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Urban Discipline for Urban Policy: Forming a Modern Subject Under the Nusantara Capital City Development

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to examine how urbanisation in Nusantara has been a project to impose modernity on the people, articulated through urban discipline and urban policy. Using an exploratory study, we interviewed individuals from Indigenous communities, conducted a focus group discussion, and analysed webinars and technical documents related to Nusantara through content analysis and a desk study. Our findings reveal that the development of Nusantara was motivated by the desire to improve the region through two discourses: sustainability and techno-urbanism, stemming from global environmental and digital disruption discourses. These discourses are then exercised as the basis of modernity efforts introduced to the Indigenous community of the Paser-Balik people. These efforts include spatial planning, land and forest management, job creation, and digital bureaucracy, which aim to reassemble the people as modern subjects. In response to these efforts, the communities made Adat-based land claims and leveraged their identity to express their ontology. The responses from local and Indigenous communities are a form of political ontology to assert their power through imaginative instruments. Such imaginative powers must be incorporated into urban policy to achieve inclusivity in Nusantara development.

摘要

本文旨在探讨努桑塔拉 (Nusantara) 的城市化如何成为一项通过城市规范与城市政策向民?众推行现代性的工程。本研究采用探索性研究方法，对原住民社区成员进行了访谈，组织了焦点小组讨论，并通过内容分析和案头研究，对与努桑塔拉相关的网络研讨会及技术文件展开了分析。研究结果表明，努桑塔拉的发展源于通过两大话语体系改善该地区?的愿景：可持续发展与技术城市主义，这两大话语体?系均源自全球环境与数字变革话语。这些话语随后被用作向帕塞尔 - 巴厘克 (Paser-Balik) 原住民社区推行现代性举措的基础。此类举措包括空间规划、土地与森林管理、就业创造及数字?政务，旨在将民众重塑为现代主体。针对这些举措，社区基于传统习俗 (Adat) 提出了土地诉求，并借助自身身份表达其本体论主张。地方及原住民社区的这些回应构成了一种政治本体论，即通过富有想象力的方式维护自身权力?。为实现努桑塔拉发展的包容性，此类想象力必须被?纳入城市政策制定之中。

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1. Introducing Nusantara

Five years after its official announcement in 2019, the relocation of Indonesia's capital city to Nusantara Capital City (henceforth Nusantara) in Kalimantan Island is underway. Sepaku in Kalimantan Timur Province was selected due to its centrality in the Indonesian archipelago, its low natural disaster frequencies, and the land availability (Warsilah *et al.* 2023). The requisite physical constructions, media campaigns, and legal-formal regulations have been established, and the city is poised to commence full operations as the centre of government. The national government is adamant about this project and the positive prospects it will bring, despite relentless critiques toward the ecological fallacies of its *raison d'etre* (Amir 2023), the hasty and exclusive process (Hackbarth and De Vries 2021, Nugroho and Adrianto 2022), and the social and environmental impacts (Teo *et al.* 2020, Syaban and Appiah-Opoku 2023). Conversely, proponents of Nusantara posit that it will stimulate the regional economy (Yusuf *et al.* 2023) and that it will result in the invocation of a new urban governance paradigm based on techno-futuristic urban facilities (Rifaid *et al.* 2023). Urbanisation is one of the fundamental pathways to make these Nusantara dreams come true. Nusantara, therefore, emerges as an ideological project, shaped by its related actors' intentions and interests.

Involved in the process of urbanisation in Nusantara, the government, non-governmental organisations, Indigenous communities, and locals compete to gain control of land and resources and to negotiate their respective interests in the process (Warsilah *et al.* 2023). However, Nusantara is not an empty space, but rather a region that has a long history. For centuries, the area now known as Nusantara has been inhabited by the Paser-Balik people, including settlements in *Kampong* (rural village) Mentawar, *Banuo* (Paser terminology for a region) Sepaku, *Banuo* Pemaluan to Maridan and Sepan Village (Badan Registrasi Wilayah Adat 2024). Paser-Balik community members are now in direct contact with the Nusantara project, which promises prosperity in the form of a discourse of development.

The current discourses around Nusantara development are articulated through knowledge that envisions Forest City, Sponge City, and Smart City concepts as the ultimate goals of Nusantara. In a thesis, Ayu (2023) reveals that the discourse of Nusantara is based on three pillars of sustainability: the environment, the economy, and social issues. Nugroho and Akbar (2023) analyse the discourse around Nusantara in President Joko Widodo's tweets, demonstrating how these discourses are then structured into policies. In the context of policy formation, discourses around Nusantara are reconstructed in three distinct phases: engineering, formulation, and implementation (Nugroho and Akbar 2023). At this juncture, the discourses and policy enactment have solidified Nusantara as a regime that produces its own truth.

In this paper, we seek to address the question of how contemporary, discursive processes shape the discursive regime of Nusantara. Subsequently, we ask how this regime is exercised through urban policy and planning. To answer these questions, we employ a Foucauldian concept of discourse and discipline to frame the "urban discipline" analytical tool (Hannah 1997). Urban discipline will link the discursive processes of Nusantara and the policies and planning it produces, and its impact on the Paser-Balik communities. We thus challenge the authority of the government as the instigator of this project, with the local communities as the "subjects" to be modernised. While there are numerous local communities (e.g. transmigrants and newcomers) in the research area, our focus is on the Paser-Balik communities due to their marginalised position and struggles (Devinta and Addiansyah 2024).

By focusing on the discourse of development and its policy implications, this paper aims to enrich critical perspectives and debates on the impact of urbanisation on marginalised Indigenous communities in Indonesia (Kennedy *et al.* 2023). We will demonstrate how, at the ideological level, modernism is rewired to become neoliberalism in the context of Nusantara development. This rewiring necessitates anticipation for the future of new city development in Indonesia, in which we will frame this anticipation using an imaginative power and political ontology of Indigeneity. In the next section, we will elucidate the concept of discourse that we use in this research.

2. Forming the Modern Subject Through Urban Discipline and Urban Policy: A Conceptual Framework

The conceptual tools of urban discipline and their relation to urban policy and development are derived from Foucauldian theory of discourse, power/knowledge, and discipline. Following Grillo's (1997) elaboration, the interrelation between discourse and development can be understood as follows: "Discourse thus includes language, but also what is represented through language. A discourse (e.g. of development) identifies *appropriate* and *legitimate* ways of practicing development as well as speaking and thinking about it" (Grillo 1997, p. 12 our emphasis). To function in this manner, discourse is operated through the interrelation of power and knowledge and subsequently produces the "regime of truth" that Foucault defines as: "the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned" (Foucault 1981, p. 131).

Foucault examines the way social institutions, including hospitals, asylums, and schools, exercise this power to shape subjects through the concept of discipline (Foucault and Rabinow 1984). He posits that "Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)" (Foucault 1995, p. 131). Each social institution develops its own technique and discipline method and produces unique and desired outcomes for the bodies it rules (Foucault and Rabinow 1984). Methods of discipline have evolved over time, and in the modern period, the penal system of discipline does not directly target the physical body but rather something beyond the body: its functions or freedoms (Foucault 1995). Discipline constitutes the governmentality that is subjected to the subject formation (Luxon 2019). In this research, we suggest that urbanisation from Nusantara as a development project is discursive – it forces the Indigenous community of Paser-Balik to be developed according to the discourses around Nusantara through a set of disciplinary techniques.

As a discourse, modern development champions capital, science, and technology in the form of technicalities (Li 2012). Consequently, it is dominated by and privileged those who hold power and knowledge, particularly the Global North (Escobar 2007). Historically, technicalities of urban planning and the policy in the Global South have discursively enforced state administrative control and are designed according to the European settlers' interests during the settler colonialism era (Watson 2009). As a result, policy thinking and discourse around urbanisation in the Global South gravitate toward the idea of regional transformation rather than human development. Such a mindset sees the population as labour to extract the abundant resources around the new urban area (Schindler 2017). This situation calls for more transformative urban planning and policy that challenge the status quo and reach far beyond improved technicalities (Schindler 2017, Pellissery and Gómez Aristizábal 2021).

In this context, urbanisation can be considered a component of modernism and development projects. Urbanisation can be discerned ideologically in urban planning and formally in urban design (Mabin 2003). Through the modern rationality and knowledge inherent in urban planning, modernism is embodied in urbanisation (Mouratidis 2021, Abedini *et al.* 2022). For instance, James Scott (1998) posits that urbanisation was initiated by the rationalisation and regulation of forest areas. Furthermore, urban areas serve as a testament to modernity as a design concept, as David Harvey (1989) elucidates. Harvey (1989) posits that the city's structure and the semiotic relations within the city are an expression of modernist design. Mashhadi Moghadam and Rafieian (2019) also assert that behind the epistemology of urban planning lies a power relation in the form of normalisation, and toward it, also resistances.

To operate smoothly, the urbanisation process must align all the actors and stakeholders' interests in line and minimise dissensus through a set of urban discipline techniques. Urban discipline takes the form of a modern social control where the authority monitors and hegemonises the everyday life of urban residents, thereby producing new identities and, often, the other as part of a binary opposition in the formation of the modern subject (Hannah 1997). This set of notions is then
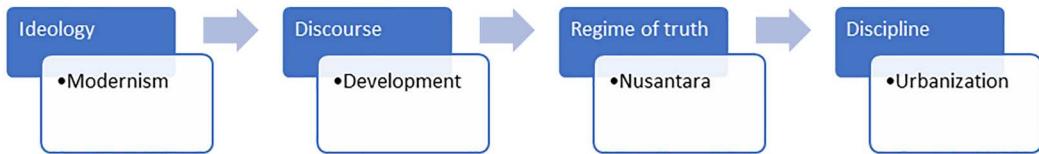
Figure 1. Discursive process of Nusantara. Source: Authors.

carried into urban studies to analyse urban governance and urban discourse, with an expansion to urban policy analysis (Jacobs 2006). Urban policy is then seen as a governing apparatus that works to reregulate and discipline the docile bodies of its citizens. This is achieved, for example, through punitive justice in schools (Balch-Crystal 2017), forced regulation and exclusion of street vendors (Gengzhi and Desheng 2011), and techno-urban controls of water distribution (Usher 2014). Collectively, these mechanisms contribute to the formation of the modern urban subject.

All these technical and discursive pushes result in inclusive imaginary processes as a counter-reaction. Championed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), this planning fashion would rather emphasise the importance of lived experience and local culture than technical and instrumental rationality (UNDP 2022). Imagination in urbanisation articulates the political interplay between culture (including creativity, values, and beliefs) with urban materiality (including infrastructure and facilities) through various forms, including public visual art, installation, or community centres (Jaffe 2018). For instance, cities in Aotearoa New Zealand have included *Marae* as a community centre of Māori (Marek 2020). The presence of *Marae* in cities expresses the strong values and ontologies of the Māori community, spiritually and materially through its architecture and carved ornaments (Marek 2020).

This article is relevant in that it will enable the study of the discourse of development in Nusantara as one of the latest urban constructions in the Global South. It will thereby reveal the logic and ideology behind the modernisation project and how they are imposed through policy (Perić and Maruna 2022, Rek-Woźniak 2023). The employment of urban discourse imagination will enable a critical stance to be taken in the analysis of urban policy, with a focus on the interrelationship between power and urban justice (Hastings 1999, Lees 2004, Jaffe 2018). Furthermore, discourse is crucial for illuminating the political process of knowledge and ideas production, which in turn produces the urban problems to be addressed by urban policy (Shi-xu 2014).

The conceptual framework can be seen in Figure 1.

3. On Doing This Research

This research employs discourse analysis to explore the urbanisation process as the modern development of Nusantara (Jacobs 2006, Shirazi 2023). Discourse analysis helps to shift the focus of policy from the institution as a large part of policy into a smaller chunk of practice of discipline (Hajer 1997). It can also be employed to examine the relation of urban policy with issues, challenges, and problems that are justified by modernism and scientific narratives (Jacobs 2006). Discourse in this context therefore refers to the power relations that exist within the social realm, rather than to the linguistic tools employed (Escobar 1984). Such power relations can be observed empirically from the language or technical terminologies analysed in this article.

In conducting discourse analysis, we gathered data on statements from 11 semi-structured interviews conducted in Sepaku District during August 2023. During the interviews, we aimed to construct the perspectives of the participants toward Nusantara's development based on the impacts they experienced. We recruited the leaders or prominent Paser-Balik figures at the beginning. Then, using the snowball technique, we approached the other participants after asking for a recommendation from the leaders or figures. We selected Sepaku District as our focus because Nusantara is currently being built in this particular district. Therefore, Sepaku is experiencing the most

socio-ecological changes, which can be seen from the occurring rapid rural-to-urban land use change (Andita *et al.* 2023). Sepaku District is also home to the Paser-Balik communities, who experience the direct impacts of Nusantara development.

We also drew our data from a focus group discussion (FGD) in 2023. We invited several stakeholders to a hotel in Balikpapan for this FGD, including a representative from *Otorita Ibu Kota Nusantara* (Nusantara Capital City Authority), as the state's body that is governing Nusantara's development. The FGD was conducted to gather information from government bodies and experts through discussion. We then complemented these data by examining regulations, technical reports, webinars, and media to obtain the knowledge from the authority (Buhler and Lethier 2020). Each data source has its own role and position in the discourse of urbanisation in Nusantara.

Technical reports, for instance, illuminate the presence of international agencies/donors/investors and their knowledge in constructing or orienting Nusantara (Hajer 2006). Conversely, webinars from universities and higher education institutions provide insight into the knowledge that shapes the discourse, with academics and experts offering their perspectives. It is crucial to understand the role of experts in the study of discourse in development, as they provide the foundation for discourses and, as Escobar (2007) notes, the power to shape them. The webinars selected from

Table 1. Data sources.

Method	Targets	Name/Title	Data Sources	Code
Semi-structured Interview		Indigenous community's member 1	Fieldwork	R2
		Indigenous community's member 2		R3
		Indigenous community's member 3		R5
		Indigenous community's member 4		R6
		Indigenous community's member 5		R7
		Indigenous community's member 6		R8
		Indigenous community's member 7		R9
		Indigenous community's member 8		R10
		Indigenous community's member 9		R11
		Indigenous communities figure 1		R4
		Village Government 1		R1
Content Analysis	Technical Reports	*Cetak Biru Kota Cerdas Nusantara* (Nusantara Smart City Blueprint) (Kedeputian Bidang Transformasi Hijau dan Digital 2023)	Nusantara Capital City Authority's Website (ikn.go.id)	TR 1
		Nusantara Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Voluntary Local Review Baseline (Nusantara Capital Authority 2024)		TR 2
		Rencana Induk Pengelolaan Keanekaragaman Hayati (Nusantara Nature Positive Plan) (Deputi Bidang Lingkungan Hidup dan Sumber Daya Alam Otorita Ibukota Nusantara 2024)		TR 3
		Nusantara Net Zero Strategy 2045 (Deputy for Environment and Natural Resources Nusantara Capital Authority 2023)		TR 4
	Webinars/ seminars	Seminar Nasional: Kontribusi Biologi dalam Pembangunan Ibu Kota Nusantara Berkelanjutan (Universitas Gadjah Mada 2022)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTidMFxTK9M	Webinar A
		International Webinar Day-1: The New Capital City of Indonesia, A Smart and Green City (Institut Teknologi Kalimantan 2021)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuhnuetCWOA	Webinar B
		Pentingnya Mitigasi Bencana dalam Perencanaan IKN (Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember 2022)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Av0Xu74Z0B0	Webinar C
		Forum Group Discussion "Kajian Dampak Sosial dan Dampak Ekonomi Pemindahan IKN" (PKN STAN 2022)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVbRjauRykI	Webinar D
Focus Group Discussion		Nusantara Capital City Authority	Fieldwork	OIKN

Source: Authors.

YouTube were chosen based on the content of the titles and the expertise of the speakers. The data from various sources allowed us to gain insight into the ways in which different actors utilise their knowledge and influence through different means. The list of data sources is presented in Table 1.

The data were analysed to identify intersections and discrepancies between the knowledge held by different parties and their respective approaches to addressing them. For analysing technical documents, content analysis was employed to examine each report in turn (Krippendorff 2019). This approach allowed us to explore the disciplinary methods employed in relation to the subject matter within the context of Nusantara, as well as the way the subject of development responds. In addition, a transcript was created from the webinar and seminar videos on YouTube to identify statements or arguments that could be considered part of a discourse. From this section forward, we flag YouTube videos and technical documents as the data sources in Table 1 using square brackets "[]" to differentiate them from our references.

4. Discourses and the Regime: The Making of Nusantara

This section will elaborate on the discursive process of Nusantara development that produces it as a regime of truth. The regime of Nusantara is forged by global discourse, in conjunction with its connection to modernism. This process can be demarcated into two phases.

The first phase comprises the justifications for relocating the capital city, which relies on the condition of the former capital, Jakarta, and the conditions of Nusantara's location. These rationales, as summarised by an expert in Webinar D, cover considerations of (i) Centrality of location, (ii) Land ownership and (iii) Proximity of Nusantara to the nearest large cities. In the initial phase, a symptom of modernism can be observed in the rationalisations employed to select the existing location, given its abundance of land resources. This perception is derived from a long history of perceiving Kalimantan Island as a frontier area, rich in natural resources, but still lacking optimisation (Tsing 2005). Consequently, the exploitation of natural resources must be undertaken after they have been quantified and measured for the benefit of the local population through development programmes implemented by the developed region. This results in a dichotomy of Java Island as the developed region and Kalimantan as the underdeveloped.

The second phase is the continuation of justifications hitherto and the shaping of urban design, planning, and policy. From the technical report and webinar, two global discourses have been identified: sustainability and techno-futuristic. These discourses are then structurally enforced by the legal-formal framework of the Nusantara Act and Presidential Decree of Nusantara, transforming them into urban policy.

4.1 Discourse Around Sustainability: Biodiversity and Climate Change

The concept of sustainability has become a dominant discourse in urban policy, influencing the formulation of both the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda (Tahvilzadeh *et al.* 2017, Spiliotopoulou and Roseland 2020). In Nusantara, the discourse can be observed in two technical documents: the "Biodiversity Management Masterplan" and the "Nusantara Net Zero Strategy 2045". These documents represent the primary elements of the discursive process that construct nature and ingrain it in Nusantara under the vision of the Forest City. Each technical report represents, respectively, the biodiversity conservation and sustainable development discursive regimes that emerged in the 1970s as a continuation of several reports and publications, including the Brundtland Report and Limits to Growth (Escobar 1996).

As stated in the biodiversity masterplan, biodiversity around Nusantara is regarded as a resource or nature capital (McAfee 1999). The biodiversity management implementation will be conducted in accordance with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) (Convention on Biological Diversity 2022). Through the implementation of the remaining ecosystem protection programmes, habitat and species conservation, and the remediation of degraded and destroyed

ecosystems, it is anticipated that by 2030 the biodiversity status in the Nusantara area will have been significantly enhanced [TR3, p. 4]. Thus, biodiversity protection is guided by scientific and technological bodies that may supersede the Indigenous understanding. In the context of modern environmentalism, this approach to conservation is rooted in the Western vision of the human-nature relationship, which prioritises wilderness and pristine environments over the livelihood of the Indigenous communities (Duara 2014).

Global environmental discourse on climate change also incorporates carbon as part of urban management in Nusantara. The carbon issue is embraced through the urban forest and green areas and embodied in the form of policy by establishing 65% of Nusantara as a green area [TR4, p. 5]. In comprehending this directive, we align our reading with green liberalism as presented by Ayu (2023) in her thesis as a strong indication of modernism's manifestation. The urgency of climate change has compelled the authorities to pursue green transformations in urban areas through any available means (Skorstad and Mohus 2022).

4.2 Discourse Around Techno Urban: The New Urban Bureaucracy and Liveability

Global techno-urban discourse is driven by the desire to address Industry 4.0 and technological disruption, where the authorities perceive them as an inevitable consequence. Within this discourse, urban planners and geographers envisage the role of IT engineers in this endeavour. In Nusantara, this discourse gives rise to the concept of a "Smart City" as the foundation for the construction of a high-tech utopia and is enshrined in TR1. The concept of a "Smart City" is articulated into several components, with information technology manifesting in the form of monitoring, maintaining equilibrium between the physical and social milieus, and the automation of the new capital city. The Smart City concept in Nusantara is then delivered through six service domains: Smart Governance, Smart Transportation and Mobility, Smart Living, Smart Natural Resources and Energy, Smart Industry and Human Resources, and Smart Built Environment and Infrastructure [TR 1]. All these domains facilitate the integration of information technology and digital reality into urban everyday life. Furthermore, in the preface of the document, the Deputy for Digital and Green Transformation of the Nusantara Capital City Authority asserts that

> Nusantara is designed to be a smart city, *efficient*, and *highly competitive*, by utilising information technology as the main key to increase the *people's quality of life*. [TR 1, p. 7, our emphasis]

The deputy's statement in the preface and the general content of the master plan illustrate two orientations of the techno-urban discourse in Nusantara. The first is directed towards enhancing the efficiency of Nusantara as the centre of government and state bureaucracy. Smart cities represent a modernist project in urbanisation, characterised by an excessive belief in technological apparatus, individualism, capitalist logic, and urban entrepreneurialism as the means of new urban bureaucracy (Strüver and Bauriedl 2020, Mittal *et al.* 2024). All these modern and techno-urban utopias are translated into urban policy through the disciplinary basis called "smartmentality" governance which categorises cities into smart or "smart-deviant" types (Vanolo 2014, p. 889). This process is exerted through Key Performance Indicators for the Nusantara smart city. Another indication of modernity is urban entrepreneurialism, which can be observed in the invitation of large technological corporations to invest in the development of the smart city of Nusantara. Secondly, the techno-urban discourse resonates with the discourse around the liveability of Nusantara. The discourse of liveability has dominated global urban discourse for decades and reflects the expert roles in crafting urban planning (Escobar 2007). The marriage of liveability and techno-urban discourse is then integrated into urban everyday life through urban policy (Wathne and Haarstad 2020, McQuire 2023).

These orientations are employed to chart larger urban issues and problems and cement urban policy through rhetoric and linguistic devices. For instance, the discursive process in shaping the concept of a smart city and its liveability policy is built upon a plethora of definitions and concepts

that enable experts to arbitrarily favour and include the framework, thereby adding its complexity (Turovsky *et al.* 2021, Purandare 2023). It can be stated that the concept of a smart city is embraced as a mere brand or best practice for a city and essentially an arena for knowledge contestation by experts (Allam and Newman 2018). In Indonesia, the implementation of smart city initiatives is still hindered by the multitude of standards in different governance hierarchies, including global, regional, and national levels, which often causes confusion at the execution levels (Bastian *et al.* 2022). Consequently, the masterplan of Nusantara Smart City illustrates that the development of smart cities in Nusantara is not constrained by existing regulations and standards, and instead employs a distinctive set of technical terms, including "optimal," "integrated," "open and inclusive," and "circular and sustainable."

5. Forming an Urban Subject Through Urban Disciplines

The preceding section outlined the dominance of modernism in the discursive process of Nusantara development, facilitated by expert knowledge and technocratic planning. In Nusantara, these are reflected in two discourses. Firstly, the discourse of sustainability shapes the nature-culture relationship. Secondly, the discourse of techno-urbanism delineates the contours of the new urban bureaucracy and future socio-economic milieu. These relations and milieu serve as the context within which the regime of Nusantara is manifested as a truth. For the local population and Indigenous communities to be included in the Nusantara regime, they must adhere to the truth of the Nusantara regime. It is now the responsibility of the authorities to facilitate the formation of modern subjects through the implementation of urban discipline methods. We will now proceed to examine two examples of urban discipline methods and how they correspond with each dominant discourse.

5.1. Land and Forest Management and Urban Planning

It is very likely that Nusantara will fall under the purview of the market mechanism, given that the government has openly acknowledged the necessity of foreign investment to fund this colossal, trillions of Rupiah mega-project. The invitation to investors automatically activates the market mechanism for the development of Nusantara, which in turn leads to the commodification of the market, with land, the most abundant resource, becoming the primary commodity. As Karl Polanyi (2001, p. 71) elucidates, land is transformed into a "fictitious commodity" under market mechanisms. This process of land commodification exacerbates the land ownership problems, particularly for Indigenous communities, as the land must be certified in the form of a land certificate. Previously, the Paser-Balik communities used various forms of land ownership, such as *Lok Lati*, fruit trees, or their elders tombs, as a means of demonstrating their possession of the land. Regarding forest management, Paser-Balik recognises different types of forest and farmland, such as *Lati Tuwo* and *Lati Burok* (Badan Registrasi Wilayah Adat 2024). The difference between these two types of forest is the duration. *Lati Burok* is cultivated and left to rest for 3–5 years, whereas *Lati Tuwo* takes 5–15 years to rest. However, these traditional forms of land ownership are now replaced by land parcel boundaries and industrial forest management.

The land parcel system was formally enforced through a regulation. The provincial government enacted Governor Regulation 6/2020 (Gubernur Kalimantan Timur 2020) that controlled land use and land transfer around Nusantara. It provides insight into the process of replacing traditional land ownership with modernist forms, which is now taking place in Nusantara. The urban discipline in this sense can be seen in the transformation of land management and land commodification. This has resulted in the Paser-Balik communities being required to follow market mechanisms to gain their rights to their land, despite their adherence to customary practices and traditions that have been in place for centuries. In addition to the commodification of land, the market mechanism also has the effect of replacing native species used by the Paser-Balik community with those that are more marketable. The ratan plant is an example of this. The Paser-Balik community once often

used ratan as a material for household utensils. Our informant, R2, informed us, however, that the ratan plants had indeed disappeared. They had once been in the vicinity, within a forest environment, but had subsequently been subjected to exploitation by the corporation and replanted with wooden trees. Consequently, there is no specific indication in the Nusantara Biodiversity Masterplan that the ratan issue will be addressed.

Another disciplinary method in land and forest management can also be seen through the modernistic view of conservation and forest management. The biodiversity conservation that privileges endemic animals over people, as a modern imagination of pristine wilderness, triggers competition for people and animal living space in the form of conservation areas and settlements. Replicating Duara (2014), modern Western conservationism diverts the human-nature relation that is based on livelihood into ecosystem protection and conservation. Furthermore, the discourse of climate change and its derivatives, such as carbon issues and natural disasters, also act as disciplinary methods. The Paser-Balik people are prohibited from burning the forest, where their traditional swidden agriculture involved slash-and-burn practices to ensure natural fertiliser for their crops. This disciplinary method makes them dependent on modern agricultural practices that rely on seeds, pesticides, and artificial fertilisers to enter the market.

From the existing urban planning of Nusantara, we can identify several instruments that guide the urban design and urban form. One aspect that emerges as a consideration is the aesthetic components of the city that are subject to the engineering of natural elements of topography and retention ponds [Webinar B]. While a discourse and discussion of urban aesthetics are related to the commodification of tourism and the political climate (Rezafar 2023). In Nusantara, they resonate with the discourses of sustainability and their nature-based solutions. This relation is anchored to the Forest City imagination that prioritises nature metabolism. Aesthetic elements of Nusantara are reflected in the images from the authorities that illustrate the greenness of the city. Furthermore, the land use/land cover policy, which designates 65% of this area as forest, is in alignment with this vision [TR 4, p. 5].

In addition to its aesthetic elements, the urban design of Nusantara also incorporates the urban functions as presented by the Detailed Spatial Planning of the Government Core Zone (Kepala Otorita Ibu Kota Nusantara Republik Indonesia 2023). The spatial planning and urban structure expand the urban discipline of Nusantara into a sort of biopower that regulates the population of Nusantara (Foucault 1995). As a biopower instrument, spatial planning also produces a territory where the Paser-Balik communities must obey. Space is divided, and within each border, a set of rules that controls what is and what is not allowed must be followed. It often clashes with the existing, *Adat*-ruled guidelines. For example, spatial planning defines an area of industrial forest that intersects with *Lati Tuwo* or *Lati Burok*, thus restricting access to the local community members in terms of mobility, as they are not allowed to enter this space.

5.2 Labour Creation and Digital Bureaucracy

The location of Nusantara has been undergoing a period of rapid urbanisation, with a corresponding influx of material and people. This has had a significant impact on the urban-rural relations, which have been destabilised as one of the economic rural backbones has undergone structural transformation. As Yusuf *et al.* (2023) have analysed, Nusantara will push a drastic shift in the economic structure of Sepaku District and Kalimantan Timur Province from agriculture and forestry towards tertiarisation and high-tech industry. This shift will increase the demand for high-skilled labour (Yusuf *et al.* 2023). In Nusantara, the tertiary sectors are maintained by techno-urban discourse, which is related to digital bureaucracy. In which, techno-urban discourse also includes smart industry as one of its service domains.

The implementation can be seen in the designation of the Buluminung and Kariangau areas near Nusantara as petrochemical and renewable energy industries, which are intended to support the futuristic imagination of Nusantara (Cahyanto 2025). The disciplinary mechanism regulates skills

that extend beyond the physical body, such as cognitive labour, which are manifested in a range of certifications. Those who fail to meet the required credentials may face rejection or exclusion. This process exemplifies a Foucauldian approach to discipline as it forces people to obey this credentialism.

Reinvoking the fictitious commodities of Karl Polanyi, the labour of the local people is then seen as a commodity and manufactured through the disciplinary mechanism of their brain and body (Foucault 1995, Polanyi 2001). Consequently, under this logic, the local people and Indigenous communities around Nusantara must be involved in the development process. In this case, the local population is regarded as a human resource, and the term "development" is applied at the body level through workshops, training, or what is commonly referred to as capacity building. This perspective was conveyed by one of our informants, who stated,

> It would be impossible for us to compete without education because the newcomers, excuse me, are not stupid people. People from there are smart and rich, and how could we compete? Our human resources are low [R3]

The urbanisation of Nusantara also functions as a means to overcome the over-accumulation or the limits of capital by constructing physical infrastructure, in accordance with the ideas of David Harvey (Harvey 1984, 2001). It can be observed that the orientation of economic growth, as expressed by experts and government officials, constitutes the economic realm of urban discipline. The authorities impose this discipline by building infrastructure, both physical and digital, to construct a techno-urban discourse. As a result, as Schindler (2017) has pointed out, a population that has been accustomed to its mode of life for centuries would experience a shock. In Nusantara, the local communities who have lived within an agricultural sector have now shifted to construction for the present and, according to the plans, urban industry later. A member of the Nusantara Capital City Authority nonetheless stated that this situation was read as an inconvenience by the community members.

> We had provided industry-oriented training in the beginning for them. But then, when they started to work in [construction] … although the number [of Kalimantan-origin workers] was less than 30%, they could not stay. 'It's hot … if I were only paid IDR150,000 [US$$9] per day, it would be better to harvest the palm fruit … [where] it's not hot, we could seek shade, and we could smoke'. [OIKN, notes in italics are added by the authors for context]

It illustrates how the local and Indigenous community members have been accustomed to the rhythm of agricultural work, and how they value the comfort of their farmland more.

Techno-urban discourse and the entailing smart city policy dominate the entire regime of the Nusantara Smart City. Within this discourse, the authority campaigns for Nusantara to be a dream-come-true, with all the modernist imaginations. Nevertheless, drawing from experiences in European cities, several scholars have pointed out that the smart city and its modern imaginations exclude the citizen voice instead. The planning and implementation of the smart city becomes overly technical, thus occupied only by experts or policymakers (Engelbert *et al.* 2019, Sepehr and Felt 2023). Digital technology has the effect of homogenising urban economic activities into digital capitalism, heralded by e-commerce or the virtual marketplace (Sepehr and Felt 2023). Thereby, all economic activities and labour would be centred around profit accumulation and an innovation imperative, excluding informal, diverse, everyday economies such as self-provisioning agriculture, leisure, or caring work (Gibson-Graham and Dombroski 2020).

6. All Power to the Imagination: Paser-Balik Communities and the Ontological Turn to the Subject

Up to this point, we have outlined the discourses that shape urbanisation in Nusantara, and how they are implemented through a set of urban discipline methods related to the discourses. The process of urbanisation is characterised by the stark presence of modernism, which produces

dichotomous differences that privilege the scientific and technocratic, due to the inherent logo-centrism of modernity (Gibson-Graham and Dombroski 2020). This is then justified by the concept of *capitalocentrism* in urban planning and policy (Gibson-Graham 2006). Urban discipline is essentially imposing these ideologies on Indigenous communities through modern economic and political rationality, thereby making them modern urban subjects (Gibson-Graham and Dombroski 2020). We will extend this discussion by presenting the reactions from the Paser-Balik communities.

Despite the gradual formation of local and Indigenous subjects within the Nusantara regime, characterised by urban discipline, acts of indiscipline persist. These acts are largely based on imaginative force, conviviality, and creativity. This is evidenced by the local and Indigenous communities around Nusantara, who appear to have adopted the 1968 Paris political movement slogan "All Power to the Imagination" (*l'imagination au pouvoir*!) (Tally 2013). The communities manifest this slogan through *Adat*-based land claims and ethnic groups based on collective identity encapsulated in Adat-istiadat (Bakker 2009). One informant expressed a hope for an *Adat Istiadat* revival for this purpose, stating,

> We only asked one thing. Can the Balik Tribe be revived, reemerge, starting with the *Adat Istiadat*. [R4]

As our participants hoped, we could see that there was a difference between culture and *Adat Istiadat* terminology worth noting. For the authority, "culture" referred to cultural material attributes such as traditional attire, dances, or crafts. The importance of such cultural attributes had been stressed by the authority, which aimed to establish culture as the foundation of Nusantara.

> Because we wished that when we built Nusantara, the spirit of it would be culture. It was the aspect that also differed from the Forest City [OIKN]

Nonetheless, the so-called spirit of culture in Nusantara is directed toward a "living museum" notion: displaying merely material cultural attributes while neglecting the Paser-Balik people and their actual well-being (Swara *et al.* 2025, p. 7). The concept of imaginative resistance from the Paser-Balik community goes beyond material cultural attributes to the emotion, identity, and political imagination under its *Adat Istiadat*. Within this *Adat Istiadat*, the Paser-Balik community members can articulate their sovereignty based on their basic existence or ontology. *Adat Istiadat* also becomes a space where their creative, informal economic activities (e.g. types of Paser-Balik land and forest, ratan products, and adaptation of swidden agriculture) and political actions gain legitimacy to keep up with Nusantara's discourses and policy.

One of the most pertinent examples of the employment of *Adat Istiadat* is the struggle of *Adat*-based land claims. The requirement for land ownership in urban development in Nusantara must comply with a multitude of regulations, including the submission of documentation, proof of citizenship, borders, legality, and land status. The Paser-Balik, however, had already established a traditional land ownership system prior to the imposition of state authority, which organized the way land was to be managed or owned. To keep up with this land ownership regulation, the Paser-Balik people have utilised an *Adat*-based land claim based on their various marks of land ownership (see section 5.1). It is then pursued through a legal and formal approach (Bedner and Arizona 2019). The legal-formal approach involves an advocacy to harmonise the positive law of land ownership carried by Nusantara with the *Adat* law of the Paser-Balik people (Arizona 2023, Bakker 2023). Regardless, the *Adat*-based land claim required the foundation of Indigenous sovereignty beyond state recognition to Paser-Balik existence or ontology. This Indigeneity identity then becomes the political approach to further strengthen a legal-formal approach (Bedner and Arizona 2019).

Identity is a personal construction that can be used as an articulation of authenticity, as a form of power, and is related to one's existence and one's ontology. European settlers from the Global North tend to cling to a modernist ontology that is built on the "universe of science" (Jervis 2018, p. 119). Such ontology structures a hierarchical rationality that assumptively positions scientific and Western identity above others, excluding and eclipsing others. In contrast, the ontology of indigeneity is

built upon relationality with more-than-human beings (rather than hierarchy) and is ingrained in the individual body, hence the everyday life of community members (Kramm 2024). It is thus in the political imagination of the Paser-Balik community that living or being *in* Nusantara is being *with* Nusantara, as our informant asserted.

> Meanwhile, our rights have not been fully recognised. The point, actually, is for the government to recognise our rights. We supported Nusantara because we also want to live side by side with that Nusantara [R3].

In the following final section, we will examine the opportunities and challenges of implementing political and legal-formal approaches to establish Adat-based land claims and Indigeneity ontology to urban planning and policy in Indonesia, with a focus on the case of Nusantara.

7. Lesson Learned from Nusantara Development: Towards Urban Neo liberalism and Multiple Ontologies on Urban Policy and Planning in Indonesia's New City Development

To answer the research question of how modern urbanisation discursive processes shape the regime of Nusantara and its implications for urban policy, we have traced the discursive effects of global discourse to the local level. From the discourse analysis, it can be concluded that the discourses and the regime they produce cement neoliberal urban policy and governance (Hudalah and Woltjer 2007, Herlambang *et al.* 2019, Kidokoro *et al.* 2022) in Nusantara. Each urban discipline method reflects modern developmentalism policies that ultimately epitomise the market mechanism as a part of global capitalism expansion, knowledge- and rational-based decision-making, and modern bureaucracy. They function as a frame to shape the Indigenous as a modern subject.

Neoliberal policy shapes urban planning and development through the excessive implementation of technocratic planning, which is dominated by expertise (Raco and Savini 2019). This fashion of urban planning then becomes a pretext for economic rationality, which takes the form of foreign investment and the commodification of land and labour. It is important to consider the implications of this research in the context of neoliberal governance and its role in the further development of the new city. The digital and sustainability utopian visions presented in these discourses have become a source of inspiration for the new city development blueprint in Indonesia, driven by the modern development paradigm. While the concept of Nusantara development initially appears promising, it is necessary to assess its potential to address the challenges of inclusive yet sustainable development.

Considering the challenge, this research proposes that urban planning policy should adopt an "ontological turn" to the subject (Michael 2016, p. 361). It entails opening the discourse beyond the realms of rationality and technocratic discourse and incorporating the diverse ontologies. Technically, this necessitates the critical inquiry to the scientific construction that underpins the discourse of urban development. Such a scientific construction is characterised by oxymoronic exclusive inclusivity jargon and the greenwashing of sustainability. Instead, it should be redirected towards a more embodied and imaginative process (UNDP 2022).

One of the strategies is the creation of a multiple ontology urban planning approach, which enables the coexistence of different realities in urban design, based on Indigenous system knowledge (Pile 2023, Billawer and Nel 2024). Thus, it is first and foremost necessary to admit the ontology of Indigenous communities and to recognise the communities' right to self-determination. Nusantara, as a recent attempt to create a major urban centre, should open a space for the Paser-Balik community to assert their ontology, imagination, and *Adat*-based governance. As the Paser-Balik community has thrived for centuries prior to the Nusantara development, their relationship to their land must be seen as equal to the positive law of land ownership. Their land is the manifestation of their sovereignty, and it also encapsulates their culture, social interactions, and knowledge. Therefore, Nusantara must be built as a continuation rather than a disruption of their livelihood.

On a larger scale and context, the friction between Nusantara's urban discipline and Indigenous communities *Adat Istiadat* resembles a Global-Southern urban development tension. It is the encounter of formality and informality, planned and spontaneous, in everyday life. In between this friction, the Paser-Balik community situates their struggle and seizes the opportunity to take the power back through the "undiscipline" technique. By doing so, they advance their tradition, history, and relationship with nature. There is still a long and winding road ahead. However, history has recorded the act of the Paser-Balik community in facing disciplining Nusantara, which will provide an invaluable lesson for the other Indigenous communities in Indonesia to fight for their ontology. Existence is a resistance.

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