



The Policy Paradox of Rice Import Restrictions: Food Sovereignty and Governance in Post-Reform Indonesia

Nila Triwahyuning Tyas^{1*}, Endang Susilowati², Yety Rochwulaningsih³,
Agustina Wilujeng Pramestuti⁴

Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia

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*Correspondence Address:

nilatwtyas@gmail.com

Abstract:

This study aims to examine the policy paradox between rice import restrictions and food sovereignty in post-Reform Indonesia from a governance perspective. An explanatory mixed-methods approach was employed by integrating historical policy analysis and descriptive quantitative analysis. The study analyzed government regulations, policy documents, BULOG reports, rice import statistics, and domestic production data from 2004–2024 to evaluate policy effectiveness, institutional coordination, and governance capacity. The findings reveal that the 2004 rice import moratorium successfully reduced import volumes and strengthened state intervention in food markets in the short term. However, these achievements did not lead to sustainable food sovereignty due to persistent challenges in agricultural productivity, institutional coordination, supply-chain efficiency, and technological modernization. This study contributes to the food governance literature by demonstrating that food sovereignty is a multidimensional governance outcome shaped by policy effectiveness, institutional coordination, and governance capacity, rather than by import restrictions alone. The findings imply that import management should be integrated with broader governance reforms, agricultural modernization, and institutional strengthening to enhance food system resilience and reduce structural dependence on external food markets.

INTRODUCTION

Rice remains the cornerstone of Indonesia's food system (Arieftiara et al., 2026; Hibatullah et al., 2024; Widyawati et al., 2025), serving not only as the primary staple food but also as a strategic commodity closely associated with economic stability, public welfare, and state legitimacy. Consequently, rice governance has become one of the most important policy domains in Indonesia, where government intervention extends beyond market regulation to include broader objectives of food security and food sovereignty. Despite continuous policy efforts, Indonesia continues to experience recurring dependence on rice imports during periods of domestic production shortfalls, indicating that food security challenges are influenced not only by production capacity but also by institutional coordination, governance effectiveness, and long-term policy consistency (Hasan & Daryanto, 2024; Muis et al., 2025).

This persistent dependence reveals a policy paradox. On the one hand, successive governments have implemented protectionist measures, including import restrictions and market intervention, to strengthen domestic agriculture and reduce reliance on imported rice. On the other hand, Indonesia has repeatedly resumed rice imports to stabilize domestic supply when production declined. The 2004 rice import moratorium introduced during the Megawati Soekarnoputri administration illustrates this contradiction. Although the policy successfully reduced rice import volumes in the short term and reinforced government intervention in food markets, it did not eliminate Indonesia's long-term structural dependence on external rice markets. This paradox suggests that the effectiveness of rice import policy cannot be evaluated solely by reductions in import volumes but must also consider broader governance outcomes.

Previous studies have examined Indonesia's rice import policy from the perspectives of trade policy, political economy, food security, and agricultural economics (Fadah et al., 2024; Vadilaksono & Syaukat, 2023; Yusrin et al., 2024). These studies demonstrate that rice import decisions are influenced by market conditions, political interests, and domestic production capacity (Ahmed et al., 2025; Diawati & Rasyid, 2025; Fadah et al., 2024). However, relatively little attention has been devoted to explaining how governance arrangements, including policy effectiveness, institutional coordination, and governance capacity, shape the long-term success or failure of rice import restrictions in achieving food sovereignty. Consequently, the governance mechanisms underlying Indonesia's persistent dependence on rice imports remain insufficiently explained.

To address this gap, this study adopts a food governance perspective. Food governance refers to the institutional arrangements, policy processes, and coordination mechanisms through which governments regulate food production, distribution, trade, and consumption to achieve food security and sustainable development (Oñederra-Aramendi et al., 2023; Patay et al., 2026; Rodrí & Ruí, 2024). Drawing on this perspective, the study conceptualizes food sovereignty as a governance outcome determined by three interrelated dimensions: policy effectiveness, referring to the achievement of policy objectives; institutional coordination, referring to collaboration among public institutions responsible for food governance; and governance capacity, referring to the ability of institutions to formulate, implement, and sustain long-term food policies. This framework enables the analysis to move beyond conventional evaluations based solely on trade performance or agricultural production.

Against this background, the 2004 rice import moratorium provides an appropriate empirical case for examining whether protectionist import policies contributed to sustainable food sovereignty or merely produced short-term administrative success. Rather than treating the moratorium solely as a trade policy, this study interprets it as a governance intervention whose effectiveness depends on the interaction between policy implementation, institutional coordination, and governance capacity.

Accordingly, this study examines the policy paradox between rice import restrictions and food sovereignty in post-Reform Indonesia from a governance perspective. Specifically, it analyzes how the 2004 rice import moratorium was implemented, evaluates its effectiveness in reducing structural dependence on imported rice, and examines how policy effectiveness, institutional coordination, and governance capacity influenced food sovereignty outcomes. The study argues that although the

moratorium strengthened government intervention and temporarily reduced rice imports, it failed to generate the institutional and structural transformation required for sustainable food sovereignty. By integrating governance dimensions into the analysis, this study contributes to the food governance literature by providing a more comprehensive explanation of why protectionist rice import policies have not eliminated Indonesia's long-term dependence on external food markets.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed an explanatory mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2021; Grace et al., 2023; Hirose & Creswell, 2023) by integrating qualitative historical policy analysis and descriptive quantitative analysis to examine the relationship between rice import restrictions and food sovereignty in post-Reform Indonesia. The combination of these approaches enables a more comprehensive understanding of governance outcomes, as qualitative analysis explains institutional development and policy implementation. In contrast, quantitative analysis identifies changes in rice import dependency and domestic production trends over time.

The qualitative analysis examined the evolution of Indonesia's rice import policy during 2004–2024, focusing on policy formulation, implementation, institutional transformation, and governance reforms. Data sources included government regulations, policy documents, BULOG reports, presidential statements, and academic literature, which were analyzed using thematic coding across open, axial, and selective stages. Meanwhile, the quantitative analysis used annual secondary data on rice imports, domestic production, and major policy interventions to identify longitudinal trends rather than establish statistical causality.

The governance analysis was structured around three dimensions: policy effectiveness, institutional coordination, and governance capacity. Policy effectiveness was assessed through changes in rice import volumes, implementation consistency, and achievement of policy objectives. Institutional coordination focused on the roles and collaboration among key agencies, particularly the Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Agriculture, and BULOG. Governance capacity was evaluated through institutional ability to sustain policies, improve domestic productivity, strengthen distribution systems, and support long-term food sovereignty.

The analytical framework adopts a food governance perspective, conceptualizing food sovereignty as an outcome shaped by institutional arrangements, policy processes, and coordination mechanisms. Rather than focusing solely on trade performance, this study evaluates whether rice import restrictions generate sustainable governance outcomes through policy effectiveness, institutional coordination, and governance capacity. The integration of qualitative evidence and quantitative trends provides a systematic assessment of how these dimensions influence food sovereignty in Indonesia.

The study used primary and secondary data sources selected for their relevance to rice import governance and food sovereignty. Primary sources included official regulations, government documents, statistical publications, and institutional reports, including regulations on BULOG and rice import management. Quantitative data were obtained from official sources, including BPS, BULOG, and the Ministry of Agriculture, covering rice imports, domestic production, and policy interventions from 2004–2024.

To ensure analytical validity, this study applied source triangulation (Papavasileiou & Dimou, 2025; Sciberras & Dingli, 2023) by comparing evidence from government

regulations, official statistics, institutional reports, and academic literature. This approach strengthened the reliability of findings by linking policy interpretations with empirical trends and institutional evidence. Through this methodological design, the study provides a comprehensive explanation of the policy paradox between rice import restrictions and Indonesia's continued dependence on external rice markets.

The collected data were analyzed using historical, governance, and descriptive quantitative analyses. Historical analysis examined policy developments, institutional transformations, and state responses related to rice import governance by tracing regulatory changes and socio-economic conditions after the Reformasi period. Governance analysis evaluated policy effectiveness, institutional capacity, and coordination mechanisms to assess how rice import restrictions contributed to food sovereignty and long-term food system resilience.

Descriptive quantitative analysis complemented the qualitative findings by examining trends in rice imports, domestic production, and trade policy developments. Statistical data were presented through tables and figures to illustrate changes in rice import volumes before and after the moratorium policy. The integration of these three analytical approaches provided a comprehensive understanding of how policy effectiveness, institutional arrangements, and governance capacity shaped the relationship between rice import policy and food sovereignty in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Transformation of Food Protection Governance in Indonesia

The transformation of Indonesia's food protection policy during the administration of President Megawati Soekarno putri reflected broader efforts to restore economic stability and strengthen food governance following the 1998 Asian financial crisis. During this period, food policy became increasingly linked to state intervention in rice governance, agricultural protection, and public welfare. Consequently, the government intensified its intervention through import regulation, market stabilization, and institutional restructuring within the national food system. The findings indicate that the strengthening of food protection policies between 2001 and 2004 represented a governance transition rather than merely a series of regulatory reforms. The restructuring of BULOG through Government Regulation No. 7 of 2003 strengthened the agency's institutional role in maintaining national rice reserves, while the issuance of Ministry of Industry and Trade Decree No. 9/MPP/Kep/1/2004 established stricter controls on rice imports as part of the government's food sovereignty agenda.

Viewed through the analytical framework of this study, these reforms primarily enhanced policy effectiveness by improving the government's capacity to regulate rice imports and implement food market interventions more consistently. At the same time, clarifying BULOG's responsibilities and introducing a more centralized regulatory framework strengthened institutional coordination, particularly among agencies responsible for rice procurement, import regulation, and market stabilization. However, the findings also demonstrate that comparable improvements in governance capacity did not accompany improvements in policy effectiveness and institutional coordination. Although regulatory intervention intensified, complementary reforms in agricultural productivity, technological modernization, supply chain management, and cross-sectoral coordination remained limited. Consequently, institutional reforms increased the

government's ability to control rice imports but did not fundamentally reduce Indonesia's structural dependence on external rice markets.

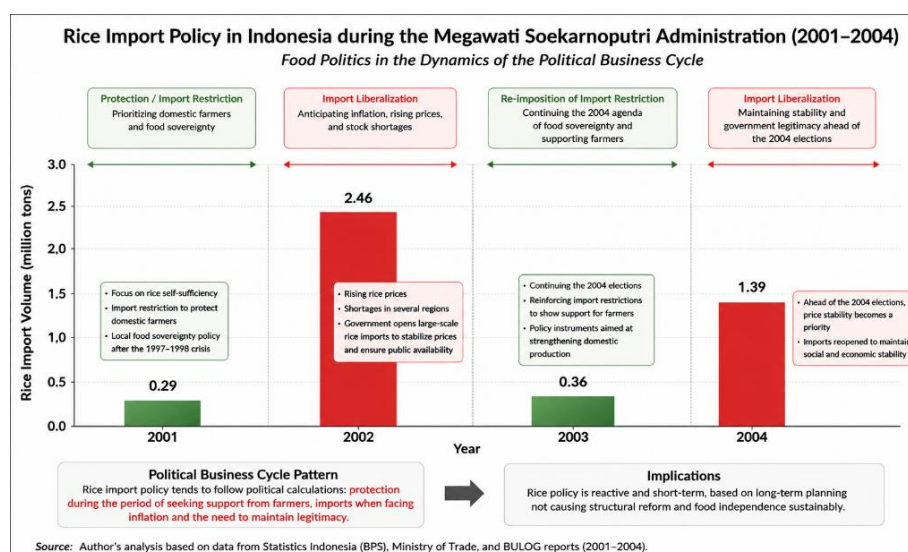


Figure 1. Transformation of Rice Protection Policy During the Megawati Administration (2001–2004)

Source: Author's analysis based on BPS statistics, BULOG reports, and government regulations

Table 1. Governance Transformation of Rice Protection Policy During the Megawati Administration (2001–2004)

Year	Policy / Institutional Change	Governance Objective	Expected Food Governance Outcome
2001	Strengthening BULOG's role in rice procurement and price stabilization	Stabilize domestic rice supply and prices	Improved market control and food availability
2002	Food security prioritized within the national development agenda	Enhance government commitment to food security governance	Greater policy focus on domestic food resilience
2003	Government Regulation No. 7 of 2003 transforming BULOG into a State-Owned Public Enterprise (Perum BULOG)	Strengthen institutional capacity and food reserve management	Improved governance of rice stocks and market intervention
2004	Ministry of Industry and Trade Decree No. 9/MPP/Kep/1/2004 on rice import restrictions	Reduce import dependence and protect domestic farmers	Increased domestic agricultural protection and support for food sovereignty
2004	Amendments through Ministerial Decrees No. 357/MPP/Kep/5/2004 and No. 368/MPP/Kep/5/2004	Strengthen implementation of rice import controls	Enhanced regulatory oversight of rice trade governance

Source: Compiled by the author based on Government Regulation No. 7 of 2003, Ministry of Industry and Trade Decree No. 9/MPP/Kep/1/2004, BULOG reports, and BPS publications.

These findings suggest that the historical transformation of food protection policy generated significant improvements in administrative governance but only limited progress toward sustainable food sovereignty. The imbalance among policy

effectiveness, institutional coordination, and governance capacity constitutes the first empirical indication of the governance paradox examined in this study.

The Rice Import Moratorium and the Apparent Success Narrative

The implementation of the rice import moratorium in 2004 was widely regarded as a major achievement of Indonesia's food protection policy during the Megawati administration. The policy substantially reduced rice import volumes during its initial implementation and reinforced the government's commitment to protecting domestic agricultural production. Government intervention through BULOG also contributed to temporary market stabilization by limiting imports of rice and maintaining rice availability in strategic regions. From a policy effectiveness perspective, these outcomes indicate that the moratorium successfully achieved its immediate objectives. The reduction in rice imports and the government's strengthened ability to regulate domestic rice markets demonstrate that protectionist measures were effectively implemented in the policy's early stages. These achievements also enhanced public confidence in the state's capacity to manage food security during the post-Reform economic recovery.

The findings further indicate improvements in institutional coordination, as the implementation of the moratorium required closer interaction among the Ministry of Trade, BULOG, and other government agencies responsible for food management. More coherent coordination contributed to the consistent enforcement of import restrictions and supported short-term market stabilization. Nevertheless, the empirical evidence suggests that stronger policy implementation did not translate into greater governance capacity. Despite lower import volumes during the moratorium period, domestic agricultural productivity, food distribution systems, and technological modernization showed limited structural improvement. Indonesia subsequently resumed rice imports during periods of production shortfalls, indicating that the governance reforms supporting the moratorium were insufficient to sustain long-term food sovereignty.

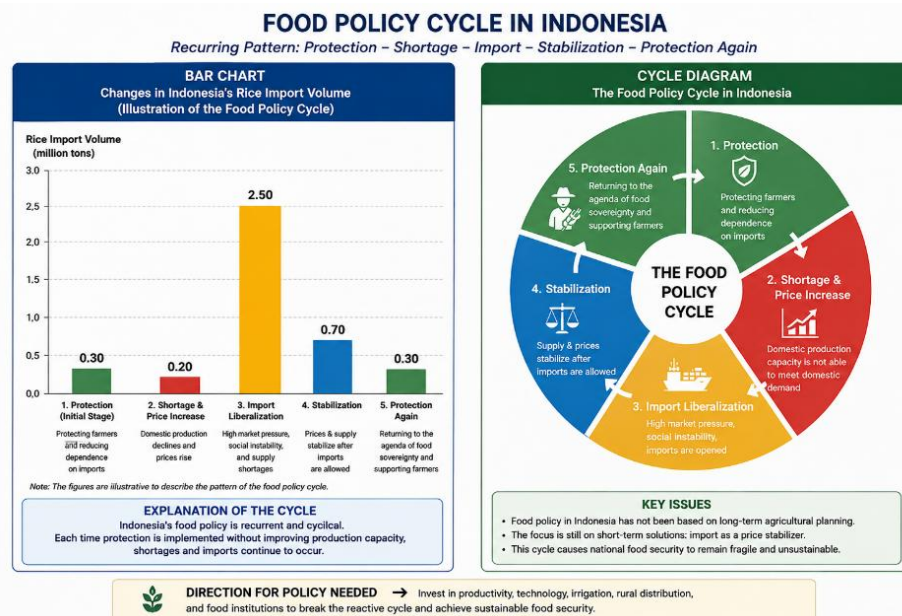


Figure 2. Apparent Success of the Rice Import Moratorium During the Megawati Administration (2001–2005)

Source: Author's analysis based on BPS statistics, Ministry of Agriculture reports, and BULOG publications.

Table 2. Rice Import Policy Outcomes During the Moratorium Period (2001–2005)

Governance Dimension	Indicator	Before Moratorium (2001–2003)	Moratorium Period (2004–2005)	Policy Outcome
Import Management	Rice import volume	High and fluctuating	Significantly reduced	Lower import dependency
Market Stabilization	Domestic rice availability	Vulnerable to import fluctuations	More stable supply conditions	Improved market stability
Agricultural Protection	Exposure of domestic farmers to imported rice	Relatively high	Reduced through import restrictions	Increased domestic protection
Institutional Role	BULOG intervention in rice markets	Primarily reserve management and stabilization	Expanded role in market regulation and supply control	Stronger governance intervention
Food Sovereignty Objective	Government commitment to food self-sufficiency	Limited emphasis	Strong policy priority	Enhanced food sovereignty agenda
Public Legitimacy	Public perception of government commitment to food security	Moderate	Increased following import restrictions	Strengthened policy legitimacy

Source: Compiled by the author based on Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), BULOG publications, Ministry of Agriculture reports, and USDA Grain and Feed Reports (2005).

These findings demonstrate that the apparent success of the rice import moratorium reflected improvements in policy implementation and institutional coordination rather than a comprehensive strengthening of governance capacity. Consequently, the policy produced positive short-term governance outcomes but failed to generate the structural transformation required to eliminate Indonesia's dependence on imported rice.

Governance Challenges and Policy Sustainability

Indonesia's rice import policy during President Megawati Soekarnoputri's administration reflected broader governance challenges in balancing food security objectives, domestic agricultural protection, and market stability. Rice policy functioned not only as an economic instrument but also as a strategic mechanism for managing food availability and maintaining public confidence in government food management. Consequently, state intervention in rice imports became increasingly important within the broader framework of food governance.

The implementation of rice import restrictions during 2001–2004 revealed a recurring pattern: protectionist measures were adopted to strengthen domestic agricultural production and reduce dependence on imported rice. However, when domestic production could not meet national demand or market instability threatened food availability, the government was required to reintroduce import controls to stabilize supply. This pattern illustrates the cyclical nature of rice import management within Indonesia's food governance system.

The results further indicate that while rice import restrictions contributed to short-term reductions in import dependency, they were not accompanied by sufficient structural improvements in agricultural productivity, food distribution systems, irrigation infrastructure, or technological modernization. As a result, the policy's sustainability remained constrained by structural weaknesses in the national food system.

Table 3. Governance Challenges and Sustainability of Rice Import Policy in Indonesia (2001–2005)

Governance Dimension	Policy Achievement	Governance Challenge	Long-Term Implication
Import Management	Reduction in rice import volumes during the moratorium period	Dependence on domestic production performance and supply conditions	Import requirements re-emerge when domestic supply is insufficient
Food Security	Improved short-term market stabilization and rice availability	Vulnerability to production fluctuations, climate risks, and demand growth	Food security remains susceptible to external and internal shocks
Agricultural Development	Increased protection for domestic farmers through import restrictions	Limited productivity growth, technological modernization, and farmer regeneration	Weak structural transformation of the agricultural sector
Institutional Coordination	Stronger government intervention in rice market governance	Fragmented coordination among ministries and food-related institutions	Reduced policy effectiveness and implementation consistency
Infrastructure and Technology	Greater policy attention to food self-sufficiency objectives	Inadequate investment in irrigation systems, logistics, and agricultural technology	Persistent constraints on production capacity and distribution efficiency
Food Sovereignty	Strengthened national commitment to food sovereignty and self-sufficiency	Continued structural dependence on external food markets during supply shortages	Partial achievement of sustainable food sovereignty

Source: Author's analysis based on BPS statistics, BULOG reports, Ministry of Agriculture publications, Government Regulation No. 7 of 2003, and Ministry of Industry and Trade Decree No. 9/MPP/Kep/1/2004.

Table 3 demonstrates that the rice import moratorium generated several short-term policy achievements, particularly in reducing rice imports, stabilizing domestic markets, and strengthening government intervention in food governance. However, these achievements were accompanied by significant governance challenges, including institutional fragmentation, limited agricultural modernization, inadequate infrastructure investment, and weak coordination among food-related institutions. As a result, the policy's sustainability remained constrained by structural weaknesses in Indonesia's food system. These findings indicate that while rice import restrictions contributed to advancing food sovereignty objectives, their long-term effectiveness depended on broader governance reforms that strengthen agricultural productivity, institutional capacity, and food system resilience.

Food Sovereignty as a Governance Outcome

The findings indicate that the rice import moratorium contributed to strengthening Indonesia's food sovereignty agenda by reducing rice import volumes and reinforcing the government's commitment to domestic agricultural protection. The policy demonstrated the state's capacity to intervene in food markets and regulate rice imports in pursuit of national food security objectives. In the short term, these measures supported greater control over food supply management and reduced exposure to external market fluctuations.

However, the achievement of food sovereignty remained limited. Although import dependency declined during the moratorium period, improvements in domestic agricultural productivity, food distribution systems, and institutional capacity were

relatively modest. Structural challenges such as limited technological modernization, inadequate infrastructure, and fragmented governance arrangements continued to constrain the long-term sustainability of food sovereignty efforts.

Table 4. Assessment of Food Sovereignty Outcomes Under Rice Import Restrictions		
Food Sovereignty Dimension	Evidence During the Moratorium Period (2004–2005)	Assessment
Import Dependency	Rice import volumes declined significantly following the implementation of import restrictions	Achieved in the short term
Domestic Production Capacity	Limited improvements in agricultural productivity, modernization, and production efficiency	Partially achieved
Institutional Capacity	Government strengthened regulatory intervention through BULOG and import control mechanisms	Moderately achieved
Food Distribution Efficiency	Distribution bottlenecks and logistical inefficiencies remained unresolved	Weakly achieved
Food System Resilience	Vulnerability to production shocks, climate variability, and supply disruptions persisted	Limited achievement
Agricultural Sustainability	Structural constraints in land use, technology adoption, and farmer regeneration continued	Partially achieved
Sustainable Food Sovereignty	Dependence on external markets remained during periods of domestic supply shortages	Partially achieved

Source: Author’s analysis based on BPS statistics, BULOG reports, Ministry of Agriculture publications, and government regulations related to rice import management (2001–2005).

Table 4 demonstrates that the rice import moratorium contributed to several dimensions of food sovereignty, particularly by reducing rice import dependence and strengthening government intervention in food governance. However, the overall achievement of food sovereignty remained partial. While import restrictions improved the government’s ability to regulate food markets and protect domestic agricultural interests, they did not substantially improve domestic production capacity, food distribution efficiency, or food system resilience. As a result, structural dependence on external food markets persisted, particularly during periods of supply disruption and production shortfalls. These findings suggest that sustainable food sovereignty requires not only import management policies but also broader governance reforms to strengthen agricultural productivity, institutional capacity, and long-term food system resilience.

Discussion

Transformation of Food Protection Governance in Indonesia

The findings demonstrate that the transformation of food protection policy during the Megawati administration extended beyond trade regulation and represented a broader effort to strengthen state governance over strategic food commodities. The restructuring of BULOG and the introduction of stricter rice import regulations indicate a shift toward stronger institutional intervention in food management. This finding supports previous studies arguing that effective food governance depends on institutional arrangements capable of coordinating production, distribution, and trade within an integrated policy framework (Donner et al., 2024; Sulistiyowati et al., 2026; Tamasiga & Onyeaka, 2026; Astuti et al., 2026).

However, the present findings also challenge the assumption that stronger state intervention necessarily improves long-term food governance outcomes. While earlier

governance literature often associates increased institutional coordination with greater food system resilience, this study shows that equivalent improvements in agricultural productivity, technological modernization, or inter-sectoral coordination did not accompany enhanced regulatory authority. Consequently, institutional strengthening improved administrative control but failed to eliminate Indonesia's structural dependence on imported rice.

This discrepancy suggests that governance effectiveness depends not only on the existence of stronger institutions but also on their capacity to coordinate complementary structural reforms across the food system. Rather than contradicting governance theory, the findings refine existing literature by demonstrating that policy effectiveness, institutional coordination, and governance capacity do not necessarily progress simultaneously. In Indonesia's case, institutional reforms strengthened policy implementation while governance capacity remained insufficient to support sustainable food sovereignty.

The Rice Import Moratorium and the Apparent Success Narrative

The findings indicate that the rice import moratorium functioned effectively as a short-term governance instrument to reduce rice imports and stabilize domestic food markets. These results are consistent with previous studies suggesting that import restrictions can temporarily protect domestic producers and strengthen government control over strategic food commodities when supported by effective regulatory mechanisms (Ruspayandi et al., 2022; Berning & Sotirov, 2024; Lahmar & Siddiqui, 2026; Zhang et al., 2025). Government intervention through BULOG also strengthened public confidence by improving market stability during the post-Reform recovery period.

Nevertheless, the present study identifies a governance paradox that has received limited attention in prior research. Although earlier studies frequently interpret declining import volumes as evidence of successful food sovereignty policies, the longitudinal evidence presented here indicates that these achievements primarily reflected short-term policy outputs rather than sustainable governance outcomes. Indonesia resumed rice imports during subsequent periods of production deficits, demonstrating that temporary reductions in imports did not resolve the structural factors driving import dependency.

This finding therefore challenges the tendency in the protectionist policy literature to evaluate policy success primarily by import performance. Instead, the evidence suggests that long-term food sovereignty should be assessed using broader governance indicators, including institutional capacity, agricultural modernization, supply-chain resilience, and policy coherence. Consequently, the apparent success of the moratorium illustrates the distinction between administrative effectiveness and sustainable governance performance.

Governance Challenges and Policy Sustainability

The findings demonstrate that the long-term effectiveness of Indonesia's rice import policy was constrained by governance challenges extending beyond trade regulation. Consistent with previous governance studies, institutional coordination, infrastructure development, and policy integration remained critical determinants of food system resilience (Galanakis et al., 2025; Keegan et al., 2024; Schneider et al., 2025; Syndoukas et al., 2026). These findings confirm that reductions in import volumes alone provide only a partial measure of policy effectiveness.

However, this study also offers an alternative explanation for the dominant narrative that emphasizes market liberalization as the principal source of Indonesia's food vulnerability. The evidence suggests that persistent import dependence was driven less by external market exposure than by weaknesses in domestic governance capacity, including fragmented institutions, insufficient agricultural modernization, and inconsistent long-term policy implementation. Thus, structural dependence persisted even under protectionist policy regimes.

Compared with previous studies that primarily focus on trade-offs between producer protection and consumer welfare, this research demonstrates that governance capacity represents the more fundamental determinant of policy sustainability. Effective food sovereignty therefore requires coordinated reforms across agricultural production, logistics, technological innovation, and institutional management rather than reliance on import restrictions alone. These findings expand existing governance literature by highlighting that sustainable food sovereignty depends on structural governance transformation rather than recurrent trade interventions.

Food Sovereignty as a Governance Outcome

The findings demonstrate that food sovereignty should be conceptualized as a governance outcome rather than merely the consequence of reducing food imports. While the rice import moratorium strengthened government intervention and temporarily reduced rice imports, these achievements did not translate into sustainable food sovereignty. This conclusion is consistent with governance literature emphasizing that resilient food systems require institutional coordination, production capacity, and long-term policy coherence (Chevallier, 2023; Keegan et al., 2024; Schneider et al., 2025).

At the same time, the study extends prior scholarship by challenging the common assumption that lower import dependence necessarily implies stronger food sovereignty. The Indonesian experience demonstrates that import reductions can coexist with continued structural dependence when governance reforms fail to strengthen agricultural productivity, logistics systems, and institutional learning. Consequently, food sovereignty should not be evaluated solely through trade indicators but through broader measures of governance performance.

Compared with previous studies that primarily examine food sovereignty from political economy or trade perspectives, this research positions governance capacity as the critical mechanism linking policy intervention to sustainable food system resilience. The comparison indicates that policy effectiveness and institutional coordination are necessary but insufficient conditions for achieving food sovereignty unless supported by long-term governance capacity. Therefore, the Indonesian case contributes a governance-based explanation of why protectionist food policies may produce symbolic success while failing to generate structural food independence.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the policy paradox between rice import restrictions and food sovereignty in post-Reform Indonesia, using the 2004 rice import moratorium under the Megawati administration as a case study. The findings reveal that while the moratorium achieved short-term policy objectives by reducing rice imports, strengthening state intervention, and increasing control over strategic food commodities, it did not generate sustainable food sovereignty due to persistent challenges in agricultural productivity,

institutional coordination, technological development, and food distribution systems. This study contributes to the food governance literature by demonstrating that food sovereignty is not merely determined by import reduction but represents a multidimensional governance outcome shaped by policy effectiveness, institutional coordination, and governance capacity. The concept of the policy paradox further explains why policies may achieve immediate administrative success while failing to deliver long-term structural transformation. The findings imply that import restrictions should be embedded within a broader governance strategy involving agricultural modernization, infrastructure development, technological innovation, and stronger institutional coordination to enhance food system resilience. However, this study is limited by its focus on a single policy episode and reliance on historical and descriptive evidence. Future research should employ comparative and longitudinal approaches, incorporate advanced policy evaluation methods, and examine multi-level governance arrangements to understand the pathways toward sustainable food sovereignty further.

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