

## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation examines the issue of the use of new media by civil society groups in political communication. The process of political communication is broadly defined as the production, distribution and access of information in the context of interests among various parties. Democracy, which is the context of this dissertation from 2010 to 2020, has unique dynamics and shows that new media cannot be utilized optimally by civil society groups in Indonesia, both in the contestation of political communication or public communication in general.

This dissertation examines three civil society groups, namely Remotivi, Combine, and Makassar Nol Kilometer to understand how the three of them use new media in their political communication activities. The three of them have similarities as civil society groups that work in the field of communication and use new media intensely. They also have differences in the context of location, the form of the group, as well as the variety of issues raised.

The research method used in this dissertation is a case study because this method can reveal the real reality relatively adequately and is methodologically possible using a variety of available data sources, namely observations, statements of actors, and documents or content of communication activities carried out by the three civil society groups.

In general, the analysis of this dissertation shows that the use of new media by civil society groups is not optimal based on three aspects, namely the arena, actors and device. These three aspects are abstractions from the thoughts of Giddens (1984), Mosco (2008), Castells (2010), and van Dijk (2012). The arena aspect which consists of regulation, existence and interaction, and public sphere shows that regulation provides an opportunity for civil society groups to play a major role in political communication even though in reality it does not. The existence and interaction of civil society groups is also recognized socioculturally and runs dynamically. However, the arena has not encouraged balanced contestation between various parties, so it is difficult to change it according to the aspirations of civil society groups. The interaction between actors in each region also shows that

structural duality does not work both ways. The public sphere also shows that the use of new media has not been able to change the domination of the old media that has been going on throughout the New Order era. The area of political communication that tends to benefit market institutions causes the issues discussed to be limited and the public does not freely form their opinion.

The actor aspect shows that civil society groups have relatively strong capacities with regard to agency, modality, and literacy. Civil society groups are fully aware that they are agencies through the discursive actions that are present, including the way they understand communication resources and their use through new media known as modalities. Likewise with the literacy attached to actors, skills in using new media, including understanding the context in communicating, shows that civil society groups have good capacity.

The number and variety of channels and content formats included in device aspect indicate that new media provides broad opportunities, but in fact the diversity of these channels tends to make civil society groups alienated from each other with the issues they bring to wider issues. Likewise with various content formats, between facts, opinions, and a combination of the two which tend to be seen as weakening the issues that are trying to be offered in the public sphere.

**Key words:** new media, civil society groups, political communications, democracy, arena, actor, device