

## **Focus and scope**

***Jurnal Communication Specialist** adalah jurnal yang dikelola Program Studi Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Dr. Soetomo. Karya ilmiah yang diterbitkan dalam jurnal ini adalah artikel hasil penelitian, baik penelitian lapangan, analisis teks, maupun studi literatur. Topik artikel yang difokuskan dalam jurnal ini adalah :*

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## Cultural space and communication production at mount Kelud, Indonesia

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**Abstract** The research aimed to understand the process of political communication in the contestation of Mount Kelud between the Blitar and the Kediri Regency Government in regional autonomy era. Mediation and legal efforts have been carried out to resolve Mount Kelud dispute, but the Central Government has not decided the administrative boundaries of the two Regencies since 2003. The research took the perspective of Henri Lefebvre's space production, which stated that space produced in the community's daily life (social space) and produced by power (political space). The study used a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. The findings of the study revealed that the Kediri Regency Government has carried out cultural construction and communication through the "Larung Sesaji" in Kelud Mountain Festival. Meanwhile, Blitar Regency has not done similar activity; even if it has conducted the Sesani "Larung Intan." The central government could consider the cultural space on Mount Kelud as a synthesis of social space and political space as an effort to resolve disputes over regional boundaries.

**Keywords:** contestation; space production; cultural construction and communication

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to understand the process of political communication in the Mount Kelud space contestation between the Blitar and Kediri Regency Government in the era of regional autonomy in Indonesia. The paper took Lefebvre's perspective of production space which synthesised that space is a product of social interaction (social space) and produced by power or politics (political space) (Lefebvre, 1991). However, in contrast with Lefebvre research, the study argued that space is not only produced as a social space in society's everyday life (Goonewardena, 2008), and political policy (Elden, 2007). On the other hand, the space in Mount Kelud is seen as a cultural space. Indeed, it is a synthesis of social spaces in which there is a culture of society (social) and political space in the form of political effort (public policy) to carry out cultural construction and communication in Mount Kelud.

Lefebvre considered social space as a combination of physical or material space and mental space or idealism (Lefebvre, 1991, 2003, 2004; Lefebvre et al., 2009). That social interaction raises political interaction processes. To quote Lefebvre's (in Elden, 2007) statement, "there is a political space because space is political" (p. 67).

Many social scientists have tried to comprehend Lefebvre's thoughts about the production of space by relating it to certain contexts. Among them are "*the Social Production of Urban Space*" (M. Gottdiener, 1997); "*The Key to Reading Henri Lefebvre*" (Elden et al., 2003); "*Understanding Henri Lefebvre - Theory and Possibilities*" (Elden, 2005); "*An Introduction Henri Lefebvre Criticism*" (Merrifield, 2006); "*Space, Difference, Daily Life - Reading Henri Lefebvre*" (Goonewardena, 2008); "*Understand the City*" (Glass, 2016); and "*The Future of Urban Cultural Studies - Henri Lefebvre and Humanity*" (Fraser, 2015). Some scientific studies have also used spatial production perspectives, including "*The Production of Hospice Space*" (McGann, 2016); "*JH Jones: The Production of Public Space*" (Jones, 2016); "*Performativity, Politics and Production of Social Space*" (Glass & Rose-Redwood, 2014); and in the field of communication studies, "*Henri Lefebvre's Theory of Production of Space and The Critical Theory of Communication*" (Fuchs, 2019). Several studies were conducted using the Lefebvre Spatial Production in several countries on numerous themes, among others, urbanisation, urban space contestation, urban public space, urban planning, tourism, and education.

Other researches linked Lefebvre's spatial production with urbanisation. Some of the topics are the dynamics of spatial production and the process of urbanisation of the *Negev Bedouin (Badui Negev)* in Israel (Karplus & Meir, 2014); Spatial production and migration of Nepali workers in South Korea (Seo & Skelton, 2017); Spatial production and urbanisation in China's Jiangsu province (Ye et al., 2017); Urbanisation in Birtamode Nepal (Brøgger, 2019); the Baduy as marginal people in the suburbs of Israel (Dekel et al., 2019), and the decline in the

population of China's Shanghai Tangwan Village due to urbanisation (Ye et al., 2020).

Lefebvre space production was also associated with space as a commodity produced by capitalists in several works of research, such as in Surabaya City, Indonesia (Aminah, 2016); and in Sao Paulo Brazil (Alvarez, 2016). Other researches linked the theory to the concept of public space, such as the production of public space in the City of Manchester, England (Leary, 2013); post-industrial space production in Rotterdam, the Netherlands (van den Berg & Chevalier, 2018); public space in Brisbane Australia (Zamanifard et al., 2018) and the emancipatory feminism movement in Utah USA (Nicolosi, 2020)

The study of Lefebvre's space production had been examined from several aspects. For example, the tourism aspect: the Chinese National Forest Park (F. Luo et al., 2016); and the Yamal Peninsula, Northern Siberia, Russia (Gorbuntsova et al., 2019). From education and professional aspect, researches have been done on the academic socialisation as the production and negotiation of social spaces in New Zealand (Soltani, 2018) and the production of shared workspaces in Shenzhen, China (Y. Luo & Chan, 2020). The study of architecture also conducted researches from the perspective of spatial production, including the production of urban space in the Southern World (Kamalipour & Dovey, 2020) and spatial production in London (Robin, 2018).

Many of the studies above have examined the urban areas associated with urbanisation, public contestation space, space, urban planning and education. There has been no research conducted outside urban areas or examines tourism. The research was also based on the perspective of Lefebvre's space production associated with space contestation. However, instead of examining space contestation from a political and economic point of view, the study attempted to understand the cultural contestation in spatial production. The research was focused on non-urban space contestation, in the case was Kelud Mountain in Indonesia. The study categorised space and contestation of Mount Kelud in three aspects, namely social aspects, political aspects, and cultural aspects. The type of cultural contestation is rarely associated with spatial production perspectives even though the contestation is evident in the 'battle' of cultural communication between Blitar and Kediri Regency on Mount Kelud.

Previous studies related to cultural communication, including Merkin et al., explained the state of the art of cultural communication research, such as the relationship between individual values and masculinity with communication patterns (Merkin et al., 2014). Claudia's research revealed the relationship between learning spaces in Romanian society and the process of cultural communication (Cuc, 2014). Other studies discussed cross-cultural communication (Tomblason & Wolf, 2017), and cultural strategy as a solution for communication strategies (Zhou & Shin, 2017).

Quoting (Zhou & Shin, 2017), cultural communication strategies could be used to resolve political communication deadlocks, such as the case of space contestation on Mount Kelud between Blitar and Kediri Regency that has been going on since 2003. Various mediation and legal efforts have been carried out to resolve the Mount Kelud dispute which involved the Central Government, East Java Provincial Government, as well as Blitar and Kediri Regency Government. However, until today, there has been no public decision from the Central Government, in the case, the Ministry of Home Affairs, regarding the administrative boundaries of the two Regencies.

The root of the problem was, based on the territory administration, Blitar regency had evidence that the Crater of Mount Kelud (contested/disputed space) belonged to Blitar Regency. However, they had no intention to exploit the natural potential. Whereas in the case of Kediri Regency Government, it has been developing tourism potential in Mount Kelud since 2003. The administration had developed tourism infrastructure and conducted cultural construction by organising "*Festival Kelud*" or Kelud Festival, where they offered various offerings in the Crater of Kelud Mountain each year.

In simple terms, it can be said that administratively or (*de jure*), Blitar Regency Government should win the space contestation. However, *de facto*, Kediri Regency Government has succeeded in turning Mount Kelud into a 'capitalist mode of production' (Aminah, 2016) (Alvarez, 2016), through the development of tourism with cultural construction and communication. Among them were the "*Larung Sesaji*" in Festival Kelud, with "*nguri-nguri*" (reminiscing) the fables and myths of the Kediri Hindu Kingdom era (tales of Kilisuci Goddess and Lembu Suro).

Space contestation in Mount Kelud case could be understood from the perspective of spatial production (Lefebvre, 1991) which synthesised that social space rose from everyday life experiences. Furthermore, Lefebvre explained that social space is not singular and does not have exclusive boundaries, causing it to penetrate and overlap one another. This condition has led to dynamic social spaces formed by the practices of power through three dimensions, perceived-conceived-lived. Initially, as a tangible physical space, then how people interact and negotiate with space, and finally live in that space. To achieve the three dimensions of space, three processes must be realised. These processes are spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces. Spatial practice defines space by society. Space representations are spaces conceptualised to direct human action. Finally, the representation of space is a space as a place to live for the residents and users of space.

In Mount Kelud case, space contestation in the three dimensions does not only occur in the social and political sphere. There is also a cultural contestation between Blitar and Kediri Regency Government. The Cultural Construction and Communication in Kelud Mountain contestation, which involves two Regency Government is the interesting

point of the study. The research contributed to the development of political communication, especially related to how power (politics) was used in the communication process in the context of resolving spatial disputes in Mount Kelud, Indonesia.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was a phenomenological qualitative research method (Husserl, 1999). Creswell categorised the phenomenological approach as one of the 5 (five) traditions in research in qualitative methods (Cresswell, 2014).

The research took place on Mount Kelud, which is the place disputed by Blitar and Kediri Regency in East Java Province. In the study, the phenomenological approach was used to photograph the everyday life of the people around Kelud by using three data collection techniques (Yanow, 2017). The first technique was observing. The researchers mainly observed the areas around Mount Kelud. The observations were conducted from 2015 to 2020, both from the Kediri Regency side (Sugihwaras Village, Ngancar District) and from the Blitar Regency side (Sumberasri Village, Nglegok District).

The second technique was *interviewing*. Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 9 (nine) research subjects divided into several elements. They were the East Java Provincial Government as a representative of the Central Government, Blitar Regency Government, Kediri Regency Government, Geospatial Information Agency, Regional Military Command V Brawijaya Topography as a member of the Regional Boundary Strengthening Team of East Java Province, as well as Blitar and Kediri Regency Communities Members.

The third was *reading documents*. Researches read documents from online media and several libraries in Indonesia. The following table is about the document findings and data sources in this research.

**Table 1.** The Document Findings and Data Sources

No	The Document Findings	Data Sources
1	News about Mount Kelud	Online Media
2	Books about Mount Kelud	The National Library
3	General Description of Blitar and Kediri Districts	East Java Province Library
4	The History of the Kingdom of the Kediri	Kediri Regency Regional Library
5	Blitar Regency during the Majapahit Empire	Blitar Regency Regional Library
6	Kelud Mountain Map	Geospatial Information Agency Library
7	Social Theory Books	Airlangga University Library
8	Dissertation of Political Geography	Universitas Gadjah Mada Library
9	Dissertation of Political Communication	Universitas Indonesia Library

Source: Data from Researchers (2020)

Some important things to note in phenomenology research include *noema*, *epoche* (bracketing), *noesis*, intentional analysis and eidetic reduction. Noema is the surface answer or initial answer given by the



research subject (informant). In stage *ephoce*, researchers must be keen to capture keywords for *bracketing*. At this stage, the researcher focused on words which were followed up to deepen and explore meaning to obtain *noes* (Theodoru, 2015) and *noesis* (Kamayanti, 2016).

Therefore, *noesis* could be considered as the final answer from the subject in an exploration of the meaning. After that, the whole analysis process was carried out without considering the opinions of the researcher (*intentional analysis*). Eventually, in the final stage, a result was found, which is a condensation of the whole process of meaning called *eidetic reduction*. In the research, *noema* is defined as the space or the contestation of space in Mount Kelud. In comparison, the *noesis* in the research was the *social space*, the human and social interaction of space in Mount Kelud, the *political space* and *cultural space*.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Social Spaces in Kelud Mountain

Mount Kelud is one of the volcanoes in the East Java Province of Indonesia. The mountain is located on the border of three Regencies, namely Blitar Regency, Kediri Regency and Malang Regency. It 140 km southeast of the City of Surabaya, the capital of East Java Province. Referring to Lefebvre's (1991), Mount Kelud can be identified as social space because there is an interaction of mountains (physical/material) and humans who have mental or ideas. Social interaction between humans who have an idea (mental) with Mount Kelud as a physical place has been going on since humans settled around it and named it Mount Kelud.

The name 'Kelud' or often written as *Kelut* in Javanese -in Dutch it is called *Klut*, *Cloot*, *Kloet*, or *Kloete*- has 2 (two) different meanings. For people of Kediri Regency, Kelud is a 'broom' (a tool for cleaning), as written in the Kelud Mountain Museum. However, the definition was denied by the Blitar Regency community members. They believed that the word 'Kelud' came from the Kawi language, which means 'north' (Gudel, 2018). It means that for the people of Blitar Regency, Mount Kelud is located in the north of Blitar Regency.

Historical records of human interaction with Mount Kelud has been going on for a long time. It mainly related to the impact of the Mount Kelud eruption on human civilisation. As a volcano, Kelud is the most active in Indonesia. Due to the enormity of the Mount Kelud eruption, Amin Widodo hypothesised that one of the causes of the destruction of the Majapahit Kingdom's civilisation was because it was buried by the eruption of Mount Kelud (Widodo, 2019). "*Serat Pararaton*" from Majapahit Kingdom era (Widodo, 2019) noted that Mount Kelud had erupted in 1233 Saka/Hindu Year (1311 AD), 1256 Saka (1344 AD), 1317 Saka (1395 AD), 1343 Saka (1421M), 1373 Saka (1311 AD) 1451 AD, 1384 Saka (1462 AD), and 1403 Saka (1481 AD).

Researchers observations proved that the existence of Mount Kelud as a social space -human's physical interaction with Mount Kelud- was recorded even before Majapahit Kingdom civilisation. The existence of Penataran Temple in Penataran Village, Nglegok District, Blitar Regency, a proof that human relations with Mount Kelud have occurred since the time of the Kediri kingdom. Penataran Temple is a Hindu worship temple which was built during the region of Kediri Kingdom and continued in the era of the Majapahit Kingdom. The Penataran Temple Complex was a place of worship based on the contents of the "*Prasasti Palah*" (inscription). "*Kitab Negarakertagama*" described that King Srengga (one of the Kings of Kediri Kingdom) often worshipped in the place.

The Kingdom of Kediri was the origin of Dewi Kilisuci Legend. She was connected with 2 (two) young men in various versions, for example Dewi Kilisuci with Mahesosuro and Lembusuro (www.merdeka.com, 2017) and (www.nasional.kompas.com, 2014) or Dewi Kilisuci with Mahesosuro and Jotosuro (Legenda Rakyat Kediri, 2018; Profil Kebudayaan Kabupaten Kediri, 2018). The legend was included in the *Larung Sesaji* activity which was part of the Kelud Festival in Kediri Regency (Priyatno, 2019).

Based on various sources, at that time, Dewi Kilisuci, the daughter of Jenggolo Manik, was famous for her beauty. Two kings asked for her hands in marriage. However, the two kings were not human. One king had the head of a cow, Lembu Sura. The other was had the head of a buffalo, Mahesa Suro (www.merdeka.com, 2017).

Due to the situation, the princess wanted to reject the proposals. So, she declared a contest that would be impossible for humans. She requested the contenders to build two wells on the summit of Mount Kelud. One well must smell fishy while the other must be fragrant. Both contenders must finish the task in one night or until the rooster crows.

Through magic and after working all night, Mahesa Suro and Lembu Suro were able to complete the challenge. However, Dewi Kilisuci still would not accept the proposals. Then, Dewi Kilisuci requested the kings to enter the well. Because of her seduction, both of them plunged into the deep well. Once they were in the inside, Dewi Kilisuci ordered the Jenggala soldiers to bury the two kings with stones. Mahesa Suro and Lembu Suro died. However, before their death, Lembu Suro had sworn, "*Yoh, wong Kediri mbesuk bakal pethuk piwalesku sing makaping kaping yoiku. Kediri bakal dadi kali, Blitar dadi latar, Tulungagung bakal dadi Kedung*" (Yes, the people of Kediri must pay greatly for my death. Kediri will become a river, Blitar will become the land, and Tulungagung will become a lake) (www.merdeka.com, 2017).

According to Eko Priyanto, from the Kediri Regency Office of Tourism and Culture, Dewi Kilisuci was the daughter of King Airlangga. Her proper name was Sanggrama Wijaya Tungga Dewi. According to Priyanto, '*kili*' means female priestess, '*suci*' means holy because she had never gotten her menstruation since she was thus bearing no

children. The princess was going on a 'mandito' (ascetic) (Priyatno, 2019).

Regarding the legend of Dewi Kilisuci, Eko Priyanto did not agree with the account that mentioned *Lembu Suro* and *Mahesa Suro*. According to him, both have the same meaning, namely ox or cow (Legenda Rakyat Kediri, 2018). The book entitled "*Legenda Rakyat Kediri*" was published by The Kediri Regency Office of Tourism and Culture. The book claimed that the kings were named *Mahesosuro* (cow-headed human) and *Jothosuro* (tiger-headed human).

Other than cultural significance above, Mount Kelud also has economic significance. The people on the slopes of Mount Kelud have traditionally harvested the natural resources of Mount Kelud, such as clove, coffee, pineapple, durian, and various vegetables. The situation attracted the Dutch colonists to establish plantations on the slopes of Mount Kelud. In Kediri Regency, Margomulyo Plantation is located in Sugihwaras Village, Ngancar District of Kediri Regency. In Blitar Regency, there are two plantations. Gambar plantation is located in Sumber Asri, Nglegok District while Karanganyar Coffee Plantation is located in Karanganyar, Modangan Village, Nglegok District. The eruption of Mount Kelud also resulted in sand and stone that the community can use as building materials as well as sold to several other regencies in East Java.

The interaction between human and Mount Kelud is what according to Lefebvre a social space. That means the space inhabited by humans in daily life. The space in Kelud Mountain is felt physically, understood by the Government of Kediri and Blitar Regency. It is also socially felt by the people of both Regencies in terms of economic and cultural aspects. Table 2 describes an analysis of social space on Mount Kelud

**Table 2.** Social Lives in Mount Kelud

Spatial Practice	Representations of Space	Representational Spaces
Perceived Space Physical (materialism) Space perceived Space Physical Individual	Conceived Space Mental (idealism) space understood and defined Space Idea Policy Local Government of Blitar Regency and Kediri	Lived Space Social (materialism, idealism) space in everyday society Space Social Cultural Aspects (including history) and Economic Aspects of Communities around Mount Kelud

Source: (Lefebvre, 1991), analysed by Researchers (2020)

## Space Production in Kelud Mountain

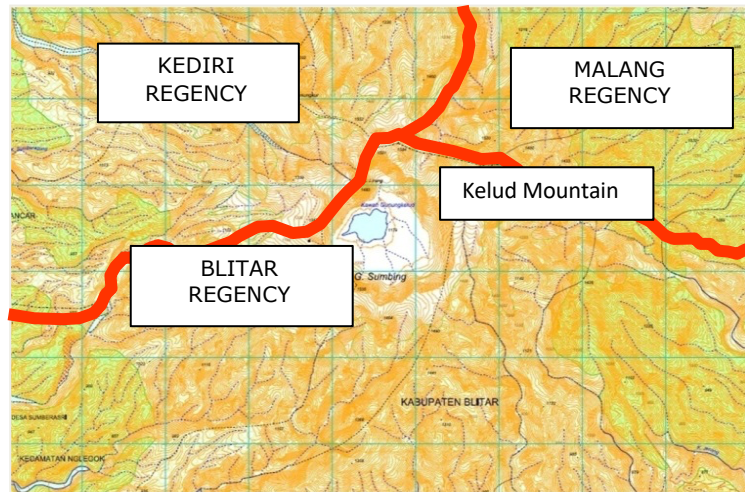
Space in Mount Kelud should not merely be portrayed as social space in term of *everyday life* around Mount Kelud as explained above. It can also be understood as a political space. Mount Kelud becomes a space produced by political power, in the case, Mount Kelud as a contested space. Space is contested or disputed by power between the Blitar Regency Government and the Kediri Regency Government. The dispute over regional boundaries between Blitar Regency and Kediri Regency has been happening since 2003. The situation justifies the expression *'there is a political of space because space is political'* (Elden, 2007).

The Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 141 of 2017 Concerning Regional Boundaries defined space contestation as the word 'dispute'. In the research, this terminology is expressed as contestation, whereas in Indonesian law Indonesia, it is known as a dispute. Although the Blitar Regency Government disagreed with the dispute because they were adamant that Kelud belongs to Blitar Regency (Winarso, 2018). The following is an explanation from Suhendro Winarso;

"Blitar has been conducting academic studies intensely. We have conducted field rehearsals in collaboration with geodesy experts from ITB. They have sued the same comment: the issue is black and white. Not grey. ITB also stated that they are ready to discuss with all universities in Indonesia. Kelud crater definitely and legitimately located in Blitar, without academic doubt. We have presented the case in five renowned universities in Indonesia. ITB, UB, UGM, ITN, ITS. Neither of the five colleges complained or disagreed. They unanimously agreed that the boundary-clarification measures carried out by Blitar Regency were in accordance with the rules and geodetic rules and so on. There is no doubt. It is clear. How the not confirmed. Even though it is black and white" (Winarso, 2018).

Aulia from the Government Administration Bureau of the East Java Province confirmed that what was contested by the two regencies was not the peak. The peak of Mount Kelud has been ruled to be in Blitar Regency. Instead, the two regencies contested the Crater of Mount Kelud (Aulia, 2019). The researchers' search of the map of Mount Kelud in the Geospatial Information Agency and the National Library revealed that the peak of Mount Kelud is indeed located in Blitar Regency. The following is an Indonesian Digital Earth Landscapes, Sheet 1508-321-CRIC, published by the National Survey and Mapping Coordinating Board.

Figure 1. 2001 Digital Indonesian Rupabumi Map



Source: Bakosurtanal 1508-321 Edition I-2001

Based on Indonesian Digital Landscape map above, it is very clear that the mountain crater is located in Blitar Regency. Nevertheless, according to Eko Artanto, the Head of Administrative Border Mapping in Geospatial Information Agency, the map is still indicative. It means that the map is yet to be officiated by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Indicative properties in maps are drawn in dotted lines. After the Ministry of Home Affairs declared the matter, it will be definitive, which means the lines do not break up (Artanto, 2018).

From the legal aspect, the dispute of Kelud crater by Blitar and Kediri Regency is in *status quo* position. That is, the matter is still on hold and is waiting for the Ministry of Home Affairs decision. The Ministry of Home Affairs as the policymaker who has the right to make decisions on such matters, as stipulated by Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation no 141 of 2017 concerning Affirmation of Regional Boundaries. In the political aspect, there is still another way to settle the dispute on Mount Kelud. The keyword is 'agreement' because politics is all about agreement.

Sapta, The Head of Topographic Data Survey Section Regional Military Command V Brawijaya, stated whenever he was invited as a member of the East Java Regional Boundary Affirmation Team in the meeting between Blitar and Kediri in the Provincial Government, stated that the map contestation was a matter of agreement (Sapta, 2019). Likewise, Eko Artanto suggested: "Just negotiate...deliberate. If you can agree, for example, the line follows the one in the north, for example. So, the Crater (Kelud) is entirely in Blitar Regency territory, for example. That is not a problem" (Artanto, 2018).

The dynamics of space contestation in Mount Kelud between Blitar and Kediri Regency since 2003 is illustrated in the following table 3.

**Table 3.** Chronology of Spatial Contestation Dynamics in Mount Kelud

No	Time	Information
1	Starting in 2003	In 2003 the Regent of Kediri, Sutrisno, began to carry out tourism development up to the Mount Kelud Crater. Blitar Regency protested against the development process. More than 12 (twelve) times the mediation process was carried out by the Provincial Government, and the Central Government related to the Kelud dispute but found no solution.
2	28 February 2012	As mandated by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the East Java Provincial Government as a facilitator of conflict resolution sued a Decree (SK) of the Governor of East Java Number 188/113/KPTS/013/2012, which decided that the Mount Kelud area was included in the District of Kediri
3	2012- 2014	Blitar Regency did not accept the Governor's decision and held a 'protest' and demonstration by the Blitar Society to the Government of East Java Province
4	December 2014	Government of East Java Province contested a Decree of East Java Governor No. 188/828 / KPTS/013/2014 concerning Revocation and Cancellation of Governor Decree Number 188/113/KPTS/013/2012 so that mediation between the two districts becomes open again.
5	December 2014- August 2015	(2) Two times the Government of East Java Province, mediated. The Government of Kediri Regency did not accept, so it used another way namely to sue the East Java Governor's Decree through PTUN. The Provincial Government submitted the matter to the Ministry of the Interior.
6	12 August 2015	PTUN Surabaya granted the Kediri Regency Government's request and cancelled the East Java Governor's Decree Number/KPTS/188/828013/201413
7	August 2015-18 December 2016	For more than a year, the Ministry of Home Affairs had not mediated with the two contested regencies
8	19 December 2016	To strengthen the Surabaya Administrative Court Decision, the Government of Kediri Regency submitted an appeal to the Supreme Court (MA). On 19 December 2016, the Decision of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia 402 K / TUN / 2016 decided to DECLINE the appeal of the Kediri Regency Government on the East Java Governor's Decree No. 188/828/KPTS/013/2014 concerning Revocation of the Decision of the East Java Governor No. 188/113/KPTS/013/2012 related to Settlement of Regional Border Disputes between Blitar Regency and Kediri Regency located in the Mount Kelud area so that the position of the Mount Kelud crater becomes <i>status quo</i> .
9	20 December 2016 - now	The Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has not yet decided the status of the Kelud Crater.

Source: Data analysis from researchers, with initial sources from (Jawa Pos Radar Blitar, 2015)

The decision of the Supreme Court is a sign that the political authority to decide regional disputes are returned to the Ministry of Home Affairs (Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation 141 of 2017). However, until now, there has been no decision from the Ministry of

Home Affairs. One solution to resolve the dispute is through politics. The keyword here is 'agreement' between parties who have political authority, namely Blitar Regency Government and Kediri Regency Government because Mount Kelud has become the symbol of the two districts.

### **Cultural Construction and Communication In Kelud Mountain**

Berger and Luckman first introduced the word construction associated with social science as '*social construction*' (Berger & Luckmann, 1990). The term 'social construction of reality' is defined as a social process through actions and interactions where individuals continuously create a reality that is shared and experienced together subjectively.

Mount Kelud is a space disputed by Kediri Regency and Blitar Regency. It has become a reality that 'created', 'constructed', 'produced' by the two districts. Irwan Abdullah explained that the world continues to experience changes, including cultural boundaries. These changes are caused by shifts in the construction of meaning which is strongly influenced by power relations (Abdullah, 2007).

Mount Kelud as a symbol fought between Blitar Regency and Kediri Regency in the Kelud Mountain contestation has 2 (two) different roads. In the legal context, Blitar chose the *de jure* route (legal/administrative) because the matter is black or white. Meanwhile, Kediri Regency chose the *de facto* route by continually developing tourism potential until today. Therefore, there is a saying, "*sing duwe Blitar sing bangun Kediri*" (Blitar owns it, but Kediri builds it) (Basuki, 2018).

Then, why did the Kediri Regency Government aggressively carry out tourism development in Mount Kelud, while Blitar Regency did not? The Blitar Regency Government explained that they considered Mount Kelud to be a disaster mitigation area, not a tourism area. Mount Kelud is a protected forest area whose 'authenticity' must be preserved. So, in the Blitar Regional Government Planning Document, there are no plans to develop Tourism facilities in Mount Kelud, unlike in the Kediri Regency. Blitar Regency has a lot of other tourism potentials, including the south coast area and dozens of temples scattered in Blitar. Regarding Mount Kelud, the Blitar Regency Government only plans to develop special interest tourism, for example, the opening of the hiking trail to the peak of Mount Kelud (Winarso, 2018).

Researchers' observations revealed that indeed up to now, from the side of Blitar Regency, there is no asphalt road to the Crater of Mount Kelud, unlike the Kediri Regency side. The trail located on the slope of Mount Kelud on the Blitar district leading to the Kelud crater is a protected forest owned by Perhutani.

Kediri Regency has different slopes conditions than Blitar Regency. Since the Dutch era, on the slopes of Mount Kelud on the side of the Kediri Regency, there is the Margomulyo Plantation, which is located in Sugihwaras Village, Ngancar District, Kediri Regency. It is currently the

Margomulyo Plantation Regional Company. Because it is a regional company, of course, the ownership of the land in the plantation belongs to the Kediri Regional Government. From Margomulyo Plantation to the Crater of Mount Kelud, it is possible to build a paved road. Finally starting in 2003, the Regent of Kediri, Sutrisno, began to build an asphalt road to the Crater of Mount Kelud. Previously, there was a trail that can only be passed by a dirt bike vehicle.

Zainal Arifin, Head of Tourism Development, Department of Tourism and Culture of Kediri Regency stated that because Sutrisno, the Regent of Kediri at the time was a technocrat, he tried to find a way to develop tourism potential in Mount Kelud. In 2006, the Kediri Regency Government began building tourism facilities and infrastructure in the Crater of Mount Kelud. Starting from the lighting in the Crater, gazebos, hot water pools, toilets, prayer rooms and food stalls (Zaenal Arifin, 2019)

The facilities built earlier, in 2006, were finally destroyed by the massive eruption of Mount Kelud in 2014: "All the facilities that we have built are lost. Around the Crater, the parking area was exhausted. Nothing left at all. Substations of view, lights, pools of hot water, all are gone, as well as public facilities, such as the small mosque that have not been saved..." (Arifin, 2019).

The eruption of Mount Kelud in 2014 became a valuable lesson for the Kediri Regency Government because Mount Kelud has become a tourist icon in the District of Kediri, the District Government of Kediri requested an opinion from the Volcanology and Disaster Mitigation Agency in Bandung. As a result, the Volcanology and Disaster Mitigation Agency approved the construction of tourism facilities, provided that they had to exceed a radius of 3 km from the Crater of Mount Kelud. The Kediri Regency Government also reviewed the Mount Kelud master plan. The Kediri Regency Government then built educational tourism facilities as well as other facilities such as a drag race on the slopes of Mount Kelud, which is located in the Margomulyo plantation owned by the Regional Government of Kediri Regency.

According to Mbah Ronggo, the '*juru kunci*' (caretaker) of Mount Kelud, besides continuously building tourism facilities on the slopes of Mount Kelud, the District Government of Kediri, has carried out the Mount Kelud offerings Larung since 2002 (Ronggo, 2020). However, according to Eko Priyanto, the Department of Tourism and Culture of Kediri Regency in 2019, the routine activity of offering in the Mount Kelud crater has been carried out since 2005 (Priyatno, 2019). Larung offerings activities are part of the Mount Kelud festival which is held annually in *Suro* (Javanese Month) or *Muharram* (Hijri Month) on Friday *Wage*. However, for the procession activities in the Kelud festival, it is usually adjusted to the community holiday schedule, which Saturday or Sunday. In the Larung Sesaji procession, there is usually a theatrical procession of a woman who is likened to Dewi Kilisuci (Priyatno, 2019).



Furthermore, Eko Priyanto explained that the primary concept of Larung Sesaji is a prayer to ask God for salvation and thankfulness for the blessings of fertile Mount Kelud land, which is very suitable for agriculture and plantations (Priyatno, 2019). Blitar Regency also carries out the prayer procession in the "*Larung Saji*". Every elected Regent in the Blitar Regency usually starts the agenda of their Administration by conducting "*Larung Intan*" in Kelud Crater since the Regent in the Dutch colonial era. However, the Larung Intan procession is done in a simple manner. Not as festive as the Kediri Regency (Winarso, 2018). Because there is no proper road access from Blitar Regency to the Kelud crater, the procession of Larung Intan Blitar Regency is also carried out by road from Kediri Regency.

Referring to (Zhou & Shin, 2017), cultural communication strategies can be used in breaking communication 'impasse.' In the connection, Mount Kelud as a social space is not only politically challenged but also culturally contested. The cultural space contestation, as explained by Irwan Abdullah, involves space, society and political power, thus causing a shift in the boundaries of cultural space (Abdullah, 2007). Kediri regency succeeded in carrying out the process of construction and cultural communication on Mount Kelud, from what was once only a myth or fairy tale, then in the form of a festival in the form of "*Larung Sesaji*" which is part of the Mount Kelud Festival. The Blitar District Government does not do them. Cultural communication in Larung Sesaji on Mount Kelud has theoretical implications that the communication process can also take place in an arena of 'space' as Fuchs's statement about meeting the conception of space production by Henri Lefebvre with communication theory (Fuchs, 2019).

## **CONCLUSION**

The study on the dispute or contestation of space in Mount Kelud between Blitar Regency and Kediri Regency can be concluded as follows. First, in everyday life of surrounding communities, Mount Kelud is a social space in which there is social interaction between the community and Mount Kelud, both of which bring economic and non-economic values such as culture, beliefs and others.

Second, the production of space in Mount Kelud is seen politically as Lefebvre's stated that there is a political space because space is political. The Central Government has not yet settled the result of space contestation between Blitar Regency and Kediri Regency since 2003 because both have different standpoint. *De jure* (law, administrative map) from the Blitar Regency Government and *de facto* from The Kediri Regency Government which has built tourism facilities and infrastructure at Mount Kelud. This is where the role of politics must be carried out, based on the statement that the map challenged an agreement. Thus, politics is also an agreement of both parties to find common ground.

Third, in the study, the perspective of spatial production is also drawn in the cultural context of Mount Kelud. Mount Kelud has become a symbol of the two districts, both Blitar and Kediri. Therefore, the space on Mount Kelud is also a symbolic contestation, which involves the history, daily life of the people and myths that develop in the community. The role of politics (power) in the symbolic contestation of space in Mount Kelud is massive because it seeks to reproduce, reconstruct and re-communicate symbols in the form of culture that develops in society—in the context of the District Government of Kediri successfully carrying out construction and cultural communication of Mount Kelud in the form of tourism development of Mount Kelud. This is evident in "*Larung Sesaji*" in the Kelud Festival which held every year on the Kediri Regency side. Cultural communication has had a positive impact on society, the "sense of belonging" of the community towards Mount Kelud, because Mount Kelud has become an inseparable part of people's daily lives. However, the research has limitations because it only links the production of space with social, political and cultural contestation on Mount Kelud. This research provided an opportunity for other researchers to also elaborate on the perspective of spatial production in other non-urban areas.

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