



JURNAL KAJIAN WILAYAH

p-ISSN: [2087-2119](#)

e-ISSN: [2502-566x](#)

BICYCLES IN THE CITY: ECOLOGICAL MOBILITY AND GREEN CITY DISCOURSE IN FREIBURG, GERMANY

BERSEPEDA DI KOTA : MOBILITAS EKOLOGIS DAN WACANA KOTA HIJAU DI FREIBURG, JERMAN

Lintang Wahyusih Nirmala¹, Wiwik Sushartami²

Anthropology Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada ¹²

e-mail: ¹*lintang.wahyusih.n@mail.ugm.ac.id, ²sushartami@ugm.ac.id

Diterima: 20-07-2021

Direvisi: 05-11-2021

Disetujui: 20-12-2021

ABSTRAK

Bersepeda di kota Freiburg merupakan hal yang umum dilakukan oleh masyarakat lokal sebagai bentuk dari mobilitas sehari-hari. Dikenal sebagai kota hijau, kota Freiburg memiliki perhatian khusus terhadap bidang transportasi dan ekologi yang berusaha mereduksi penggunaan kendaraan bermotor pribadi melalui kebijakan dan peraturan pemerintah. Penelitian ini berfokus pada produksi diskursus yang lahir dari aktivitas bersepeda di Freiburg. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga ingin melihat bagaimana aktivitas bersepeda ini ditinjau dari perspektif ekologi kota hijau. Penelitian menggunakan metode observasi, partisipasi dan wawancara kepada informan penelitian dan didukung dengan data internet. Hasil yang diperoleh dalam penelitian ini berupa paparan data tentang (a) adanya diskursus mobilitas berkelanjutan dalam konteks green city; (b) bentuk-bentuk program dan peraturan pemerintah tentang bersepeda di Freiburg; dan (c) realitas pemakaian dan penggunaan sepeda di Freiburg. Beragamnya dialog yang lahir dari aktivitas bersepeda ini berikatan dengan adanya praktik ekologi green city di Freiburg yang masih menjadi perhatian hingga saat ini.

Kata Kunci: *Bersepeda, Diskursus Green City, Ekologi Kota, Mobilisasi Ekologi*

<https://doi.org/10.14203/jkw.v12i2.872>

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Accreditation Number (RISTEKDIKTI): 34/E/KPT/2018

ABSTRACT

Cycling in the city of Freiburg is a common thing to do by local communities as a form of daily mobility. Known as a green city, the city of Freiburg has specific attention to the fields of transportation and ecology which seek to reduce the use of private motorized vehicles through government policies and regulations. This effort was provided as a solution to government regulations to develop public transportation and promote bicycles. Cycling, which has been common in Freiburg for decades, is still an interesting topic to discuss. This study focuses on the production of discourse that was born from cycling activities in Freiburg. Besides, this study also wants to see how this cycling activity is from an ecological perspective of green cities. This research was conducted using participatory observation research methods, interviews with research informants, and Internet research. The results obtained in this study show: (a) the existence of discourse on sustainable mobility in the context of green cities; (b) program forms and government regulations on cycling in Freiburg; and (c) the reality of the meaning and use of bicycles in Freiburg. The diversity dialogue born of this cycling activity binds to the practice of an ecological green city that is still a concern in Freiburg today.

Keywords: City Ecology, Cycling, Ecological Mobility, Green City Discourse

INTRODUCTION

Possibly the normal day in the middle of May 2019, along with the arrival of spring, we can see the hustle and bustle of people passing by the main station, *Hauptbahnhof*. This train station is adjacent to the bus terminal where all public transport lines, trams, and buses, depart and stop. People were seen waiting, walking quickly, lined up waiting for the tram to come. For Indonesians, we might have shared the imagination of crowded streets with extravagant smooth cars built in Europe. There weren't as many cars as they would fill city streets and long traffic jams. Instead, bicycles dominate the streets, visible everywhere, especially in the center of Freiburg.

Freiburg describes itself in Freiburg [The Official Tourism Website \(n.d\)](#) as a future-oriented environmental capital, which means that it has a particular interest in future environmental settings. This can be seen from the vision and mission of the city, which is advancing in the application of green city concepts to various areas of urban

development, such as economics, politics, ecology, and transport. So, what is a green city? [Kahn \(2006\)](#) clarified that it is not easy to describe the definition of green itself. In his opinion, Kahn clarified that the green city ecosystem would support local and global communities. The implementation of the green city principle in its perception is a city with a clean and decent environment in terms of water, air, and residential needs. In addition, Freiburg is also developing environmentally friendly transportation systems and alternative energy by utilizing solar energy. Freiburg's consistency in building an environmentally friendly city, including in the field of transportation, can be interesting to discuss further.

Another impression of the green city of Freiburg is occasionally to find black smog coming out of the exhaust of motorbikes and cars. Motorbikes or cars are rarely seen in the streets compared to, say, around the North Ringroad of Yogyakarta, where the authors come from, in the afternoon. A lot

of people are seen walking back and forth, lining up at bus stops to ride trams and, riding bicycles. We can see the everyday mobility of Freiburg citizens in peace with the green city concept of Kahn (2006). Walking, public transport, and cycling are popular means of transport in Freiburg.

“How come there are so many bicyclists in Freiburg?” This question seems to be typical to anyone who feels that as a country in Europe, cars would rule urban streets. Public transport options are also very satisfactory. It does not impact Freiburg; the bicycles look to dominate compared to the motor vehicle. During the brief visit to Freiburg, while on the tram or walking around, the author rarely saw motorbikes passing. The ethnography of this research is to explore the culture of cycling in the Freiburg community as part of the discourse that has led to dialog in the sense of ecological mobility and which relates to many aspects such as economic, social, lifestyle, industry, politics, and urban planning in Freiburg.

How does cycling become a very popular thing in Freiburg? How was the discourse shaped by the option of bicycles as an ecological representation of transport generated in Freiburg? In simple terms, Mills (2007) explains discourse can be understood as a conversation and “*holding forth*” (discussion) about a subject. Discourse in cultural and critical theory is a general area of the production and circulation of statements (governed by certain rules) (Mills, 2007: 11). Foucault explained the concept of discourse in three definitions (Mills, 2007: 9), one of which is

the discourse, a collection of statements that can be individualized, a collection speech that appears to be organized in a certain way and is considered to have general coherence and power. In this study, the practice of cycling in Freiburg is becoming a conversation and coherence with another conversation. How is the discourse of cycling practiced from the point of view of the government and culture in Freiburg? Why do people want to use bicycles as their primary means of transport? Talking about cycling in Freiburg is not only a concern about mobility in the sense of green cities, but also a concern about the nature of other discourses, such as ecology, economics, politics, society, and culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Budaya Barat dalam Kacamata Timur” (Western culture from an Eastern perspective) is the work of the Anthropological Research Faculty in Freiburg in 2005 and includes one of the findings of bicycle research in Freiburg. The research was conducted by Satria (2006) which showed the results of bicycles as a lifestyle of the Freiburg community from the point of view of consumer culture. In the study, it is clarified that the bicycle was chosen to meet the needs for versatility, hobbies, fitness, and a more economical purpose. Bicycles become means of transport because they are efficient, economically, and functionally (Satria, 2006: 148) h. Satria’s research has brought a breath of fresh air to this current research defining how to use bicycles as a

mode of mobility in Freiburg 14 years ago.

The use of bicycles in Freiburg is connected to government policies in the field of transport and ecological urban planning that affect each other. In her research on transport and car-free living in Vauban, one of the districts of Freiburg, [Melia \(2006\)](#) clarified the effect of government transport policies on car ownership. This created a conflict due to the high cost of parking that must be paid by the owner of the car. In this case, [Melia \(2006: 5\)](#) explains that:

“Predictably, some car owners have tried to avoid these rules, registering cars with the names of relatives, making personal arrangements with residents outside the free parking area, or parking in undeveloped areas. The Carfree Association is working to resolve this conflict, but the Board has taken legal action on two occasions.”

A study on the implementation of transport in Freiburg was also carried out by [Buehler and Pucher \(2011\)](#) on “Sustainability Transport in Freiburg: Lesson from the German Environmental Capital”, which describes the developments in transport in Freiburg and its policies and impacts on the sustainable transport system and urban planning in Freiburg. The findings of this study clarify the history of sustainability in the German Federal Government since the 1970s, but which has the most crucial role in practice, depending on the city and the state, in policymaking ([Buehler & Pucher, 2011: 45](#)). It is this German Federal Policy that influences the course of the development of sustainable transport.

Preferring a bicycle as a means of transport is not only affected by the means and facilities of government policy but also by personal experience and decisions. This is because cycling influences a variety of facets of human personal life. [Spencer, et. al. \(2014\)](#) researched “Bicycles, Transportation Sustainability and Quality of Life in Burlington” and looked at the relationship between quality of life, sustainability, and transport in the context of cycling activities. This research uses the Transport Quality of Life (TQoL) framework and a systematic approach to the relationship between cycling and quality of life. These findings indicate the relationship and effect of cycling on (a) health, in particular the improvement of body exercise and the reduction of crashes, injuries, and pollution; (b) monetary savings; (c) the reduction of CO₂; and (d) individual well-being concepts due to the use of bicycles.

The green city discourse of the city of Freiburg focused on cycling as part of ecological mobility. It is certainly true that the discourse on the green city itself can be a study of science. [Pace, Chukirna & Rivera \(2016\)](#) in their paper entitled “How Green is a Green City?” clarified that ‘greenness’ or it can be said that the greenness of the city is a counterattack to rapid population growth in increasingly unfriendly cities. Three keywords have been put forward in the definition of a green city: (1) environmental quality; (2) human well-being; and (3) political and social action ([Pace, Chukirna & Rivera, 2016: 2](#)). The results obtained are the three keywords that turned out to be

linked to each other, and the green city is a term that has a multidimensional sense.

From research on bicycles, mobility, transport policy and the connections between transport and quality of life that have been included in the Green City discourse, the practice of cycling as part of a discourse that has already been influenced and shaped by discussion, textual and contextual. In the context of this research, cycling in Freiburg, as stated in Satria's research in 2005, explained that cycling with the lifestyle of the Freiburg people at that time was the basis of the discourse in the field of ecological mobility which is still under discussion today.

Cycling can be said to be a mode of transport option, but in Freiburg, cycling deserves more than that. Mobility and transport are part of the government's concern to grow Freiburg as a green city. Cycling is debated in the Green City discourse with different ways of study and regulation. In the field of anthropology, the study of discourse is commonly used to spark new discussions on the topic. Fowler defines discourse as something that can encode different representations of experience and sources of representation, in the form of the communication in which the discourse takes place (Mills, 2007: 8). This research focuses on the study of cycling practices in the context of the green city discourse in Freiburg.

In anthropology, the study of discourse is widely used to spark new discussions about an issue. Benveniste in Mills (2007: 7) provides a broad understanding of discourse

which can be written or oral and can appear in historical narratives. Macdonell in Mills (2007: 14) explains that dialogue is the main condition of discourse and statement that is built in a social context, which is determined by that social context and contributes to continuing its existence.

Green City discourse can be interpreted as a contact space on sustainability. This is because the idea of a green city is closely connected to the theory of sustainability. Cycling in Freiburg is not only a mobility alternative but is related to urban planning that contributes to a green city, so that in practice cycling is part of laws and policies that often apply the concept of sustainability. The Freiburg government created regulations, policies, and laws to control the people's incompatibility with the government. Regulations, policies, and laws are closely connected to the governance and biopower of the state.

For Foucault biopower is a "power over life" that leads to the two poles of the power between the anatomic and the biological that uses influence and control to live (Bustamante, 2013:77). In the modern life of Western society, Biopower was seen as a dominant system of social control (Pylypa, 1998). Biopower produces a discourse on norms and normality that controls the individual to conform. According to Foucault, Biopower is related to the form of discipline. At the micro-level, it works at the individual level, while at the macro-level, it works at the population level (Wallenstein, 2013:11-12) . Biopower practices in green cities, Freiburg, were written in the

principles and ecological rules that the government regulates and tries to apply.

This research, therefore, explores the practice of governance and biopower implemented by the government of Freiburg. Is the practice of cycling in Freiburg a form of government-run social control agreement? This study is intended to clarify all sides of the cycling viewpoint from both the government and the community sides.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from fieldwork. The fieldwork was conducted by researchers in a certain period at the research location. The fieldwork aims to give ethnographers in the native environment to see people and their behavior has given all the real-world incentives and constraints (Fetterman, 2010). Activities undertaken during the fieldwork, observation, participation, and interviews and for the secondary data were obtained from papers, books, brochures, and websites about the city and mobility in Freiburg before and after field activities. The ethnographic study took place when the first author had the opportunity to briefly visit Freiburg Im Breisgau, a town in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, from 11 to 31 May 2019.

During the field research, the first author obtained a description of the research environment through observation. The observation was to look at the means of transport and mobility used by Freiburg citizens in a variety of locations related to

cycling activities, such as (1) Radstation (bicycle station in the city center of Freiburg); (2) the area around the Uni-Freiburg campus; (3) the downtown and several suburbs in the direction of the districts of Vauban and Littenwiller; and (4) several bicycle rentals, sales and service places in the city of Freiburg.

To enrich the research data, the author also conducted participant observations. Participant observation characterizes most ethnographic research and is crucial to effective fieldwork (Fetterman, 2010). She did not only make observations but also participated in activities that are usually carried out by cyclists in Freiburg. Emerson, Fretz & Shaw (2007) explain that participant observation can help the researcher to gain access and immerse oneself in new social worlds and also bring versions of these worlds to others. Participant observations were made by the researcher during the study by way of cycling in a Freiburg community. In addition, the researcher also participated in the Fridays for Future action which raises the issue of climate change and the global environment that is routinely carried out by the Freiburg society. The global warming issue due to carbon dioxide emissions was one of the topics raised in that action. The use of bicycles and public transportation can help reduce motor vehicle ownership which indirectly contributes to carbon emissions to the global environment.

The final and crucial field research process is the interview. People exchange these verbal commodities to communicate. The ethnographer quickly learns to savor the informant's every word for its cultural or subcultural connotations as well as for its denotative meaning (Fetterman, 2010). Interview with several informants was another way to obtain data from field research. There are five groups of informants with different backgrounds: (1) Uni-Freiburg students; (2) the owner of the bicycle rental service shop; (3) the courier staff document; (4) the participants of the Friday demonstration and (5) the bicycle rental service providers. The data analysis was first carried out by classifying the findings on the subject in the Green City discourse through the programs and policies of the Freiburg City Government. The categorization of data has given a clearer picture of mobility in Freiburg, especially about cycling activities. The primary data analysis was supported by secondary data analysis that supplement the study of green city discourse in Freiburg due to the limited time available for analysis to collect primary data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Green City and Mobility in Freiburg

Freiburg im Breisgau is a city in the Baden-Württemberg region which is located at the coordinates 47° 59'N 7° 51'E in the southern part of Germany. The city of Freiburg has an area of 153.07 km² with a population of 229,636 inhabitants (ICLEI,

2018). Based on the history of the [Freiburg Research Student Team \(2006\)](#), the beautiful and historic city of Freiburg has undergone a long journey from being the Central Trade District, an independent study center, destroyed by the European War, the center of government and administration of the Baden Region until the end of the war, and the construction of the city began. It was mentioned that during the Habsburg Dynasty, Archduke Albrecht VI, as an Austrian ruler, gave Freiburg independence and founded a university that later helped meet the silver reserve requirements of the current commercial competition. Freiburg is regarded as the green city and the warmest town in Germany.

“Since 2008 Freiburg profiled itself as a Green City. The “green approach” is evident in its environment and mobility policies, city and town planning, as well as implementation strategies. The city's comprehensive and reliable transportation system aligns with its vision and is a major contribution to its sustainability” (ICLEI, 2018).

The city of Freiburg applies the concept of a green city in urban planning by building several public facilities. The process of developing the idea of a green city, which initially centered on energy regeneration, then progressed towards waste management and transport. One of the rules applied to support this is that the Altstadt area is devoted to tram users, cyclists, and pedestrians.

This research mostly focuses on the Altstadt (Old Town) area and its surroundings. In the Altstadt area, there is a University of Freiburg, shopping centers, and public places such as The Theater, The Museum, The Cathedral, and The Münstermarkt (Cathedral Market). Not far from the University is the station for train, tram, and The Freiburg Central Bus Terminal, Hauptbahnhof. It is in the same place as the Radstation. Radstation is a paid bicycle parking station that can be used by the public daily or for a monthly subscription of up to one year. The mobility in this area is quite high because many students and residents travel using public transportation or bicycles. There are also several office areas and public facilities. As for housing, some student dormitories have usually located some distance from the University, while for settlements built with the green city concept, Vauban, is located quite far from the old city but can be reached by bus or tram.

Declaration as part of the Green City has been developed since 2008 (ICLEI, 2018) . It should be remembered that the ideas of city management are ecologically based on environmental principles, which are related to sustainable ideals, both ecologically, socially, and economically. The government also considers the needs of the people and creates a sustainable concept as the basis for the growth of the city of Freiburg in a variety of political activities. This is illustrated by the government that helped to set up a political organization that created a green city, namely Sustainability Management,

which was founded in 2011 as a coordination center and headquarters that develops a green profile and is integrated with local policies (Freiburg Wirtschaft Touristik und Messe GmbH & Co., 2016: 1) . Until now, several parties have participated in the realization and management of the Freiburg city system in various fields, including transport.

Freiburg citizens may use public transport, private cars, motorcycles, walking or bicycles to get about. Bicycles will be at the core of this study. Seeing the many cyclists going through and passing through Freiburg is a reminder of knowledge about Freiburg, known for a long time as a bicycle-friendly area. In fact, when did the bicycle become the chosen means of transport in Freiburg? Arguably since the government paid attention to the environment around the 1970s to 1975 era because the government start to have a concern about environmental crisis issues (Buehler & Pucher, 2011).

Known from Kalchauer's book review about Freiburg Little City History (Kleine Freiburger Stadtgeschichte), since the First World War in 1845, the use of public transport in Freiburg began with the opening of rail lines and the building of an electric tram in 1901. The construction of a new pedestrian area started in 1969, which became the starting point for the government's attention to the transport system in Freiburg. At the time, the pedestrian path could be restricted to mere urban facilities. Until 1975, bicycles had only been used as private vehicles and had not been politicized.

The monthly newsletter Baden-Württemberg, a German bulletin with the title “Geschwindigkeit und Innovation: 200 Jahre Fahrrad” (Ratering, 2017), provides a short description of the usage of bicycles in the past. It was only in 1817 that Karl Drais discovered the starting point of the invention of a bicycle (when it was called a velocipede or called a fast foot). Previously, in those days people were either using horses or walking. It lasted until the end of the Second World War in Germany. Finally, the motorization movement that occurred around 1950 spread worldwide, including in Freiburg, and became a new alternative to private transport and mobility.

After 1975, the government’s focus started to turn towards the development of more environmentally sustainable transport, considering alternative mobility for the population. This was also triggered by higher fuel prices so the government started introducing policies. The environmental policy in Freiburg (Freiburg im Breisgau Government, 2011) covered five pillars of transport policy, namely (1) the growth of public transport networks; (2) the promotion of bicycles; (3) the promotion of pedestrians; (4) the construction of friendly and safe roads; and (5) the restriction of the use of privately owned motor vehicles. The government regulates transportation lanes between motorized vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. Cyclists have specially provided lanes that are different from motorized vehicles, although in some areas they must be shared with pedestrians. In addition, the issue of bicycles as part of

ecological mobility in Freiburg started to become a public and government discussion that contributed to the political direction of the city of Freiburg.

Bicycle in Freiburg: Mobility Dialogue in Green City Discourse

Filled with an online search for Freiburg, we’re getting acquainted with the green city that has been Freiburg’s concern and identification since a few years ago. In particular, the concepts and values of the green philosophy of this method, which have been applied in the city of Freiburg, including in transport, are actively reducing the use of motor vehicles. Different mobilities constitute different kinds of society (Urry in Vivanco, 2013); the sentence can be interpreted to mean that each different kind of mobility shows the different forms of society. Therefore, the understanding of cycling in Freiburg can be different from the understanding of cycling in Indonesia due to the varied backgrounds and experiences of mobility and transport.

Sustainability is an important thing that cannot be separated from the production of the green city discourse. The discourse on sustainability is constructed from three dimensions i.e., the ideal environment, economy, and social (Buehler & Pucher, 2011). Mobility may simply be defined as a spatial movement of motion that is often associated with transportation. Vivanco (2013) explained that mobility is not only a movement, but has a socio-cultural, economic, and political significance. Sustainable mobility is something that

should have a simple and minimal negative impact on many aspects, especially the environment.

Several principles are required to govern the three dimensions as a process toward sustainability in the sense of a green city. [Beatley \(2000: 17\)](#) refers to four principles that are used to regulate urban sustainability, namely (a) The principle of urban management; (b) The principle of policy integration; (c) The principle of ecosystem thinking; and (d) The principle of cooperation and partnership. These four principles would work in synergy to ensure that urban sustainability is realized even though it would take a long time and, it does not always run smoothly without a hitch.

As an alternative transport to reduce the use of motor vehicles in Freiburg, in addition to the choice of public transport, bicycles would be an interesting point of discussion when it entered the political arena in Freiburg. From observations on several streets in Freiburg, we could find party campaign posters with bicycle pictures on the background of green posters that read *Fahrrad Gerech*t, some with windmills-*Klima Gerech*t and bees. It turned out that the brochure belonged to the Alliance 90/Die Grünen, which after some online research, we found that it was a political party that had environmental policies as its basic point of departure. Reading this brochure closely helps us to see Freiburg from a political point of view; in addition to the limited amount of field research that we had.

The city of Freiburg has the power to limit the use of motorized vehicles while

encouraging bicycles as an example of green growth in Freiburg. “Foucault recognizes the states privileging of ‘disciplinary forms of power’ over ‘sovereign forms of power’ in shaping rather than restricting mobility in a bid to reconcile these divergent aims” ([Doughty & Murray, 2014: 5](#)). The state has the privilege of using its power to discipline the public, in this context the Freiburg people in driving. By offering alternative options in the area of public transport and cycling, rather expressly banning the use of motor vehicles explicitly.

Based on observation and participation, and backed by the information brochure on the *Radverkehr Fussgängerzone* (Cycling and Pedestrian Zone), we have found that there are a variety of bicycle facilities, rules, and restrictions in Freiburg, such as (a) providing parking space; (b) providing priority driving lanes; (c) controlling driving safety; and (d) facilitating the traffic signs. The government distinguishes the distribution of traffic lanes between motorized vehicles and cyclists in several areas, especially downtown and residential areas, and usually, cyclists share lanes with pedestrians. For parking areas that have a subscription fee, the public can use the self-service bicycle parking facility at *Radstation* (Bike Station) near Tram, Train, and Bus Station or park in the space provided at several locations near tram and city bus stops. This can make it easier for people to commute from one area to another.

The individual body may not feel regulated by the state as an active

discourse is discussed in various aspects of governmental regulations. “Paterson illuminates the way that bodies become entwined in mobile governance, drawing from Foucault’s notion of biopower, where the state governs mobile bodies rather than passive discourses” (Doughty & Murray, 2014). Mobility in Freiburg is, in effect, an active discourse, often debated in the realm of green city political discussions. It can be seen by how the government has shown its propensity to lead people in mobility to abandon their cars and turn to bicycles or public transport.

Biopower as a force in modern political life reveals its attachment to a nation with different phenomena of social life, including mobility. Instead of making people feel dictated by oppressive regulations, Freiburg governments are building up cycling activity among society as a natural and ordinary mobility choice. This has been seen by how informants reacted to the issue of why they cycle. Normalization without realization is the product of the habituation of the practice of cycling in Freiburg. The question of “Why do people in Freiburg still use bicycles to this day” was refuted by another question, “Why do people still use cars today?” This refutation made us aware of a different point of view about seeing a bicycle as something natural and a car as something that should be abandoned immediately.

“I don’t know ... it is just normal. It is no in my mind, bikes or no, or tram? It is just like brushing my teeth in the morning, I just take my bike. So, yeah, but

also if I talk with my brother who is not living in Freiburg. I feel that the way riding a bike is normal here is not as normal as the other cities” (Interview with Laura, 24 May 2019).

Cycling in Freiburg has unconsciously become the standard, custom-made in daily life. Bicycles are not only used as transportation for students but also for workers who find it easier and more economical to use bikes. Some parents can also bring their children, who are usually toddlers, in an extra stroller behind on the bike. The use of bicycles is also quite common as a means of delivering food, to document couriers. Recently there has also been the development of paid-to-use public bicycle rentals with the intention that bicycles are used larger and cover more areas of Freiburg.

Practicing cycling every day in mass, for decades, has unconsciously created a consensus that cycling is a simple and natural thing to do in Freiburg. Cycling in Freiburg is part of the dynamics of daily social life that can suggest the existence in it of the force of government. So how are attempts made to ensure that cycling remains a transport option for the Freiburg community?

One way is to create a space for dialog between government and society, by looking at the political model in Freiburg, where people have the initiative and enthusiasm for an ecological discussion to create a space for a popular dialog that needs to be conducted in different ways. Campaigning is one

way to build a forum for dialog together at least for individuals, who can channel their interests to the government and raise public consciousness of environmental issues.

It was a good fortune for the first author that during her brief visit to Freiburg, she was able to take part in one of the regular campaigns coordinated by the Freiburg community on Fridays for Future. Fridays for Future is an international campaign activity on the environment. The protest was held every Friday until it was resolved by the local government. This action has also gained broad public exposure since Greta has also made this action available on social media and has helped to lift the spirit of resistance between students and adults ([Fridays for Future, n.d](#)).

Many environmental concerns are said to be more of a concern for the government and the public, ranging from the global climate crisis, bee protection, agriculture, and the CO₂ crisis, which was raised a lot that day. The researcher saw some people holding posters showing the car being replaced by a bicycle, some writing “Let’s CO₂ Tax”, “Make Love, not CO₂”, and others in German that she could understand only after opening the google translate App. She had the opportunity to have a conversation with one of the participants who was holding a bicycle poster, a man who was about 40 years old, and luckily was able to answer her question in English. In response to her questions on his expectation of the action and the reason why he was talking about bicycles as an ecological problem, he answered:

“We all already know that Freiburg is a city that has bicycles as a daily transportation choice. Today I want to increase public attention and awareness of to use bicycles as a solution to the ozone crisis on Earth. Switch to using a bicycle compared to using a car. And also, for the government, I hope they increase the target of using bicycles to 32% compared to now. I hope that more bicycles can dominate the streets of Freiburg” (Conversation with anonymous participants at Fridays for Future, 24 May 2019).

Fridays for Future is only one of the many dialogue agendas set up in Freiburg, and we are sure there are still many other modes of action that can provide space for ecological dialog between the government and community in different forms of activity. By conducting a series of lengthy political processes conducting a joint political commitment of some political institutions such as Local Agenda 21, the European Union (EU), the European Parliament until the Green Party were influential in political decision-making and policy in Freiburg. The Freiburg government with its numerous public and political commitments will try to keep the city of Freiburg on the green city path. Organizing spaces for dialogue and collaboration with the community can help

sustain a discourse or value that the city retains.

The use of bicycles in Freiburg, which has long been used in everyday activities, not only affects the environment, but also increases the potential for the growth of the bicycle industry in Freiburg. As part of sustainable mobility in green city discourse, economic transition is one thing that has also occurred in Freiburg. [Dekoster & Schollaert \(1999\)](#) clarified that bicycles provide benefits in the private sector, especially in the business and commercial sector. Recognizing the increasing potential of bicycles in Freiburg, the government has begun to establish a scheme that aims to perpetuate and make bicycles more attractive and can be used by anyone in Freiburg.

The emerging idea has led to the bike-sharing system, which can simply be understood as bicycle rental. The bike-sharing system was first introduced in Amsterdam in 1968 as a means of intervention to alleviate congestion and is free to use by everyone in the city without conditions and free of charge ([Fernandez, 2011](#)). The government also introduced the bike-sharing system via VAG (*Verkehrs AG or Freiburg city transportation agency*) in partnership with the Next Bike company, to introduce a bicycle rental system within hours. By implementing this scheme, the government has tried to cooperate with students in a variety of universities in Freiburg, including the Uni-Freiburg, in cooperation with StuRa (*Studierendenvertretung/ student representatives*), a kind of Student

Executive Board. This initiative program then gave rise to similar businesses started in Freiburg. This bike-rent business model offers advantages and convenience for customers, to be able to commute around by bicycle without buying and can have a bicycle at an affordable price. Some of the benefits offered include discounts for students, services, and even bike change. The efforts of many parties participating in this program have contributed to building an environmentally friendly transportation system. This system was built to keep the transport system working on the premise of sustainability in the green city discourse.

Bicycle in Freiburg: Mobility Dialogue in Green City Discourse

In general, bicycles in Freiburg are considered part of the community mobility mode, which allows people to travel and feel flexible, economic, and ecological. Bicycles as a thing here have several meanings depending on where they are mounted. Ebert in [Vivanco \(2013: 9\)](#) states that “Bicycles touch on all these issues, and the purchase or riding a bicycle are more than practical choices: bicycling has important economic, political, social and cultural dimensions that endow certain kinds of meanings on the object and its user, meanings that vary across social groups and cultures.” Bicycles can impact many issues which are more than practical choices. The definition of a bicycle in Freiburg can be very complicated because people have lived in a culture of cycling for a long time.

When linked to the ecological discussion of green cities, cycling in Freiburg is related to the environmental context. In the economic field cycling in Freiburg also plays a role in the business of delivery, buying and selling, rent, and others. In addition, when addressed in the socio-cultural field, cycling in Freiburg has been freed from and is not linked to social status or gender. This is different from the social construction of bicycles in the early days, which was closely linked to the question of the upper and middle classes of society. This picture then transforms a bicycle into one which reflects green living; pollution-free, environmentally friendly, progressive, and modern.

In smaller discussions, in the Uni-Freiburg student community, the bicycle dialog is linked to the social ties that are intertwined within it. Some of these students also go out together or ride bikes together when they leave for or return from college. The familiarity of the students who use bikes does not rule out the possibility of getting a vacation event together like that hosted by Laura and her colleagues, Running Dinner. The event was held for students who use bicycles every day. There is no compulsion or exception for those who wish to join since this invitation is typically by word of mouth.

“We did a like a running dinner. It starts, like, at someone’s house and everyone prepares a meal like something small for somewhere in the world

and we have like a bicycle and ride around Freiburg. It’s like a community event. We just ask some people if they want to join and we met at nine, at ten at night.” (Interview with Laura, Uni-Freiburg Student, 24 May 2019).

Bicycles in Freiburg cannot easily be used as an indicator of the social status or economic class of the population because bicycles are used based on their practicality. In addition, many Freiburg people have more than one type of bike; some of them even have more than three bikes because they are regularly tailored to the needs and lifestyle of each person. The types of bicycles in Freiburg are not only city bikes or mountain bikes, but also cargo bikes, which are used to transport stuff or crops, and bicycles with an additional trailer used to carry children behind their parents’ bicycles. Usually, on weekends, many residents spend their free time cycling, either alone or with friends and family. The government makes cycling possible for most of the people of Freiburg to achieve the goal of a green city. The government has mobilized all promotional and structuring efforts with various bicycle and traffic rules and policies in Freiburg to make all residents feel safe and secure. But how do people practice cycling, then?

The experience and behaviors of everyone will affect the understanding of security and personal comfort internally. This may involve the need to protect yourself from the risk of a bicycle accident or a bicycle loss, particularly in areas of self-

responsibility, such as personal protection. The government has indeed provided facilities to fulfill the right to ride bicycles safely for cyclists. However, it turns out that for some people, security is still inferior to comfort and each person has different habits and preferences. The practice of cycling in Freiburg is somehow still free from government power and control.

So, what makes the people of Freiburg prefer bicycles as a means of transport? Some said that cycling is easy and inexpensive. Compared to the allocation of funds to be spent by the public-on-public transport, which is EUR 55 a month, they chose to bike on economic grounds that the bicycle has low regular maintenance and monthly expenses. A few more answered that the need for flexibility and avoiding traffic jams was the reason. This explanation has been a strong motivation for people to choose a bicycle since 2005 through research conducted by [Satria \(2006: 130\)](#) , which notes that bicycles are the quickest means of transport to ride in the region. Cycling is going to help us get free from traffic jams in the area. By using bicycles, we can easily reach all parts of the area. This was also expressed by Manuel (student, 23 years old) that by cycling “you can take the whole city” so there is no need to walk and wait for the tram.

“...you can take the whole city. Because [you] don’t have to walk to take the tram, because a bike is so fast. You can really move in only 10 minutes and it’s that the good point that this

is a small city I would say”
(Interview with Manuel, 24 May 2019).

After going through the discussion about cycling in Freiburg, we can see that this activity can be viewed from various perspectives, from the government and society side. From the government’s perspective, bicycles are not only a means of transportation, but they are also political. “It argues that the bicycle is a vehicle mobilized in the construction of a political and green way of life, and in two ways: first, as an object of environmental discourse, the bicycle is mobilized into the articulation of green visions; and second, as an object used in the everyday lives of environmental activists, the bicycle mobilizes those activist distinctively green lifestyles” ([Horton, 2006](#)) . Cycling can be the prevailing discourse of mobility as a solution to the transport problem in Freiburg since it is not only designed and constructed by the government but also gets reciprocal discussions from the people.

CONCLUSION

Discussing cycling practices turns out to be not only a matter of daily mobility choices for the people of Freiburg but also a long discursive process involving the government and society. Discourse is understood as talking, as something that can be discussed, as something that can be produced and reproduced, and as something dynamic and changing. Bicycles have been discussed as a common form of transportation in Freiburg, even for decades.

The production of discourse resulting from cycling in Freiburg is very diverse, anyone can be the source to produce and reproduce it. In Freiburg, the discourse generated from this cycling activity is related to green cities and sustainable mobility.

Answering the problem in this study, related to how cycling activities in Freiburg are viewed from the perspective of green city discourse, is closely related to governmentality and biopower from the government. A governmentality is a form of government authority in regulating and organizing the territory and its population to suit the system adopted. This was put into practice by the government in the form of rules and policies to maintain the system in Freiburg. The city government of Freiburg has the authority to regulate transportation and mobility in Freiburg. After 1975 the government began to pay attention to the transportation system in Freiburg in a more ecological direction. This mobility system is pursued in line with the sustainable principle of a green city. The government has also created a space for dialogue to sustain the green city discourse in the city of Freiburg. Through Fridays for Future, the government tries to provide space for the aspirations of its citizens. So far this research has been carried out, researchers have not found any conflict between fellow road users, both motorized vehicle drivers and cyclists, from the existence of the transportation policy.

Cycling in Freiburg has become normal, whether we realize it or not, because of the government controlling and regulating its

people. "Normalization produces individual as the necessary mode and the counterpart of the norm, that is, as a material artefact of power (Mills, 2013)". Normalization produces individuals as a need for material power generated in governmentality and biopower instruments in the form of rules and policies applied in Freiburg. In a subtle way, the biopower which is manifested in government programs and policies has blended into the daily life of the Freiburg people and has become a necessity so that government power and control do not feel repressive.

The variety of cycling activities that take place in Freiburg can be seen in the daily reality of the city. While the government's discourse on the promotion of bicycles brings with it an ecological mission, the reality is that not all informants automatically mentioned ecology as the key reason for choosing bicycles in Freiburg. Designed with an image of ecological solutions and dynamic urban transport and backed by a range of policies and urban planning that favor the cyclist, the bicycle discourse was born and born out of interlocking activities. Apart from the activity of mobility that has been going on for decades, bicycles are still an interesting discussion agenda for many complex aspects of Freiburg. Bicycles are a socio-political, economic, and cultural commodity in Freiburg. Although they are commonplace, bicycles are still interesting to discuss further, particularly in the discourse on green politics in Freiburg.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research is under the auspices of the UGM Anthropology Tandem Research Program 2018 with the theme Anthropology and Environmental Activism with funding from the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University.

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