

THE CONSTRUCTION OF WOMEN IN BEAUTY PAGEANTS
(An Autoethnographic Study of the Puteri Indonesia 2023 Titleholders)

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS



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(AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE PUTERI INDONESIA 2023
TITLEHOLDERS)**

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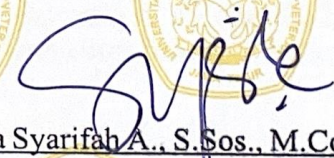


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ABSTRACT

The Puteri Indonesia beauty pageant is one of the most prominent national competitions in Indonesia, widely recognized not only for showcasing physical beauty, but also for promoting cultural representation, social advocacy, and women's empowerment. This study explores how women are constructed within the framework of beauty pageants, particularly through the experiences of the three titleholders of Puteri Indonesia 2023. Using an autoethnographic approach, this study positions the researcher, who is also one of the titleholders (Puteri Indonesia Lingkungan 2023), as both subject and observer. Along with two fellow titleholders as additional informants, the researcher reflects on insider experiences during the selection process to post-crowning responsibilities. Findings indicate that the ideal woman in Puteri Indonesia has evolved beyond physical appearance to include intellect, personality, leadership, communication, and social engagement, as captured by the pageant's 5B values (Brain, Beauty, Behaviour, Brave, and Be Right). However, implicit beauty standards such as height and facial proportions continue to shape the selection process, suggesting that inclusivity remains limited structurally. Overall, this study demonstrates that Puteri Indonesia is a complex site of negotiation where women are not merely objects of representation, but also agents who actively participate in constructing and redefining the meaning of femininity, beauty, and power through beauty pageant in Indonesia.

Keywords: Puteri Indonesia, Women's Empowerment, Inclusivity, Autoethnographic

ABSTRAK

Kontes kecantikan Puteri Indonesia merupakan ajang nasional yang tidak hanya menampilkan kecantikan dan estetika perempuan, tetapi juga menjadi wadah representasi nilai budaya dan kontribusi sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami bagaimana perempuan dalam kontes kecantikan dikonstruksi oleh ketiga Pemenang Puteri Indonesia 2023 dengan menggunakan pendekatan autoetnografi. Peneliti, bersama dengan kedua informan lainnya merefleksikan pengalaman pribadi yang akan memberikan perspektif orang dalam (*insider perspective*) selama proses seleksi, karantina, hingga masa jabatan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kontestasi Puteri Indonesia telah mengalami transformasi konstruksi perempuan, dari yang semula berorientasi pada fisik, telah bergeser meliputi aspek intelektualitas, kepribadian, dan kontribusi sosial. Meskipun telah bergerak ke arah pemberdayaan dan melibatkan keberagaman, Puteri Indonesia masih menghadapi tantangan dalam mewujudkan sistem seleksi yang benar-benar setara. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa ajang Puteri Indonesia merupakan platform kontestasi yang kompleks, perempuan tidak hanya sekadar direpresentasikan, tetapi juga berperan aktif dalam mengkonstruksi makna kecantikan perempuan.

Kata kunci: Puteri Indonesia, Pemberdayaan Perempuan, Inklusivitas, Autoetnografi

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