

Affection and Political Awareness of Indonesian Migrant Women Workers

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Abstract

The problems experienced by Indonesian female migrant workers both in their own country and in the destination country show how vulnerable they are to violence. Most of them are workers in the informal sector, such as domestic and care workers, who are categorised as low-skilled workers. As a result of this categorisation, they often experience discrimination and even violence. This is the impact of neglecting experiences, especially in fulfilling political rights, which hinders full access to policy guarantees that protect them. Data were collected using literature analysis and secondary research. This study uses a philosophical approach based on Sara Ahmed's theory of affection and Nancy Fraser's recognition of how the experiences of Indonesian female migrant workers need to include empathetic emotional values and recognition of the political rights of Indonesian female migrant workers. The findings of this article highlight the importance of fostering political awareness through the integration of affection and recognition in understanding and overcoming the political injustice of Indonesian female migrant workers.

Keywords: affection, political awareness, Indonesian Female Migrant Workers, recognition

Introduction

Indonesian women migrant workers (hereafter referred to as PPMI) play an important role in supporting the national economy. In 2022, more than 61 percent of Indonesia's total migrant workers were women (BP2MI 2024). Of these, about 23.2 percent were domestic workers (Solidaritas Perempuan 2024). Despite their huge economic contribution, they are often marginalised in political discourse. In Indonesia's 2024 election, the issue of migrant workers, especially women, was only superficially discussed. Female migrant workers are rarely recognised as an important political issue by either the country of origin or the country of destination.

In Indonesia, there are still many barriers to the participation of migrant women workers. Access to voting is often limited due to the lack of socialisation of political rights, the lack of electoral infrastructure in destination countries, and the unclear legal status of most women migrant workers (Solidaritas Perempuan 2024). The sense of alienation they experience in the destination country, both socially and politically, deepens the distance between them and the political process in their country of origin. Experiences such as longing for family, feelings of powerlessness, and

frustration due to labour exploitation add an emotional dimension that reinforces their political marginalisation (IMWU 2022).

The process of recognising the experiences of women migrant workers is urgent, especially in relation to positioning them as political subjects. Experiences - including the emotions they feel - do not only function as passive responses to social conditions but can also serve as important drivers of political awareness and social mobilisation (Lindio-McGovern 2019). Emotions such as alienation and frustration, when framed in a collective context, can form the basis of strong political solidarity. Women migrant workers have great potential to be a significant political force, particularly in how they directly engage with experiences of injustice as citizens with political rights.

Traditional political approaches tend to marginalise the role of affection. Emotions and personal experiences are seen as irrelevant to political action. However, personal emotions and experiences can be developed into a unique political awareness. Collective affection can facilitate the mobilisation of political movements in the midst of systemic injustice. In her book "The Cultural Politics of Emotion" (2004), Sara Ahmed¹ argues that affection can form a collective identity that allows

marginalised groups, such as Indonesian women migrant workers, to build solidarity among themselves. In this context, Indonesian migrant workers, especially women, can use their emotional experiences - related to frustration and disappointment over the lack of guarantees from PMIs' labour-related policies - to create social movements that demand their political and social rights.

The social movement of PPMIs can then be strengthened through collective actions such as protests, campaigns, and advocacy to fight for their political rights. Compared to some migrant worker movements from other countries, political action by Indonesian migrant workers has indeed been observed. PPMIs have also formed organisations and solidarity networks to demand political recognition.

We can learn from the example of a political movement in the Philippines. Since 1984, an alliance for the collective political mobilisation of Filipino women (UN 2007) has been formed through the General Assembly Binding Women for Reform, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action (GABRIELA). The GABRIELA Alliance fights for the rights of Filipino women in general, including securing representation in the legislature. The GABRIELA Alliance also addresses many grassroots issues, including the struggle for the rights of women migrant workers (Karan, Gimeno, & Tandoc 2009). The Alliance also encourages Filipino women migrant workers to play an active role in the political process in their home countries, including in elections. Thanks to these social and political movements, the Filipino women migrant workers' movement has a more organised structure and is gaining support from the government and international organisations.

We can use the example of the experience of the women's political movement in the Philippines as a lesson that forms the basis of this research - in relation to efforts to guarantee the rights and protection of women migrant workers - so that we can find the philosophical roots of the problem. In particular, we will focus on the problems and limitations of Indonesian PPMIs' political rights as a basis for strengthening the analysis of the importance of understanding the role of affection in shaping collective political awareness - through recognition and solidarity. This is expected to support the organisation of Indonesian women migrant workers in claiming their political rights. To this end, several research questions need to be formulated, including 1) How can affection shape the political awareness of Indonesian women migrant workers? 2)

How can the recognition of Indonesian women migrant workers' experiences be a driver of political movement and solidarity? 3) How can Indonesian women migrant workers bring up the uniqueness of social movements as a form of collective mobilisation in their political struggle? These three broad questions will form the basis of the research.

This research aims to explore how the affective experiences of Indonesian women migrant workers shape their political awareness and how these affections trigger social movement mobilisation in the destination country as a form of concern for the political situation in the country of origin. Thus, this research seeks to understand how Indonesian women migrant workers can transform themselves from a marginalised group into active political subjects through solidarity based on affective experiences.

Theoretical Framework and Research Methods

We begin this research with the question of the role of affection in shaping political awareness before moving on to the question of social and political justice - as a form of the social and political movement of Indonesian women migrant workers. The authors see affection as the main element, encompassing different feelings and emotions that migrant workers experience in their daily lives. These include feelings of alienation, longing, injustice and hope. At the very least, these experiences and emotions can be explored to prove that they are not just emotional reactions - as they can be the basis for the formation of political awareness and solidarity.

Sara Ahmed's approach to political and cultural emotions will show that emotions are ultimately not private (2004). There is an interconnected social and political nature that can be a driver for collective movements. These collective emotions combine personal experience with greater solidarity (Ahmed 2004). Having explored the relationship between affection and social awareness - in the form of solidarity - we turn to Nancy Fraser's approach² in "Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition and Participation" in her book with Axel Honneth, "Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange" (2003). Fraser stresses the importance of recognition as part of social justice alongside economic redistribution. Social justice also includes recognition of the identity and rights of marginalised groups (Fraser 2003). Recognition in this context is linked to equal treatment and full political participation for each

individual. This requires active political participation. For Fraser (2003), an effective social movement must advocate for two things: 1) redistribution (economic and social improvement) and 2) recognition (recognition of social and political identity).

We use these two theories in a layered discussion to strengthen the framework for understanding the social movement of Indonesian women migrant workers. Affection serves as a starting point that triggers political awareness through collective solidarity. The affections and experiences of Indonesian women migrant workers provide the motivation for them to move. The theory of recognition then becomes a further impetus to create a more structured social movement - involving the redistribution of resources and the recognition of political rights.

We built this theoretical framework to analyse the data collected through the literature review method and secondary research to understand the experiences and affections formed in the political awareness of Indonesian women migrant workers. The literature review in this research was conducted to understand more deeply the theories and research related to affection in politics, social movements, and the positioning of Indonesian women migrant workers as political subjects. We conducted secondary research by analysing various research reports from different organisations that document the conditions of Indonesian women migrant workers in destination countries, especially in relation to their access to political rights. We analysed the data using a thematic approach to identify key themes related to affection as a trigger of political awareness that is the basis of solidarity among Indonesian women migrant workers, the experiences of social and political movements of various Indonesian women migrant workers organisations, and reflections and highlights on the uniqueness of the emerging social movements among Indonesian women migrant workers.

Common Sense: Discrimination in the Name of Skills Differentiation

A sense of commonality is one of the defining factors in the exploration of this study. Women migrant workers from Indonesia share similar histories and experiences with several countries in the Southeast Asian region. Southeast Asia is known as a region that channels many migrant workers to different countries (Yeoh 2024). The huge demand for labour from Southeast Asia began with the oil boom in the Middle East and Gulf countries in the

1970s, which required large numbers of construction workers. The Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand had the largest numbers of migrant workers in the oil sector. In the absence of proper wage regulations, migrant workers from Southeast Asia tended to be underpaid, partly for reasons of political neutrality (Yeoh 2024). The Philippines capitalised on this situation by promoting migration as one of the country's development strategies - both for unemployment and foreign exchange.

The demand for domestic workers began to emerge in the 1980s. Many countries in Asia experienced economic growth due to the development of the industrial sector, which required low-skilled and informal workers in care and domestic work. Even in Southeast Asia, countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam received large numbers of migrant workers from Indonesia and the Philippines. Thailand itself has become a destination country for migrant workers from Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam (Yeoh 2024). The large-scale use of migrant domestic workers - predominantly women - has supported development policies that emphasise the benefits to migrant workers, destination countries and countries of origin. The emphasis that migration, if well managed, will reduce poverty has led many employers to encourage more people from some of these areas to engage in economic improvement, both for their families and for the country (Yeoh 2024).

Problems arise when the state ignores the 'skills' of migrant workers. There are various rights violations experienced by migrant workers, particularly those classified as low-skilled and those in the domestic sector (domestic workers and caregivers). Skilled migrant workers are generally more likely to enjoy privileges in their destination countries (Goh & Yeoh 2017; Yeoh 2024). Facilities and easy access to permanent residence, employment and life insurance, and citizenship are more readily available to 'skilled' migrant workers - including their families (Hewison & Young 2006; Yeoh 2024). Low-skilled migrant workers, on the other hand, experience a different treatment that seems to separate them as 'human beings' from a decent life. Women migrant workers in the domestic sector find it more difficult to secure employment because of the policy distinction between the formal and informal sectors (in this context, domestic work falls into the informal sector).

Informal work has led to the emergence of many middlemen who play a role in organising and channelling migration. This opens up opportunities for the exploitation of women migrant workers in

the domestic sector in the absence of strong state protection. This principle of labour differentiation means that low-skilled migrant workers are seen only as temporary workers with no prospect of being allowed to settle or integrate into the society of the destination country (Yeoh 2024). There are various issues of discrimination that migrant workers face from the communities in which they work. Many are also scapegoated when there is an economic or health crisis - as happened during the COVID-19 pandemic (Hewison & Young 2006; Goh & Yeoh 2017; Yeoh 2024).

This situation leaves migrant workers without social and legal guarantees and protection in the country of destination. On the one hand, their presence is needed to do jobs that the people of the destination country do not want to do (such as manual labour, construction, domestic work, and maintenance), but on the other hand, neither their country of origin nor their country of destination provides guarantees of employment and decent life as citizens. Their access to various rights and facilities is limited. They are more vulnerable to exploitation, denial of origin, unilateral termination of contracts, and inappropriate deportation. This condition is exacerbated by commercial exploitation by labour brokers, who impose labour risks on migrant workers - a tendency to exploit vulnerability in the name of corporate profit (Yeoh 2024).

Affection As A Trigger For Political Awareness

Feelings and emotions are not only personal in nature but also emerge from the social forces that shape the individual - embodiment and collective experience (Ahmed 2004). Ahmed (2004) highlights the affective perspective as an orientation that presents feelings and emotions as the result of repeated and consistent interactions between individuals and others (in the community). This will shape the body of individuals and groups not only on the surface but more deeply as it brings together experiences. Affection is then not only a reflection of what individuals and groups feel but also a reflection of how power relations work.

In the context of Indonesian women migrant workers, affection is present through alienation in the destination country, longing for the region/country of origin, and frustration at the injustices experienced at work. This shapes their political awareness. The experience of alienation in the destination country positions them as 'the other', both in the social structure of the destination country and in the political narrative of the country of origin. Emotions are often articulated

through this process of alienation when certain groups (Ahmed 2004) - in this case, women migrant workers - are perceived as 'other' and potentially threatening to social and economic stability.

Affection in the context of longing for family in Indonesia is not only an emotional experience but also a political one. This longing has a certain directionality: it connects migrant workers to their identity of origin while underlining the lack of recognition of their role as political subjects at the national level. Emotions will continue to cling to individual and collective bodies (Ahmed 2004), creating solidarity among migrant workers who share similar experiences.

Frustration with labour exploitation and legal exclusion often triggers social mobilisation. These frustrated emotions can create 'affective politics', where emotions not only affect individuals but also flow between groups, creating political solidarity. In the case of Indonesian women migrant workers, these collective emotions are mobilised through various organisations, such as the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (IMWU) in Hong Kong, which uses affective experiences as a platform to demand social justice and political recognition.

As such, affection is not only an emotional response to unjust structural conditions but also a catalyst for the formation of political awareness and collectivity. Affection organises the 'orientation' of individuals' bodies to the world around them, enabling them to read structural injustices as political issues that require systemic change (Ahmed 2004). In the case of Indonesian women migrant workers, affective experiences such as alienation and longing become important starting points for building political solidarity and justice-oriented social movements.

Recognition of the Political Rights of Indonesian Women Migrant Workers

Having understood the issue of affection orientation in situations of injustice experienced by Indonesian women migrant workers, we can begin to answer the second question of this research, which relates to the recognition of the experiences of Indonesian women migrant workers. The theory of recognition in this study is based on Fraser's approach, which proposes that social justice requires the integration of two main dimensions: redistribution and recognition (Fraser 2003). She divides social injustice into two categories: 1) economic injustice, which is rooted in political-economic structures, and 2) cultural injustice, which is rooted in patterns of social

representation and interpretation. These two categories of injustice are inextricably linked to understanding the emergence of social inequality. There needs to be an understanding of recognition that is integrated with the redistributive dimension. Economic injustice is often reinforced by patterns of recognition injustice, where groups experiencing economic exploitation also face cultural marginalisation (Fraser 1997; 2003). Therefore, social justice solutions must include both equitable economic redistribution and equitable cultural psychosocial recognition.

According to Fraser, recognition refers to the need for respect for the identity and dignity of an individual or group (2003). Injustice in recognition occurs when patterns of representation and cultural values discredit the identity of a particular group, rendering it unrecognised or disrespected. This injustice can take the form of invisibility or disrespect. Without adequate recognition, individuals or groups cannot participate equally in social, cultural, or political life (Fraser 2003). Recognition itself can be divided into 1) affirmative recognition, which maintains identity differences without changing the underlying structures of injustice, and 2) transformative recognition, which aims to change the patterns of representation and cultural values that produce such injustice (Fraser 2003). The transformative approach is more radical in that it proposes a complete reconstruction of the social and cultural structures that support injustice.

Recognition is not only a matter of respecting the identity of individuals or groups but also involves full participation in social life (Fraser 1997; 2003). Without recognition, individuals or groups cannot enjoy social justice because they are prevented from participating in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. Recognition is, therefore, one of the key pillars in creating an equal and inclusive society.

Recognition is closely linked to the quality of democracy because social justice achieved through recognition not only guarantees respect for the identity of individuals or groups but also ensures their equal participation in public life. When recognition is achieved, individuals or groups are not only recognised symbolically but also empowered to participate fully in the decision-making processes that determine the direction of common life.

The democratic theory itself emphasises the relationship and importance of individual freedoms, fundamental rights, participation, and representation - values that are also promoted by the recognition

theory approach. The quality of a country's democracy is measured by how it responds to the interests and will of its citizens (Soare & Gherghina 2024). The quality of a country's democracy is measured by how it fulfils the political rights of its citizens. Political rights refer to the guarantee of participation in public affairs, the right to be elected and to vote, the right to participate in the public administration of one's country, the right to join a political party, the right to stand for election, and the right to participate freely in political meetings and/or protests (Conte & Burchill 2009; Conge 1988).

Political rights are thus inseparable from citizenship rights and are at the heart of democratic societies. Therefore, the quality of a country's democracy is measured by whether the state responds to the problems and needs of its citizens to participate in politics (Soare & Gherghina 2024). In terms of the political participation of migrant women workers, the state has not been fully present to respond adequately to the challenges of participation.

Some of the problems faced by Indonesian women migrant workers include: 1) Difficulties in exercising the right to vote (barriers to political access and participation): In Hong Kong and Macau, the majority of migrant workers were unable to exercise their right to vote directly at polling stations. Instead, they voted by postal ballot, which was notoriously difficult to monitor and prone to fraud, such as missing ballot papers or manipulation of results. The lack of mobile ballot boxes as an alternative further limited migrant workers' access to participation. These structural barriers mean that while they have the right to vote, the reality is that access to exercise that right is severely limited, creating a sense of frustration and disappointment (Susilo 2023); 2) Lack of government attention to the conduct of overseas elections (unpreparedness of election organisers): The overseas elections were not fully organised. For example, polling stations in Indonesian consulates were not opened, and inaccurate voter registration led to lower turnout. Migrant workers felt less involved in the process, leading to a sense of alienation and frustration. The emotions arising from this lack of attention can trigger political awareness to demand better representation and fairer access to the electoral process (Idham Holiq in Basyari & Purnamasari 2023); 3) Concerns about transparency and potential fraud (vulnerability of postal voting methods): Postal voting, which was the only method used in Hong Kong and Macau, was very difficult for election officials to monitor. This increased the potential for manipulation

and fraud. This created distrust in the electoral system, which raised political awareness among migrant workers about the need for a more transparent and fair system (Idham Holiq in Basyari & Purnamasari 2023); 4) Political marginalisation of migrant workers (lack of a migrant worker protection agenda): In addition to technical issues in the electoral process, the migrant worker protection agenda was not prioritised in the elections. Migrant workers are often seen only as a vote bank, without any real effort by political candidates to fight for their rights and welfare. This lack of attention has led to a sense of disappointment among migrant workers, leading to the realisation that they need to be more involved in the political process to fight for their own interests (Susilo 2023), and 5) Limited oversight in overseas elections (lack of representation in formal institutions): Postal voting makes it difficult for election officials to ensure that the votes received and counted are accurate and transparent. The absence of polling stations or mobile ballot boxes exacerbates this situation and shows how little effort election organisers make to ensure fair participation for migrant workers (Idham Holiq in Basyari & Purnamasari 2023). This condition may create political awareness among migrant workers that they are often overlooked in formal processes and, therefore, feel the need to fight for their rights outside formal political channels (Susilo 2023).

Women migrant workers' political participation is not limited to electoral or national politics but includes other forms of participation that are equally important and valid. Although their participation in formal or national politics is relatively low, this can be compensated by their involvement in local and informal politics, which provide more inclusive and relevant spaces for participation in their daily lives (Lindekilde in Momesso 2022). Women migrant workers' political participation should, therefore, be seen more broadly, beyond the boundaries of conventional politics.

The importance of recognising the political rights of Indonesian women migrant workers cannot be separated from their role as significant contributors to the national and transnational economy. This recognition includes not only formal recognition of their political rights but also recognition of their participation in public life. Without adequate recognition, Indonesian women migrant workers will continue to be on the margins of the democratic system - as voters without full access to make a substantive contribution to the political process. Justice is not only about the redistribution of resources but also about the recognition that allows for the equal

participation of all groups. In this context, recognition of women migrant workers' political rights must include structural transformation that removes barriers to their participation, ensures inclusive and fair electoral processes, and positions them as legitimate political subjects. Only through full recognition can Indonesia's democracy become truly inclusive, responsive, and socially just - including the full participation of Indonesian women migrant workers.

Reflections on the Social and Political Movements of Indonesian Women Migrant Workers

It is important to highlight the political rights of Indonesian women migrant workers. In principle, Indonesian women migrant workers have the same political rights as Indonesian citizens. In reality, however, they are ignored in policymaking. They are not even involved in political activities. An example of this is the lack of attention paid by the Indonesian government to guaranteeing the right to vote, especially in the context of overseas elections. Although women migrant workers have the right to vote as part of their citizenship, the political processes they experience show a gap in direct engagement between their affective experiences and the state's attention to these emotions. Their experiences reflect emotions that indicate the existence of unequal power relations when the state is present only as a technical regulator and not as a party truly connected to their emotions and realities.

Affection for the emotions felt by Indonesian women migrant workers due to limited political access, the lack of inclusive electoral infrastructure, and the lack of political protection are not isolated experiences. These emotions are present collectively (Ahmed 2004), including institutionally - they are not just 'owned' by individuals. The emotions felt by women migrant workers are, in fact, a reflection of the state's failure to respond empathetically to their needs. The state dissociates itself from the collective emotional part of the experience of Indonesian women migrant workers. As a result, the state fails to articulate policies and protections that recognise collective emotions as a basis for political decision-making.

This affective orientation towards political rights is a manifestation of a just democracy in a country. The absence of the state in the emotions of women migrant workers reinforces their affective orientation towards political rights. As frustrations and disappointments continue to be ignored, women migrant workers begin to realise that their participation in electoral or formal

politics is not fully valued. This not only creates an emotional distance between the state and its citizens but also encourages migrant women to seek other forms of participation that allow them to voice their needs and interests.

This affective orientation, shaped by their everyday experiences, is the starting point for a broader political awareness. For example, the lack of the state's attention to the conduct of overseas elections, such as limited access to polling stations or unpreparedness to ensure the transparency of the electoral process, shows that the state is present only as a passive facilitator. The absence of the state as an entity that truly understands and engages with these collective emotions makes women migrant workers feel alienated from the political process that should be their right. The affective orientation that emerges from this experience reinforces their awareness that political rights are not only the right to vote but also the right to participate in an inclusive and transparent political process.

In this context, affection becomes more than an emotional response to injustice; it serves as a mechanism to identify the gap between the state and its citizens. This gap highlights the importance of recognising women migrant workers' political rights not only as an administrative obligation but also as an emotional and political responsibility of the state to be present in their collective experience. As such, women migrant workers' affective orientation towards their political rights not only reflects resistance to exclusion but also becomes a call for deeper political consciousness and more empathetic state engagement.

The state has not only affectively rejected the experiences of Indonesian women migrant workers. It has also failed to give substantive recognition to the existence of Indonesian women migrant workers. The state's failure to respond to these collective emotions not only deepens the emotional distance but also reveals a lack of recognition of the political rights of women migrant workers as full subjects in the political system. The affective problems they experience cannot be separated from the need for wider recognition, including recognition of their dignity, experience and political rights. Indonesian women migrant workers are not only foreign exchange earners for the economic benefit of the country; they are also legitimate Indonesian citizens entitled to protection - even in their destination countries.

The lack of recognition of women migrant workers' experiences in Indonesia's political process reveals a

deep divide. When Indonesian women migrant workers are seen only as a source of economic revenue for the state, there is a political marginalisation that ignores their presence as citizens - both in Indonesia and as Indonesian citizens in their destination countries. This economic exploitation can also be seen in the underpayment of wages and the precarious working conditions to which they are subjected. This economic injustice is certainly due to the injustice associated with the lack of recognition of their experiences. Indonesian women migrant workers are seen not only as cheap labour but also as 'second-class citizens' whose political rights are not fully recognised. This lack of recognition includes invisibility in state policies, as well as disrespect arising from stereotypes of migrant workers as an unimportant group in political structures.

In the context of elections, Indonesian women migrant workers often face barriers that reflect gaps in political recognition. The lack of adequate polling stations in destination countries or unmonitored voting methods such as postal voting suggests that the state does not recognise their role as legitimate political subjects. These barriers not only limit their right to vote but also create a sense of alienation and disappointment. These conditions reinforce patterns of injustice that trap women migrant workers in a cycle of economic and cultural subordination.

It is important to consider solutions that combine redistribution with recognition. We need to provide legal protection for migrant workers - including Indonesian women migrant workers, many of whom work in the informal sector (as low-skilled workers) - and easier access to political processes such as elections (either to vote or to be elected). These efforts must be accompanied by recognition to ensure that women migrant workers are seen as an integral part of Indonesian democracy. This recognition includes not only respect for their political rights but also the transformation of patterns of cultural representation that discredit their position as citizens. Recognition becomes an important element in overcoming the democratic gap faced by women migrant workers. Without recognition, economic redistribution efforts will result in partial solutions that do not address the root of the problem. Conversely, by ensuring that women migrant workers are fully recognised in political and cultural structures, Indonesia can build a democracy that is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all its citizens.

These two approaches of affection and recognition then reveal a unique element that belongs to women

migrant workers. Transnational identity is a unique element that enriches the social movements of Indonesian women migrant workers. As migrant workers are dispersed across different countries, they bring a transnational perspective that allows them to adopt mobilisation strategies from local and international contexts. For example, the Indonesian women migrant workers' movement in Hong Kong retains local narratives that reflect their own needs and experiences. This transnational identity allows them to bridge different cultural and political contexts, creating a social movement that is flexible yet focused on a common goal.

A unique feature of Indonesian women migrant workers' social movements is their ability to integrate non-formal forms of political participation into their struggles. While they are often hampered by structural barriers in formal politics, they use informal spaces such as cultural communities, migrant workers' organisations, and social media to fight for their rights. This approach reflects their ability to navigate and challenge conventional political boundaries, creating new spaces for inclusive and relevant engagement. By harnessing collective power rooted in affective experiences, demands for recognition, and transnational identities, Indonesian women migrant workers can create a social movement that is not only unique but also structurally and culturally transformative.

Closing

Indonesian women migrant workers have very specific and collective experiences that distinguish them from other groups in the political struggle. This uniqueness is rooted in a transnational identity that brings together a combination of economic conditions, migration status, and the cultural identities they carry. This philosophical research has presented a reflection that addresses the complexity of injustices experienced by Indonesian women migrant workers in the context of their political rights. By combining perspectives of affection and recognition, this research highlights how collective emotional experiences such as alienation and frustration not only reflect conditions of injustice but also catalyse the formation of political awareness. On the other hand, the lack of recognition of women migrant workers' rights and experiences reinforces their political marginalisation, both in formal democratic processes and in wider social spaces.

One of the main factors shaping the uniqueness of their social movements is the affective experience of

alienation, exploitation, and lack of recognition in the socio-political system. This affection not only reflects structural inequality but also creates a strong sense of solidarity among them, providing the basis for collective mobilisation for social justice. Recognition also plays an important role in their struggle. Indonesian women migrant workers are often characterised as 'cheap labour' or 'foreign exchange earners' without the guarantee and protection of their rights as citizens. Their social movements reflect a demand for recognition as full political subjects in both their countries of origin and destination.

Affection and recognition are two complementary dimensions in understanding and addressing the injustice experienced by Indonesian women migrant workers. Affection, rooted in collective emotional experiences of alienation, longing, and frustration, is not only a response to structural injustice but also serves as a trigger for political awareness and solidarity. This affective experience is the basis for the building of collective power to demand more inclusive and just change. However, this affective experience is meaningless without recognition. Without recognition, Indonesian women migrant workers will continue to be marginalised in the democratic system, seen only as a source of foreign exchange without full access to substantive participation in the political process. Recognition must be realised not only through formal recognition but also through structural and cultural transformation that ensures economic justice and recognition of their experiences.

Based on the philosophical exploration and reflection in this study, we recommend some concrete actions that can be taken: 1) Management of affection through a community-based political education programme. This programme is the best form of collective emotional management of the experiences of women migrant workers so that they can be positioned as active political subjects; 2) Documentation and promotion of good practices in the work of social organisations of migrant workers. National governments can support this initiative through cooperation and solidarity networks of migrant workers in each destination country where migrant workers work. Governments should also facilitate transnational approaches in cooperation with other countries and international labour organisations; and 3) Recognition of migrant workers, especially women migrant workers, without exception (all skill levels) in public policy. The government must recognise them as part of a policy agenda that provides legal protection and political access. This includes educating

policymakers about the importance of recognising women migrant workers as economic contributors and political subjects. By integrating affection and recognition into policy and advocacy approaches, Indonesia can create a truly inclusive democracy. The state should provide guarantees and space for women migrant workers to become active, involved, and valued political subjects.

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End Notes

- 1 Sara Ahmed (1969-) is a British-Australian writer and academic who focuses on the research and development of (intersectional) feminism, lesbian feminism, queer theory, affect theory, critical race theory, and post-colonialism. Ahmed explores the social dimensions and circulation of emotions in addressing intersectional issues of injustice.
- 2 Nancy Fraser (1947-) is an American philosopher, critical theorist, and feminist. Fraser is known for her theories of identity politics and concepts of justice - including her writings proposing the confluence of redistribution, recognition, and participation - to critique issues of social injustice, particularly from the perspective of contemporary liberal feminist critique.

