Peasant Understanding of Food Sovereignty: Indonesian Peasants in a Transnational Agrarian Movement

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Abstract

La Via Campesina (LVC) is a transnational agrarian movement that actively promotes food sovereignty as an alternative approach to the global food crisis. Communication among local, national, and global members of this movement is needed to spread it further and support food sovereignty. This study focused examines the dynamics of local–global communication in a food-sovereignty movement by comparing peasants' statements in the relevant communicative spaces and official texts produced by LVC. The method of ethnography of communication (EO) is used to determine peasants' understanding of food sovereignty and the context that influences it. Based on a multi-site strategy of ethnography for gathering data, we observed seven relevant communicative spaces and interviewed 22 peasants from 15 Indonesian regions. We also gathered secondary data to analyze LVC's official publications. We found a convergence between local and global in understanding food sovereignty, suggesting that the dynamics of local–global communication are influenced by the following: (1) the existence of communicative spaces on the local, national, and global levels; (2) the importance of the participation of local peasants in these communicative spaces; and (3) location-specific issues.

Pemaknaan Kedaulatan Pangan bagi Petani Lokal: Kasus Petani Indonesia Anggota Pergerakan Petani Transnational

Abstrak

La Via Campesina (LVC) adalah sebuah pergerakan transnasional petani yang secara aktif mempromosikan kedaulatan pangan sebagai pendekatan alternatif terhadap krisis pangan global. Untuk menyebarluaskan pergerakan kedaulatan pangan, komunikasi antara anggota lokal, nasional, dan global sangat diperlukan. Artikel ini fokus dalam mengungkapkan bagaimana dinamika dalam komunikasi lokal-global dengan membandingkan pemaknaan petani lokal dan teks-teks yang diproduksi oleh LVC mengenai definisi kedaulatan pangan. Etnografi komunikasi dipilih sebagai metode untuk mengungkapkan bagaimana petani mengkomunikasikan makna kedaulatan pangan dan konteks yang mempengaruhi pemaknaan tersebut. Berdasar strategi etnografi multi-situs dalam mengambil data, observasi dilakukan pada 7 ruang komunikatif dan melakukan wawancara mendalam dengan 22 petani dari 15 wilayah di Indonesia. Data sekunder juga digunakan untuk menganalisis teks-teks yang diproduksi oleh LVC. Ditemukan adanya konvergensi antara lokal dan global dalam memahami kedaulatan pangan dan hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dinamika komunikasi lokal-global dipengaruhi oleh: (1) adanya ruang komunikatif yang melampaui batas-batas lokal dan negara; (2) pentingnya menekankan partisipasi dari petani dalam ruang komunikatif; (3) isu-isu spesifik lokasi.

Keywords: authoritative text, food sovereignty, Indonesia, organizational communication, transnational agrarian movement

1. Introduction

At 1996 World Food Summit in Rome, the idea of food sovereignty was introduced as an alternative approach to the global food crisis; it has become a central term in political debate among civil-society organizations, academics, and government officials (Borras, Edelman, & Kay, 2008; Desmarais, 2008; Edelman et al., 2014; McKeon, 2013). Food sovereignty, as stated in the Nyéléni Declaration, is defined as follows:

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

La Via Campesina (LVC), the largest and most influential transnational agrarian movement, has been playing a central role in developing the idea of food sovereignty and communicating it to the public. LVC has branded itself as an international peasant movement, and its member organizations include 164 local and national groups in 73 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North and South America (LVC, 2009). Although LVC emphasizes that peasants are the back-bone of its membership, its charter declaration also refers to fishermen, pastoralists, indigenous people, migrants, and rural workers and credits them with their roles in the food-sovereignty movement (LVC, 2009). The diversity of its members, in their cultures, ethnicities, classes, ideologies, and domestic systems, affects how the collective meaning of food sovereignty is defined among LVC members. The members of LVC from India are mostly peasants with little land and rarely encounter land appropriation, while Indonesian peasants are often victims of land appropriation (Borras et al., 2008). This shows that each member has a unique perspective that defines the foremost issues for achieving food sovereignty. The definition of food sovereignty, functioning as an authoritative text within the transnational movement, requires adjustment to the specific context.

Many ways of achieving food sovereignty are possible; however, first and foremost, LVC members must understand the principles of food sovereignty. LVC holds that food sovereignty must be understood separately from food security, a term coined by the Food Agriculture Organization (FAO). Some assume that food sovereignty requires food security or vice versa, others believe that the two concepts are complementary, and some, especially those in the food-sovereignty movement, have concluded that food sovereignty and food security are radically different (Chaifetz & Jagger, 2014). According to the FAO, "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 1996). The food-sovereignty movement considers this definition to be focused more on creating a certain quantity of food rather than on the process of production, which can include monoculture practices and the use of chemical inputs in mass food productions, where peasant use of local seeds, local knowledge, and local agricultural practices is being eroded, peasants have little or no ownership of land, and they are constrained by other practices that have no prospect of being overcome by a food-security system. Thus, LVC has socialized the meaning of food sovereignty, ensuring that its members can differentiate between food sovereignty and food security. If its members were to have a different understanding of food sovereignty, this would hinder or even undercut collective action intended to achieve food sovereignty.

This study explored how the concept of food sovereignty spreads throughout the world. This study examined the case of Serikat Petani Indonesia (SPI), a social-movement organization and an LVC representative in Indonesia. SPI has members throughout Indonesia, from Sumatra in the west to the Lesser Sunda Islands in the east. The complex dynamic that operates within a transnational movement prompts us to consider whether the food-sovereignty campaign operated by SPI and LVC is being pursued in a uniform manner? How does the concept of food sovereignty interact with local culture and the local environment? How do local peasants define food sovereignty? What convergence is there between the local understanding and the texts produced by LVC? This study explored these questions.

The theory in organizational communication called communication as constitutive of organization (CCO), sees food sovereignty as an authoritative text; this phrase here refers to the condition wherein a text holds power over a collective construct (Kuhn, 2008) and does not belong to an individual but to an organization as a whole (Koschmann, Kuhn, & Pfarrer, 2012). In our case, the idea of food sovereignty has power over LVC members, including local the peasants who make up SPI. The organization, from the perspective of CCO, is maintained through interactions among its members (Koschmann, Isbell, & Sanders, 2015). CCO is still dominantly used for analyzing corporations, but it also has begun to be employed to analyze non-profit organization, inter-organizational networks, goverments, and civil-society organization, although this use remains limited (Koschmann et al., 2015).

The Montreal School, an approach to CCO theory, assumes that communication can be observed, beyond

language and discourse, in the interactions that build the reality of an organization. This does not limit us to human interaction alone, but every turn of conversation, discourse, artifact, text, or narrative should be seen as a communication (Cooren, Kuhn, Cornelissen, & Clark, 2011). If we examine how an organization is maintained through communication, it is necessary to analyze what happens in and within interactions that produces, reproduces, or changes the form and practice of the organization and whether its policies, strategies, values, relationships, or structures have altered. Other concepts in studies of transnational social movements, such as the boomerang effect (Keck and Sikkink, 1999), multi-level opportunity structures (Sikkink, 2005), complex internationalism (Tarrow dan della Porta, 2005), and rooted cosmopolitan (Tarrow dan della Porta, 2005) could provide frameworks to understand the strategies of transnational social movements as they face a domestic and international system. CCO helps us examine the role of the domestic and international system in shaping transnational social-movement activities and of the words or symbols used by its members, rules in interaction, and level of participation.

The Montreal School recognizes that in organizational communication, construction and orientation arise together (Cooren et al., 2011; Koschmann et al., 2015). However, diversity is always present among members of organizations in collective constructs. To accommodate ambiguity and diversity, negotiations must occur between members. Building an authoritative text is therefore a dynamic process. Such a text changes continuously through communication among members of the organization to maintain collective construction and actions. This dynamic process is manifested in conversation and text: the exchange of observable messages or interactions and the symbols formed by the conversation, respectively (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Cooren et al., 2011; Taylor & Cooren, 1997). A text can be represented in verbal, non-verbal, and written forms that can represent the organization, which shows that the organization exists as a result of text that is built through conversation, and which can only be changed through conversation. Thus, text and conversation form an unending cycle of organization building. This study observed the conversation of local peasants in communicative spaces, as representatives of SPI and LVC. We view speech and comments from local peasants as communicative acts that understand, negotiate, and maintain food sovereignty as the authoritative text of LVC.

Many studies of transnational movements are focused on the construction of authoritative texts at national and global levels. They exhibit how differences among transnational movement members can be influenced by ideology (Doherty & Doyle, 2006), history (Baletti, Johnson, & Wolford, 2008), and culture (Boyer, 2010). Further, every movement organization has a different

degree of power, autonomy, and lobbying capacity (Borras, 2010). How do transnational movements negotiate these differences and construct an authoritative text? Studies have shown that participation and dialogue among members are important in redefining power relations in transnational movements (Andrews, 2010a, 2010b; Binnie & Klesse, 2012). Fominaya (2010) also found that participation, face-to-face communication, emotion building, informal networks, and dialogue with fixed members help build solidarity among members and motivate them to overcome their differences and construct an authoritative text. These studies have shown factors that influence the process of constructing an authoritative text, but studies focusing on marginal people are limited.

Several studies have explored the participation among local members in transnational networks. Levitt and Merry's (2009) study used a vernacularization, or translation, approach, which uses the language of a community to explain a concept. This approach remains the strongest for explaining how concepts are explored in reality. A dilemma remains with it, however: the authoritative text of a transnational movement organization must exhibit universal values to resonate with the public, although those values might contradict with local ones. Boyer (2010) stated that the introduction of food sovereignty to local peasants met with difficulties because they were familiar with the term food security, which contains the word security, and that made peasants feel more secure with it. The use of the word sovereignty is felt to be abstract and highly political. These studies have shown the dynamics in local–global communication: local understanding is needed to construct an authoritative text to be understood and used by local people.

This paper responds to this dilemma. We found that the existence of communicative spaces for local peasants is crucial in building the meaning of food sovereignty. In becoming representatives of LVC, the peasants could participate in relevant communicative spaces, at the local, national, and global levels, to define, negotiate, and maintain food sovereignty as an authoritative text. The reduced access to communicative spaces that emphasized the participation of local peasants could bridge local–global dynamics to build authoritative text. Using ethnography of communication (EO), we observed and analyzed how local peasants articulate, negotiate, and maintain the meaning of food sovereignty in relevant communicative spaces; then, we analyzed the convergence of local–global communication for understanding food sovereignty.

2. Methods

This study employed a qualitative case study method (Yin, 2003) to exhibit human interaction and communication and examine why humans interact and communicate in a

certain way (Creswell, 2009). EO was used to discover the meaning of food sovereignty from a local perspective, examine the process of meaning building, and find a convergence of local understanding with LVC texts. EO was used in this study, on the assumption that the meaning of food sovereignty is continuously communicated in communicative spaces where peasants participate. Hymes (1972) found that communication and interaction do not appear in a vacuum but depend on the particular context or case. EO supports the premises of CCO in studying communication events or communicative spaces (Schoeneborn & Vasquez, 2017). CCO focuses on communication events on a micro level, where interaction, conversation, negotiation, and agreement between members occur and define an organization. A communication event is defined as "a sequence of instances of communication (texts and conversations) that are performed in distinct space-time" (Schoeneborn & Vasquez, 2017). Thus, EO is practical for CCO analysis because it also puts emphasis on interactions, not only their contents. Words or symbols used by members, type of talk, and level of participation were identified using EO.

LVC and SPI have built communicative spaces, including meetings, conferences, and public discussions, that emphasize the participation of peasants, at the local, national, and global levels. Peasant participation in these meetings influence the way food sovereignty is interpreted and communicated. In EO, observation and in-depth interviews are used to collect data, as EO mainly analyzes communication acts. Observations were made in organizational meetings, such as public discussions, meetings, or conferences. Interviews were conducted to deepen or clarify the results of the observations. Texts produced by the social-movement organization, such as online articles, declarations, press releases, and key documents, were analyzed as part building an authoritative text.

A speaking grid (Hymes 1967) is a systematic data-collection method; it involves several concepts: (1) setting, the description of the situation and physical condition of a meeting; (2) participant, the person him- or herself and his or her social and relationship statuses; (3) ends, or the purpose of the meeting and of the participant; (4) action sequence, the sequence of the meetings and the topics discussed in it; (5) key, the tone and attitude of the meeting; (6) instrumentalization, the form and style of communication, such as written or oral; (7) norms, the rules and values of the meeting; and (8) genre, the type of communication, such as discussion or lecture. We also used this grid as a guide to categorize

our data. While coding, we found that the speaking grid helped us analyze interactions and how conversation is conducted in a social movement and the texts produced by SPI and LVC, using which, we could deduce the socio-historical conditions, including local-specific conditions governing how peasants communicate and the context of interaction for each communicative space.

Sites and informants were selected using multi-site ethnography, which reduces the need for a method to analytically explore transnational processes, groups of people in motion, and ideas extending over multiple locations (Marcus, 1995). The meaning of food sovereignty travels, so multi-site ethnography allows us to treat of various perspectives with a single idea. In this paper, multi-site ethnography allowed us to trace different communication practices used in defining food sovereignty and guided us in choosing sites and informants. We conducted EO in 2016–2017. We observed seven meetings (Table 1) and recruited 22 local peasants from 12 regions: North Sumatra, South Sumatra, Bengkulu, Riau, Lampung, Jambi, West Java, the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Central Java, East Java, Southeast Sulawesi, and Central Kalimantan. The in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face, via telephone, and using instant messaging, allowing us to follow stories of food sovereignty. This study also collected secondary data from the official SPI (www.spi.or.id) and LVC (viacampesina.org) websites, where we chose three texts to be analyzed as authoritative LVC texts (Table 2). Analysis of the declaration texts was required to exhibit convergence in local–global communication.

After data collection, we performed coding using QSR Nvivo Pro 11, a piece of qualitative research software (Richards, 1999). The coding process involved three steps: (1) the speaking grid; (2) the Miles, Huberman, & Sadana (2014) coding process, which includes descriptive, in vivo, process, evaluation, emotion, and values coding; and (3) the use of CCO's concept. After the coding process was complete, mind maps were created to explain the study results.

Triangulation was done in using various ways: using interview data, observations, and documents to obtain valid data. Additional interviews with informants were done to increase accuracy and confirm or discuss the research findings. Informants were chosen from different regions to gain various perspectives that could support the findings.

Table 1. Observed Meetings (2016–2017)

Level	Description of Meetings	Location
Local	Natural Farming Training	Yogyakarta, Indonesia
National	Internal Meetings: Preparation for Plantation Conference	
	Internal Meetings: Preparation for Agroecology Conference Held in Sri Lanka	Jakarta, Indonesia
	Public Discussion and National Forum	
	Plantation Conference	
Global	Seventh LVC International Conference	Basque Country, Spain
	Field Trip: Natural Farming Practices, Southeast Asia and China Sub-Regional	Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Table 2. Analyzed Texts

No.	Text	Year Issued
1	The Declaration of Nyéléni	2007
2	Surin Declaration: First Global Encounter on Agroecology and Peasant Seeds	2012
3	Seventh International Conference, La Via Campesina: Euskal Herria Declaration	2017
4	Revised draft, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (February 2018)	2018

3. Results and Discussion

Food Sovereignty: LVC's Definition. A study of three texts produced by LVC produced the food-sovereignty approach illustrated in Figure 1.

Food sovereignty as a human right. Food sovereignty rests on the rights of the people (Claeys, 2012; Wittman, 2011). The revised draft of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (February 2018): "States shall respect, protect and fulfill the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas." Here, the word people refers to peasants, fishermen, pastoralists, migrants, rural dwellers, consumers, women, and youth. The inclusion of these roles is motivated by fact that the first food-sovereignty texts were produced at the Nyéléni Forum in 2007, which was attended by 500 peasants, fishermen, migrant workers, and others from 80 countries (The Nyéléni 2007 International Steering Committee, 2007). The presence of these roles is important: food sovereignty is a collective concept for building a fair and environmentally friendly agriculture system.

Peasants, pastoralists, and fishermen are the main producers of food, and they are interconnected in achieving food sovereignty. In natural farming processes (the use of natural, organic, or other terms will be explained later), natural fertilizers are produced from animal waste; animal feed comes from peasants' crops; and even waste like fish bones can be processed into natural fertilizer. Natural farming works like a cycle, and each role works collectively to make it function. An agribusiness system, by contrast, produces large-scale agricultural inputs that are easily purchased and accessed but are expensive and unhealthy. Besides this, the agribusiness system has other negative effects: the largest gain goes to the industrial owner, not to peasant or producer of food; peasants begin to be dependent on agricultural industry, which prevents them from producing if they do not purchase agricultural inputs from industry; and collective work between food producers (peasants, fishermen, and pastoralists) is disconnected. Thus for LVC, food sovereignty encourages collective work to take place between food producers so that an agricultural system independent from agricultural industry is established.
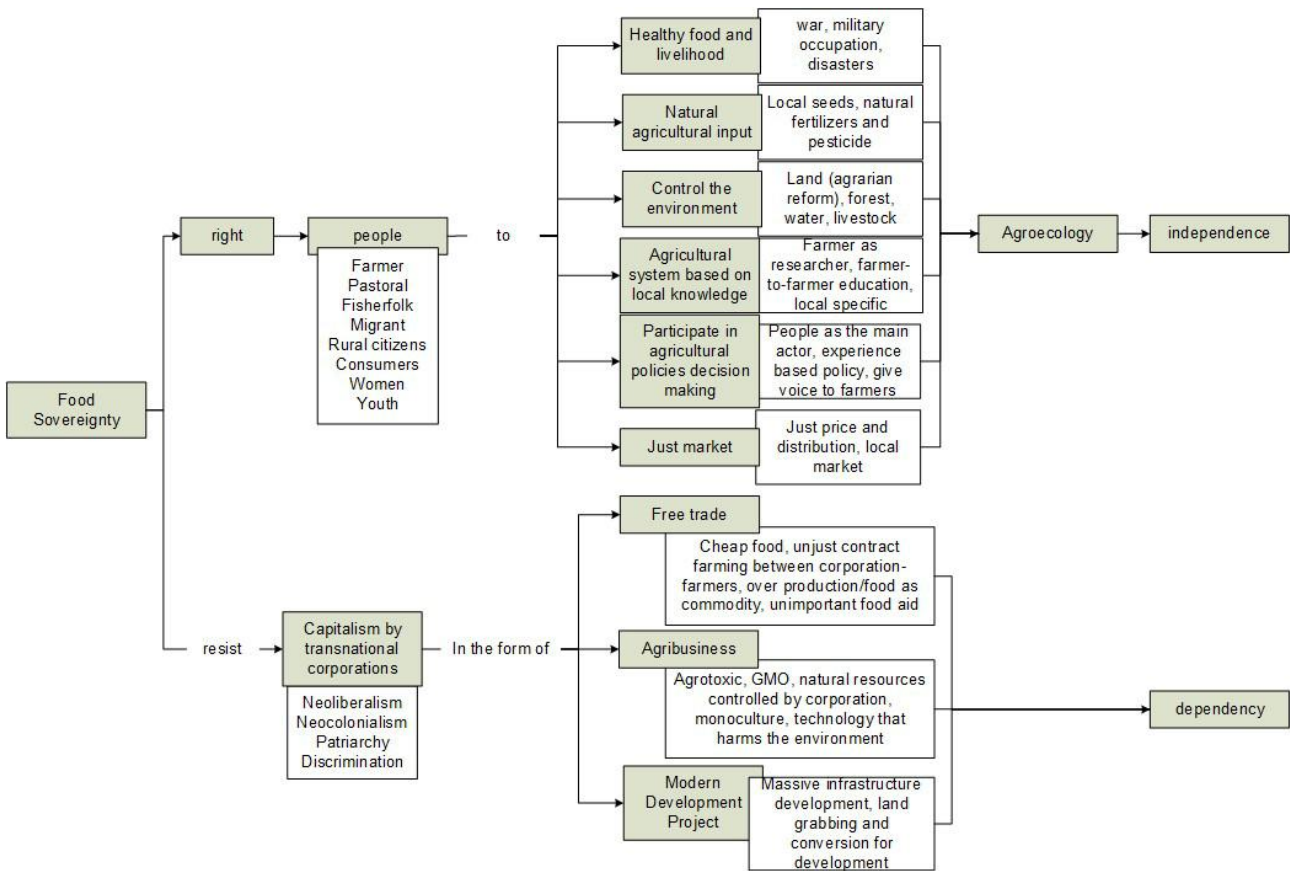
Food Sovereignty

right → people
Farmer
Pastoral
Fisherfolk
Migrant
Rural citizens
Consumers
Women
Youth

to →

Healthy food and livelihood — war, military occupation, disasters

Natural agricultural input — Local seeds, natural fertilizers and pesticide

Control the environment — Land (agrarian reform), forest, water, livestock

Agricultural system based on local knowledge — Farmer as researcher, farmer-to-farmer education, local specific

Participate in agricultural policies decision making — People as the main actor, experience based policy, give voice to farmers

Just market — Just price and distribution, local market

→ Agroecology → independence

resist → Capitalism by transnational corporations
Neoliberalism
Neocolonialism
Patriarchy
Discrimination

In the form of →

Free trade — Cheap food, unjust contract farming between corporation-farmers, over production/food as commodity, unimportant food aid

Agribusiness — Agrotoxic, GMO, natural resources controlled by corporation, monoculture, technology that harms the environment

Modern Development Project — Massive infrastructure development, land grabbing and conversion for development

→ dependency

Figure 1. Definition of Food Sovereignty by LVC

Food sovereignty also acknowledges the role of women and youth in the food system. Women are an inextricable part of the agricultural process, but their work often receives small or no wages. The youth also play an important role in food sovereignty because they represent the future. If they have no interest in working in agriculture, who will provide us with food? Modern youth are exposed to cities that promise a more prosperous life, far from the countryside. This will contribute to the eradication of food producers, to be replaced by agribusiness.

Food sovereignty incorporates migrants and consumers because both have the right to healthy food. Migrants are displaced, sometimes displaced due to military activity, war, natural disaster, government transmigration plans, or farming contracts provided by agricultural industry that reduce their access to healthy food. Consumers, beside their right to healthy food, also have the right to truthful information about the food they consume. Agribusiness system produces food using GMOs or biotech, which is far from healthy and hides the processes and ingredients they use.

As can be seen, collective food sovereignty relates to food producers and also to families and people both rural

and urban. The reality of women and youth in peasant and pastoralist families shows that all have a role in the natural farming system. The inclusion of food producers, migrants, and consumers in food sovereignty established a rural–urban relationship that ensured food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is not a rural-oriented approach and it is not exclusively pursued by peasants; rather, it is a condition in which food producers, families, and rural and urban dwellers, work together for healthy food and a fair agricultural system.

Agroecology as "a way of life" to achieve food sovereignty. LVC declared agroecology as a natural farming approach to achieve food sovereignty. According to the 2012 Surin Declaration:

There are countless names for agroecological farming all over the world and Via Campesina is not concerned with names or labels, whether agroecology, organic farming, natural farming, low external input sustainable agriculture, or others, but rather wants to specify the key ecological, social and political principles that the movement defends. For Via Campesina, truly sustainable peasants agriculture comes from the recovery of traditional peasant

farming methods, the innovation of new ecological practices, the control and defense of territories and seeds, and well as social and gender equity. (LVC, 2012)

LVC stresses the term agroecology in official texts, but other terms, like organic farming, natural farming, and sustainable agriculture, are recognized so long as the principles remain the same as those of agroecology, which is founded on ecological, social, and political protection. Figure 1 shows that agroecology is an agricultural practice that ensures healthy life and food, using natural farming practices to maintain the ecological balance, where knowledge of natural farming practices is derived from food producers' daily experiences, creating agriculture policies, emphasizing the participation of food producers and establishing a fair market. Thus, the name agroecology does not apply if agricultural inputs are organic but still provided by industry, nor is it called agroecology when women's wages are lower than men's. Agroecology indirectly drives the creation of independence for peasants, in contrast to agribusiness systems that make peasants dependent on industry.

Communicative spaces for local peasants. We believe that communicative space influences peasant understanding of food sovereignty. Traditionally, political/media theory sees communicative space as an act within a nation state (Eriksen, 2007). However, within LVC many communicative spaces exist that foreground the participation of local peasants. Local peasants can freely articulate their thoughts without fear of being judged in these spaces because other peasants around the world who have common problems inhabit them. We agree with de Souza (2009) that in communicative space where conditioned silences can be broken or where the voiceless can voice their concerns. We believe that the participation of peasants in communicative spaces helps them internalize the meaning of food sovereignty.

Communicative spaces within LVC spread along local, national, regional, and global networks, and peasants are often the delegates within them. These communicative spaces can be initiated by SPI, LVC, or other relevant organizations, such as NGOs or governments. We found in this study that peasants arrange their own meetings to flesh out their agendas as members of SPI and LVC. Every communicative space has its own context, which determines how local peasants communicate and understand food sovereignty.

At the local level, for example, our subjects held their own meetings to plan their work as members of SPI and LVC. The most recent local meeting was to plan to build cooperatives at each local base; at this meeting, subjects grappled with the logic of cooperatives in their daily lives: cooperatives are needed for the peasants to prosper and resist corporations. They also initiated an agroecology

training, using a farmer-to-farmer instructional method. In this training, the subjects developed an understanding of how agroecology could drive farmer independence from the agricultural inputs of industrial farming. It was clear that for our subjects understanding of food sovereignty is practical and close to daily life. This was not limited to a few stories; many stories of food sovereignty exist, and some will be explored in the subsequent section.

At a local level, participants in meetings often invite peasants with experience in specific issues. For example, a group of peasants from Sukabumi invited advanced peasants from Bogor for an agroecology training because they were already practicing agroecology and had participated in several international workshops held by SPI and LVC. These advanced peasants helped the Sukabumi peasants map their own problems in agroecology. Since this method involves meetings between peasants, the settings it produces are less formal, which makes knowledge transfer easy. The participants asked questions actively, to ensure that agroecology was right for them in their attempt to achieve food sovereignty.

SPI also uses the roleplay method, allowing peasant members to differentiate the different roles of the related stakeholders in the agricultural system. Some peasants played the role of the corporation, some played youth uncertain whether to remain and help their parents or leave their parents to work for corporation, while some had the role of people who forcefully take land. This method is useful for communicating peasants' experiences with other stakeholders. After the roleplay, the peasants discussed their experiences with these stakeholders. It also helps identify common problems experienced by peasants.

At the national level, there are two types of communicative spaces: those organized by SPI, where the participants are local members from different regions and those created by SPI or another organization with diverse participants, possibly including relevant government officials, NGOs, and other peasant organizations. In the first type, local peasants usually expect to be the delegates to national or global meetings. In this kind of meeting, they are provided with relevant information to be able to promote food sovereignty using their daily experiences. It is clear that embodies an attempt to transfer the idea of food sovereignty from an organization to its local members. For the idea to transfer, it must be in accordance with specific local issues. For example, one member lives on a plateau, which makes him or her accustomed to preserve water, forest, and the land quality. For him or her, food sovereignty is transferred through an explanation of the significance of the relationship of peasants to nature, where they must use agroecology to protect it. In the second type of communicative space, peasants act as SPI/LVC delegates and criticize national government policies using food

sovereignty as a basis. From the peasant's perspective, the government has little role in supporting the independence of peasants. The peasants put, for example, the following questions to representatives of governing bodies: "Why doesn't the government support the preservation of local seeds?" "Why do we have to use fertilizers provided by industry?" "Why does industry have better access to land?" On a national level, food sovereignty was used to distinguish local members from other peasants and farmers and, ultimately, from agriculture industries.

The national settings were formal; however, peasants still delivered their aspirations and queries, even aggressively, ensuring that the government or other parties understand their stance. They shouted some slogans like "Long live peasants!" "Long live women peasants!" "Give back our land!" and "Stop giving land to corporations!" to communicate the importance of food sovereignty. Shouting these slogans also stimulated emotion and solidarity from other peasants. At the national level, the purpose here was to ensure that food sovereignty could express to other parties and represented in declarations produced by these meetings.

At the global level, several types of communicative spaces exist: discussions with international organizations, such as FAO and the UN, to try to change global policy; field visits, where local peasants learn farming practices from countries where farmer-to-farmer learning is implemented; and international LVC conferences, held every four years. In the first setting, food sovereignty is closely related to changing global policies, especially WTO policies, such as free trade and other development projects that put the peasant at a disadvantage. In the second type, food sovereignty is used to recognize existing farming practices in each country that are based on local knowledge. The subjects learned that there is no one way to produce foods. Their own identity is closely related to their farming practices, which must be preserved to achieve food sovereignty. However, the peasants shared problems with others, where neoliberal policies expressed in agricultural industry and free trade were used to eradicate local knowledge in favor of a more modern, uniform approach that prioritizes economic profit. For the third type, an international conference centers on building solidarity with members from different countries and their diverse cultures, classes, races, and histories. Even though the countries are different, they are connected by same problems: neoliberalism and its derivatives. Slogans like: "Farming is a form of struggle," "All peasants are our family," "Let's strive for women peasants!" "Women are the mothers of food sovereignty, "Land for the people," "We must fight together!" "Each country has its own local knowledge," and "End free trade and the WTO!" were often heard in global meetings or found in LVC texts. These slogans were intended to build solidarity among the members of LVC.

Communicative spaces are ideal for ensuring participation, and every aspiration was heard. Yet, as organizations, SPI and LVC must ensure that food sovereignty as a concept does not deviate from its principles. We found that the conversations between the peasant members and organizational staff (or non-peasant members of SPI and LVC) are crucial for maintaining communicative spaces. Organizational staff has the crucial role of ensuring that every aspiration of peasant members, whether agreeing to or rejecting food sovereignty, was delivered to and heard by others. When opposition occurred, organizational staff facilitated experienced peasants' explanation of food sovereignty to overcome the deviant perspective. Power and hierarchy still occurred in these communicative spaces, but it is required to ensure that the peasant members could still act collectively, using their experiences, to strengthen the movement.

Food sovereignty: local peasants' understanding. Matching the communicative spaces described earlier, there are also two types of understanding of local food sovereignty: (1) understanding general principles of food sovereignty, including independence, family, cooperation, and resisting corporations, and (2) understanding food sovereignty through location-specific issues, such as agrarian reform, agroecology, distribution, prices, markets, and health.

Independence. Food sovereignty allows peasants reconsider their role. Wolf (1966) stated that peasants are rural cultivators who raise crops and livestock, do not operate an enterprise for a business concern but run a household, and (3) transfer their surpluses to a dominant group that does not allow them any say in determining the price of their product. Furthermore, Wolf states that the development of civilization divided the social order between peasants and rulers. The concept of food sovereignty was created to alter this definition. As seen in texts produced by LVC, the core of food sovereignty is independence. We also heard the word independent over and over from our peasant subjects, signifying something they wanted to achieve. "We don't want to be dependent on seed corporations or other agricultural corporations. We can make our own agricultural inputs": many respondents expressed this point when we asked them how they wish to become independent. The idea of independence allows peasants to realize that modern development projects, such as the green revolution, free trade, and the full support of agricultural industry, would preserve divisions among peasants and rulers, which make peasants dependent on market demand and agricultural-input packages, including seeds, fertilizer, and pesticides, provided by industry alone.

Independence would mean peasants managing the means of production, modes of production, and modes of distribution themselves. This notion was described by Van der Ploeg (2014) as re-peasantization, defined as

"the fight for autonomy and survival in a context of deprivation and dependency." The ideal of food sovereignty attempts to widen peasants' role beyond cultivating and producing raw products to involvement in production of agricultural inputs, post-harvest processing, and constructing alternative markets. The definition of the peasant in food sovereignty is a rural people who self-produce and self-manage agricultural inputs, food (raw or processed), post-harvesting, and distribution. This would assign peasants various roles, or as we called it, make them multi-role workers. We found several multi-role peasants at our study sites. Of course, not all were multi-role peasants; however, such peasants can be found in groups or communities that work collectively. Some are experts in providing seeds and materials to make natural fertilizers and pesticides. Others organize post-harvest processing and enable alternative markets. Each works collectively to end dependency on the food industry. Through this collective work, these peasants strive to be central actors in the agricultural system. For example, a group of peasants in Wonosobo exhibits a division of roles, wherein the women produce seeds and manage post-harvest processing, while men produce the organic fertilizer and pesticides, cultivate land, and work in distribution. In Sleman Regency and Yogyakarta, a group has division of roles based on expertise: one peasant produces food but is also a breeder of worms as organic agricultural inputs. Another, who raises cattle, produces milk and manure as an organic input. Other peasants network with small or mid-sized food enterprises to distribute products. Thus, many groups of peasants can implement a multi-role economy and become independent.

Family. These multi-role peasants refute Wolf's (1966) assertion that peasants cultivate only to run their households (sustain their families) and have no business concerns. However, using the definition we proposed, peasants have a business interest in sustaining their farming and also in their families' survival. We found many peasants sharing the same idea that a peasant should supply for the family first. This took many forms, as noted in the multi-role workers mentioned above. Some peasants explained that "we cultivate vegetables, spices, and coffee as our main source of income, but we also have a small paddy and raise fish in our small pond so that our family does not need to buy food." Thus, agricultural practices are designed to support independence and to meet the family's food needs. The concept of the peasant family also goes hand-in-hand with the requirements of agroecology, such as the cultivation of various crops in one place and the integration of agriculture and livestock. Polyculture allows peasants to support themselves not only with a single commodity, but also with varied crops: coffee, pepper, clove, banana, durian, avocado, and others. One Kendal peasant said, "I'm a coffee-growing peasant, but that doesn't mean I only cultivate coffee. Like food sovereignty says, polyculture is more productive and environmentally friendly, so we decided to cultivate other crops." This, of course, is worlds away from monoculture peasants, who produce mainly for the market.

Cooperative. The word cooperative was used several times by peasants in our study in support of food sovereignty. Cooperative development is based on the observation that peasants must disconnect their dependence on food corporates. Local peasants are working to stop selling their products to food corporations because the distribution process is long and does not allow them to determine their own surplus. A cooperative, however, could allow local peasants to store and sell their products in alternative markets, where they could reduce the length of the distribution process and obtain more price-determination power. Thus, local peasants see cooperatives as a solution to marketing issues. However, others doubt the benefits of a cooperative. Many have negative experiences with cooperatives in their local area as, in reality, they may not serve the needs of their members. Some even said, "A cooperative is a corporation in disguise" because its main principle is maximizing productivity, without consideration for sustainability, and it sells to industrial corporations. This practice, for local peasants, only deepens the dependency between peasants and rulers.

Food sovereignty: location-specific issues. Location-specific issues influence peasants' understanding of food sovereignty. Our informants noted five main issues: agrarian reform; agroecology; distribution, price, and marketing; and peasant health.

Agrarian reform. This crops up in many regions, but some areas are more vulnerable to agrarian conflict: those surrounded by large corporations or plantation complexes, such as the island of Sumatra, Southeast Sulawesi Province, Central Kalimantan Province, and Banten and Sukabumi in West Java Province. These areas are vulnerable because land grabbing by large corporations and plantations complexes can occur at any time, even where legal protection exists under Act No. 41 2009 on Protection and Sustainability of Agricultural Land for Food, stating that abandoned land is to be distributed to peasants for community welfare and agrarian reform. In Langkat, North Sumatra, for example, in 2016 and 2017, oil-palm plantations and peasants' homes were destroyed by PT Langkat Nusantara Kepong (LNK), a private company that manages 20,700 hectares of land.

This reduces food sovereignty to land struggle or land reclamation. This understanding is reinforced by SPI, who provide its members with classes in agrarianism. SPI prioritizes paralegal education for agrarian struggle, focusing on the introduction of the law, the constitution,

and peasant rights, using technical material like criminal-procedure law, depiction of litigable and non- litigable cases, or legal investigation techniques. It is important to educate peasants about agrarian issues so they could reclaim their land.

This discussion does not eliminate the danger of land acquisition elsewhere. It may also occur in other areas where infrastructure development, such as of highways and airports, is occurring. However, in those areas, paralegal education is less urgent. In Yogyakarta, for example, agrarian reform is a sensitive issue due to local politics; the land is strictly regulated by the Sultan of Yogyakarta. This condition has caused peasants in Yogyakarta do keep their distance from agrarian reform.

Migration is closely related to agrarian reform. We found migrants whose rights to access and cultivate land, promised to them in official policy, are violated. In Katingan, South Kalimantan, the migrants have stayed for 10 years, and nevertheless they have obtained only a hectare of what is considered their rights because of administrative delays and documentation process. Thus, SPI guidance for these peasants directed them to resolve these matters legally with the local and national governments. LVC texts cite the displacement of these migrants who have little to no access to land or food because of governmental delays. The peasants within the migrant program can have little interest in agroecology as they have no access to land.

Agroecology. As LVC texts note, agroecology denotes farming practices disseminated by LVC: it is a management approach intended to achieve a sustainable agricultural ecosystem by utilizing local knowledge to produce food and replace agricultural inputs with natural processes (Holt-Giménez & Altieri, 2013; Wezel et al., 2009). Agroecology itself is different from organic farming, as that stems from different principles (Gliessman, 2013). For example, organic agriculture allows monoculture, while agroecology promotes polyculture. In addition, organic farming, as introduced by the Indonesian government, still attaches organic labels to packages of agricultural inputs. This differs from the agroecological concept, which encourages peasants to independently produce their own agricultural inputs. Agroecology is often used interchangeably with other farming terms, such as sustainable agriculture, organic farming, or climate-smart agriculture (CSA). However, LVC's stance on these terms is clear. Sustainable agriculture, organic agriculture, and CSA are dominated by international organizations, such as the WTO, which focus only on producing as much food as possible without taking the peasant welfare or the sustainability of nature into account. For this reason, LVC declared agroecology to be the orienting term of farming practice among its membership, to distinguish itself from other farming practices, which are defined by international organizations.

However, for the communication of agroecology to local peasants, the term is used more flexibly because it is difficult to introduce new concepts to local peasants. Organic or natural farming, as a term, is more familiar to local peasants, so SPI uses it to educate them about agroecology. As a result, impact not all local peasants are familiar with agroecological terms, but, in agreement with the Surin Declaration, the existent of different terms makes no difference if agroecological principles are applied.

Questions of agroecology often arise in areas where land acquisition is less widespread. These include Bogor, West Java; Pati and Kendal, Central Java; some districts in Yogyakarta; Ponorogo, East Java; and some districts in Lampung. However, those who practice agroecology generally only cultivate less than 1 hectare of land, unlike Sumatran peasants, who cultivate 10 hectares. This condition is exacerbated by the large number of peasants who continue to rent land, remaining in a feudal relationship with their landlords, who may prohibit agroecology. Within this limitation, they must work, in groups or collectively, to meet the need for agricultural inputs, the need for food for their families, and market demand.

Agroecology also appears among peasants who live bear protected forest areas, springs, and wildlife. Such individuals often see themselves as protectors of the environment through their agroecological practice. For example, to prevent erosion, peasants plant annual crops, practicing polyculture; to preserve water and soil quality, peasants often limit use of chemical agricultural inputs; and to protect wildlife, they refrain from hunting. Some peasants claim that pests and plant diseases are also caused by the use of chemical agricultural inputs, careless farming practices, and disruption of wildlife habitats.

In such areas, SPI is focused on agroecological training. Peasants are encouraged to build agricultural demonstration plots to put what they have learned into practice and set an example for other peasants. SPI also mobilizes advanced agroecology peasants to visit other regions and spread agroecology practices in a peasant-to-peasant learning method.

Distribution, price, and markets. Peasants who practice agroecology are gaining in income thanks to the polyculture principles. Local peasants refer to this as sustainable income. They are not as susceptible to price fluctuations, because when the price of one commodity drops, a profit may be possible from others. This strategy is also closely tied to family food self-sufficiency, meaning that peasants' expenditures on food can be

minimized through polyculture. Another advantage of practicing polyculture, especially for peasants living close to urban areas, is the availability of markets. Local peasants sell their products to alternative markets: kiosks, supermarkets, restaurants, and small enterprises. The advantage of accessing these alternative markets is the relatively short distribution process, which brings greater profits. We also found that some groups organize their members to produce processed food, allowing greater profits.

Unlike those in vulnerable areas with agrarian conflict, the commodities peasants cultivate are usually mapped to meet market needs, especially industrial needs, such as palm, rubber, coffee, or cacao. Peasants in vulnerable areas with industrial markets sell their products to middlemen or collecting agencies. In this situation, the distribution chain is longer because the path from middleman to the consuming company is sometimes mediated by two or three agents. This reduces peasant power over prices, unlike peasants in areas without agrarian conflicts because they sell them in alternative markets where prices can be negotiated. For more severe conditions for peasants in an initial scheme, the greater need the company has for a contract between itself and a peasant group, whose land is used for the company's needs. Such peasants find it difficult to practice polyculture because they are limited to cultivating those products that are requisitioned. There is no negotiation in price and no other markets available; all is decided by the company.

These different conditions lead peasants to have variable priorities regarding food sovereignty. Peasants in conflict-prone areas will focus more on the survival of the their families and the continuation of their farming activities in conditions of market limitations, but those who live near to urban areas are more focused on shortening the distribution chains by accessing alternative markets. Given this difference in conditions, the advocacy by SPI on distribution depends on peasant conditions. While cooperative education is equally distributed among all, peasants who already practice agroecology and are close to urban areas are encouraged to access alternative markets.

Peasants' health and safety. This issue usually arises in regard to women. In Southeast Sulawesi, for example, some women meet with reproductive problems due to lack of clean toilets and water on oil-palm plantations. Additionally, some peasants have entered mental hospitals due to sudden massive call for chili seeds by local governments that lead them to uproot all their crops. However, when harvest time came, it was found that chili was overproduced, and its price dropped dramatically. This caused huge losses, as a peasant from Southeast Sulawesi, told us, adding that "some of our friends are experiencing mental problems because of this. They have

entered mental hospitals." Safety is an equal concern. Land grabbing hurts peasants, whether they are male or female, adult or child. There are even peasants in jail because they tried to prevent land grabbing. For peasants, thus, food sovereignty is closely related to health and safety.

Thus, we conclude that local peasants' understanding of food sovereignty is influenced by location-specific issues. We also found that SPI communicated the idea of food sovereignty in relation to such location-specific issues to allow local peasants to internalize the meaning of food sovereignty. Thus, communication of food sovereignty to peasants by SPI is not uniform.

Peasant members of SPI from different areas realized that each location has its own priorities regarding food sovereignty. Peasants from Bogor, for example, do not see agrarian reform as unimportant simply because they do not experience it: one peasant stated, "Being sovereign does not only stem from practicing agroecology but also from other issues. Land issues and seed issues have the same priority. There are many ways of achieving food sovereignty, so long as the purpose is to encourage peasant prosperity." Peasants from Yogyakarta said, "Whether this concerns production or agrarian reform, it's always the strategy that we use to strengthen food sovereignty. Restricting the movement to agroecology won't resolve agriculture issues in Indonesia." Thus, peasants also accept a diversity of issues and methods to achieve food sovereignty.

Local–global dynamics in understanding food sovereignty. The Montreal School holds that in authoritative texts that cause process, abstraction appears to create universal texts to accommodate the needs of every member of the organization (Brummans, Cooren, Robichaud, & Taylor, 2014). The process of abstraction, however, leads to distanciation, or the distance from the authoritative text to the actual needs of members (Koschmann et al., 2012). No distanciation is found between local peasant understanding and the texts produced by LVC on food sovereignty. Local members share the same understanding on the main principles of food sovereignty, as described above. However, variations exist in the understanding of these principles, based on location-specific issues. To accommodate local needs, location-specific issues are also represented in LVC texts. There thus is a convergence between local and global understandings of food sovereignty.

Three factors influence local–global dynamics in understanding food sovereignty. First, many communicative spaces are enacted by SPI or LVC to enable knowledge transfer between members. These spaces are available at the local, national, and global levels, in the context of varying issues and contexts that could enrich peasants' understanding of food sovereignty.

Second, the communicative spaces highlighted the participation of local peasants to ensure the recognition of local needs in building and making sense of the meaning of food sovereignty. We found that peasants who participated in local, national, or global level meetings actively articulated their needs to achieve food sovereignty. Peasants' freedom to organize local meetings also supported them to build discourses on food sovereignty that have location-specific characteristics. The participation of peasants at each level of communicative spaces allows the maintenance of local peasants understanding making authoritative texts. Third, location-specific issues are recognized as the basis for the understanding of local peasants on food sovereignty. LVC does not seek universality as they create their authoritative texts. Instead, they gather local voices to represent the reality of local peasants. It is easier for local peasants to make sense of food sovereignty in their daily surroundings. Issues like agrarian reform, agroecology, and distribution arise from local conditions of access to means of production, mode of production, and mode of distribution.

4. Conclusion

This study exhibited the local–global dynamics in the development of authoritative texts in a transnational agrarian movement. Distanciation, as understood in CCO theory, can be overcome by enabling communicative spaces going beyond local and state borders, emphasizing the active participation of local peasants in such communicative spaces, as well as recognizing location-specific issues in creating authoritative texts. Contexts that dynamically change over space and time can be overcome through the continuously provision of communicative spaces that recognize local ideas and knowledge within global framework. Different issues of local agriculture can be incorporated into the idea of food sovereignty, creating building a connection in local and global issues.

We showed that the transnational agrarian movement, one actor in global communication, exhibits the ability to empower marginalized people, such as peasants, and to preserve local uniqueness. We share this idea with Appadurai (1996), who argues that globalization is not simply linear, one-sidedly homogenizing different societies that each have their own local reality into a community with a one-dimensional reality, but a multidirectional process that gives an expansive presence to the dynamics of localities in addressing global issues. This case study could be explored to greater depth through study of the participation of peasants at each level of communicative space, discovering links among local, national, and global dynamics in building food sovereignty as an authoritative text.

As a result of this research, we are able to propose that CCO might be a framework for understanding how members of transnational social movements can communicate and define such movements and what kind of communicative spaces they could build to allow local and global dynamics to play out in constructing an authoritative text or a collective meaning. Additional research on the role of communicative spaces that transnational social movements and relevant policy makers could provide would help show how grassroots society and policymakers negotiate and construct authoritative texts.

Practically, this study's results could help facilitators build communicative spaces that serves their purposes of recognizing and accommodating the logic and worldview of local people. The communication of a new concept would be embedded in local reality to ensure that such a concept is internalized by small farmers.

Acknowledgments

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