Salt self-sufficiency (salt industrial development) has been a major policy concern in Indonesia in the past few years. Encouraged by this policy, Indonesia has attracted significant domestic and foreign direct investments to seize investment opportunities in the countryside to produce salt for fulfilling the domestic demand. Consequently, many salt companies have opened up and receive a land concession. This study analyzes how discourse regarding salt self-sufficiency has been employed to release land from customary tenure to a coalition of state, corporate and local elites’ actors. This paper is not intended to criticize the goal of salt self-sufficiency but to reveal how it has been used to empower and enrich large agrarian capital instead of develop sustainable livelihood for rural communities. Additionally, this paper highlights the interconnections between food politics and agrarian capitalism, and shows how the concern for salt self-sufficiency in Indonesia has worked to the advantage of large agrarian capital. Drawing on our research in the rural Kupang, Indonesia, our analysis indicates that the agrarian politics remain as contested as the dynamic within the state-society-capital nexus. Further, the process of land transfer are not just the overt maneuvers of state and corporate entities; they also ‘emerge by stealth’ where differentiation, erosion of social relations among the peasantry communities, and the uneven distribution and differentiated access to land reinforce each other.