



“Save Meratus”, the Motto of the Spirit Conserving Nature and Ancient Tradition in Hulu Seungai Tengah Regency

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Abstract. Global environmental issues are in the spotlight of various parties in keeping the earth sustainable. As happened in Hulu Sungai Tengah district, by raising the slogan “save meratus” so that people are aware and care about natural threats that have a domino effect on various aspects of life. The slogan “save meratus” was able to enlighten the public in understanding the importance of preserving nature in order to remain sustainable, especially for the people in Hulu Sungai Regency. This study aims to analyze when and to what extent the slogan “save meratus” appears on the surface in enlightening the public about nature conservation. The method in this study uses discourse analysis. Data collection is done by looking at what media are campaigning for the #savemeratus symbol. The results of this study see that the #savemeratus symbol has entered various media, both social media and news media. The #savemeratus symbol has exceeded the initially expected limit. Through this symbol, the community is enlightened about the issue of the Meratus Mountain area and the importance of protecting the environment so that it remains sustainable.

Keywords: Environment · New Social Movement · Save Meratus

1 Introduction

Socialization by NGOs in providing assistance to the community about the awareness of the importance of the environment is the beginning of a form of collective understanding. The collective understanding carried out by this NGO is part of a social movement about the importance of protecting the environment so that it remains sustainable. The role of NGOs in providing understanding to the community in Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency turned out to have yielded the expected results. These results make Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency an area that until now has not been touched by companies engaged in extractives. This success is the result of an organized social movement.

Macionis (1999) (in Oman, 2016) [1] argues that social movements are the most important type of collective behavior. Then other sociologists also say that social movements are more of a form of collective action (collective action) than a form of collective behavior (collective behavior). Meanwhile, some sociologists classify social movements

as a form of collective behavior [2]. The definition explains that what the community in Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency does is a collective action. However, the social movements carried out by the people of the Regency Hulu Sungai Tengah do not just stop there but are also considered a new social movement. By definition, a new social movement is a movement that emphasizes changes in lifestyle or culture rather than pushing for specific changes in public policy or economic change [3]. Substantially a new social movement is a movement developed from a previous social movement theory. This movement provides an alternative to the previous movement, the fundamental differences are in terms of goals, ideology, strategy, tactics, and participants and more so than the traditional working-class movement.

The social movements carried out by the people in Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency have the same effect as the definition of a new social movement. The emergence of NGOs in providing a public understanding of the importance of preserving nature to remain sustainable turned out to have a domino effect on the social structure of society. This social movement started with socialization by NGOs about the importance of protecting nature and then a symbol for the movement called #savemeratus emerged. The symbol of this movement has been raised by various groups in the HST Regency community in recent years which has emerged from cyberspace. Based on the infosawit.com website, citizen protests occurred in 2015 regarding the granting of permits by the local government to companies engaged in plantations.

The #savemeratus symbol has become a social movement that is currently the most effective form of communication in conveying messages about the importance of protecting nature. Communication, especially in cyberspace, makes technological devices in social movements have an important role. Donk [4] calls communication a tool for mobilizing resources. Through communication, social movement activists pool their resources which not only consist of people who share the same thoughts and destiny, but also include funds, commitment, and knowledge. Technology-based communication in cyberspace facilitates speed in interaction. Breindl (2010) [5] argues that the Internet facilitates the speed of interaction, reduces the price of an act of participation, as well as expands the reach of the message conveyed. Social movements also regard the internet as a tool. Movements and collective actions become easier to initiate.

The #savemeratus symbol has become very accepted and appears randomly in the community. The message conveyed by the symbol has an effect on the community in understanding that nature needs to be protected, not only in the Meratus mountains but also in other parts. The new social movement from the existence of #savemeratus is a change of movement from the old form by using cyberspace as an alternative. Laer & Aelst [6] argue that the use of internet channels is a factor that determines alternative forms of social movement. As seen in Fig. 1 about the social movement matrix from Laer & Aelst.

2 Literature Review

In the matrix above there are categories of forms of activity carried out by social movements through two things, namely the existence of virtual world support and the high and low threshold of the movement. When viewed from this category, #savemeratus

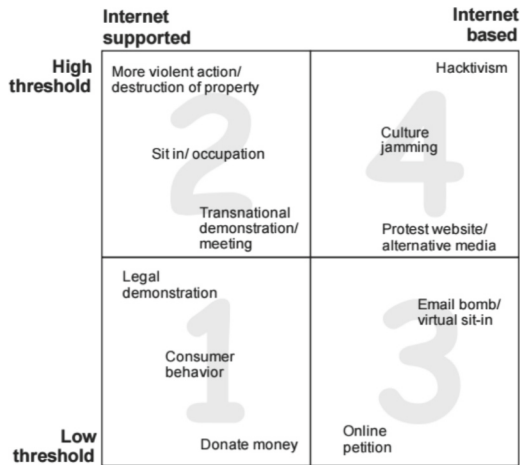


Fig. 1. Social Movement Matrix

is included in box number 4 which is a virtual world media as an alternative to social movements. The interesting thing is the actor behind the #savemeratus initiative who succeeded in creating a new social movement in protecting nature so that it is maintained. The #savemeratus movement makes the entire structure of the HST Regency community involved in maximizing the meaning of the symbol. According to Sanjaya [7] the power of a discourse contained in digital activism is influenced by two things. First, the identity and relevance of the discourse maker. Second, the urgency of the environmental issue that is the topic of the online petition.

Based on the background, this research examines which digital media have succeeded in making #savemeratus a symbol of the movement to protect nature, especially in HST District.

This study focuses on new social movements that use social media in cyberspace, especially the #savemeratus symbol. What digital media have brought up the #savemeratus symbol in the social movement in HST District.

3 Methodology of Research

3.1 Instruments and Procedures

The research methodology used in this research is qualitative with the method of discourse analysis. the method of analysis of social semiotics proposed by MAK Halliday [8]. This approach is part of discourse analysis theory, not only analyzing syntagmatic texts but also paradigmatic texts. This study looks at the phenomenon of the #savemeratus movement symbol used by actors who played a major role in its success. Halliday [9] sees the need for the ability of researchers to see language as a product that is inherent in the social and cultural aspects of the community. This means the conditions in the language that make the text.

In this section, researchers make observations about the use of #savemeratus on various media, such as social media, news and others in digital form. It explores the extent to which the #savemeratus symbol is spread across various digital platforms. The use of this digital platform is also analyzed by anyone who plays the role of an actor for success.

3.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis is an activity carried out to convert data from research into information that can later be used in drawing conclusions [10]. This analysis identifies language choices and symbols in which #savemeratus is included. As stated by Santoso, discourse that needs to be considered is language, type of interaction, medium, channel, and rhetorical mode. This element is then used in this study by looking at the use of #savemeratus.

4 Results of Research

The Meratus Mountains is a part of nature that is the pride of the people of South Kalimantan in general and is the pride of several regencies that are included in the administrative area. Meratus is a mountainous region located in the southeast of the island of Borneo and which divides the province of South Kalimantan. The Meratus Mountains broadly stretches for $\pm 600 \text{ km}^2$ when viewed from the southeast to the north to the border of Central Kalimantan and East Kalimantan. Geographically it is located between $115^\circ 38' 00''$ to $115^\circ 52' 00''$ East Longitude and $2^\circ 28' 00''$ to $20^\circ 54' 00''$ South Latitude. The Meratus Mountains are part of the administration of 8 (eight) regencies in South Kalimantan Province, namely Tapin Regency, Tabalong Regency,

The wealth of the Meratus Mountains is also worthy of being used as a National Geopark, considering the diversity of existing geoheritages. Where in general there are 57 geosite points that have the potential to be developed as part of the Meratus Mountains geopark [11]. The natural wealth that is owned certainly makes residents feel belonging and proud of the Meratus Mountains as part of their lives. It is not surprising that a movement has emerged that tries to protect the area as an effort to maintain and preserve its beauty. The movements that later appeared in the form of #savemeratus in various digital media turned out to be real movements. This movement can be seen from the online media news trail Antaranews.com which was carried out by environmental activists by the NGO Walhi in 2009 in front of the HST regent's office,

However, this action also did not stop entrepreneurs from getting permits from the local government. As Rusmandi wrote in the digital news media Antaranews.com, the plan to open an oil palm plantation area by the local government was revealed when the Dayak Meratus indigenous community caught two representatives of a private plantation company in February 2013. A group of people from the Murakata Earth Rescue Alliance (APBM). This action was disclosed on the digital news media infosawit.com. According to the contents of the news, in March 2015 the APBM held a grand meeting as well as a peaceful protest against the issuance of a location permit for oil palm plantations. The APBM asked the HST Regent, Harun Nurasid, to revoke the HST Regent's Decree Number 500/57/503 of 2014 concerning the location permit for oil palm plantations.

These various actions then gave rise to #savemeratus which invites people who care about the Meratus Mountains to voice their voices in their own way.

The action of caring for the community for the protection of the Meratus Mountains by making the #savemeratus symbol has received a positive response. This can be seen from the many digital media platforms that voice this symbol. Such as Youtube media, Instagram, and national and local digital news media such as Kompas, Media Indonesia, Kalimantan Channel and local media outside Kalimantan, namely Suara Jogja. This selection is the author's way of seeing how far the #savemeratus symbol has gone beyond the initial limits to be achieved. The first to be discussed are:

4.1 YouTube and Instagram, People's Creativity in Campaigning for Symbols

In this digital era, every individual has a device called a smartphone. Of course, the device is not only used as a communication tool to other individuals, but is also a tool to help activities for the owner of the device. Starting from activity reminders, capturing images both motion and still and can even make videos or watch videos. According to Gary B, Thomas J & Misty E, 2007, smartphones are internet enabled phones that usually provide Personal Digital Assasin (PDA) functions, such as calendar, agenda, address book, calculator, and note-taking features [12]. The use of this smart phone gives rise to expressions that are owned by the owner, including making videos using the #savemeratus symbol.

This video, which was created and uploaded on YouTube, shows how people mobilize their resources to support new social movements. Ulrich Beck defines a new social movement as a new social articulation that crystallizes new experiences and problems that are experienced and faced together, as a result of the general disintegration of economic-based experiences [13]. The experiences and aspirations expressed through videos by the community in supporting the #savemeratus movement is a movement that starts from the grassroots. When viewed from the use of the #savemeratus symbol on the YouTube website, there are 1,300 videos with 574 channels participating in campaigning for the movement (Fig. 2).

The number of participants who participated in campaigning for this symbol can be said to be very large. Those participants who contributed videos using the #savemeratus symbol, including ChannelMultimedia Al-Hidayah Official with 25 uploaded videos, the Edit Malayang Rescue TV channel there are 29 uploaded videos, the Borneo Secrets channel with 14 videos, while the channel using the name #savemeratus itself has 23 videos and Walhi Kalsel as an actor who often plays with environmental issues gave his work as many as 18 videos. The many roles of the community in campaigning for this symbol have made it more known and the more people know that their nature is under threat.

The interesting thing is that the symbol does not stop at saving the Meratus mountain area. But people are starting to realize that it is important to protect nature from being damaged by human hands by greed. Public awareness in protecting nature can be seen from the use of symbols that are easily expressed by people who have social media such as Instagram. The #savemeratus symbol on Instagram has 50,831 uploads pinning a campaign against the movement. Thousands of uploads with interesting captures and

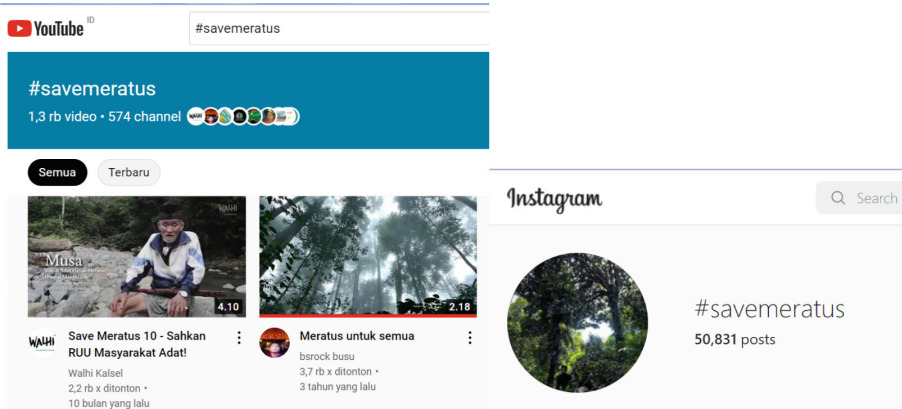


Fig. 2. #SaveMeratus

nature themes give the impression that people are starting to really care about the preservation of nature. Each uploaded photo certainly has the opportunity to be discussed in the photo's comments column.

4.2 News with Digital Media

Events that occur in community activities will very quickly spread to each individual through news which is a medium for conveying information. Over time, in this digital era, the media that conveys news to the public is not only the established news media. However, social media also plays a role in delivering information to a large audience. The positive side of social media in delivering news is very fast, but the negative side is the lack of accuracy of the information conveyed. In contrast to news that already has a name and is established. The accuracy of the information submitted can be accounted for by the media concerned.

There are no doubts about the big national and even international media such as Kompas and Media Indonesia. The accuracy of the information presented has gone through stages in accordance with journalistic standards. The media always presents news that is considered very interesting and has elements of national interest. The symbol of the #savemeratus social movement has been included in the well-known news channel several times. This means that this movement has succeeded in drawing national attention to the importance of protecting nature in the Meratus Pegunungan area. Then look at the local media, which turns out to be not only local media in Kalimantan such as the Kalimantan Channel, but local media outside Kalimantan such as Suarajogja.id, which is arguably based in the city of Jogja, has covered the #savemeratus symbol movement.

The symbols in #savemeratus don't just come out of nowhere, but rather a series of years before the movement's symbols appeared. This movement makes people understand more about the Meratus mountain area which is currently under threat from the market. According to Rajendra Singh [14] sees the New Social Movement as a form of response to the presence and strengthening of two institutions that enter people's lives, namely the state and the market. This gives a signal about the threat of the area being

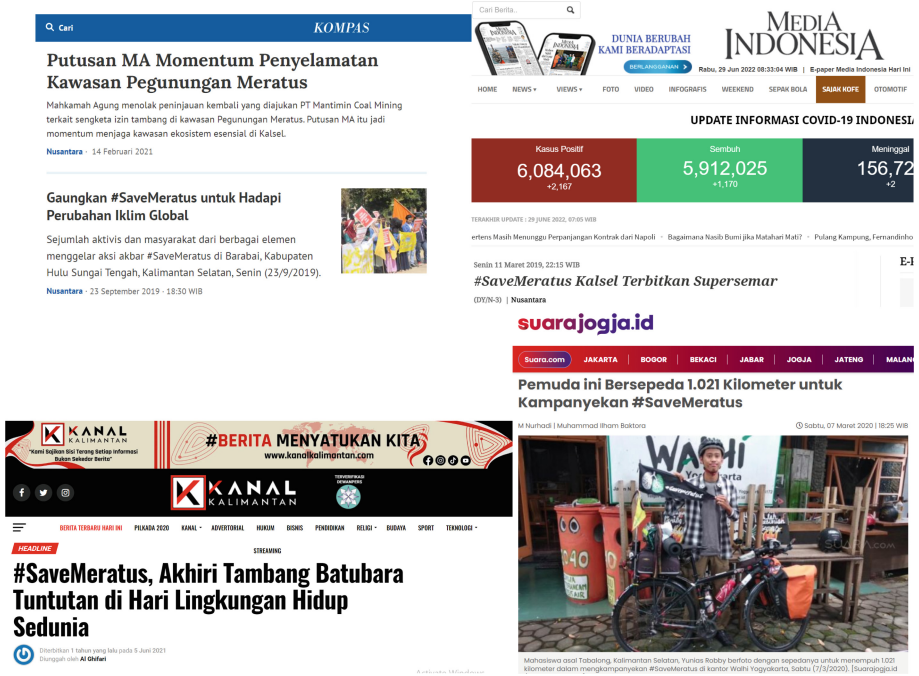


Fig. 3. #SaveMeratus

the target of the company owner in the extractive sector. However, with the presence of this movement from the #savemeratus symbol, people are starting to understand not only about the issue of the threat to the Meratus mountain area, but also about the issue of protecting the environment so that it remains sustainable.

The public’s understanding of environmental issues and keeping them sustainable and away from damage is the implementation of the success of the new social movement through the #savemeratus symbol. This becomes interesting because the initial appearance of the symbol was only limited to saving the Meratus Mountain area. But over time the symbol crossed boundaries regionally and in discourse. Even in online buying and selling media such as Shopee, the symbol of the #savemeratus movement has been circulating. As in Fig. 3, where the image is not only campaigning for a movement that uses the #savemeratus symbol, it also gives a signal that this movement has entered into various aspects of people’s lives (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. #SaveMeratus

5 Conclusion

The Meratus Mountains are an ancestral heritage, especially from the surrounding indigenous peoples whose daily needs have been met from the existing natural products. The entry of companies in the extraction sector threatens the existence of the HST community and especially indigenous peoples. The emergence of the idea of #savemeratus to protect the meratus mountains in order to stay awake. Over time the #savemeratus symbol in HST has spread to various areas in South Kalimantan and Social Media. The many uses of the #savemeratus symbol on social media make the meaning of the symbol cross boundaries from the beginning of its appearance. The #savemeratus symbol now doesn't only talk about the Meratus Mountains, but also represents the environmental movement in South Kalimantan.

Movement #savemeratus has now become a symbol of resistance against environmental destroyers for the people of South Kalimantan. This symbol, which initially only gave enlightenment to the HST community about the importance of keeping the Mount Meratus sustainable, has now crossed its limits and provides a deeper understanding of the need to maintain a balanced environment in order to live side by side with nature. The slogan "save meratus" was able to enlighten the public in understanding the importance of preserving nature in order to remain sustainable, especially for the people of Hulu Sungai Tengah Regency.

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