

**THE SOCIO-SPATIAL ACCUMULATION OF CEMENT
CORPORATIONS:**

The Reproduction of Absolute Space, Monumentalization of
Kiai, and Compartmentalization of Counter Space in Northern
Kendeng, Central Java Indonesia



By

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SRN. 1630016026

DISSERTATION

STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA

**Submitted to
School of Graduate Studies of Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic
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for the degree of Doctor in Islamic Studies**

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To the best of my knowledge and belief, I declare that this dissertation is my own work and that I have used no sources other than the ones referred to. I understand that the School of Graduate Studies of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta may take disciplinary action against me if it believes that this is not my own unaided work.

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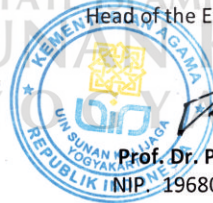
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Yogyakarta, November 14th, 2022

Head of the Examining Committee,



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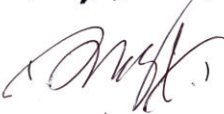
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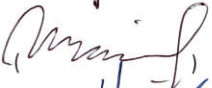
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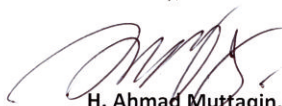
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Venue : AULA 1st floor School of Graduate Studies UIN SunanKalijaga
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as suggested in the Closed Examination on November 18, 2022, I am of the opinion that the dissertation can already be submitted to the Postgraduate UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta to be tested in the Doctoral Promotion Open Examination (S3) to obtain a Doctorate degree in Islamic Studies.

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Co-Promoter,



Achmad Uzair, S.IP., M.A., Ph.D.

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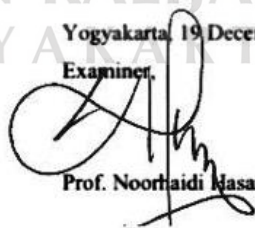
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ABSTRACT

In northern Kendeng, by employing Henri Lefebvre's theory, this research aims to decipher the production of space for the socio-spatial expansion and accumulation of cement corporations. By the production of abstract space, the expansion of cement corporations has accelerated due to how it imposes an abstract homogeneity between mining and well-being, which is actually full of contradictions. Due to these many contradictions, as well as deceptions and violations, the abstract space has been challenged by massive local resistance since 2005. For this reason, to perpetuate its dominance in the social space of northern Kendeng, the abstract space has now transformed into absolute space. Through its transformation into both (a) an absolute (fascist) political space and (b) an absolute (dogmatic) religious one, these socio-spatial expansions and accumulation of cement corporations are hard to challenge by the counter space of northern Kendeng.

In the earlier case of Pati, even though the cement factory of *PT Indocement* won the lawsuit, it resulted from odd spatial practices because it contained several irregularities. In the following case of Rembang, regardless of the fact that operations of the *PT Semen Indonesia* cement factory should have been legally terminated, it persisted with the support from absolute political and religious spaces. Due to the dominance of such absolute space, the counter space found difficulties in transforming it into a differential space for several reasons. For example, *first*, the support from a high-profile *kiai* for the cement factory in Rembang and the polarization of (religious) identity-related issues in Pati made the counter space encounter obstructions. *Second*, the choice of Samin's identity as a representative character in the documentary film entitled "*Samín vs. Semen*" has become a double-edged sword in which it has actually managed to obtain great solidarity at higher levels, but it has caused fragmentation of counter space at the local level. Particularly in Pati, not only is space fragmented, but bodies (as the sources of space)

and identities (as the properties of the body) are also compartmentalized. I would show that not only has *Sedulur Sikep*'s involvement been exploited to divide the resistance movement, the involvement of non-Muslims (i.e., Catholics) has been polarized in such a way that at least the apathy of Muslim groups to join the available resistance alliance has been detected. *Third*, the involvement of NGOs has become another double edged sword in which they were initially involved to participate in building a resistance movement, but later they had aggravated internal suspicions, antagonism and friction in counter space.

Key words: Production of Space, Resistance Movement, Cement Corporations, Northern Kendeng



التراكم الاجتماعي المكاني لشركات الأسمنت:

استنساخ الفضاء المطلق، وأثرية الكيبي، وتقسيم الفضاء المضاد

في كندنج الشمالية، جاوة الوسطى إندونيسيا

فؤاد فائزي

مستخلص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى شرح إنتاج الفضاء للتوسع والتراكم الاجتماعي - المكاني لمصنع الأسمنت بكندنج الشمالية باستخدام نظرية هنري لوفيفر. ومع إنتاج الفضاء الخيالي، تم تسريع توسعة مصنع الأسمنت. نظرًا لاحتوائه على العديد من التناقضات والانتهاكات والخداعات، فقد تلقى الفضاء الخيالي مقاومة محلية هائلة منذ عام 2005. ولذلك، لإدامة هيمنته في الفضاء الاجتماعي بكندنج الشمالية، تحول الفضاء الخيالي إلى الفضاء المطلق. من خلال تحولها إلى (أ) الفضاء السياسي المطلق (وهو فاشي) و(ب) الفضاء الديني المطلق (وهو عقائدي)، يصعب معارضة التوسع والتراكم الاجتماعي - المكاني لشركة الأسمنت من خلال الفضاء المضاد في كندنج الشمالية.

على الرغم من فوز مصنع الأسمنت PT Indocement بالدعوى في قضية باقي، إلا أنه تم الحصول عليه من خلال ممارسة مكانية غريبة لاحتوائه على العديد من المخالفات. في حالة رمانج، على الرغم من أنه كان يجب إنهاء مصنع الأسمنت PT Semen Indonesia بشكل قانوني، فإنه نجا بدعم من الفضاء السياسي والديني المطلق. بسبب هيمنة الفضاء المطلق، يواجه الفضاء المضاد صعوبة في التحول إلى الفضاء التفاضلي لعدة أسباب. مثال ذلك، أولاً، أدى دعم كيبي الأثري لمصنع الأسمنت في رمانج واستقطاب قضية الهوية (الدينية)

في باقي إلى جعل الفضاء المضاد يواجه عقبات. وثانيًا، أصبح اختيار هوية سامين كشخصية تمثيلية في الفيلم الوثائقي بعنوان "سامين مقابل الأسمنت" سيقًا ذا حدين نجح بالفعل في تعزيز التضامن الكبير على الصعيدين الوطني والدولي، لكنه في الحقيقة يسبب في حدوث تجزئة من الفضاء المضاد على المستوى المحلي. وعلى وجه الخصوص في باقي، فإن الفضاء المضاد ليس متجزأ فحسب، بل تم تجزئة الجسم (كمصدر للفضاء) والهوية (كخاصية للجسم). سوف أشير إلى أن مشاركة Sedulur Sikep لم تستخدم فقط لتقسيم حركة المقاومة، بل إن مشاركة غير المسلمين (أي الكاثوليكين) قد تم استقطابهم بطريقة تجعل على الأقل لامبالاة الجماعات الإسلامية للانضمام إلى تحالفات المقاومة القائمة. وثالثًا، أصبح تورط المنظمات غير الحكومية سلاحًا ذا حدين من حيث أنها انخرطت في البداية في بناء حركة المقاومة، لكنها بعد ذلك لا تؤدي إلا إلى تفاقم الشكوك والعداء والاحتكاك الداخلي في الفضاء المضاد. وثالثًا، أصبحت مشاركة المنظمات غير الحكومية سلاحًا ذا حدين حيث تورطوا في البداية في بناء حركات مقاومة، لكنها بعد ذلك تؤدي إلى تفاقم الشك والعداء والاحتكاك الداخلي في الفضاء المضاد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإنتاج الفضائي، حركة المقاومة، مصنع الأسمنت، كندنج الشمالية

ABSTRAK

Di Kendeng Utara, dengan menggunakan teori Henri Lefebvre, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguraikan produksi ruang bagi ekspansi dan akumulasi sosio-spasial pabrik semen. Dengan produksi ruang abstrak, ekspansi pabrik semen telah diakselerasikan. Karena mengandung banyak kontradiksi, pelanggaran dan tipu daya, ruang abstrak mendapatkan perlawanan lokal yang massif sejak 2005. Oleh karena itu, untuk melanggengkan dominasinya dalam ruang sosial Kendeng utara, ruang abstrak telah menjelma menjadi ruang absolut. Melalui transformasinya menjadi (a) ruang absolut politis (yang fasis) dan (b) ruang absolut agamis (yang dogmatis), ekspansi dan akumulasi sosio-spasial dari korporasi semen itu sulit dilawan oleh ruang konter di Kendeng Utara.

Dalam kasus Pati, sekalipun pabrik semen *PT Indocement* memenangkan gugatan, ia dihasilkan dari praktik tata ruang yang ganjil karena mengandung beberapa kejanggalan. Dalam kasus Rembang, meski pabrik semen *PT Semen Indonesia* seharusnya dihentikan secara hukum, ia tetap bertahan dengan dukungan ruang absolut politis dan agamis. Karena dominasi ruang absolut, ruang konter mengalami kesulitan untuk bertransformasi menjadi ruang diferensial karena beberapa alasan. Misalnya, *pertama*, dukungan seorang *kiai* yang monumental terhadap pabrik semen di Rembang dan polarisasi isu identitas (agama) di Pati membuat ruang konter menemui kendala. *Kedua*, pemilihan identitas Samin sebagai tokoh yang representatif dalam film dokumenter berjudul "*Samin vs Semen*" telah menjadi pedang bermata dua yang sebenarnya telah berhasil menggenjot solidaritas yang besar di tingkat nasional dan internasional, namun ternyata ia telah menyebabkan fragmentasi ruang konter di tingkat lokal. Khusus di Pati, ruang konter itu tidak hanya terfragmentasi, tetapi tubuh (sebagai sumber ruang) dan identitas (sebagai properti tubuh) juga telah dikotak-kotakkan. Saya akan menunjukkan bahwa keterlibatan *Sedulur Sikep* tidak hanya dimanfaatkan untuk memecah belah gerakan perlawanan,

keterlibatan non-Muslim (yaitu, Katolik) telah terpolarisasi sedemikian rupa sehingga setidaknya sikap apatis kelompok Muslim untuk bergabung dalam aliansi perlawanan yang telah ada telah terdeteksi. *Ketiga*, keterlibatan LSM telah menjadi pedang bermata dua di mana mereka pada awalnya terlibat untuk berpartisipasi dalam membangun gerakan perlawanan, tetapi kemudian mereka justru memperburuk kecurigaan, antagonisme dan friksi internal di ruang konter.

Kata Kunci: Produksi Ruang, Gerakan Perlawanan, Pabrik Semen, Kendeng Utara



TRANSLITERATION

This work contains many non-English words in languages such as Indonesian, Javanese, and Arabic. I write non-English words in italics. Short explanations of non-English words are written inside square brackets [] and footnotes are used for longer and more detailed explanations. To write Arabic words, the transliteration system of the Library of Congress and the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* have been used with slight variations.

ء=	ز= z	ف= f	
ب= b	س= s	ق= q	
ت= t	ش= sh	ك= k	
ث= th	ص= s }	ل= l	
ج= j	ض= d }	م= m	
ح= h }	ط= t }	ن= n	
خ= kh	ظ= z }	و= w	
د= d	ع= ‘	ه= h	
ذ= dh	غ= gh	ي= y	
ر= r			
Short:	= a	= i	= u
Long:	ا = a>	ي = i>	و = u>
Diphthong:	اي = ay		او = aw

The *ta marbuta* (ة) is omitted unless it occurs within an *id}a>fa* in which case it is written “t”, such as *wah}dat al-wuju>d*. Arabic words that have been incorporated into Indonesian, Javanese, and indicate certain events, names of institutions and persons, or are now part of the vocabulary of these languages, are written in their Indonesianized form, such as ‘*Ahli Hikmah*’ instead of ‘*Ahl al-H}ikmah*’, ‘*Akhwat-Ikhwān*’ instead of ‘*Akhwa>t-Ikhwa>n*’, and ‘*Sultan Hasanuddin*’ instead of ‘*Sult}a>n H}asan al-Di>n*’.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY OF WORK	iii
APPROVAL	iv
YUDISIUM	v
BOARD OF EXAMINERS OPEN EXAMINATION FOR DOCTORAL PROMOTION	vi
PROMOTOR APPROVAL	vii
APPROVAL STATEMENT	viii
ABSTRACTS	xiii
TRANSLITERATION	xix
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	xxi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xxii
TABLE OF FIGURES	xxvi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	
xxviiiiviii	
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
A. Research Background	1
B. Research Questions	4
C. Research Purposes and Significances	4
D. Literature Review.....	4
1. <i>Sedulur Sikep</i> : Minority Identity, Cement Mining Company, and Resistance	5
2. Collective Identity, Framing Strategy and Networks of Resistance: From Grassroots to Elites	9
3. Contested Discourse on Mining Industry: State, Cement Corporation, and Local Villagers.....	12
E. Theoretical Framework.....	17
1. The Production of Space: Deciphering Abstract Space and Absolute Space	17
2. Competing for the (Religious) Authority of <i>Kiai</i> and Development: Figurative Process, Narrative Making, and Legitimative Acts.....	34

3. The Dilemma of Identity: Advantages and Risks in Resistance Movements.....	44
F. Research Methods.....	48
1. Data Collection Method.....	48
2. Location of Study.....	51
3. Research Informants.....	52
4. Data Analysis Method.....	56
5. Ethical Consideration.....	56
6. Structure of Discussion.....	58

**CHAPTER II KENDENG IN MOTION:
THE CONTRADICTIONS AND RESISTANCES
AGAINST THE SPATIAL EXPANSION OF CEMENT
CORPORATIONS..... 61**

A. The Spatial Expansions of the Cement Industry in Kendeng.....	61
1. The Cement Industry in <i>Northern Kendeng</i> of Central Java.....	61
2. The Failure of <i>PT Semen Gresik</i> and the Progress of <i>PT Sahabat Mulya Sakti</i> in Pati Regency.....	66
3. <i>Semen Indonesia</i> in Rembang Regency: Legally Disbanded but Operating.....	70
B. The Spatial Configuration of Northern Kendeng: Between Living Spaces for Agricultural Activities and the Mining Industry.....	74
1. The Spatial Re-organization of Access to Land and Water: Villager Exclusions and Resistance.....	74
2. Spatial Planning (RTRW) and (Strategic) Environmental (Impact) Assessment (AMDAL-KLHS): Contradictions, Violations, and Deceptions.....	81
3. The Investment Value of the Cement Industry versus the Economic Valuation of Agricultural Resources for Surrounding Villages.....	105
C. Conclusion.....	117

CHAPTER III ABSTRACT SPACE VERSUS COUNTER SPACE: THE CONTESTED RE-PRODUCTION OF MUSLIM RELIGIO-SOCIAL SPACE IN PATI AND REMBANG..... 119

A. Pati and Rembang: Unpacking the Political and the Religious Spatiality 119

B. Corporate Social Responsibilities: Compartmentalizing Counter Space of Pati..... 130

C. The Distribution of Social Funds in Rembang: Dominating Social Space, Appropriating Muslim Figure (*Kiai*), and Building Spatial Metaphor 142

D. *Tenda & Musholla Perjuangan*: Building and Obliterating Counter (Religious) Space of Rembang 159

E. *Kendeng Lestari*: A Contestation over its Spatial Meaning between Cak Nun versus Gunretno 179

F. Conclusion 195

CHAPTER IV THE SPATIO-RELIGIOUS HEGEMONY OF THE CEMENT CORPORATION: MONUMENTALIZING THE FIGURATIVE BODY OF KIAI AND HIS RELIGIOUS NARRATIVES 197

A. Religion and *Kiai* in the Polemic Vortex of a Cement Factory: Contests for Religious Absolute Space..... 197

B. Fatwa and *Bahth al-Masāil*: Vying for Religious (Narrative) Space 203

C. Monumentalization of the Figurative Body of *Kiai* Maimoen Zubair: Reproducing a Religious Absolute Space for the Cement Corporation..... 209

D. The Supporting (Religious) Narratives of *Kiai* Maimoen Zubair for the Cement Factory: The Reproduction of the (Islamic) Axiom on Nationalism and Historical Genesis of *PT Semen Indonesia*..... 223

E. The ‘Moderated’ Counter-Space: Reinterpreting Mbah Mun’s Statements and Building Counter Narratives 232

F. Conclusion 243

CHAPTER V OBSERVING THE ENIGMA OF DIFFERENTIAL SPACE: STIGMATIZATION, POLARIZATION, AND COMPARTMENTALIZATION OF COUNTER SPACE.....	245
A. Saminist (<i>Sedulur Sikep</i>) and Other Spatial Bodies: Internal Frictions, Conflicts, and Fragmentation of Counter Space	245
B. The Paradox of “ <i>Samin versus Semen</i> ”: Framing, Counter-Framing and Fragmentation of Counter Space	285
C. NGOs: Another Double-Edged Sword for Counter Space	300
D. Conclusion	325
CHAPTER VI FINAL REMARKS: THE REASON WHY THE SPATIAL EXPANSION AND ACCUMULATION OF CEMENT CORPORATIONS IN NORTHERN KENDENG IS HARD TO CHALLENGE.....	327
A. Conclusions.....	327
B. Reflections	328
C. Recommendations.....	330
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	331
CURRICULUM VITAE	369

SUNAN KALIJAGA
 YOGYAKARTA

TABLE OF FIGURES

Picture I. 1	The Position of Pati and Rembang Regency in Central Java	52
Picture II. 1	Location of the Villages Affected by Cement Corporations in Pati & Rembang	65
Picture II. 2	The Villages Affected by PT Semen Gresik's Mining Plan in the Sukolilo Sub-District of Pati Regency	84
Picture II. 3	The Villages Affected by PT Sahabat Mulya Sakti's Mining Plan in the Sub-district of Kayen & Tambakromo of Pati Regency.....	89
Picture II. 4	The Villages Affected by PT Semen Indonesia's Mining Activities in the Gunem-Bulu Sub-District of Pati.....	95
Picture II. 5	A Flood in Tegaldowo Village in April 2020.....	110
Picture III. 1	The Town Square of Rembang at Night	144
Picture III. 2	SMKN 1 and the Academy of Semen Indonesia Sponsored by PT SI	152
Picture III. 3	The Cement Plant of PT SI versus the Surrounding Agricultural Landscape.....	160
Picture III. 4	The Tent of "Struggle" in the Location of PT Semen Indonesia's Cement Factory.....	167
Picture III. 5	The Inauguration of the Musholla of "Struggle" in the Location of PT Semen Indonesia's Cement Factory.....	169
Picture III. 6	The Tent of Pro-Cement Group.....	171
Picture III. 7	Photographs of the Perpetrators for the Burning of Tenda Perjuangan	174
Picture III. 8	The Picture of Habib Sholeh Anis Ba'asyin, Cak Nun, and Gunretno (from left to right).....	181
Picture IV. 1	The Picture of a Peasant Mother (Yu Sukinah) who Visited Mbah Mun for Support & Blessing ...	200
Picture IV. 2	The Gravestone of Mbah Ronggodito in Tegaldowo	203

Picture IV. 3	The Monument of “hubbul wathan minal iman” in the Main Road of Pati-Rembang	229
Picture V. 1	The Resource Persons in “Kuliah Bersama Rakyat” in Kedumulyo-Sukolilo-Pati 2019.....	252
Table II. 1	Court Decisions on the Conflict over the <i>PT Semen Gresik</i> Factory in Sukolilo Pati	68
Table II. 2	Court Decisions on the Conflict over PT SMS/PT Indocement in Kayen and Tambakromo Pati	69
Table II. 3	Shareholders of PT Semen Indonesia Tbk.....	71
Table II. 4	Court Decisions on Conflict over <i>PT Semen Indonesia</i> in Gunem Sub-district of Rembang	72
Table II. 5	The New Licence for <i>PT Semen Indonesia</i>	73
Table II. 6	The Elements and Membership of JMPPK	80
Table II. 7	Cost per Month for Water-related Activities during Drought in Rembang	93
Table II. 8	The Contradictions in the Spatial Practices of the Cement Corporations in Northern Kendeng	101
Table II. 9	Livelihood Composition of Kedumulyo Villagers in 2009	111
Table II. 10	The Main Occupation of each Working Age in Pati 2018-2019.....	112
Table III. 1	Population and Religion in Pati Regency in 2015	119
Table III. 2	Population and Religion in Rembang Regency in 2020	120
Table III. 3	The Number of Pesantren and Santri in Pati & Rembang	120
Table III. 4	The Number of Pesantren & Kiai by Subdistrict in Rembang Regency (2016)	147
Table IV. 1	The Networked-Political Position of Mbah Mun’s Family	213
Table IV. 2	The Networked-Political Position of KH Thoyfoer’s Family	216

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAWK	: <i>Aliansi Ahli Waris Kendeng</i>
AKSI	: <i>Akademi Komunitas Semen Indonesia Rembang (Rembang Community Academy of Semen Indonesia)</i>
AMDAL	: <i>Analisis Dampak Lingkungan</i> (Environmental Impact Assessment – EIA)
APPEL	: <i>Aliansi Pemuda Peduli Lingkungan</i>
APTI	: <i>Asosiasi Petani Tembakau Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Tobacco Farmers Association)
ASC	: <i>Acintyacunyata Speleological Club</i>
CAT	: <i>Cekungan Air Tanah</i> (Groundwater Basin)
CSR	: <i>Corporate Social Responsibilities</i>
DPRD	: <i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah</i> (Local House of Representatives)
EIA	: <i>Environmental Impact Assessment</i>
FMPL	: <i>Forum Masyarakat Peduli Lingkungan</i>
FNKSDA	: <i>Front Nahdliyyin untuk Kedaulatan Sumber Daya Alam</i> (Nahdliyyin Front for Popular Sovereignty over Natural Resources)
FORMASI	: <i>Forum Masyarakat Sinom Widodo</i>
Gemati	: <i>Gerakan Masyarakat Brati</i>
GPS	: <i>Glinggang Puthu Sinder</i>
IUP	: <i>Izin Usaha Pertambangan</i> (Mining Business License)
JMPPK	: <i>Jaringan Masyarakat Peduli Pegunungan Kendeng</i> (Network of Community for Kendeng Preservation)
KBAK	: <i>Kawasan Bentang Alam Karst Sukolilo</i> (Sukolilo Karst Landscape Area)
KEPAL	: <i>Keluarga Pemuda Lemah Abang</i>
KLHS	: <i>Kajian Lingkungan Hidup Strategis</i> (Strategic Environmental Assessment – SEA)

KRP	: <i>Kebijakan, Rencana, Program</i>
KSP	: <i>Kantor Staf Kepresidenan</i> (Presidential Staff Office)
LIKRA	: <i>Lingkar Kendeng Sejahtera</i> (Circle of Prosperous Kendeng)
LSM	: <i>Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat</i> (NGO – Non-Governmental Organization)
MA	: <i>Mahkamah Agung</i>
MUI	: <i>Majelis Ulama Indonesia</i> (Chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council)
MWC-NU	: <i>Majelis Wakil Cabang Nahdlatul Ulama</i> (Nahdlatul Ulama Branch Office)
NU	: <i>Nahdlatul Ulama</i>
PBNU	: <i>Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama</i> (The Executive Board of Nahdhatul Ulama)
PCNU	: <i>Pengurus Cabang Nahdlatul Ulama</i> (Nahdlatul Ulama Branch Management)
PDAM	: <i>Perusahaan Daerah Air Minum</i> (State-Owned Water Company)
PDI	: <i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Democratic Party)
PDIP	: <i>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan</i> (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)
PKB	: <i>Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa</i> (National Awakening Party)
PLTN	: <i>Pembangkit Listrik Tenaga Nuklir</i> (nuclear power plant)
PNI	: <i>Partai Nasionalis Indonesia</i> (Indonesian Nationalist Party)
PPLH UNDIP	: <i>Pusat Penelitian Lingkungan Hidup Universitas Diponegoro</i>
PPP	: <i>Partai Persatuan Pembangunan</i> (United Development Party)
PT INTP	: <i>PT Indocement Tunggul Prakasa Tbk</i>
PT SG	: <i>PT Semen Gresik</i>

PT SI	: <i>PT Semen Indonesia</i>
PT SMS	: <i>PT Sahabat Mulya Sakti</i>
PTTUN	: <i>Pengadilan Tinggi Tata Usaha Negara</i> (High State Administrative Court)
PTUN	: <i>Pengadilan Tata Usaha Negara</i> (State Administrative Court)
RKL	: <i>Rencana Pengelolaan Lingkungan</i> (Environmental Management Plan)
RPL	: <i>Rencana Pemantauan Lingkungan</i> (Environmental Monitoring Plan)
RTRW	: <i>Rencana Tata Ruang Wilayah</i> (Spatial Planning)
RZW3PK	: <i>Rencana Zonasi Wilayah Pesisir dan Pulau-Pulau Kecil</i>
SGG	: <i>Semen Gresik Group</i>
SMGR	: <i>Semen Gresik Group</i>
SMIG	: <i>Semen Indonesia Group</i>
SMKN	: <i>Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Negeri</i> (Public Vocational High School)
SOE	: State-Owned Enterprise
SPP	: <i>Serikat Petani Pati</i>
WALHI	: <i>Wahana Lingkungan Hidup</i> (Indonesian Forum for the Environment)
WIUP	: <i>Wilayah Izin Usaha Pertambangan</i> (Mining Business Permit Area)
YLBHI	: <i>Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum</i> (The Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation)

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

On June 16, 2014, hundreds of village mothers suffered from beatings and other repressive actions from the local police. Two women fainted, one mother suffered from skin abrasions, and someone was thrown into the bushes by the police at that time, as well.¹ The beatings began as a group of mothers from the village blocked a group of government officials who would conduct a groundbreaking for the establishment of a cement factory in Rembang, Central Java². These mothers refused to step aside and they just threw themselves on the road as a shield to block the entourage of cement officials. There was a mother who took her clothes off as a form of protest. To disperse the village women's protest, the police took repressive actions.³ Following this incident, the mothers had set up a tent and a small mosque (*musholla*) in front of the entrance of *PT. Semen Indonesia* (PT SI). It was built to embody their resistance against the cement factory.

¹ Tommy Apriando, "Dua Tahun Perempuan Rembang Menolak Tambang di Tenda Perjuangan," *Mongabay Environmental News*, last modified June 22, 2016, accessed March 26, 2020, <https://www.mongabay.co.id/2016/06/22/dua-tahun-perempuan-rembang-menolak-tambang-di-tenda-perjuangan/>.

² A similar blocking protest also occurred in the resistance against *Semen Gresik* (SG) in Kedumulyo, Sukolilo Pati in 2009. In this protest, the local peasants blocked the land measurement of PT SG's prospective plant in Kedumulyo village, Sukolilo, Pati. After this protest, nine protesters from the local village were arrested by the police. See Erwin Dwi Kristianto, *Menyelamatkan Lingkungan Berakhir Di Penjara: Kriminalisasi 9 Warga Penolak Pabrik Semen Di Kabupaten Pati*, ed. Donny Danardono (Semarang: YLBHI, Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Semarang, 2009).

³ Ming Ming Lukiarti, "Perjuangan Ibu-ibu Petani Rembang Melawan Korporasi Tambang," *Jurnal Perempuan*, accessed March 26, 2020, <http://www.jurnalperempuan.org/2/post/2014/07/ming-ming-lukiarti-perjuangan-ibu-ibu-petani-rembang-melawan-korporasi-tambang.html>.

The *Kendeng* Mountains are a series of interconnected mountains that stretch across Central Java to East Java. Due to their potential for karst, they have attracted interest from cement-mining industry. Yet, for example, in Pati and Rembang of Central Java, the arrival of cement corporations has sparked resistance from local villagers, the majority of whom depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The surrounding agricultural community believes that the arrival of mining corporations would damage northern Kendeng's ecosystem. Since northern Kendeng, Central Java, has been targeted as an area for the cement industry,⁴ various protests against cement corporations have emerged.

Among others, massive resistance from local villagers against cement corporations have continued since 2005⁵ when *PT Semen Gresik* (PT SG) planned to obtain a mining permit in the northern Kendeng village of Sukolilo, Pati. The local villagers filed a lawsuit against it and the Supreme Court (*Mahkamah Agung* – MA) finally decided to revoke the mining permit in 2010⁶. Following that, *PT Indocement Tunggul Prakasa Tbk*, through its subsidiary *PT Sahabat Mulya Sakti* (PT SMS), gained mining permits in Tambakromo and Kayen, Pati, in 2013⁷. Responding to that, the local community filed a lawsuit, but failed, because PT SMS won it in the Supreme Court in

⁴ There are several cement factories targeting northern Kendeng as their mining areas. Some are already operating while others are in the process of managing their license/permit applications. They are (1) *Semen Indonesia* & PT Holcim in Tuban, (2) *Semen Grobogan* in Grobogan, (3) *PT Tahta Radja Sakti* in Lamongan, (4) *Semen Indonesia* in Rembang, and (5) Indocement in Pati. See Mawa Kresna, "Serbuan Pabrik Semen di Pegunungan Kendeng Utara," *tirto.id*, last modified March 22, 2017, accessed March 28, 2020, <https://tirto.id/serbuan-pabrik-semen-di-pegunungan-kendeng-utara-clgT>.

⁵ Agust Eko Yuwono, "Resistensi Masyarakat Terhadap Rencana Pembangunan Pabrik Semen di Kedumulyo Kecamatan Sukolilo Kabupaten Pati" (Universitas Negeri Semarang, 2010), 65.

⁶ Citra Dewi, "Analisis Gerakan Sosial di Kecamatan Sukolilo, Kabupaten Pati, Jawa Tengah" (Skripsi, Institut Pertanian Bogor, 2015), 61–2.

⁷ Ganies Oktaviana, "Analisis Konflik Sumber Daya Alam di Pegunungan Kendeng Utara, Kabupaten Pati, Provinsi Jawa Tengah (Studi kasus : Rencana pembangunan pabrik semen oleh PT. SMS di Kecamatan Tambakromo dan Kayen)" (Skripsi, Institut Pertanian Bogor, 2015).

2017. PT SMS was allowed to continue its proposal for an operational license in 2020⁸. Meanwhile, after the original failure in Pati, PT SG moved and continues its mining plan in Rembang and obtained a mining permit from the Central Java Governor in 2012. In Rembang, PT SG changed its name to *PT Semen Indonesia* (PT SI)⁹. Even so, the local villagers eventually won their lawsuit in the Supreme Court in 2016 and PT SI must stop its activities. However, PT SI has insisted on carrying out the plant's operations and mining activities in Rembang¹⁰.

In this research, the recent developments of the above issues will be elaborated. At first glance it appears that the facts on the ground imply the use of social movement theory, but this research will not be structured and specifically analyzed with that theory. This is primarily done to avoid the tendency of so-called romanticizing resistance¹¹ that fails to capture the workings of power and its transformation in the everyday lives of the inhabitants of space in northern Kendeng. For that reason, this research uses the theory of production of space from Henry Lefebvre (1974) to unpack the workings of power in creating new spaces for capital expansions. I will use Lefebvre's theory to diagnose how power works in social space by (1) capturing power relations, (2) locating their position, and (3) finding out the points of application and the methods used¹².

In this research, I argue that, *first*, capitalist domination is made possible by the endorsement or the negligence of the political space

⁸ Andika Prabowo, "MA Tolak Kasasi Warga Pati," *Koran Sindo*, last modified March 14, 2017, accessed March 28, 2020, <http://koran-sindo.com/page/news/2017-03-14/5/116>.

⁹ Maksun Syam, "Jaringan Penolakan terhadap Industri Tambang di Pegunungan Kendeng Utara" (Universitas Indonesia, 2016), 67.

¹⁰ Danang Firmanto, "Kalah di Pengadilan, Semen Indonesia Nekad Bangun Pabrik," last modified October 12, 2016, accessed March 28, 2020, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/811757/kalah-di-pengadilan-semen-indonesia-nekad-bangun-pabrik>.

¹¹ Lila Abu-Lughod, "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women," *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 1 (February 1990): 41–55.

¹² Foucault, 1982: 209, 211 as cited in *ibid.*, 42.

through many socio-spatial irregularities, contradictions, and violence practiced by the cement corporations in creating new spaces for their mining operations. *Second*, capitalist power is also accelerated by support from a high-profile *kiai* (religious leader) for the cement corporation so as to moderate the local resistance tendencies. *Third*, to make matters worse, the dominating tendencies of the cement corporations are harder to challenge due to the fragmentation of the resistance movements that result from (a) the polarization of religious identity and (b) the antagonistic discourses and narratives among the activists that lead to internal suspicions and frictions.

B. Research Questions

Based on the above background, this research aims to answer several questions:

1. Why has there been continuous exploration and exploitation of cement mining in northern Kendeng, Central Java?
2. Regarding the fact that there are many irregularities in the cement-mining plan, in what ways do cement corporations maintain their dominance?
3. Why is it difficult for resistance movements to counter the dominance of cement corporations?

C. Research Purposes and Significances

1. To determine the reasons why cement corporations are able to continue their plans in spite of massive resistance in northern Kendeng, Central Java.
2. To find out the ways in which the cement corporations maintain their dominance.
3. To elaborate on the obstructions of resistance movements in challenging the dominance of cement corporations.

D. Literature Review

There have been many studies on the agrarian conflicts between cement factories and local villagers in northern Kendeng, Central Java, Indonesia. Considering that, the literature review is formulated

through a contextual (rather than historical and theoretical) approach based on the existing research. As far as I reviewed the existing research, there are several that need to be briefly explained to situate my research position. I arranged them into several topics below:

1. *Sedulur Sikep*: Minority Identity, Cement Mining Company, and Resistance

In Pati, Central Java, the involvement of Saminists, recently referred to as *Sedulur Sikep*, in resistance movements against *PT Semen Gresik* (PT SG), which later became *PT Semen Indonesia* (PT SI), and *PT Indocement* is significant. In this case, Idhom (2009) points out that *Sedulur Sikep* has a vital role in the resistance movement against *PT Semen Gresik* in Sukolilo, Pati, Central Java¹³. Interestingly, Idhom argues that the oppositional predisposition of *Sedulur Sikep* is related to their history and ideology of resistance during the colonial era¹⁴. Furthermore, that *Sedulur Sikep*'s resistance against the cement mining factories was an integral part of their struggle against the stigmatization of their identity. In this case, the stigmatization and marginalization of the *Sedulur Sikep* were restored in northern Kendeng to weaken the resistance against cement corporations¹⁵. As a minority group, *Sedulur Sikep* often receives unfair treatment and is judged by the state and the majority group. Additionally, in the midst of plans to build a cement factory (PT SG), they had to deal with the powers of capital, state, and pro-cement groups who were trying to weaken the resistance movement by stigmatizing and marginalizing their identity. For example, there is the stigma that *Sedulur Sikep* is a group of backward, uneducated, and ignorant people, which means that their invitation to refuse a cement-

¹³ Addi Mawahibun Idhom, "Resistensi Komunitas Sedulur Sikep terhadap Semen di Sukolilo Pati" (Skripsi, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2009).

¹⁴ Zakki Abdillah, "Politik Perlawanan Sedulur Sikep" (Tesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2017), accessed April 15, 2020, <http://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/30399/>.

¹⁵ Idhom, "Resistensi Komunitas Sedulur Sikep terhadap Semen," 116.

mining company should be ignored¹⁶. On top of that, a Muslim group¹⁷ of the Sukolilo sub-district participated in strengthening the stigma by labeling *Sedulur Sikep* infidels (*kafir*), which means that following their call to refuse cement mining corporations would be *haram* (forbidden by Islamic law)¹⁸, Unfortunately, the production of such Islamic narratives has not yet been elaborated on in greater detail.

Moreover, Idhom shows that *Sedulur Sikep*'s resistance against PT SG is closely related to the construction of their beliefs, especially regarding the belief that agriculture is the only recognized livelihood for them. Aprianto (2013) further argues that such a belief has led *Sedulur Sikep* to have a strong attachment to the land because it is believed as not merely soil, but also as a presence of social and state life system¹⁹. For that reason, the arrival of a cement-mining factory is considered a threat to the foundation of their belief. This belief has become one of the underlying powers of *Sedulur Sikep* in resisting PT SG.

Apart from the *Sedulur Sikep* community, Yuwono (2010)²⁰ and Dewi (2015)²¹ acknowledges that many other villagers of Sukolilo are mainly worried that cement mining activities will damage their environment and water resources for their living needs and agricultural lands. They are aware that they are not prepared to work in a cement mining factory and are incapable of competing with the highly limited prospective of outside-workers with proper educations²². They are

¹⁶ Ibid., 149.

¹⁷ Idhom admitted that the *santri* (traditional Muslim) group is the largest group in Pati along with *kiai* (charismatic Muslim scholars) and their *pesantren* (Muslim boarding schools) with quite a number of students. See Ibid., 196–7.

¹⁸ Ibid., 150.

¹⁹ Tri Chandra Aprianto, "Perampasan Tanah dan Konflik: Kisah Perlawanan Sedulur Sikep," *BHUMI: Jurnal Agraria dan Pertanahan*, no. 37 (2013): 160.

²⁰ Yuwono, "Resistensi Masyarakat Terhadap Rencana Pembangunan Pabrik Semen," 64.

²¹ Dewi, "Analisis Gerakan Sosial di Kecamatan Sukolilo," 40.

²² See Yuwono, "Resistensi Masyarakat Terhadap Rencana Pembangunan Pabrik Semen," 65 and; Dewi, "Analisis Gerakan Sosial di Kecamatan Sukolilo," 37.

generally worried about the disturbance of their economic welfare by the presence of a cement factory²³.

Moreover, for resisting marginalization, as well as the weakening efforts against resistance, the anti-cement *Sedulur Sikep* activists actively propagate their message into villages to convince people that there is a threat of environmental damage to *Kendeng* due to mining activities. They also mobilize their cultural, social, and political networks at the local and national levels, particularly through Gunretno, a central figure of the anti-cement activist movement *Sedulur Sikep*, and *Jaringan Masyarakat Peduli Pegunungan Kendeng* (JMPPK – Community Network for Preservation of Kendeng)²⁴. At the same time, such resistance is part of their attempt to get out of an inferior position as a marginalized community. In this case, *Sedulur Sikep*'s existential desire to strengthen their social position is seen as a positive value for the success of expelling PT SG from Sukolilo in 2010²⁵.

As a matter of fact, after *PT Semen Gresik* was driven out, *PT Sahabat Mulia Sakti* (PT SMS), a subsidiary of *PT Indocement Tunggal Perkasa Tbk* (PT INTP), obtained a new mining permit in the district of Tambakromo and Kayen of Pati Regency. In 2010, PT SMS began its first socialization in Pati. Owing to the hatred against cement companies that has been firmly rooted in the minds of the Pati population, PT SMS received fierce resistance from the Pati community. However, in its new development, the resistance against PT SMS began to split between *Sedulur Sikep* and some members of JMPPK. As a matter of fact, in the face of PT SG, there has actually been a split in the *Sedulur Sikep* community; those pro and con,²⁶ and,

²³ Avid Nur Meida, Purwoko, and Budi Setyono, "Konflik Corporate vs Society: Analisis terhadap Konflik dalam Kasus Pendirian Pabrik Semen di Kecamatan Sukolilo Kabupaten Pati," *Journal of Politic and Government Studies* 2, no. 2 (2013): 321–330.

²⁴ Idhom, "Resistensi Komunitas Sedulur Sikep terhadap Semen," 202.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 176.

²⁶ Even after the withdrawal of SG, some reconciliation efforts were conducted by several parties, but the fragmentation persists. See Ihda Ayu Maratussholihah, "Upaya Rekonsiliasi Masyarakat Pasca Konflik Rencana

in the face of PT SMS, the fragmentation rose to the surface²⁷. Moreover, fragmentation also arose within the body of JMPPK, as the main alliance in driving out PT SG, which resulted in the emergence of a new alliance, called LIKRA (*Lingkar Kendeng Sejahtera* – Circle of Prosperous *Kendeng*), whose purpose is to rival Gunretno's leadership in JMPPK. A new stigma emerged, i.e., that JMPPK was an organization owned by *Sedulur Sikep* so that people who joined would be converted into *Sedulur Sikep* followers²⁸. The marginalization of the *Sedulur Sikep* is continuing to be used to weaken the resistance movements in northern Kendeng. Novianto et al. (2017) argue that such fragmentation and marginalization are exacerbated by the activities of PT SMS in channeling CSR (Corporate Social Responsibilities) funds which are used deliberately to divide and weaken the anti-cement movement in Pati.²⁹ Not only through a subtle way, but thugs were hired by PT SMS to terrorize the protest actions carried out by the anti-cement groups, so that physical violence was inevitable³⁰.

In the dynamic context of the resistance movement against the cement industry in Pati, the involvement of Muslim groups tends to be underestimated. Oktaviana (2015) admits that empirically the involvement of Muslims (organizations) was small and in a subordinate position compared to other resistance actors³¹. Yet, Idhom (2008) recognizes that the *santri* (Muslim students of traditional *pesantren*) community is the largest community in Pati, especially as seen from the existence of the number of *kiai* (charismatic Muslim religious scholars and leaders) and *pesantren* (Islamic boarding

Pembangunan Pabrik Semen di Kecamatan Sukolilo Kabupaten Pati” (Skripsi, Universitas Negeri Semarang, 2017), accessed April 18, 2020, <https://lib.unnes.ac.id/32040/1/3401413097.pdf>.

²⁷ Dewi, “Analisis Gerakan Sosial di Kecamatan Sukolilo,” 43.

²⁸ Oktaviana, “Analisis Konflik Sumber Daya Alam,” 43.

²⁹ Arif Novianto, Kurnia Cahyaningrum Effendi, and Yuyun Purbokusumo, *Di Balik Topeng Kebajikan: Wajah Asli CSR Indocement dalam Konflik Pembangunan Pabrik Semen di Pati*, Laporan Penelitian Hibah Riset FISIPOL UGM (Yogyakarta: Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2017).

³⁰ Aprianto, “Perampasan Tanah dan Konflik,” 162–3.

³¹ Oktaviana, “Analisis Konflik Sumber Daya Alam,” 56.

school) in Pati³². In this case, I think the invisibility of the Pati Muslim community in the cement controversy deserves to be carefully questioned. Also, the previous dynamic of anti-cement movements are open to change due to the fact that in the next development, the anti-cement movement involves other religious groups (such as Catholics). Thereby, in northern Kendeng, it is strategic to update the dynamics of identity-based interactions in the anti-cement movements and the related-polarizing efforts to weaken the resistances.

2. Collective Identity, Framing Strategy and Networks of Resistance: From Grassroots to Elites

Network building in the resistance movement against cement corporations in northern Kendeng has become an interesting issue for several researchers. It is widely admitted that the resistance movement in northern Kendeng has succeeded in building networks at the local and national levels. In this regard, Syam (2016)³³ elaborates that the network development and the formation of a collective identity is exercised through specific framing strategies mainly conducted by JMPPK-Pati and JMPPK-Rembang. Syam shows that the framing process carried out by the resistance networks in northern Kendeng has put forth a collective identity as the protector of Mother Earth. It is particularly reflected through the mental construction against the despotism of the government and the cement corporations in jeopardizing the preservation of Mount *Kendeng*³⁴.

In the beginning, the experience of GRO, a Saminist activist with a wide network, played an important role in the anti-cement movement by connecting various actors from diverse spaces with expansive expertise ranging from academics, NGO activists, government officials, and interested individuals³⁵. The formation of JMPPK has made the resistance movement more organized and

³² Idhom, "Resistensi Komunitas Sedulur Sikep terhadap Semen," 196.

³³ Syam, "Jaringan Penolakan terhadap Industri Tambang di Pegunungan Kendeng Utara."

³⁴ Ibid., 110.

³⁵ Ibid., 49.

connected with many other groups in the context of opposing the cement corporations in Pati and Rembang. The network development strategy is based on informal relationships which are later loosely managed through JMPPK³⁶. This liquidity has led diverse individuals and groups to share resources without losing their autonomy and independence in achieving common goals³⁷. Similarly, Kurniawan (2008)³⁸ declares that the role of JMPPK for nurturing the resistance movements against the cement corporations in Pati is pivotal.

Along with GRO, a female *Sedulur Sikep* activist, GRI, has contributed significantly to strengthening the resistance networks, especially at the grassroots. Being female did not hamper her efforts to go into the social spaces of other communities (especially Muslim groups) to campaign against the dangers of cement mining in the northern Kendeng³⁹. Two strategies used to solicit their support regarding the dangers of cement mining factory are *gethok tular*⁴⁰ (word of mouth) and *dodok lawang*⁴¹ (going door to door). The campaign that GRI established was quite successful in drawing participation from Muslim groups. GRI made use of Muslim spaces to

³⁶ Ibid., 75.

³⁷ Ibid., 37 & 112.

³⁸ Ahid Wahyu Kurniawan, “Gerakan Petani Dalam Pro Kontra Pembangunan Pabrik Semen di Desa Brati Kecamatan Kayen Kabupaten Pati” (Skripsi Versi Jurnal, Universitas Airlangga, 2018), accessed April 19, 2020, http://repository.unair.ac.id/75016/3/JURNAL_Fis.P.64%2018%20Kur%20g.pdf.

³⁹ Syam, “Jaringan Penolakan terhadap Industri Tambang di Pegunungan Kendeng Utara,” 84.

⁴⁰ See Rizky Indah, “Peran Tokoh Masyarakat Dalam Membentuk Opini Publik (Studi Kasus Rencana Pembangunan Pabrik Semen Gresik Di Kecamatan Sukolilo Kabupaten Pati Tahun 2009)” (Skripsi, Universitas Diponegoro, 2010), accessed April 19, 2020, <http://eprints.undip.ac.id/16415/> and; Rini Darmastuti et al., “Gethok Tular, Pola Komunikasi Gerakan Sosial Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Masyarakat Samin di Sukolilo,” *Jurnal SPIKOM* 3, no. 1 (July 18, 2016): 104–118.

⁴¹ Biyan Mudzaky Hanindito, “Upaya Framing Jaringan Masyarakat Peduli Pegunungan Kendeng (JMPPK) dalam Penolakan Pembangunan Pabrik Semen di Kawasan Pegunungan Kendeng Utara” (Skripsi, Universitas Brawijaya, 2019).

run her campaigns,⁴² but Syam does not pay specific attention to scrutinize it. Despite the significant role of GRI, control over the anti-cement movement remains with GRO⁴³. In line with this, Hapsari et.al. (2017) found that in Bombong, in Baturejo of Sukolilo in Pati, the anti-cement network structure has low cohesiveness, unbalanced network patterns due to fragmentation, and there is a centralized figure⁴⁴ who dominates the entire network⁴⁵. However, it is admitted that the role of that central figure in building networks outside the *Sedulur Sikep* community for the success of the movement's goal is undeniable⁴⁶. Meanwhile, among the national networks, the urban middle class groups tend to view local villagers as peasant/victims in need of their assistance, so local participation is minimal (*top-down*)⁴⁷. Based on such dynamics, Syam concludes that the movement in northern *Kendeng* is trapped in an elite vortex⁴⁸.

Moreover, Novianto (2018) argues that on the one hand, the involvement of *Samin* (*Sedulur Sikep*) has been able to strengthen the networks of solidarity and form a strong alliance in the resistance movement against cement factories at the local, national and international level. However, on the other hand, it has made the cement resistance movement in Pati prone to fragmentation which has actually occurred since 2012. He admits that the articulation of identity

⁴² Syam, "Jaringan Penolakan terhadap Industri Tambang di Pegunungan Kendeng Utara," 84.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁴⁴ The centralized communication relied on a single figure was also acknowledged by Moh Roihan Asrofi, "Pola Komunikasi Juru Dakwah Masyarakat Samin Sedulur Sikep Menghadapi Rencana Pembangunan Pabrik Semen di Bombong Baturejo Sukolilo Kabupaten Pati" (Skripsi, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2016), accessed April 15, 2020, <http://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/24608/>.

⁴⁵ Dwi Retno Hapsari, Billy K. Sarwono, and Eriyanto Eriyanto, "Jaringan Komunikasi Dalam Partisipasi Gerakan Sosial Lingkungan: Studi Pengaruh Sentralitas Jaringan Terhadap Partisipasi Gerakan Sosial Tolak Pabrik Semen Pada Komunitas Adat Samin Di Pati Jawa Tengah," *Jurnal Komunikasi Indonesia* 6, no. 2 (January 3, 2017): 126.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 126–7.

⁴⁷ Syam, "Jaringan Penolakan terhadap Industri Tambang di Pegunungan Kendeng Utara," 117.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

(*Saminism*) has succeeded in attracting the involvement of a very wide network of outsiders, but it has also sparked conflicts in the internal anti-cement movements of Pati⁴⁹ and such liability to fragmentation is later exploited and orchestrated by the cement factory (i.e., PT SMS) to weaken the anti-cement movements⁵⁰. In this research, I will show that not only has *Sedulur Sikep*'s involvement been exploited to divide the resistance movement, but also that the involvement of non-Muslims (i.e., Catholics) has been polarizing in such a way that apathy among the Muslim groups has been detected. More specifically, the involvement of Catholic groups is stereotyped as their effort to secretly run a missionary agenda, resulting in Muslim groups restraining their involvement in the resistance movement. It shows that the articulation of identity in a social movement is like a double-edged sword by which, on the one hand, it strengthens (enlarges) the movement, but, on the other hand, it can be exploited in order to cause apathy and internal divisions.

3. Contested Discourse on Mining Industry: State, Cement Corporation, and Local Villagers

In Pati, in terms of discursive contestation over the construction of a cement factory, Novianto (2016)⁵¹ exposes the hegemonic practices of the governmental authorities and cement corporations in launching their mining plan. He explains that the hegemonic practices have been produced through policy making which are then propagated as good will to improve people's lives so that the will to dominate, exclude, marginalize, devastate the ecosystem, and maintain the status

⁴⁹ Arif Novianto, "Berebut Saminisme: Artikulasi Politik Masyarakat Adat dalam Konflik Pembangunan Pabrik Semen di Pegunungan Kendeng," in *Kebijakan Publik dalam Pusaran Perubahan Ideologi: Dari Kuasa Negara ke Dominasi Pasar?*, ed. Wahyudi Kumorotomo and Yuyun Probokusumo (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2018), 29.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 230.

⁵¹ Arif Novianto, "Perlawanan Rakyat: Analisis Kontra-Hegemoni dalam Ekonomi Politik Kebijakan Pembangunan Pabrik Semen di Pati" (Skripsi, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2016), accessed April 19, 2020, http://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/home/detail_pencarian/105299.

quo is disguised. However, the anti-cement community of Pati does not remain silent, even though it has been moderated by the disguise of conflict management, inviting experts for scientific legitimacy, hegemonic discourse production and coercive actions, they respond to the will of the hegemonic power with a counter-hegemonic movement.

In Rembang, Ardianto's research (2016)⁵² is worthy of review. However, it is worth noting that it has been criticized by Novianto (2017)⁵³ based on the contradiction between its objective and final recommendation that stems from Ardianto's choice of analytical theory. Initially, in the case of *PT Semen Indonesia*, it aims to seize the discourse in the process of policy making, but at the end it concedes the policy formulation towards liberal-capitalistic democracy, thereby considered to have neglected the subordinating and hegemonic structures in policy making. Regardless of the criticism, I think Ardianto succeeds in showing that the discourses underlying the state policy on mining-based development, which is believed to bring prosperity to the community, are a myth. As matter of fact, by strengthening poverty discourse in agriculture-based communities, the state has propagated the discourses of economic prosperity through the hegemonic perspective of mining-based development, so that the planned construction of a cement factory (PT SI) in Rembang is legitimized. On the other hand, in reality, Ardianto shows that the majority of Tegaldowo villagers work as farmers, who depend much on agriculture for their livelihoods, suggesting that the mining development policy could be a threat to the sustainability of the villagers' agricultural activities⁵⁴. Therefore, he argues that the discourse of economic prosperity through mining industry is a biased

⁵² Hendra Try Ardianto, *Mitos Tambang Untuk Kesejahteraan: Pertarungan Wacana Kesejahteraan Dalam Kebijakan Pertambangan* (Yogyakarta: PolGov, 2016).

⁵³ Arif Novianto, "Mendistorsi Hegemoni Dan Anti-Esensialisme: Analisa 'Mitos Tambang Untuk Kesejahteraan' Dalam Kerangkeng Liberalisme," *BHUMI: Jurnal Agraria dan Pertanahan* 3, no. 2 (2017): 279–285.

⁵⁴ See Ardianto, *Mitos Tambang Untuk Kesejahteraan: Pertarungan Wacana Kesejahteraan Dalam Kebijakan Pertambangan*, 167–185.

interest that is not sincere and not neutral. Based on research and experiences in other countries, Ardianto shows that the mining-based development would actually bring calamities, not prosperity, especially for the surrounding areas⁵⁵.

In the context of policy study, Ardianto (2016) then offers an agonistic, rather than rational, approach. The agonistic approach is an approach in policy making that accommodates context dynamics, differences (antagonism), subjectivity, and local participation. A bit similar to this, Puryanto & Susanto (2019)⁵⁶ also propose a development model based on Indonesian cultural values, suggesting that agriculture-based development, which is part of the local traditions and cultural values of Indonesia's ancestors, should be preserved rather than destroyed by promoting the cement mining industry in an area with a basis for cultivating agricultural activities. Therefore, Qisti (2015)⁵⁷ also assesses that the Rembang government policy regarding the permit over a cement factory in Rembang should be sanctioned and revised because it contradicts other regulations regarding protected geological areas. In other words, in the perspective of Islamic law, Subaktiansyah (2018)⁵⁸ argues that the environmental permit issued by the Governor of Central Java has violated the principle of *maqâsid asy-syar'ah*. Therefore, Latif (2018)⁵⁹ views that

⁵⁵ See *ibid.*, 37–50.

⁵⁶ Sidik Puryanto and Didi Susanto, *Konflik Dan Gerakan Sosial Di Rembang: Pertarungan Ekonomi Politik, Sosial Budaya, Dan Lingkungan*, Edisi pertama. (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2019).

⁵⁷ Launa Qisti, “Harmonisasi Hukum Surat Keputusan Gubernur Jawa Tengah Nomor 660.1/17 Tahun 2012 Tentang Izin Lingkungan Kegiatan Penambangan Dan Pembangunan Pabrik Semen Oleh PT Semen Gresik (Persero) Tbk.” (Universitas Brawijaya, 2015).

⁵⁸ Mochamad A’an Tri Subaktiansyah, “Kontestasi Mâslaha ‘Ammah dan Common Good Dalam Ruang Publik: Studi Kasus Pembacaan Terhadap SK. Gubernur Jawa Tengah Nomor 660.1/30 Tahun 2016 tentang Izin Lingkungan” (Tesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2018), accessed April 15, 2020, <http://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/34073/>.

⁵⁹ Muhamad Latif, “Legalitas Perizinan Lingkungan (Kasus PT Semen Indonesia berdasarkan Surat Keputusan Gubernur Jawa Tengah Nomor 606.1/4 2017)” (Tesis, Universitas Muhammadiyah Solo, 2018), accessed April 15, 2020, <http://eprints.ums.ac.id/65640/1/07.%20M.LATIF.pdf>.

the cancellation of the mining permit by the Supreme Court in 2016 as the right decision, meaning that the new permit issued by the Governor of Central Java in 2017, which gave new legal legitimacy to the establishment and operation of *PT Semen Indonesia*, is an authoritarian policy.

Furthermore, in the context of the local supporters for the establishment of a cement factory in the Tegaldowo village of Rembang, Arofat (2016)⁶⁰ elaborates a variety of discourses developed by *PT Semen Indonesia*. PT SI uses a variety (religious, educational, cultural, and employment) of discourses as an effort to draw local internal awareness formulated through their daily meaning making so that the expansion of a cement factory is legitimated⁶¹. In such a context of discursive reproduction, power contestations occur among PT SI supporters⁶². To some extent, with abundant capital support, PT SI succeeds in dominating local public discourses and has often successfully reproduced its hegemonic discourse in the affected villages⁶³.

On the other side, Agustin (2018)⁶⁴ analyzes the discourses produced by villagers who resist *PT Semen Indonesia* in Tegaldowo, Rembang. Through the production of murals (graffiti) at the resistance posts in Tegaldowo, she pays attention to the power relations working in the conflict between the local villagers against PT SI. She argues that several discourses produced by the anti-cement villagers are to strengthen their reasons for resisting PT SI, such as the discourse about environmental sustainability, environmental preservation, water availability, community fragmentation, *PT Semen Indonesia* is a liar,

⁶⁰ Syiqqil Arofat, "Kontestasi Kuasa Diskursus Sengketa Pembangunan Pabrik PT SI di Rembang" (Tesis, Universitas Indonesia, 2016).

⁶¹ Ibid., 10.

⁶² Ibid., 11.

⁶³ Ibid., 106.

⁶⁴ Sarah Rahma Agustin, "Analisis Wacana Kritis Perlawanan dalam Mural SeBumi (Diskursus Perlawanan dalam Penolakan Pendirian Pabrik PT Semen Indonesia di Rembang)" (Skripsi, Universitas Islam Indonesia, 2018), accessed April 19, 2020, <https://dspace.uui.ac.id/bitstream/handle/123456789/12756/SKRIPSI%20LENGKAP.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>.

the government and the industrial apparatus are colluding with one another, corporate violations of law, and corporate power relations and its dominance in conflict. Thus, as demonstrated by Masykuri (2018)⁶⁵, the competition between the pros and cons for a cement factory run in two directions. In the (discursive) competition, the contested issues in either supporting or resisting the cement factory range from identity making, actor forming, escalated conflicts, and mass mobilization to the expansion of involved activists.

In addition, because the women of the village are actively involved in the resistance movements, one of the identities formulated in the resistance movement against cement factories in *Kendeng* is related to women, specifically the village mothers' movement⁶⁶. In Rembang, in spite of specifically being an active organizer (the coordinator) of JMPPK-Rembang,⁶⁷ Candraningrum (2014)⁶⁸ shows that women do not accept their position as mere victims, but that they use their agency and are actively involved in the development of political resistance against the destruction of the *Kendeng* mountain ecosystem. Discursively, they are involved in building a paradigm, as well as a reflective analogy about a threatened *Kendeng* as their mother who has been giving milk and fertility to the local villagers.

Despite that some practices of spatial reproduction have actually been mentioned in the above research, their analysis is limited to discourse on (mental) space, that is to say that the production of space is only viewed from the production of knowledge, awareness, and

⁶⁵ Romel Masykuri, "Dinamika Politik Perseteruan Pembangunan Pabrik Semen di Rembang Jawa Tengah" (Thesis, Universitas Airlangga, 2018), accessed April 19, 2020, <http://lib.unair.ac.id>.

⁶⁶ See Syam, "Jaringan Penolakan terhadap Industri Tambang di Pegunungan Kendeng Utara," 251–2.

⁶⁷ Annisa Innal Fitri and Idil Akbar, "Gerakan Sosial Perempuan Ekofeminisme Di Pegunungan Kendeng Provinsi Jawa Tengah Melawan Pembangunan Tambang Semen," *CosmoGov* 3, no. 1 (April 29, 2017): 98.

⁶⁸ Dewi Candraningrum, "Politik Rahim Perempuan Kendeng Menolak Tambang Semen," *Jurnal Perempuan*, last modified September 23, 2014, accessed April 18, 2020, <http://www.jurnalperempuan.org/2/post/2014/09/dewi-candraningrum-politik-rahim-perempuan-kendeng-menolak-tambang-semen.html>.

attitude. Therefore, the medium through which discourses, knowledge, and attitudes are translated into physical structures and the ways in which the social space is dominated by *PT Semen Indonesia* are ignored. I would argue that, due to the fact that discourses on the acceptance of *PT Semen Indonesia* have been spatially transformed into several buildings (physical space) and religious figures (spatial bodies), they have become a representational space for the domination and legitimacy of *PT Semen Indonesia*. As a result, I argue that the building and operations of *PT Semen Indonesia* remain hard to resist even though many local villagers are disappointed over the (discursive) promises and hopes given by *PT Semen Indonesia*⁶⁹.

E. Theoretical Framework

1. The Production of Space: Deciphering Abstract Space and Absolute Space

Space as a locus of analysis in religious studies started around the 2000s, especially in the field of theological studies⁷⁰. In social studies, space began to be seriously studied in the 1980s, especially since Henry Lefebvre found his momentum in elaborating the production of space in '*La Production de l'espace*' in 1974. At the beginning, Lefebvre's work did not receive serious attention from the academic world, even in France itself⁷¹. His work was considered to be very abstract, but in fact it has opened new possibilities. Such abstract theory eventually found its peak of significance when David Harvey managed to interpret the abstract postulates provided by Lefebvre, one of which was from his 1973 work entitled "*Social Justice and the City*," in which Harvey introduced Lefebvre's term "urban revolution" merely as a cameo, but the term had "a deep and

⁶⁹ Arofat, "Kontestasi Kuasa Diskursus Sengketa Pembangunan Pabrik PT SI di Rembang," 41.

⁷⁰ Kim Knott, "Spatial Theory and Method for the Study of Religion," *Temenos - Nordic Journal of Comparative Religion* 41, no. 2 (September 1, 2005): 177, accessed February 27, 2020, <https://journal.fi/temenos/article/view/4778>.

⁷¹ Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 101.

lasting resonance in critical urban studies and geography”⁷². Subsequently, Harvey’s works have then marked a ‘spatial turn’ in social studies, extending beyond geography⁷³.

The study of space is not something new, but specifically making it a mode of production in capitalism is a recent thing. For example, the work of Mircea Eliade in 1959 which conducted a study of sacred (*axis mundi*) and profane (*imago mundi*) space was criticized as “mystifying the sacred and ignoring its politics” in its encounters with profane interests⁷⁴. Likewise, I do not think the work of Knott (2005)⁷⁵, which mostly bases his development of religion-spatial theory on the phenomenal work of Lefebvre, is not specifically intended to elucidate the political economy of space. Thus, in this work, I prefer to turn my attention to the abstract theory of Lefebvre in efforts of deciphering the working of spatio-religious elements in the mode of production of capitalism. In other words, here I attempt to interpret and apply Lefebvre’s “*Production of Space*” in Islamic studies thoroughly. In this endeavor, I will focus on illustrating what Lefebvre refers to as “religious absolute space” in the production of capitalist space.

Economic accumulation in the capitalist form has been in process since the middle ages in the Renaissance era and has accelerated up to the present time. It suggests that it has extended itself over the whole world and, therefore, the cumulative process has become irresistible⁷⁶. As a matter of fact, the cumulative process has also occurred in terms of (political and strategic) space, which has

⁷² Ibid., 102.

⁷³ C. Schmid, “Henri Lefebvre’s Theory of the Production of Space: Towards a Three-Dimensional Dialectic,” in *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, ed. Kanishka Goonewardena (New York: Routledge, 2008), 27.

⁷⁴ Kim Knott, “Geography, Space and the Sacred,” in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. Hinnells, 2nd ed. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2010), 480.

⁷⁵ See Knott, “Spatial Theory and Method for the Study of Religion.”

⁷⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, ed. Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden, trans. Gerald Moore, Neil Brenner, and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 56.

been occupied and then planned through material, financial and spatio-temporal planning⁷⁷. There is no doubt that capitalism has a profound influence on practical space⁷⁸. Capitalism has exercised its hegemony through the active role of space (operationally or instrumentally), as well as through knowledge and action⁷⁹. Capitalism and neo-capitalism⁸⁰ have produced what Lefebvre calls abstract space, which is reflected in the world of business or 'world of commodities' on both a national and international level along with logic and strategies based on the power of money and the political state to dominate social space⁸¹. Abstract space, together with the forces operating in it, has produced false consciousness and an ideology that causes fetishization⁸². This abstract space then transforms into absolute space, which is political and religious in nature, so that it is repressive and dogmatic in character. In this perspective, abstract space is a tool of domination which asphyxiates the historical conditions that give birth to it and its internal differences and then imposes abstract homogeneity, which is actually full of contradictions⁸³. The dominance of capitalism over space is not only at the micro level, the medium level and the macro level because it exists in “all planes and in all the interconnections between them”⁸⁴. No part or level of space is allowed to escape domination, except as far as regarding its appearance because it wants to control space as a whole, so it

⁷⁷ Ibid., 170–1.

⁷⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, OX, UK ; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1991), 9.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁸⁰ Lefebvre defines neo-capitalism as “an institutionally modified version of former capitalism (competitive, then monopolistic) with production relations unchanged.” Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life in the Modern World*, trans. Sacha Rabinovitch, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 42.

⁸¹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 53; Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*, 186.

⁸² Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 393.

⁸³ Ibid., 370.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 412.

maintains it in 'disjointed unity', in which fragmented spaces are forced to look homogeneous⁸⁵.

In the context of capital critique, the theory of space production has the task of tracing the production and genesis of space so that the contradictions it contains will appear, notably because it says what it wants to say but hides it; specifically the political, militarist, and ultimately fascist intentions in its character, even though it claims to represent collective (public) desires and thoughts in social space⁸⁶. Thus, what appears in social space is just a representation of space, as if the contents clearly appear, but actually it is deceptive⁸⁷. Here, "social space is defined (also) as the locus and medium of speech and writing, which sometimes discloses and sometimes dissimulates, even sometimes expressing what is true and sometimes what is false (with the false serving the truth as relay, resource, and foundation)"⁸⁸.

Once representational space becomes absolute in religious space, it will free capitalism from any mistakes⁸⁹. Absolute space purifies any space as fundamentally sacred space mainly through 'a strictly symbolic existence'⁹⁰. It is often forgotten that even though all symbols are relative, they had a concrete and material existence before they were made into symbols of anything. In this case, Lefebvre admonishes that the relative often hides the absolute⁹¹.

"The monument is essentially repressive. It is the seat of an institution (the church, the state, the university). Any space that is organized around the monument is colonized and oppressed...Monument is always laden with symbols, it presents them to social awareness and contemplation (passive) just when those symbols, already outdated, are beginning to lose their meaning...For the monument, it is the only conceivable or imaginable site of collective (social) life. It controls people, yes, but does so to bring them together...monuments embody a sense

⁸⁵ Ibid., 378–88.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 137, 140, 143.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 173.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 211.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 204.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 236.

⁹¹ Ibid., 233.

of transcendence, a sense of being elsewhere...they proclaimed duty, power, knowledge, joy, hope”⁹².

No doubt that the use of symbols (or, monuments) is the most effective way to appropriate space⁹³. For example, the space of a sacred place (such as mosque, church, cloister, etc.) is an absolute space which is always ready to serve for “the benefit of priestly castes and the political power they exercise or serve” by giving birth to forms (symbols), principles, and figures (through figurative process) to accommodate their absoluteness⁹⁴. Religious buildings (or, monuments) in this case symbolize power and wisdom⁹⁵. Religious space, as one form of absolute space, becomes a ‘space of speech’ and knowledge where there is actually a hidden space, namely the space of exchange, or more precisely, an exchange of power⁹⁶. The ‘space of speech’ is the space where material preconditions can be known because it “envelops the space of bodies and develops by means of traces, of writings, of prescriptions and inscriptions”⁹⁷. The peculiarity in the space of speech (which contains political commands and prescriptions) will be known at another level, namely the level of generalization, because it has political attributes, so that although it is religious, it is filled with symbols of power and violence⁹⁸.

In short, the production of space from Lefebvre seeks to decipher, not just discourse on space which only provides (mental) clues and testimony to the process of space production⁹⁹, “the actual production of space by bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory” because “the specific use of the space and the interrelationships are ordered in

⁹² Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 21–2.

⁹³ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 366.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 236–43.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 366.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 266.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 403.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 37.

a specific way”¹⁰⁰. It is admitted that reality (social and spatial practice) must still be understood by first starting from mental space and then into concrete space, however, on the contrary, it is not possible to grasp reality by only struggling in mental space¹⁰¹.

“...what we are concerned with here is not texts but texture....a texture is usually made up of a rather large space covered by networks or webs; monuments constitute the strong points, nexuses or anchors of such webs. The actions of social practice are expressible but not explicable through discourse; they are, precisely, acted - and not read”¹⁰².

Lefebvre views that “discourse is nothing more than a lethal void - mere verbiage” so that the production of space seeks to link the production of meaning to the object of meaning (meaning made for whom), i.e. it is made for someone who lives and acts in space¹⁰³. So, if it is seen with a simple logic from the operational procedure of the power action, then there are three things that can be noticed: (1) there are those who benefit from a space (beneficiaries of space), (2) then there are those who are excluded from that space (deprived of space), and (3) that these two things are always attached to the properties of space, especially to the norms¹⁰⁴.

For Lefebvre, different from the previous beliefs, space is neither empty nor merely a frame because it is a capitalist mode of production to dominate and control society¹⁰⁵. Thus, Lefebvre puts space as something which is social in origin and socially produced (**social space is social product**) because “any space implies, contains and dissimulates social relationships - and this despite the fact that a space is not a thing but rather a set of relations between things (objects and products)”¹⁰⁶. As a result, Lefebvre does not separate mental and concrete space and seeks to elaborate the relationship between the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 415.

¹⁰² Ibid., 222.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 132.

¹⁰⁴ See *ibid.*, 289.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 26 & 91.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 83.

lived space, the perceived space, and the conceived space (or what is called the moment of social space) in his triadic dimensions of space (spatial triad)¹⁰⁷.

Lefebvre's spatial triad emphasizes dialectics (which is the theory of contradictions), rather than binary opposition, in elucidating contradictions in the practice of spatial production of capitalism.¹⁰⁸ The spatial triad consists of (1) *spatial practice*; a material dimension of social activities in community space which appears in a dialectical interaction and it also refers to a system which is formed through articulation of various elements, activities, and networks in everyday life,. (2) *Representation of space*; a dominant space rooted in *savoir* which is a mixture of *connaissance* and ideology so that it is often mental and exploitative in character. It is what gives an overview and definition of space consisting of verbal forms; description, definition and scientific theories of space. (3) *Representational space*; a dominated space which is liquid and dynamic in character such as symbolic dimensions and a process of signification of space which connect to materialist dimensions¹⁰⁹. This spatial triad will appear through a dialectical process of disclosure which is interconnected among one another and it must be able to capture a concrete form or it will lose its power¹¹⁰. However, Lefebvre stands against treating space as "spatiality" such as "commodities", which are only seen from the "exchange" aspect, so that it becomes something separate, but rather that we must focus on how space and commodities are produced along with social relations inherent in them¹¹¹. The domination over social space will give way to the production of spatial practices¹¹².

Social practice in social space is an 'extension of the body'¹¹³. The role of the body is vital for the three moments of social space

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 33.

¹⁰⁸ See *ibid.*, 333 & 354.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 36, 38–9, 41–2; See Schmid, "Space, Difference, Everyday Life," 36–7.

¹¹⁰ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 40.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 38.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 244.

because they presuppose the use of the body (limbs, senses, gestures). For example, the perceived space requires the body in relation to the perception of the external world, which cannot be separated from "the representations of the body", which is a place of accumulation or intersection of knowledge, ideology, surrounding milieu, culture, etc. through symbolism and is digested through illusionary immediacy¹¹⁴. Thus, in this case, the body is an intermediary between mental and social space¹¹⁵ because "it is by means of the body that space is perceived, lived and produced"¹¹⁶. However, the body is also the source of space where "before reproducing itself by generating other bodies, each living body is space and has its space: it produces itself in space and it also produces that space"¹¹⁷. The body is understood as something which is simultaneously concrete and abstract¹¹⁸. Thus, the body is like a two-sided machine, but it is not a machine at all because it consists of two structures that have an unpredictable effect and rejects every single rigid mechanism and definition¹¹⁹. The body is also often transformed into "symbols which are generally intrinsic parts of a politico-religious whole", becoming coordinated symbols¹²⁰. It is worth noting that Lefebvre reminds us that "it is very important not to overlook, in the immediate vicinity of the body, and serving to extend it into the surrounding networks of relationships and pathways, the various types of objects"¹²¹.

The survival of capitalism, and more generally development, is highly dependent on their ability to control space in its entirety, starting from the land, the underground resources beneath land or sea, what is in the above ground sphere, in the space of mountains and even of the planets (especially with the help of technology)¹²². Despite

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 40.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 61.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 162.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 170.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 185.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 195.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 224.

¹²¹ Ibid., 211.

¹²² Ibid., 325.

space, the survival of capitalism is supported by a mixture of ideologies for growth which hides a reality, i.e. the brutal character of economic growth and capitalist expansion, “they obscure the contradictions and apparently make them vanish” and they also even “mask their own contradictions as ideologies” so that “they pave the way for expansion, even without having any apparent relationship to growth and profit”¹²³. Meanwhile, to specifically pave the way for spatial expansion, space is “broken down into separate spaces, occupied by functions that are exercised within these distinct spaces”¹²⁴. All space will be labeled with an exchange value which then implies interchangeability and transforms it into a commodity which is juxtaposed with other goods¹²⁵. The producer of space seems to appear as the party with the best intentions in the world, for example through infrastructure projects which, at glance, seem objective¹²⁶.

The concept of space is referred by Lefebvre as “all possible spaces, whether abstract or ‘real’, mental or social. In particular it has two aspects: representational spaces and representations of space”¹²⁷. Social space is the basis or foundation and what is put on it is only laid down so that social relations do not have a presence except in and through space¹²⁸. Space is basically like a body consisting of various limbs and senses that cannot be separated so that it has multifunctionality and works simultaneously. However, often the space is compartmentalized and sliced into pieces and then it is economically accumulated and this is called an ‘abstraction’ (a process of removing something from other related associations, attributes or concrete accompanies so that it is considered independent and preoccupies people)¹²⁹.

¹²³ Henri Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism: Reproduction of the Relations of Production*, trans. Frank Bryant, 1st ed. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1976), 107.

¹²⁴ Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*, 214.

¹²⁵ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 337.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 338.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 299.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 401–4.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 229.

In the production of space, abstraction is mainly applied to space and time, even though they are inseparable because time is part of space but often it is simply eliminated after the object of space production is completed¹³⁰. The attempt to separate time from space aims to conceal the contradictions and violence inherent in fragmented spaces which appear to be homogeneous, but actually are not¹³¹. Time is then reduced to obstacles in the use of space¹³². Therefore, connecting space with time dialectically is one way to understand the production of space so that the contradictions will be visible¹³³. No one can avoid ‘trial by space’ because over time, the oppressive and repressive forces of abstract space will be unpacked¹³⁴. The separation between spatial and temporal is a form of separation between representation of space and representational space and, therefore, involving representational space is an attempt to maintain unity or restore the lost one¹³⁵.

Remember that what seems limp from space is actually just delusion¹³⁶. Space has a logic of visualization that there is something hidden in the production. To find out the logic of this visualization is to analyze the metaphor (a shift from the whole to the part) and metonymy (a shift from the part to the whole) of space because, according to the psychoanalysis of space, space is divided into *façades* (what is seen in front) and *obscenity* (what goes on behind and invisible in front)¹³⁷. Thus, the production of capitalist space only shows part of the whole and does not reveal what is happening behind. Therefore, it is required to understand fully the production of space between “readable and non-readable, between what appears and what remains hidden”¹³⁸. As well, we must pay attention to the relation of

¹³⁰ Ibid., 96.

¹³¹ Ibid., 306, 308 & 387.

¹³² Ibid., 393.

¹³³ Ibid., 293.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 416.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 175.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 190.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 99.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 283.

one space to another by expanding its scale both geographically and historically.

If Marx starts his concrete abstraction of capitalist mode of production from use value and exchange value which then produces a surplus value, Lefebvre starts from representation of space and representational space which then produces social space¹³⁹. For Marx, space appears as no more than “the sum of the sites of production, as the territory of various markets”¹⁴⁰. For Lefebvre, the production of space as a mode of capitalist production that will accumulate whatever is in that space (political economy of space)¹⁴¹. Lefebvre admits that what he was doing is a project on developing different modes of production which, of course, was carried out by different conceptual determinants. As a project, it is still very abstract. However, an abstract theory will actually open up opportunities for interested groups in developing it further through concrete efforts¹⁴².

It is worth noting that a space-based strategy is very dangerous because it sacrifices the future for the sake of a brief moment while simultaneously destroying the present time in the name of the future in a programmatic manner and it does not guarantee any certainty¹⁴³. In the production of space, each space will be divided based on its function (marked, interpreted, specified) and prohibited for certain activities¹⁴⁴. Thereby, “the meanings conveyed by abstract space are more often prohibited than solicitation or stimuli (except when it comes to consumption)”. For example, in everyday life, many people do not realize that they have accepted a ban when there is a gate where it protects the space of the elite from intruders and all that is done with negative appropriation of the space under the control of private property¹⁴⁵. In this example, what is concealed is a moral and political

¹³⁹ See *ibid.*, 101 and; Henri Lefebvre, *Dialectical Materialism*, trans. John Sturrock (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 79–80.

¹⁴⁰ Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*, 211.

¹⁴¹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 101.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 419.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 337.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 320.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 319.

order: certain powers which govern these conditions, with socio-economic compliance, seem to flow directly from the logos born of agreement on a rationalization of space¹⁴⁶. In a broader context, for example, 'spatial planning' has proven to be very effective in producing and slicing space¹⁴⁷. In the advanced phase, space is not only restricted by boundaries but is also zoned¹⁴⁸.

Spatial planning colonizes its dwellers because they are not included in the planning process¹⁴⁹. All of this begins by narrowing the political term which presupposes full power in statesmen, as democratic representatives of people, who then, together with experts and specialists, have control over planning¹⁵⁰. By such power, they appear as 'decision making centers', which then give rise to a perfect domination, namely as 'producers of space', so that the dwellers are only positioned as 'consumers of products, consumers of space'¹⁵¹. Simultaneously, they are either producers of space and 'creators of new social relations'¹⁵² because they believe in and want to create human relations by defining a (fragmented) space¹⁵³.

In the process of spatial production, urban space is a center of spatial accumulation¹⁵⁴ because cities, in the form of oligarchs, continue to take control of villages through the practice of urbanity that concentrates on many terrains, forests, and mountains in villages¹⁵⁵. In this case, Lefebvre refers the dominant space as urban rather than city¹⁵⁶ inasmuch as he asserts that "society has been completely urbanized" especially when viewed from its social relations and relations of production, suggesting that cities and

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 317.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 350.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 317.

¹⁴⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Cambridge, Mass, USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 158.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 163.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 85.

¹⁵² Ibid., 83.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 98.

¹⁵⁴ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 101.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 268.

¹⁵⁶ Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 45.

villages will not make any difference due to villages are (or, will be) transformed to urban (urban revolution)¹⁵⁷ under the pretext of economic growth and industrialization¹⁵⁸. The surplus value from the extraction of these villages will not be consumed where it is produced, but it will be realized and distributed to a place far from its origin¹⁵⁹. As a matter of fact, an urban community depends on the surrounding villages and has two relations; *firstly*, it depends on its agricultural products and, *secondly*, it is an entity endowed with an administrative and military capacity to provide protection. However, paradoxically, on the one hand, it sometimes protects the village but, on the other hand, often exploits it¹⁶⁰.

Meanwhile, the state, as a political product, exists to institutionalize abstract space of capitalism in order to simultaneously legitimize the accumulation of space¹⁶¹. Then, 'economic relations' becomes identical with 'relations of power' and 'the two could no longer be separated'¹⁶² until they arrive at 'the production of a politico-economic space'¹⁶³. At this point then the politico-economic space (by bringing the state and nationalism to support it) has perpetuated abstract space (in absolute terms) by allowing the destruction of its own foundations of land, space, cities, and villages¹⁶⁴. Spatially, the role of the state is to bind production units and economic activities scattered across various plains into a 'spatial unity' of a country, then to link them with global actions dictated by 'planning guidelines' and 'national plans'¹⁶⁵. At this point, it is important to elucidate the relationship between fragmented localities and globalism by looking

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 1–2.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹⁵⁹ See Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 269 and; Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, 26.

¹⁶⁰ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 234.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 285.

¹⁶² Ibid., 275.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 270.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 326–27.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 378.

at its flows and networks which are rationally guaranteed by institutions and programmed to work within a spatial framework¹⁶⁶.

Consistent with the state support above, “law and justice presided over injustice, and the name of equality was applied to an inequality that became no less flagrant as a result - though, it did become harder to combat”¹⁶⁷. As a matter of fact, “every state is born of violence, and that state power endures only by virtue of violence directed towards a space”¹⁶⁸, “the violence of the state must not be viewed in isolation: it cannot be separated either from the accumulation of capital or from the rational and political principle of unification, which subordinates and totalizes the various aspects of social practice - legislation, culture, knowledge, education- within a determinate space; namely, the space of the ruling class's hegemony over its people and over the nationhood that it has arrogated”¹⁶⁹. In short, the ‘syntagmatic’ links between activities of various agencies within social spaces are portrayed by Lefebvre as “a space which is determined economically by capital, dominated socially by the bourgeoisie, and ruled politically by the state”¹⁷⁰ and, it is my submission that, it is purified religiously by the religious figure.

The productive forces of capitalism continue to produce new spaces of domination with different modes of production accompanied by the production of discourse, reality, and social relations, which are in accordance with the code of the mode, which are supported by knowledge and power¹⁷¹. However, capitalism only produces what can be reproduced so that it only re-produces and imitates past production. This is where the ultimate contradiction is because the capacity to produce space only produces reproductions or, in other words, it does 'nothing but repetition'¹⁷².

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 347.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 327.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 280.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 281.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 227.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 46–7.

¹⁷² Ibid., 377.

In the midst of the productive forces of capitalism, there are barriers which become counterparts to the dominance of space; i.e., counter spaces¹⁷³. A counter space contains, for example; against power and its arrogance, against the relentless expansion of private and industrial profits, and against the specialized spaces and narrow localization of functions¹⁷⁴. To counter the dominant space of capitalism requires counter space with the production of a new 'differential' space¹⁷⁵. An opposition to the dominant bourgeois space must be similarly carried out by the production of a new space. As far as a new space is not produced, a 'differential' space is impossible. As a matter of fact, a new or 'differential' space for countering domination has often been destroyed before it is produced because the bourgeoisie always takes the initiative in producing and reproducing their dominative space¹⁷⁶. Therefore, a new differential space is based on “actual struggles to establish differences and that the differences generated through such theoretical and practical struggles must themselves differ both from natural distinguishing characteristics and from differentiations induced within existing abstract space”¹⁷⁷. For example, despite restrictions on them, mosques have been reproduced to counter the state’s domination as below:

“A strategy to minimize the influence of the Ulema is also related to the nationalization of mosques... Despite these restrictions, mosques seem to represent a formidable challenge to state authorities. They can neither close them down nor bring activities such as indirect education of the masses under state control. The mosque remains a place of inspiration for the people, a network for activists and a meeting point for dissidents. Opponents of the political authorities frequently take advantage of such community locales”¹⁷⁸.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 367.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 382.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 379.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 52–6.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 64.

¹⁷⁸ Abdullah Saeed, “The Official Ulema and Religious Legitimacy of the Modern Nation State,” in *Islam and Political Legitimacy*, ed. Shahram

Not only in the nation-state era, but mosques have proven to be one of the differential spaces reproduced as a center of resistance to counter Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. For example, the success of the Acehnese in confronting the first Dutch aggression became a theme discussed in Javanese mosques so that it was able to give new hope¹⁷⁹. Mosque activities had then fueled the growing anti-colonial resurgence throughout the Muslim world's atmosphere¹⁸⁰.

Above all, Lefebvre cautions to look integrally for new differential spaces that might appear to be counter-space. As far as they are unable to escape from the mode of production and the relations of production of capitalism, such space is just a complete illusion. Leisure space is exemplified by Lefebvre as contradictory space because it simultaneously reproduces (not counters) the mode of production and the relations of production of capitalism because "leisure has been transformed into an industry, into a victory of neo-capitalism and an extension of bourgeois hegemony"¹⁸¹. In the Indonesian context, we can see such leisure space reproduced in the name of environmental projects which appropriate religious symbols such as *kiai* (religious leader) and *pesantren* (Islamic school) which are funded with billions of dollars by international donors and

STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
SUNAN KALIJAGA
YOGYAKARTA

Akbarzadeh and Abdullah Saeed (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 23.

¹⁷⁹ Paul van Veer, *Perang Aceh: Kisah Kegagalan Snouck Hurgronje* (Jakarta: Grafiti, 1985), 89.

¹⁸⁰ Michael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 43.

¹⁸¹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 384.

agencies, such as the World Bank¹⁸², but they merely ended up selling yogurt and outdoor activities for leisure¹⁸³.

Based on the above perspective, in this study the capital expansion of cement corporations in northern Kendeng seeks to be portrayed as one of the processes in which Muslim (religious) space is appropriated and re-produced into an absolute space in paving the way for the cement corporations to exert their spatial invasion. On the contrary, the counter movements against it would be depicted as an effort of building a new (counter or differential) space. To some extent, it will be represented here as a contestation of the re-production of (social) space indeed.

For that purpose, after explaining the background and setting by relying on Lefebvre's theory, Chapter Two will specifically seek to decipher the contradictions inherent in the production of space for spatial accumulation of cement corporations, which finally exert their domination through (absolute) political space. Following that, the contestation over the re-production of Muslim religious 'absolute' spaces (buildings and slogans) is elaborated in Chapters Three and Four. Notably, Chapter Four will focus on the appropriation of the spatial body of *kiai*, as mediation for the transformation of capitalist abstract space from mental to social (or, concrete) spaces, as depicted from the produced (politico-religious) narratives, networks, and slogans.

¹⁸² The World Bank is an international institution that involves many faith-based organizations and actors in its development projects so that one of its presidents, James Wolfensohn (1995-2005), is known to be close to many religious leaders. See Oscar Salemink, "The Purification, Sacralisation, and Instrumentalisation of Development," in *Religion and the Politics of Development: Critical Perspectives on Asia*, ed. Philip Fountain, Robin Bush, and R. Michael Feener (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 35; and Philip Fountain, Robin Bush, and R. Michael Feener, "Religion and the Politics of Development," in *Religion and the Politics of Development: Critical Perspectives on Asia*, ed. Philip Fountain, Robin Bush, and R. Michael Feener (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 21.

¹⁸³ See Anna M. Gade, "Tradition and Sentiment in Indonesian Environmental Islam," *Worldviews* 16, no. 3 (2012): 263–285.

2. Competing for the (Religious) Authority of *Kiai* and Development: Figurative Process, Narrative Making, and Legitimative Acts

For the socio-spatial expansion of capitalism, the production of ‘religious absolute space’ is crucial to preserve its religio-social dominance. Therefore, it is important to delineate the dynamic use of religion and its elements in relation to the capitalistic development projects in Indonesia and the ways in which the appropriation over religious figures, including their agencies and narratives, is usually exercised to legitimate the expansion of capitalistic developments, particularly in the Indonesian context.

In general, it is hard to underestimate the role of religion in Asia. As a matter of fact, though there are many Asian countries claiming to be secular, they declare their official religions in their state constitution¹⁸⁴. For this reason, to understand the politics of development, religion is still seen as important due to the fact that it is commonplace that religion and its actors are involved in various development projects in developing countries such as Indonesia¹⁸⁵. In this regard, it is often found that there is an instrumentalization of development by using religion. Of concern is that the sacralizing process of development projects are often sanctified as religion. Development is sacred as is religion so that it becomes indisputable. The sacralization makes it go beyond discussion, leaving it untouched and as if it were apolitical¹⁸⁶.

Li (2004) argues that modernization of Indonesia in the form of capitalistic development projects has caused billions of rural people, whose main livelihood is from agriculture, to suffer from losing their jobs¹⁸⁷. The promise of new jobs by selling their labor in newly established factories from modern developments remains an

¹⁸⁴ Fountain, Bush, and Feener, “Religion and the Politics of Development,” 22.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁸⁶ See Salemink, “The Purification, Sacralisation, and Instrumentalisation,” 55.

¹⁸⁷ Tania Li, *Land’s End: Capitalist Relations on An Indigenous Frontier* (Durham ; London: Duke University Press, 2014), 3.

illusion¹⁸⁸. As a result, the relation of modern development policy with poverty reduction in rural areas is actually doubted¹⁸⁹.

The majority of the population in Indonesia is Muslim. Given that, it has a position that counts. Though this Muslim population does not have a single religio-political articulation, it does not preclude interested parties from often involving Muslim groups to achieve a certain goal. Thus, the support of these Muslim groups is often seen as a path in the goal achievement of certain individuals, groups, or state. A figure who is often sought out to raise support is the religious leader who is considered to have authority and power through the support of their followers. Amidst various nicknames of local Ulama in Indonesia, especially in East and Central Java, they are often called *kiai*¹⁹⁰.

In general, a *kiai* is understood as a knowledgeable religious leader whose function is to guide everyday life in Muslim societies. Perceived as mastering religious knowledge, *kiai* are gaining religious authority in their communities, “owing their authority entirely to their learning, came to be known as simply the ‘Ulama’, the scholars”¹⁹¹. *Kiai* is translated by Elefson (2009) as “charismatic Islamic leader,” and regarded as having ‘Islamic mystical potency’ which sparks socio-political power among those connected to this social network and this relation existed due to, for example, “common people’s aspirations for

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YOGYAKARTA

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁹⁰ Endang Turmudi, *Struggling for the Umma: Changing Leadership Roles of Kiai in Jombang, East Java* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2006), 22.

¹⁹¹ Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God’s Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam*, University of Cambridge oriental publications 37 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 2.

*berkah*¹⁹². Such kind of charismatic authority is believed and recognized in a hierarchical community¹⁹³.

Basically, religious authority can be found “in certain notions, in texts, in individual persons, in groups of persons, and in institutions in the widest sense of the word”¹⁹⁴. These elements sometimes intertwine so that their authoritative force sparks more power. Not only through formal and procedural *fatwa* instruments, what is said or advised (*fatwa*-like statements) by individual holders of religious authority who also have authoritative power, especially if they are supported by charismatic figures (such as *kiai*), collective bodies, based on certain religious (Arabic) texts, and “disseminated through printed media, radio, television, and the Internet”¹⁹⁵.

Furthermore, a *kiai* usually runs a *pesantren*. It is an educational institution, similar to *madrassa*, which uses a traditional system of learning. In *pesantren*, there are three important elements, i.e., *kiai*, *pondok*, and *santri*. A *kiai* is usually assisted by several senior students (*santri*) and his family members. A *pondok* is the residential housing complex for running the *pesantren* system. The *santri* are students who are learning Islamic knowledge from the *kiai* and who also “support the existence of the *pesantren*, but also sustain the influence of the *kiai* in society”¹⁹⁶.

In the *santri* community, a search for religious legitimacy lies in its symbolic figure of the *kiai* as the center. “Among Islamic variants with differing views of Islam, the dominant *santri* defend their Islamic

¹⁹² Todd Philip Elefson, “Transactions for Blessing (Baraka): An Ethnography of Socio-Religio-Political Power among Men in the Santri Islam Region of Java” (Fuller Theological Seminary, 2009), 5, accessed August 3, 2020,

<https://search.proquest.com/openview/7103763fb6818f60742618fd402039bd/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>.

¹⁹³ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, Penguin classics (New York: Penguin Books, 1961), 93.

¹⁹⁴ Nico J. G. Kaptein, “The Voice of the ‘Ulamâ’: Fatwas and Religious Authority in Indonesia,” *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 49, no. 125 (2004): 115.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 122 & 127–8.

¹⁹⁶ See Turmudi, *Struggling for the Umma*, 25–26.

legitimacy, looking to the *kiai* at the symbolic center”¹⁹⁷. Based on the valuation of the network owned by *kiai*, gaining support from *kiai* would mean obtaining support from their network, i.e., the network of *santri*. “*Pesantren* have also been instrumental in the development of fraternities among the *santri* students, which could become the basis of an Ulama' valuable alliance and exchange network”¹⁹⁸. Thus, *pesantren* are united by the charisma of the *kiai* and reinforced by the patronage bond between teacher-student¹⁹⁹.

Specifically, Geertz (1960) asserts that there has been a changing role of *kiai*. Undeniably as a cultural broker, *kiai* used to have a central role in Indonesian development, especially in rural areas. Initially, the *kiai* was “the main connecting link, who joined the local system to the larger whole” in the village residents, especially during the pre-independence era. *Kiai* used to play the role of “a cultural middleman between villager and metropolitan life, and so create an effective juncture between traditional cultural patterns and modern ones”²⁰⁰. However, in the post-revolutionary era, the role of *kiai* is changing due to the demands of nationalism, Islamic modernism, and complex social transformation.

“...in Indonesia, the official Ulema often utilize their role in giving a veneer of ‘Islamicity’ to the state. The Ulema may do this by highlighting the Islamic credentials of the state, or by issuing fatwas in support of activities undertaken by the state or of a particular policy or law. For instance, if the state wishes to crush a particular religious or political opponent, the official Ulema may issue a *fatwa* stating that the views of the opponent

¹⁹⁷ Elefson, “Transactions for Blessing,” ii.

¹⁹⁸ Hiroko Horikoshi, “A Traditional Leader in A Time of Change: The ‘Kijaji’ and ‘Ulama’ in West Java” (University of Illinois, 1976), 329, <https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/67549>.

¹⁹⁹ Martin van Bruinessen, “Indonesia’s Ulama and Politics: Caught between Legitimising the Status Quo and Searching for Alternatives,” *Prisma - The Indonesian Indicator*, no. No. 49 (1990): 3.

²⁰⁰ Clifford Geertz, “The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2, no. 2 (January 1960): 229–30.

are heretical, giving the state a free hand in dealing with the problem”²⁰¹.

Given his (authoritative) knowledge, (the body of) *kiai* often becomes a contested figure by the state and the *Umma* (Muslim population)²⁰². Basically, a *kiai* is expected, among other things, to instill true values and accommodate the interests of his followers²⁰³. Yet, being independent is not easy for *kiai* because it can make them appear in opposition to the government²⁰⁴. However, “It is widely believed that the Ulema as a group tend to provide ‘religious’ legitimacy for many of the Muslim states today”²⁰⁵. Owing to the pressure of practical politics, *kiai* are now faced with a difficult choice to save or, indeed, destroy the important foundations that previous generations have built. As a matter of fact, *kiai* are often used by professional politicians as “mere charismatic magnets for votes”, yet when a *kiai* enters into politics, he is only seen as an “amateur politician”, suggesting that they are easy to be manipulated by certain parties²⁰⁶.

Kiai are generally incorporated into one of the largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia, namely, *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU). In another way round, *pesantren* are a miniature version of NU, meaning that NU grew into “a large interest group representing the *pesantren* milieu”²⁰⁷. The force of NU is located in *kiai* (Ulama) and his followers²⁰⁸. The majority of NU followers are villagers, laborers,

²⁰¹ Saeed, “The Official Ulema,” 24.

²⁰² Greg Fealy and Robin Bush, “The Political Decline of Traditional Ulama in Indonesia,” *Asian Journal of Social Science* 42, no. 5 (2014): 538–9.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 539.

²⁰⁴ van Bruinessen, “Indonesia’s Ulama and Politics,” 1.

²⁰⁵ Saeed, “The Official Ulema,” 14.

²⁰⁶ See Geertz, “The Javanese Kijaji,” 247; Greg Fealy, “Divided Majority: Limits of Indonesian Political Islam,” in *Islam and Political Legitimacy*, ed. Shahram Akbarzadeh and Abdullah Saeed (London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 161.

²⁰⁷ van Bruinessen, “Indonesia’s Ulama and Politics,” 3.

²⁰⁸ C. Dijk, “Ulama and Politics,” *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde/Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 152, no. 1 (1996): 109.

fishermen, small traders, and the like²⁰⁹. Support from NU, as the largest traditionalist organization in Indonesia, could imply an endorsement from its members. Therefore, it is common that NU's support becomes a bone of contention in the political arena of Indonesia.

“Since before Indonesian independence, NU has served as a source of religious authority and the producer of Islamic knowledge and thought; and has provided opportunities for social and religious activism; and has also served as a conduit for political activism”²¹⁰.

Similar to the relationship between *kiai* and *santri*, NU also has a large 'patronage-oriented' tendency between the activists and their members, a relationship that is perpetuated through patronage, not ideas or programs²¹¹ and the pattern of relationships among NU followers is primordial and very loyal²¹². The ownership of a concrete mass base makes NU attractive to any government regime of Indonesia²¹³. As a part of the politics of development, the government often involves *kiai* in development projects and a *kiai* often lends his religious legitimacy to the government to exercise it, with certain rewards²¹⁴. Modernization of the economy has made economic independence difficult for *kiai* so they are increasingly vulnerable to being bribed (paid) by the state or big companies²¹⁵, but it is indeed hard to prove. The increase in the country's political power has made it difficult for *kiai* to maintain their autonomy from any direction of the government²¹⁶. The state increasingly becomes intrusive to the authority of a *kiai* in defining Islamic discourse and orthodoxy and, therefore, *kiai* is 'relativized' rather than 'sidelined'²¹⁷.

²⁰⁹ Fealy and Bush, “The Political Decline,” 542.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 558.

²¹¹ van Bruinessen, “Indonesia’s Ulama and Politics,” 3.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 2.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1–2.

²¹⁵ Fealy and Bush, “The Political Decline,” 537.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ Mandaville, 2007 as cited in *ibid.*

“All Indonesian governments, including those which have tightly controlled Islamic parties, have been wary of alienating the Islamic community and have carefully cultivated Muslim support. Both Sukarno and Soeharto devoted considerable effort and expense to co-opting Muslim leaders to their cause or, at the very least, gaining Muslim approval for government policies”²¹⁸.

When there is tension between *nahdliyin* (NU's followers) and state authorities, it often puts *kiai* in a difficult situation to determine his direction of support²¹⁹. Actually, the political participation of a *kiai* will tarnish his traditional leadership role, though it benefits him in terms of financial income²²⁰. Thereby, a *kiai* who voices opposition to the government will be praised and, conversely, if he supports the government, he will be denounced by *nahdliyin*. However, *kiai* tend to accept state co-optation due to the fact that there is a powerful political force (status quo) in the collective body of NU, directing *kiai* to seek official positions and political influences²²¹. However, the involvement of *kiai* in practical politics mostly benefited NU's elites and its patronage network rather than its grassroots followers²²². Yet, in its rhetoric, NU carried out pragmatic cooperation with the state to promote the economic and political welfare of its members²²³.

To make matters worse, the modern wave of capitalism has come into NU so that *kiai* have begun to get involved in the local political constellation for income (money)²²⁴. As a result, contemporary entanglements between *kiai*, capital, and the state lead some observers to raise doubts about the genuine involvement of *kiai*

²¹⁸ Fealy, “Divided Majority,” 151.

²¹⁹ Fealy and Bush, “The Political Decline,” 539.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 538.

²²¹ See *ibid.*, 540.

²²² *Ibid.*, 544.

²²³ Robin Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama and the Struggle for Power within Islam and Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), 100.

²²⁴ Fealy and Bush, “The Political Decline,” 555–6.

as in the best interests of the *umma*²²⁵. As a matter of fact, the political position of NU has been described as “a more subtle but lucrative form of politics”²²⁶. Such dualism can be seen in NU leaders in the local regions who are trying to extract the benefits from their good relations with the government for the benefit of followers and themselves²²⁷. The material benefits are not only extracted from the government, but also from foreign agencies and corporate sources²²⁸. Thus, in other words, NU (Ulema and its members) will tolerate whatever is considered beneficial²²⁹. It was different during the Soeharto era in which NU and its progressive ideas were on the frontline in opposing the government; NU is now seen as not being “a major force for reform or religious and social liberalization in the post-Soeharto era”²³⁰.

Since its founding in 1926, NU has been political, especially if it is seen for the anti-Dutch and nationalistic spirit²³¹. Undoubtedly, *pesantren*, with its networks of *kiai* and *santri*, were considered a very conducive space and a breeding ground for resistance mobilization²³². However, NU’s oppositional standing is questionable because struggling for independence was absent in NU’s objectives²³³. In fact, NU declared the Dutch colonialism as ‘*dar-al Islam*’ in 1938²³⁴. Until 1942, NU's position towards the Dutch was very accommodating²³⁵. Overall, NU's relationship with the Dutch (or Japan) is similar to its relationship to other political powers which is marked by incoherence²³⁶. On a rhetorical level, NU narrates itself as a critic of

²²⁵ See Greg Fealy, “The Political Contingency of Reform-mindedness in Indonesia’s Nahdlatul Ulama,” in *Islamic Legitimacy in a Plural Asia*, ed. Anthony Reid and Michael Gilson, Routledge contemporary Asia series 3 (London ; New York: Routledge, 2007).

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 158.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 159.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 163.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 165.

²³¹ Bush, *Nahdlatul Ulama*, 39.

²³² Mawardi, 1967: 16 as cited in *ibid.*

²³³ Feilard, 1999a as cited in *ibid.*

²³⁴ Feilard, 1999a: 16-8 as cited in *ibid.*, 40.

²³⁵ Van Bruinessen, 1994: 45 as cited in *ibid.*

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

the government and military. However, at the level of political pragmatism, NU seeks and takes advantage of power structures²³⁷. NU did not hold street protests, but NU conducted silent negotiations with local officials to get concrete economic and political benefits²³⁸. However, despite such pragmatism-oriented and accommodative policy of NU, *kiai* and their *pesantren* have sometimes become a progressive element which appears to stand for the interests of *nahdliyin* at the local level such as in the colonial era where, though NU's policy tended to be accommodative, it did not block many local *pesantren* to become the 'breeding grounds' for radical resistances against colonialism²³⁹.

Fealy (2003) admits that "Islam has seldom acted as an independent, cohesive or determining force in Indonesian politics"²⁴⁰. In other words, although in general NU tends to be accommodating, compromising, and moderate in accepting state policies, it does not guarantee that at any time NU will give unusual surprises by going against state policy. NU is difficult to generalize because "NU's elite is increasingly fragmented", resulting from the way "NU functions as a confederative organization, with a relatively loose hierarchy and structural lines that allow considerable autonomy for *kiai* and local branches"²⁴¹. For example, in the politics of environmental issues in Indonesia, in 2007 NU proved itself as a progressive force capable of blocking the PLTN – *Pembangkit Listrik Tenaga Nuklir* (nuclear power plant) project in Jepara of Central Java against state policy in defense of *nahdliyin* interests over nuclear dangers for local environmental sustainability. By means of *bahth al-masāil* (NU's body or procedures for legislating certain religious laws over every day or dilemmatic issues by issuing a *fatwa* – Islamic legal decision – in which many NU *kiai* were invited to conduct *fiqh*-based examinations by initially "listen(ing) to government ministers, senior officials,

²³⁷ Ibid., 100.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ See *ibid.*, 40.

²⁴⁰ Fealy, "Divided Majority," 166.

²⁴¹ Fealy and Bush, "The Political Decline," 554–5.

scientists, lawyers, sociologists, and activists speak for and against”), NU issued a *fatwa* of *haram* (religiously forbidden) on the PLTN development plan²⁴². The *fatwa* was issued based on the narrative that PLTN would bring more negative aspects (*kemadlaratan*) rather than beneficial ones (*kemashlahatan*)²⁴³. Likewise, in 2014, to resist the geothermal power plant in Kuningan, West Java, a *bahth al-masāil*²⁴⁴ was held in the *pesantren* of Buntet Cirebon and issued a *fatwa* of *haram* against state policy²⁴⁵. Indeed, the two energy projects ended in failure.

Meanwhile, in the issue of the cement-mining industry in northern Kendeng, support from a charismatic *kiai* was contested and in Chapter Four I will show that the success of a cement factory to obtain support from a charismatic *kiai* of Rembang has made the opposition obstructed. In this regard, the body of the high-profile ‘supporting *kiai*’ has become a symbolic mediation for the cement factory to obtain support from the ‘religious’ absolute space. Meanwhile, although several *kiai* oppose the cement factory, they do not do so by means of a frontal confrontation against the ‘supporting *kiai*’. Meaning that, the support from the high-profile *kiai* has moderated the open resistance against the cement corporations from the other *kiai*. As a result, after receiving support from the (political) absolute space, the support from the (religious) absolute space has further reinforced the abstract space of the cement corporation. It is no wonder that, though the Supreme Court revoked the operational

²⁴² See Richard Tanter, “Nuclear Fatwa: Islamic Jurisprudence and the Muria Nuclear Power Station Proposal,” *Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability*, 2, last modified 2007, accessed August 2, 2020, <https://nautilus.org/apsnet/nuclear-fatwa-islamic-jurisprudence-and-the-muria-nuclear-power-station-proposal/>.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁴⁴ See *Bahtsul Masail Haul Buntet 2014*, 2014, accessed August 27, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xR4CiJn-eKo>.

²⁴⁵ Sobih Adnan and Alhafiz K, “Isu Penjualan Gunung Ciremai Dibahas di Haul Buntet Pesantren,” *NU Online*, last modified April 5, 2014, accessed August 6, 2020, <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/51236/isu-penjualan-gunung-ciremai-dibahas-di-haul-buntet-pesantren>.

license of the factory in 2016, the persistence of the factory to run does not receive significant resistance.

3. The Dilemma of Identity: Advantages and Risks in Resistance Movements

The resistance movements against the cement corporations in northern Kendeng cannot be separated from identity-related issues. Since their inception, these resistance movements have generated several (collective) identities ranging from the *Samin* (*Sedulur Sikep*) minority group to the villager movement that finally became known as the Guardians of Mother Earth. However, the *Samin* identity that appeared for the first time, one of which is through a documentary film called *Samin versus Semen*, has had several positive and negative impacts on the dynamic development of the resistance movement. Therefore, it is needed to briefly review the theoretical debates on the impacts of identity-based utilization in social movements, particularly in relation to compartmentalization of counter space in northern Kendeng. It is worth noting that in social movement theory, the role of (collective) identity is indeed a matter of debate. On the one hand, it is perceived as having a positive role in enlarging a movement, but, on the other hand, it is thought as causing fragmentation in the body of a movement.

The majority of researchers have made collective identity a central concept and theory in viewing “the role of cultural meanings in social movements” because it is considered to have advantages in explaining social mobilization²⁴⁶. Due to the vital position of collective identity in a movement, it is even assumed that “without which movements cannot mobilize supporters”²⁴⁷. However, in relation to protest and political studies, perspectives on collective identity have shifted from what was previously seen as an advantage

²⁴⁶ James M. Jasper and Aidan McGarry, “The Identity Dilemma, Social Movements, and Contested Identity,” in *The Identity Dilemma: Social Movements and Collective Identity*, ed. Aidan McGarry and James M. Jasper (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015), 4.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

to now be seen as a 'straitjacket' which is actually detrimental. On the one hand, it is considered beneficial inasmuch as the collective identity provides inspiration for the mobilization of members to take political action. On the other hand, it is considered to be detrimental inasmuch as it distorts and represses more than it helps individuals²⁴⁸. Thus, collective identity in protest movements is like “double-edged swords”²⁴⁹.

“Identities can be imagined by others and imposed on a group from the outside to oppress or position it in a social hierarchy. They are not only banners to inspire mobilization; they are cultural stereotypes that damage and distort.”²⁵⁰

In addition, collective identity is considered to obscure the complex reality of social movements because it freezes other adaptations and reinterpretations of lived experiences and expansion of movements. Fixed identity tends to exclude the involvement and mobilization of other potential individuals or groups. Therefore, a debate over mere identities, but rather on their political possibilities, in movements should be avoided²⁵¹. Some people will feel proud of their identity (label) but some will feel cynical and reject it. Their pride is because they are in the “center of identity”, while others who are not are at the periphery. This is where identity contains a paradox because, though it often provides a general cause for mobilization²⁵², identity itself is actually a form of division, fragmentation and compartmentalization of movement²⁵³. For example, collective identity contains a basic cognitive logic that looks positively at one

²⁴⁸ See *ibid.*

²⁴⁹ See Clare Saunders, “Double-Edged Swords? Collective Identity and Solidarity in the Environment Movement1,” *The British Journal of Sociology* 59, no. 2 (2008): 227–253.

²⁵⁰ Jasper and McGarry, “The Identity Dilemma,” 2.

²⁵¹ Judith Butler, 1990 as cited in *ibid.*, 4.

²⁵² See Francesca Polletta and James M. Jasper, “Collective Identity and Social Movements,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 27, no. 1 (2001): 283–305.

²⁵³ Jasper and McGarry, “The Identity Dilemma,” 4.

group (in-group) and, conversely, looks negatively at another (out-group)²⁵⁴.

Thus, fixed identity may create space (for polarization) for other groups or opponents to attack a movement by restoring the stigmas attached to movement identity.²⁵⁵ Meanwhile, loose identity will open a space for internal contestations²⁵⁶. As a result, it opens the weaknesses of a movement which at any time can be used for purposes that are detrimental to the movement. For example, for groups (often minorities) who suffer from stigma, their mobilization of resources is implicitly aimed at changing their negative stigma or, in other words, to “transform shame into pride in the identity”. Yet, such goal-based mobilization often creates “moral shock, anger, and indignation along the way” so that it will also create moments for reactions from opposing groups²⁵⁷.

Jasper and McGarry (2015) define collective identity as “an act of the imagination, a trope that stirs people to action by arousing feelings of solidarity with their fellows and by defining moral boundaries against other categories”²⁵⁸. Actually, the majority of academics see collective identity as something socially-constructed and contested, not biological or primordial, furthermore that those who claim that identity prefer that identity as something fixed, implying homogeneity and coherence, through which it will provide strength. For example, when gays and lesbians are attacked by religious groups, they tend to argue that their sexual orientation is something that comes from their genes; biological and fixed, not socially-constructed in nature²⁵⁹.

“It involves both cognition and emotions and can ultimately be traced to the universal human need for attachments to others. It may be based on shared structural positions, especially class, nation, age, race-ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, but

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 8.

²⁵⁵ See *ibid.*, 6.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 9.

²⁵⁷ Britt and Heise, 2000 as cited in *ibid.*, 8.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 1.

²⁵⁹ See *ibid.*, 3.

these never automatically construct identities. There is always a great deal of “identity work” that creates, sustains, and transforms identities.”²⁶⁰

To some extent, identity creation is actually similar to the mode of production of capitalism because “the process of identity work creates products – public statements, names, placards, symbols, and so on”²⁶¹ which, in a movement, seem at first glance homogeneous, but it actually contains contradictions, especially when it is seen from the production relations for other individuals or groups involved in it. However, as far as the internal debate revolves around “tastes in tactics,” it is actually a form of “nonviolence and participatory democracy,” provided that it is carried out openly and not exclusively. Thus, as far as it is not counter-productive and no more than “necessary discussions,” it is “essential to the movement's survival” because what is being discussed is around “reflective discussion and contestation over ends, means, and fields of action”, as for example in the ecology movement, protesters often argue about protest tactics “ranging from civil disobedience to parliamentary representation”²⁶².

In short, the main negative outcome of a collective identity-based movement is that it will result in fragmentation resulting from the proliferation of organizations and duplication of movements so that it opens golden opportunities for opponents to undertake attempts to obliterate it. Apart from being due to individual ego or ambition, differences in purpose, activity, and substance of the movement, a fragmentation stemmed from collective identity often leads to the destruction of the movement²⁶³. Above all, on the one hand, collective identity is still seen as necessary²⁶⁴ because of its “strategic advantages” but, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that it is a

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 1–2.

²⁶¹ Flesher Fominaya 2010 as cited in *ibid.*, 6.

²⁶² Ibid., 10.

²⁶³ Ibid., 9–10.

²⁶⁴ See P. G. Klandermans, “Identity Politics and Politicized Identities: Identity Processes and the Dynamics of Protest,” *Political Psychology* 35, no. 1 (2014): 1–22.

fiction hard to realize because its complex cultural contents make it difficult to be implicated into a common identity²⁶⁵.

In the end, due to the fact that several identity groups are involved in the resistance movement in northern Kendeng, I seek to portray the dynamic interplay of such identities within the fragmentation or compartmentalization of counter space. On the one hand, identity is an important aspect in the development of the resistance movement in northern Kendeng. A previous study shows that the identity of *Samin* (or, *Sedulur Sikep*), as a minority group, has made the resistance movement against cement factories bigger²⁶⁶. It has been able to attract broad sympathy and solidarity from local, national, and even international sources. The *Samin* identity has been able to mobilize various resources to support the anti-cement movement. However, on the other hand, another study shows that ever since the beginning of the resistance movement, the emergence of the *Samin* identity opened up space for opponents to divide the resistance movement²⁶⁷. Adding to that, I would show that, despite restoring the stigma and stereotypes of *Saminism*, the identity of *Saminism* is also juxtaposed with other (religious) identities that have recently emerged and been involved in the resistance movement. As a result, the polarization of issues related to (religious) identity is now increasingly widening and exacerbating the fragmentation. Not only is it confronted with Muslim (religious) identity, *Saminism* is now also associated with a non-Muslim identity, i.e., Catholics, as I would elaborate in Chapter Five.

F. Research Methods

1. Data Collection Method

This research is designed to be qualitative and is approached by a narrative viewpoint. From the interviews and conversations, I collected data consisting of various information and stories. I arrange the information and stories from the research participants or

²⁶⁵ Jasper and McGarry, "The Identity Dilemma," 13.

²⁶⁶ See Idhom, "Resistensi Komunitas Sedulur Sikep terhadap Semen."

²⁶⁷ See Novianto, "Berebut Saminisme."

interlocutors into a narrative chronology²⁶⁸. In this research, I hold a transformative worldview²⁶⁹ that aims to either portray or challenge the socio-ecological injustice and (potential) crisis stemming from the spatial domination of cement corporations in northern Kendeng.

There are mainly two methods I employed to obtain the primary data, (1) observation and (2) interviews (formal) or conversations (informal). Through these methods, I attained information (or stories), facts (or evidence) and opinions (or ideas) on certain issues from the interviewees or interlocutors. To begin with, my initial observation was on March 27, 2015 at an “*Istighosah Akbar*”²⁷⁰ (Public Praying) organized by the Nahdliyin Front for Popular Sovereignty over Natural Resources (FNKSDA - *Front Nahdliyyin untuk Kedaulatan Sumber Daya Alam*) at *Pondok Pesantren Roudlotul Tholibin* in Leteh, Rembang. I attended this event as a member of FNKSDA; a coordinating forum between NU youth with concerns about conflicting management issues of natural resources, such as air, water, land, and everything contained therein, especially those that occur in the NU basis.

In this event, as a participant observer, I learned the fact that the anti-cement villagers really hoped for support from their *kiai*, but this was not easy to obtain. This *Istighosah* was primarily intended to gain support from KH Mustofa Bisri (Gus Mus), but he was not willing to appear even though he was at home. In the end, only Gus Yahya (KH Yahya Cholil Staquf) appeared to lead the *Istighosah*, but not only that, after the event, several movement leaders gathered with several *kiai* who were present to discuss some movement issues. However, I found out later that there was suspicion that some *kiai* were actually supporters of the cement factory. As a result, the discussion, particularly among the activists, was moved to another place, i.e., a

²⁶⁸ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2014), 13–4.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 9–10.

²⁷⁰ See FNKSDA, “Siaran Pers Istighosah Akbar; Ponpes Leteh, Rembang,” *FNKSDA*, last modified March 27, 2015, accessed August 28, 2020, <https://fnksda.or.id/siaran-pers-istighosah-akbar-ponpes-leteh-rembang/>.

Catholic church. In this observation, I did not make a recording, but I made some field notes.

At this *Istighosah*, I started to get acquainted and chat with Rembang villagers resisting the cement factory in northern Kendeng. In addition to the villagers, I also started to get acquainted with the activists of the anti-cement movement, from the local region of Rembang and Pati, as well as other activists from outside the affected areas. My encounters with them continue with friendship, at least through social media, where then I gradually came to understand the issues and dynamics surrounding the resistance against cement factories in northern Kendeng either from their status updates, posts, and direct conversations. I gathered several understandings through this method which I then attempted to verify with them when I met some of them during my field research.

I also participated in one of the anti-cement protests by JMPPK (*Jaringan Masyarakat Peduli Pegunungan Kendeng*) that was held in front of the Semarang Governor's Office on January 17, 2016, in which JMPPK almost collided with another demonstration carried out at the same time by the Indonesian Tobacco Farmers Association (APTI – *Asosiasi Petani Tembakau Indonesia*) who reject the tobacco import policy. I was present at the ceremony to commemorate Indonesia's independence on 17 August 2019 which was held by JMPPK-Pati in Kedumulyo Village, Kayen District of Pati Regency of Central Java. In this event, I participated in the ceremonial process and follow-up events such as “*Kuliah Bersama Rakyat*” (discussion with local villagers) where the speakers came from among the Samin, Muslim, academic, and Catholic groups. Here, I found out that there were many in the audience from outside Pati.

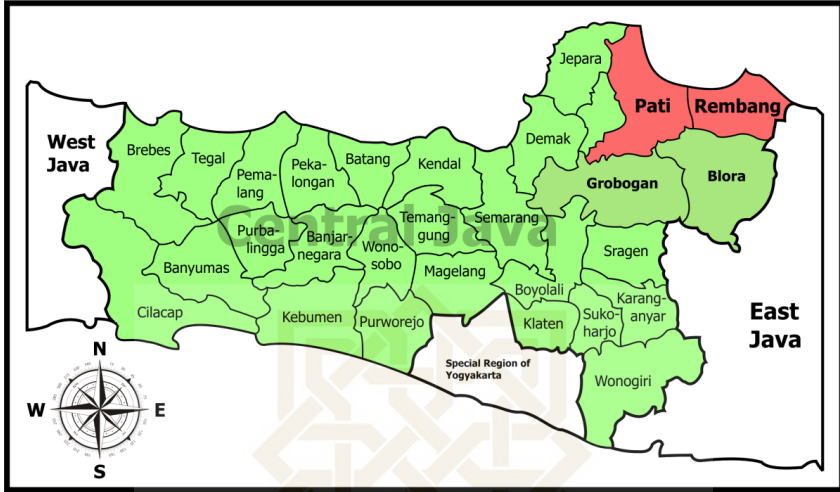
Finally, for the purpose of observation, I also attended the gathering “*Temu Ageng*” (Great Meeting) of *Sedulur Sikep* on September 22, 2019 in Sambongrejo Village, Sambong District, Blora Regency of Central Java. During the discussion, I found out that there is a different understanding on *Saminism*, particularly in terms of its relation to Islam. It was surprising that a Saminist from Bojonegoro tended to identify himself as Saminist and Muslim at the same time.

Adding to that observation, I had casual but serious conversations with interlocutors who are my friends from previous acquaintances and conducted interviews with several informants during my fieldwork from 13 August 2019 to 28 September 2019. With my friends (or interlocutors), I talked about the developments and updates about the protest movements in Pati and Rembang. In these discussions, I also asked them several questions regarding my research focus. From these conversations, I then came up with several names of people that I should interview to deepen my research focus. I recorded most of my conversations and some were fully transcribed. Meanwhile, I also met several informants to interview, which consisted of movement activists and Muslim leaders in Pati and Rembang. I recorded and then transcribed all of the interviews. Both in the observations and interviews, I always made short notes, especially related to several important points and facts. Along with the above methods, as my secondary data I collected other facts from available previous studies and online media. In this method, I aimed to collect the scattered fragments in various studies, news, and online news media, YouTube channels, and social media relating to controversies of cement mining corporations in northern Kendeng. From such data sources and their collecting methods, I then tried to assemble them into a line regarding the production and reproduction of space in the context of the cement-mining controversy in northern Kendeng of Central Java.

2. Location of Study

At the beginning, I wanted to conduct my research mainly in Rembang. However, to understand the development of the protest movement in Rembang firstly required me to comprehend the protest movements that had previously emerged in Pati. The meaning is that the protest against the cement factory in Rembang is hard to separate from the resistance movement in Pati. Therefore, I decided to reframe my research location in Pati and Rembang of Central Java.

Picture I. 1 The Position of Pati and Rembang Regency in Central Java



Source: sketched based on Wikimapia

In Pati and Rembang, I did not base my research location on specific villages. However, I randomly chose the location based on the availability of interlocutors and informants of this study. In Pati, I stayed at the house of a friend who is not directly related to the resistance movement, while in Rembang I lived with a friend who has been involved in the resistance movement from the start.

3. Research Informants

The information and data in this study not only come from people whom I put as informants, but also from people whom I put as interlocutors. With informants, I did formal interviews, while with interlocutors I had informal conversations and discussion. During my field research, I was accompanied by DW, an activist from Yogyakarta who has been involved in propagating an anti-cement campaign, mostly through online media.

Most of my interviewed informants are male. There are only three female informants (FA, RSM, and DE). Similarly, most of my interlocutors are male. There is only one female interlocutor (NG) and she is a former chairman of JMPPK-Rembang. While most of my

interviewees and interlocutors in Rembang are affiliated with JMPPK-Rembang, in Pati most of them are not affiliated with JMPPK-Pati. Meanwhile, their occupations range from villager, civil servant, freelancer, to NGO worker. The selection of informants snowballed, by which I mean that most of them were interviewed based on my previous conversations with interlocutors. Their names popped up in several chats, so I decided to interview them to listen to their views, as well as to hear stories on the purpose of keeping representation from both sides.

In Pati, I had conversations and interviews with several people. In Prawoto village, I met my old friend, namely AL, and spent a night at his house. From AL, I got a story of the contestation over the resistance movement and his skeptical position due to the fragmentation. From that story, I decided to then interview AN in the city of Pati. AN is a controversial religious figure because although he rejects the cement factory in Pati, he has close ties with Franky Welirang, a vice president of *PT Indocement* cement factory, so that he is often rumored to actually be someone who supports the cement factory. In the interview, he emphasizes that he strongly rejects the plan for a cement factory in Pati and that he would do a street protest if a cement factory were to be established in Pati. Incidentally, later on after my field research, I found out that one of his daughters (namely, FA) is my friend so I also asked her about a number of things, even though it could only be through social media chats.

In the city of Pati, I stayed with a friend for several nights. While I was there, I often hung out in a coffee shop because there I hoped to meet IBC, a local artist who, at the beginning of the anti-cement movement in Pati, was involved in protests through art and cultural performances. Because I never saw him there, I decided to just visit his house which I continued to do twice. From IM's house, I stopped by the store of AT, one of the local Kendeng activists who focuses on campaigning against the cement factory through screen printing and owns a t-shirt sales counter, and I interviewed him. In the coffee shop, I met also with NM, a local NU activist, and I chatted about the dynamics of Pati mass protests, in general.

I also participated in a discussion forum “*Kuliah bersama Rakyat*”²⁷¹ (Lecture with Local People) initiated by JMPPK in Kedumulyo. In addition to following “*Susur Gua Lowo*” (Exploring the Lowo Cave) to see the river flow under the karst of Kendeng, I listened to the descriptions, analysis, and comments of speakers from across campuses and faiths regarding the dynamics of the resistance movement against the cement industry in Central Java. As moderator, Gunretno, a Samin, represented JMPPK as moderator, Mbak Zaim represented Muslim groups from the State Islamic University (UIN) Kudus, and Romo Benny and Romo Budi represented a Catholic group from Soegijapranata University of Semarang and others. Before this lecture, I also had a conversation with a friend, namely SO, a director of a national NGO focusing on cultural issues and minority groups and he has long interacted with *Samin* indigenous people of Central Java. During my last stay in Pati, I conducted a long interview with FA in his house. He is one of the Pati activists against the cement factory who lives in Tayu. From FA, I received confirmation of several issues and information regarding “behind-the-scene dynamics” in the protest movements against the cement factory in Pati. Aside from Pati, I also conducted an interview with AR, an anti-cement activist of Pati who is now living in Yogyakarta. From AR, I received other perspectives and information regarding Pati’s resistance movements.

Furthermore, in Rembang, I was greeted by MP and we had a long conversation about updates on movement issues, particularly in Kendeng, and generally, Indonesia in several occasions. I have known MP since 2015. While in Rembang, I stayed at the house of DJ, a local NGO activist on nature preservation issues. Also, in Rembang, I had intensive conversation on several occasions with a former female chairman of the JMPPK-Rembang, namely NG. To avoid fragmentation, NG had once left Rembang, but then returned to teach at one of the private universities there. It should be noted that NG, MP

²⁷¹ See Bagas Yusuf Kausan, “Menghidupi Kemerdekaan Ala Warga Kendeng,” *Kalamkopi*, August 20, 2019, accessed September 2, 2020, <https://kalamkopi.wordpress.com/2019/08/20/menghidupi-kemerdekaan-ala-warga-kendeng/>.

and DJ are local people who had been activists of earlier local protests against the cement factory in Rembang. On the advice of DJ, I was introduced and conducted an interview with DE, a female doctor who is active in providing support to the local resistance movement. In addition, I chatted with IK and SHD, the activists who work on digital campaigns against the cement factory through a YouTube channel. There, I also interviewed BBG, a local government staff person at the district level who supports the anti-cement movements.

Furthermore, in Rembang, I also toured the Gunem sub-district and saw a *Semen Indonesia* factory already operating there. In Gunem, I had a conversation with JO at his house. Not only once, I returned to JO's house on a different day to continue the interview. On my second visit to JO's house, I continued to visit and interview WTR, a local anti-cement activist who now suffers from paralysis. It turned out that I had met WTR in a closed forum of networked anti-cement activists after the “*Istighosah Akbar*”, which was held at a Catholic church in Rembang. From WTR's house, I visited and interviewed NGT, having previously stopped to see a female activist from the village named SKN, but coincidentally she suffered from a centipede sting. Due to her condition, I decided to cancel our interview.

On another day, NG and I visited the house of ISM and his wife and I did a few interviews with them. The arrival of NG, who had been missing for a long time, invited other villagers (Pak SLR and Bu RSM) to come to ISM's house so that, apart from meeting and crying because they remembered their past closeness, I heard many of their stories about the ins-outs and joys-sorrows of the local anti-cement villagers of Gunem. They (Pak SLR, Pak ISM, and Bu RSM) are Gunem villagers who often join protest actions.

At one of the Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) in Leteh, I visited and interviewed MA, one of *kiai* at *Roudhatut Tholibin*, three times. Based on previous interviews, I also interviewed two *Kiai*, GO and GH. Three of them are among the local religious leaders of Rembang who support the anti-cement movements. Even though GO is often rumored to be lenient with the existence of a cement factory,

in the interview he emphasized that he still resists the *PT Semen Indonesia* cement factory in Rembang.

4. Data Analysis Method

During my fieldwork, I mostly did voice recording of informants and several interlocutors. When I was not doing voice recording, I surely did field notes. I transcribed the tapes for easier memory and analysis. I then read the transcripts and field notes, then marked the relevant points for further analysis. , Sometimes the collected information and data required me to refer to further related information or documents which I could find in online media and YouTube channels. To be known, the Kendeng anti-cement resistance movement has excellent documentations and online-media campaigns in the virtual world. The empty gaps in conversations and interviews were often addressed in this way.

The above considerable amount of data had once exhausted me. Yet, after I revised my research outline based on my field research data, I then reduced them into several relevant topics. Therefore, I did not use some (irrelevant) data, but it may be useful for other research topics. After I categorized the relevant data on my topics, I started to compose words, sentences and chapters so as to be readable and understandable.

During the writing process, I sometimes realized that additional opinions or information were needed. I covered this issue by pausing the writing process and having conversations with interviewees or interlocutors through online chats, mostly through WhatsApp and rarely Facebook messenger, yet I also made a phone call to one interlocutor. Coincidentally, there are two interviewees who often texted me through WhatsApp about new updates on my topic. Based on such development of data, I updated my data in the middle of the writing process.

5. Ethical Consideration

From the above descriptions of my research methods, it is clearly illustrated that my standpoint is based on the perspective of the

protesters, not the proponents of cement factory. It is a matter of my standpoint, suggesting that the spatial expansion of cement corporations in northern Kendeng is wrong and should have been halted. Therefore, the research's descriptions here are bound to reflect such a standpoint's perspective resulting in ignoring the proponent's viewpoints.²⁷² As defined by Ford (2000), standpoint is "a subjectively held viewpoint about an issue justified by an individual person or group's value system"²⁷³. In environmental and ecological research, a standpoint is considered important because "science is used not only to answer agreed questions between scientists but to influence peoples' values" so as to bring new adherents to a desired standpoint²⁷⁴. However, people with different standpoints may consequently devalue my work.

As stated by Ford (2000), the standpoint is concerned with "what things are researched and what approaches are taken"²⁷⁵. As a consequence, my standpoint pointed me to the theory of space production rather than development theory in analyzing the aforementioned controversy in northern Kendeng. It is particularly intended to show that there are many irregular practices in the spatial expansion of the cement corporations in the northern Kendeng. Yet, by deploying other theoretical perspectives, people may produce different conclusions. However, such difference is an effort to explore and maintain 'socio-diversity' in viewing a similar issue²⁷⁶.

In addition, although the majority of the protesters would have no problem having their real names written here, in order to avoid or

²⁷² Hammersley, 1992 as cited in Anssi Peräkylä, "Reliability and Validity in Research Based on Naturally Occuring Social Interaction," in *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*, ed. David Silverman, 2nd ed. (London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2004), 283.

²⁷³ E. D Ford, *Scientific Method for Ecological Research* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 432, accessed March 16, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511612558>.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Charles C. Ragin and Lisa M. Amoroso, *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*, 2nd ed., Sociology for a new century series (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2011), 44.

trigger deeper fragmentation among them, I chose to use letters from their names. It should be noted that, due to factionalism, the protesters sometimes disagreed and argued with each other's opinion on certain issues. However, there would be some situations where I would not use their initials when I referred to their works in online news, YouTube channels, and books related to the real names of the informants or the interlocutors, although I would not give any hint of them.

As my standpoint is considerably attached to the anti-cement position, it is not easy to navigate myself as a researcher and supporter of the anti-cement movement in this work. For example, I faced a dilemma of whether or not to portray the internal movement's fragmentation in this research. Yet, I was eventually reassured by a local activist who said that, since the anti-cement movement is seemingly stagnant at the moment, it is an appropriate time to portray the internal fragmentation in efforts to build constructive criticisms of anti-cement movements in northern Kendeng. Also, so as not to worsen the current situation of the anti-cement movement, I decided not to interview an informant who was arguably crucial to my research for clarification purposes.

6. Structure of Discussion

I arranged this research with the following structure:

Chapter I: in addition to background, research questions, objectives, and research methods, this section contains a literature review and theoretical framework which explains the position and theoretical perspective of this research.

Chapter II: this section describes the issues which occurred in northern Kendeng, especially regarding the capital expansions, the opposition movements and the spatial contradictions of the cement industry which eventually triggered conflicts in Pati and Rembang.

Chapter III: this section elaborates the spatial contestation over the reproduction of Muslim (religious) space in Northern Kendeng and the ways in which the cement factory has exerted its domination.

Chapter IV: this section portrays the contestation over support from the ‘spatial body’ of *kiai*, along with their religious narratives and appropriation strategies, in relation to the dynamics of opposition against the construction of a cement factory in northern Kendeng.

Chapter V: this section describes the compartmentalization of counter space that stemmed from the polarization of some issues over anti-cement movements, especially in relation to Samin identities, documentary films, and NGOs which later caused friction, suspicions, and fragmentation in counter space.

Chapter VI: this section seeks to answer the research questions in the form of conclusions based on the findings and data analysis. In addition, it posits recommendations regarding the dynamics of resistance movements in northern Kendeng and further research agenda.



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CHAPTER VI
FINAL REMARKS:
THE REASON WHY THE SPATIAL EXPANSION AND
ACCUMULATION OF CEMENT CORPORATIONS IN
NORTHERN KENDENG IS HARD TO CHALLENGE

A. Conclusions

From the description and analysis of the data in the previous chapters, I will now seek to answer the three questions of this research as follows:

First, the exploration and exploitation of cement corporations continues in northern Kendeng because the cement corporations have managed to reproduce the absolute space regardless of the fact that there are many anti-cement sentiments from within the local population. The counter space has actually managed to unpack many contradictions in the spatial production of the cement corporations, but the abstract space insisted on continuing the mining plan by transforming into the absolute space to enforce obedience from the local population and negligence upon irregular spatial practices. Thus, the transformation of the abstract space of the cement corporation into absolute space has allowed the continuation of the cement-mining exploration and exploitation in northern Kendeng regardless of the spatial contradictions.

Second, the cement corporations maintain their dominance for socio-spatial accumulation through the production of absolute space. The absolute space for spatial accumulation has been reproduced by the cement corporations into two faces, namely (a) the political absolute space and (b) the religious absolute space. The reproduction of political absolute space embodies the spatial practices of the cement corporations in northern Kendeng with contradictions, fascist tendencies, and coercive or repressive actions. The political absolute space has provided the abstract space of the cement corporations with legal legitimacy for their spatial expansions in northern Kendeng. Meanwhile, the reproduction of religious absolute space has

hegemonized the religio-social space through the appropriation of the monument-like figure and his *fatwa*-like narratives so that the construction of a cement factory has been perceived, conceived and lived like an undisputable dogma in the religio-social space of northern Kendeng, particularly in Rembang. In this regard, the religious absolute space has sanctified the abstract space from any contradictions or violations in its spatial practices for preserving its dominance and the sake of socio-spatial accumulation of the cement corporations.

Third, the resistance movements find it difficult to counter the dominance of the cement corporations due to (1) the abstract space of cement corporations has transformed into the (political and religious) absolute space and (2) the counter space is now fragmented due to internal suspicions, friction, and fragmentation, as well as other polarized issues benefitting the cement corporations. Indeed, from the beginning the cement corporations have orchestrated the compartmentalization of the anti-cement movement such as by persuading several movement activists to openly or covertly receive CSR-based funds or donations resulting in suspicions and friction within the anti-cement movement. Since then, the suspicions, friction, and polarizations of other issues have been worsening and bringing about fragmentation in the anti-cement movement, particularly in Pati. Given the fragmentation, it is increasingly difficult for the counter space of northern Kendeng to transform into a differential space and thereby the counter space is prone to be confined in a contradictory space. Finally, the compartmentalized counter space has made the spatial expansion and accumulation of the cement corporations in northern Kendeng even more difficult to challenge.

B. Reflections

Based on the study on the spatial expansion of the cement corporations in northern Kendeng, there are four reflections that I can draw here. *First*, it is obvious that the production of space of the cement corporations in northern Kendeng is followed by the creation of various contradictions. Indeed, the abstract space will always

produce contradictions. A contradiction is continuously followed by other contradictions. In other words, it is a never ending production of contradictions.

Second, the capability of the abstract space of capitalism to easily transform into a political absolute space indicates that the state structures or apparatuses have been mostly controlled by capitalism. As a result, the state appears to legitimize, guard, and pave the way for the interests of capitalism. Thereby, it is common that the state prioritizes the interests of capitalist corporations rather than the interests of its people, in general. As a result, the people's resistance against the spatial expansion of the capitalist enterprises becomes even more difficult because it is actually against the state.

Third, by and large, the penetration of the cement corporations in northern Kendeng is in principle seen here an expansion of capitalism because it jeopardizes the welfare of the local population for the accumulation of wealth by a few capitalists. In this regard, the expansion of capitalism can also be seen as a new form of colonialism (neo-colonialism). During the struggle for Indonesian independence, Islam had become fuel for the radicalization of anti-colonial resistance. On the contrary, Islam has now become a powerful tool to moderate people's resistance against the expansion of neo-colonialism in Indonesia. The doctrine of *hubbul wathon minal iman* had been a slogan for the spirit of anti-colonial resistance, but now it has become a slogan of support for the expansion of neo-colonialism in Indonesia.

Four, in northern Kendeng, the people's resistance through legal-formal channels proved to be in vain. In other words, in no way can litigation stop the expansion of the cement corporations in northern Kendeng. It must be noted, nonetheless, that the inability of law or litigation to carry out its ideal function is the result of the dominance of political absolute space. Therefore, even if the cement factory is defeated through litigation in one place, it easily moves to another location or insists on continuing its plan by ignoring (violating) any unwanted legal decisions and formal-scientific recommendations (such as KLHS) under the protection of the fascist political space. Thus, it is reasonable that the resistance against the

expansion of capitalism in Indonesia cannot rely solely on formal litigation, other 'democratic' channels are necessarily taken into account including radical channels such as the mass power mobilization at the blockage of the north coast road in Pati.

C. Recommendations

Based on the findings, analysis and conclusions of this study, there are several recommendations I would like to put forward at the end of this chapter as follow:

First, the government must eliminate the absolute space, especially the political one. In northern Kendeng's controversy, it is evident that it has legitimized the contradictory spatial practices of the cement corporations and jeopardized the lives of the local population. Otherwise, the perseverance to perpetuate the political absolute space shows that the current regime is authoritarian and anti-democratic so it deserves to be overthrown.

Second, the counter space of northern Kendeng must dialectically address the roots of fragmentation so as to transform into a differential space. Particularly, the counter space must develop ways of dealing with stigmas, stereotypes, and their polarization. However, the counter space must open to new realities and criticisms so as to enhance the attainments of the anti-cement movement.

Third, for the next research agenda, focusing on the latest developments in the enigma of whether the counter space will transform into a differential space deserves further scrutiny, particularly in the face of the absolute space of cement corporations.

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