GEDSI IN SMART CITY POLICY: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF REGULATION IN INDONESIA

*[1]FEDRO, FEDRO@STUDENTS.USU.AC.ID
[2]SILVIA ANNISA, SILVIAANNISA@USU.AC.ID
*[1]UNIVERSITAS SUMATERA UTARA,SOCIOLOGY STUDY PROGRAM, MEDAN, NORTH SUMATERA, INDONESIA
[2] UNIVERSITAS SUMATERA UTARA,SOCIOLOGY STUDY PROGRAM, MEDAN, NORTH SUMATERA, INDONESIA
(*whatsapp number: +62895612348647)

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ABSTRACT

Smart city has become a significant agenda in national development. This concept is promoted as a solution for the modernization and efficiency of urban life. However, behind the narrative of progress lies a crucial question regarding the position and inclusivity of citizens within the framework of its policies. Therefore, this study aims to critically analyze the discourse embedded in national-level smart city policies, including how such discourse is reproduced through policy communication and socialization.

Employing a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, this research examines fundamental aspects such as the construction of discourse within regulations and policy communications relevant to Smart City in Indonesia, specifically in relation to whether these discourses integrate or, conversely, negate the principles of Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI). Furthermore, the analysis is extended to explore how discursive practices in official government reporting reinforce or weaken the principle of inclusivity toward society and vulnerable groups.

The objects of this research include regulatory documents relevant to national-level smart city policies as well as related government-issued news texts. The analytical focus of this study rests on the initial proposition that the dominant discourse in smart city regulations is predominantly top-down and characterized by minimal meaningful public involvement, which ultimately risks perpetuating exclusion of vulnerable groups and negating GEDSI principles in development. This study contributes to the critical discourse on digital urbanism in Indonesia by uncovering the social implications of policy language and providing insights for policymakers and civil society to promote a more just and inclusive implementation of smart city initiatives.

Keywords: GEDSI, Smart City, Public Policy, Social Inclusion

BACKGROUND

Smart city has become one of the global discourses that signifies the rapid development of urban governance and administration in the digital era. This concept serves as a perfect reflection of economic and political interests at the onset of the fourth industrial revolution, namely around the 21st century (Suartika & Cuthbert, 2020). In terms of definition, a smart city can be understood as an innovative city that utilizes information and communication technology to enhance the quality of life of people in urban areas (Anthopoulos et al., 2016). This technological transformation and integration are deemed

necessary to improve traditional forms of urban management and accelerate city growth (Syalianda & Kusumastuti, 2021).

As a breakthrough, the smart city is promoted as a solution to urban complexities through the utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance the efficiency of public services, improve governance, and foster sustainable development. This concept is also portrayed as a representation of the modern urban landscape in which technology is employed to improve residents' living standards (Kaiser, 2024), encompassing six domains: Smart Economics, Smart Environment, Smart Governance, Smart People, Smart Living, and Smart Mobility (Alotaibi et al., 2025).

This concept has rapidly developed not only in developed countries but also in developing countries, including Indonesia. Rachmawati et al. (2024) emphasize that the implementation of smart cities holds significant potential to be adapted to the characteristics of Indonesian cities, which generally possess distinctive features ranging from geographical to cultural aspects. In line with this, the Indonesian government has positioned the smart city as a strategic agenda in national development planning. Concrete examples of smart city implementation efforts can be seen, for instance, in the "Movement Towards 100 Smart Cities" and the "Movement Towards Smart Cities" initiatives launched by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics.

However, even long before that, the government's efforts to realize governance based on smart city principles had been reflected in the establishment of various policies integrating digital transformation into the context of urban governance as well as bureaucracy. Numerous legal instruments, ranging from Presidential Instructions, Presidential Regulations, and Government Regulations to Laws, have been issued to provide guidelines, references, and encouragement for implementing agencies as well as the broader public regarding smart city implementation.

This step aligns with Kaiser (2024) perspective, which emphasizes that in order to achieve efficiency in urban management, the smart city concept cannot be implemented solely within specific areas or cities but must also be accompanied by comprehensive nationwide efforts focusing on smart infrastructure, governance, transportation, healthcare services, and macro-level economic development.

Beyond formal regulations, public policy communication through government socialization channels also plays a crucial role in shaping public awareness and perceptions regarding urban governance based on smart city principles. Articles, public relations outlets, social media, and official websites of policymakers serve a vital role as instruments of discursive reproduction in the context of smart cities. These channels cannot merely be regarded as platforms for conveying technical information, but also as mechanisms that construct meanings of what constitutes a smart city and who is entitled to be part of it.

Nevertheless, behind the jargon of efficiency and modernization of life embedded within these policy products lies a fundamental question: to what extent is the smart city concept truly inclusive of all segments of society? Considering that the transformation toward a genuinely inclusive smart city remains, to this day, a difficult goal to achieve (Obringer & Nateghi, 2021).

In this context, the conceptual perspective of GEDSI (Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion) is essential to be employed as both a standpoint and an analytical lens. Conceptually, GEDSI is understood as an approach that promotes equal rights and responsibilities for every individual (Rahmadhani & Sholeh, 2021). More specifically, Malihah et al. (2023) emphasize that the aspect of gender equality within the GEDSI framework refers to equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities regardless of one's gender. Meanwhile, within the aspect of "Disability," the focus lies on facilitating interaction between persons with disabilities (including those with visual or hearing impairments, as well as potential physical, intellectual, or psychosocial disabilities) and the various barriers in their environment, whether in education, law, policy, social pressures, or other surrounding factors (Berger & Wilbers, 2020).. Furthermore, "Social Inclusion" refers to efforts that enable individuals and communities to fully participate in the social, economic, and political life of society (Juvonen et al., 2019). Within this scope, GEDSI plays an important role as a prerequisite for advancing development

processes by positioning social concern as a commitment grounded in the principle of "no one left behind (Malihah et al., 2023).

Hermawati (in Dahniar et al., 2024) also emphasizes that, in order to achieve sustainable development, the GEDSI perspective is indeed essential to apply. Without serious attention to this concept, the implementation of smart cities through various regulatory products risks perpetuating existing inequalities. In the absence of GEDSI, the digitalization of urban governance may, in fact, widen the gap between groups that are able to access services and those who remain marginalized.

Looking retrospectively, the various regulations that have been created reveal diverse discursive patterns, ranging from the dominance of efficiency narratives to the emergence of partial attention toward inclusion. From a sociological perspective, this issue is relevant to debates on the relationship between technology and society, where technology is never neutral. It is always produced within a particular social context and carries with it inherent biases and interests. Supporting this view, Suartika & Cuthbert (2020) even observe the considerable potential that the smart city, ideologically, has already been compromised by business and market interests.

This condition ultimately resonates with Ulrich Beck's concept of the "risk society," which highlights that the use of technology in addressing societal problems paradoxically generates a wide array of risks (den Hond & Moser, 2023). In the end, the integration of technology into urban development and society has two faces: it may reinforce elite interests, or conversely, open up space for more equitable citizen participation.

Given the limited number of studies focusing on the same object, it is necessary to conduct a more rigorous analysis of how government regulations and policy dissemination channels frame and construct discourses of inclusivity within the smart city discourse. Therefore, this study aims to analyze texts, uncover discursive practices, and examine the social practices underlying regulations and policy dissemination by the government relevant to smart cities. It is expected that this research will contribute to enriching the literature on smart cities from the perspectives of GEDSI and critical sociology, while also providing input for policymakers regarding the integration of GEDSI into decision-making processes for digital-based urban governance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method within the framework introduced by Norman Fairclough. This method was chosen because it is capable of uncovering meanings, ideologies, and power relations embedded in policy texts as well as government communication media. As Fairclough asserts, critical discourse analysis does not only examine the linguistic structures within texts but also connects them to broader social contexts, including how discourses are produced, distributed, and consumed within society (Rohmatulloh & Setiawati, 2025). This analytical model also assists researchers in understanding how language and texts, in this case, regulations and policy communications, are influenced by social contexts and structures of power. Through this approach, the study seeks to examine the construction of smart city discourse in Indonesia while also assessing how GEDSI aspects are positioned within regulations and public communication media.

The data selection technique employed is purposive sampling, namely the deliberate selection of objects of analysis based on their relevance to the focus of the study. In this case, the objects of analysis include four selected regulations relevant to government digitalization and urban development: Presidential Instruction No. 3 of 2003 on the Development of E-Government, Presidential Regulation No. 95 of 2018 on Electronic-Based Government Systems, Government Regulation No. 59 of 2022 on Urban Affairs, and Government Regulation No. 82 of 2023 on the Acceleration of Digital Transformation and Integration of National Digital Services.

In addition, this study also analyzes three government policy communication texts: postings from the official website of the National Urban Development Project (NUDP), a publication by the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) on the concept of smart cities, and a public relations report

on the President's address during the 50th Anniversary of the Indonesian Association of Planners (IAP). The selection of these objects is based on the consideration that regulations and online media represent vital arenas in the construction of discourses concerning policies, in this case, smart city policies, in Indonesia.

The primary data sources in this study are regulatory texts and policy dissemination content on official government websites as mentioned above, while the secondary data consist of relevant academic literature such as journal articles, books, research reports, and other official documents addressing smart cities, GEDSI, and sociological theories on discourse, power, and inclusivity. The study was conducted in September 2025, with the analysis carried out qualitatively through procedures that involved reading the texts, extracting key diction, and interpreting their meanings within the framework of sociolinguistics and critical discourse analysis.

DISCUSSION

Regulation is an instrument that is not merely administrative in nature but also reflects the dominant discursive constructions within a given context. As a legitimized discursive product, regulation shapes frameworks of thought, bureaucratic practices, and social relations within society. This aligns with Radaelli (2023) view that regulation is not merely a label describing facts and governing routines, but rather the outcome of semantic work aimed at constructing meaning, having been shaped through constellations of interactions with various actors.

The four regulations analyzed in this study demonstrate distinct discursive dynamics. Each regulation constructs its own particular discursive formation while also illustrating the extent to which social inclusion and the GEDSI concept are embedded within Indonesia's smart city agenda.

Instruksi Presiden No. 3 Tahun 2003 tentang Pengembangan E-Government

Presidential Instruction No. 3 of 2003 represents the initial regulation marking the government's commitment to bureaucratic digitalization. As E-Government itself is understood as the use of technology by the government, particularly web-based applications, to enhance access for citizens, business partners, employees, and other institutions to information possessed by the government (Indar et al., 2024).

From a textual perspective, this regulation appears to prioritize discourses of efficiency, openness, and bureaucratic modernization. This is reflected in the sentence *"Pemerintah juga harus lebih terbuka terhadap derasnya aliran ekspresi aspirasi rakyat dan mampu menanggapi secara cepat dan efektif"* (Bagian Tuntutan Perubahan). The emphasis on speed and effectiveness illustrates that this regulation highlights administrative responsiveness as a crucial aspect to be considered.

In addition, the aspect of accessibility is also emphasized. Within the section on the objectives of E-Government development, it is stated *"pemanfaatan kemajuan teknologi informasi agar pelayanan publik dapat diakses secara mudah dan murah oleh masyarakat di seluruh wilayah negara."* Upon closer examination, the phrase *"oleh masyarakat di seluruh wilayah negara"* may be understood as an affirmation of inclusivity in spatial terms rather than in social terms. Thus, the inclusivity constructed remains geographical in nature, without addressing marginalized groups such as women, persons with disabilities, or impoverished communities as highlighted within the GEDSI perspective. Yet, balancing social and spatial inclusion becomes essential within any developmental process. A combination of the two can foster meaningful participation for marginalized groups (Ariyanto, 2024).

Furthermore, this regulation also emphasizes that *"Dengan demikian seluruh lembaga-lembaga negara, masyarakat, dunia usaha, dan pihak-pihak berkepentingan lainnya dapat setiap saat memanfaatkan informasi dan layanan pemerintah secara optimal"* (Bagian Tuntutan Perubahan). This statement portrays society as a homogeneous concept. The groups specifically mentioned are state institutions, businesses, and stakeholders. Meanwhile, marginalized groups (including vulnerable groups) are accommodated only within the abstract term *"masyarakat"* without specific identification.

The generalized use of the term *"masyarakat"* in this case can be understood as a conscious or unconscious effort to obscure differences under a singular notion.

This aligns with Radaelli (2023) argument that policymakers can construct a unity of meaning, or in this case simplify meanings, from what could otherwise be diverse interpretations, in service of a particular agenda. Ultimately, such a linguistic approach carries the potential to normalize inequality by failing to affirmatively recognize marginalized groups. From the perspective of critical disability studies, the absence of any reference to persons with disabilities signals a form of symbolic exclusion that disregards their digital accessibility needs. This condition can also be explained through the concept of *"Slow violences"*, which refers to situations in which vulnerable groups are not consciously and deliberately marginalized, yet are not meaningfully included, not affirmatively recognized, or even overlooked. Such biased and neglectful practices eventually produce equally severe consequences (Radaelli, 2023).

The discursive practice underlying the issuance of this regulation emerged within the early 2000s context of globalization, where the issue of digital divide was considered significant. This is evident in the statement *"Ketidakmampuan menyesuaikan diri dengan kecenderungan global tersebut akan membawa bangsa Indonesia ke dalam jurang digital divide, yaitu keterisolasian dari perkembangan global karena tidak mampu memanfaatkan informasi"* (Bagian Tuntutan Perubahan). Here, the digital divide is framed as a technological competition and as an imperative to keep pace with global developments. In other words, the discourse constructed emphasizes preventing Indonesia from falling behind other nations in terms of information access, rather than addressing the unequal access to digital technologies among vulnerable and marginalized groups. In fact, the digital divide itself encompasses not only differences in access to information but also unequal access to information and communication technologies shaped by social, economic, cultural, and political factors (Rogerson, 2020).

From the perspective of text, discourse, and social practice, this regulation reflects the subordination of social equality issues concerning vulnerable groups, at least in the temporal context of its creation and implementation. The dominant ideology within this regulation is bureaucratic efficiency and administrative modernization. Such dominance of discourse risks perpetuating digital exclusion for vulnerable groups, as their meaningful concerns were not recognized within the policy text.

Peraturan Presiden No. 95 Tahun 2018 tentang Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik

In addition to the aforementioned initial regulation, there is another significant regulation that further strengthens the agenda of bureaucratic digitalization, namely Peraturan Presiden No. 95 Tahun 2018. From a textual perspective, this can be observed in the *pertimbangan* section, which states that *"bahwa untuk mewujudkan tata kelola pemerintahan yang bersih, efektif, transparan, dan akuntabel serta pelayanan publik yang berkualitas dan terpercaya diperlukan sistem pemerintahan berbasis elektronik"* (Poin 1 Bagian Pertimbangan). In the following point, it is also stated that *"bahwa untuk meningkatkan keterpaduan dan efisiensi sistem pemerintahan berbasis elektronik diperlukan tata kelola dan manajemen sistem pemerintahan berbasis elektronik secara nasional"* (Poin 2 Bagian Pertimbangan). These excerpts indicate that the discourse being constructed is centered on bureaucratic accountability, transparency, and efficiency. Notably, the terms *"inklusi"* or *"kesetaraan"* are absent throughout the entire text of this regulation.

However, *Bab I Ketentuan Umum Pasal 1 angka 26* stipulates that *"Pengguna SPBE adalah instansi pusat, pemerintah daerah, pegawai Aparatur Sipil Negara, perorangan, masyarakat, pelaku usaha, dan pihak lain yang memanfaatkan Layanan SPBE"* (Pasal 1 angka 26). This excerpt highlights that although *masyarakat* is designated as a user of SPBE, it is nonetheless represented as a homogeneous category, without any explicit affirmative attention to specific important groups, such as vulnerable populations.

In this excerpt, the phrase *"Pelaku usaha"* is afforded the space to stand independently, while vulnerable groups, indigenous communities, and others do not receive the same recognition. Yet, both

could be understood as specific subcategories of the broader concept of *masyarakat*. This lexical composition reflects a differentiated emphasis on priorities: business actors are considered important enough to be explicitly mentioned as a separate category, whereas vulnerable groups are not. Such a practice can be seen as a form of *"selective ignorance"*, an act of omission in which certain groups are deliberately highlighted while others are overlooked (Richter et al., 2021). In this case, vulnerable groups are subsumed under the generalized categories of "*masyarakat"* and *"pihak lain yang memanfaatkan layanan SPBE."*

From the perspective of discursive time and space, this regulation emerged during the administration of President Joko Widodo, when digital government was becoming a dominant discourse. This is evident from the President's repeated statements that bureaucratic digitalization, intended to produce a government that is agile, responsive, and efficient, is of paramount importance (Ferdian et al., 2021). Thus, this regulation functions as a legitimizing instrument for the agenda of accountable bureaucratic transformation.

The discourse consumers of this regulation are the government institutions mandated to adopt SPBE. This is explicitly stated in the sentence, *"Instansi Pusat dan Pemerintah Daerah diharapkan dapat membangun pelayanan publik yang terpadu, efektif, responsif, adaptif, dan mudah diakses oleh masyarakat serta memberikan ruang partisipasi masyarakat dalam turut serta penyusunan kebijakan dan program pembangunan."* Although *masyarakat* is normatively positioned as an important actor, the primary actors explicitly mentioned and regulated in this policy are the relevant government institutions. Nevertheless, compared to the previous regulation, this one demonstrates some progress in terms of its commitment to social inclusion for the public.

This reflects a bureaucratic *habitus* that emphasizes formal legitimacy through transparency and accountability, yet does not sufficiently empower the social capital of vulnerable groups. The regulation places greater emphasis on symbolic capital, such as projecting an image of government that is clean, efficient, and inclusive, while failing to provide real opportunities for marginalized groups in terms of tangible access.

From the perspective of social practice, this regulation reflects the absence of inclusion as a foundational principle that ought to be foregrounded. By prioritizing bureaucratic efficiency without substantial attention to inclusivity, the regulation once again risks widening inequalities in access to public services, particularly for women, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and economically disadvantaged groups. As Purwosautro & Maryanto (2022) argue, such conditions of injustice (subordination) do not occur naturally, but rather emerge from social actions (conscious or unconscious) that are shaped by relations of domination. In this case, domination manifests in the form of neglect.

Peraturan Pemerintah No. 59 Tahun 2022 tentang Perkotaan

Compared to the previous regulations analyzed, this one demonstrates a more progressive discursive shift. Article 1 paragraph 8 stipulates that *"Standar Pelayanan Perkotaan yang selanjutnya disingkat SPP adalah ukuran kuantitas dan kualitas layanan Perkotaan yang harus dicapai oleh Pemerintah Pusat, Pemerintah Daerah, dan/atau Badan Hukum dalam rangka memenuhi kebutuhan yang berhak diperoleh warga Perkotaan tanpa diskriminasi."* The phrase *"tanpa diskriminasi"* underscores a clear commitment to the principle of equality.

Furthermore, Article 43 paragraph 2 states that *"standar keadilan digunakan untuk memastikan semua kelompok masyarakat termasuk kelompok rentan dapat memanfaatkan layanan Perkotaan secara adil."* The explicit reference to *"kelompok rentan"* is an affirmation not found in earlier regulations. This can be seen as a direct, affirmative, and inclusive emphasis.

Article 40 paragraph 1 stipulates that SPP must be implemented through measurement based on data and public perception. Article 41 paragraph 2 (b) further emphasizes that public perception should be assessed from the perspective of the justice standard. Even more notably, the explanation of Article 45 paragraph 2 clarifies that perception surveys may be conducted through conventional means or via

enumerators for communities lacking access to technology. Such provisions reflect sensitivity to the *digital divide* in its social dimension, not merely technological. Limited access faced by communities with particular constraints is thus recognized and considered on par with the importance of administrative efficiency.

In Nancy Fraser's theoretical framework, this regulation seeks to foster both distributive and representative justice. Fraser emphasizes that ideal representation ensures all groups and individuals are granted equal opportunities to participate. She also stresses that addressing injustice requires deconstructing long-standing patterns of exclusion in order to enable genuinely equal participation (Kauhanen et al., 2024). In this regard, the explicit mention of *"kelompok rentan"* marks a conscious deconstruction of the abstract notion of *"masyarakat"* found in previous regulations. Such a move constitutes an affirmative step toward enhancing the representational visibility of vulnerable groups, consistent with the principles advanced by the GEDSI framework.

Thus, from a discursive perspective, this reflects a paradigmatic shift from technocratic efficiency toward inclusive development. Nevertheless, the regulation still presents certain limitations. Disability issues are not explicitly mentioned, which indicates that the principle of inclusion has not yet been comprehensively addressed. From the perspective of critical disability studies, the absence of references to disability signifies that accessibility for persons with disabilities is still not regarded as a primary concern within this regulation. As in the previous cases, this highlights a subordinating form of power relations (Purwosautro & Maryanto, 2022). Even so, this regulation can still be considered a significant step toward constructing an inclusive discourse in urban development.

Peraturan Pemerintah No. 82 Tahun 2023 tentang Percepatan Transformasi Digital

Compared to the regulation on urban development, this supporting regulation once again demonstrates a technocratic tendency. Article 1, point 4 stipulates that *"Masyarakat adalah salah satu pengguna dari Layanan SPBE yang merupakan bagian dari Layanan Digital Nasional."* However, this reference appears only once and in a homogenized manner, without emphasis on vulnerable groups.

The preamble states that *"bahwa untuk mewujudkan pelayanan publik yang berkualitas dan terpercaya, sistem pemerintahan berbasis elektronik dan Satu Data Indonesia yang terpadu dan menyeluruh, birokrasi dan pelayanan publik yang berkinerja tinggi, penguatan pencegahan korupsi, dan penguatan aspek keamanan siber dan keamanan informasi, perlu melakukan percepatan transformasi digital"* (Pertimbangan Poin a). Within this passage, no concepts of inclusivity, equality, or public participation are found.

Furthermore, Article 5, paragraph 1(b) adds that Peruri may utilize services and/or human resources in both technological and non-technological sectors to support its tasks. Yet the term *"sumber daya manusia"* is used in a generalized manner without affirmative recognition of vulnerable groups. In fact, explicitly naming vulnerable groups in regulatory texts can have a significant impact and set a positive precedent in efforts to reduce marginalization and subordination (Macioce, 2022).

From the standpoint of technocracy critique, this regulation still positions society as passive users, while the government and major institutions act as dominant actors. This aligns with Bourdieu's analysis of the *Field of Power*, in which bureaucracy and corporations dominate the policy arena, while vulnerable groups are not granted representative positions (Wulan, 2022)

Within Fraser's framework, this regulation fails to fulfill the principles of redistribution and representation. To apply redistribution and representation ideally, vulnerable groups must be provided with proper and proportional, or even affirmative, recognition (McIntyre, 2020). In the absence of these concepts, the regulation risks widening the social dimension of the digital divide. For persons with disabilities and the economically disadvantaged, the lack of affirmative measures may lead to their further exclusion from national digital services.

From a sociological perspective, the analytical patterns across these regulations reveal a tension between the ideology of technocracy and that of social inclusion. The state predominantly advances a logic of efficiency and administrative control (*governmentality*), while the principle of equality only appears sporadically and in a partial manner.

Policy dissemination & socialization through official government web channels

In addition to formal regulations, the discourse on smart city development in Indonesia is also shaped through government communication channels, particularly official online media such as ministry websites, government news portals, and publications from regional public relations offices. Accordingly, government policy dissemination texts should also be read as discursive products that embody specific values, ideologies, and power relations. Within the framework of critical discourse analysis, government media can be understood as a hegemonic arena in which the meaning of the "smart city" is negotiated, simplified, and disseminated to the broader public.

Official NUDP Website: General Information on NUDP

The official NUDP webpage emphasizes smart city development within the framework of infrastructure integration and governance efficiency. This is evident in the use of phrases such as *"mobilitas yang tinggi"*, *"percepatan pergerakan ekonomi"*, and *"transformasi pembangunan masa depan"*. In other words, the future of cities is framed through the logic of mobility and economic growth. This phenomenon is not new, as Naji & Kucz (2021) found a trend that the development patterns of cities around the world often prioritize economic potential over social aspects.

Furthermore, the webpage also employs terms such as *"tidak efisien"*, *"kurang terintegrasi"*, and *"skala prioritas"* to describe the problems of urban development. The causes of social inequality in cities are viewed primarily as a result of poor governance, rather than layered social disparities. Ideally, however, inequality and disparity in urban development are complex phenomena that cannot be solely attributed to poor governance, but rather result from layered social disparities (Nelson et al., 2024).

The only mention of society appears in the sentence *"pembangunan infrastruktur yang dapat dinikmati secara merata oleh masyarakat lokal"*. While this sentence alludes to equality, society is still positioned as passive beneficiaries. There is no elaboration on how communities, let alone vulnerable groups, can participate in planning or decision-making.

From the perspective of development sociology, this text reflects the dominance of a technocratic paradigm that emphasizes infrastructure and process efficiency as the primary solutions to social problems. This aligns with critiques of technocratic rationality, which tends to dismiss structural issues such as gender, disability, and poverty in favor of technical and technology-based aspects. As also explained by Ferrawati & Pasha (2020), both urban and national development often adopt a perspective of technical rationality, prioritizing effective outcomes supported by rapid technological solutions.

Thus, the NUDP website implicitly narrows the definition of urban inequality to a matter of technical integration rather than social injustice. Ultimately, this text can be interpreted as emphasizing infrastructure redistribution while neglecting the representation of vulnerable groups. This, in turn, reproduces inequality, as the specific needs of marginalized groups are not accommodated within the vision of smart city development.

Bappenas: The Concept of Developing a Competitive Smart City

In contrast to the NUDP webpage, publications by Bappenas (Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional) on its website emphasize the aspect of social welfare in urban development. Sentences such as *"kota cerdas harus dapat memberikan dukungan pelayanan dasar bagi masyarakat luas"* and *"kota cerdas tidak bisa berpegang hanya pada aturan one size fits all tetapi menyesuaikan dengan kondisi*

karakteristik daerah dan kebutuhan masyarakat di wilayah tersebut" indicate an effort to shift the discourse from technocratic to people-centered.

Furthermore, it is stated that *"kota cerdas harus dapat menyejahterakan masyarakatnya. Fokusnya bukan sekadar teknologi informasi. Justru IT menjadi bagian dari kota cerdas di samping pemenuhan kebutuhan dasar masyarakat lainnya."* This text marks an important change: technology is no longer positioned as an end in itself but rather as an instrument for meeting societal needs. This aligns with Bonnedahl (2021) view that technology should ideally be designed to adjust to the needs of society.

However, despite the frequent mention of the term *"masyarakat"*, the concept remains homogeneous. There is no explanation regarding women, persons with disabilities, or the poor. Thus, social inclusion remains abstract. Within Bourdieu's framework, this may be read as the government's strategy of symbolic capital to demonstrate concern for the wider public, while in reality failing to provide genuine recognition to vulnerable groups. From Fraser's perspective, this publication has attempted to integrate the redistributive dimension (access to basic services) but has yet to address representation (the participation of vulnerable groups).

Nevertheless, this discursive shift is important. It demonstrates progressiveness in moving the smart city discourse from a technocratic project toward one of social welfare. Yet without affirmative strategies, this publication risks perpetuating bias, ultimately continuing to marginalize the needs of vulnerable groups.

State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia: Presidential Address at the 50th Anniversary of IAP

In his address at the 50th Anniversary of IAP, the President delivered a critical reflection on urban development. This reflection, expressed in the form of a speech, was published through the policy dissemination channel of the State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia on its official website. In its posting, the text contains several parts that emphasize hopes for enhancing inclusivity in development, as reflected in the phrase "*perencanaan bukan sekadar build building, tapi build environment.*" This phrase signals an attempt to shift urban development from merely physical aspects toward socio-cultural dimensions.

Also, the President stressed that smart city should not be understood merely as "digital automation" but rather as a comprehensive direction of development. Other statements underline the importance of inclusion, such as "*merancang kota yang inklusif dan terbuka bagi seluruh warganya*" and "*jalan aman untuk pejalan kaki, pesepeda, pengendara motor maupun mobil*" These statements reflect a commitment to equal access for diverse groups of urban space users. Although these expressions remain discursive, non-formal, and without regulatory force, they represent a positive precedent for the more concrete implementation of the GEDSI concept (particularly in terms of social inclusion).

Within Fraser's theoretical framework, this address emphasizes the dimension of representation because it explicitly acknowledges the importance of inclusion. Yet, ultimately, as with other publications analyzed, gender and disability aspects remain unaddressed directly. This illustrates that social inclusion remains confined to a general and abstract level.

From the perspective of governmentality, the President's address can also be understood as the state's attempt to influence how urban planning technocrats conceptualize smart city. This is because speeches and statements from political leaders, in this case: president, can affect how technocrats carry out their work (Rafiqa, 2020). The primary audience of this text is urban planning experts, and thus the discourse constructed here functions as legitimacy and instruction that smart city development must reflect a more people-centered orientation. In this regard, the text can be viewed as a discursive intervention aimed at shifting dominant understandings or discourses. Socially, the text reflects a humanist ideology that places human beings at the center of development. However, the absence of affirmative strategies for marginalized groups still indicates limitations in the implementation of an ideal GEDSI framework within this discourse.

When viewed from the perspective of GEDSI as a whole, the discourse constructed through government policy dissemination channels tends to address inclusion in general terms, without acknowledging differentiated vulnerable groups. In the case of gender, for example, across the three sampled policy dissemination efforts, there is no explanation of how smart city will address women's needs, particularly regarding safe transport access, participation in decision-making, or the use of women-friendly digital services. Similarly, disability issues are largely absent from government media narratives, despite the fact that digital accessibility is a crucial aspect of smart city development. Urban poor communities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups are also rarely mentioned explicitly, leaving them excluded from the government's construction of the smart city.

From the overall analysis, it is evident that government regulations produced for the development of urban governance and the realization of smart city tend to perpetuate the homogenization of society and prioritize technical rationality over social dimensions. Nonetheless, some of the texts discussed above have demonstrated positive precedents in the ongoing effort to build social inclusion.

CONCLUSION

A critical discourse analysis of regulations and policy dissemination channels shows that the discourse on smart city development in Indonesia is often dominated by a technocratic logic that emphasizes bureaucratic efficiency, accountability, and digital integration, while GEDSI aspects have not yet been fully integrated as a foundational principle. This can be observed historically, beginning in 2003 when bureaucratic digitalization was first emphasized, and continuing into the second decade of the 21st century, where tensions between these discourses remain evident.

Nevertheless, there are some exceptions, such as the progressiveness of Government Regulation No. 59 of 2022, which explicitly mentions "*tanpa diskriminasi*" and "*kelompok rentan*" Such progressiveness is also reflected in online policy dissemination that has begun to shift narratives toward people-centeredness and inclusivity.

Given that GEDSI integration within the analyzed texts remains incomplete, fragmented, and lacking in concreteness and explicitness, it is evident that embedding GEDSI into smart city based urban development planning has become an urgent necessity for the future. Without such integration, regulations will continue to reproduce bias and perpetuate injustice and neglect toward vulnerable groups who require both support and recognition.

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