

The production of upstream space (area) of river as tourism site in economic recovery post-COVID-19

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore and analyze the production of the upstream area of the river on the western Anjasmoro flank as a tourism site in economic recovery post-COVID-19. The focus of this research is on the spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces carried by the migrants on the flanks of Mount Anjasmoro. The informants were determined using the snowball technique with a subject of seven informants consisting of three key informants and four supporting informants. The results showed that the spatial practice was observed from the method by which migrants obtained the place they desired, and the local society survived as a form of their existence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, the representation of the upstream river area has undergone a complex transformation. The land that was originally used as productive land has turned into built-up land, creating a gap between local society and migrants that triggers spatial conflicts. Third, the representational space of an agropolitan area into a tourist destination is created and advertised worldwide to accelerate its marketing and consumption. In the end, the production of upstream river areas carried out by migrants presents a positive impact on the economy of local society, as it increases their economy.

Keywords: production of space; the upstream; tourism; COVID-19

1. Introduction

In 2020, the world experienced a global downturn due to the COVID-19 virus. The downturn experienced by the community in various sectors, especially in the tourism sector. According to the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Industries data, the COVID-19 pandemic has seriously impacted tourism in Indonesia. From February 2020 until this research was conducted, the number of tourists decreased by 25 percent from the previous year, which amounted to 4.025 million people. Further, in April 2021, the number of tourists experienced a significant decrease by up to 12.67 percent compared to 2020. Accordingly, the tourism industry also experienced a loss of 20.7 billion in that month, resulting in 409,000 workers in the tourism sector being laid off (Noviyanti, 2021). In contrast, the tourism activities in the western Mount Anjasmoro's flanks, known as Wonosalam District, experienced a significant increase during the pandemic because the area was not included in the red zone of the COVID-19 in the Jombang Regency. Besides, this location is far from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Administratively, the western flank of Mount Anjasmoro is located in the Jombang Regency, East Java, Indonesia, specifically in Wonosalam District. Historically, this area has been an agro-industrial site with numerous primary commodities, such as cloves, durian, coffee, and cocoa (Jombang District Government, 2019). Additionally, the Anjasmoro flank area also offers tourism potential in the agrotourism sector because most of the population work as

farmers. Further, this potential will impact the socioeconomic conditions of the community. Additionally, the obtained impact is classified into intangible and tangible. The increase in community welfare is indicated by the higher community income, along with the emergence of new tours in various forms and dynamics. Meanwhile, the tangible impact represents the reduction in productive land due to the conversion of land functions from agricultural and plantation areas to tourism sites (Christian & Desmiwati, 2018). With the emergence of migrants (investors) from the Surabaya and Bareng Sub-Districts buying land in the area as their future asset, the local society will be marginalized because ownership of land assets is transferred to the migrant group (Miswanto & Safaat, 2018).

In 2020-2021, tourism development on the Anjasmoro Flank had a relatively speedy progression, as indicated by the numerous types of tourism being offered. These tourist attractions include cultural festivals, villa rentals, eco-green parks, and restaurants, turning the upstream watershed into water tourism. The rapid development of tourism is inseparable from the intervention of migrants who started the upstream river area in 2020. Based on the results of our field observations, as many as 80% of tourist destinations are managed privately by migrants by renting land, leaving village non-governmental organizations to manage the remaining 20%. Those 80% of tourism destinations organized by migrants mainly utilize the river area as their central tourist attraction. This phenomenon is principally caused by their superior grasp of the tourist potential on the flanks of Mount Anjasmoro compared to the local society. The watershed of the Boro River, which offers clear and cold water, is the central popular attraction for most visitors because it is different from the attractions offered by the surrounding tourist areas, such as Batu City, Pasuruan, and Mojokerto.

Prior to the arrival of the migrant, the upstream watershed had been used by local society as plantation land, with perennial crops such as coffee, cloves, and cocoa serving as their primary sources of income. During the pandemic period, the development of tourism on the flanks of Mount Anjasmoro experienced rapid expansion and growth. Tourism is more centered on the upstream river, as the community and migrants established water-based tourism, such as café, watersports, and so forth. The changes in land use make a significant contribution to the previous one. Based on its development, local society plays a greater role as labor and land tenant in the tourism area, using a profit-sharing system with migrants.

The efforts made by a group of local society and migrants have broadly impacted the communities living on the flanks of Mount Anjasmoro, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, as the tourism activities reduced their standard of living. On the other hand, the tourism developments during the pandemic have also absorbed local workers, leading to new tourism sub-businesses on the flanks of the mountain. For example, in one of our research locations, a number of new sub-businesses were observed along the way to the tourist sites, such as souvenir shops, street cafes, and even the shop selling equipment for water tourism activities.

Unlike many tourist destinations that suffered losses and even permanent closing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism on the flanks of Mount Anjasmoro still operated and progressed during the pandemic and post-pandemic. The development of the upstream river area is inseparable from humans' perception of the physical space as their social living environment. Space is formed and conceptualized in the human imagination so that the production of an area is a means for humans to understand the environment in supporting their lives (Lefebvre, 1991). However, the development process is indivisible from

capitalization, which shifts the community's existence. Conflicts over land and interests often occur, making them more dynamic and dialectical. Therefore, this study focused on: 1) the spatial practice and (2) the representation of space and representational space of the upstream used as tourism during the economic recovery post-COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Method

This study investigated the production of space utilizing the upstream area during the economic recovery post-COVID-19 pandemic. This tourism site was developed to recover the economy after the pandemic since the pandemic devastated economic activity, especially in the tourism sector. Henry Lefebvre's theory of space production is considered relevant in this study. The production of social space concerning perceptions of the environment built on social relations correlates with economic and recreational activities. The production of space consists of three stages, namely spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces (Lefebvre, 1991). This study used a qualitative approach with a critical paradigm aiming to dismantle the dominance of the superordinate group (the migrants) over the ordinate group (local society). Besides, this study also oriented to micro studies on the western flank of the Anjasmoro Mountain. The flank area of Mount Anjasmoro was chosen due to its complex and unique phenomenon following the objectives of this study. During the COVID-19 pandemic, most tourist areas, like Batu and Pacet, limited their tourism activities at the expense of their economy, both actors and social networks (Arifin, 2021). The Anjasmoro Mountain Flank area tourism activities continue to develop, contradicting tourism policies during the pandemic.

In this study, we selected informants using a snowball technique where informants were divided into two categories of key and supporting informants (Neuman, 2014). The key informants were considered to know the intricacies of the space production process. The supporting informants were subjects who supported or rejected the key informant's statement (Moleong, 2018). The total number of our informants was seven people, consisting of three key informants and four supporting informants. Detailed information about our informants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of Informants

No.	Name	Tourist Actors	Type of Informant	Location
1.	Prastyo	Owner of Tourism	Key Informants	Carangwulung
2.	Mulyono	Village Official	Supporting informants	Carangwulung
3.	Jazuli	Village Official	Supporting informants	Wonosalam
4.	Widodo	Tourist Worker	Supporting informants	Wonosalam
5.	Krishna	The manager of tourism	Key Informants	Wonosalam
6.	Tekad Slamet	The manager of tourism	Key Informants	Wonomerto
7.	Pedi	Village Official	Supporting informants	Wonomerto

This research was carried out in three locations along the upstream watershed on the flanks of the Anjasmoro Mountains, namely the villages of Wonosalam, Wonomerto, and Carangwulung. The data were collected through a number of techniques, namely non-participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The obtained data were analyzed using the model developed by Miles and Huberman. The model explains that the analysis is conducted interactively and continuously. Data analysis was carried out when during the data collection process. The research data analysis included data reduction, data presentation (primary and secondary interpretation), and further verification or conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3. Results and Discussion

The presence of space is inextricably linked to an individual's social life. In this sense, space is used for housing, activities, and production. So far, space is considered a static and singular element that cannot be represented by humans (Wahyudi, 2021). Apart from this, Levebre positioned space as the main element in maintaining the capitalist system's existence, which continues to transform into various forms following the development of an era. The physiography of Mount Anjasmoro is included in the Argowayang mountain complex, which is located west of the Arjuno–Welirang formation with a variety of landscapes. Such conditions affect the form production of space carried out by the local communities which is quite complex. The production of space on the flanks of Mount Anjasmoro establishes a relationship between local communities and migrants as they use the area for various interests and goals. This study divides spatial production into three concepts, namely spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space (Hendra, 2018). In the perspective of Marxist geography, space is neither an object nor a subject, but space is a social reality in which there is dialectics with human activity. In production, humans will mobilize spatial elements, including their resources, based on their goals (Levevre, 1991).

3.1. Spatial Practice: Migrants' Efforts in Acquiring Land

Space has a dynamic and broad definition that demands deep investigation. Space cannot be observed using the naked eye. As space is accompanied by other dimensions or elements, no party correctly understands and examines the definition of space. Thus, the recently available definitions are formulated based on the perception of it. Based on its dimensions, space is divided into two, the abstract and natural spaces. The abstract space can be directly seen using human senses, while the natural space is more complex as it can be defined socially. In the second dimension, space is considered a social product that facilitates spatial practice. Humans may use or obtain their required space in a practical way through spatial exercise (Ritzer, 2014; Wahyudi, 2021).

Accordingly, the upstream river area is mainly used by people who live in the mountains. The upstream also supports many daily activities, ranging from household purposes to irrigation channels on agricultural land and plantations. In this case, the upstream is also accessible for anyone can access without any boundaries of resource ownership (Hairini et al., 2021). On Mount Anjasmoro, many springs, such as Gunting River, Boro River, Sumber Biru Spring, and others, have established an upstream that has supported many community activities, especially for irrigation and household needs. The vital role of the springs forming the river upstream (Gunting Rivers) is confirmed through their contribution to irrigation in the northern part of Jombang. In the end, the upstream of the river becomes both a commodity and a contested space. Before the transformation of the upstream watershed as a tourist attraction, many people on the mountain's flanks used it to irrigate a cocoa plantation or bamboo trees, as those plants offer future usage (Central Bureau of Statistics of Jombang Regency, 2021). This activity also serves as a means of conservation to prevent flooding in the downstream area, which has occurred every year. One of our informants described that annual floods in the downstream area are induced by the community's business in the upstream area, which used to be a cocoa plantation. Consequently, as one of the disaster mitigation measures, our informants and other communities plant bamboo trees on riverbanks to compensate the commodification of space in the upstream area.

This intervention is believed to enhance the people's welfare level since the river border is used to produce additional commodities. Further, the previously untapped spaces began to be transformed into more valuable spaces after many migrants came to the mountainside area. Initially, the migrants from the Surabaya and Bareng District came to the area due to the popularity of local durian commodities produced in the region. Then, they flocked to purchase local properties as their investment. Then, it was exacerbated by the low price of land in the Wonosalam Sub-District during the COVID-19 outbreaks, which is inversely proportional to the growing needs of local society. One of our informants confirmed this finding as he described the increasing household needs during the pandemic. The unreasonable growing price for certain basic commodities, followed by stagnant income, has encouraged people to pawn or sell their assets at low prices. Before the pandemic, the price of land in the Wonosalam District ranged between 200–400K IDR per meter for the plantation land and 500–800K IDR per meter for the land in strategic places. However, during the pandemic, it dropped to around 80-150K IDR per meter for plantation land, and 150–250K IDR per meter for land in strategic places. Investors use this opportunity to increase their investment value by buying assets from the local society. Most of those lands have good irrigation channels, many of which are accompanied by springs with high and stable water discharge regardless of the season.

Aside from selling their lands, many landowners rent out their plantation land to migrants using a profit-sharing system to meet their living needs during the pandemic. They agreed on a 70:30 profit-sharing system, in which 70% of the obtained profit was for tenants, while the remaining 30% was for landowners. Once the migrants had found a good place with the necessary resources, they started to produce space by changing the available space, especially upstream of the river, into something that could be commodified and offered high economic potential. One of our informants, who was also the water-based tourism manager, explained that he had turned the upper river border into eco-green park tourism using his resources. He also explained that he was inspired by tourism trends in East Java during the pandemic that offered natural nuances which still practiced physical distancing protocols that could attract tourists. Linearly, a study carried out by Paramitha also reported that staycation and wellness tours in open places, especially in the mountains, are the most popular tourism activity during the pandemic (Paramitha & Putra, 2020). Consequently, villages with beautiful and fertile spaces have been commodified in such a way to be water-based tourism villages to increase village and community income during a pandemic (Anggoro et al., 2021). On this basis, one of our informants produced space on land he leased from local society and transformed it into a tourism site during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another informant also expressed the same nuance. As an immigrant, he got land along the river at a low price. The land was used as a corn and bamboo plantation by the previous owner. Using the same capital as the previous informant, he adjusted the river border space into a natural café tourism that offered gurgling water and river tubing facilities that are rarely found elsewhere. The production of space has significantly contributed to tourism destinations. In other words, space production has impacted the economy of local society with the emergence of new jobs and sub-economic activities supporting the tourism concept. This is in contrast to the study conducted by Wulandari, reporting that the production of space impacts the exclusion of local society from the management of valuable and desirable assets. Besides, the same study also discovered that the spatial practice carried out by the migrant group indirectly eliminates the local people's power over the space, along with a transfer of ownership following the migrant group's wish (Wulandari, 2017).

The spatial practices on the flanks of Mount Anjasmoro consist of the migrants' effort to attain the space and the local society's attempts to survive during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, local society's conception of space, economy, and ability has shifted. The transformation is due to a large number of local societies giving up their space to the migrants, then the migrants controlled and commodified the areas. With this spatial practice, the commodity's standard of living is enhanced by using opportunities.

3.2. Representations of Space: Transforming Productive Land into Built-up Land

Lefebvre (1991) explained the production of space into three concepts. The spatial practice is represented by the migrant effort to obtain land by rent or buying. The second concept is about the space of representation. In the study of classical geography, space can be defined as a static and intrinsic place. However, in postmodern geography studies, the critical flow of space is defined as a different place based on its history and usage (Lefebvre, 1991). For example, a river in a traditional society can be defined as a place for sanitation as well as a place for daily activities (water people). However, this definition is gradually changing into a place for agricultural areas and a source of household needs in the era of modern society. Thus, the human conception of space has transformed into a more complex and multidimensional concept.

In the past, the western flanks of Mount Anjasmoro were known as the most prominent clove and secondary crop-producing area in Jombang Regency. However, our finding is linear with the Regional Long-Term Development Plan of Jombang in 2005–2025, which is included in the district's agropolitan area. As a hinterland area, the flanks of Mount Anjasmoro are located in a strategic development area (jombangkab.go.id, 2019). Based on the community typology, most people in this area work as farmers or planters with various types of plants. As a farming community, they depend heavily on the commodities they produce. One of our informants described that 80% of the people in his village depend on natural products. As for land productivity, many farming communities adhere to an integrated farming system. Integrated agriculture is an agricultural system that combines several sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, livestock, and other sectors. This system produces several products include fuel, feed, fertilizer and food. With some restrictions, the agricultural system efficiently and effectively utilizes all that farmers own. In this system, it is also possible to preserve nature through massive natural exploitation (Purba et al., 2022). According to this informant, apart from being farmers or planters, the community also raises livestock, especially dairy cattle whose milk is used. Their livestock is intended as an alternative if their crop gets unsatisfactory results. On the other hand, with livestock, farmers are no longer worried about the lack of fertilizer since they produce abundant fertilizer daily.

To minimize the risk of disasters, the farmers replace conservation crops using perennials that can withstand the high rate of erosion during the rainy season, such as cocoa, coffee, and bamboo. Based on the community's farming experience, those three plants have a level of soil porosity required for the current water rate. Rustanto also reported that those three plantation crops could reduce the erosion rate from 6,874 tons per year to 4,179 tons per year along the upper reaches of the Serayu River (Rustanto, 2019). Further, farmers still use the vacant land between trees to plant the short plants and elephant grass to feed their livestock.

In addition, the advent of migrants who purchase and rent land from local society, conducting spatial practices, has shifted the definition of space representation. Besides, the representational of space transformation is inseparable from the spatial conflicts between migrants and local society. The dispute emerged due to the land conversion, in which fertile land with an integrated agricultural system was converted into built-up territory with concrete and asphalt construction. Particularly, the dispute was induced by society's concern about increasing disaster potential due to the loss of land cover vegetation. Besides, the spatial conflict was exacerbated by the contrast between the land function conversion and local wisdom that the community has believed for generations. Finally, the migrant slightly commodified the representation space by involving local society in the space. The results of the space production are illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The Transformation of Space in One of the Tours

Watershed tourism (river tourism) is a tourism activity that utilizes natural and artificial resources on the flanks of the mountains as a source of springs along with facilities. River tourism has established local economic activities involving various diversification of supporters, such as gift shops, typical food stalls, and so forth. This tourism has tremendous potential, requiring only a proper design and environment perception development. As stated by Darmawan that sustainable tourism is a tourism activity that can meet the needs of tourists and the surrounding community while maintaining the fulfillment of future requirements. In this case, it is necessary to develop tourism without denying the local wisdom upheld by local society (Darmawan & Ikaputra, 2021). One of our informants also explained that during the land conversion process carried out by migrants, spatial conflicts often occurred between the local society and the migrants. This conflict was because the local society observed the difference between the migrants' promises when purchasing or renting the land and what they actually practiced. Further, the local society perceived the production of space as a way of destroying nature, which is certainly in contrast to their beliefs. For so long, the local people of Mount Anjasmoro have held the concept of coexistence with nature without destroying it as their philosophy of life. One of our informants also added that they could minimize spatial conflicts with local society by involving them as labor and in designing the tourism concepts.

Based on the previous brief description, the spatial representation of the upstream river has undergone a very complex transformation. The gap between local society and migrants in representing space triggers spatial conflicts. Besides, the models or the resulting representations have attained a diverse understanding. This refers to the space *owned* by various individuals with various interests in controlling a space (Lefebvre, 1991). The representation of space has opened opportunities for the realization of previously fictitious spaces in individual consciousness to become real through civilization. The flanks of Mount

Anjasmoro are represented as productive land areas utilized through an integrated agricultural system by local society. This concept was ultimately reproduced by migrants to be a built-up land for water-based tourism activities during economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic (Ritzer, 2014).

3.3. Representational Space: Agropolitan Area towards Tourist Destinations

Representational space is the antithesis of spatial representation. The representational space is built on the basis of the human conception of a place based on its historicity. In that case, the representation of space is built on something false in the subconscious, which is forced to be present as a real space. Therefore, every object being constructed by humans will be associated with certain symbols. When space is understood symbolically, spatial practice positions the symbol as a sign of the most authentic relationship between spaces. Consequently, the representation space is symbolized through tourism identity. In this study, we focused on three tourist sites, including Banyumili, Asriloka, and Biru Spring tourism. The three tourist identities manifest the migrants' representation of space that is forced to be realized into real space, which the local community had never considered.

The changing identity of the Anjasmoro mountain flank area from an agropolitan area to a tourist destination exemplifies a representation of the space created by migrants. Within the area, we observed some types of tourism, most of which utilize springs and rivers in the area. One of the attractions produced by the local society is Biru Spring. Space production was carried out by changing the function of the upstream border of the river from its primary function into its tertiary one. The tertiary function was realized by constructing a café upstream of the river where tourists can enjoy food while playing water in the river. Prior to becoming a tourist destination, the river border was a closed area abandoned by the local community. The head of the Biru Spring tourism management explained that their tour was established following the perceived and lived space of the migrant, which later was discussed with the local community and manifested into spring tourism (Wahyudi, 2021). The subject also explained that he and the local community tried to deconstruct the river's landscape by widening the river and constructing an artificial dam to enhance its aesthetic and generate a high discharge when the tour was opened. The illustration of Biru Spring is presented in Figure 2 and figure 3.



Figure 2. Attraction of the Sumber Biru Tourism

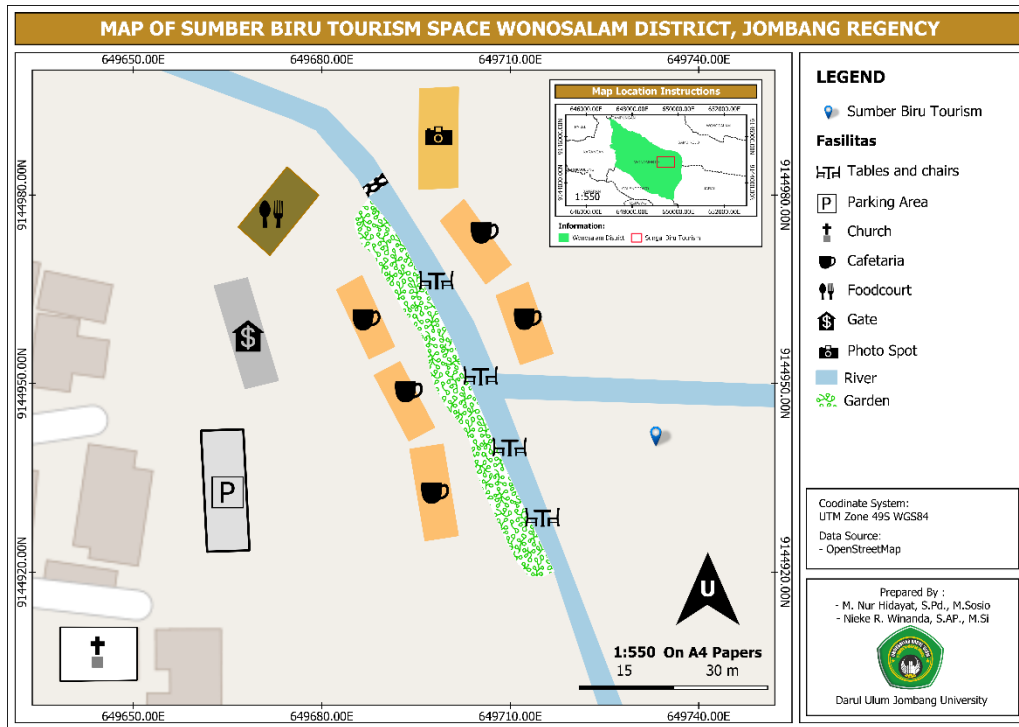


Figure 3. Upstream Space Production in Biru Spring

The manager of Biru Spring tourism was also aware that upstream space production carries a high disaster risk. During his position as the tour manager, a flash flood hit the upstream of the river due to high rainfall. Therefore, the manager built a concrete wall along the border. Additionally, a zoning system is applied in the upper part of the river using erosion-preventing plants, along with higher drainage channels around the springs. Meanwhile, another informant who was a worker in Asriloka Tourism also expressed his concern about the higher risk of disasters caused by converting the upstream of the river into built-up land tourism areas. Before turning the riverbank into a tourist attraction, local people had warned him of its dangers. Like the previous tourist attractions, Asriloka Tourism in the upper part of the river was once flooded, causing its objects to be washed away along the border that has become a built-up area. While working in Asriloka, this informant was more afraid of overflowing river water than the risk of landslides on the river border.

Our data suggested that the three tourist areas have a high level of danger because the upper river border has a mass of soil and rock that easily slips due to unstable ground and the absence of landslide-retaining vegetation along the built-up land. In addition, high rainfall and steep flanks can also increase the risk of higher landslides (Salsabila et al., 2021). This situation is also supported by a previous study reporting that a high level of flank along the upstream border of the river facilitates the transfer of soil mass due to the absence of land cover, resulting in landslides that threaten tourists in that location (Irawan et al., 2020). To mitigate the possible disaster, some managers modified the border using concrete and stone arranged in such a way.

In addition, the manager of Banyumili Tourism, which is labeled eco-green park, attempted to maintain the vegetation on the river border without destroying and modifying the area into an exotic location. However, he changed the river's flow at the top of the tourist

site by splitting it into two streams, in which a large water discharge was deflected away from the tourist attractions. In contrast, the flow with a minor release still passed through the tourist sites. In this space production, he turned a cattle ranch into an iconic place to attract many visitors. The efforts made by tourism managers to minimize disasters certainly improve tourists' convenience and lowers tourist concerns about a disaster.

During the pandemic, tourism sites on Mount Anjasmoro's flanks significantly face adversity in various fields due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Based on interviews with several tourism managers, fewer than 1000 tourists visited these tourist sites every day during the pandemic. The peak of the visitors in the area was recorded after the revocation of the red zone status in the Jombang Regency, allowing visitors to freely carry out their tourism activities. A large number of tourist visits significantly impacts the community around tourist sites, as the community can open new sub-businesses as their additional income. An informant who is also the village secretary stated that Banyumili Tourism had carried a number of transformations, increasing the welfare of local communities through the absorption of local workers, the emergence of home industries, and rising income used in developing village potential. The average revenue received by the community in new sub-businesses ranges around 200-500K IDR per day. This is an extra source of revenue for the local community on the sides of their occupation as farmers and planters.

The change of an agropolitan area into a tourist area is inseparable from the representation of space created by migrants. The representation was created through certain symbols consumed by the wider community. The designed representation space was distributed through cyberspace (social media, discourse games, advertisements, and so forth) to accelerate its dissemination. Our analysis results suggested that space production will never stop as space will reproduce itself. The construction of space has aided people in framing space in its context so that it might have values affecting their daily life (Lefebvre, 1991).

4. Conclusion

The production of space on Mount Anjasmoro has shown the dynamics of the economy and land conversion between local society and migrants. During the COVID-19 pandemic, cheap land prices and potential areas motivated migrants to come and carry out space production. The influx of migrants has led to various spatial practices, allowing them to dominate and play a more significant role in the area. The game of capitalists or owners of capital makes local has ruled out the local people. However, it still positively influences the local community, raising their standard of living even though they hold a non-significant role in the production of upstream space into a tourist spot. The change in the representation of space on the flanks of Mount Anjasmoro strengthens Levebvre's proposition that space has a political element, positioning it as a commodity that can be produced and fought. For investors, a space can be taken over and controlled following their desires. Meanwhile, the local society can improve its standard of living after the pandemic.

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