

Local and Migrant Domestic Worker

Editorial

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Anita Dhewy

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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
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**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.

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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

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

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Abstract

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.

Key words: female domestic workers, domestic workers union, decent work, Domestic Workers Protection Bill

Introduction

According to ILO Convention No. 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers, (a) the term domestic work means work performed in or for a household or households; (b) the term domestic worker means any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship. The two primary factors emphasized in the convention is that domestic workers are workers and that their relationship with employers are work relationships. But today, domestic work is still perceived as low-value "women's work." Consequently, domestic workers are devalued, as evident in the lower pay for women compared to men. Wages for jobs such as gardening, driving, or guarding the home, usually performed by men, are higher compared to wages for women who are assigned with cooking, cleaning the house, or babysitting.

But the low value of the work of domestic workers is inversely proportional to the generally increasing number of domestic workers worldwide since the mid-1990s. According to ILO, there are as many as 67 million domestic workers distributed across the globe (2013). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, there were 2,555,000 domestic workers in 2013, according to the National Labor Survey (Sakernas). The number increased to 4,034,290 in 2015, and of said number, 74% were women (ILO 2017a). ILO's data was the result of a study to estimate the population

of domestic workers based on Sakernas's data, summarized in a report titled *Toward A Better Estimation of Total Population of Domestic Workers in Indonesia*. The increasing number of domestic workers show that there is a demand for domestic workers and that domestic work has become an employment sector that absorbs significant labor, especially women labor. The profession has the potential to become a formal profession. Unfortunately, the increase in the number of domestic workers has not strengthened the bargaining position of domestic workers. These workers are still miles away from decent living and decent work conditions.

In this article, I wish to delineate the history of domestic work as work that is burdened upon women and explain how this burden has impacted domestic workers. I will also discuss the relationship between domestic workers, employers, and the state through a class perspective. What are domestic workers' contributions to the country? Has the state fulfilled its responsibilities to domestic workers? In this writing, I apply the feminist research methodology, namely "via an interactive process without a subject/object inequality between the researcher and the person(s) studied" (Venny 2006, p. 5). In this way, more profound results can be achieved, results that can reflect a better understanding of realities. By using this methodology, I was able to find a common thread

between domestic work and domestic workers in the past and today's efforts to achieve the fulfillment of domestic workers' rights.

In this writing, I will discuss, in a descriptive way, domestic workers' bargaining position as seen in the field today—how they continue to improve and organize, learn, unionize, and fight while continuing to push the government to provide protection to domestic workers, as women, as workers, and as citizens. To this end, the use of feminist theory and the swift liberation of women domestic workers to achieve justice, equality, and welfare can no longer be put on hold. I directly joined domestic workers in these efforts, in performing field observation, analyzing problems, studying findings and determining next steps. I also performed a simple survey with the Sedap Malam Tebet, Jakarta Selatan, Domestic Workers' Organization (Operata) and the Kemoceng Rawa Kalong, Depok, Operata as my sample, while simultaneously performed case study to reveal the positions of domestic workers and employers in their work relationship. I performed the survey by collecting data on June 10-16, 2017. To complete my case study, I used data on violence against PRT, collected by the two Operata since 2016.

Women Domestic Workers' History of Oppression

I depart from a feminist theory that historically discusses the root of oppression against working class women. I feel that this is important in order to understand the position of women domestic workers, who until today are still under similar conditions as women centuries ago. The dialectic of history still shows patriarchy as the easiest tool for aggravating class antagonism, causing women domestic workers to be devalued. Engels, in *The Origin the Family, Private Property, and the State*, explains the historical basis of the oppression against women, which began when women and men's collective work transformed into individual work, creating private ownership and the accumulation of added value (2011, pp. 36-49/ Indonesian translation). Men has continued to perform productive labor outside the home, while women are burdened with reproductive and care work inside the home. This is the root of class oppression as well as the sexual division of labor, marking an era of slavery. Such conditions continued to be perpetuated through monogamous marriage in the patriarchal family.

Engels further explained that sexual division of labor was entirely spontaneous at first (2011, pp. 154-157). Men's job was to fight, hunt, fish, prepare raw food material and equipment, while women needed

household equipment. But along with time, and supported by the advancement of simple technologies and an understanding of how to process natural products, humans began producing more than what they needed. These activities of production were men's affairs because they were the ones who initially wielded the tools for such activities. But this is how collective work and mutual household management simultaneously collapsed, to be replaced with the slave society.

Lorimer, in *The Fundamentals of Historical Materialism* (Indonesian translation, 2013), explains the position of class in a slave society:

It is typical of slave production relations, which arose in Ancient Greece and Rome, that not only the means of labour, but also the labourers themselves became the property of other people, the slave-owners. The latter appropriated to themselves the whole product of the slave's labour, allowing the slaves only as much as was necessary to keep them alive. (2013, p. 134)

To explain the position of women slaves who perform domestic work in a more in-depth way, hooks argued:

The area that most clearly reveals the differentiation between the status of male slaves and female slaves is the work area. The black male slave was primarily exploited as a laborer in the fields; the black female was exploited as a laborer in the fields, a worker in the domestic household, a breeder, and as an object of white male sexual assault. (2015, p. 35)

hooks brings to light a racial slice from the history of black women domestic slaves, whose workloads were heavier than male slaves. Black women slaves experienced multifold violence, were exploited as farm labor, were domestic workers for slave owners, fed cattle, and became the targets of sexual assaults by their "white" master. Women were in deeper in performing domestic tasks in the extremely oppressive climate of slavery. They were exploited, without receiving pay, as servants for their masters. Several historical films or films that portray real stories of slavery—*12 Years a Slave* (McQueen dir. 2013) and *The Birth of a Nation* (Parker dir. 2016)—explicitly show the slavery of blacks, particularly women who were bought and forced to work on plantations or inside the homes of slave masters under wretched conditions.

Likewise, in feudal societies, women domestic workers fared similarly: they became the king's servants (*abdi*). An *abdi* surrendered her life to serve her king without receiving pay. Women *abdi* were tasked with managing the kitchen and cleaning the king's living

quarters. Most abdi did not receive pay because they felt that the kingdom's guidance and protection were sufficient. The relationship between a king and his abdi was more of a patron-client relation. Scott, in *Perlawanan Kaum Tani* (1993), explains that the patron-client relations are a relational exchange between two roles that can be said as a special case concerning a tie that involves instrumental friendship when an individual with a higher socioeconomic status (patron) uses her influence and resources to provide protection and benefits for someone with a lower perceived status (client). As a widespread pattern of exchange, services and items traded by patrons and clients reflect the needs that emerge among each stakeholder, as well as resources owned by each stakeholder (Scott 1983, pp. 17-18). In Indonesia, the germination of domestic workers was evident in the feudal societal structure. In Java, domestic workers were known as *ngenger, jongos, bedinde, batur, or babu*. Based on the historical explanation above, it's clear why until today domestic workers are still seen as performing "work that is the habit of women at home since long ago." Societal classes as well as a patriarchal culture that places women second caused a long history of oppression against women. As a result, women's dignity and humanity are devalued along with mention their pay/reward, work hours, and workload. In the context of domestic worker, this oppression is very palpably felt. Why? *First*, the majority of domestic workers

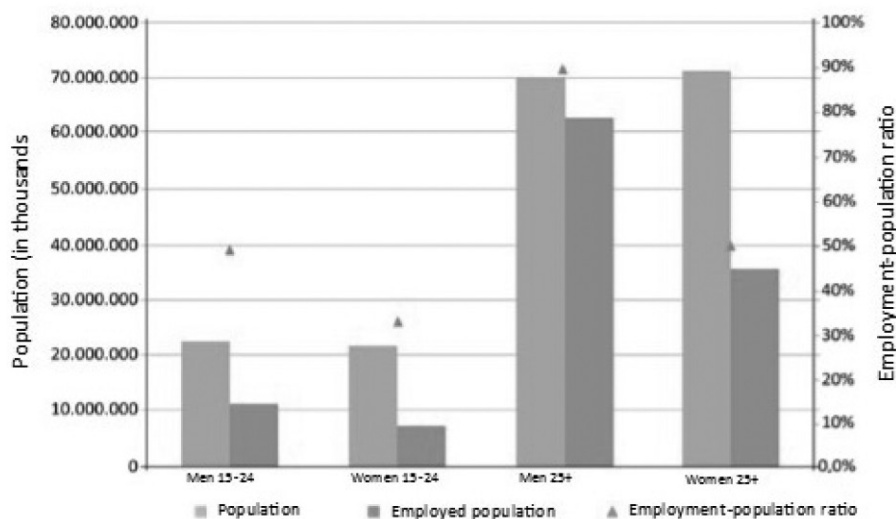
are women. *Second*, they perform domestic work inside the home, just like women have without receiving pay for centuries.

Domestic Work: Labor for the Household

Industrialization—a characteristic of capitalism—has caused the demand for labor, both formal and informal. To fulfill labor demand in industries, family members, including women, have stepped into the public domain to work and pursue a career. But women are also demanded to continue performing care and nurture duties for the household. Meanwhile, work in the public domain absorbs time and resources for performing these duties. Eisenstein sees this as the result of industrialization (1979):

History, ideology, and an examination of industrial countries which have relied on women in the labor force for a longer period and have established alternate childcare arrangements suggest that women will still be responsible for child care, unless we make the reorganization of parenting a central political goal. (1979, p. 102)

Likewise in Indonesia. If we look at the employment-population ratio, the number of productive-age women working in public sectors has also experienced an increase.



Graph 1. Employment-population ratio based on gender and age, February 2015

Source: ILO 2015; Indonesia's Social and Labor Trends 2014-2015, Processed from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), 2015

To address this issue, middle- and high-income families search for and find others who can be paid to alleviate their "double burden." They transform into employers. This vacancy can be seen also as employment opportunities for women who are not economically

independent, are unemployed or are housewives, who can then transform into domestic workers. Domestic workers perform housework and care for the children or parents middle- or high-income employers and receive pay. As Bloodworth, Hose & Taylor suggests:

The Industrial Revolution tore apart communal peasant life. In its place, the new capitalist system demanded a long working day, beginning and ending with the factory whistle ... The newly emerging industrial working class could start to piece together some form of family life through this process. (2009, p. 5)

The phenomenon has also impacted rural areas. Most domestic workers are rural women who have migrated into cities or are local residents in a city or regency, who have been impacted by structural poverty. Low wages and dwindling farmlands have caused women and/or their families to target large cities, where there are jobs and better wages. Their departure to cities to become domestic workers are based on their own initiative, or because they've gone to follow a relative and work at the relative's home, are invited by others who have gone before them to cities, or are recruited by official as well as unofficial labor brokers.

Domestic Workers in the Capitalist Framework

In capitalism, domestic workers are viewed as informal labor who also support the smooth flow of capital. The successful proletarianization of domestic workers can be observed in the fake relation between domestic workers and true capitalists. To safeguard the sustainability of the economy and the flow of capital, capitalists positions domestic workers as their employers' property. This is why domestic workers' wages are not considered in the components making up employers' salaries. The easiest capitalist method is to burden the domestic worker's wage on the employer's salary, which also means the insertion of the value of domestic labor. The situation would be different if the employer's salary is very high. Sometimes domestic workers and capitalists can have a very close relation. It may be that a domestic worker's employer is the person who owns the capital herself. Specifically, domestic workers influence the process of capital accumulation by contributing to the employers' productivity. Domestic workers are labor that force employers, as workers in public sectors, to accumulate wealth and assist capitalists in accumulating added value. In *Marxism and The Oppression of Women*, Vogel wrote:

In capitalist societies, according to Marx, labour-power takes the specific form of a commodity, that is, a thing that has not only use-value but also exchange value. Borne by persons, this commodity has certain peculiarities. Its use-value is its capacity, when put to work in a capitalist

production-process, to be the source of more value than it itself is worth. Its exchange-value – what it costs to buy the labour-power on the market – is 'the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of the laborer, an amount that is established historically and socially in a given society at a particular moment. (1978, p. 194)

Capitalism exploits the legacy of the sexual division of labor to devalue women's value in work relationships, and there is even still some intersection with racial tendencies. Often you'll hear people say that women from ethnic group A are stronger in performing domestic work and are easier to command, or if you want to hire a domestic worker, find one from ethnic group B. The value of a domestic worker is also determined by her productive energy, plus her ethnicity, which determines whether she would be more beneficial or easier to exploit. This racial tendency is very evident in the view that migrant workers from developing countries are easier to exploit.

In line with technological advancements, housework can now be performed quicker. Technology allows the work of domestic workers, both in terms of time and workload, to be reduced. The technology provided by the employer is also taken into account in wage efficiency. On the other hand, capitalists deliberately choose to allow the industrialization of domestic labor to proliferate. This way, the state no longer has to spend too much effort managing the demand and offer for domestic workers. In some cases, domestic workers are employed by recruitment agencies. Recruitment agencies are outsource institutions, whose role is as agents who bring employers and domestic workers together. But these intermediary institutions are, in fact, practicing modern trafficking. The institutionalization occurred because there was a business opportunity for (the industrialization of) labor, to fulfill market demand for domestic labor. Furthermore, some agencies are still allowing 15-year-old girls to work as domestic workers, so long as they show a letter of permission from their parents. In other words, these recruitment agencies are still allowing children to work under exploitative conditions.

If the definition of labor (particularly in regard to labor/workers) is work to produce items (and/or services), then domestic tasks are not categorized as work. This is why the work of domestic workers is not [seen as] productive labor. But is that really the case? A domestic worker is tasked with cooking for the employer's family. She

buys food ingredients (or perhaps the employer does) for cooking. Among these ingredients, there are raw ingredients (vegetables, fish, herbs, etc.) to be processed together using cooking equipment, and meals are produced. Are meals products? The answer is yes. Thus, the domestic worker has performed productive labor. Meanwhile, the domestic worker's productive labor can have a functional value if consumed by the employer's family and the employer includes it in her wage.

The Characteristics of Employers in their Work Relationship with Domestic Workers

There are several reasons why an employer hires a domestic worker, among others:

- Time. The employer is already spending most of her time outside the home so that she has no time left to perform housework. By hiring a domestic worker, the employer's time for performing tasks inside the home (cooking, cleaning, caring for children or the elderly) is instead spent by the domestic worker.
- Prestige. This motivation is influenced by the logic built by social structures/classes in society. Employing a domestic worker is a point of pride for employers. The employer is usually from the upper class and sometimes employs more than one domestic worker.
- Performance. To some employers, appearance is crucial for supporting the productivity of their work. For example, an employer who works as a company manager would not come to office wearing dirty clothes and dusty shoes. She would try to look her best so that she feels more motivated and to receive praise from her staff.
- Habit. Some employers are also used to being assisted by a domestic worker since childhood. When the employer marries or moves away from her core family's home, the employer then hires a domestic worker. This type of employer is not used to performing housework herself, so that her life is incomplete without the presence of a domestic worker.
- Double income. When both spouses in a marriage work, and one decides to quit only to care for the family, the productivity of one labor who should be able to bring home additional income would simply expire. To avoid this, the couple hires a domestic worker.

Employers hire either live-in domestic workers or live-out domestic workers. Live-in domestic workers are usually hired through recruitment agencies or through relatives in the domestic workers' hometown. But some employers also look for live-in domestic workers on their own. Hannah (16), a live-in domestic worker, was brought by her employer directly from her village in Lebak. Hannah's employer also often brings Hannah home for holidays. All of her Hannah's needs are provided by her employer. There are also employers that employ one domestic worker for all tasks, including babysitting. Conversely, there are employers who hire more than one domestic worker (live-in and live-out) to perform different types of work, for example Sri Narti (36), a live-in domestic worker who performs all cleaning work, while Elyla Rumiayati (41), works as a live-out babysitter.

Conditions in Rawa Kalong, Depok, are different. The migration of the workforce into the Depok region has caused the number of small-scale residential complexes to grow. In this region, the development of residential areas tend to be oriented toward cluster and minimalist types, resulting in a limited space for live-in domestic workers. In Rawa Kalong, based on what learned from the domestic workers I assist, there are no live-in domestic workers, which is also influenced by the demographics of the region, namely that almost all domestic workers own a house. This factor also contributed to the decline in the number of employers who employ live-in domestic workers.

Table 1. An Estimated Number of Employers Who Employ Live-In Domestic Workers

Year	The number of Employers who Employ Live-In Domestic Workers
2010	948.815
2011	864.589
2012	781.902
2013	644.225
2014	637.225
2015	434.101

Source: ILO 2017a; Toward a Better Estimation of Total Population of Domestic Workers in Indonesia, processed from Susenas's 2010-2015 data

A decline in the number of live-in domestic workers and an increase in the number of live-out domestic workers also occurred.

Table 2. Estimated Number of Domestic Workers by Type of Job Performed

Year	PRT Live-in	PRT Live-out
2010	880.793	2.985.899
2011	786.247	3.313.589
2012	625.976	3.499.310
2013	499.325	4.698.254
2014	569.934	3.387.394
2015	683.433	3.350.756

Source: ILO 2017a; Toward a Better Estimation of the Total Population of Domestic Workers in Indonesia, processed from Susenas's 2010-2015 data

With higher incomes and a higher social position, employers occupy the higher class, while domestic workers, with lower incomes and a lowed social positions, occupy the lower class. This class difference creates an unequal power relation between the two groups. With their class position, employers have the opportunity to accumulate work value and act capriciously toward domestic workers. Conversely, because of domestic workers' class position, they are vulnerable to exploitation and violence. Each employer enforces different work rules. In one employer household, the characteristic of family members also differ from one to the next. Usually, if a relative temporarily stays at the employer's home, the domestic worker is burdened with a bigger workload. Or if an event is held at the employer's home, for example a prayer group meeting or an *arisan* (lottery gathering), the employer will ask for the domestic worker's assistance. Some employers also give repetitive instructions as they wish or will meticulously check the domestic worker's work. If the work is considered inadequate, the domestic worker is usually asked to repeat the task.

Many employers manipulate the domestic workers' work hours so that they work longer than necessary. Not all employers provide overtime pay when the domestic worker works longer than her average hours or when the employer instructs her to perform work outside her main duties. Sometimes overtime is compensated with items, food, or basic necessities. Additionally, there are still plenty of employers who do not provide health insurance and do not apply work health and safety standards at their home, which of course endangers the domestic worker as well as the employer and her family. Furthermore, employers very rarely use a work agreement when employing a domestic worker. Employers do not want to put in the effort and tend to see work agreements

or contracts as exclusive, rendering it unnecessary for domestic workers to have one. In fact, work health and safety standards as well as a work contract are crucial elements for protecting both the domestic worker and the employer. Not all employers behave negatively toward their domestic worker and oppress them. Some employers are already aware and fulfill most elements of decent work for domestic workers. But their numbers are very few and they do not significantly influence other employers. There are employers who are unaware that there are decent work regulations that must be implemented. To this end, campaigning for the fulfillment of domestic worker rights is necessary so that employers are aware and willing to fulfill domestic workers' rights. Such a campaign are also the responsibility of domestic workers.

Domestic Workers' Situation in Indonesia

The majority of domestic workers in Indonesia are working in not yet decent conditions. They are exploited, they experience injustices as well as various types of violence. The data on violence against domestic workers released by the ILO on June 16, 2017, presents worrying figures. Only 15 domestic worker cases, comprising labor, criminalization and criminal issues were brought to law (ILO 2017b). According to data collected by Jala PRT in 2016, as of September there were 217 acts of violence against domestic workers. Lita Anggraini, Jala PRT's national coordinator, said, as quoted by Bayu, "80% of the violence experienced by domestic workers, of the total 217 cases, did not go further than the police" (Anggraini cited in Bayu 2016 "<http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2016/09/15/17370611/80.persen.kasus.kekerasan.prt.berhenti.di.kepolisian>"). Meanwhile, in the Sedap Malam Operata, 41 cases of multiviolence were experienced by members, while in the Kemoceng operata, there were 11 multiviolence cases that have not yet been addressed legally. Live-in domestic workers experience isolation in their workplace, limited mobility, inadequate privacy, long hours and receive subsistence wages. They are also more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence, unlike live-out domestic workers who are more flexible in managing their work hours, who have more than one employer, have more capacity for self-development and do not completely rely on their employers. Nevertheless, live-in and live-out domestic workers are equally vulnerable.

There are no minimum wage standards for domestic workers, which causes a range of wages for domestic

workers. I took a sample of nine domestic workers who are members of the Sedap Malam Operata to show that domestic workers receive varied wages, with work hours and workload that were not previously agreed upon.

Table 3. Inequality in work hours, workloads, and wages among live-out domestic workers

Name of Domestic Worker	Age	Duties	Work hours/day	Work hours/week	Wage/month (Rp)	Overtime	Overtime pay (Rp)
Tini	28	Tidying up rooms, sweeping and mopping the floor, washing (by hand) and ironing clothes	2	6	800.000	Bathroom cleaning	20.000
Siswati	29	Tidying up rooms, sweeping and mopping the floor, washing and ironing	2	7	900.000	-	200.000
Umi Saadah	35	Tidying up rooms, sweeping and mopping the floor, washing and ironing clothes	4	6	1.000.000	Bathroom cleaning	20.000
Susi Ani	32	Tidying up rooms, sweeping and mopping the floor, washing and ironing clothes	3	6	1.000.000	Performing extra work	50.000
Diana Wati	28	Washing (by hand) and ironing clothes	3	6	700.000	-	-
Margiyanti	34	Tidying up rooms, sweeping and mopping the floor, washing and ironing clothes	3	3	700.000	-	-
Nuryani		Tidying up rooms, sweeping and mopping the floor, washing and ironing clothes, washing and wiping dishes	4	6	800.000	If instructed	Varies
Tariyanti		Tidying up rooms, sweeping and mopping the floor, washing and ironing clothes	4	6	1.000.000	-	-
Sri Mulyani		Washing and ironing clothes, babysitting	12	6	1.200.000	-	-

Source: Survey on Sedap Malam Operata members, through interviews and questionnaires, June 10-16, 2017

We can see, based on above data, that employers provide varying wages. Although the size of the house and the size of the employer's family are still considered in determining a domestic worker's wage, they do not factor in very significantly. Workloads are also determined based on the employer's customs, which means that a domestic worker's salary is not determined as a certain amount because the employer is aware of her responsibility for paying decent wage, but rather on the goodness and kindness of her heart. Standard wage in the end depends on the employer's standards. Work hours, rewards received in return, the types of tasks performed—all are determined by the employer. This was already explained by Marx in *Wage-Labor and Capital* (2008):

Despite the variety of their statements, they would all agree upon one point: that wages are the amount of money which the capitalist pays for a certain period of work or for a certain amount of work. Consequently, it appears that the

capitalist buys their labor with money, and that for money they sell him their labor. But this is merely an illusion. What they actually sell to the capitalist for money is their labor-power. This labor-power the capitalist buys for a day, a week, a month, etc. And after he has bought it, he uses it up by letting the worker labor during the stipulated time. With the same amount of money with which the capitalist has bought their labor-power (for example, with two shillings) he could have bought a certain amount of sugar or of any other commodity. (2008, p. 17)

Domestic workers are still subservient to their employers' rather exploitative orders. Many domestic workers can't make themselves refuse or speak out when an employer instructs them to perform extra work outside of their primary duties. Often, the domestic worker considers the extra work an obligation that must not be refused. Overtime is paid as the employer wishes and is only seen as a token of gratitude because the domestic worker has agreed to work overtime. On the other hand, domestic workers see overtime pay as

“blessings”. They are oppressed because they have been subordinated and occupy the lowest stratum in the system, so that they are alienated in their work itself. But a transformation can happen if women domestic workers refuse to occupy such an oppressive system and to belong to the oppressed class, or if they fight against said oppressive system by creating a new culture and system.

The State’s Role in Perceiving the Domestic Worker “Situation”

Today, there has been a shift in the situation of domestic workers, i.e., that domestic work has become paid work, although the work is still the same as was performed by women centuries ago. Wages make it seem as if housework is now valued more. But it is in fact still low-valued, is subsistence work, and belongs to the informal sector. Not to mention, the government has yet to create instruments for the protection domestic workers. There are no signs that the legal instrument proposed by the international ILO Convention No. 189 and its recommendation No. 201 on decent work for domestic workers will be ratified by the government. Jala PRT (the National Network for the Advocacy of Domestic Workers) have proposed the draft bill for the protection of domestic workers since 2004. But now, 13 years, later, the draft bill has not been passed. The government argues that labor standards cannot be applied to domestic workers because domestic workers perform work in private homes and do not perform productive work. This is because the state views the household as private domain, so that work relationships are negotiated on an individual basis. The government’s reluctance to intervene in domestic work has caused domestic workers to simply rely on the “goodness” of their employers.

Lenin (n.y.), in *The State and Revolution* (<https://www.marxists.org/indonesia/archive/lenin/1917/negara/state1.htm>), explains what Marx meant by ‘state,’ as follows:

This expresses with perfect clarity the basic idea of Marxism with regard to the historical role and the meaning of the state. The state is a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonism objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable.

The state must be present and must take the side of the oppressed class, instead of mediating and quelling the class struggle. But fact is, the government will not take

the side of class that produces nothing. The state, said Marx, only extends the class struggle. In the meantime, the state chooses to take the side of the ruling class and exploits the class struggle to reap benefits.

The statement above can be viewed within Indonesia’s legal framework. Minister of Manpower’s Regulation No. 2/2015 only implicitly regulates the labor relationship between the state and domestic workers, but explicitly favors domestic worker recruitment agencies. There are no articles that regulate the labor relation between the state and domestic workers. The ministerial regulation is still very weak and cannot be used as a certain guide for protecting domestic workers, and is no more than simply an effort to subdue the appeal of domestic workers who speak out to demand protection, as explained by Eny Rofiatul, a Jakarta Legal Aid Institute attorney, at the launching and discussion of the book *A Compilation of Domestic Worker and Child Domestic Worker Cases*, “Manpower Ministry’s Regulation No. 2/2015 does not take the law on labor into consideration. Consequently, the ministerial regulation is very weak in regard to its labor aspects” (June 16, 2017). Furthermore, ministerial regulations do not have binding legal strength. In Law No. 13/2003 on Labor, employers are not categorized under job providers. The labor law focuses more on regulating the work relationship between businesses and labor, as opposed to employers and workers in all forms.

Despite the oppression experienced by women, the state does not provide legal instruments with a women’s perspective. The issue of women—especially working women—are simply set aside because it’s seen as unproductive. This is how the state also perpetuates patriarchy among domestic workers. As citizens, domestic workers are socially excluded, in the family, society, and in the country. They are seen as women with low human capital, causing them to not receive appreciation and protection. What I see is the state preserving domestic workers’ improper work conditions and are attempting to tame some women so that they remain in the domestic sphere. The state also continues to preserve domestic workers to support the accumulation of added value. Imagine how much capital would have to be spent if the employer’s institution or company has to bear the need for cleaning services for the employer’s home. Domestic workers are deliberate alienated from their nature as workers. Why? We can imagine that if a massive and strong labor organization were to join hands with other labor organizations and together demand decent work to the

government and strike for days. How much loss would the state have to bear?

Domestic Workers' Union: Organization, Education, Empowerment, and Advocacy

It's evident, based on the various conditions explained above, that there is a need to overturn domestic workers' situation. If the discrimination and injustices experienced by domestic workers are class-based, then what's needed is a class undertaking. The significant number of domestic workers and the fact that the majority of domestic workers do not yet have decent work conditions—these two things can serve as to turn their situation around. Consolidating the power of domestic workers through domestic workers' unions can be an answer. Workers have given us very good examples of organization. Through unions, workers have built an awareness for decent work and have gathered force to encourage the implementation of decent work at the workplace. The establishment of the International Domestic Workers Federation, which is affiliated with domestic workers' organizations in 54 countries, is proof that domestic workers can have their own movement, like the labor movement. But how do we describe the process of building and expanding a domestic workers' union?

Domestic workers' right to unionize is guaranteed by Article 1(3) in Law No. 21/2000 on Workers' Unions. From Jala PRT's assistance along with ILO Jakarta, today there are 13 domestic workers' organizations distributed throughout the greater Jakarta area, Lampung, Makassar, Yogyakarta, and Semarang, five of which are unionized. I encountered many challenges when organizing domestic workers. Employers believe that a domestic workers' organization can make it hard for them to receive maximum work from domestic workers. Some employers also believe that workers' organizations are only for workers in formal sectors. They also believe that domestic workers should not get involved in organizations so that they don't argue or talk back. Employers who already have a negative view of domestic workers' organizations will be protective of their domestic workers so that they don't join an organization. This applies to both live-in and live-out domestic workers. Some employers who understand the right and freedom to unionize and organize allow their domestic worker to join an organization. There was also rejection when organizing domestic workers, among others based on the argument that: (1) (the view that) involvement in an organization is not beneficial and does not yield any

profit, (2) many domestic workers are still afraid that their employer would not give them permission, (3) the domestic worker was suspicious when I invited her to join an organization, among others because I was thought to be the delegate of some party, of a certain mass organization, and even a domestic worker agent, (4) no time for involvement in an organization, (5) the domestic worker feels that her employer already treats her well.

It's more difficult for live-in domestic workers to be involved in an organization because their work hours are challenging and they must first explain their wish to join an organization to their employer. On the other hand, live-out and part-time domestic workers can still manage their time, although most of their time is already allocated to working and caring for their family. Often a domestic worker does not understand that work relationship has nothing to do with their employer. Domestic workers gauge their employer's kindness based on how often the employer would give presents or how often the employer complains. In fact, affective relations are different from work relations. Organizing domestic workers created a forward stride, namely the formation of small domestic worker groups. Additionally, domestic worker outreach is initiated so that these groups can grow and can be managed under a community of domestic workers. Such is the organizing process. But, as Vogel said, quoting Clara Zetkin to remind us of how difficult it can be to organize working women because their work and family restrict their movement and consequently their involvement in an organization:

Zetkin warns against the tendency to focus on 'women's petty interests of the moment', and emphasises the importance, as well as the difficulty, of organising women workers into trade-unions. She notes that several major obstacles, specific to women as women, stand in the way of successfully undertaking socialist work among working-class women. Women often work in occupations that leave them isolated and hard to mobilise. Young women believe that their wage-work is temporary, while married women suffer the burden of the double shift. (Vogel 1978, p. 119)

Especially because domestic workers work inside the home, which means reaching every domestic worker at her workplace requires extra patience. Domestic workers in large cities are easier to find in their residential pockets and tend to be more open to organization because it does not disrupt their work hours. Likewise, the families of domestic workers aren't always completely supportive. There was one case in the Sedap Malam Operata where a domestic worker was strongly forbidden by her husband from joining organizational activities. Then, how does an

organization overcome hurdles from family members and employers? *First*, through information. Domestic workers' organizations have begun educating their members through the Sekolah Wawasan (Information School). The school has become an alternative school for domestic workers, a place where they can share knowledge and experiences, and theorize on them. This is how they learn about the causes of the injustices that they're experiencing as domestic workers and as women. Apart from revealing their work situation at the employer's home, at the school they also reveal their situation at home, within the family. Understanding the causes of women's oppression is crucial for building the class consciousness of domestic workers.

At the school they also learn about decent work for domestic workers as well as its element, comprising domestic workers' labor rights as well as laws and regulations that benefit as well as disadvantage domestic workers. They also learn public speaking, how to draft a work contract, how to write, how to operate a computer, English, and how to negotiate with their employers as well as their family. In the work relationship between an employer and a domestic worker, collective bargaining would be impossible, which is why individual bargaining (negotiation) becomes very important for domestic workers in the fulfillment of their rights. Negotiating with an employer is indeed a tough struggle for domestic workers, and this also has to do with an unequal power relation, with the employer's position of power and the domestic worker's position as a subject under the employer's power. Nuryani, for example, is a domestic worker who negotiated for a raise with an employer, because she had been working for over one year (Nuryani 2017, interview 21 May). The employer said, "I didn't get even a raise. Why would you ask for a raise?" Or Umi Saadah, who, when attempting mediation with the employer because she was fired, the employer instead dominated the discussion because she felt she was being challenged by a domestic worker (Umi Saadah 2017, interview 22 January). But they learned from these experiences and can implement effective negotiation strategies so that the employer will be willing to fulfill the rights of the domestic worker under their employment.

To domestic workers, negotiating with family is a unique experience. At first they were afraid to explain to their husband or brother that they had joined a domestic workers' organization. But by patiently building their family's awareness, one by one, they were able to join a domestic workers' organization. Additionally, the most

crucial element in the protection of domestic workers are work contracts/agreements. When operata members submitted a work contract draft to their employer, employers reacted in various ways. Very few employers were willing to use a work contract. More refused, as if they could not accept the notion that domestic workers are like formal workers with a work contract. Although during interview the domestic worker had already explained the benefits of a work contract, most employers refused, and the domestic worker is forced to work without a contract while continuing to negotiate with the employer—or sometimes the domestic worker does not end up working for the employer. In fact, a work contract also involves protection for employers in regard to the employer-domestic worker work relationship.

Second, strengthening organization as domestic workers' platform for struggle. Organization is fortified also to encourage the leadership of domestic workers by improving their capacity in regard to organizational management for organization members. They put the information they receive at Sekolah Wawasan into practice by representing their organization in training for organizational management held by Jala PRT, ILO Jakarta, or other organizations/institutions. Meanwhile, domestic workers are already demonstrating organizational independence, as evident in their trash banks and consumers' cooperative: independent financial organization as well as participating in guarding their organization's independence. *Third*, advocacy. Advocacy are the true practices of struggle for organizations. With information that they have received as capital, they manage cases experienced by organization members, starting from reporting to mediation. Additionally, they also campaign via social media. They meet with stakeholders such as House faction members and develop a network with other organizations such as the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute, Apik Legal Aid Institute, Kowani, the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan), etc.

The three actions described above are the routes to transforming domestic workers' conditions. If organization is the platform for struggle, then members are the wheels of this platform. Domestic workers directly perform processes in developing organizations into strong workers' unions. In doing so, transformation truly lies in their hands. The more domestic workers develop their network and the more united they are, both nationally and transnationally, the closer they get to success in "forcing" the government to protect and

guarantee their rights. It's also important to coalesce with workers' unions from other sectors—both formal and informal—so that the wave of the working women's movement can grow to be more massive.

Conclusion

In capitalism, capital and power are meticulously organized. Sectors of society remain under supervision by the ruling class and those with capital. They also reign over political aspects in order to preserve power, by oppressing the working class. Domestic workers are part of this oppressed class, which is why it's important to mobilize and organize domestic workers, and to direct them in the struggle of the working class. Of course, the quality of this normative struggle must be improved so that it becomes a political struggle. Normative changes fought for by domestic workers will slowly be replaced by a comprehensive social transformation for the welfare of the working class. Large and strong unions are domestic workers' tool of struggle. Unions are places to learn, unite, and fight. Without unifying, domestic workers will only remain as part of the working class who will stay unempowered in its oppression. Unions under the guidance of political organizations would advance more. Political organizations must also be built by the working class, and not the ruling class. This is how domestic workers can participate in Indonesia's social transformation.

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