

Looking Self and Others: Media Roles in Waria (Male-to-Female) Transgender Identity Formation in Indonesia

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Abstract

This paper examines results of interviews with Waria (Wanita-Pria or male-to-female) or transgendered individuals in Surabaya regarding the role of media in their identification formations. Previous television reception studies (e.g. Morley (1980), Liebes & Katz (1991)) show the relationship of audiences' social identities to their interpretation of media texts, including the place of these interpretations in the process of identification. This study investigates how people with transgendered identities in Surabaya respond to the creation of Waria identity and images in Indonesian media. It raises questions over whether or not the media have facilitated Waria identification processes in this context and, if so, in what ways.