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Technical Reasoning on a Local Government Land Property as Heuristic Tool to Accommodate City Leaders Strategic Planning

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Abstract

One of the Land Asset Management facets in Indonesia has been so far the possession of the land as an asset for local government. The regulation allows local government to organize local land assets to support land use planning in various patterns. While at the same time, Indonesia has a rigorous rule on land use planning with Euclidean Zoning System called RTRW Plan, which lasts for 20 years. Land use patterns could not be ruled by projecting a specific order, ideology, technical stances, etc. This article would like to contextualize a dynamic in which city leader infrastructure strategic planning was being technically anticipated by filtering out the feasibility of local land asset which meet the minimum requirement of the RTRW as the principal reference for spatial land use planning. This article does not necessarily address its aim at problematizing RTRW; rather, in the first place, it discusses the vigorous of the local government technical department to bridge a so-called City Leader strategic planning with the current systems of the RTRW. Here, the article would argue that a tiny time frame of the City Leader's order leaves a narrow space for technical staff to map out a holistic technical plan. Instead, opting for a specific local land asset appeared to be the instant solution to such a plan. Furthermore, the second concern of this article specified its attention on providing the technical means so that the choice of the predetermined location was constructively and objectively justified beforehand. A specific case study of Pekalongan Regency, Central Java Indonesia, allowed delving into the empirical case. The city leader was at the last year of his terms, and it was claimed, the choice to develop hospital infrastructure was part of a political maneuver. A qualitative approach in the form of in-depth interviews and compilation of secondary documents was employed. The city technical managers needed to operate rational technocratic mechanisms to the politico-technique juxtaposition to justify the planning problem's technical rationality and the other side to provide a technical solution, pointing out land assets under the framework of the RTRW. Thus, the arguments developed in this work contested the land choice technical assessments were not necessarily neutral rather a supporting element to adjust the overwhelming leader's strategic choice fully. Further discussion materials are proposed. In this case, the political strategy created a circumstance of instantaneity and a limited time frame that could lead to the enthusiasm of strategic thinking under the realm of the urban planning system.

Keywords*: strategic planning; strategic thinking; technicalization; land asset; RTRW*

1. Introduction

Very few academics work in Indonesia invested in the construction of the Urban and Regional Planning instruments, considering the dessert of publication in this domain. By nature, the study on public policy instruments is frequently developed within the public policy studies, back to the classic authors such as Hood, Salomon, Lascoumes, Halpern, and Le Gales (Capano & Howlett, 2020). Nevertheless, the focus on instruments as a research topic in Urban studies in Indonesia might have escaped scholars' attention. Therefore, it appears significantly important that this research elaborates a study apropos the formulation of tools related to urban planning practices by considering an empirical case within the local context.

However, the work based on the notion of a public action instrument constitutes, however, as a sub-field of the analysis of public policies, including urban planning. Very often, questions about the choice of instruments of public action and their general mode of operation are presented in a functionalist manner, relating to simple technical choices without a deeper understanding of why specific technical tools were chosen. However, the evolutions developed in various literature have shown multiple dimensions that cannot be separated from a technical instrument. Salomon (2002) explains that certain

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political aspects of an instrument are embedded through the justification that accompanies the use of a tool. Therefore, the approach with this instrument then becomes a mode of reasoning that allows transcending boundaries, sometimes as a sacred mantra to rationalize a choice, between politics and policy (Ferguson, 2014). Based on this, several studies in the sociology of quantification, such as using statistics as a means of proof in rationalizing a policy (Desrosières, 2014), present an understanding that an instrument could possibly fall into socio-political eventualities and is not a purely technical choice. Other research also mentions the dimension of "estimation" by relevant actors during the formulation of a technical instrument (Bardet, 2014).

Here, the term "public action instrumentation" is all the problems posed by the choice and use of the tools (techniques, modes of operation, tools) that make it possible to realize and operationalize the action. Studying instruments is the urgency to acknowledge the reflection of different aspects, whether the fundamental problem itself, the control on the problem, the actors and the experts involved and eventually, the outcomes excepted (Lascoumes & Le Gales, 2007; Pinson, 2010; Elliot & Salamon, 2002). Temporality and contingencies of urban policy agenda would possibly be determined through the prism of its instrument (Lascoumes & Simard, 2011).

From the consideration of the scientific repertoire of instruments, this paper intended to elaborate research that relies on the instrument's point of view on the urban planning process in Indonesia. In terms of urban planning tools in Indonesia, the most popular is the Comprehensive Land Use Document called RTRW. The promulgation of national spatial planning laws back in 2007, in which national regulation opted this approach as a principal reference of spatial planning instrument. RTRW has a spatial planning system and land use arrangement through code and zoning regulation of rigid land-use planning which are set as long-term planning documents, valid until twenty years (Darmawati et al., 2015; Setiowati et al., 2018; Wijaatmaja, 2015). The RTRW should well fit the definition of the Euclidian zoning system in which spatial planning is divided into specific land use devoted to certain types of permitted activities. The Euclidean zoning system often uses a strict separation of land use according to specific activities (Djunaedi et al., 2010). There are two systems within Euclidean zoning, color-coded land-use patterns zoning and text zoning. The latest explains descriptively in detail if certain activities were permitted, limited, conditional, or prohibited.

A Comprehensive Spatial Planning model - RTRW Document, established as main spatial document both functionally and operationally. The extraordinary enthusiasm of urban planning scholars for this instrument is identified through the massive body of academic works from different prestigious urban planning schools in Indonesia. It can practically underline here, most parts of the curriculum of urban planning faculty relied heavily according to the dynamics on one single dimension of urban planning instrument such as RTRW. The approaches of RTRW itself have always been a comprehensive, linear, and governmentally controlled model through a standardized document consisted of rigid code and zoning regulation of land use planning. The instrument is a set of guiding frameworks for city planning procedures (Nugroho & Sugiri, 2009). It is a parental instrument, playing a vital role as the essential brick of the legal mechanism of urban planning arrangement (Darmawati et al., 2015).

Given the duration of the RTRW, which lasts for 20 years while the regional leadership lasts for five years, basically, there is an instrument for the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) in which the visions and missions of the development of the new leadership can be articulated and as the principal reference to assess annual program and agenda. The Euclidean RTRW system demands careful and comprehensive planning from each region. However, the unprecedented and uncontrolled dynamics, whether social issues, economic, environmental, or political turmoil, that shape adjustments within Urban and Regional Planning (Bidandi & Williams, 2020; Sairinen, 2004). As previous research has figured out, the regulation approach Community participation in the planning process is still a formality or even referred to as pseudo participation (Manaf et al., 2016). In this article, the same case also occurs where political actors design an infrastructure plan that is claimed to be strategic. However, traces of that plan could not be found in the RPJMD, The Annual Work Plan (RENJA), The Annual Budget Work Plan (RKAT), or within the RTRW. Thus, this study seeks to explain how the unprecedented political decision was forced to be rationalized through a technicalization process so that it narrowed down the feasibility of the plan. Accordingly, the article's aims were to bring forth the socio-technical impact of the RTRW system within the local urban planning practices. A specific case is provided in which socio-political dimension occurs within the local level where the preoccupation of the RTRW took place locally.

In contemporary form urbanization, the urban planning process faces a vast array of multi-faceted problems and opportunities (Brenner & Schmid, 2014). Thus, the city actors should embrace the unprecedented events in a more adaptive way (Rauws, 2017). Sometimes, all those unprecedented events would escape the bureaucratical routine which seeks governance on its mechanisms. Ultimately, the process of institutionalizing external agendas within the framework of city governance is an additional instrument for cities today (Elliot & Salamon, 2002).

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At this stage, it is necessary to underline that the purpose of this article is far from being a simple critique of the RTRW and not merely to show the habitus of how the local government uses the RTRW as a reference for spatial planning. This article specifically focuses on the construction of sectoral instruments that have escaped the attention of many academics, even though they are closely related to the impact created by the RTRW itself. The sectoral planning process under the RTRW is at stake. On a more detailed scale, this article intends to discuss the technical instrumentation patterns and dynamics of a strategic policy, a temporal policy, or a political mandate related to a spatial plan where the formulation of the instrument leads to conformity with the RTRW framework.

The existing empirical dynamics and the development of the theoretical framework above make it very important to observe "instruments" to understand what a city is managed. An instrument is the culmination of various factors, both the basic issues that are the motivation, the actors involved, the existing agendas, goals, and desired outcomes. These aspects can be identified by examining the instrument itself because it is not born from ex-nihilo conditions (Lascoumes, 1996). Thus, an urban planning instrument cannot be categorized as a technical choice that is free from values and is highly dependent on the prevailing circumstances (Knox & Ozolins, 2000).

As being developed by some authors that criticized rational comprehensive planning, many of the urban problems, strategies, opportunities, and agenda are fragmented in nature and may arise temporality and are merely relevant for a short time notice. Thus, urban and regional development in the contemporary era should be well equipped to face the extraordinary uncertainty in order to better provide excellent services to the city functionality (Coutinho-Rodrigues et al., 2011), including one of the political circumstances as one of the important factors in terms of the political economy of infrastructure planning within spatial planning (Chowdhury et al., 2009; Ghosh & Meagher, 2011; Marshall & Cowell, 2015).

It is a common understanding in terms of public policy studies, agenda-setting coming from the legitimate actors such as political actors (Marques, 2013). It could be important here to understand how city planning is being the object to such agenda-setting – strategic agenda of bureaucratic leaders (Fainstein & Fainstein, 1971; Forester, 2013; Rakodi, 2001) which sought an immediate reactivity in terms of its technical adaptation. In terms of theoretical framework, urban planning has had already advent the ability to adjust to changing circumstances, and demands and the idea of small steps and gradual changes instead of taking long-term fixed jumps approaches (Ahern et al., 2014; Gasparatos et al., 2009; Rauws, 2017).

Thus, the possible emergence of the political-strategic planning within the comprehensive Planning System as the fundamental approach in Indonesia should be put into a large discussion and critics in terms of the consequences and the consistency in terms of its rigidity. Within these complex streams, this research delved into empirically testify how sectoral planning taken by the City leader in Pekalongan Regency has broader consequences on the stance to respect the rule of RTRW. The temporality of Central Java, Indonesia. At present, control of land assets is required by the local government. This is based on the view that in the era of regional autonomy, land assets are seen as a commodity that has very important economic value as an asset that can be utilized effectively and efficiently to increase Regional Original Income (PAD), is also intended to be granted with a right to a third party with a Management Right (Supriyadi & Suhadi, 2011).

From plenty of previous research, it is shown how the flexibility of government-owned land whether devoted for infrastructures or as an economic commodity in view of benefit for Local government. This resulted in the emergence of an impulsive planning model in accordance with the dynamics of technical choices at the given time.

With reference to the context of the city planning system, this paper basically examines a specific issue related to the dynamics of land assets controlled by the Local Government. Regional autonomy is, of course, an important element as a very influential variable where the local government has considerable authority in managing city planning, and besides that, it also has the privilege of managing and planning the land assets.

This research elaborated the case study in Pekalongan Regency, Central Java Province, Indonesia. A relevant case example is to discuss how the land of Local Government assets is planned impulsively. More specifically, the Pekalongan Regency Government in early 2020 planned to relocate the Regional General Hospital as one of those local government strategic planning. It seems necessary to underline that the relocation initiative was born from the considerations of regional leaders who feel the need to issue development policy maneuvers as a form of strategic policy as regional leadership. In the process, to support this direction, technocratic planning was organized under the coordination of the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda). In this case, the results of the technocratic planning led to appoint local government land assets to support this justified - strategic urban planning movement.

To foster discussion, the organization of the writing of this paper will be divided into three main components. First, this paper will delve into the extent to which the sectoral urban planning approach through the contingency of the political actor was deemed "strategic," the ways in which the politics distort the strategy and decision-making

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process for infrastructure planning. Second, given the empirical case presented in this study, this article will then describe the rationalization process in which technical formulations were taken to encapsulate the political decision to fit into its technical feasibilities of the opted land asset. Third, this research elaborated a discussion regarding the choice to directly optimize the use of the land asset to accommodate the temporality of the plan.

The organization of the writing of this paper will be divided into three main components, namely discussions related to the dynamics of strategic plans that were born from the regional leadership convention, the second will discuss the assimilation process of the convention into technocratic planning, and its technical components and the third will discuss the role of land assets as instruments reserves to accommodate these planning practice models.

2. Research Method

This research employed a qualitative approach which consists of several steps of acknowledging the locus of the problem. Defining the research topic started during 2019 – 2020, thanks to the active coverage of media. Since then, news regarding the plan has been increasingly sticking to the wider public. The meetings and preliminary discussions conducted with important stakeholders from Bappeda Agency, and the Local Health Office helped to understand the project thoroughly. Pekalongan Regency Government itself has implemented concrete steps by inputting the plan in the government's 2020 work plan.

The discussion in the form of in-depth semi directives interviews was carried out with key actors to enrich our understanding of the context. Repeating the discussion through online meeting were needed to bridge to confirm some doubtful information and to verify the validity of the data. This preliminary stage is very crucial in building a fundamental foundation for the choice of study topics in this article.

Furthermore, the frequency with the actors allowed us to have formal permission to engage in public discussions as well as technical discussions, even though there are limitations for us as researchers to access sensitive internal debates. We experienced five different formats of technical discussion. The first was back in March 2020 as the first meeting to break down the plan. The second was in May 2020 for the pre-technocratic document, the third was in June 2020 for dissemination of analytical substances, and the fourth was back in august for the final technical report presentation. The last one, the fifth, was in September 2020 for the presentation of an expert on the Masterplan pre-design.

During the process, we maintain the concept of *sui generis*, as explained by Durkheim as a form of researcher's attitude to study the object (Durkheim, 2016). We try to optimize the nature of the order of reality without distracting the process by observing objects with a very objective view. Our position at the time of the discussion remains as passive observers. This process's main reason was to keep the highest degree of the scientific value of the materials gathered (Surel, 2015).

After completing all the observation steps, we proceed to the 'coding' technique to range and classify the topics according to their order. This step was conveyed manually through Microsoft Word without any specifics. Secondary data collected, such as technical documents, helps to support previous efforts to having formal technical documents of the road map planning.

As for the analysis framework for the study of the problematization of the plan, we lean to the scaffold of the theory developed through certain studies such as the concept of the conventional code of Alain Desrosieres (Armatte, 2016). The concept which being developed furthermore by Fabrice Bardet into the concept of the estimation model. The following formula named "A technocratic policy production" deals with the construction process of public policy encompassing political context, technical-scientific measurement, and estimation as the elaboration between politics and the scientific method. The figure 1 below illustrates the quantification process which involve political process (*conventionnement*) and scientific proof.

While for the construction of the functional instrument plan, we borrowed the Method "Detectors & Effectors" developed by Christopher Hood and Helen Mergetts in the following scheme. The schematization characteristic of the construction of an instrument of public action (Hood, 2009). Figure 2 reflects the role of detectors that would represent an operational instrument that aims to contextualize the problem into a legitimate formal application according to the government standards. At the same time, effectors would play the same principle as detectors to meet the outcome ends of the instrument.

From this framework, the integral process of the construction of the instrument is analyzed. It was ranging from the problematization process that consists of conventional code, scientific measurement, and detector toward the operational tools constituted by estimation and effectors that lead to the final justification of land assets as the result of the whole process.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 New hospital as conventional leader's decision

It is entirely imperative to understand, in the first place, the origin of the idea to build a new hospital in the Region of Pekalongan was arose from the conventional strategic choice of the bureaucratic leader. As denoted during the in-depth interview, the geographical position of Pekalongan stretches along the northern coastline in Central Java Province does not have hospital health service facilities because the distance between one hospital

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and another is about 30 km. Therefore, to cut the existing gap, the Pekalongan Regency Government sees the necessity to plan a hospital in the administrative area of the Pekalongan Regency. Thus, where the origin of planning a new hospital appeared within the corridor of the north coastline, which was embedded in the public discourses of the Regent in 2019. Figure 3 shows the geographical point in which the ideal location for new hospital was identified.

To contextualize the label of that strategic planning, initially planning a new hospital was not part of the regional mid-term Development Plan nor Regional Spatial Plan programs. The strategic plan bourgeoned from the conventional conduct of the regional leader's perspective. It could be understood here that by considering some theories of the problematization of problem publics, the decision was taken single-viewed through the symbolized power of the concerned actor (Wacquant, 2013).

The strategic plan was immediately registered into the Pekalongan Regency Regional Government Work Plan for 2020-2021 formulated by the body of the Regional Planning Board Office (Bappeda). This process was crucial to be pass-through to highlight the formalized stamped on such initiative. Here, the hospital planning project was more and more technically enforced to polish its technocratic rationalities as essential tenets to this process, including the direct choice of government land assets to accommodate the planning (Pacchi, 2018). The following is an excerpt from the hospital development plan stated in the Annual Work Plan (RKPD) of the Bappeda document that only appeared in 2020: "*There are efforts to increase population coverage of health services, especially advanced levels of hospital development, one of which is through the construction of a new hospital in the given location because geographically it lacks the minimum distance"*.

The fact that the plan appeared only in the RKPD of the Bappeda in 2020 clearly shows the temporality of the plan that goes beyond the principle of the comprehensive planning system. The unprecedented socio-political dimension of the mandate is at the interplay

Technically, The Indonesian Government applies the bed ratio component as a reference for the adequacy of hospital services. On Figure 4, the graphic bar demonstrates population number compared to the purple line as the ideal standard to the hospital bed ratio. The figure clearly illustrates a significant gap between population and the existing bed ratio. This has become a benchmark for strengthening the rationalization material by the Pekalongan Regency Government in justifying the strategic level of the plan. According to Bappeda, the quantification demographic projection formula would provide a fair justification within the next 15 years. It is estimated that in 2035 there will be a population increase of around 956,638 people living in Pekalongan, which addition of approximately 39,973 people in the next 15 years.

It let to be noted the reign of quantitative tools and formula as chosen support system for a public decision. The same pattern as contained in Desrosiers Theory (2014) and Bardet (2014), the hybridization between political decisions and scientific-quantitative formulas is a mainstay in legitimizing a measure of decision making by public policy actors. The fact that hospital development policies were accommodated quickly on formal documents inherits a demonstration of legitimacy and power exercises in regional planning practices regardless of the outcome ends of the project.

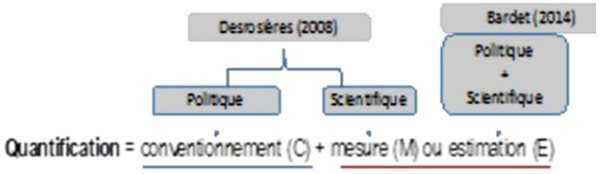

Figure 1. Quantification formula in public policy

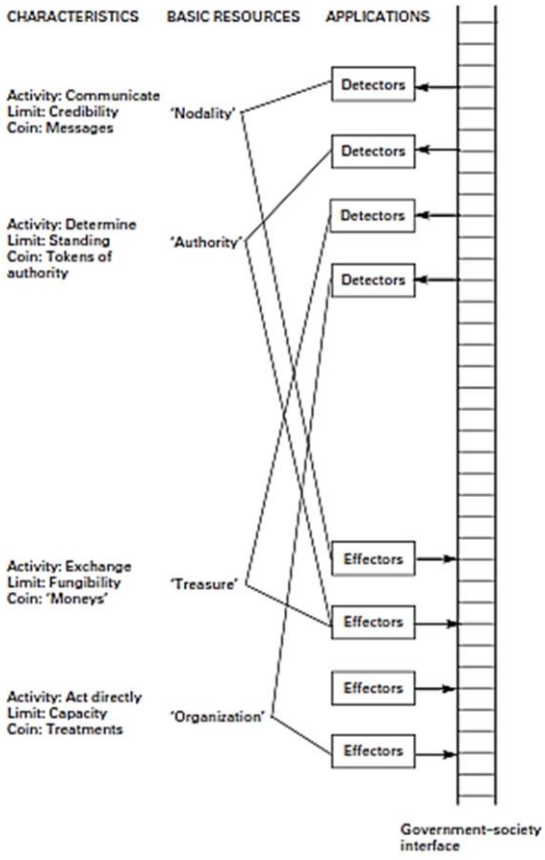

Figure 2. Instrument as detectors and effectors

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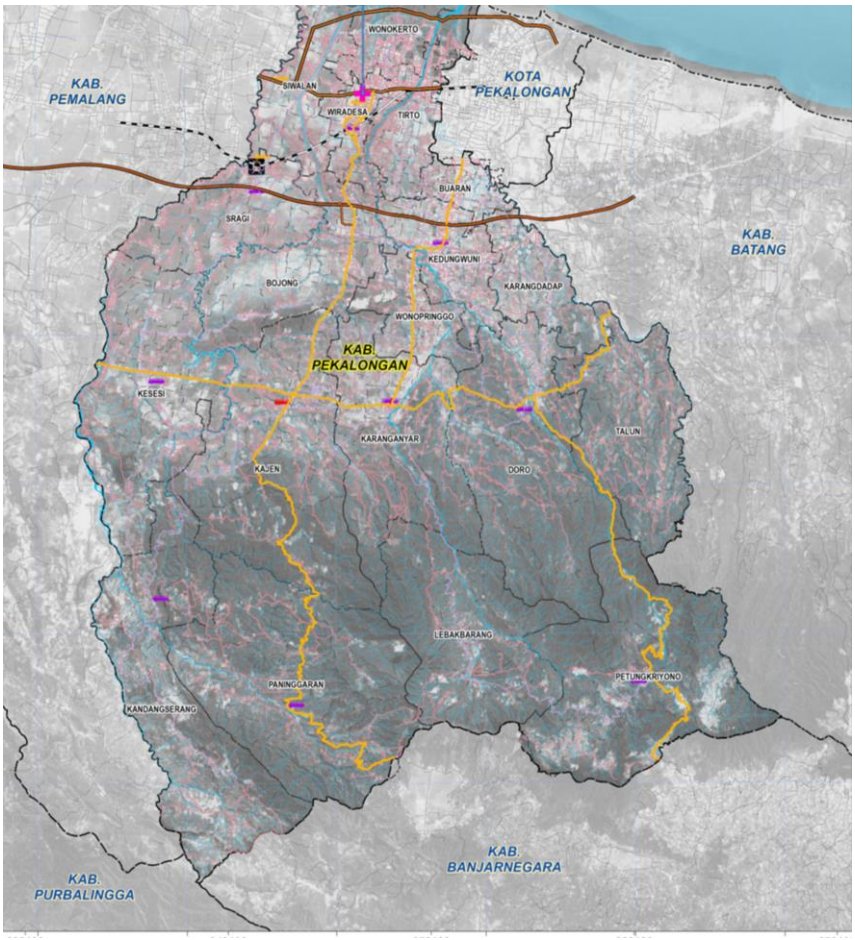

Figure 3. The identified subdistrict as ideal geographical location

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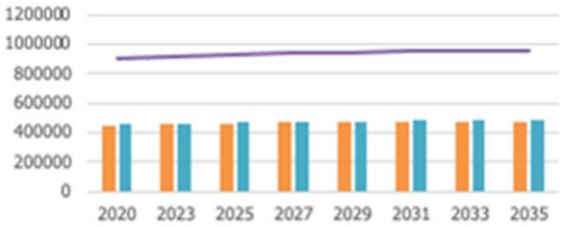

Figure 4. Demographic projection 2020-2035 (*Regional Planning Board Office,2021)*

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Figure 5. Government land owned as fundamental factor to lead the choice

3.2. Optimizing existing land assets as an effector tool

Given that the report promulgated, the new hospital should be located all along the Pantura north coastline corridor, and the government seems running out of choices. There are not many scenarios for selecting locations that the government can carry out, especially Bappeda as the policy executor. Scanning of government-owned land is a normal routine whenever there is development planning because it is an economical option to reduce regional financial burden. Mainly, this pattern is standard practice and often applied in every region, a form of land banking concept in Indonesia (Silviana & Al-lathiif, 2018; Sundari & Ma'rif, 2013).As referred to in this case, the planned location for the new Regional Hospital is the asset of a 2.07 Ha located on the side of the Pantura Artery Road in Kampil Village, Wiradesa District.

In Indonesia's zone planning classification, the scale of the zoning plan map used is 1:125.000, which stands as raw planning to control reliable development in the future. In Figure 5, based on a detailed review of the spatial plan for Pekalongan Regency, the site plan chosen was the Government land-owned asset in an area namely Wiradesa District. In terms of suitability of land use plans, the area is classified in the residential and industrial zoning, which still normatively reliable to any public health infrastructures

Technical arguments were developed to adjust such an option. It might be cited here that according to technical understanding, in the hierarchy of urban service structure in Pekalongan Regency, Wiradesa District is planned as a Local Activity Center (PKL) that serves its surroundings.

In addition, Wiradesa District is an area crossed by the Primary Arterial Road (Pantura Road Corridor), which runs from the Pemalang City boundary in the west and Pekalongan City in the east. Wiradesa sub-district also has an important position as an area that is crossed by the Provincial Road in the form of the primary collector 2 road (JKP 2), which connects Wiradesa - Kalibening / Bts. Regency. Banjarnegara.

In the technical plan that was carried out, the Pekalongan Regency Government claimed the area was appropriate to be used as a relocation plan. Following the direction of the Technical Guidelines for Class B Regional Hospital Buildings, Educational Classification, the hospital area is not allowed to be in any type of disaster-prone area. These justifications were generated from existing Land Use Planning documents. Due to the limited time frame and given the high order of the project as a strategic plan, a heuristic approach was applied. The new hospital will be allocated in an existing government land owned.

3.3 Integration of the third party: normalizing the plan

However, those technical justifications could not yet be performed sufficiently as an instrument to operationalize the political decision. Even though the superiority of political choice comes before technical planning (Rakodi, 2001), the technical report should be provided to push forward the institutionalization process. The integration of Urban planning experts as the third

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Figure 6. The Expert technical approval on predetermined land choice (*Feasibility study document, 2020)*

party should add more weight to the normalization process of such a predetermined plan.

As the responsible for the technical aspect, Bappeda always on the front liner. The formulation of the Socio-economic and technical Feasibility study with aims to elaborate the comprehensive aspect of the project was needed to cope with the national procedural standard in bridging statutory spatial plans and investment projects. According to the Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation Number 29 of 2000, concerning the Implementation of Construction Services the feasibility studies step understood as a further strategy to formally raise the maturity of the decision according to a technical point of view. In this manner, Bappeda as the technical coordinator would require the expert from the Urban planning consultant office to provide the feasibility study. The implication of the third party was mean to have a broader view yet objective perspective on the feasibility components of the plan.

For decision-makers at every level of the government, the feasibility studies document is a supporting tool to anticipate the early period of the project (Widodo, 2010). A feasibility study is an in-depth study of the feasibility of a project, both economically, socio-cultural, technical, and financial. The feasibility study plays an important role in supporting the development itself, both from the positive and negative sides in the planning period (Febriyan et al., 2017).

Certain points were discussed by the expert, such as the justification of the need for the new hospital within the region, which is the demand analysis compared to the statistical gap. Another critical point was the analysis on the side of the readiness criteria of some elements, the likes of the legal land status, the status of the land on Zoning regulation document, the existent of the plan on Regional Mid-term development planning, and so on. As indicated by figure 6, the results of the feasibility studies are the positive recommendation on the existing Government land-owned choice with some suggestions to enlarge the location by acquiring the surroundings area owned by the individuals to meet the minimum requirement for future development.

While the approach was becoming more and more technocratic, the involvement of planning experts has apparently left behind the democratic dimension of such planning. As noted by some authors, technical experts are supposed to be a value-free, neutral perspective, thus depoliticizing the planning process (Pissourios, 2014).

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Within the context of this study, it can be argued that despite the significant involvement of the experts, there have been very few spaces left to justify the independence of expert actors. There was no other alternative location proposed than to superpose any available technical judgments on a single choice. It is worth to be underlined, the introduction of the experts only came into play after the plan was internally prescribed and the land location was determined.

Thus, it contrasted the fact that experts and technical studies were not neutrally put in place but to reinforce the preexisted important steps taken (Özdemir, 2018). The Feasibility studies document is overwhelming the justification of the single option according to normative standards.

4. Conclusion

This empirical case shows a symbolic form of the non-democratic model characterized by a single-handed top-down approach. The use of technical reasoning with values and facts in making planning decisions are non–value-neutral decisions. The choices are dictated in a predetermined end by political and social issues rather than extracted from a democratic-technical point of view. Thus, through this article, the uncertainty of the plan and the unprecedented timeframe has resulted in an important consequence of the deployment of government land owned as a resource to accommodate the given approach. The article argues how the land asset management system at the local government level is vulnerable to extraordinary political power that could possibly overarching technical process. For future research, this work would suggest the whole investigation. To what extent does the degree of the politicized urban planning approach affect the general exploitation of land assets to support such an approach.

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