall desire to decrease food imports ("Rapat terbatas mengenai lanjutan", 2020). Joko Widodo again cautioned his Cabinet and regional leaders of a looming food crisis in a national working meeting in 2021 (Kementerian Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 2021).

Concerns of a food crisis were further accentuated as the Russo-Ukraine War broke out. The war resulted in a global food price hike due to Russian blockades of Ukrainian wheat exports, which was particularly felt in Indonesia. Widodo visited Moscow in hopes of ensuring a resumption in the flow of wheat. The meeting resulted in an agreement from Putin to lift the blockade and ensure a resumption in the flow of goods out of the Black Sea (Maulia, 2022). In addition, Indonesia also added food security to its G20 presidency agenda, further reflecting the Widodo administration's belief of an existential threat to Indonesia's food security.

The administration's response to the potential food crisis was to establish food estates in Sumatera, East Nusa Tenggara, Central Kalimantan, and Papua for an expected total of over 770,000 hectares of new farmland to be opened; with 148,000 hectares allotted for rice and the 622,000 hectares for non-irrigated crops such as cassava and corn. More than half of the food estate will be concentrated in Central Kalimantan (McDonald & Meylinah, 2021; "Indonesia starts developing", 2020). Though the food estate project was expected to be part of the first term agenda, it experienced delays and could only proceed in 2017 due to difficulties in finding a suitable location. The Widodo administration designated the food estate as a "strategic national project", making it a priority for the administration. After a series of deliberations, it was decided the food estate would be built on former PLG lands in Central Kalimantan. The location was recommended by the mayor of Central Kalimantan and endorsed by a feasibility study conducted by the Environment and Forestry Ministry (Anam, 2020).

The food estate project was designed as a joint inter-ministerial project. Though initially led by the Agriculture Ministry, Joko Widodo decided to appoint Defence Minister, Prabowo Subianto, as the project lead. Joko Widodo rationalised the appointment as a means to "quickly anticipate [a possible food crisis] by establishing strategic food reserves", noting that "defence isn't only about weapons systems, it's also about resilience in the food sector". The Defence Ministry is expected to coordinate at least six ministries: Public Works and Housing, SOE, Spatial Planning, Environment and Forestry, Agriculture, and National Development Planning (Fachriansyah, 2020).

The new food estate project has generated considerable controversy, particularly from conservationist groups. Critics have pointed out the potentially detrimental financial, social, and environmental impacts of the project due to widespread deforestation, displacement of indigenous communities, and questionable profitability (“Stop food estate di kawasan”, 2020). There have also been allegations of widespread mismanagement within the Defence Ministry as the primary interlocutor of the program. Environment and Forestry Ministerial Regulation no. 24/2020, also colloquially known as the Food Estate Law despite not being a product of legislature, allows for a streamlined conversion of production forest areas to food estate areas. The new regulation would permit an area to be converted to a food estate based on an expedited environmental assessment in lieu of a more exhaustive assessment. This new provision has allegedly been exploited by the Defence Ministry. The management of the food estate was entrusted to a private company, PT Agro Industri Nasional (Agrinas). The company is owned by a non-profit foundation, Development of Potential Defence Resources Foundation, where Defence Minister Prabowo Subianto serves as the head of advisory board. Key leadership positions within the foundation are held by members of Prabowo’s political party, Gerindra. The Defence Ministry, however, has denied its links to PT Agrinas (“Rainforests fall for Indonesia's food”, 2021).

Analysis

Having elaborated the food security policies of Indonesian governments, this section proceeds to examine whether the issue of food security has been securitised and whether the securitisation of food can be considered morally defensible based on the framework of just securitisation. Summaries of the results of the analysis may be found in Table 2 and Table 3 respectively.

Has Food been Securitised?

The Sukarno administration

Sukarno had identified the objective threat of famine to the nation, caused by an inability to produce enough rice to meet the demands of an increasing population. Left unaddressed, this inability would eventually “eliminate” the nation. Note that in his 1952 speech, Sukarno used the term “*bahaya kemusnahan*”, which the closest translation would be “the threat of extinction”, further accentuating the urgency of the matter. Compounding on these threats was Indonesia’s dependence on the global market, which, as a recently independent country beset by economic turmoil, would only exacerbate the threat to the nation. To save the nation, Sukarno had placed his hopes on policies aiming at agricultural intensification, extensification, and providing professional education. From the use of security language, it is clear the issue of food had been securitised. The conduct of security measures in the form of production-oriented policies further indicate securitisation has occurred.

The Suharto administration

Suharto saw food as a means to assert and sustain political legitimacy, which depended on his administration's ability to maintain the prices of foodstuffs, rice especially, at an accessible level. Food was no longer a "matter of life or death" requiring extraordinary measures to protect, yet due to its perceived central role in advancing economic development, the administration continued to present the issue in security language. Further enabling this was the fact that the issue of food had not yet been fully de-securitized largely in part due to the abrupt transfer of power from the Sukarno to Suharto administrations. The absence of proper de-securitisation resulted in a condition perhaps best described as a state of "latent" securitisation, where the issue remains securitized, though extraordinary measures are not taken. A latently-securitized issue may be re-securitized, given favorable conditions (Taufika, 2020).

Suharto left food policy to technocrats in his administration, which focused on introducing "green revolution" technologies, economic incentives, market controls, and transmigration (Falcon, 2014). However, the administration's focus on achieving national resilience as a bulwark against a Communist resurgence essentially enabled the administration to frame any issue in security terms, food notwithstanding. Additionally, the Suharto era bureaucracy was not purely civilian; active military personnel were permitted to occupy civilian posts. These structural conditions eased the involvement of military personnel in implementing food policies, as evidenced in the involvement of the military elite in the BIMAS Gotong Royong program. However, when the administration perceived threats to domestic stability and the nation due to the loss of food self-sufficiency, it quickly responded with a measure to ensure food resilience was maintained. Following the collapse of the administration in 1998, food security became latently securitized again due to the absence of a proper de-securitisation, even by the transitional administrations.

The Yudhoyono administration

The Yudhoyono administration did not initially securitize food during the first term. Food security remained on the political agenda, but there were no significant moves to securitize the issue. There are two possible explanations for this. First, there were positive developments in agricultural output, while imports were generally within acceptable levels. Coupled with relatively stable economic growth, the administration may have not seen the need to securitize food. Second, the administration was occupied with other pressing security issues, such as counterterrorism and reconciliation with the *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka* separatist movement (Jones, 2015). As a result, Yudhoyono had maintained the politicisation of food resilience, while not engaging in neither de-securitisation nor securitisation.

A trend towards securitisation became more apparent in the second term, after the administration had perceived threats to food resilience. The revision of the Food Law, in addition to the passing of laws related to horticulture and farmers' protection was motivated by protectionist tendencies in agriculture, were a reaction to the increased budgetary strains

on food imports, which in turn were perceived to be devastating to local farmers. The administration also passed Presidential Instruction no. 5/2011, which allows for narrow involvement of police and military personnel in securing food reserves during extreme climate conditions (droughts, floods, etc.). The administration started to ramp up perceived threats of a looming food crisis, which would be exacerbated by population increase. In defending the MIFEE, the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs has noted MIFEE was a necessary policy to “anticipate a food crisis” (Neilson & Wright, 2017). The practice of allowing the involvement of military and law enforcement may suggest a form of extraordinary action, however, military personnel may be deployed for a wide range of military operations other than war based on the 2004 Armed Forces Law (Haripin, 2020). Regardless, the involvement of the armed forces would constitute as a security practice hinting towards securitisation as it expands the remit of an agency which initially was not equipped to deal with food security. Like previous administrations, the Yudhoyono administration did not openly and completely de-securitise the issue, thus rendering it latent.

The Widodo administration

Securitisation of food in the Widodo administration is more obvious compared to the previous administration. The incorporation of food resilience into national security discourse represents a break from the Yudhoyono administration’s reluctance to engage in overt security language. In addition, the administration had also positioned food self-sufficiency as a goal of his administration through the referencing Soekarno’s “*soal hidup atau mati*” speech. In his second term, the threats to the nation became more evident. A notable aspect was the unified adoption of the narrative across ministries, which was less evident during the Yudhoyono regime. This has been attributed to Joko Widodo’s big-tent coalition, which weakened political opposition, thus centralising power within the executive circle (Mietzner, 2016). Positioning food resilience as not just a national development priority, but also a matter of national security, allowed the Widodo administration to establish new agencies and expanding the remit of existing agencies dedicated to responding the identified threats.

Is Securitisation Morally Defensible?

Having identified instances of securitisation, the second part of the analysis calls for a normative testing of securitisation, and in some cases, de-securitisation, to determine whether securitisation is morally defensible. The analysis proceeds by examining initiation, conduct, and termination of securitisation in each administration. In addition, as the Widodo administration is currently ongoing, analysis on conduct of securitisation remains preliminary.

Table 2 Summary of the state of securitisation/de-securitisation of food security across administrations.

	Sukarno	Suharto (early)	Suharto (late)	Yudhoyono (first term)	Yudhoyono (second term)	Widodo
Securitising moves	Identified objective threats of famine in existential terms	Identified objective threats of famine as an issue of regime survival	Loss of self-sufficiency posed a threat to legitimacy and stability	Nonapparent	Perceived threats of food shortage	Identified objective threats of climate change and its effects in existential terms
Security practice	Production-oriented policies	Production-oriented policies, price controls, and improving access.	Failed execution of large-scale food estate	Creation of new agency with additional remit in food security	Import restrictions, increasing operational remit of military, and food estates	Production-oriented policies, import restrictions, and food estate
State of securitisation	Securitised	Securitised	Securitised	“Latent” securitisation	Securitised	Securitised
State of de-securitisation	Not de-securitised	Not de-securitised	Not de-securitised	Not de-securitised	Not de-securitised	Unknown

Source: Author’s own illustration.

The Sukarno administration

The initiation of securitisation by the Sukarno administration may have been based on just cause and intent. The widespread food shortages in the 1950s and 1960s, caused by a combination of population growth, droughts, and logistical problems posed an existential and objective threat to the nation (van der Eng, 2012). As far as intent is concerned, the available evidence points towards just intent, as the administration enacted policies aimed at intensifying rice production.

In conducting securitisation, the principle of proportionality has been observed as the policies were mainly targeted to increase production. In the case of an agent-lacking threat, the available evidence does not suggest the presence of an ulterior or agent-benefitting motive underlying these policies. The effectiveness of conduct, however, may be questioned. First, the evidence suggests the administration lacked the necessary technological and logistical capacity to ensure the success of these policies. Second, the explicit rejection of foreign food aid raises doubts on the administration’s sincerity in security practice. By rejecting international food aid, the administration did not act in a way to mitigate further harm to the referent object. This practice further raises questions of the sincerity of the securitising agent.

Until the end of the Sukarno administration in 1966, there were no publicly available statements announcing the termination of food securitisation. As a result, the issue may be considered to still be in a securitised state.

The Suharto administration

During the first decade of his rule, Suharto re-initiated securitisation of food. The justness of initiation, however, may be questioned. The threat of food shortages, which persisted throughout the late 1960s, served as a just cause for securitisation. The following conduct, represented in the acceptance and use of foreign aid and 'green revolution' technologies to increase rice production, may also be considered proportionate and effective in addressing the identified threats. This was marked by an overall improvement in living standards and an increase in agricultural output (Booth, 2000; Thee, 2012). Within this particular time bracket, the agent's intent may be considered just as the agent's actions are consistent with the threats identified by the agent. However, when one looks at the socio-political context, the sincerity of intent may be questioned. By portraying food policies as a bulwark against a potential Communist resurgence, the primary beneficiary of these policies would be the political elites as opposed to the nation.

The justness of securitisation seems to further falter after the achievement of rice self-sufficiency in 1984. Following the principle of timeliness in de-securitisation, security rhetoric and practice related to food should have been ceased. Suharto's 1985 State of the Nation Address, however, suggests continuation of previous policies to sustain self-sufficiency, although the administration had ceased the use of security discourse in the issue of food. This suggests an incomplete de-securitisation, rendering the issue latent.

The loss of self-sufficiency, coupled with warnings of food shortages in 1995, served as enablers for the re-securitisation of food, as indicated in the initiation of the PLG program. However, the initiation of securitisation in this instance would be considered unjust in intent, as it was conducted to benefit the securitising agent. In its conduct, the PLG was also disproportionate and ineffective, as it resulted in long-term ecological and socio-economic harm, particularly to the indigenous population of Kalimantan (McCarthy, 2013).

It may be argued the Suharto administration held the responsibility to de-securitise food, at least up to the point where self-sufficiency was achieved. By then, the threats of famines had generally been abated. However, until the abrupt end of the Suharto administration in 1998, there were no evident attempts to reverse the securitisation of food, rendering the issue latent. The latent state of food security remained throughout the transitional administrations of Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid, and Megawati.

The Yudhoyono administration

As the first administration that marked the beginning Indonesia's period of democratic consolidation, it had the opportunity to de-securitise food security. The creation of a new agency with remit in food security, in addition to the absence of reforms on previous policies which could be potentially used to securitise food in the future, however, suggests the issue remained in a latent state.

The initiation of securitisation in the second Yudhoyono administration shows mixed results. In terms of just cause, although there were threats to food security as a result of the 2007-2008 financial crises, existing food security measures were considered relatively adequate to bear the brunt of the crisis. It was more likely Yudhoyono was more concerned of his domestic image, as his relaxation of rice imports and general incompetence in managing agricultural policy was met with widespread dissatisfaction and political opposition (Hill, 2015). This led to a need to strengthen his international image through the MIFEE project. In this sense, the parameters for justness of intent and cause are unfulfilled, which results in an unjust initiation of securitisation.

As security practice, the administration's proposed MIFEE project fails to meet the criteria of just conduct in both effectiveness and proportionality. The MIFEE project had questionable benefits in terms of increasing food security; instead, it may have worsened food security, especially in already food-insecure regions. In terms of production, the proportion of allocated land for growing food crops paled in comparison to the land allotted for cash crops. Furthermore, the introduction of monoculture plots of land undermined local food production in Papua, which contradicts the goal of improving access and diversification (Ito et al., 2014).

The Widodo administration

As far as threats are concerned, the Widodo administration has identified several objective threats, with climate change and its effects being prominent, to food security as laid out in the Defence White Paper. Other threats included global food price hikes due to pandemic-induced global supply chain issues. At a glance, these threats may be considered both objective and existential, thus fulfilling the requirements for just cause. However, it also raises the question of whether it is just to securitise against future objective threats as opposed to imminent threats. Just securitisation theory seemingly rejects securitising future threats, as 'it is unlikely to be the only and last thing that could deliver the desired result in a relevant situation' (Floyd, 2019). Viewed in this light, the justness of cause becomes questionable, especially in justifying the administration's chosen security practice of establishing a large-scale food estate.

The case for just intent and conduct requires further scrutiny. The emphasis on self-sufficiency as a goal in itself is problematic, as it would entail costly measures with questionable long-term benefits. Moreover, the main beneficiary of self-sufficiency remains unclear: is it for the benefit of the state or citizens? (Lassa & Shrestha, 2014) However, as the previous sections have shown, the self-sufficiency narrative has been entrenched since the Sukarno administration (Neilson, 2018). Thus, although alternatives may have been considered, the persistence of the self-sufficiency narrative, in addition to its public appeal, nudges the administration to pursue food estates as a security practice in response to the identified threat of food shortages. The evidence so far reveals the food estate policy might not have been carried out with sincere intent, as the main beneficiaries of the projects have

mostly been political elites instead of the referent object. In sum, food securitisation may not have been initiated and conducted justly.

Table 3. Summary of the normative analysis of securitisation/de-securitisation of food security across administrations.

	Sukarno	Suharto (early)	Suharto (late)	Yudhoyono (first term)	Yudhoyono (second term)	Widodo
Initiation	Based on just cause and intent	Based on just cause, but questionable intent	Not based on just cause nor intent	No initiation	Not based on just cause or intent	Just cause and intent questionable
Conduct	Generally proportionate, though narrowly effective, although implementation was marred by technical and logistical limitations.	Proportionate and effective in addressing the identified threats	Disproportionate and ineffective	Questionable	Disproportionate and ineffective	Preliminary evidence shows disproportionate and ineffective
Termination	No explicit termination	Not terminated	No explicit termination	No termination, despite having moral responsibility	No explicit termination	No explicit termination

Source: Author's own illustration.

Conclusions

The research had set out to identify and analyse the securitisation of food across four administrations in Indonesia. It has made three central findings. First, the discourse surrounding food in Indonesia is generally based on the dream of achieving food self-sufficiency as a pre-requisite for food sovereignty as laid out by Sukarno. The narrative of self-sufficiency has since then been co-opted by subsequent administrations to legitimise practices which have mostly focused on increasing production and protecting domestic farmers, as opposed to ensuring equitable access. These practices have commonly taken the form of farmland expansion, particularly in areas beyond the main island of Java. Second, practices enacted by the administration are not always morally defensible, as they have not always been initiated with sincere intent and conducted in a manner to benefit the referent object while limiting harm to thereof. Instead, this paper has shown that the securitisation of food presents a lucrative opportunity for the political elite to benefit themselves under the pretence of

addressing a “matter of life or death” for the nation. This has been particularly evident when large-scale projects are presented and implemented as an antidote for food insecurity. What often follows is mismanagement, which results in potentially more harm than expected. Third, the research has also shown discourses of food security have generally remained in a latently securitised state due to incomplete de-securitisation, despite the change in administrations. This condition has enabled subsequent administrations to re-securitise food security in discourses of self-sufficiency, even in the absence of just cause or intent.

The findings reveal that food security in Indonesia has long been the product of security discourses due to the persistent self-sufficiency narrative. The continued securitisation of food, coupled with its lack of de-securitisation, enables political leaders to justify policies that have questionable benefit to the nation. Continued securitisation of food security, therefore, would be considered unjustified. As just securitisation theory prescribes, de-securitisation becomes a moral imperative. However, doing so would require a fundamental ideational shift from self-sufficiency to an alternative paradigm of food security which promotes equitable access rather than a narrow focus on self-sufficiency.

The research has attempted to empirically test the normative framework of just securitisation theory; however, it is not without limitations. Admittedly, this preliminary attempt has only sought to apply just securitisation theory instead of developing a potential competing formulation. Limited access to primary source material, which would have greatly enriched the analysis of intent, also posed a challenge in conducting a comprehensive analysis. Additionally, this analysis has mostly focused on food production policies. Future research may opt for a more comprehensive analysis on the justness of distribution and access policies, especially in the face of future existential threats. Limitations notwithstanding, the research has shown just securitisation theory to be useful in longitudinal analysis of security policies spanning across administrations within a single country. Further research may consider comparative applications of just securitisation theory to enrich its empirical applicability.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers for their comments. The author also thanks Jun Honna for their constructive feedback and support on an earlier draft of this article. The research is financially supported by the MEXT Embassy-recommended Scholarship 2021 and Ritsumeikan University.

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