

Power Relations in 2023 Merapi Eruption Management

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ABSTRACT

Local wisdom plays a crucial role in disaster mitigation, as exemplified during the 2023 eruption of Mount Merapi. Amid the eruption, societal myths circulated, asserting that Merapi erupted to conceal mining-induced holes. The statement was made by the Sultan of Yogyakarta Special District (Sultan DIY) during an interview with the media. It then receives responses and pros and cons from the community, then forms a community perspective. Researchers analyzed data from a Jogja TV interview with the Sultan, using semiotic analysis and Foucault's power relations theory. The findings reveal that there is discourse and knowledge that portrays Merapi's eruption as a corrective response to mining damage. This narrative gained societal acceptance, highlighting the influential role of local authorities in shaping disaster perceptions. However, the discourse also raises the counterpoint of disagreement.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a country located at the confluence of three world plates, has an impact, namely a high disaster due to volcanic activity. Volcanic activity in Indonesia has been a positive and negative influence on the people of Indonesia. Countries with the most active volcanoes have as many as 129, which means that as many as 17% of the active volcanoes in the world are in Indonesia. Indonesia is one of the regions with the highest potential for volcanic disasters in the world. From various areas in Indonesia, Java Island is the area with the most potential volcanic disaster. Java Island is an island that is the centre of population concentration. It has 23 type A volcanoes with an eruption history of 470 eruptions, or as many as 47% of eruptions that have occurred in Indonesia.

Mount Merapi is one of the mountains located on the island of Java. The active volcano is located on the border of the Central Java and Yogyakarta regions. This is a very active mountain. Mountain It always experiences regular eruptions, with a total of 80 eruptions. Therefore, Merapi is dubbed the never sleeps volcano, which means it was the most active mountain during the

Holocene. The mountain eruption of Merapi that has occurred so far generally leads to the west and southwest.

On March 19, 2023, Mount Merapi erupted, which caused several areas in Central Java to also be affected by volcanic ash rain. The existence of this eruption caused several areas in Java to be exposed to volcanic ash and the closure of the slopes of Merapi in Sleman, Yogyakarta. This mountain, which is on the border of the Central Java and Yogyakarta regions, spewed hot clouds six times and seven incandescent lava as of March 12, 2023, putting the mountain's status at alert level (detik.com 2023).

This Merapi eruption did not only occur this year. According to the Central Agency for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation, Mount Merapi is an active volcano that has an eruption cycle of 4 years. It was recorded that since the 1600s, the mountain, which is located in four regions—Sleman DIY, Magelang, Boyolali, and Klaten—has erupted more than 80 times. However, this cycle also cannot occur because Merapi has had a long break for 18 years (Kumparan News 2020).

The existence of a disaster cycle of Merapi eruptions that is certain to occur makes the people on the slopes of Merapi more vigilant. Every time Merapi activity increases, people are getting ready to evacuate. Because they know that a Merapi eruption disaster can stalk them at any time. However, the area on the slopes of Merapi is still very much inhabited by people because of its attractiveness in the form of abundant natural (Setyawati et al. 2015). As a community that has repeatedly lived in an area prone to disasters, various local knowledge about Merapi eruptions emerged and was passed down hereditarily.

At the time of the eruption, the sultan of Jogja was interviewed by the media regarding the eruption that occurred. The sultan's statement stated that the eruption of Mount Merapi did not lead to an eruption because Merapi was believed to only be doing its job to cover damage to mining pits around the Merapi area. This then led to comments from the public stating that what the sultan conveyed was the truth, but some refused. Unknowingly, this then gave rise to a relationship of power and knowledge that was created. It'll give rise to a discourse that some societies believe This doesn't close the possibility of a physical discipline that happens through the media. It doesn't rule out the possibility that people will incorporate the discourse into an act at the time of an eruption, that is, not wanting to be evacuated to a safer place before the disaster. The discourse of knowledge spread in society will lead to the discipline of the body unconsciously. This will hinder the evacuation process in the event of a disastrous eruption of Mount Merapi. So this research is important to provide information and knowledge related to things related to power relationships during the overthrow of the Merapi eruption. This is what then makes researchers interested in conducting a research entitled Power Relations in tackling the Merapi eruption in 2023.

Reality can be shaped and produced through various discourses that can support each other. (Priyanto, 2017 as cited in Apriliyadi & Hendrix, 2021). Discourse was defined by Foucault as knowledge that is structured and related to rules and practices that can produce statements that have meaning in a certain range. Thus, discourse, according to Foucault, has a close relationship with power. The discourse produced would form a general understanding that would be liked by

the general public. Discourse, as well as the knowledge that has been produced, will raise the question of the discipline of the body as a form of the positive response of society (Apriliyadi & Hendrix, 2021). In modern society, body discipline doesn't have to happen through the process of physical interaction (Apriliyadi & Hendrix, 2021). A variety of regulations, rules, procedures, punishments and rewards can be controlled by an individual without their realizing it. Foucault explains that the power of generating discipline in the body has a mechanism of influencing the individual part of the self, touching the body, entering into actions and behaviours, discourses, and learning processes in everyday life (Foucault, 2002; Maring, 2010; Apriliyadi & Hendrix, 2021).

Research on the eruption of Merapi has been carried out by many previous researchers. The research conducted by Krisidyanto (2019) states that in the case of the Merapi eruption, there is a role for social capital in collective efficacy when dealing with disasters. In addition, research from Handoyo (2019) attempts to dissect the parenting style of mothers who were victims of the Merapi eruption. Research from Rahmawati (Rahmawati & Sugiantoro, 2019) seeks to dissect how communication patterns occur in health services when dealing with people with disabilities. Next is a study by Victor Marchezini, which tried to uncover the biopolitics of disaster: power, discourses, and practices. This study shows the emergence of the illusion that the state has succeeded in saving biological lives in the event of a disaster. This illusion arose from the discourse and practice of the government of São Luiz do Paraitinga, Brazil (Marchezini, 2015).

From several studies that have been carried out by previous researchers, there has been no research on the eruption of Mount Merapi in terms of the media and using the theory of power and knowledge relations. So to reduce the shortcomings of previous research, researchers are interested in conducting research with the title of power relations in tackling the Merapi eruption in 2023 by using media research related to news of the Merapi eruption. This initiative will provide a knowledge contribution to disaster recovery.

METHODS

The research uses qualitative methods that focus on social phenomena occurring on the Internet. Qualitative research aims not only to describe reality at the outset but also to gain a deeper understanding of social and human issues. Fadli (2021) In-depth research interpretation Quality research focuses on how meaning is acquired and influences behaviour. However, the results obtained still have to be taken into account because the human character, behaviour, or mind have dynamic characteristics. In qualitative research, accuracy is required so that the data that has been collected can be revealed by obtaining appropriate research (Yulianty & Jufry, 2020). The object of this research is a video on the official TV channel called *INI KATA SULTAN SOAL ERUPSI MERAPI* or in English "THIS IS WHAT THE SULTAN SAID ABOUT THE MERAPI ERUPTION". The data was taken from a one-minute, fifty-second video from that channel. The methods used in data collection are observation and documentation. Then the data was analyzed using Foucault's theory of power relations and semiotic analysis techniques by Roland Barthes. Foucault states that between power and knowledge, there must be a dynamic relationship. This is because, in practice, the exercise of power will produce knowledge and vice versa (Foucault, 1997). The researchers chose this theory because it fits the purposes of the research. Then the data analysis uses semiotic analysis techniques from Roland Barthes. Barthes semiotics states that

there are three meanings used in understanding context. The first meaning is denotative, which refers to the object and is definite and explicit. The second meaning is connotative, which means the meaning behind the denotative meaning is hidden because it is influenced by the system. The last meaning is a myth, which is interpreted as the meaning "assumed" because the myth of nature is placed as the deepest (Rahayu & Afrianto, 2017). The observations were carried out by the researchers by observing the entire content of the video. then will set up a scene or conversation that shows denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings. Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis technique was chosen because the researchers wanted to know the meaning contained in the official TV channel, either explicitly or in a way that requires deeper understanding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Denotative and Connotative Meaning

Denotative is a level of marriage that explains the relationship between signs and reality. This relationship will produce an explicit, clear, direct, and certain meaning (Candra & Alfatih, 2019). This is different from the meaning of a connotative. In a simpler sense, a connotative is a meaning that cannot be seen directly, uncertainly, or explicitly. According to Barthes, the meaning of this connotative is not natural and can be formed by the existence of social conventions.



Picture 1: Scene 1

Research Data, 2023 [source]

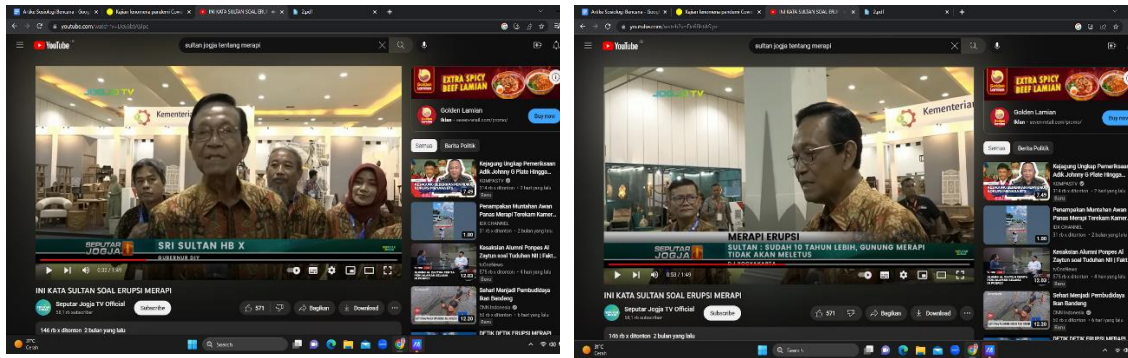
Denotative

In this first scene, the Governor of DIY, Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, is seen being interviewed by the media. This first scene was taken from 00.01 to 00.30 seconds. The Sultan made a statement that the public should not panic about the Merapi eruption that occurred in March 2023. However, the public must also remain vigilant about this eruption. Then the sultan stated that the eruption that was happening at this time was a normal thing, even though the status of Mount Merapi was at alert level 3. Sultan Hamengkubuwono X's next statement was *merapi itu ya erupsi begitu aja, nggak akan meletus seperti dulu. Yang terpenting ngebaki yang dirusak karena ditambang* or in English "Merapi just erupts like that; it won't erupt like before. The most important thing is to fulfil those damaged by mining".

Connotative

In this first scene, the implied meaning of Sri Sultan HB X's statement is the myth of the Merapi eruption that will occur in 2023. Sri Sultan believes that the Merapi eruption that occurred and is on alert level three will not erupt. According to the Sultan, this eruption was only an activity carried out by Merapi to cover up dug holes as a result of mining in the area around Mount Merapi.

In this case, it can be seen that the myth of dealing with the Merapi eruption disaster is still developing in society.



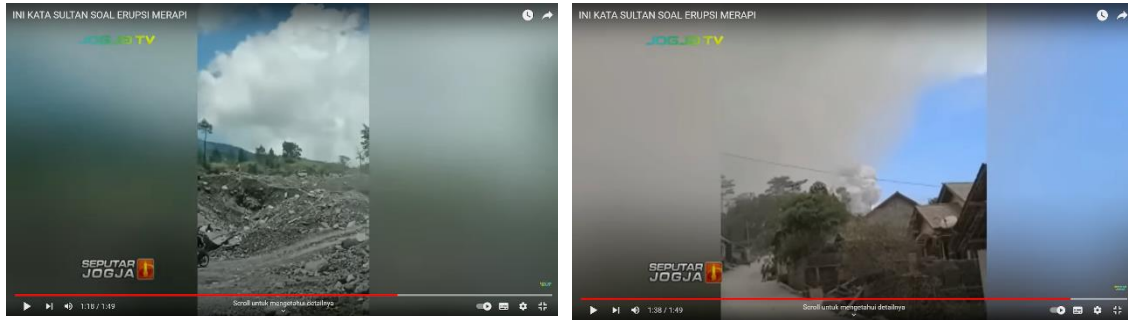
Picture 2: Scene 2
Research Data, 2023 [source]

Denotative

The second scene was taken at 00.31 to 01.00 seconds. In this scene, the sultan stated that the eruption of Mount Merapi would stop by itself if the holes damaged by the mines had been repaired and covered by volcanic ash from the eruption of Mount Merapi. *Nanti kalo lubang lubang itu telah tertutup kan berhenti sendiri* or in English “Later, when the hole is closed, it will stop by itself”. Then the Sultan also added that the eruption of Merapi only reached the top and would not erupt because the purpose of the Merapi eruption was believed by the sultan to cover up the holes caused by mining. *Ndak papa, hanya diatas saja tidak sampai meletus*, or in English “It's okay; it's just upstairs not to explode”. Sultan said when interviewed by the media. *Udah berbeda wong udah 10 tahun lebih, biasanya kan 4 tahun meletus*, or in English “It's different because it's been more than 10 years; usually, it takes 4 years for an eruption to erupt”, added the sultan.

Connotative

In this section, Sri Sultan HB explained that Mount Merapi will not experience an eruption like the previous eruption. This was conveyed by the Sultan, who said that what was said referred to the period of volcanic eruptions. If Merapi usually has an eruption period of once every 4 years, then this volcano has not erupted for ten years. This fact then made the Sultan declare that the Merapi eruption would not erupt. This is due to the difference in conditions in Merapi, which has not experienced an eruption for ten years. The Sultan also convinced a myth that Merapi would stop erupting if the holes around the area of Mount Merapi formed by mining activities were closed. The mythology in society about dealing with disasters still exists today. Myth is something that many people believe in, especially those who are still thick with tradition. Yogyakarta is an area that is still thick with myths related to the existence of Mount Merapi.



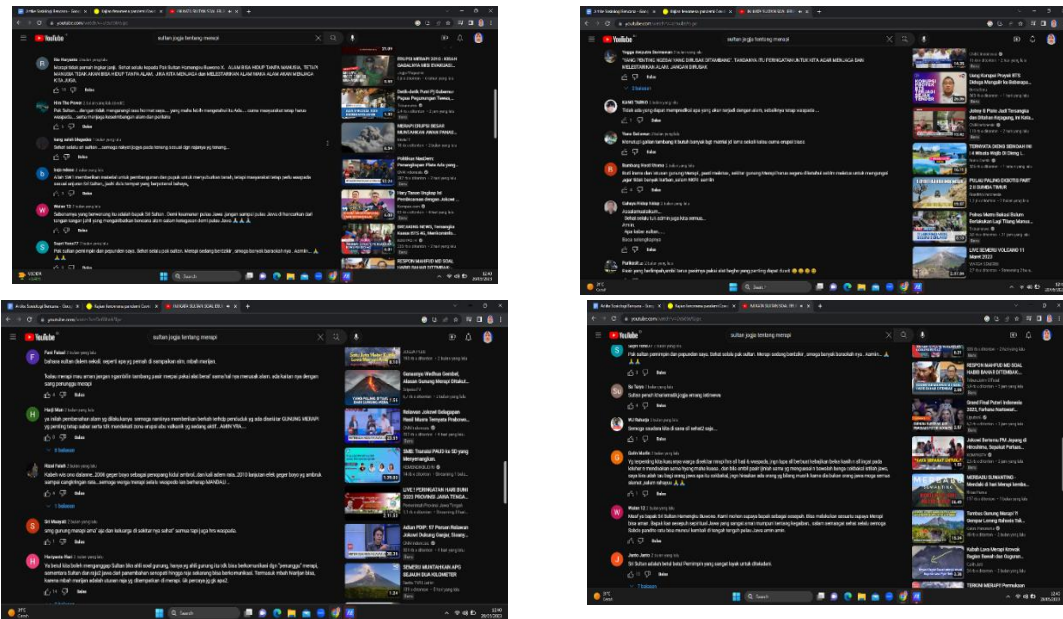
Picture 3: Scene 3
Research Data, 2023 [source]

Denotative

This third scene was taken from 01.01 to 01.49 minutes. At this minute, the sultan HB X stated this: *Sekarang memang harus keluar ya memang nyembur, tapi kan hanya 1 kilo/2 kilo karena yang ditambang kan disekitar itu* or in English “Now you have to get out. Yes, it's gushing, but it'll only be 1 kg or 2 kg because of what's been mined around there”. Then the sultan also reminded residents not to carry out mining on the path that is included in the Merapi danger zone, which is the path for hot clouds to slide. This scene also shows several houses in the Boyolali area that were hit by ash rain from the Merapi eruption.

Connotative

In this part, Sri Sultan also conveyed a message to the public to stay away from the area around the mine, which is a path for volcanic ash avalanches. The Sultan also stated unequivocally that the eruption of Merapi would not occur at the bottom. The eruption will only occur in an area of 1 or 2 kilometres because that area is damaged by mining activity. Then the Sultan stated that it was indeed time for the eruption of Merapi to come out to close the mine pit. So that this is believed by the sultan as a natural activity, and this eruptive activity will not occur at the bottom and only occur in areas between 1 and 2 kilometres from Merapi.



Picture 4: Scene 4
Research Data, 2023 [source]

Denotative

In this last scene, the researcher examines comments from the public about the video statement of Sultan HB X about the Merapi eruption in 2023. Many people agree with what Sri Sultan said: that the eruption of Merapi was only to cover up the damage to the mine. There are also comments from the public stating *Sri Sultan adalah betul betul Pemimpin yang sangat layak untuk diteladani. Bahasa sultan dalem sekali. seperti apa yg pernah di sampaikan alm. Mbah Marijan. Nggeh leres pak Sri Sultan..saya orang cangkringan Sleman..yakin..tidak akan meletus..ibarat ban mobil dia kempes pelan pelan..tidak akan jeblog..itu malah lbih aman* or in English “Sri Sultan is indeed a very worthy leader to be dealt with. The language of the sultan is Dalmatian, just like the one used to be spoken by the late. Mbah Marijan. I'm sure he's not going to blow up. He's going to push the tires slowly. It's just safe”. But there are also people who comment otherwise, like, *Koyo seng gawe urip wae pak Sultan ndisiki ra bakal bledos, nek gusti allah bledos ke gunung Merapi trus kata katamu apa lagi pak Sultan* 🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄🙄, *klo saya klo emang mau meletus ya biarin aja kui wes kersane Gusti allah ,gitukan enak* 🙄🙄🙄 *g hrs mentheng mentheng ngomongnya PK Sultan* or in English “Just like what makes you live, Mr. Sultan, beforehand, it won't erupt. If God erupts Mount Merapi, then what else do you say, Mr. Sultan? If I want it to erupt, just let it go; that's God's will. That's nice; I don't have to challenge what Mr. Sultan says”.

Connotative

In the last scene, we can see several comments made by the public regarding the statement made by Sri Sultan HB X. The mass media has a role in providing insight to the public about disaster information. There are two sides to the media, namely, being able to convey information that can make people panic, but it can also make people able to reduce panic (Roem 2020). Most of them agreed with what was conveyed by the Sultan of DIY. They also believe that the eruption of Merapi is part of Merapi's promise to maintain the balance of nature, namely, to cover the natural damage caused by mining activities. It can be seen that there is a relationship between knowledge and power. Foucault explains that power can shape knowledge, and knowledge will produce power. In this case, the power possessed by Sri Sultan as the Governor and the Sultan of the Special Region of Yogyakarta as the leader in the Jogja area made a statement about the Merapi eruption that is currently happening in 2023. The Sultan stated that this Merapi eruption is a natural activity carried out by Mount Merapi to cover up hole damage as a result of mining activities carried out around the area of Mount Merapi. This eruption will not make the volcano experience an eruption like in previous years. Then the power possessed by the Sultan created the production of knowledge in society. The people finally believed that what Sri Sultan said was the truth. So they agreed with what was said by Sri Sultan, namely that the eruption would not erupt but only carry out its duties to cover up the damage caused by mining activities.

Myth

Roland Barthes defines myth as the meaning of a mythological story that is not only formed from an oral speech but also from writing, photography, films, scientific reports, sports, advertisements, shows, and paintings, all of which have a module representing meanings that may not be understood directly. like capturing the meaning of a picture of a painting, in which there must be an interpretation. Society views myths as being used as a form of statement about a reality that is supernatural (Sardi, Az Zahra, & Sadewo 2021). The mythological story put forward by Barthes

is used as a medium for communication and has a signification process logically by the socio-cultural situations and conditions in society (Iswardiyanti 2007).

The eruption of Merapi is a volcanic activity that spews volcanic ash. Eruption is the process by which a volcano releases lava and gas. As quoted from Tribunnews Palembang Novry (2023), the cause of volcanic eruptions is that eruptions that occur at volcanoes are the result of very strong gas pressure from within the bowels of the earth, which then continuously tries to push the existing magma out. This pressure will later make the magma in the bowels of the earth move up slowly. This can happen because the mass in the magma has a lighter weight than the surrounding rock. In this process, magma, which has a temperature of around 1200 degrees Celsius, will melt the rocks around it. This will then cause magma to build up in the mountain. This is where the pressure on the earth will then increase. This can happen because the existing magma is blocked by a layer of solid rock or lithosphere, which is difficult to penetrate. Then there is a very strong pressure that causes the rock layers to crack. It is in these cracks that magma will then spread out to the surface of the earth. Then, the magma will also melt the fissure channel to form a rock channel called the *kepundan* or dyke in English.

Rock layers that cannot withstand the strong force of magma will cause explosions and bursts as a form of reaction for the release of energy originating from the bowels of the earth. A magma that manages to come out to the surface of the earth is called a volcanic eruption. The Bandung Institute of Technology stated that the cause of the eruption that occurred at Mount Merapi was caused by three things, including the fact that the volume in the magma chamber had reached its full stage, there were avalanches in the magma chamber caused by magma crystallization, and also by quite high rainfall.

In this case, the eruption of Mount Merapi is considered a normal thing to cover up mine damage. This myth then developed in society, and even this statement emerged from the highest leader in the city of Yogyakarta, namely Sri Sultan HB X. This is a myth that developed in Yogyakarta society. Mount Merapi is one of the mountains that have elements attached to its mythology (Roskusumah, T. 2013). The existence of a caretaker at Merapi makes it attractive and has its local trust for the community. Many traditions in Java are closely attached to the existence of Mount Merapi. These myths sometimes become a challenge for disaster mitigation communication in society. Information owned by the Geological Agency of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources is sometimes not the main reference for the community around Merapi (Roskusumah, T. 2013). The community trusts information that comes from caretakers and views disasters as natural and religious symbols raised by the volcano itself.

So it can be concluded that what is meant by a Merapi eruption is that it is normal because it is an activity carried out by Merapi to cover the damage to the holes caused by mining activity, which is a myth. In addition, the statement made by Sri Sultan HB X that Merapi will not erupt because it has not had an eruption for ten years because this Merapi eruption is an activity that will continue to be carried out by Mount Merapi until the mine pits are closed is also a myth. The eruption of Merapi occurs because the magma that is in the bowels of the earth cannot withstand the pressure, so it flows out. Merapi, which is said to not erupt; in ancient times, Merapi also rested for 18 years (Kumparan News 2020). So that the eruption cycle of Mount Merapi is every

four years, and if it is more than four years, then there will be no eruption, not an absolute guideline for Mount Merapi.

Knowledge and Power in the Disaster Mitigation Process

Foucault's thinking was influenced by Nietzsche, as can be seen in some of the works he wrote. Foucault then wrote about power, and the concept of power later became the main focus of Foucault's thought. Foucault defines knowledge as something that can be said by someone in a discussion practice and cannot be specified by this fact. Knowledge is a space that can make the subject occupy a position and talk about familiar objects in a discourse. Knowledge is also defined by Foucault as the area of coordination and subordination to statements that can be visibly conceptualized, defined, applied, and transformed. In this case, the statement from Sri Sultan HB 10 is a form of knowledge that is then transformed in society because of the existence of a hierarchy of positions between the Sultan and the related community regarding the eruption of Mount Merapi.

In an interview conducted with the media, Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, the governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, stated that the eruption that will occur at Mount Merapi in 2023 is something natural. This is because Merapi is covering damage to holes caused by mining excavations. Then Sri Sultan also stated that Merapi would not experience an eruption like 10 years ago because the current eruption was only a form of activity carried out by Merapi to cover natural damage in the area around Merapi. The Sultan's statement was later approved by several communities. The community stated that what was said by the Sultan was true because Merapi was indeed taking care of the damage caused by humans. Foucault sees that knowledge is likened to a discourse that operates within a power (Apriliyadi & Hendrix, 2021). Knowledge has the function of social control. Communities can form a building of knowledge that is used in regulating how their citizens should be able to act, behave, or limit certain things. This knowledge can be realized through stories, concepts of belief, and so on (Maring, 2010). It is in this context that knowledge is built by the concept of trust that is owned by Sri Sultan, which is then used to regulate how citizens act to not panic and remain alert when a volcanic eruption occurs.

Foucault explains that in practice, the exercise of power will inevitably bring up knowledge, and no knowledge does not see power relations. Knowledge does not become a subtle expression of power relations. But this knowledge resides within the power relations themselves. Power can produce knowledge, and knowledge also functions as power. In this context, the power possessed by Sri Sultan as a leader then produced the knowledge that the eruption that occurred at Merapi was just an ordinary thing that was being done by Merapi to cover the damage to the mining pits. The development of modern society cannot be separated from the existence of mass media. The media is not only a place for conveying information in society. However, it has developed into a place for the formation of discourses that will underlie each era. Moreover, with the very rapid development of information technology, the media is very influential in every line of life. This is what then makes the knowledge expressed by the Sultan in the mass media form a discourse in society. Discourse has a characteristic where there are field boundaries for an object. Discourse is also interpreted as a definition from a perspective that is most trusted and considered the most correct. The power of this knowledge a lot of pro-contracted society in the media by commenting, some agree that the eruption that occurred on the current Merapi is a form of work of the Merapi in closing the damage to the mining canal so that Merapi will not erupt. However, some contradict

the sultan's statement. Thus, the media has a role in disseminating discourse and knowledge, thus forming public opinion. This study has similarities with some of the previous studies that have been mentioned, which are similar in terms of discussing a disaster. However, this study has differences from the previous research that has been mentioned. This research differs from the research objects, the research methods used, and the focus of research that focuses on the relationship of power and knowledge in dealing with the Merapi eruption catastrophe in 2023.

CONCLUSION

Merapi is an active volcano in Indonesia that, so far, has an eruption cycle every 4 years. Mount Merapi erupted in March 2023. This eruption of Merapi has reached alert level 3, which has caused several areas around it to be hit by the rain of volcanic ash. Many were interviewed by Sri Sultan HB X the governor of DIY, which is the place where this mountain is located, in media related to the eruption that occurred. Later in the interview, the sultan mentioned that Merapi would not erupt because the Merapi eruption that occurred was a normal thing that was done by Mount Merapi to cover damage to dug holes due to mining activities around the area. The sultan's statement then received several comments from the public, and some of them agreed with what the sultan, HB X, said. In this context, there is a process of relations between power and knowledge. The power possessed by the sultan was then used to produce knowledge about the Merapi eruptions. This knowledge then spreads in the mass media, thus forming a discourse in society. Discourse is a point of view that is believed and considered true. In this case, many people consider what the sultan said about the Merapi eruption to be the truth. Because people see Merapi as a mountain that is still attached to its mythological elements. This mythological element, if inherent in society, would have an impact on the inhibition of the evacuation process. Wacana and inherent knowledge in society will bring about a discipline later internalized in an act of unwillingness to be evacuated to a safer place when an eruption occurs because of the belief that the Merapi will not erupt.

Acknowledging research limitations, the author recommends further data exploration to enhance this sociological study on Merapi's management, offering valuable insights for future disaster preparedness.

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