

Sexuality and Transgender Identity Through the PERWAKOS Community (Transgender Surabaya Association)

Fransisca Benedicta Avira Citra Paramita, Hetti Sari Ramadhani, Sasmita Aprilia Putri
Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Surabaya, Jawa Timur

ABSTRACT

The emergence of transgender groups living and living around society is often considered a threat that is a societal disease. The problem of transgender people in Indonesia has always been associated with problems that are then linked by religion and position in society. In the context of cultural society in Indonesia, gender differences and sexual diversity, including transgender and transsexual, can also be said to be gender diversity in Indonesia. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive type of research. The result of this research is that PERWAKOS (Surabaya City Waria Community) strives to provide a place and more attention for transvestites to be able to feel accepted in society.

Keywords: Gender, Identity, Sexuality, and Transgender.

Corresponding author

Name: Fransisca Benedicta Avira Citra Paramita

Email: citraparamita@untag-sby.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

The issue of the presence of transgender groups or commonly referred to as transgender in society is inevitable. Transgender in society is inevitable. The emergence of transgender groups who live and stay around the community are often considered as a threat that is a community disease. Often considered as a threat that a disease of society. In the country of Indonesia itself, transgender groups are a minority group, but the problem is that transgender people are not only a minority group, but also a minority group. The problem is that transgender people are not only a minority group, but are classified as a group that has deviant behavior and but classified as a group that has deviant behavior and is not accepted by society. Ostracized and even not accepted by society.

The above assumption can be seen through some mass media coverage that appears about transgender then there are also some assumptions and problems that arise in society. There are several pro and con opinions about LGBT people including transgenders. As written in kompasiana.com, the issue of LGBT reaps the pros and cons of each party. Both sides understand their respective positions and arguments. The news presupposes that if the pro-LGBT group remains active and aggressive in campaigning, then the opposite will be done by the counter group to always be ready to fight.

In addition to the above arguments, there are some survey results that also agree and side with the assumption reported in tempo.co which writes that based on a survey conducted by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting or SMRC states that almost the entire population of Indonesia considers LGBT a threat. 87.6 percent of them think so, but there are also those who think otherwise, namely around 10.8 percent and the rest prefer not to answer. Through the survey results above, it can show that most Indonesians consider that transgender groups are groups that are not considered by Indonesian society and even reach the point of a threat.

The assumption that Indonesia, which has diversity and freedom of speech, has something that restrains minorities from gaining freedom is also strongly felt by transgender people or people who are considered as minorities. The assumption is also written by Yudah (2013) that the existing construction in Indonesian society always defines and connects transgender and deviant groups.

The issue of transgender in Indonesia is always associated with issues that are then linked to religion and position in society. In the context of cultural society in Indonesia, gender differences and sexual diversity including transgender and transsexual can also be said to be gender diversity in Indonesia. Transgender and transsexual can also not be seen as an influence from Western culture, but seen from the increasing number of transgender in Indonesia which is then associated with sexual and gender diversity in Indonesia. This assumption is also written in www.sains.kompas.com which writes that Indonesia has a rich history of homosexuality and transgender. This article writes that the depiction of someone who is identified as transgender, homosexual and lesbian has been shown and taught to Indonesian people since long ago through regional dances in several regions in Indonesia.

The many assumptions and views of society about transgender groups are strongly influenced by what is actually represented in the mass media. The formation of discourses in society is inseparable from the role of mass media that spread ideologies about gender displaying gender that is considered correct and gender that is considered incorrect in society. The mass media seems to create a picture of the lives of transgender groups who are sometimes considered to have a different sexual orientation from the surrounding community. Through this, confusion arises in society about the sexual orientation of transgender people.

Through this, a new problem that arises is gender confusion or how to represent the right gender division for these transgender groups. The gender division displayed in the mass media can sometimes be said to be a division that is adjusted to what is constructed in society. It is as explained by Nugroho (2008) that gender is related to the process of believing how men and women should play and act according to the structured values, social and cultural provisions where they are. In other words, gender is the distinction between women and men in roles, functions, rights, behaviors shaped by local social and cultural provisions. This is what transgender groups feel by going against the existing gender concepts in the society.

The rejection of transgender groups in society is identified because society is constructed by gender differences between men and women. The play on gender terms

between men and women which then by transgender people becomes a problem. The emphasis on gender and sexuality which is then associated with biological factors is of great interest to transgender and transsexual individuals. The assumption is also said by Rosario in Davies (2017) that the study of gender and sexuality influenced by transgender researchers is a study that has a very real attraction for every individual.

This is also reinforced by Prosser in Davies (2017) who explains that how gender is sharply imprinted on one's body and states that sex/gender is something that is inevitable. The challenge stated by transsexual and transgender critics lies in the power of gender and the magnitude of desire based on the body.

In the media, transgenders are often presented as middle to lower class groups. Marginalized groups who are poor or do not have high education. Transgender figures are also often portrayed as figures who are laughed at by many people because their bodies are considered a joke or a spectacle tool for the surrounding community. This assumption was also stated by Rokhmansyah (2016) who mentioned that transgender people are often used as an object of laughter by men who like to laugh at the shape of the female body in a masculine form. So far, the oppression experienced by LGBT groups, especially transgender people, has not been able to identify the perpetrators and groups that carry out the domination. Through the above statement, the question then arises that whether the entire industry and community groups are then victims of the embodiment of patriarchal ideology that has been very embedded in society.

Through the description of the problems and phenomena about transgender above, then some questions arise that then if there are several groups in Indonesia then how do they survive and even continue to show the existence of their group? In the city of Surabaya itself, there is one community that houses or accommodates transgender people in Surabaya and its surroundings. This transgender community is the only transgender community that has self-existence and in its daily life has a place that is also close to the community.

The name of the community is "Perwakos", Perwakos stands for Persatuan Waria Kota Surabaya. This community is the only waria community in Surabaya that has been established since 1978 until now and has very many members in Surabaya. The membership structure of Perwakos is also very systematic or structured. The emergence of the PERWAKOS community itself in Surabaya has a considerable role for the sustainability or social situation of transgender or waria groups in Surabaya.

PERWAKOS has a place or can be said to be a basecamp located at Jalan Banyuurip Kidul Gang IA No. 7 Surabaya. The author is interested in the Perwakos community because there is a lot of blasphemy and rejection in society, but the different thing done by the Perwakos community is to create a group that is actually close to the community and also has a role in society. The many problems experienced by transgender groups are actually a challenge faced by transgender groups.

What is often associated with waria groups is the issue of sexuality where many waria are also classified as homosexuals or other sexual orientations. Therefore, the author

wants to identify or uncover the problem of sexuality representation carried out by transgender groups in the Waria Community of Surabaya City.

In Indonesia, transgender people are a minority group, but the problem is that transgender people are not only a minority group but are classified as a group that has deviant behavior and is ostracized and even not accepted by society. The assumption is also written by Yudah (2013) that the existing construction in Indonesian society always defines and connects transgender and deviant groups.

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One comparison of research conducted by Fitri Meliya Sari in 2016 with the title of the article "Media Construction of Transgender" which explains how transgender groups are in the spotlight of the media. The research aims to describe the media portrayal of the existence of transgender in Indonesia. One of the cases discussed is the case experienced by Dena Rachman, one of the transgenders who lives in Indonesia and dares to come out. The result of the study is that there is justification by the media in describing the negative behavior of being a transgender and the like. These images and arguments can lead public opinion to criticize or oppose the decision of Dena Rachman to change her identity from male to female. The difference between the above research and the research conducted by the author is related to the reality experienced by transgender people on social media.

METHOD

The research conducted used descriptive research. Descriptive research is intended to provide a real picture of a particular situation or the relationship between various phenomena in an actual and organized manner. Descriptive research can be interpreted as "a problem-solving procedure investigated by describing or describing the state of the subject or object of research (a person, institution, society, etc.) at the present time based on the facts that appear or as they are" (Sugiono, 2009).

The types of data used in research with a qualitative approach are primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly from data sources. In this study, primary data is data obtained directly from interviews or observations in the field. Meanwhile, secondary data is data obtained from documents, official records, scientific papers, personal documents, and other supporting data related to this research. In this study, the main source of data is informants, namely people who can provide the necessary

information. In relation to the research focus, in this qualitative approach research, data sources can be obtained from members of the Surabaya transvestite community (PERWAKOS).

Data collection is the process of digging up data in the field, while the techniques used in research with this qualitative approach are as follows:

1. Interview.

Interviews are used to obtain data by conducting a series of questions and answers with related parties. This interview was conducted to collect information needed in research obtained from existing primary data sources.

2. Observation

Observation is a systematic observation and recording of the problems studied without asking questions even though the object is a person. Observation allows researchers to observe for themselves and then record things related to the focus of the research.

3. Documentation

To complement the primary data, the researcher seeks to obtain data that is not directly related to the object of research. In this case, researchers used the documentation method. Documentation is a data collection technique from various written sources such as notes, books, reports, journals and archives as well as internet data that has relevance to the problem under study. With this collection technique, it will make it easier to obtain the necessary data to be used as secondary data.

The data analysis technique in the qualitative approach is to use the analysis technique from Miles & Huberman (1992). The Miles & Huberman analysis consists of four analysis streams, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawn/verification. Qualitative data analysis activities are carried out interactively and take place continuously until the data is saturated. The interactive model in question is as follows: In the data reduction stage, the researcher reduces the data by sorting, categorizing and making abstractions from field notes, interviews and documentation. After reducing the data, the presentation of data was carried out in the form of interview notes (CW), field notes (CL) and documentation records (CD). After being presented, they are given a data code to organize the data so that researchers can analyze it quickly and easily. Researchers make data reflections from code to text.

After the data reduction and data presentation stage, the next stage is the drawing of conclusions or verification supported by strong evidence. The conclusions obtained are the answers to the formulation of problems and questions that have been prepared by the researcher since the beginning.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

RESEARCH RESULT

Along the way, transgender identity about a sexuality analysis has meanings and identities that sometimes cannot be easily judged by society. But sometimes people will quickly conclude that a transgender person will tend to have homosexual traits. This assumption is as said by Boellstorf written in Davies (2017) who said that in Indonesia gender and sexuality tend to have a close relationship in a cultural image. He also said that the number of homosexuals in Indonesia, as well as transgenders, there is a sexual awareness that can trigger the development of gender identity.

Through several public views on a transgender person who often considers that a transgender person is a person who spreads viruses or diseases to the community, what is done differently by PERWAKOS actually wants to help enforce or fight diseases and viruses that are considered by the community. PERWAKOS does many things to be able to maintain its existence and to be able to get a place on the side of the community.

The most important way of PERWAKOS is to go to the problem of sexuality or sexuality that is often experienced by the LGBT group and often problematic by the community to the LGBT group, especially transgenders, namely the spread of HIV disease which is quite widely experienced and spread by the LGBT group. This assumption is similar to that written by www.bbc.com who stated that 30% of HIV transmission in Indonesia is owned and spread through LGBT groups. Through this, which then gives rise to greater acts of violence or discrimination against LGBT groups, especially transgender because transgender groups are the most visible group compared to other groups.

In Surabaya itself, this was also experienced by the transvestite group in Surabaya that according to the data written by suarasurabaya.net who explained that through the data available in the Ministry of Health in 2007, as many as 25 percent of transvestites in Surabaya were HIV-positive. Through this number, which then resulted in the position of the spread of HIV disease in the transvestite group in Surabaya has the second position after Jarkarta, with a percentage of 34% of transvestites infected with HIV/AIDS.

Through this, PERWAKOS then does to clean up the stigma or public view of transgender groups, namely having diseases related to sexuality. PERWAKOS once a month has a schedule to conduct counseling about HIV Aids to its members. As written in the suarasurabaya.net through the results of an interview with Sonya, one of the administrators of Perwakos who mentioned that the counseling activity will be held once a month by PERWAKOS with the aim of providing education to other transvestites to keep paying attention or using condoms when having sexual intercourse with other men.

He also said that the high death rate that has been experienced by PERWAKOS members due to HIV disease has made many transvestites actually get more discrimination in society. Sex workers among transvestites have indeed not become something strange in the ears of the public, because transgender or transvestite groups in their history and until now have representations that a transvestite is a person who is identified with sex workers or the lower class.

Through that statement, it was also confirmed by the PERWAKOS community group that the transvestite group is a discarded group, even a transvestite is a person who is not wanted by his family and the surrounding community, therefore there are many challenges that a transvestite must face to be able to maintain his life, one of which is by becoming a sex worker. This is also as written by suarasurabaya.net who interviewed one of the members of PERWAKOS, where he also said that a transvestite in the eyes of the community is a person who is considered as a piece of public garbage, therefore many transvestites may not have a special skill, so sometimes the only way they survive is to become a sex worker on the side of the road. With this happening, the spread of HIV AIDS becomes very easy among transvestite circles and groups.

DISCUSSION

The representation of sexuality chosen by the transvestite group is always introduced that a transvestite is also a homosexual where they also have a dual identity, namely a transvestite who has a homosexual orientation. There are many choices and bad acceptance from the community for the transvestite group because even from the state revenue for the transvestite group is very minimal. One of them is the elimination of identity for the transvestite group.

This is also written by www.idntimes.com who wrote through the results of an interview from a PERWAKOS member named Cantika, he explained about the difficulties faced by a transvestite in state rights, namely with the revocation of identity for transvestite, the impact will cause difficulties in finding a job, the next impact is that the rights to health and education facilities can no longer be felt. The incident experienced by PERWAKOS about the representation of transvestites in culture and life in Indonesia does have many challenges and discrimination. This assumption was also written by Aziz (2017) who wrote that when talking about LGBT in practice, it cannot be separated from the discussion of sexuality, because a problem causes discrimination which mostly leads to the status of the confession of sex that a person has. Transgender identity has a sexual orientation which also sometimes has a certain uniqueness where a transgender person may have a social identity that he or she is heterosexual, bisexual, gay or even asexual.

The identity received by the transvestite group does not stop only with HIV AIDS, but transvestites are also often identified with someone who deserves to receive violence. In terms of Indonesian culture, transvestite groups are groups that are considered deviant behavior because they are considered to violate the values and norms that exist in Indonesia, through which a transvestite often receives physical violence from the surrounding community and even government officials. As written in the kompasiana.com writes that transgender or transvestite groups are minority groups that are considered to be groups that violate culture and religion.

There are many violence that can be committed against transvestite or LGBT groups in several areas, one of which is in Aceh where there is a fairly severe law against transvestite or LGBT groups in the city, namely with the whipping law. In some other areas, the punishment for transvestite groups also varies. In the city of Surabaya itself, it often has

the same fate. The violence felt is not only verbal violence but also physical violence. As said by Cantika in www.idntimens.com where she mentioned that many cases of violence experienced by transvestite members can be more than 25 cases of violence experienced by transvestite members per year.

This violence then causes many transvestites to choose to exile themselves, some even choose to return to being men, but in practice it will be very difficult because the choice to become a transvestite is not because of the choice or opinion of others, but he considers that there is an instinct from birth. The public's perception of a transvestite until now is considered a container for prostitution and diseases related to sex diseases. This was also agreed by one of the members of PERWAKOS who wrote in the idntimes.com Cantika explained that every time there is an association of two or more transvestites, the public will always consider it as prostitution, besides that from a religious perspective, transvestite groups also have no place in any religion, especially Islam.

Through the statement of cantika as a member of PERWAKOS above, it also mentions the meaning or position of waria in the position of religion. The position of a transvestite in religion in Indonesia is also not well represented. There is a lot of rejection in many religions or sometimes in places of worship for transvestite groups. The many rejections faced by the transvestite group cause the PERWAKOS community to try to show their identity and try to change the society's representation of a transvestite. The basic goal carried out by PERWAKOS is only to be able to have a place for transvestites who feel they no longer have a place in society. So PERWAKOS is trying to fight for the place just to be able to protect all transvestites in the city of Surabaya.

The way done by PERWAKOS is by utilizing mass media to be known by the public first. The existence of PERWAKOS in social media may not be as smooth as the existence in the news media. PERWAKOS only uses social media Facebook, blogspots, and emails to be known and searched for by the public. The rest of the things done by PERWAKOS are by appearing in online news and the role of students to make a study about the waria community. The limitation of communication tools and space on social media is the cause of the lack of promotion or existence in social media carried out by PERWAKOS. This is because many mass media do not allow and are considered to have laws and prohibitions for transvestite groups to be able to show their existence and voice.

CONCLUSION

The representation of waria in Indonesia, one of which is the city of Surabaya, is indeed an interesting discussion to discuss because many things have been done by the waria community who have tried to voice their opinions and fight for the rights and freedoms of the state but have not yet found a bright spot in every problem they face. Starting from representations in the media such as depictions in movies or television shows and others that always corner or position that a transvestite is a person who is considered a disease of society. The second thing is that the representation of the sexuality of the transvestite group is considered a homosexual and has a lot of spread of HIV disease, in terms of its own culture, transvestites are considered violators of norms and rules that exist

in every culture in Indonesia, one of which is acceptance from a religious perspective that is not accepted by all religions.

Therefore, PERWAKOS (Surabaya City Waria Community) strives to provide a place and more attention for waria to be able to feel accepted in society.

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