

## Transgender Narrative in Public Service Announcement

### Narasi Transgender dalam Iklan Layanan Masyarakat

Anna Puji Lestari<sup>1</sup>, Yuliyanto Budi Setiawan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, Jl. Prof. Hamka (Campus III), Ngaliyan,  
Semarang City 50185, Central Java, Indonesia.

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Semarang, Jl. Arteri Soekarno-Hatta, Tlogosari, Semarang, Central Java

\*Corresponding author, e-mail: [annapujilestari@gmail.com](mailto:annapujilestari@gmail.com)

#### Abstract

*After changing its city branding several times, Semarang now has a new city branding, namely "Semarang Variety of Culture." However, the city branding reaped contra from academics and cultural figures because Semarang was considered not sufficient yet in terms of representing its cultural diversity. Responding to this, the Semarang City Government and the Semarang City Public Works Department created a public service advertisement on CCTV socialization for flood control in the city of Semarang with a transgender figure as the ad star. This research was qualitative research designed with Seymour Chatman's Narrative Analysis. The research found a commodification and objectification of transgender people who imitated the feminine style of women in the advertisement. In other words, the public service announcement of Semarang CCTV socialization lowered the femininity, which is synonymous with women. The public service advertisement also violated the moral codes adopted by the majority of the Indonesian people.*

**Keywords:** *Feminism objectification; public service advertising; transgender; city branding*

#### Abstrak

*Setelah beberapa kali berganti city branding, kini Semarang memiliki City Branding baru, yakni "Semarang Variety of Culture". Namun, city branding tersebut justru menuai kontra dari kalangan akademisi dan budayawan karena Semarang dinilai belum kentara unsur keragaman budayanya. Menanggapi hal tersebut, Pemerintah Kota Semarang dan Dinas Pekerjaan Umum Kota Semarang membuat Iklan Layanan Masyarakat mengenai Sosialisasi CCTV Pengawasan Banjir di Kota Semarang dengan Tokoh Transgender sebagai Bintang Iklannya. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan desain Analisis Naratif Seymour Chatman. Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa dalam Iklan terdapat komodifikasi dan obyektifikasi terhadap transgender yang mengimitasi gaya feminin perempuan. Dengan kata lain, Iklan Layanan Masyarakat Sosialisasi CCTV Semarang merendahkan feminitas yang identik dengan kaum perempuan. Iklan layanan masyarakat tersebut juga melanggar kode-kode moral yang dianut oleh mayoritas masyarakat Indonesia.*

**Kata Kunci:** *City branding; iklan layanan masyarakat; obyektivikasi feminitas; transgender*

## Introduction

City branding is essential for the city image. The reason is that it is the city brand that is presented to the minds of the national community, even the international world. In Indonesia, each city has a different city branding, such as "Stunning Bandung" in Bandung City, "The Sunrise of Java" in Banyuwangi City, and "Shining Batu" in Batu City. However, of many city brandings in Indonesia, the branding of Semarang City is considered unique.

Initially, the city branding of Semarang was "ATLAS City," which was short for Aman, Tertib, Lancar, Asri dan Sehat (Safe, Orderly, Smooth, Beautiful, and Healthy). However, due to the quarrel in society, Semarang changed its city branding several times. After ATLAS CITY, the Semarang City altered the branding to "Kota Lumpia" before changing it again to "Semarang Pesona Asia." The last city branding drew criticism from various circles. This is because the embedded city branding was considered unsuitable for Semarang. Semarang was not charming in Asia, and this made the concept look like an exaggeration. Indeed, many people in Semarang themselves promoted counter-city branding (unofficial) as "Semarang Kota CongYang." CongYang is a kind of liquor of Semarang.

After "Semarang Pesona Asia," Semarang had no city branding for a long time and only had the tagline "Semarang Hebat," replacing the tagline "Semarang Setara," which previously received strong reactions from the public because the tagline seemed to indicate that Semarang was an inferior city. Finally, recently, Semarang has had formulated its city branding, namely "Semarang Variety of Culture." That city branding was initiated by Universitas Negeri Semarang (Unnes) students in collaboration with the Semarang City Regional Planning Board (Bappeda) with B2DM (Brand Belief, Brand Driver, and Brand Marketing) strategies.

However, although communities in Semarang City seemingly can feel relieved because they finally had an appropriate city branding, this new city branding still reaped criticism from some Semarang citizens, including academics and cultural figures. For them, as reported by Audrian (Audrian, 2019), Semarang itself was considered not able to explain the identity and characteristics of the city. Responding to the strong reaction of the public regarding the inability of Semarang to become "Semarang Variety of Culture," the government of Semarang City carried out various programs by promoting the breath of "Semarang Variety of Culture" as a concrete step to show consistency.

One of them was through public service announcements about CCTV socialization in Semarang City to create a flood-free Semarang. The public service announcement came from the Semarang City Government in collaboration with the Semarang City Public Works Agency. The advertisement was considered by some as an embodiment of "Semarang Variety Culture" because it gave transgender opportunities to appear to the public. The ad displayed Tamara Jalan Raya as the ad star. Tamara Jalan Raya is a transgender figure in Semarang who works as a cafe singer, MC, and busker on the streets. Transgender is commonly referred to as sissy or transvestites. It differs from transsexuals who are transgender people who perform genital surgery. Tamara Jalan Taya is transgender because it does not perform genital surgery.

Public Service Announcements featuring transgender seems to contradicts Indonesian Advertising Ethics regarding the attitude of point (b), which states: "Placing ethics in the structure of moral values that support each other with the provisions of the legislation as a structure of legal values." Furthermore, it also appears to violate three other rules. Firstly, the Indonesian Advertising Ethics point (1.26) regarding

Pornography, which states, "Advertisements may not exploit eroticism or sexuality in any form and manner;" Secondly, point (3.3) regarding gender in terms of sexuality and gender-biased language, which states: "Sexuality: that both men and women should not be sexually exploited;" Thirdly, "Gender biased language: that there should not be any impression of the use of terms or expressions which can be misinterpreted or that can offend something gender, or that excludes one of them."

In addition, the practice seems to violate other code of conducts, ranging from Article 9 of Broadcasting Code of Conduct (Pedoman Perilaku Penyiaran (P3)) (KPI, 2012), which states "Broadcasters must respect the values and norms of decency that apply in society," the Article 15 of 2012 Broadcasting Program Standards (Standar Program Siaran, SPS) (1) which says, "Broadcasting programs must pay attention to and protect the interests of children and/or teenagers," and support Article 37 (4) Points (a) which says, "Content that encourages teenagers to learn about inappropriate behavior and/or justify inappropriate behavior as normal in everyday life."

As regards these regulations, the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI, 2012) has socialized a ban on television stations broadcasting programs that campaigned for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT). This prohibition is imposed to protect children and adolescents who are under age so as not to duplicate LGBT behavior. In light of that, the public service ads containing transgender elements cannot air on TVRI, the national television stations functioning as a public broadcast institution. These public service announcements only appear on social media such as YouTube and Instagram.

The phenomenon in Semarang, therefore, considering the norm-like and regulation in Indonesia, should be considered unique. The reason is that while the public service advertisements are usually presented to minimize the presence of transgender people, in the Semarang Banjir Free community service adverts, the transgender is the star of the advertisement. This phenomenon is also worth researching because seldom communication studies research transgender that is hired to be the star in Public Service Announcements. This will be the novelty of the present research. Previous research on public service announcements and transgender was conducted by Muthia Humairah et al. (Humairah & et al., 2015), entitled "Designing Motion Graphic Public Service Advertisements Regarding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Deviant Behavior in Bukittinggi Society." However, the study merely designed a Public Service Adverts to address the prevention of the spread of deviant behavior using motion graphic media.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to describe the (1) objectification of transgender sexuality in public service announcements on CCTV socialization in Semarang and (2) the commodification of transgender in public service announcements on CCTV socialization in Semarang. This research seeks to answer the question of whether transgender should be the ad star in public service advertisements in the name of freedom of public space and the embodiment of "Semarang variety of culture" even though it appears to contradict the norms.

## Method

The research was descriptive qualitative. Qualitative and descriptive research methods provide a more in-depth examination and understanding of individual learners and their behaviors and experiences (Nassaji, 2015). This research used the Seymour Chatman narrative analysis method to analyze the narrative of the Semarang Anti-Flood

CCTV Community Service Announcement. The object of this study was the text of the CCTV Socialization Society service ad for flood-free Semarang, which makes the transgender as the star of the advertisement that has been shown on YouTube and Instagram. The data of this study mainly came from the text of the public service Ad for CCTV socialization in Semarang. In addition, this study also used secondary data sources that were relevant to research topics obtained through books, literature, and digital archives on the internet.

In the narrative analysis, the data collection process was divided into two parts according to the use of the main paradigms of theory in research, namely at the level of story and discourses. Data collection at story level was based on the identification of the elements that make up it, namely event and existence. This identification began with mapping the story sequence unit, which was the smallest element of a story. The collection of sequences of this story can then find unexpected events that were inserted (contingency), the core of the telling (kernels), companion stories (satellite), time-frequency, plot, the character of the actors, and setting the event occurrence.




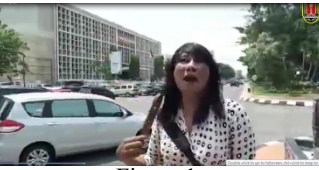
At the discourse level, data collection was done by identifying the structure of narrative transmission and manifestations resulting from the identification of verbal, dynamic, balletic, pantomime, and so on. Fundamentally, the narrative is a kind of text organization, and that organization, and that schema, needs to be actualized in: written words, as in stories and novels; in spoken words combined with the movements of actors imitating characters against sets which imitate places, as in plays and films; in drawings; in comic strips; in dance movements, as in narrative ballet and mime; and even in music (Chatman, 1980). The narrative is also vectored. It directs us from one moment to the next, and the direction is usually forward, from an initial state of affairs to a final one. However, narrative discourse need not trace a straight path (Chatman, 2009).

## Results and Discussion

A message in public service announcements must contain denotation and connotation. The denotation in this context is a knowledge system of public service announcements, which is seen with a transgender person as the ad star. However, at the level of connotation, a text has a polysemic meaning (multiple meaning) related to the cultural and social order of a society where the text is presented. At the level of connotation, the legitimacy of power, limitations, and even sanctions will be known to viewers who are not "compliant" or understand the appeal of the public service advertisement for flood monitoring CCTV surveillance in Semarang. The public service advertisement text was dismantled to find out the professional code formed by the public service advertisement.

The professional code, however, operates within the "hegemony" of the dominant code. Indeed, it serves to reproduce the dominant definitions precisely by bracketing their hegemonic quality and operating instead with displaced professional codings which are foregrounded, such as neutral neutral-technical questions as visual quality, news and presentational values television quality, and professionalism (Hall, 1973). The results of the narrative analysis showed that the public service announcements for CCTV socialization in Semarang contained sexual objectification and the commodification of transgender people, who imitated the feminine style of women. The following are the explanation:

Table 1. Results of Narrative Analysis of Public Service Announcement on CCTV Socialization in Semarang

<i>Narrative Analysis: Seymour Chatman</i>				
Story (Content)		Discourse (Expression)		
Dialog (Structure of Narrative Transmission) (Verbal)	Existent (Characters, Settings)	Event (Action, Happenings)	Manifestation (Pictorial, Gestural, Musical)	Connotative Meaning
Tamara busking	The famous Transgender figure in Semarang, who is typically called "Tamara Jalan Raya" or abbreviated Tamaraja" is touring busking in the Kota Lama area.	Tamara walks in searching for people to ask for money with busking	 There is background music. The camera's low angle position shows the calf and abdomen.	The objectification of transgender sexuality in a feminine style imitated from women
Tamara: "Permisi numpang ngamen dong. (Mulai menyanyi) Coba-cobalah susu yang besar, susu punya banci diganjel gombal, palsu lho!"  (Tamara: "Excuse me for busking. (Starts singing) Try a big breast, sissy breast propped up cloth, fake, you know! ")	Tamara; two visitors of Kota Lama	Tamara sings (busking) in front of visitors of Kota Lama	 Figure 1  Figure 2	Objectification of transgender sexuality and gender commodification.
Petugas: Tamara Jal! Kae lho artiste Semarang lho.  (Officer: TamaraJal! you know, the Semarang celebrity!)  Figure 1  Tamara: Hai Ganteng awan-awan kok penean, ngapain tho! Menek-in aku kan lebih enak!  (Tamara: Hi	Tamara; CCTV officer from the Public Works Service; in Kota Lama near the Mberok river.	Tamara receives an explanation from officers that the Public Works Department is installing CCTV to monitor floods and the surrounding environment so that Semarang is safer and	 Figure 1  The position of the high angle camera shows Tamara as an object and inferior.	The objectification of transgender sexuality, transgender commodification for CCTV socialization in Semarang.

Handsome! Why do you climb in the middle of the day? Just climb my body; it is better!)

more comfortable.

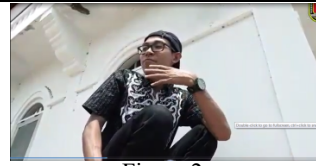


Figure 2

Figure 2

Petugas: Ini Lho, Mas, eh Mbak, eh Cin! Lagi Ngecek CCTV.

(Officer: So, Mr, eh Ma'am, I mean, dear! I am checking the CCTV).

Tamara: Emang buat apa ada CCTV di situ, buat kepo-kepo aku ngamen ya? Tapi jangan nafsu, Lho!

(Tamara: Why on earth was there CCTV, is it to monitor me busking, huh? Don't you lust after me, you know!)

Petugas: Jadi CCTV ini dipasang oleh Dinas Pekerjaan Umum Kota Semarang untuk memantau debit air di sungai Mberok. Nah, Kalau debit air Sungai Mberok tinggi karena hujan, maka pompa harus segera dinyalakan biar tidak banjir.

(Officer: So, this CCTV is installed by the Semarang City Public Works Department to monitor the flow of water in the Mberok river. Well, if the Mberok River water discharge is high because of rain, the pump will immediately be started so that it does not flood.)

Tamara: Oalah ngono, Canggih Yo!

(Tamara: I get it now. How sophisticated it is!)

Petugas: Nah, Selain itu CCTV ini juga untuk memantai sungai

Low angle shooting showing the officer (male) gives the impression of admiration, grandeur, and as a symbol of power while Tamara is positioned in inferiority.



Figure 3

The Low Angle shooting shows the impression of admiration, grandeur, and as a symbol of power in the Public Works Office building and its Components.

Mberok itu sendiri  
apabila sungai itu  
kotor, bisa segera  
dibersihkan, Cin... Nah  
gitu!

(Officer: Well, besides,  
this CCTV is also to  
monitor the Mberok  
river itself. If the river  
is dirty, it can be  
cleaned up  
immediately, dear ... So  
that's it!)

Tamara: Trus apalagi  
manfaat CCTV itu?

(Tamara: Then what  
else is the benefit of  
CCTV?)

Figure 3

Petugas: manfaatnya,  
selain tadi, buat warga  
Semarang nih, CCTV  
ini juga bisa dipakai  
untuk memantau  
lingkungan di  
sekitarnya, apabila ada  
sesuatu di lingkungan  
sekitar bisa mengakses  
CCTV ini di Dinas  
Pekerjaan Umum di  
Kota Semarang di Jalan  
madukoro raya Nomor  
7, Cin..

(Officer: The benefits,  
besides earlier, for  
Semarang residents,  
this CCTV can also be  
used to monitor the  
surrounding  
environment. If there is  
something in the  
neighborhood, the  
people can access this  
CCTV at the Public  
Works Department in  
Semarang City on  
Madukoro Raya Street  
Number 7, dear ..)

Tamara: Wah  
Semarang makin maju  
dan aman, ben aku  
laris... Nek ngamen...  
(Tamara: Wow,  
Semarang is getting  
more advanced and  
safer to make me full-  
booked... when I'm

---

busking ...

Tamara: Semarang  
makin nyaman, Cin...  
Bangga yo mestine.  
Ayo dukung Semarang  
makin aman dan  
nyaman juga bebas  
banjir.

(Tamara: Semarang is  
more comfortable, dear  
... We should be proud,  
of course. Let's support  
Semarang to be safer  
and more comfortable  
and free from flooding.

Tamara: (menyanyi):  
Sering sekali, aku  
banci, di Kota lama, di  
pinggir Kali Mberok  
(suara laki-laki waktu  
menyebut kata  
Mberok).

Tamara: (singing):  
Very often, I am a  
sissy, in the Kota  
Lama, on the edge of  
Kali Mberok (male  
voice when saying the  
word Mberok).

Tamara, in  
Kota Lama

Tamara  
promotes that  
Semarang is  
increasingly  
safe and  
comfortable  
with the  
presence of  
CCTV  
installed by  
the Semarang  
City Public  
Works  
Department.



Shooting Medium Close Up  
shows Tamara in detail on the  
face wearing makeup like a  
woman.

Transgender  
commodification.



In the end, the ad displays the  
Semarang City Government logo  
indicating that the Ad is under the  
control of the Semarang City  
Government.

Based on the narrative analysis, the position of transgender in public service announcements was used as a commodity to attract the attention of the public, and there was the objectification of transgender sexuality that imitated the feminine style of women.

Semarang CCTV Socialization Ad is a Public Service Ad. According to Ad Council, a non-profit organization in the United States that pioneered Public Service Ads, that type of ad should have the following characteristics: (1) non-commercial, (2) non-religious, (3) non-political, (4) national vision, (5) intended for all levels of society, (6) submitted by organizations that have been recognized or accepted, (7) can be advertised, (8) a high impact and importance to deserve the support of local and national media. The Semarang City Public Works Agency submitted public service announcement CCTV socialization under the auspices of the Semarang City Government.

After dismantling the code in the ad text of the public service announcement CCTV Socialization, it was found that the position of the transgender was used as a commodification, in terms of sexuality, to "attract" the public attention. Commodification, according to Vincent Mosco, is a process of converting use-values into exchange rates (Mosco, 2009). Tamara Jalan Raya, a transgender person, experienced a commodification of labor. The commodification of labor is a tendency to neglect the labor commodity and the process that takes place at the point of production (Mosco, 2009).



Although the ad was non-profit, the process or method of delivery in the ad adopted a profit advertising method in "attracting" the attention of the audience. The audience was made interested in seeing transgender figures in socializing CCTV. However, it does not aim only to benefit from a large number of spectators but also to make the Public Works Department and the City Government of Semarang gain popularity and recognized by the people of Semarang for their performance in freeing Semarang from flooding after previously Semarang was known as a flood-prone city. This is a form of hegemony for the people of Semarang.

The concept of hegemony, according to Antonio Gramsci, is a condition that makes the parties controlled obey the authorities voluntarily. It is voluntary because those who are controlled consciously accept and internalize the values and norms of the authorities; that is, the authorities must give their subordinate approval (Gramsci, 1999). Hegemony is different from the dominance obtained by physical violence that makes the citizens "obedient."

In addition, the hegemony is the power or dominance that one social group holds over others. This can refer to the "asymmetrical interdependence" of political-economic cultural relations between and among nation-states (Straubhaar, 1991) or differences between and among social classes within a nation. Hegemony is "dominance and subordination in the field of relations structured by power" (Hall, 1985).

Thus, hegemony is not only concerned with social power but also a method for obtaining and preserving power. The power which is agreed by its citizens is undoubtedly dangerous because it will lead to the potential abuse of power. For example, if Semarang residents were already dazzled and subjugated by the authorities that Semarang was free from flooding, it would prevent the government from controlling several areas in Semarang that were still prone to flooding.

The hegemony of how Semarang City Government handled the flood was not only agreed by the Semarang citizens but also by the majority of the Indonesian people. The Semarang City Government was highly praised for being able to cope with floods by building flood control systems such as those already available abroad. Semarang City boasted the controlling machine, sucking tens of thousands of water in one second if the water exceeds the natural limit, helping 82.6 percent of the Semarang City area free from flooding, whereas 17.4 percent of the remaining was still being worked on by the Semarang City Government. The worrisome problem is that the hegemony through public service announcements CCTV socialization would avert the Semarang City Government to ignore flooding in the remaining 17.4 percent of the area that was still prone to flooding.

Besides, in the public service advertisement, there was also sexual objectification of the transgender figure who imitated the feminine features of women. To objectify is to make into and treat something that is not an object as an object, which can be used, manipulated, controlled, and known through its physical properties (Calogero, 2012). Sexual objectification occurs when a woman or someone who acts as if she has a woman's body or body parts are singled out and separated from her as a person, and she should be viewed primarily as a physical object of male sexual desire (Bartky, 1990). This sexual objectification often intersects with women's other sociocultural identities, such as sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and social class, to form unique sets of media portrayals and experiences for subgroups of women (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Thus, the transgender figure in the public service adverts was sexually exploited and became the target of ad designers to get the attention of the audience, especially men. It

figured in provoking male fantasies of lust by accentuating sissy as someone who liked to be invited to have sex and have large breasts that made of cloth wadding.

It is worth considering that although Indonesia is a country that recognizes human rights (HAM), not a few LGBT people (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) feel discriminated against and violations of human rights because of their sexual orientation that deviates. This is because there are restrictions established by law, morals, ethics, and religious values, which emphasize that every human being, in addition to having human rights to be protected, also should respect other people's human rights. Also, it seems Indonesia recognized religions do not allow deviant sexual behavior, as stated, for example, in the Qur'an: "Indeed, you approach men with desire instead of women. Rather, you are transgressing people" (QS Al-A'raaf: 81).

Coupled with Indonesian law that guarantees the right to have a religion and carry out obligations according to the guidance of one's religion, it becomes more vindicated considering that, according to the psychological perspective, LGBT is a disease that can be cured (Harahap, 2016), and for some religions, they are seemingly justified to contribute to rectifying the deviant. For example, in Islamic teaching, a Muslim is not only ordered to carry out obligations but also prevent bad behavior.

The law also stipulates restrictions in Article 28B (1) of the 1945 Constitution: "Every person has the right to form a family and to continue descendants through a legal marriage." Articles 1 and 2 of Law No. 1/1974 concerning Marriage states that: "Marriage is an inner and outer bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife to form a happy and everlasting family (household) based on the Almighty Godhead" "Marriage is legal if done according to law each of his religion and beliefs." Against the background of the above provisions, based on morality, ethics, religion, community values, and order, unmarried sexual relations between men and women are not permitted and are considered immoral acts. It, therefore, also implies the deviant behavior of LGBT that is not intended to get married and considered deviant sexual behavior is not permitted.

Furthermore, in the advertisement, there was also the sexual objectification of transgender figures who behave femininely. That is, femininity related to women is sexually injured. The ad has been broadcast on Youtube and Instagram since December 2019. The development of communication technology and the dissemination of content through digital channels is more potent in adopting patriarchal ways of seeing women's femininity (Lestari & Sunarto, 2018a). It means the harassment of femininity, which is closely related to womanhood through verbal words and depictions that make femininity only suitable as a sex object, can be a form of humiliation and cyber symbolic violence (Lestari, 2019). The legitimacy of the patriarchal culture has put women at a very disadvantaged position in life (Lestari & Sunarto, 2018b).

Feminine harassment and the nature of womanhood have gained many places in digital channels because there are no specific regulations in the Information and Transaction Law Electronic (ITE) regarding the prohibition of loading and distributing charged content or lowering the degree of women. Besides that, Public service Announcements are a kind of persuasive message that the ad is more effective in inducing the target adopter to change behavior (Nisa, 2015). Therefore, the government should be more careful in creating public service ads. Public service announcements containing transgender elements and the objectification of sexuality are feared to alter the behavior of boys adopting sissy style for fun. Public service announcements that air through online platforms should be given more attention. This is because most teens

experience online risk with three types of risks: content risk, contact risk, and behavioral risk (Luthfia, Triputra, & Hendriyani, 2019).

## Conclusion

Public Service Announcement for CCTV Socialization in Semarang contains much inappropriate humor. This humor directed transgender as a commodity and as an object that was sexually abused for imitating the feminine style of women. Thus, the use of transgender as a star in public service announcements is not appropriate because, in addition to the content presented is not educational, it also will affect the image of Semarang city branding. It is hoped that the government will be wiser in making public service ads that prioritize content and ethics to educate its viewers.

Also, the rise of inappropriate digital content often escapes, even though it has many elements of harassment against women. Therefore, it is necessary to add additional articles in the ITE Law concerning the prohibition of digital content that is disparaging to women and femininity. Based on the results of the research, empirically, it can be seen that the dissemination of content that violates P3SPS gets a vast place through digital channels. This, of course, is worth watching out for. Future research might be able to examine the effect of transgender presence in public service announcements on public understanding of the "Semarang Variety of Culture" city branding quantitatively.

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