



Becoming a Woman: Transwomen's Digital Activism Against the Hegemony of Heteronormative Narratives Through Self-Representation*

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ABSTRACT

Behavior carried out by the public who adheres to heteronormative ideas towards gender minorities, such as transwomen, often results in acts of persecution and hegemony in the real world. This action is the result of self-expression carried out by transwomen. With the existence of social media, self-representation can be done by transwomen without thinking about the persecution they will get. But on the other hand, the hegemony obtained by transwomen on social media still occurs. Based on this, the recent study looks at the self-representation carried out by transwomen on social media, especially their personal Instagram, as a form of digital activism. This article focuses on the narratives conveyed by three transwomen, namely, Alegra Wolter, Ian Hugen, and Anggun Pradesha. These three subjects were chosen because they have unique backgrounds and used them to produce narratives about transwomen. Using qualitative content analysis techniques, this research analyzes their self-representation on Instagram as a form of digital activism, specifically as a 'counter-discourse' - a form of resistance that challenges the dominant discourse. This article reveals that both Alegra Wolter, Ian Hugen, and Anggun Pradesha have similarities and differences in Instagram representation. This difference in representation is likely due to the different backgrounds of each research subject.

Keywords

digital women; gender; heteronormativity; persecution; self-expression

To cite this article (7th APA style):

Kulau, K., Aini, S. N., & Akalili, A. (2023). Becoming a woman: Transwomen's digital activism against the hegemony of heteronormative narratives through self-representation. *Journal Communication Spectrum: Capturing New Perspectives in Communication*, 13(2), 105-126. <https://doi.org/10.36782/jcs.v13i2.2491>

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the discussion in Indonesia was again heated by the discussion about trans. This was because a YouTube content creator pranked a transwoman with the motive of providing social assistance for COVID-19 in Bandung, West Java. The sad thing is not the assistance that the transwoman received, but what the transwoman received was garbage. In April 2020, a transwoman named Mira received an inhumane act where she was burned alive, this cruel incident occurred in Jakarta (Amelia, 2021). This seems to be objective evidence that transwomen do not yet have a proper place in most Indonesian society today.

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*This article is extended version of a paper presented at the 1st Communication Sciences International Conference for APJIKI (CISCA) 2023, Bali, 23-24 November 2023

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A criminal act was also experienced by a transwoman with the initials IB in West Nusa Tenggara in February 2021. There was a refusal when she was asked to serve sexual desires and refused to give money to the perpetrator. She was also slit in the neck by the perpetrator using a razor and died.

In the world of politics, the involvement of transwomen is often associated with discrimination and negative tendencies. Hendrika Mayora, a transwoman who holds a position as a BPD in Sikka Regency, received negative comments and was asked to return to the "right path" or become a "real man". Several parties also stated that she would only be able to become a "flower candidate" or could be interpreted as an individual who would not be able to work optimally.

Different treatment is experienced by transgenders, especially transwomen in other countries. This was proven when the Tokyo Olympics just ended a few months ago. There was one thing that caught the attention of the world community, namely that at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, for the first time, the IOC allowed transwomen to participate in women's sports. The transwoman is named Laurel Hubbard and is from New Zealand. This shows that the position of transgender women in several countries has been given a decent position.

The holding of the Miss Equality World agenda in August 2023 in Bali is a space for transwomen from 11 countries to compete. The beauty contest encourages transwomen to show their abilities and eliminates the negative stigma against transwomen. Through this public event, it is shown that transwomen also have rights in life and the existence of humanitarian values and gender equality.

The case above is proof that the lives of transwomen are often controlled, oppressed, and dehumanized, as well as discriminatory actions based on power relations carried out by adherents of heteronormativity (Garelick et al., 2017; Roberts et al., 2015). Calling (2020) added that this condition is exacerbated by the condition where the closest family of transgender people often stigmatizes and discriminates because of shame. This heteronormative culture is the basis for the normalization of these actions. Due to the hegemony carried out by adherents of this culture, transgender activists focus their movements on the internet or social media (Schmitz et al., 2022). This is because by using the internet, transwomen can more easily avoid physical oppression.

According to Butler (1990), in queer theory, LGBT is not a social deviation but a variation of human identity based on performative actions. Performance is related to the presence of chaos over the appearance of individuals intertwined with the blurring of gender norms to convey that gender and sex are not specific or natural. Even the stereotypes that are present towards LGBT people result in homophobia and heterosexism. Where transgender people have a high risk of experiencing harassment, sexual violence, and even physical violence (Morrow & Messinger, 2006); borrowing thoughts from Ariyanto (2008), several forms of discrimination are often experienced by LGBT people in Indonesia in the form of social discrimination (harassment, ridicule, stigma, exclusion), legal discrimination (state policies or regulations that violate the rights of LGBT people), political discrimination (different opportunities in the realm of practical politics), economic discrimination (in the form of violations of the right to work in the formal sector), to cultural discrimination (the elimination of cultural values that are friendly to LGBT people).

The presence of social media can provide a vast space for gender minorities, such as transwomen, to fight for themselves. This is manifested in online activities. Online activities using social media can be created in various forms that will have different effects but have similarities, namely, using the internet to support their movements (McCaughy & Ayers, 2003). The use of social media allows transwomen to represent themselves fully and display their identity (Fox & Warber, 2015). In the context of Indonesia, this is because conventional media has been filled with anti-LGBT rhetoric, which is usually carried out by politicians and religious leaders (Davies, 2018; Fadhlina, 2021). This proves that the Indonesian public is still dominated by heteronormative views that discriminate against gender minorities.

These online activities in fighting for something refer to something called digital activism. Kaun and Uldam (2018) explain that digital activism is activism on the internet or other digital media that is used for specific political purposes. Digital activism can also be defined as (conventional) social activism that is mediated using digital platforms (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Selander & Jarvenpaa, 2016). There is another thought, namely, expressed by Ozkula (2021). Ozkula (2021) has a slightly different view from Bennett and Segerberg (2012) and Selander and Jarvenpaa (2016) because

Ozkula (2021) is of the view that digital activism has a new form of organization (different from conventional) and the formation of mediated networks also has a new form.

Digital activism is also conceptualized through the diction of participation; according to Mercea (2016), online protest participation is basically a communicative act that shows personal views on public issues. Digital activism becomes a series of practices in the form of resistance and not a feeling of resistance to the power that is present. Various practices can be categorized as digital activism in the form of political advocacy and commentary, recruitment and movement building, organization and coordination, online direct action, hacktivism, and civil action (Ozkula, 2021). Online direct action consists of various actions based on differences of opinion through digital space. These efforts include various forms of creative online protests in the form of making political parodies such as study program banners or memes for ideological purposes (Gurak & Logie, 2003; Tang, 2013).

Traditional collective social action has also shifted into digital activism and developed through information systems into a connective action. In digital activism, significant impact can be found and created at all levels by utilizing digital resources. On the other hand, digital audience activity is a large volume of action in digital activism because almost two-thirds of social media users have participated in politics in social media spaces (Rainie et al., 2012; Vaast et al., 2017). Digital activism activities can be seen in the form of clicktivism, meta-voicing, assertion, political consumerism, digital petitions, botivism, e-funding, data activism, and exposure to hacktivism, regardless of the differences in perspectives explained above.

This study has the paradigm that digital activism is used for specific political purposes. As explained in the previous section, identity is part of a political mechanism that can be used to free oneself from the hegemony of dominant discourse. Based on pre-research observations, the representation used as a tool to fight the dominant discourse is used to gain reinforcement. This is in line with one of the characteristics of digital activism, primarily through social media, which must be strengthened.

George and Leidner (2019) stated that Reinforcement is a fundamental aspect of social media that provides many reminders, repetitions, and confirmations from a person's social network. This repetition and Reinforcement will be one aspect of the success of digital activism based on social media. In the context of this research, digital activism is used to counter the dominant discourse narrated by heteronormative adherents. Moussa and Scapp (1996) stated that the concept of counter-discourse used to counter the dominant discourse was first expressed by Foucault (1970). In line with this, Death (2010) stated that counter-discourse is a form of hidden (implicit) protest. Furthermore, Moussa and Scapp (1996) explained that when a discourse becomes frequently discussed, the discourse will roll to create a counter-discourse against the dominance of a discourse. This counter-discourse is considered a form of resistance to injustice felt by certain groups.

In this context, the concept of counter-discourse expressed by Foucault (1970) is in line with the purpose of using identity politics, which was explained by Kathryn Woodward (1997), to free themselves from domination over minority groups. Therefore, it is rational for minority groups to produce counter-discourse on social media as a form of digital activism because social media offers a platform to produce counter-discourse (Feltwell et al., 2017).

The presence of the internet offers the convenience of carrying out social activism (Coban, 2016). This is because the internet has proven effective in many socio-cultural contexts to facilitate social change through activism or movements (Cao & Guo, 2016). Especially for those from marginalized communities who find it difficult to express themselves in mainstream media. Therefore, using the internet to express themselves and advocate for various goals in the public sphere. In particular, social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter have played an essential role in facilitating online activism, as in Andreevskikh's article (2018), activism carried out by a transgender aims to counter the dominant public perception that hegemonizes public spaces. The narrative regarding violations of existing norms is one of the narratives that is resisted in the context of online activism.

Andreevskikh (2018) also explains that there is another purpose for the activism carried out, namely, to challenge the concept of "normal" in public discourse. In addition, the goal of obtaining equal rights is also something that is desired. Capuzza (2014) added that activism carried out by

transgenders is to raise public awareness of the existence of transgender identity. Efforts to raise this awareness are expected to spread into public discourse and get a proportional place in mainstream media. Since around 1994, the transgender social movement has reached global proportions due to the accessibility of digital networks and the presence of online spaces (Dame-Griff, 2017; Rawson, 2014). The rise of transgender digital activism is related to the transgender experience in community formation based on discrimination and suffering (Steinbock, 2019). Activities carried out online by transgender people show that gender programming cannot be avoided and is carried out in order to achieve an emancipatory orientation. Transgender activism continues to be pursued throughout the world, one of which is the demand for gender recognition by gender social justice groups (Aristigui et al., 2017; Davy, 2011). Through the accessibility of online culture, these actions are able to connect freedom with the ability to grow a sense of belonging, gain a voice, and even representation and self-actualization.

Since around 1994, the transgender social movement has reached global proportions due to the accessibility of digital networks and the presence of online spaces (Dame-Griff, 2017; Rawson, 2014). The rise of transgender digital activism is related to the transgender experience of community formation based on discrimination and suffering (Steinbock, 2019). The activities carried out online by transgender people show that gender programming cannot be avoided and is carried out in order to achieve an emancipatory orientation. Transgender activism continues to be pursued throughout the world, one of which is the demand for gender recognition by gender social justice groups (Aristigui et al., 2017; Davy, 2011). Through the accessibility of online culture, these actions are able to connect freedom with the ability to cultivate a sense of belonging, gain a voice, and representation or self-actualization. In order to achieve the goals of their activism, transgender people must be able to establish relationships with the public through their social media (Williams, 2022). Transgenders produce content on their social media in the form of narratives about their authenticity, hyperfemininity, and self-disclosure, self-identity (Lovelock, 2017). However, some transgenders discuss their bodies in building their identity (Williams, 2022) which causes them to become mere objects of sexuality. This is what can create a wrong perception of the narrative struggle built by other transgender activists. In narrating their discourse on social media, transgender activists often choose to use hashtags to support the narratives they build (Brown et al., 2017). This is because, in digital media, the use of hashtags will be a shortcut to making the narratives built easy for the public to know.

This digital activism exists because transwomen often face injustice. The injustice faced by gender minorities such as transwomen, in fact, with the existence of social media, makes it easier for them to convey their narratives of resistance through social media. Transwomen show their resistance to the heteronormative hegemony carried out by society by introducing their community using social media (Anugrahanti, 2020). Introducing the community to the public will increase public awareness of the presence of the community in the community. This is a resistance because, for some Indonesian people, transgender groups do not have the right to live in Indonesia (Mujani, 2018). The community also tries to normalize sexual violence experienced by transgender people through news channels (Indainanto, 2020) and films (Ningsih, 2014). In fact, sexual violence against anyone is inappropriate. However, it seems that individuals from gender minorities deserve sexual violence. Therefore, transgender people produce narratives about sexual violence through social media channels. Transgender people often experience sexual violence because they are often used as sexual objects (Brewster et al., 2019). One form of resistance narrative that has recently been discussed is the existence of transgender Islamic boarding schools. The many injustices experienced by gender minorities, such as transgender people, have resulted in a narrative of resistance to this. Due to the stigma, injustice, and pressure experienced by transgender people, many of them tend to have issues with their mental health (de Lind van Wijngaarden & Fongkaew, 2021; Fongkaew et al., 2022; Stojanovski et al., 2022).

According to Barker-Plummer (2013), mainstream news media tends to marginalize and create stereotypes and pathological depictions of transgender people. The media also sensationally places transgender people and frames them as adverse parties by using offensive narratives through language. Transgender people who are increasingly active through online media always create diverse, accurate representations and form a positive atmosphere. With these conditions, the

existence of transgender people is able to present knowledge in the digital space related to transgender identity and issues. Social media can be a space to empower individuals to display their sexual identity and their lives so that their existence can be accepted in the context of society. Negative representations of transgender people create sensations and exploit transgender people. The existence of funny caricatures of transwomen and cross-dressers is commonplace, as the depiction of transgender people as criminals, sex workers, individuals with mental disorders, and those who are not worthy of being loved (Phillips, 2006; Shelley, 2008). Information presented by the media about transgender people is often inaccurate, biased, and even ignores historical context (Chailand, 2003; Shelley, 2008).

Media has a significant influence on the realization of identity in transgender people and is used as a comparative tool for transgender people to compare their experiences with the experiences of characters in the media (Ringo, 2002). According to Burgess (2009), for young people, the increased visibility of transgender people in contemporary culture can trigger the expression of self-identification by transgender people with the parties in their lives. Transgender people also often use their way of dressing as a form of narrative resistance to the standard norms imposed by society. This is because society is accustomed to categorizing men's clothing as only being worn by men or vice versa (Han & Choi, 2018). Sometimes, society is also accustomed to categorizing the color someone uses, such as pink (Koller, 2008). Men who wear pink will be considered men who are not masculine, even though, in fact, this is not the case. One example of a transgender who fights this narrative is Dena Rachman, who uses fashion to fight the narrative of gender construction carried out by the dominant society (Herlina, 2014).

Based on Joseph's thinking (in Budyatna & Nina, 1994), self-disclosure or self-disclosure becomes a form of communication in which information about oneself that is usually kept is then communicated to the public. Through the media, transgenders deliberately reveal themselves and result in themselves being known by others. Self-disclosure through digital space shows the existence of self where, according to Frankl (in Aprilia, 2016), three factors influence the nature of human existence in the form of spirituality, freedom, and responsibility. In the aspect of freedom, there is a meaning that transgenders are not dictated by non-spiritual factors or external conditions from the environment, so transgenders have the freedom to choose how they will behave if they want to be psychologically healthy.

Digital activities carried out by transwomen or other transgenders are mostly moving towards equal rights, such as the provision of a transgender identity column on the KTP; and mainstreaming information about transgender as a counter-narrative to the narrative built by adherents of heteronormative beliefs. These activities are often carried out through social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. In fact, these activities are not entirely free from all forms of discrimination, as evidenced by the fact that transwomen still experience verbal violence on their social media (Adelia & Pratiwi, 2021).

Several transgender figures routinely produce counter-narratives to heteronormative beliefs in Indonesian society or voice the rights of transwomen through their social media or other people's, namely Alegra Wolter, Ian Hugen, and Anggun Pradesha. For some people, these names are less famous than Millen Cyrus, Oscar Lawalata, or Denna Rachman. However, these three people are intense in producing narratives compared to the three popular names above.

Alegra Wolter is a doctor who graduated from a well-known private university in Jakarta. She is a transwoman who inspires her community to pay attention to the mental health and sexual health of people around her, especially fellow members of the gender minority community. Her interest in mental health issues is inseparable from her struggle to survive as a victim of bullying and sexual harassment. Wolter experienced bullying because she had feminine traits since she was little. She is a public opinion at a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) called testjKT.org.

Another figure is Ian Hugen. Ian Hugen is a model and influencer who has 119 thousand followers on his personal Instagram and 532 thousand on his online diary. Just like Alegra Wolter, Ian Hugen has experienced bullying. Hugen initially lived and resided in Makassar, and he revealed that in that area, he was seen as a disgusting figure by society. Hugen never defined himself as a different individual, but he defined himself as a unique individual. Hugen also often uses social media platforms, both his own and others, to narrate about transgender.

Anggun Pradesha is a film director and producer. One of her films is "Emak Menolak" which was nominated for 25 Documentary Short Films at the 2021 Indonesian Film Festival. This film tells the story of the relationship between a mother and her transgender child. Anggun Pradesha is also the secretary of the INTAN Foundation (Transperempuan Inclusion). In several posts on Anggun's Instagram account, she has been seen fighting for the rights of transwomen to obtain E-KTPs for the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The presence of Alegra Wolter, Ian Hugen, and Anggun Pradesha is a form of gender minority that routinely produces counter-discourse. The three people produce videos that offer a more inclusive perspective on the diversity of feelings and experiences of being a transwoman. The discourse narrated by them is something authentic because it is voiced directly by those who live and experience the life process of a transwoman. Therefore, this article will try to explain how transwomen carry out digital activism in fighting the hegemony of heteronormative narratives through the representation of identity politics narrated by Alegra Wolter, Ian Hugen, and Anggun Pradesha on social media.

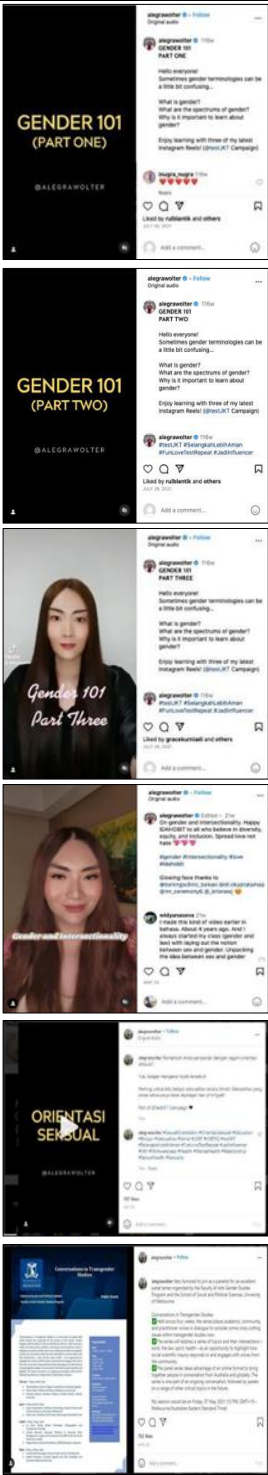



Several studies related to transgender people have been conducted in the social humanities. In their research, Fitria et al. (2024) stated that although transgender identity is often opposed, the public has begun to respond positively along with the development of social media use. This is in line with Silalahi & Pramudita (2024), namely that social media offers space for transgender people to gain connections and independent education through the arrangement of online experiences that are attempted. This finding is reinforced by the fact that transgender people who are active on social media are at the stage of self-actualization that is oriented towards presenting positive public opinion Putridinanti (2021). Transgender individuals actively use social media as an expressive space for their efforts to be accepted and treated humanely by the public (Buss et al., 2021). However, Fitrinanda (2018) explains that the audience also accepts and responds to the presence of transgender with full dynamics that are intertwined with personal thought patterns, understanding of beliefs and religion, and the meaning of human rights. The research that has been conducted has not been able to provide meaning to the form of representation carried out by several transgender individuals with a special focus on Instagram social media. Therefore, this study aims to explore this.

METHOD

This study will use a qualitative approach. This is because qualitative research allows us to understand phenomena based on the meaning given by humans to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). This study also uses a qualitative content analysis method with the type of directed content analysis, which has advantages in the use of theory to its extension (Hsieh & Sannon, 2005). Qualitative content analysis allows us to collect text data in the form of words, meanings, symbols, ideas, themes, and other forms of communication messages (Neuman, 2011). The text referred to in qualitative content analysis allows the content contained in the communication media to be recorded and analyzed further (Neuman, 2011). Using a purposive sampling technique, this paper collects data with content limitations in 2021-2023 from the Instagram social media accounts of Alegra Wolter, Ian Hugen, and Anggun Pradesha. This is because Pride Month in 2022 falls in June. Therefore, to gain momentum, this study takes data with a timeframe from 2021 to 2023, both before, during, and after pride month. The type of content taken has criteria in the form of discussion of gender issues, active participation in public activities, relationships with family and/or partners, and work. Several of these points are essential because they are intertwined aspects that shape the transgender self as a subject with its representation. There are four types of triangulation techniques, namely triangulation of techniques, data, inter-researchers, and theory (Denzin, 2017; Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2014; Patton in Sutopo, 2002). In order to ensure the truth of the data obtained, researchers use several triangulation techniques, namely data and theory triangulation. This triangulation refers to findings that are not only examined through one data subject and theory but can be reviewed with several data subjects and theories. Furthermore, the data that has been obtained will be further examined using the principle of intertextuality expressed by Fiske (1987).

The following are the units of analysis in this study which come from the content in the Instagram accounts of Alegra Wolter, Ian Hugen, and Anggun Pradesha:

Table I. Research Data Analysis Unit

Criteria	Alegra Wolter	Ian Hugen	Anggun Pradesha
Gender issues			 

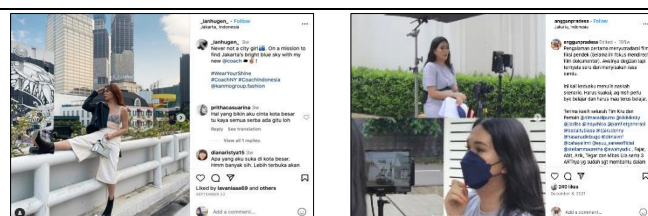
Activeness in public activities



Relationship with family and/or partner



Pekerjaan



FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Alegra Wolter's Self-Representation

Alegra Wolter was born male, but since childhood, she has had a feminine disposition that naturally emerged. With Alegra Wolter's disposition, which is considered different from that of the majority of boys, she is considered a strange and wrong individual. Due to this condition, she often gets bullied by her peers. Alegra Wolter also once felt that she was trapped in the body of a boy, which made her depressed. Alegra Wolter even hated herself and asked God to remove her feminine traits. The bad things that Alegra Wolter experienced as a child can be interpreted as gender dysphoria in the form of psychological pressure caused by the inconsistency between the sex that was present at birth and her gender identity (Ayuningtyas, 2022). When Alegra Wolter began to understand that she was experiencing gender dysphoria, she tended to dismiss her feelings, which made her mental condition unstable. With the various bitter problems she has experienced, Alegra Wolter decided to become a doctor in order to be able to help more parties through her profession (Hatma, 2022). Although throughout her education, she still experienced an environment that was not yet accustomed to the presence of transgender people. However, now Alegra Wolter is the first transgender doctor to be open to the public about her gender identity (Ananda, 2022). Through the experiences and phases of life that she has gone through, Alegra Wolter has become a more empathetic doctor, able to understand other individuals and help through medical means.

The self-representation carried out by Alegra Wolter on her Instagram media can at least be recorded in several posts that she narrated in 2021. Alegra Wolter has a tendency to produce narratives of resistance, and her intelligence is wrapped in educational content and has the characteristics of an intellectual. It is proven that some of the content she presents is intertwined with intelligence and the mainstreaming of gender concepts. Here is one of the posts shared by Alegra Wolter via her Instagram media.



Figure I. Three Gender Series on Alegra Wolter's Instagram

Picture I above is one of three parts of a brief explanation of Gender by Alegra Wolter. In series one, Wolter explains What is meant by Gender and the Differences between Gender Identity and Gender Expression. Then in series two, Wolter explains Gender as a social construct of the Binary and Non-binary models (Transgender and Cisgender), as well as Trans Binary and Trans Non-Binary. In series three, Wolter reveals the reasons why it is essential to study Gender in order to avoid patriarchal culture where women are often victims; avoid toxic masculinity where men are victims; and discrimination, violence, and injustice where non-binary (transgender) are often victims. In the third series, there is an invitation to remove shackles and move forward together, as well as an appeal to protect each other.

The uploads with the theme of enlightenment and mainstreaming the concept of Gender above, which were made in several series, show the process of strengthening the issue, which is carried out by consistently discussing the issue. This proves what George and Leidner (2019) have said: social media provides the ease of repeating and strengthening problems that can be fundamental aspects. This aspect can be the reason for success in digital activism. If examined further, what Wolter is doing is the process of producing counter-discourse. At the same time, it is known that the majority of the Indonesian population still considers gender minorities, such as transwomen, to be taboo to talk about. But Wolter put this aside by making several video series discussing Gender. Wolter routinely continues to produce discourses that are different from the dominant discourse. This is in line with the thoughts of Moussa and Scapp (1996), who stated that the more often a discourse is discussed, the more the discourse will roll to create a counter-discourse to the dominance of a discourse. Wolter's use of social media as a place to produce counter-discourse also confirms Feltwell's thoughts (2017). Feltwell (2017) stated that social media offers the ease of producing counter-discourse.

These three series of explanations regarding Gender, in addition to being in line with the thoughts of Moussa and Scapp (1996), also confirm the findings of Capuzza (2014), which revealed that transgender or, in this context, transwomen will actively increase public awareness of the breadth of gender identity including transgender identity in it. Furthermore, Brown et al. (2017) revealed that transwomen will use specific hashtags to help strengthen the narrative conveyed by a trans woman. This was confirmed in the context of Wolter; based on the findings above, what was expressed by Brown et al. (2017) was proven in this study. This is because Wolter also uses specific hashtags to accompany the content he distributes through his Instagram channel.



Figure 2. Alegra Wolter's post on July 30, 2020

In the video content narrated by Wolter, in addition to containing gender-education narratives, Wolter also uses several interesting dictions in narrating his struggle.

“..... Of course, we should differentiate this depending on gender identity and expression. Some transgender friends are attracted to men, women, and both. While feminine men are not necessarily gay.”

Based on the video transcript above, we can see the exciting diction chosen by Wolter in narrating his struggle. He chose the diction “we” and “friends” when referring to other people. This, when associated with the characteristics of the micro-celebrity concept, is a strategy to position the audience as someone close to the sender of the message (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). However, in the context of online activism, this can be said to be a way to establish relationships with the public (Williams, 2022). On the other hand, the use of this diction can also be interpreted as a way to introduce the transgender community. By using the diction “we” and “friends,” Wolter is not alone in narrating the struggle and education. According to Anugrahanti (2020), this method is classified as resistance to the hegemony of heteronormative discourse.



Figure 3. Alegra Wolter's post on April 26, 2021

Figure 3 is one of many posts that represent Wolter as an intellectual figure and has acted as a speaker several times, both in academic and non-academic activities. Wolter's representation is apparently not in line with the findings presented by Pérez-Bustos (2016), who revealed that transwomen are represented far from intellectualism.

If the findings of Herlina (2014) place the way of dressing as a means of fighting the dominance of discourse, Wolter uses his intellectuality to fight this dominance. This is inseparable from his background as a doctor. Perhaps this background also places him very focused on sexual and mental

health issues. Wolter's focus is inseparable from the fact that transgender people often have issues in mental health due to the stigmatization carried out by supporters of heteronormative beliefs (de Lind van Wijngaarden & Fongkaew, 2021; Fongkaew et al., 2022; Stojanovski et al., 2022).

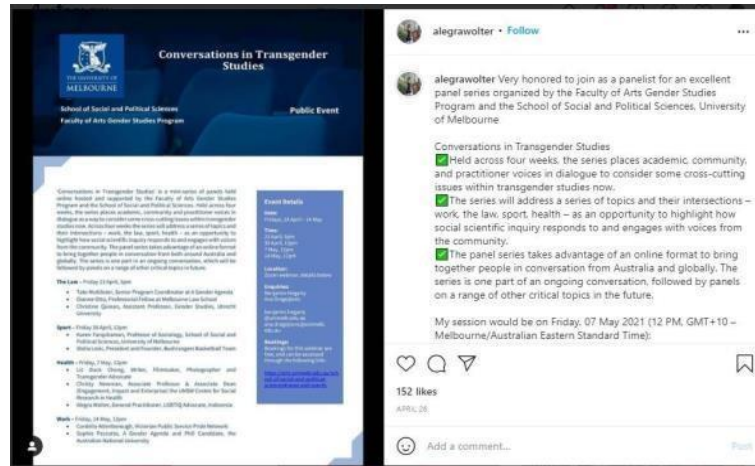


Figure 4. Alegra Wolter's post on May 20, 2023

Figure 4 shows Wolter's upload on gender and intersexuality, which was uploaded in relation to the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intesexism, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) on May 17. Where the commemoration is oriented so that everyone, including LGBTQ+ people, can be free from spaces of hatred, violence, and discrimination. This is in line with the narrative in Wolter's content caption in the form of "Happy IDAHOBIT to all who believe in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Spread love, not hate".

This is related to efforts to get out of the expectations of the dominant society to be able to act heteronormatively, resulting in the limited direction of the transgender and LGBTQ+ communities. In line with the research results of Liem (2016) and Praptoraharjo (2015), the presence of transphobia in transgender people makes them closely associated with stigma, discrimination, and violence from various parties when compared to lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. Transwomen are always seen as strange people who oppose God's nature, so in the mass media, they are constructed through discriminatory narratives (Amrianto et al., 2023).



Figure 5. Alegra Wolter's post on July 19, 2022

Identity as a transwoman does not prevent Alegra Wolter from empowering and collaborating with many parties. As seen in Figure 5, through her Instagram social media account, Wolter often shares moments when she is productive by synergizing with certain parties. She always shows her efforts to become an empowered transwoman by being involved in public activities. In the picture, Wolter also collaborates with @jaringanindonesiapositif and @kompastv, and the feeling of

enthusiasm for her involvement in the agenda is shown with "Thank you, @jaringanindonesiapositif Depok, for inviting me." This is in line with Capuzza's (2014) thinking that activism carried out by transgender people is oriented toward increasing public awareness of the presence of transgender identity. This hope can also create public discourse and allow transgender people to have proportional space in mainstream media.

Ian Hugen's Self-Representation

Ian Hugen has been aware of her feminist side since she was little and decided to change in 2017. In Ian Hugen's life journey as a transwoman, she was encouraged to grow into a more mature person. Where this can be represented when she receives criticism or gives arguments to the public, during her career as a transwoman, Ian Hugen often received challenges in the form of harsh comments and threats (Astira, 2021). Before declaring herself as a transwoman, Ian Hugen introduced her gender as queer in 2017. Ian Hugen felt comfortable with her queer status and had no problem being called a man or a woman. Until 2019, Ian Hugen declared herself a transwoman by deciding that 'Okay, I am a woman' (Esa, 2023). According to Ian Hugen, the transformation from queer to transgender is considered more accessible when compared to the change from male to queer. The gender change carried out by Ian Hugen arose from the concept of gender that is always categorized by society. The phrase that Ian Hugen felt was difficult was self-disclosure, not to the public, but to himself. Finally, Ian Hugen had the principle to focus on the concept of how individuals are able to interpret themselves, not focusing on the views of others. Now, Ian Hugen focuses on gender equality and presents self-love in his works so that he always invites people to exist with confidence in their various uniqueness (Arundhati, 2022).

The self-representation carried out by Ian Hugen on his Instagram media can at least be recorded in several posts that he narrated in 2021. Ian Hugen tends to narrate his resistance and intelligence through his life story. He uses the hashtag #SUNDAYwithIanHugen to help identify narratives that use narrative strategies to represent himself. This condition is in line with Lovelock (2017); transgenders always produce content on social media in the form of narratives related to authenticity, hyper-femininity, self-disclosure, and self-identity. In the act of narrating discourse through social media, transgender activists often use hashtags that aim to strengthen the narrative that is built digitally (Brown et al., 2017). The use of hashtags as digital activism by Hugen through Instagram social media is a step in creating a narrative that is readily known widely by the public, especially with preferences or principles that are in line.

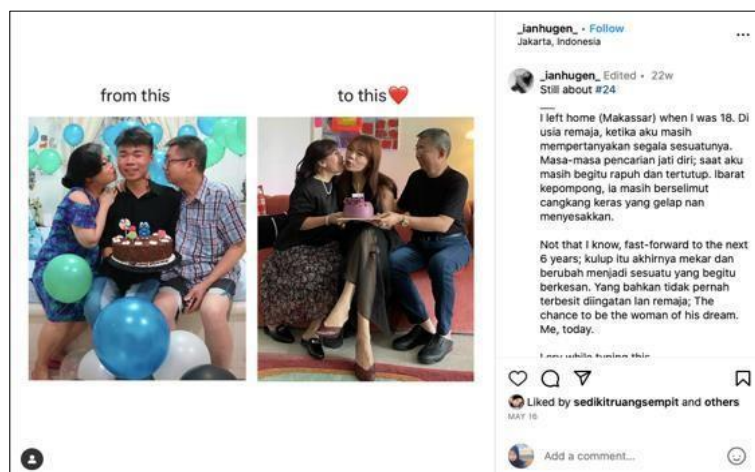


Figure 6. Ian Hugen's post on May 16, 2023

Figure 6 is one of Hugen's latest posts about her family. Hugen, in her narrative, represents herself as a transwoman who is supported by her family and does not get stigmatized by her immediate family. What Calling (2020) found about transwomen who will get stigmatized and discriminated against because of shame by their immediate family was not found in Hugen's context. Hugen says in the post that after she had been honest about her condition, she became even closer to her immediate family. Hugen's post can be interpreted as a form of implicit protest against the

many families who do not accept the presence of transwomen in their families. According to Death (2010), this implicit protest is an effort to produce counter-discourse.



Figure 7. Ian Hugen's post on November 6, 2022

Figure 7 shows Ian Hugen as a transwoman participating in social activities in the form of community service. She actively participates in volunteer activities and hopes to be able to provide benefits to others. Joining and helping others on the agenda brings Ian Hugen a sense of happiness. Transwomen need to gather themselves and show their existence positively to eliminate stigma and discrimination against them (Hanif et al., 2022). The upload of Hagen's involvement in the social space confirms what Capuzza (2014) found: that activism carried out by transgender people is intertwined with the aim of raising public awareness of the presence of transgender identity. So that the orientation and actions presented are able to create public discourse and transgender people increasingly get proportional space in the mainstream media.

In the post, it was also found that Hugen used the hashtag #SUNDAYwithIanHugen to mark content containing the narrative of her struggle. The use of this hashtag is in line with what Wolter did and the findings of Brown et al. (2017) to support the narrative of the struggle of a transwoman. Hugen's self-representation and use of hashtags can be interpreted as an increase in the visibility of transgender people that can trigger the disclosure of self-identification by transgender people with parties in their lives. Hugen's consistent digital activism through #SUNDAYwithIanHugen further confirms the thoughts of Brown et al. (2017) regarding the use of hashtags that can strengthen digitally constructed narratives.



Figure 8. Ian Hugen's post on December 23, 2023

In addition to representing herself as someone whom her family supports, Hugen also works as a model and has 119 thousand followers as of October 18, 2023. This number places Hugen as

a microcelebrity in addition to her profession as a model. Hugen's profession as a model proves the findings of (Fongkaew et al., 2022) that transwomen can work as models or supermodels.

Hugen's status as a microcelebrity often gives her the opportunity to do other jobs. From a marketing perspective, Hugen's persona as a transwoman certainly attracts them. Because the persona of a transwoman as a microcelebrity is not common in Indonesia, this persona is important for a microcelebrity to build (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). In addition to her persona, Hugen also uses private information such as her family and place of origin as commodities. This is certainly in line with what Marwick and Boyd (2011) said about the characteristics of a microcelebrity. When viewed from a business perspective, what Hugen represents certainly has its market niche that product owners can target.

In the picture, it can be seen that Hugen's method of fighting the dominant narrative is different from that of Wolter. What Hugen did is in line with the findings presented by Herlina (2014), who stated that transwomen will use fashion that is used to fight the dominant narrative. In addition, this post also proves the findings of Williams (2022), who revealed that there are transgender or transwomen who use their bodies to discuss their identity. This condition is related to society, which has so far been accustomed to categorizing men's clothing as only being used by men and vice versa (Han & Choi, 2018). This is a narrative of resistance to something that is considered "normal" by public discourse (Andreevskikh, 2018). Hugen's openness in the digital space shows self-existence in accordance with Frankl (in Aprilia, 2016), which is influenced by the nature of human existence in the form of the freedom factor.



Figure 9. Ian Hugen's post on March 8, 2021

Through picture 9, Hugen tells that her struggle to become a woman was not easy to get through. The post was shared on International Women's Day. Something is interesting in the photo caption narrated by Hugen in the post.

"Becoming a 'Woman' is one of my greatest achievements today....

..... These are the things and nonsense that we need to eradicate....!"

In this context, Hugen uses the diction "I" to represent herself. According to observations made by the author, Hugen rarely uses this diction to represent herself. Hugen usually uses "gue" as the diction that represents herself. Even for narratives that tell about her family. The diction "I" is often used to represent oneself in the context of communication that has personal and formal closeness to the people of Jakarta. Hugen's use of diction can also be interpreted as an effort to introduce the transgender community. In accordance with the findings of Augrahanti (2020), this method is classified as resistance to the hegemony of heteronormative discourse.

So, the narrative delivered by Hugen in commemorating International Women's Day has a very personal meaning for her. It is even surpassing the personal nature when she narrated the story about her parents. Hugen's struggle to become a "woman" certainly has its meaning for Hugen that cannot be expressed in this article due to research limitations.

In addition, in the post, there is also the diction "lawn," which is very rarely used by Hugen in her Instagram self-representation. This shows that, although the image is built, Hugen is not a gender activist who always voices resistance. However, for a particular moment, resistance to injustice needs to be voiced. Where so far, the presence of transphobia in transwomen has made them close to stigma, discrimination, and violence from various parties when compared to lesbians, gays, and bisexuals (Liem, 2016; Praptoharharjo, 2015). The act of resistance against injustice carried out by Hugen is also in line with Mercea's (2016) thinking that online protest participation is a communicative act that shows personal views related to public issues. Social media presents reinforcement that is a fundamental aspect and provides various reminders, repetitions, and confirmations from individual social networks, where repetition and reinforcement available will be a factor in the success of digital activism based on social media, especially that carried out by transwomen.

Anggun Pradesha's Self-Representation

Anggun Pradesha admitted that she started liking the same sex when she was in elementary school and liked to dress up when she was a student in high school. About two years after graduating from high school, Anggun Pradesha realized that she was a transwoman (Gloria, 2021). She felt that there was rejection from her family and social life in her home environment. Although Anggun Pradesha's parents tried to accept her condition, she chose to run away from home so as not to become a disgrace to the family. Anggun Pradesha had been involved in prostitution for two years since running away from her home in 2009 (Gloria, 2021).

In the end, Anggun Pradesha decided to become a director from a minority group, namely transgender. She also pursued the profession of film producer and screenwriter who tried to change the perception and negative situation of transgender. On the other hand, she also grew into a transwoman who is active in various organizations and as a speaker. In addition to being an artist, Anggun Pradesha is also the administrator of the Intan Foundation in Jakarta, which works on the issue of inclusivity for transgender groups (Melela, 2022). Anggun Pradesha wants to show transgender people that there will always be opportunities for access to work or speak out. She also always invites transgender people to realize and understand their potential so that they dare to pursue the dreams that they have always dreamed of.

The self-representation carried out by Anggun Pradesha on her Instagram media can at least be recorded in several posts that she narrated in 2021. Anggun Pradesha, in narrating her resistance and enlightenment, wraps it in social movements, criticism, and her self-representation as a film producer and transgender activist.



Figure 10. Anggun Pradesha's post dated September 19, 2021

Figure 10 shows Pradesha representing herself as a gender activist who routinely criticizes and fights against heteronormative narratives conveyed by others. In the post, Pradesha fights against the narrative conveyed by a religious leader. As expressed by Davies (2018) and Fadhlina (2021), religious leaders are one of the groups that routinely produce anti-LGBT discourse. In fact, Pradesha

fought against the anti-LGBT discourse by uploading it to her Instagram page. The activities carried out by Pradesha were caused by the conditions of transwomen who often experience injustice, where, according to Barker-Plummer (2013), mainstream news media tend to marginalize and present stereotypes and pathological depictions of transgender people. In addition, Pradesha's critical actions also show the rise of digital transgender activists related to the production of counter-discourse on social media as a form of digital activism caused by the existence of digital modes in producing counter-discourse (Feltwell et al., 207).

The narrative of resistance conveyed by Pradesha was not only expressed through her Instagram channel. But through her Instagram channel, it can be found that she often becomes a speaker at a discussion or seminar to voice the perspective of a gender minority such as a transwoman. Pradesha, who is frequently invited as a speaker, has a similar representation to Wolter because she is often invited as a speaker.



Figure 11. Anggun Pradesha's post dated August 21, 2021

In addition to representing herself as someone who carries out online activism through her Instagram channel. Pradesha also affirms her struggle with social movements in the real world. The establishment of the INTAN Foundation shows this. Pradesha is the secretary of the INTAN Foundation (Transperempuan Inclusion). This foundation focuses on humanitarian movements, especially for transwomen, in order to achieve inclusivity for gender minorities, especially transwomen. The actions taken by Pradesha are in accordance with the thoughts of Anugrahanti (2020) that transwomen show resistance to heteronormative hegemony by introducing the community using social media. The efforts made by Pradesha by introducing the INTAN Foundation to the public are related to increasing the presence of the transgender community in society. This condition shows that Pradesha also continues to fight in accordance with what was conveyed by Mujani (2018), that transgender groups in Indonesia often do not have the right to life.

Alegra Wolter did this to fight for gender intelligence through social media. Pradesha also uses social media to mobilize her foundation's movement to fight for the provision of a column for transwomen on ID cards. It can be seen in several posts on Pradesha's Instagram account that she and several other transwomen have fought several times for the rights of transwomen to obtain E-KTP from the Ministry of Home Affairs. The struggle of Pradesha and other transwomen has borne fruit with the recognition of transwomen in the KTP column some time ago. Borrowing thoughts from Steinbock (2019), the rise of transgender digital activists is intertwined with the experience of transgender people in forming communities based on discrimination and suffering. With digital accessibility, Pradesha's actions are able to connect freedom with the ability to create a sense of belonging and gain voting rights. So that in order to achieve the goals of the activism carried out, transgender people must always be able to establish relationships with the public through their social media (Williams, 2022).



Figure 12. Anggun Pradesha's post dated September 22, 2023

Pradesha also tells her romantic story of being a trans woman with her partner, whom she calls Harimau. The representation of romantic relationships through social media is also an effort to fight against the labelling that has been attached to transwomen. Transwomen also need love and affection from other people, including partners in general. According to (Wardana, 2021), there are several forms of intimacy by transwomen with their partners, namely a) wanting to improve the welfare of loved ones, b) feeling the joy of their partner, c) holding their partner with respect, d) relying on their partner when they need it, e) understanding each other, f) communicating intimately, g) giving and receiving emotional support. Based on the efforts made by Pradesha, it can be seen from Andreevskikh's (2018) thinking that activism is oriented towards opposing the concept of "normal" in public discourse. In addition, activism carried out by transgender people is intertwined with the aim of increasing public awareness of the identity of transgender people (Capuzza, 2014).



Figure 13. Anggun Pradesha's post dated Desember 8, 2022

Through her personal Instagram social media account, Anggun Pradesha also shared her involvement as an artist in the film industry. As a transwoman, she constantly struggles to develop herself and achieve her dreams. Although transwomen have often been discriminated against and looked down upon, Pradesha always tries to work with all her potential. Borrowing ideas from Feltwell et al. (2017), minority groups produce counter-discourse through social media as an effort of digital activism because social media is able to be a platform for producing such discourse. In the upload of Figure 13, Pradesha is determined to develop by learning to develop herself. This is shown through the narrative presented through the caption in the form of "*I must admit, I still need to learn a lot and must be willing to continue learning*". Her identity as a transwoman does not prevent her from developing by increasing her value by focusing on the film industry and working together with supportive colleagues. What Pradesha shows also agrees with the thoughts of Fox & Warber (2015)

that social media allows transwomen to be able to represent themselves completely and display their identities.

CONCLUSION

The three transwomen who are the subjects of this study have similarities and differences, as well as their characteristics in representing themselves. Algra Wolter tends to produce narratives of resistance and enlightenment wrapped in educational content and has the characteristics of an intellectual. Next is Ian Hugen who tends to narrate his resistance and enlightenment through his life story. He uses the hashtag #SUNDAYwithIanHugen to help identify narratives that use narrative strategies to represent himself. Next is Anggun Pradesha. In narrating her resistance and enlightenment, she wraps it with social movements, criticism and her representation as a film producer and transgender activist. These characteristics cannot be separated from the background of each research subject, which entirely influences the various forms of narratives they convey. These characteristics also make the representations presented by the three of them different.

INFORMED CONSENT

The authors have obtained informed consent from all participants.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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