

Local and Migrant Domestic Worker

Editorial

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Anita Dhewy

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ADDRESS:

Jl. Karang Pola Dalam II No. 9A, Jati Padang
Pasar Minggu, Jakarta Selatan 12540
Telp./Fax (021) 2270 1689
E-mail: yjp@jurnalperempuan.com
redaksi@jurnalperempuan.com

WEBSITE:

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Local and Migrant Domestic Worker

Domestic workers do not only play an important role in families, but also in society and the country's economy. Unfortunately, domestic workers are often overlooked, although domestic work—including care work—is a set of complex activities with deep implications on personal, social, and economic welfares, considering domestic workers who perform housework make it possible for members of (employing) households to perform social and economic activities outside their home, and this in turn allows public sectors to function. Apart from being overlooked, domestic workers are often not viewed as part of the labor force. According to Wong (2012), this is because domesticity is conventionally seen as feminine virtue, and this view limits women to domestic work and makes them reliant on men. Secondly, because mothers are already performing domestic work—without getting paid, with the assumption that these tasks are done voluntarily—domestic workers are not seen as “true workers,” due to the nature of their perceived “non-work.” Third, this type of work is often naturally viewed as women's work. Because the work can be done “naturally,” as opposed requiring skills (which would necessitate training and some sort of certification), women's work is unappreciated. The traditional view of domestic work has contributed to the invisibility of domestic workers, which is perpetuated by relations within the family, society, and systemic regulations, which are in turn manifested in low and often inadequate wages for domestic workers.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 1 in 25 women workers worldwide is a domestic worker. Although a great number of men work in this sector—often as gardeners, drivers, or heads of domestic staff—the sector is a feminine sector, with women making up 80 percent of all domestic workers. In Indonesia, according to the analysis of the 2012 National Labour Force Survey (Sakernas), there are 2,555,000 domestic workers above 15 years old working in the country, 1.7 million of whom work in the Java Island (ILO 2013). Meanwhile, of the 6.5 million

Indonesian migrant workers, around 80 percent are migrant domestic workers (ILO 2012). Domestic workers in Indonesia are usually women from rural areas with low levels of education. The majority of domestic workers in Indonesia do not have clear work contracts—either verbal or written—with their employers in regard to their duties, work hours, weekly days off, and pay. Additionally, not many domestic workers have social security (Migrant CARE & Jala-PRT 2016).

Jala-PRT's data shows that as of September 2016, there were 217 cases of violence against domestic workers. Jala-PRT's National Coordinator Lita Anggraini stresses that from the perspective of zero violence, even one such case, in fact, signals a serious problem, which means that the urgency of having a legal umbrella to provide protection for domestic workers should not be based on the frequency of cases or reported incidents. On the principle of welfare, the government has the responsibility to provide protection. But the draft bill for the protection of domestic workers, proposed in 2004, has not yet been passed. Furthermore, the Indonesian government has not yet ratified ILO Convention No. 189, which mandates what constitutes as decent work for domestic workers. The mandate is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly No. 8, i.e., actualizing decent work for all workers. To this end, JP94 analyzes studies on domestic workers' steps in self-empowerment, employers' position in regard to their domestic workers, the role of media in advocacy efforts, the position of domestic workers in the New Order's gender politics, domestic workers' organizational efforts, the legislative process of the domestic workers bill in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, domestic workers' contribution to children's well-being and domestic workers' work environment in regard to violence and discrimination. We hope that our documentary collection will encourage the creation of a legal umbrella for the protection of domestic workers. **(Anita Dhewy)**

Safira Prabawidya Pusparani & Ani Widayani Soetjipto
(Department of International Relations Social and Political
Science Faculty, Universitas Indonesia, Jawa Barat, Indonesia)

**Women and Their Journey to Self-Empowerment:
A Case Study of Six Indonesian Female
Migrant Domestic Workers**

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 22 No. 3, Agustus 2017, pp. 115-125, 19 ref.

In Indonesia, female migrant domestic workers are often presented in a negative light. Although they are named as "heroes of development," they're treated as mere commodity for the benefit of the country. This treatment leaves female migrant domestic workers vulnerable to violence and exploitation by employers, agents, and government staff. Nevertheless, there is an alternative narrative that is rarely highlighted in literature or media, namely of female migrant domestic workers as powerful actors. This paper aims to fill in this alternative narrative by highlighting the actions taken by six female migrant domestic workers with agency. The author believes that by using the perspective of "standpoint feminism" to analyze these six female migrant domestic workers's struggles in self-empowerment following oppressive experiences, we may see that female migrant domestic workers have demonstrated their agency while in the process of migrating. This study reveals female domestic migrant workers showed self-empowerment in their decision to migrate amid a patriarchal structure and capacity in resisting said structure through activism, and performed roles as agents of development and transformation for their communities.

Keywords: migration, female migrant domestic workers, standpoint feminism, agency, empowerment

Ida Ruwaida (Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and
Political Science, Universitas Indonesia, Jawa Barat, Indonesia)

**Decent Work for Domestic Workers as Perceived by
Employers: Results of Surveys Performed in Makassar,
Surabaya, and Bandung**

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 22 No. 3, Agustus 2017, pp. 127-136, 2 graphic,
2 table, 6 ref.

This article is based on a study on the level of information, attitudes, and practices in regard to the rights and protection of domestic workers in three cities (Surabaya, Makassar, and Bandung). This paper aims to describe the working conditions of domestic workers, not from the perspective of domestic workers themselves, but rather from the perspective of their employers. An interesting discovery in this research process is the employers' tendency to adopt double standards when faced with the way employer-domestic worker relations have developed from a more social relation to an economic relation, which signals decent work for domestic workers. An economic relation between employers and domestic workers means that domestic workers must be recognized as part of the workforce, like other types of workers, and that their rights must also be fulfilled and protected. Assuming that the protection of domestic workers is the result of social development, in the context of Indonesia, a structural intervention through state policy for creating decent work for domestic workers will prove to be tough and will have to face some resistance from cultural

elements. This study's findings in three cities show that a long, guided and comprehensive social process is needed in order to build an equal and just relation between employers and domestic workers.

Keywords: decent work, protection of domestic workers, social relations, economic relations, social development, structural intervention, cultural intervention.

Mary Austin (Centre for Gender Studies, School of Oriental and
African Studies, University of London, London, UK)

**Challenging Disregard: Advocacy Journalism and
the campaign for domestic worker legislation in Indonesia**

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 22 No. 3, Agustus 2017, pp. 137-148, 3 table, 37
ref.

This article examines a recent ILO funded project designed to engage more Indonesian journalists and media organizations in advocacy journalism on behalf of domestic worker legislation. Applying Ann Stoler's notion of 'disregard' in the context of post-Suharto democratization, I illustrate how established newsroom practices and patterns of reporting helped maintain distinctions between 'home' and overseas domestic workers which impeded progress towards comprehensive legislation. Indonesia's endorsement of the adoption of ILO Convention 189 in June 2011 opened up political opportunities, provided a framework for re-scripting media narratives and encouraged journalists to give more space to domestic workers' voices. At the same time, increased media coverage enabled those opposed to legislation to reiterate a gendered disregard for the social and economic value of domestic work.

Keywords: advocacy journalism, domestic workers, Indonesia, disregard, victim narratives.

Diah Irawaty (Department of Anthropology, State University of
New York [SUNY] Binghamton, New York, United States)

**Domestic Workers in the Paradox of Politics of
Gender and the Politics of Developmentalism:
A Case Study of Indonesia in the New Order Era**

DDC: 305
Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 22 No. 3, Agustus 2017, pp. 149-159, 56 ref.

The New Order regime produced and applied two contradictory forms of gender politics as political control over women, so that women would adhere to the state's narrative of the ideal woman. On the one hand, Suharto campaigned for state maternalism to endorse the ideal good mother, or one that performs domestic work full-time. Such women are claimed to be the pillars of the nation. On the other hand, the government endorsed the politics of developmentalism based on the "women in development" perspective and campaigned for women's participation in the national development agenda. Women were encouraged to leave the home, and even to be willing to leave their family. How were (the contradictions between) the two political approaches applied to domestic workers? What sociopolitical contexts were behind these political approaches? And how were/are domestic workers affected?

Keywords: Gender Politics, Developmentalism, International Division of Labor, Sexual/ Reproductive Division of Labor

Purnama Sari Pelupessy (Mitra Imadei, Jakarta, Indonesia)

**Domestic Workers' Efforts to Realize Decent Work:
Learning, Organizing and Fighting**

DDC: 305

Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 22 No. 3, Agustus 2017, pp. 161-171, 1 picture, 3 table, 17 ref.

This paper discusses the situation of domestic workers (PRT) and the author's process—as a community organizer—of organizing domestic workers. Using a feminist framework, the author explores the history of oppression of women in regard to unpaid domestic work and in its impacts on current domestic workers, who are paid low wages. This article also discusses the state's attitude in viewing domestic workers as workers, as citizens and as women, as well as the state's reluctance to ratify ILO Convention No. 189 as well as the draft bill on the protection of domestic workers. The author uses her experience in and knowledge of the labor movement and is informed by the particular characteristics of domestic workers. This study concludes that efforts to change domestic workers' working conditions must be done by organizing domestic workers, so that they have the power to urge the state to realize decent work.

Keywords: Female domestic workers, domestic workers union, decent work, Domestic Workers Protection Bill

Sargini, Jumiye, Muryanti (The Tunas Mulia Domestic Workers Union [SPRT], Yogyakarta, Indonesia)

**The Legislation Process of the Regional Regulation
on Domestic Workers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta
and its Challenges**

DDC: 305

Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 22 No. 3, Agustus 2017, pp. 173-181, 5 table, 12 ref.

This paper examines the legislation process of the Proposed Regional Regulation on Domestic Workers (Raperda PRT) in DIY. The regional regulation is crucial because domestic workers play a significant role for the working family and for those who are active in the public sphere. This resulted in an increased demand for the profession each year. Unfortunately, the absence of a governing regulation for the profession has led to very unclear and messy practices in the working relationship between the Domestic Worker (DW/PRT) and the customer (service user). Violations of the employment relationship have become frequent occurrences, including violence experienced by domestic workers, whether physical, psychological, economic, sexual or social. In Yogyakarta, the Domestic Workers Protection Network (JPPRT) of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) has suggested that the various type of violence experienced by domestic workers cannot be viewed separately from the absence of a regulation that governs the working relationship between domestic workers and their service users. Against this background, the JPPRT decided to pioneer and propose a draft for regional regulation on domestic workers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY).

Keywords: domestic workers protection, Proposed Regional Regulation on Domestic Workers, Domestic Workers Protection Network (JPPRT), political support

Maria Ulfah Anshor (Indonesian Commission on Child Protection [KPAI], Jakarta, Indonesia)

**The Contribution of Indonesian Women Migrant Workers
(TKIP) to the Welfare of Their Children**

DDC: 305

Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 22 No. 3, Agustus 2017, pp. 183-193, 19 ref.

This article is part of the dissertation research on the care of Indonesian Women Migrant Workers' (TKIP) children in pesantren (Islamic boarding school), using a qualitative approach and an analysis unit on these children and their environment. This study applies Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory and the "global care chain" concept with a child protection perspective. Our results show that TKIP's children who are left behind by their mothers who have gone overseas, lose "care", their welfare is psychologically and socially disrupted, and experience mutual dependence between them, their family and the TKIP overseas; the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) has become an option for TKIP's family because there are no professional child cares to care for the children of TKIP when their mothers have gone overseas. Institutionally, the pesantren has the potential to break the global care chain of injustices in regard to the care for TKIP's children, with the support of religious values and pesantren traditions. But policy support is needed to guarantee the community-based care and social welfare of TKIP's children, comprehensively integrated into the policy blueprint for Indonesian migrant workers.

Keywords: Childcare of migrant workers, children's rights and child welfare.

Anita Dhewy (Jurnal Perempuan, Jakarta, Indonesia)

**Discrimination, Violence, and the Neglect of Rights:
Domestic Workers in the Absence of Legal Protection**

DDC: 305

Jurnal Perempuan, Vol. 22 No. 3, Agustus 2017, pp. 195-204, 15 ref.

This paper focuses on the experiences of domestic workers who have been subjected to violence, discrimination and the neglect of rights by employers as well as apartment managements where these domestic workers work. The data of six domestic workers from diverse backgrounds who were interviewed in depth reflects the violence experienced by all domestic workers at work. There are forms of violence that can be easily recognized as violence, but some types of discrimination and violence are not viewed as violence or are simply seen as the norm. These types of discrimination and violence are usually associated with inappropriate/indecent work conditions. Domestic workers' vulnerability, because their work falls under the private domain, is the result of the absence of laws to protect domestic workers at work. This is why a legal umbrella for the protection of domestic workers, like other types of workers, is a fundamental need.

Keywords: violence, discrimination, neglect of rights, bill on the protection of domestic workers

Women and Their Journey to Self-Empowerment: A Case Study of Six Indonesian Female Migrant Domestic Workers

Safira Prabawidya Pusparani & Ani Widayani Soetjipto

Department of International Relations
Social and Political Science Faculty, Universitas Indonesia
Gedung Nusantara II, Lantai 2, FISIP UI, Kampus Depok, Jawa Barat 16424 Indonesia

safirapusparani@gmail.com & ani_soetjipto@yahoo.com

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Abstract

In Indonesia, female migrant domestic workers are often presented in a negative light. Although they are named as “heroes of development,” they’re treated as mere commodity for the benefit of the country. This treatment leaves female migrant domestic workers vulnerable to violence and exploitation by employers, agents, and government staff. Nevertheless, there is an alternative narrative that is rarely highlighted in literature or media, namely of female migrant domestic workers as powerful actors. This paper aims to fill in this alternative narrative by highlighting the actions taken by six female migrant domestic workers with agency. The author believes that by using the perspective of “standpoint feminism” to analyze these six female migrant domestic workers’s struggles in self-empowerment following oppressive experiences, we may see that female migrant domestic workers have demonstrated their agency while in the process of migrating. This study reveals female domestic migrant workers showed self-empowerment in their decision to migrate amid a patriarchal structure and capacity in resisting said structure through activism, and performed roles as agents of development and transformation for their communities.

Keywords: migration, female migrant domestic workers, standpoint feminism, agency, empowerment

Introduction

The increased participation and role of women in the post-Cold War international pattern of migration has sparked a gender discussion on the topic of migration. By discussing the phenomenon of migration through a feminist lens, we know that the international market has contributed to the genderization of work, namely that domestic work is “women’s work,” as opposed to real work. The construct of domestic work and the care sector as women’s “natural” work has been perpetuated in the international patriarchal structure. The resilience of gender hierarchy and gender division of labor serves as a basis for the continued commodification of domestic and care work on a global scale (Momsen 1999).

In the context of Indonesia, women dominate migrant workers placed overseas—especially in the domestic and informal sectors—in numbers. In 2016, the Agency for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (BNP2TKI) reported that women placed overseas made up 62 percent of the total number of Indonesian migrant workers (from hereon referred to as TKI), while men only made up 38 of all TKI (BNP2TKI 2016). Unfortunately, female migrant workers, particularly

those working in the domestic sector, are among groups that are most vulnerable to violence, exploitation, and abuse (Stasiulis & Balkan 1997). The most prevalent forms of vulnerability and exploitation are: physical and sexual violence, unpaid wages, substandard living conditions, and no leave or days off (Momsen 1999). One of the causes of these problems faced by Indonesian migrant domestic workers, most of whom are women, is the classification of domestic work as an informal work sector. Because of this categorization, migrant workers do not receive adequate legal-formal protection. The working relationship pattern between domestic workers with individual service users then becomes a subjective matter and falls under very minimum supervision. The lack of protection given to migrant domestic worker is the fundamental cause to the vulnerability of this group to the layered problems they face while in the migration process, i.e., before, during, and post-migration (Andriyani, Silvie & Ambasari 2017).

The most dominant portrayal of female migrant domestic workers in Indonesia is as the powerless victim. Frequently, the media will report news on female migrant workers who are abused, raped, and murdered by their

employers in receiving/host countries (Djunaidy 2012). The National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) believes that the migration of Indonesian labor has become a national-scale public issue since the 1980s, with an abundance of news reports and discussions on the worrying conditions of Indonesian migrant workers overseas, especially women (Komnas Perempuan 2003). Based on BNP2TKI's 2011-2016 data, we know that Indonesian migrant workers (TKIs) have reported a great number of cases. These cases take on various forms, from severed communication, the wish to be returned home, escape from the employing individual, to sexual violation (BNP2TKI 2016). That women migrant domestic workers are portrayed as victims is strengthened by statements made by the Indonesian government. For example, Head of the House of Representatives' Commission I Mahfudz Siddiq said the rape and abuse of Indonesian workers may injure the dignity of Indonesia as a nation (Asril 2012). Furthermore, Vice President Jusuf Kalla has said that the sending of women workers must be stopped, especially to prevent the abuse that often befalls these workers (Rastika 2014).

On the other hand, women migrant domestic workers have shown that they are not merely helpless victims, but that they can also become activists and empowered agents. Eni Lestari, a former migrant worker in Hongkong who spoke at the 2016 UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants, showed that she was not simply a helpless victim but that she—and other female migrant workers—was able to take on the role of agents of transformation. Eni has been fighting for the rights of migrant workers, especially those from Indonesia (Purnomo 2016). Furthermore, examples of female migrant domestic workers as empowered actors have been rarely discussed in academia, which is why this writing aims to explore the group of female migrant domestic workers who are also empowered actors.

This study wishes to highlight the following issue: how do women domestic workers empower themselves following a migration process that has oppressed their rights? Through the formulation of the issue, it's hoped that this writing will: (1) reveal how the process of self-empowerment for women migrant domestic workers can emerge before, during, as well as post-migration; and (2) discover internal and external factors that encourage an individual to empower herself amid an oppressive structure. To answer these research questions, we will refer to two primary concepts, namely the feminization of migration and the agency of migrant women.

The feminization of migration is a concept that shows how the international pattern of migration has been fundamentally genderized. Jindy Pettman (2010) argues that the feminization of migration occurs due to the transnationalization of women's work in the domestic, child care, and sex work sectors. The feminization of the work has helped preserve certain jobs and consumption patterns in developed countries so that first-world women have been able to enjoy public participation and freedom. But, in consequence, there is a deficit of labor as well as emotional/moral support in developing countries. Pettman (2010) also shows that the feminization of migration does not only refer to the relatively higher number of women migrant workers compared to male migrant workers, but also to the gendered labor market structure, causing certain professions to be associated with women and to be devalued in consequence. Among professions seen as within women's nature is domestic work. Domestic work is assumed as work that is performed by unskilled labor or work that is "naturally" women's work, so that domestic jobs are paid low wages.

Agency refers to certain traits possessed by an individual. Those who are seen as having agency are often men. On the other hand, a woman is not seen as a human being with full agency over herself. In discussing agency, an individual is seen as part of and as having relation to an external entity, namely "society." Individuals who can survive or stand out in an oppressive societal structure are seen as having agency. Rationality as well as the ability to control and be accountable of one's own actions is part of what is said as agency (Davies 1991).

Christiane Harzig (2001) believes that the feminization of migration is not only influenced by global factors such as capitalism and neoliberalism, but that the transnational migration system has been able to survive because there are skilled global players, namely the migrants themselves. Harzig (2001) wishes to demonstrate that migrant women are autonomous agents with agency. Harzig shows that migrant women have the capacity to perform various gender functions, to autonomously determine their mobility in the transnational community, to calculate their assets in the global market, and to use networks formed in their families as well as communities. The remittances brought home by migrant women, both economically and socially, have the potential to contribute on a personal, local (to the sender's community), and national level.

Through the transnational process caused by the pattern of women's migration, migrant women can be classified as agents who are making efforts to fulfill their agendas in the local as well as global spheres, and to negotiate the constructs of gender relations and structures.

In discussing agency, Leah Briones (2009) also demonstrates that an "agent" has the capacity to effectuate structural transformations. While referring specifically to women migrant workers as agents, how these agents negotiate with structures must also be understood. The agency meant in Briones's writing is the capability of a female migrant worker to pursue her interests and desires through access to resources (2009). The resources referred to by Briones are institutions that cover migrant networks, both formed individually or personally as well as networks formed through organizations or movements. Briones (2009) points out that through access to such resources, a female migrant worker is able to transform the structures around her as well as to empower herself.

Based on the explanation above, we can conclude that both Harzig and Briones assume female migrant workers as autonomous agents. In this case, the agency of women migrant workers is seen in their efforts to reconstruct or negotiate oppressive structures. If we refer to Briones's concept of agency, female migrant workers use (institutional) resources that exist in their surroundings to achieve their interests and wishes. This is what Briones believes to be the shape of women's empowerment.

This article is the essence of the first author's thesis on the same topic: the agency of female migrant domestic workers. The researchers employ the "standpoint feminism" perspective to fully understand the impacts of gender as a social construct, particularly on marginal women. In the standpoint feminism perspective, the state is seen as a collection of patriarchal practices that support and neglect structural injustices experienced by women (Hansen 2010). Harding (1987) views standpoint feminism not as a tool to be utilized, but rather as an aim. In order to achieve the perspective of standpoint feminism, the researcher in question must be involved in feminism's intellectual and political battle so that the researcher may view social lives from the point of view of marginal women rather than from the dominant perspective (the experience of men). In this case, feminist research is research for women that aims to trigger a social transformation that can lift women from the various forms of oppression and subordination.

The methodology used to answer our research question, as already mentioned above, is the feminist case study methodology. In essence, the use of the case study methodology refers to research that focuses on an issue or case that is distinct from generalized cases (Reinharz 1992). In this research, case study is performed on a group of female migrant domestic workers who have returned as survivors in the struggle for self-empowerment and to fight structures that have oppressed them.

The data contained in this writing is the result of in-depth interviews by the authors of six female migrant domestic workers who have returned to Indonesia and have been involved in activism. The data was collected by the first author while working on her undergraduate thesis. Sources for this study were chosen based on the "snowball sampling" technique. "Snowball" refers to the accumulative process that occurs when a research subject recommends other subjects (Babbie 2010). In the end, the authors chose to focus her research on six women migrant domestic workers who were willing to be the subjects of this research. The stories and experiences of the six former migrant workers are the focus of this research. The focus on the six former migrant domestic workers is in line with the feminist case study methodology mentioned by Reinhartz (1992). The authors must stress that the narratives of these six former women migrant workers are not meant to explain the general phenomenon of agency among migrant domestic workers to point to a wider generalization, but rather to show a study of cases that differ from the dominant literature on women migrant domestic workers.

A Narrative on the Agency of Women Migrant Domestic Workers

Migration is a process that often occurs outside the desires and decision-making of a woman. Carling (2005) points out that women's and men's experiences of migration are strikingly different. The layers of subordination that oppress women in the migration process are real evidence that women, specifically, are subjected to certain forms of oppression. In observing these differences in experience, with a focus on women, this writing enlists the experiences of Indonesian migrant domestic workers who have returned to Indonesia. The participation of women migrant domestic workers is the key to bring to light the entrenched subordination and oppression experienced by women

migrant domestic workers. The authors became acquainted with the sources through Migrant Care's network. All of the women sources are former migrant domestic workers who, upon their return to Indonesia, became involved in the efforts to resolve their own cases as well as in advocacy for the rights of migrant domestic workers in whole.

Push Factors for the Migration of Female Migrant Domestic Workers

Women's migration, as a phenomenon, is the result of extenuating circumstances. Economic disadvantage, low levels of education, and the lack of employment opportunities are some of the reasons why women migrate. The "multiple burden" shouldered by women to guarantee her family's livelihood has pushed them to work overseas as domestic workers. This supports the argument that push factors for the migration of women are external factors, or factors outside of herself. Women migrate due to the demanding needs of those around her, therefore it is out of her own will.

When I wanted to go to Malaysia, it was initially because there was trouble with my husband. I had a child, still young, actually, only one year old. Well, I was living with my mother and parents. I thought, I already had a child, why was I still relying on my parents. Coincidentally, a broker offered in the village. (Siti 2017, interview 24 March)

The experience of Siti, an Indonesian former migrant domestic worker who worked in Malaysia in Brunei, is one example of the burden that must be shouldered by women when her family's income is no longer adequate. Her story explains how a woman, who at first relied on her husband as the earner, must find other means to fulfill the needs of her child and parents. Because of the sponsor, who informed her of a job with no requirements and a large salary, Siti became interested in working overseas and left her child and both of her parents.

Apart from the burden borne by Siti, the work situation in her region, Grobogan, Central Java, was also not reassuring. Siti was forced to take the job as a migrant domestic worker because of her low level of education and the lack of employment opportunities. Although Siti had already been a victim of human trafficking and had already experienced exploitation by her employer in Malaysia, she still insisted on working as a migrant domestic worker a second time, because she was the primary earner for her family.

How was I not tragic? When I was in Malaysia, I was a trafficking victim, [but I] still went to Brunei. Why? Because

there were no jobs. I had to support my kid. Eating every day was a must. What would have happened if [I] didn't work? (Siti 2017, interview 24 March)

Jenny—a former migrant domestic worker from Brebes, Central Java, who worked in Hong Kong—had a similar experience. When she went overseas for the first time, she was only 15 years old. At the time, Jenny was not attending school because her family did not have enough money to send her to middle school. Her family's low level of education and poor financial situation pushed her to migrate although she was a minor.

Before I decided [to go overseas] I was already working in Jakarta. Because working in Indonesia, particularly Jakarta at the time, did not pay enough, I went abroad. Especially because of the large salary enticement. So there was hope to improve my family's financial situation. This is why I decided to work overseas. So not because someone encouraged me, but it was indeed because of the situation (family's finances), which forced me to leave the country at the time. (Jenny 2017, interview 3 April)

Her telling of her experience show that Jenny was forced to work overseas. Apart from her low level of education, she also felt that her job in Jakarta did not fulfill her family's financial needs. Because of this, with the information that she would be paid well overseas, Jenny made the decision to work abroad as a domestic worker.

Push factors for migration, such as low education, the poor finances of the family, the absence of employment opportunities, and burdens that must be shouldered support the fact that the decision of these female migrant domestic workers are not decisions that are completely autonomous. In the case of Siti, her decision to leave the country and work as a migrant domestic worker a second time shows that women opt for working as a migrant domestic worker because of the demands of their situation. Their decision is influenced not only by the desire to sustain her own life, but also to allow their family to live decent lives. In this case, their sacrifice in working overseas as a domestic worker, is a sacrifice of their well-being/welfare for the sake of improving the lives of those around them.

Efforts by Female Migrant Domestic Workers to Fight Against the Oppression of Their Rights

In fighting against the various forms of subordination and layered oppression mentioned above, the six research subjects interviewed by the authors show an effort to fight forms of oppression and subordination that suppress their empowerment. When faced with a situation that threatens their safety as well as dignity,

female migrant domestic workers may choose to either stay in the situation or to fight the injustices, violence, and coercion that they are subjected to. In this section, we will lay out the efforts to resist performed by Siti, Yuni, Marta, Lina, Jenny, and Indah—this study's subjects—while working as migrant domestic workers.

Since her departure to work as a migrant domestic worker, Siti had already experienced various forms of subordination and layered oppression (Siti 2017, interview 24 March and 10 April). The first time she was placed overseas, Siti did not have an idea as to what being a migrant domestic worker would entail. When she arrived in Malaysia, she was placed with an employer who owned a business. While working for the employer, Siti was also forced to work at her employer's place of business from morning until noon and to continue with domestic work after she had finished. To make it worse, while Siti worked night and day for nine months, she did not receive even one cent of her salary. When Siti asked her agent in Malaysia about her pay, she was instead slapped and threatened.

Siti then decided to run away from Malaysia and return to Indonesia. To save up money to return home, Siti worked at the cafeteria of a Sony factory located in Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang. While working at the cafeteria, Siti did not have documents because her agent kept them. She would have been in a very vulnerable position had she been caught by the Malaysian police. While working at the cafeteria for two years, Siti finally managed to save up enough money to return to Indonesia. She traveled far, through an "alternative" route because her documents, including passport and other proof of identity, were kept by her agent. Upon her return to Indonesia, all Siti could do was report her case to the Semarang Indonesian Migrant Workers' Placement, Protection and Monitoring Agency (BP3TKI). She reported, BP3TKI determined that the affair could be resolved through a Rp1.5-million compensation. Although Siti accepted the compensation, she still attempted to report her case to the ministry through Migrant Care. Unfortunately, her report could not be followed up because her documents were lost in the process.

Another former migrant domestic worker, Yuni, was accused of stealing by her employer and returned to her placement agent (Yuni 2017, interview 5 April). At her placement agency, Yuni was publicly humiliated and experienced intimidation by her agent. The agency then planned to return Yuni home soon, because of her alleged theft. Yuni, however, refused being called a thief

because the allegation was false. She then attempted to prove her innocence. While fighting for her rights and rejecting her employer's false allegation, Yuni insisted on proving that she was innocent. Unfortunately, the Indonesian embassy in Singapore considered Yuni's affair trivial compared to the affairs of other Indonesian migrant workers.

In the end, Yuni's failure to enlist the help of the Indonesian embassy in resolving her problem encouraged her to independently prove her innocence. Although her dignity was injured by the agency's many attempts to degrade her, she still made efforts to prove that she never stole while being in an oppressive situation. She showed her savings account to the agency, to prove that she had no money at all. The absence of funds in Yuni's savings was proof that she did not commit theft and that her employer's accusation was mere slander. To compensate the agency's misunderstanding, the agency offered her a new job. Once she had succeeded in proving her innocence, Yuni was able to return to work as a migrant domestic worker in Singapore, under a new employer.

Besides Yuni, Marta (2017, interview 17 and 25 April) is another example that female migrant domestic workers also fight in their placement countries to evade and to resist subordination and oppression that attempt to stifle their agency. In her placement in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Marta experienced physical and sexual violence as well as sexual violation by her employer. When her employer's children sexually violated/harassed her, she did not yet dare report the incident to her employer and her agency there. Marta only took action after her employer subjected to physical violence, when she was slapped by the female employer because she did not follow her order. Her rejection of the violent treatment made her strike for three days and to finally decide to return to Indonesia.

Furthermore, when she worked as a migrant domestic worker in Singapore for 20 months, she again experienced intimidation and received unfair treatment from her employer. In the first 13 months, Marta's employer never violated her rights, but she did not trust Marta. Marta felt she was often followed by an unknown person when dropping off and picking up her employer's child. When Marta told her employers, they instead accused Marta of having an intimate relationship with the stranger. She refused to accept this accusation and decided to stop working for the employer. This time, she summoned the courage to a third party: her recruitment agency in Singapore. She reported her employer who

often scolded and threatened Marta and did not give her enough food. Her agency then offered to find her another employer, but Marta refused and chose instead to be sent home.

Like Siti, Lina (2017, interview 1 April and 6 May) who at the time was working as a migrant domestic worker in Malaysia, also experienced exploitation in that she had to perform duties that were not in accordance with her work contract. Although Lina was performing double work as a domestic worker and a factory worker, she was only paid as a factory worker. Her employer's exploitation also caused Lina to work 16 hours per day. The work hours were already over the standard work hours for domestic workers. Furthermore, Lina's employer did not pay her overtime. Unlike the three women already described, at the time Lina did not yet have the full courage to challenge her employer, and chose to remain and harden herself in the oppressive situation.

While working as a migrant domestic worker in Hong Kong for 11 years, Jenny (2017, interview 3 April) experienced all forms of psychological violence and vulnerabilities at work. In the first 4 years of working as a migrant domestic worker, Jenny only received HK\$1,800, or far below Hong Kong's minimum wage. For four years, Jenny had no bargaining power because of her employer's intimidation. She only found freedom when she transferred to a new employer and became acquainted with an Indonesian migrant workers' association in Hong Kong. Since joining ATKI (Indonesian Workers' Association) in Hong Kong, Jenny got to understand her rights as a migrant domestic worker. In Hong Kong, she participated in advocacy for the rights and protection of migrant workers, gave training to Indonesian migrant workers, and introduced Hong Kong's law on placement.

Like Jenny, Indah's (2017, interview 24 April) experience as a migrant domestic worker in Hong Kong began with a quite challenging job. In her first 14 months of working, Indah experienced one-sided firing, transfers between employers, and received wages below the standard minimum wage. When Indah was sent home to Indonesia unfairly, she began to understand that what she experienced was a form of injustice. Plus, Indah did not accept that she had to return to Indonesia because she was unfairly fired. Based on the regulation on migrant workers, if a worker has been fired, she has the right to be found a new employer with a permanent job, without having to return to Indonesia. Because Indah returned home to Indonesia, she would have to again receive a pay cut for seven months.

Because she felt that she had been unfairly treated by the agency, she told her private recruitment agency that she would not depart again if she would be subjected to a pay cut for seven months, like before. Indah also said that her salary was far below Hong Kong's standard minimum wage. The standard minimum wage was HK\$3,670, and she only received HK\$1,800. "I don't want to receive a pay cut for another seven months. I'd rather not go overseas again," Indah said. The private recruitment agency tried to persuade her so that she would still want to work in Hong Kong. In the end, Indah negotiated with the director of the recruitment agency who was responsible of her placement in Hong Kong. Indah demanded a pay cut of only four months instead of seven and a salary in accordance to Hong Kong's standard minimum wage of HK\$3,670. Her demands for a smaller pay cut and for a higher salary were granted and Indah departed to work in Hong Kong a second time.

Female Migrant Domestic Workers' Efforts for Self-Empowerment

After struggling to fight against injustices and oppression, these female migrant domestic workers also performed efforts for self-empowerment once they had returned from their placement countries. This section will narrate the stories of the six study subjects in their struggle to emerge from oppression through activism and development activities in their communities.

Because of the unfortunate incident experienced by Siti (2017, interview 24 March and 10 April) while working in Malaysia, she decided to keep fighting for the rights of migrant domestic workers, although her own rights were not completely fulfilled. The way she saw it, by fighting for the rights of other migrant domestic workers, she was also fighting for her own rights. Siti then tried to rise as an activist for migrant workers' rights. In her fight, she continued her education and went to university so that she would have more in-depth knowledge in regard to advocacy efforts for policies that are pro-migrant workers' rights. Fundamentally, Siti's decision to continue her education and specialize in law and policy gave her a better bargaining position while negotiating with the government, in this case the House of Representatives (DPR). Siti had succeeded in becoming an activist for the rights of migrant workers and is now known by DPR members and is often invited for an audience. As of this day, Siti is still actively involved in the process of drafting the bill for the protection of Indonesian migrant workers.

We can see that Siti has performed efforts to elevate her bargaining position in the public sphere in order to

guarantee that her advocacy for the rights of migrant workers can succeed. Siti has made strides to rise from the subordination and layered oppression that she experienced since she made the decision to leave for Malaysia as a migrant domestic worker. Although Siti did not receive justice, her attempt to defend the basic rights of migrant is proof of her self-empowerment.

Yuni, in dealing with her wounds while working as a migrant domestic worker, needed a long process in order to rise from her negative experience to become a more empowered individual (Yuni 2017, interview 5 April). Yuni admits to still feeling traumatized by what had happened to her while working as a migrant domestic worker in Singapore. But she has turned her negative experience into a learning process, and is now taking action so that future migrant domestic workers will not receive similar treatment. Namely, Yuni continues to fight for the education of children in her village in Banjarnegara, so that they can continue their education, apart from being actively involved in the Sapulidi organization to advocate for the rights of local and migrant domestic workers.

Yuni is also involved in theater, as a media to express her anger and fury toward the injustices she experienced as a migrant domestic worker. In the play, she played the role of a woman with experiences similar to hers while working as a migrant domestic worker in Singapore, of violence, intimidation, and false accusations by the employer. While acting the lead role in the play titled "PRAAANG! Kisah Anak Manusia Berjarak-Jarak" ("Prang! The story of Human Children across Distances" on February 12, 2017, Yuni had to replay her trauma. Although there is still some residue of the trauma, she feels that while performing the role she was able to channel her buried feelings toward how her case was unfairly handled.

Because a number of stakeholders from the labor ministry, Women's Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) attended the play, Yuni feels that the play also served as a platform for her to voice her ideas on the lack of protection for local and migrant domestic workers. Additionally, her participation in a play with the theme of violence against migrant domestic workers (including herself) shows that Yuni was able to use her experience as a footing for negotiating her position. Her ability to challenge parties that violated her rights as well as her ability to replay her traumatic experience for the sake of raising awareness for the unprotected rights of migrant domestic workers are real

proof that female migrant domestic workers can reclaim their self-empowerment.

Unlike Siti and Yuni, when Marta returned to Indonesia, she decided to again work as a domestic worker (Marta 2017, interview 17 and 25 April). Unfortunately, her rights as a worker were again violated. For one and a half years while working as a domestic worker in the Blok A area, Marta always had issues obtaining her salary from her employer. While working for her employer, her paycheck would be paid in installments, or paid one month late. When Marta decided to quit from the job, her employer did not give her last paycheck. Until today, although Marta has continued to demand her last salary to her former employer, she has not received her last paycheck and affair has not been followed up through mediation or the legal channel. In the end, the injustice could not be resolved.

When she accepted the job as a local migrant worker, she was not yet active in the Sapulidi Domestic Workers' Union (SPRT) and did not yet have information on work contracts, so that Marta took the job without ample consideration and did not challenge the injustice she experienced. But since she has been actively involved in SPRT Sapulidi, Marta has directly participated in various advocacy efforts to push the government to discuss the draft bill on the protection of migrant workers, a policy that would better protect the rights of domestic workers. She was also actively involved in pushing for the discussion of the draft bill through protests and assistance in cases, including for one domestic worker whose salary was unpaid for 11 months. Marta feels that her involvement in SPRT Sapulidi's advocacy efforts has brought many positive changes, both to herself and the wider community of domestic workers. Although she at first did not have the courage to fight the unfair treatment that she was subjected to, Marta's active involvement in organization has encouraged her to self-empower.

Lina's experience in Malaysia, of working two jobs with work hours that were longer than the standard work hours and without receiving overtime pay, has served as an important life lesson. Her bitter experience as a migrant domestic worker made her realize the importance of protection for the rights of migrant domestic workers. Because of this, when she returned to Indonesia, she was determined to prevent labor exploitation on herself. When she found out about work agreements/contracts from her Australian expat

employer, she began to learn that work agreements are an important part in the work of a domestic worker. When she joined JALA PRT (the National Network for Domestic Workers' Advocacy), Lina was able to better understand the uses of a work contract as well as its role in guaranteeing the rights of a domestic worker.

The awareness of the importance of protection for domestic workers encouraged Lina to advocate for Indonesian domestic workers, both migrant and local. Lina claims that her involvement in organization has turned her into a person with more courage to voice her opinions in regard to the fight for the rights of domestic workers. Her efforts in advocacy include audience with the DPR on the draft bill for the protection of domestic workers and the ratification of ILO's 189 Convention, as well as participating in various protests as an orator. Lina has struggled to turn her experience in Malaysia into her foundation for learning so that Indonesian migrant workers won't continue to be exploited.

Unlike the previous four subjects, when Jenny returned to Indonesia, she already had the intention to expand the Indonesian Workers' Association (ATKI) and turn it into a platform for the empowerment of migrant domestic workers and their families. Jenny saw that by building an organization specifically for Indonesian migrant workers, injustices can be fought as a collective effort. Departing from her experience, Jenny has made efforts to assist former migrant domestic workers in utilizing her organization as a platform for advocating incidents of violation of migrant workers' rights. The absence of a law to protect the rights of migrant workers was certainly one factor that motivated Jenny to develop an organization that can inform former migrant workers and their families on the migration process and to empower them. Because of this, upon her return to Indonesia, Jenny immediately joined an organization and participated by helping migrant workers demand their rights and prevent injustices against Indonesian migrant workers. Jenny's went on journey to empowerment by becoming an activist for the protection and fulfillment of the rights of migrant workers.

Indah's experience as a migrant domestic worker in Hong Kong, of receiving below-standard minimum wage salary and being subjected to labor exploitation, has encouraged her to perform various attempts to change the circumstances of Indonesian migrant domestic workers (Indah 2017, interview 24 April). Since she began working in Hong Kong, Indah has been actively involved in a migrant workers' organization there. In 2004-

2011, Indah dedicated her time to Indonesian migrant workers, whose rights as workers were violated. During that period of time, Indah was Vice Chairman of the Hong Kong ATKI for some time. When Indah returned to Indonesia, she immediately joined ATKI Indonesia. Not long after, in 2013, ATKI received a report on the abuse of Erwiana, who was tortured and exploited by her employer for eight months. Upon receiving the report, Indah was determined to assist Erwiana until she received justice.

Indah began assisting Erwiana when the latter was treated in Sragen, Central Java. With the aid of the Yogyakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH Yogyakarta) and ATKI's network, Erwiana's case made it to court in Hong Kong. During proceedings in Hong Kong and the capture of Erwiana's former employer, named Law Wan-Tung, Indah was involved in assistance, from Ngawi to Hong Kong. The court hearing went on for six weeks, and in the end Erwiana's employer was found guilty and sentenced to six years in prison. Erwiana's employer was found guilty of 18 of the 20 charges against her (Associated Press in Hong Kong 2015).

The process toward Erwiana's victory in demanding justice was a proud experience for Indah. With Erwiana's employer sentenced to prison, Indah felt a small victory for migrant workers as well as for her as the person who assisted Erwiana. Although Indah's case was never taken to court, her action in helping other former migrant domestic workers has compensated for the injustices against herself. Indah feels that she can obtain justice by advocating for the rights of migrant workers and becoming an individual who is empowered over her own destiny.

How the Self-Empowerment of Female Migrant Domestic Workers' Can Be Observed, As Seen Through the Feminist Lens

Through this study, the authors see that the six female migrant and local domestic workers have experienced various forms of subordination and oppression caused by an unequal power relation. Almost all did not successfully achieve justice for the violation of their rights as migrant domestic workers, either because they have chosen not to report or because the authorities did not respond to their report. But although they did not receive justice for themselves, they have made attempts to rise and self-empower through activism. In the effort to self-empower, female migrant domestic workers need a support system or institutions that can help them, including to function as platforms where they can

demonstrate their agency. It's clear from the experiences of Siti, Jenny, Yuni, Lina, Indah, and Marta that they've utilized organizations and activism as platforms to advocate the rights of female migrant domestic workers as a group as well as to empower themselves.

In essence, this study has shown that female migrant domestic workers have the capacity to self-empower following an experience of various forms of oppression and subordination. The self confidence of these female migrant domestic workers can be observed through three forms of action that they perform autonomously. This self confidence is seen in: (1) the decision-making of these female migrant domestic workers in the migration process, (2) their ability to resist oppressive structures, and (3) their role as agents of change and agents of development.

Firstly, we've seen that women can demonstrate self-empowerment through their decision to leave an oppressive structure. Self empowerment through decision making was present in the choice to migrate amid a patriarchal culture that restricts women to the domestic domain and leaves women vulnerable to domestic violence. Furthermore, these women also showed self-empowerment by deciding to fight against the various oppression and subordination in the migration process, covering physical violence, labor exploitation, harassment, and their unfulfilled basic rights as workers (such as wages under the standard minimum wage). These conditions, which cause women to be devalued and vulnerable to unfair treatment, have been fought by the six female migrant domestic workers who are the subjects of this study. Their attempts to resist these structural pressures are among the evidence of the strength of these female migrant domestic workers' agency.

Secondly, when we refer to Briones's ideas, we can see that the power of these women's agency has been defined through their capacity or ability to fight the oppressive structure. They have such capacity because of institutions, both organizations and the movement to advocate for the rights of migrant workers (the rights of female migrant domestic workers in particular). The agency of female migrant domestic workers has been demonstrated through their actions in fighting for their rights, either by reporting violations against them or by protesting to demand their rights, through attempts to prevent her oppression and subordination from recurring, and through their struggles in negotiating their position. As such, their efforts to self-empower have

been directly manifested in the process of negotiating the position of female migrant domestic workers. This negotiation is female migrant domestic workers' move to reject a subordinate position. By negotiating their position through activism, a number of women have successfully risen and become more empowered following their poor conditions as migrant domestic workers overseas.

Lastly, the power of female migrant domestic workers is manifested in their role as agents of change as well as agents of development. Not all of the female migrant domestic workers who are the subjects of this study have shown that they can be agents of change or development, but we can still make the analysis that female migrant domestic workers can do more than empower and rouse herself, but to also affect change at the community and even international level. For example, Indah's advocacy in the violation of a migrant domestic worker's (Erwiana) rights in Hong Kong until in the end her former employer was sentenced to prison, is concrete proof that female migrant domestic workers have the capacity to empower not only themselves. Erwiana's case shows that female migrant domestic workers can also empower others and create concrete transformations. Thus, the part played by female migrant domestic workers as empower agents has shown that the strength of their agency is not only significance at the local level, but can also contribute to global transformations.

Based on the six cases above, we can determine that although these women were victims to a gendered structure, they have still demonstrated their agency through attempts to resist said oppressive structure. It's true that the majority of the six female migrant domestic workers did not completely succeed in resisting said structures because they themselves have not yet received justice for the violations against them. But their activism to fulfill the rights of female migrant domestic workers, including their own, is an effort toward self-empowerment. In the cases of Siti, Jenny, Yuni, Lina and Indah, they have been struggling to significantly empower themselves and have been freed from their oppressive history. They have also taken a role as agents of change and transformation in their own communities. In the case of Marta, she may not be a completely empowered agent, but taking into account her efforts to resist the gendered structure by going on a strike and reporting her case to the recruitment agency, the authors still believe that Marta indeed has agency.

Based on the findings of this study, we can see that female migrant domestic workers can take on the role of autonomous agents. It's fundamentally difficult for a woman who has experienced multiple forms of subordination and oppression to take action in resisting the structure/system, because they were once placed in the lowest position in a power relation. Their capacity to fight against various forms of subordination and oppression, for example by attempting to save themselves or report their situation amid tense circumstances, is proof of women's agency, which is separate from whether or not they succeeded in achieving justice for themselves. This agency is shown in the capacity of female migrant domestic workers to make decisions to empower themselves through resources such as organizations and movements. Their agency is reflected in female migrant domestic workers' decision to get involved in activism to prevent re-oppression of their autonomy and empowerment. The courage as well as the autonomous decision of female migrant domestic workers to abandon the structure that oppresses their empowerment demonstrates the agency possessed by the six female migrant domestic workers who are the subjects of this study.

Conclusion

Through a description of the experiences of the six women, who are former migrant and local domestic workers, we can understand that injustices are still often encountered in the process of migration. The subordination and oppression experienced by female migrant domestic workers have fundamentally threatened the fulfillment of their rights as migrant domestic workers overseas. The absence of a law to specifically protect migrant domestic workers as well as migrant workers has left them vulnerable to many forms of violence, harassment, and exploitation. The injustices experienced by female migrant domestic workers, as reflected in the stories of the six study subjects above, serve as warnings to the Indonesian government to pay greater attention to Indonesia's heroes.

While the protection of migrant domestic workers is not clearly regulated, the safety and welfare of migrant domestic workers will not be guaranteed. The absence of laws and regulations will cause migrant domestic workers to continue experiencing subordination and oppression by employers, recruitment agencies, as well as regulations in placement/receiving countries. Too many Indonesian female migrant domestic workers

have experienced violence, abuse and discrimination at work because the government has not played their part in guaranteeing that their rights are fulfilled. We hope that through this study's findings, the Indonesian government, particularly the DPR, will swiftly pass the draft bill on the protection of domestic workers and the draft bill on the protection of Indonesian migrant workers, to provide valid legal protection to migrant domestic workers and Indonesian migrant workers. The government of Indonesia must also quickly ratify ILO's Convention No. 189 Year 2011 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, to show a full commitment to the efforts to protect its citizens, who have contributed to the country's economy.

An evaluation of the placement system for Indonesian migrant workers, which does not yet have an effective mechanism for supervision, is necessary. Supervision is essential because as of today, there are still many examples that show that the government has transferred its responsibility to protect migrant workers to private recruitment agencies. The government has burdened private recruitment agencies to recruit and channel migrant workers, but do not take adequate measure to prevent the violation of the rights of Indonesian migrant workers during the migration process. These circumstances have placed Indonesian migrant workers in an increasingly vulnerable position, because private recruitment agencies are not oriented toward fulfilling the rights of migrant workers and are rather more concerned with pure financial profit.

Apart from evaluating policy on the protection of female migrant domestic workers specifically, it's also necessary to evaluate a certain policy that harms women's opportunity to migrate as migrant workers. Namely, the permission letter that must be submitted by a candidate female migrant worker before she can be officially placed overseas. This policy, which positions women as men's possession, must be evaluated. A policy that views women as actors with authority and autonomy over their own lives is needed. The state has the role of building a space that functions to empower women, not one that oppresses and positions women in the lowest stratum on the gender hierarchy.

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Jl. Karang Pola Dalam II No. 9A
Jati Padang, Pasar Minggu,
Jakarta Selatan 12540
INDONESIA
Phone/Fax: +62 21 22701689



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