Indonesian Migrant Women Workers in Türkiye and Media Representation at Home: Precarity Works and Mediating the State Protection

Daffa Ramadhani Yanuar

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Daffa Ramadhani Yanuar iD

Institute of Social Science, Social Science University of Ankara, Ankara, Türkiye

Abstract

This qualitative study examines the portrayal of Indonesian migrant women workers in Türkiye by major Indonesian online media outlets from 2018 to 2023. Using content analysis, the research explores dominant media representations surrounding workers in Türkiye's care service and tourism sectors. Findings reveal patterns of precarious work, exploitation, and vulnerability to undocumented employment, particularly involving Syrian employers. The study highlights a significant shift in media coverage from sensationalist reporting to echoing government narratives on combating undocumented migration. This shift aligns with Indonesia's labor-export policy reforms under President Jokowi, which aim to promote labor migration to formal sectors and distance the country's image from domestic worker exports. The research demonstrates how media reflects and reinforces state migrant protection policies through "domesticated protection." However, this approach inadvertently perpetuates victimization and potentially exacerbates vulnerabilities by stigmatizing unofficial migration channels. While intended to safeguard workers, stringent regulations may if not already contribute to increased undocumented migration. By analyzing the nexus between media representation, state policies, and migrant precarities, this study contributes to understanding the complex dynamics of labor migration in an emerging corridor, calling for a more nuanced approach to media coverage, policy-making, and future studies that acknowledges both migrant agency and structural challenges

CONTACT *Daffa Ramadhani Yanuar* ✉ *ramadhani.daffa@gmail.com*

Introduction

Indonesia's labor migration has always been a subject of prominent discussion within and outside the country since the 1970s. According to the World Bank (2017), Indonesia with a population of 279 million people has amassed 9 million migrant workers overseas both documented and undocumented, an equivalent of 7% of Indonesia total national workforce. United Nations (UN) (2019; 2020) reports that 4.6 million of Indonesian migrant workers overseas are documented and in a year, Indonesia can send more than 350 thousand migrant workers. Thus, Indonesia is the largest migrant-sending country surpassed only by the Phillipines and China. Indonesian migrant workers mobility now spans to diverse regions, starting from the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Unite Arab Emirates), East Asia (Hong Kong and Taiwan) and Southeast Asia (Malaysia and Singapore). This includes 2 major corridors established with more than 55% of migrants are employed in Indonesia-Malaysia corridor and around 13% in Indonesia-Saudi corridor (World Bank, 2017; United Nations, 2019;2020 as quoted in. Bal & Palmer, 2020).

The majority of Indonesian migrant workers have historically been women, but this gender disparity is gradually closing. The World Bank (2017) reports that the proportion of female migrant workers decreased from 80% to 62% between 2009 and 2016. However, women still dominate certain sectors, particularly paid domestic or care services for childcare and elderly care. These sectors, while declining in overall numbers, still account for almost 40% of the total existing migrant labor workforce, with 94% of these positions held by women.

A large portion of international labor migration from Indonesia is also due to actual economic benefits through remittance that is acknowledged by international organization, governments, NGOs, and scholars (Bal & Palmer, 2020). Remittance directly affects the daily lives of migrant families making remittance more successful than any domestic and international welfare aid from a top-down programme. The World Bank (2017) reports Indonesia migrant workers sent over 8.9 billion USD in 2016 amounting to 1% of the total GDP of Indonesia of 931 billion USD.

While it's also important to acknowledge the development opportunities through remittances, there is clearly an inherent risk of vulnerabilities that international labor migration carries. International labor migration is also a subject to both receiving and sending country policies that, most of the times are in contrast with migrant workers' interest. Critical scholars from feminist to post-colonial studies argue that there's an interplay between structural, gender, and class inequalities embedded within global migration systems that undermine migrant workers well-being in recruitment, work, and repatriation (Elias, 2010; Piper & Withers, 2018; Suliman, 2018).

In Türkiye, large numbers of Indonesian migrant workers have started to emerge. Since 2019, Türkiye's Ministry of labor and Social Security (CSGB) has granted work

permits to 2400 migrant workers from Indonesia, of which 90 %% were women (CSGB, 2023). Indonesian migrant women workers mainly employed in tourism sector as spa workers, masseuses, chefs, and sport trainers (Yanuar, 2024). The importance of increasing labor force human capital projects seems to prompted the two governments to renew a bilateral memorandum of understanding in the field of labor (Musyaffa, 2023).

Significantly, marking the first emergence of Indonesian undocumented migrant women workers in the domestic and care services (Cindyara, 2022), the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Ankara declassified numbers of rising undocumented labor migration considered to be human trafficking cases that involved many Indonesian migrant women workers in the domestic or care services of the elderly and children. In entirety, the Embassy claimed all migrant women workers are employed by non-Turkish citizens. In total, 19 individual human trafficking cases were reported in 2021, and 20 more in the 2020.

This emerging trend of Indonesian workers in Türkiye is expected to continue growing, particularly in domestic or care services and tourism sectors, with a predominance of female workers. Furthermore, with more undocumented workers involved due the unregulated nature of domestic or care services and circularity of migration induced by proximity and flexible visa policies. This projection is based on Türkiye's recent shifts in economic, political, and social structures (Töksöz, 2020). The increasing presence and future projection of Indonesian workers in Türkiye presents a new and evolving dimension to Indonesia's labor migration landscape, offering both opportunities and challenges that warrant further investigation.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

labor migration remains a prime factor in inducing global movement, despite the varied reasons for migration such as family reunion, education, conflict, or lifestyle changes (De Haas et al., 2019). For origin countries, labor migration offers economic benefits through remittances, investment, and technology transfer, while destination countries use it to address labor and skill deficits.

However, the demand for migrant labor is socially constructed, often resulting from poor wages, working conditions, and low social status associated with certain jobs. This has led to the outsourcing of "3D" (dirty, difficult, and dangerous) jobs to migrant workers, a trend observed since the 1970s with Turkish guest workers in Western Europe (Münz et al., 2007; De Haas et al., 2019). While some low-skilled manufacturing jobs have been exported to developing countries since the 1980s, sectors such as construction, hospitality, healthcare, and domestic care remain location-bound. The increasing participation of native women in the workforce and rising education levels have further depleted the labor pool for care jobs, making migrant labor crucial for industrialized economies

in the Gulf, East Asia, and Southern Europe (Ambrosini, 2016; Piore, 1979; De Haas et al., 2019).

Neoliberal globalization since the late 1970s has transformed employment practices, shifting from jobs with social benefits to independent contracts where workers bear more risks and costs. This shift has contributed to the growth of informal economies and increased reliance on undocumented migrant workers. The rise of precarious work, particularly affecting migrant women in domestic and care services, is a direct result of these labor market restructurings. The intersectionality of gender and lack of legal rights makes migrant women especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in these sectors (De Haas et al., 2019).

This theoretical framework underscores the complex interplay between global economic trends, labor market restructuring, and the specific vulnerabilities faced by migrant women workers. It provides a foundation for understanding the context in which Indonesian migrant women workers in Türkiye navigate their experiences and the challenges they face.

Migrant Women and labor Immigration in Türkiye

Türkiye has transitioned from a migrant-sending country after World War II to a major migrant-receiving country, particularly following the Syrian refugee influx. The country shares Mediterranean traits with South European countries, characterized by irregular migratory flows, a rudimentary familistic welfare state, economic dependence on tourism and agriculture, and low but increasing women participation in the labor force. Yet, Türkiye differs in its positive population growth and labor surplus (Çoban, 2023; Töksöz, 2020).

Migrant workers in Türkiye are employed in low-paid, labor-intensive sectors such as manufacturing, construction, agriculture, entertainment, tourism, and domestic and care services. labor migration is highly gendered, with women forming the majority in most sectors except construction (Töksöz, 2020). Domestic or care services and tourism are leading economic activities for foreigners, accounting for 9.48 % and 7.15 % of work permits issued in 2023, respectively (CSGB, 2023).

Another importants variable is Türkiye's visa regime, as the country supports export-led growth policies, flexible visa facilitates migration from nearby countries and less developed regions. The country's familistic society, low welfare support for care services, and increasing native female participation in professional roles have also boosted demand for domestic work among the middle and upper classes. However, this sector remains unregulated and prone to undocumented work. Since the 1990s, domestic work has primarily attracted women from former Soviet countries due to flexible visa requirements and perceived qualities like discipline and education (Töksöz, 2020).

Limited but growing literature on Filipino migrant women workers in Türkiye also indicates a new dimension of supply and demand for domestic and care work from Southeast Asia (Akalın, 2014; Çeltikçi, 2022; Deniz, 2018; Kavurmaci, 2022). These workers are often employed by high-income families who value their English skills and education. Their increasing presence has spurred growth in work agency firms. Despite being the top category for work permit registration, domestic work remains largely a grey area due to its unregulated nature and widespread informality (Çoban, 2023; Töksöz, 2020).

Similarly, as a sector of major migrant workers employer, Türkiye's tourism industry operates on similar exploitative practices, with employers seeking to "pay less for better work." This creates demand for cheap but skilled labor, often filled by migrants who can speak tourists' languages, work longer hours, and have better education than locals (Gökmen, 2018). Migrants in this sector work as masseuses, animators, waitresses, tour operators, and receptionists. Studies suggest that the increasing numbers of foreign tourists, especially from Russia, correlate with higher employment of migrant workers from former Soviet countries (Deniz & Özgur, 2010; Gökmen, 2018; Töksöz, 2020).

Overview of Indonesia's labor Migration

Indonesia's labor migration is mainly driven by gendered women labor export, neoliberal development practices, poverty, unemployment, and the demand for domestic labor in receiving countries (Killias, 2018; Silvey, 2004). These migration experiences are often marked by precariousness due to poor working conditions, exploitation, and inadequate legal protection (Parreñas et al., 2019; Silvey & Parreñas, 2020). Migration in Indonesia also has been heavily gendered, influenced by state paternalism and paradoxical perceptions of women. Indonesia's labor migration also can be understood through the following phases.

During the New Order era under President Suharto's 30-year rule, the state domesticated femininity, portraying women as symbols of household prosperity and extensions of the state. Women were expected to be obedient to men as breadwinners, while their economic contributions were often overlooked (Platt, 2018). However, driven by declining oil revenues and the need for political stability, political elites commodified the export of migrant women domestic workers. This phase saw the rise of the recruitment industry, establishing various channels to maximize profits from labor export (Killias, 2018).

The second phase, in post-authoritarian Indonesia after Suharto, witnessed the country's first democratic election in 2004. Political and economic turmoil during this transition brought migrant worker issues to media attention, resulting in state intervention and new labor migration policies. Law 39/2004 or "The National Law on the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrants Overseas," introduced a state-sanctioned scheme led

by the National Board for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers (BNP2TKI). This law required all prospective migrant workers to register with licensed private recruitment agencies with migration outside this scheme considered illegal which made labor recruitment and employment industries the biggest lobbying forces in the country and an integral part of migration infrastructure (Killias, 2018).

This phase also saw peak remittance flows, with international organizations like the International Labor Organization (ILO), International Organization of Migration (IOM), United Nations (UN), and World Bank hailing remittances as inherently positive and a tool for development (Bal & Palmer, 2020; Kunz, 2008, quoted in Killias, 2018). The Indonesian government, particularly under President Yudhoyono (SBY), celebrated women as "economic heroes" and generators of remittances. However, this period was also marked by paradoxical domesticated femininity discourse, requiring women to obtain their husband's consent for migration and restricting their ability to leave young children (Platt, 2018). This era was often described as a "care crisis," with women's migration viewed both as economic progress and a threat to national identity (Platt, 2018).

The third phase emerged as media constructed a victimized image of migrant women workers through sensationalized news coverage of abuse, rape, and exploitation (Platt, 2018). Cases of abuse were framed as "national dishonour" and "dignity violation" (Killias, 2018). This perpetuated a stereotypical view of migration as dangerous for women, implicitly suggesting home as the only safe space (Andrijasevic, 2007, as quoted in Killias, 2018). Major cases, such as Winfaidah's rape and abuse in Malaysia in 2010, were portrayed as failures of paternal protection, leading to the stigmatization of Indonesian migrant women workers as unskilled and backward (Killias, 2018). This enabled the state to impose stricter controls through moratorium bans, while still promoting migration through sanctioned channels (Platt, 2018).

During Jokowi's presidency (2014-2024), the government has focused on migrant workers' rights and labor export policy reform. The aim is to replace informal sector employment abroad with formal ones, which has outpaced the informal sector since 2012 (Manning et al, 2018). Jokowi's "politics of embarrassment" seeks to curb low-skilled migrant worker programs to protect national dignity, this approach has shifted the narrative from viewing migrant workers as economic heroes to a source of moral anxiety (Killias, 2018). In practice, Jokowi's reforms have introduced moratorium bans and quotas, limiting labor migration outside designated channels - a practice conceptualized as "domesticated protection" (Dewanto, 2020).

Problem and Research Question

This study focuses on media representation due to its crucial role in shaping public perceptions and discourse surrounding Indonesian migrant women workers. From sociological lens, media creates what Cohen (2011) termed "moral panics," following a logic of attraction that, in the context of migrant workers, often delivers sensationalized images of migrants in distress. Analyzing media representation can also reveal the mechanism of othering and how stereotyphes attached to particular stories, images, and bodies (Smets & Bozdağ, 2018). From anthropological lens, humanitarian organizations and media representation practices strategic silences (in other terms architecturing silence), which employs visibility but also invisibility at the same time, spreading awareness through headlines or producing benevolent acts but exclude engagement with migrant themselves, yet leaving the root cause and complexities behind migration unaddressed. Thus, making migrant devoid of their agency, presented as objects of media and philanthrophic mode of power that is diassociated from migrant's own historical, political, biographical specificities (Malkki, 1995; 1996; Nikunen, 2019).

Media, along with brokers, transnational activism, state regulations and institutions, forms part of a complex infrastructure that shapes migration experiences. As part of the humanitarian infrastructure, media connects migrant sufferings with transnational advocacy (Xiang & Lindquist, 2014). However, media scrutiny of human rights and labor abuses can sometimes lead to unintended consequences. For instance, in China, brokers responding to human trafficking allegations opted to deduct transport costs from migrant workers' wages, potentially trapping them in debt bondage (Xiang & Lindquist, 2014). In Indonesia, media initially contributed to stigmatizing migrant women workers as "backward," while later NGOs pressure led to heavy state regulation of labor export.

This study examines how media coverage mediates the experiences of migrant women workers, particularly in light of major labor export reforms during the Jokowi period. It aims to identify key issues faced by migrants in Türkiye, a new frontier for Indonesian labor migration, potentially serving as a precursor for future research.

This study intends to provide analysis toward this research question:

- How does Indonesian media outlets portray the experiences and working conditions of Indonesian migrant women workers in Türkiye? What is the dominant narrative? Is the portrayal empowering, patronising or victimizing the migrant women workers?

This work investigates an understudied population of migrant women workers in Türkiye, who are largely unseen in the receiving country but closely followed by the sending country's government and media. It has the potential to unveil hidden precarity chains and vulnerabilities while identifying current trends and patterns in media coverage. The

study offers a critical, empowered reading of migrant women's experiences, serving as a reminder to stakeholders to respect migrant women in their own right.

Methodology

This study employs qualitative content analysis to examine Indonesian media coverage of women domestic workers in Türkiye. Data were collected from major online outlets www.detik.com and www.kompas.com, focusing on articles published between 2018 and 2023, coinciding with Jokowi's last term. Using keywords such as "pekerja migran Indonesia" (Indonesian migrant worker, abbreviated as PMI), "tenaga kerja wanita" (migrant women workers, abbreviated as TKW), "Turki" (Türkiye), "tindak pidana perdagangan orang" (trafficking in persons, abbreviated as TPPO), and "Migran" (migrant), approximately 30 news articles, reports, and features were gathered and translated into English for analysis.

A coding scheme was developed based on themes including working conditions, exploitation, legal protection, migration processes, and Indonesia-Türkiye relations. The content was systematically coded using Nvivo12 software to identify patterns and representations. This analysis aimed to uncover dominant narratives and portrayal patterns in the coverage of Indonesian women domestic workers.

Additionally, a contextual analysis was conducted to examine the broader socio-cultural, economic, and political factors shaping the media coverage. The study also explored potential implications of this coverage on public perceptions, policies, and the lived experiences of the workers. Through this comprehensive approach, the research aims to provide insights into the portrayal of Indonesian women domestic workers in Türkiye by Indonesian media, illuminating dominant narratives, reporting patterns, and the wider contexts influencing the coverage.

Findings

Presistent Precarities

Figure 1. Word cloud commonly used the news coverages

The main findings of this study reveals the persistent signs of precarities involving Indonesian migrant workers in Türkiye. It highlights the involvement of deception, contract violation, and undocumented work are common employment practices toward migrant women workers in the domestic or care works services in Türkiye. While migrant women workers in tourism sector, also vulnerable deception and prevalent undocumented practices.

> The Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia in Türkiye, Lalu Muhammad Iqbal gave a reward to the NTB Police for their achievement in thwarting and uncovering the criminal act of trafficking in persons (TPPO). Lalu said 'in the period 2018-2022, the NTB Police Criminal Investigation Unit has handled 7 TPPO cases with 11 victims and named 9 suspects.' Lalu added 'from 2018-2022 the NTB Police had sent a team to Türkiye three times in order to identify victims, collect evidence and repatriate victims to NTB (NTB Police Thwart TPPO, Receive Award from Indonesian Ambassador in Türkiye, 2022).

> Through a virtual press conference, Director of Protection of Indonesian Citizens at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Judha Nugraha said 'based on records from the Indonesian Embassy in Ankara and the Indonesian Consulate General in Istanbul, during 2022 there were 85 cases handled by the two representatives, of which 69 have been successfully repatriated, and 16 are still ongoing cases in Türkiye waiting for the next stage of return.' There are three things that make migrant workers tempted by the agent's persuasion until they are abandoned in Türkiye. 'There are 3 modus operandi that are used. First, our migrant workers work as domestic workers for employers from Middle Eastern countries (particularly Syrian employer), and then they experience labor exploitation or unpaid salaries, etc. The second mode, migrant workers are promised in EU countries and use Türkiye as a transit country, but then they end up abandoned in Türkiye' said Judha (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Reveals 3 Modes of Perpetrators Bringing Illegal Migrant Workers, Latest in Türkiye, 2022)

The selected data sample above represent migrant women in domestic or care services work mainly recruited from the NTB province, one of the main origin region of migrant in domestic or care services. Migrant workers, which predominantly are women are reportedly vulnerable to deception, abuse, and forced labor practice. The Indonesian government through Kemlu and its Embassy immediately categorized domestic work as associated with human trafficking, as there exists no bilateral agreement between the two countries regarding this sector.

Media representation suggest migrant women in domestic or care services are mainly employed by Syrian employers in Türkiye, migrants are often deceived by false promises of high wages, averaging between 3 to 4 million Indonesian rupiah per month, with the prospect of employment in destination such as European Union (EU) countries. However, they ultimately find themselves trafficked to Türkiye, which was initially promised only as a transit point. For instance, media report highlighted apprehension of major transnational human trafficking syndicates involving Indonesian migrant women workers as victims, including in Türkiye. Notably, in 2019, the Indonesian police apprehended suspects belonging to a human trafficking syndicate with networks and victims spanning in Morocco (500 victims), Saudi Arabia (200 victims), Syria (300 victims), and Türkiye (220 victims), resulting in a total of 1,200 victims.

Conversely, tourism migrant women workers, mostly coming from the Bali province and also predominantly women, despite following proper procedures and documentation in addition being considered as a formal work, due to officially certified skills of Balinese migrant workers, language capability, and hospitality industry popularity in Türkiye, also faces vulnerability to fraud. These workers frequently encounter challenges in their daily lives, including inhumane living and working conditions and fraud employment in sectors unrelated to agreed roles, such as manufacturing or hard labor factories. Below are selected samples that represent migrant women workers from Bali:

> Based on data from the Bali Province Manpower and Energy and Mineral Resources Office as of March 2022, 18,248 Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) have returned to work abroad. The profession as an employee in the cruise ship and hospitality industry is the most popular profession. As for the most destination countries for Bali PMI, namely Italy, then followed by Türkiye and the Maldives. 'Public interest from year to year to go abroad to work is high. This is due to limited job opportunities in the country. Then since 2005 the policy of the Bali Provincial Government is to send workers who already have skills with certified competencies' said the Head of the Bali Province Manpower and Energy and Mineral Resources Office, Ida Bagus Ngurah Arda (18,248 Migrant Workers from Bali Have Departed Again, Most to Italy then Türkiye, 2022).
>
> The Bali Regional Police (Polda) will tighten supervision of labor placement companies. This is after a case of alleged fraud of a labor channeling agent in Bali. The case left 29 Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) from Bali stranded in Türkiye with 16 have returned to Bali. As previously reported, this case was revealed after four PMIs from Buleleng who had been stuck in Türkiye reported the alleged fraud against them to the Buleleng Police. Previously, these four PMIs had brought this case to the realm of law because they felt cheated by the labor channeling agent. They were

sent to work in Türkiye, but using tourist visas. In addition, the jobs they got there were not as promised. (Bali Police Takes Over Case of Alleged Fraud in Sending Indonesian Migrant Workers to Türkiye, 2022)

There are also cases of migrant women in the domestic or care service and tourism sectors who are often forced to endure substandard accommodations. These include cramped and indecent guesthouses or shelters, where they are housed together with other migrant workers, predominantly from the same countries of origin. Exacerbating their plight, these workers are reportedly provided with as little as a single meal per day and are often deprived of access to drinking water.

The media representation of migrant workers in Türkiye portrays a pervasive narrative of precarious working conditions, with negative reports spanning across various sectors and employment arrangements. The narratives surrounding migrant women workers whether in domestic or care works and tourism sectors paint a concerning pictures, as they are subjected to various forms of exploitation, deception, mainly undocumented works and for migrant women in domestic or care works as their existence is firmly equated as human trafficking by the Indonesian government, particularly by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Embassy.

How the Media Covers

The findings learned Indonesian media still tends to focus on scandalous cases or tragic events when covering Indonesian migrant workers in Türkiye. Out of 30 news articles analyzed, 4 were written in a feature-style format. These features mostly centered on procedural tourism workers affected by the 2023 Turkish earthquake. The study found that there were 73 themes embedded in these news samples, with major recurring theme lies on exploitation, fraud, inhumane conditions, and human trafficking issues.

Table 1. Main themes found in the news coverages

Recurring Major Themes	
Exploitation, Fraud and Human Trafficking	22
Non-Procedural Migrant Worker	16
State Protection and Mitigation	16
Inhumane Working Condition	7
Procedural Migrant Worker	6
Türkiye's Earthquake Pazarcık 2023	5
Covid-19 Repatriation	1
Total	**73**

These news includes precarious cases, namely 6 non-procedural Indonesian migrant women workers from the NTB province, the death of a migrant worker from Cirebon, and reports of migrant worker shelters in Türkiye that used violence to Indonesian women migrant worker. Workers in tourism also received significant attention due to fatalities from force majeure events such as the loss of life during the 2023 earthquake with the death of Irma Lestari and Ni Wayan Supini.

Media also highlighted other hardships that migrant workers encountered in tourism sectors, such as contract violation or fraud and daily lives difficulties. For instance, in accessing affordable healthcare, a migrant women worker from Bali, I Gusti Ayu Vira Wijaya, penned an open letter to the Indonesian President, Joko Widodo, regarding her deteriorating health conditions. Similarly, cases of fraudulent employment, like that of Putu Septiana, an Indonesian migrant women from Bali who was deceived into working in Türkiye but ended up stranded and hiding from immigration authorities also receive significant attention. The media appears to capitalize on sensational cases or tragedies, focusing primarily on the precarious situations faced by the victims but not the underlying question of "why" and the root cause and the structural factors contributing to these issues.

Media Attention and State Mitigation

The study reveals a significant shift in media coverage of Indonesian migrant workers in Türkiye, particularly in the portrayal of the state's role in addressing migrant issues. While sensational cases and tragedies continue to receive attention, there is a noticeable media pattern towards emphasizing government narratives on migrant protection efforts.

Diplomatic missions, specifically the Indonesian Consulate General in Istanbul and the Embassy in Ankara, are frequently depicted as the first line of response in crisis situations. Media reports prominently feature their roles in repatriation, issuing warnings, and coordinating with local authorities, reflecting a narrative that positions the state as an active protector of its citizens abroad. The Embassy's key functions, as portrayed in the media, include repatriating distressed workers using government funds or compensation from recruiting agencies, issuing warnings against accepting domestic work in Türkiye, and collaborating with regional law enforcement authorities for criminal investigations. However, the reports also highlight challenges in conducting in-depth investigations in Türkiye due to limited jurisdiction.

> Head of Sub-Directorate IV of the NTB Police Directorate, AKBP I Made Pujawati explained, 'we are trying hard to dismantle this network, until now we are also still developing'. Pujawati admitted that she had to go down to Türkiye to investigate. 'I was a week in Türkiye, it was difficult to dismantle this. Because we have to coordinate with the Turkish Police.

> We could not penetrate the location of the shelter that we suspected. But the Indonesian Embassy was able to overcome our difficulties', said Pujawati (Revealing the Stories of 6 TKW, Victims of Human Trafficking from NTB, 2018)

Interestingly, the media reports also show that there are contrasting approaches between government bodies. While the Embassy and Kemlu adopt a stronger stance with outright warnings against domestic work in Türkiye, the Central and Regional Manpower Offices opt for a more cautious approach, emphasizing the importance of choosing government-sanctioned recruiting firms. The contrasting tones in warnings issued by different government bodies highlight the complexities and potential inconsistencies in the state's approach to migrant worker protection.

> When asked about the recent case of a number of people (migrant workers) who were stranded in Türkiye and deceived because they were given holiday visas, even though at the beginning they were promised to be able to work there, Ida Bagus Ngurah Arda, the Head of Manpower in Bali urged the public to be more careful (not to use tourist visa) and follow the recommended stages (18,248 Migrant Workers from Bali Have Departed Again, Most to Italy then Türkiye, 2022).
> Indonesian Ambassador to Türkiye Lalu Muhammad Iqbal urged the Indonesian people not to easily believe job offers as domestic assistants (ART) in Türkiye. This is because, he said, the job is illegal and has the potential to become a case of human trafficking. 'Almost certainly all people who go to Türkiye are offered as domestic assistants in Türkiye, is certainly illegal,' said Lalu (Domestic Work in Türkiye is Illegal, Says Indonesian Envoy, 2021).

The media also highlighted limited narrative SBMI (Migrant Workers Union of Indonesia) is portrayed as pushing for reparations from irresponsible recruiting firms, such as in the case of a trafficking incident in Indramayu regency in 2022, where a recruiting firm was responsible for the physical abuse of a domestic migrant worker in Türkiye. SBMI's efforts aimed to compel the firm to either pay for the worker's repatriation or face legal consequences. This only highlight from NGOs, shows that either media coverage notably lacks substantial representation from NGO efforts, with only brief mentions of their push for reparations in specific cases.

The media's portrayal of collaborative efforts between the Embassy, regional authorities, and law enforcement in addressing human trafficking is particularly noteworthy. By highlighting these inter-agency collaborations and even the incentivization of successful investigations, the media constructs a narrative of an proactive and coordinated state response

to migrant exploitation. However, the media's reliance on government sources in these reports raises questions about the balance and comprehensiveness of the coverage. While it's crucial to report on state interventions, an overemphasis on official narratives may overshadow the complex realities and challenges faced by migrant workers on the ground.

Discussion

Precarity Works and Mediating State Protection

The Jokowi administration's strategy to limit the emigration of low-skilled migrant workers, particularly domestic workers, in favor of promoting skilled labor migration to East Asia and Europe, represents a significant shift in Indonesia's labor export policy. This approach, driven by economic considerations and concerns for national prestige, aligns with what Dewanto (2020) terms "domesticated protection." This concept encapsulates the government's efforts to safeguard both the economic interests and the international reputation of Indonesia, reflecting a continuation of the state's paternalistic approach to women migrant workers as discussed earlier in this paper.

The media's role in mediating this policy shift is crucial and multifaceted. As observed in the findings, there has been a notable change in media coverage of migrant worker issues during the Jokowi era. The transition from sensationalist reporting of abuse scandals to a more government-aligned narrative echoes the evolution of state perspectives on women's migration as outlined in the introduction. This shift in media portrayal can be understood as part of the third phase of state views on women migrants, where the victimization narrative is being replaced by a discourse of protection and formalisation. This transition means government has wrestled and established the narrative authority from predominantly NGOs protectionist campaigns. It also means the Indonesian government has the ability to claim an audience and providing "the voice" and yet in doing so, the government renders migrant women workers speechless over their own circumstances and future (Malkki, 1996).

This new pattern raises questions about the balance between reporting and government advocacy. While the focus on government mitigation efforts, such as swift repatriation and awareness campaigns, provides a more proactive image of state involvement, it may also obscure the ongoing challenges faced by migrant workers. The media's reliance on government sources, as noted in the findings, potentially limits the diversity of perspectives presented to the public. The Indonesian government narratives are also potentially fulling the risks of unofficial migration channels, media outlets contribute to the state's efforts to channel migration through sanctioned routes. This may inadvertently stigmatize those who choose or are forced to use unofficial channels, potentially exacerbating their vulnerability. according to Platt's (2018) argument, where state protectionism may do more harm than good.

For instance, the protectionary discourse that led to stringent bureaucratization despite the success of the migrant export program over decades in generating remittance, instead, ended up exacerbating more undocumented migration that opens the door to exploitation and human trafficking. As the loss of annual remittances to lower-income households following the moratorium ban could be a contributing factor to the high numbers of undocumented migration and human trafficking to banned countries over the years (Manning et al., 2018). As evidenced by a post-moratorium survey by Migrant Care, the ban tends to push migrant workers to seek employment opportunities abroad through unregistered recruitment agents or firms, opening the door to exploitation and human trafficking (Migrant Care, 2017).

The findings also shows a universal pattern of architecture of silence or strategic silence. Media representation shift from facilitating NGOs public pressure, media sensationalist coverage and now the state narrated coverage, silencing victimization narratives still persists. This continuing trend, while highlighting real vulnerabilities, inadvertently perpetuates a passive image of migrant women workers that fails to capture the complexity of their experiences and agency.

The unintended consequences of labor policy reform, as revealed in the findings, highlights the complex interplay between policy, media representation, and migrant realities. This analysis underscores the importance of understanding media coverage not just as a reflection of policy, but as an active participant and medium in shaping public discourse, state policy and its outcomes.

Migration Infrastructure Nexus Between Indonesia and Türkiye

As Türkiye transitioned from a migrant-sending country to a major migrant-receiving one, particularly following the Syrian refugee influx, its labor market has become increasingly dependent on migrant labor, especially in sectors like domestic or care services and tourism. This shift has introduced new dynamics to Türkiye's labor landscape, complicating the traditional understanding of migrant work that previously centered on workers from former Soviet countries and the Philippines. The emerging presence of Indonesian women in these sectors, often unnoticed and potentially vulnerable, raises concerns about the true magnitude of Indonesia's labor force in Türkiye and the nature of their employment.

The labor market for migrant women workers in Türkiye is not homogeneous, reflecting broader trends of feminization of migration. This phenomenon is driven by Türkiye's familistic society, low welfare support for care services, and increasing participation of Turkish women in the professional workforce. These factors have contributed to a rising demand for migrant women workers, particularly in domestic care services. Simultaneously, the tourism industry's need for multilingual and skilled workers has created

opportunities for Indonesian women migrants, especially those from Bali. However, the extent of these variables' influence on Indonesian migrant women workers remains a subject for critical research.

In response to these global labor dynamics, Indonesia has implemented two key policies under President Jokowi's administration: domesticated protection and formal labor export (Killias, 2018; Manning, 2018; Dewanto, 2020). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs implements domesticated protection by restricting domestic workers' overseas employment, while BP2MI (Agency for the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, previously BNP2TKI) manages the formal labor export policy, promoting and legalizing formal sector workers. These policies have created a complex migration infrastructure nexus encompassing state regulations, intermediaries, and media representation.

State policies affect migration flows through formalization and stringent bureaucratization, potentially increasing the risk of undocumented work. This is evidenced by media representations that highlight migrant agency and constructed demand, as seen in accounts of undocumented employment that expose the limitations of domesticated protection. Intermediaries in both Türkiye and Indonesia play a crucial role in facilitating migrant workers' mobility and securing employment, often navigating the gaps between policy intentions and on-the-ground realities.

The media's attention to government narratives, particularly cases involving Indonesian workers employed by Syrian migrants in Türkiye's domestic care and tourism sectors, underscores the complexity of these labor dynamics. This coverage not only reflects state protection and labor export formalization efforts but also reinforces them, shaping public perception and policy discourse.

This intricate migration infrastructure nexus between Türkiye's evolving labor market needs, Indonesia's policy responses, and the role of various actors in the migration process represents the complex realities of labor migration during Jokowi's presidential terms. It highlights the tension between protecting workers and meeting economic demands, while also revealing the potential unintended consequences of restrictive policies, such as increased vulnerability through undocumented channels. Understanding this migration infrastructure is crucial for developing more effective and nuanced approaches to labor migration management that balance worker protection with the realities of global labor markets, especially in an emerging corridor.

Conclusion

This study reveals a complex migration infrastructure nexus between Indonesia's evolving labor export policies, state protectionism, and media representation of Indonesian migrant women workers in Türkiye. The findings highlight a significant shift in media representation patterns during Jokowi's presidential terms, from sensationalist reporting

of abuse scandals to narratives more aligned with government labor export and migrant protection policies. This shift reflects the government's efforts to promote formal labor exports while distancing the country's image from domestic worker exports.

However, this policy shift has unintended consequences. The study reinforces recent arguments that stringent bureaucratization and restrictions on domestic or care workers migration have exacerbated undocumented migration and human trafficking, particularly evident in the emerging migration corridor to Türkiye. The media's role is crucial in mediating between state interests, migrant lived experiences, and public perception. As the government takes over narrative authority to manage labor migration flow, it potentially further marginalizes and stigmatizes the voices of migrant women workers.

The portrayal of Indonesian migrant women workers in Türkiye's domestic and tourism sectors reveals patterns of precarious work, vulnerability to exploitation, and complex labor market dynamics, particularly involving Syrian employers. This underscores the missing nuances of contextual factors in destination countries contributing to migrant workers' vulnerabilities, such as labor market restructuring and labor demand construction in media representation.

In conclusion, this study critiques the role of media in shaping public discourse on migrant workers and calls for a more balanced approach that acknowledges both the agency of migrant women and the structural challenges they face. It urges a reevaluation of Indonesia's labor export policies and media practices to better protect migrant workers' rights while accurately representing their experiences. Finally, as argued by Nikunen (2019), this study also advises future research to move beyond methodological representation studies and proactively seek spaces of migrant agency, listening to grassroots voices and providing critical alternatives.

Appendix

Article types are coded as 'NR' (News Reports) or 'F' (Features). Themes are represented by codes like 'AWC' (Abusive Working Condition), 'PM' (Protection and Mitigation), 'EHT' (Exploitation/Human Trafficking), 'TEV' (Türkiye's Earthquake Victim), 'P' (Procedural), 'NP' (Non-Procedural), and 'CR' (Covid-19).

No.	News Article	Source	Date	Type	Theme
1.	11 Balinese PMIs Who Were Stranded in Türkiye Finally Repatriated	Kompas	8/4/22	NR	PM, EHT, NP
2.	18,248 migrant workers from Bali have departed again, most to Italy then Türkiye	Detik	12/4/22	NR	PM, EHT, NP
3.	2 housewives in Lombok suspected of trafficking to Türkiye	Detik	12/1/21	NR	EHT, NP, AWC

No.	News Article	Source	Date	Type	Theme
4.	Bareskrim Arrests Iraqi Man Who Distributes Illegal Migrant Workers in Jaktim Apartment	Detik	25/3/21	NR	EHT, PM, NP
5.	BP3MI Bali Coordinates with Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Facilitate the Repatriation of Indonesian Migrant Workers from Türkiye	Detik	16/8/22	NR	AWC, PM, P
6.	Aftermath of migrant workers stuck in Türkiye, police keep an eye on distribution agencies in Bali	Kompas	12/4/22	NR	AWC, PM, NP
7.	Stories of migrant workers from Bali in Türkiye, working 13 hours to playing cat and mouse with immigration officers	Kompas	11/4/22	F	EHT, AWC, NP
8.	Domestic Work in Türkiye is Illegal, Says Indonesian Envoy	Kompas	6/4/21	NR	EHT, PM, NP
9.	Emak-emak dragged into human trafficking case, claims to have a police son-in-law	Detik	15/6/23	NR	EHT, PM
10.	NTB Police Thwart TPPO, Receive Award from Indonesian Ambassador in Türkiye	Detik	17/5/22	NR	EHT, PM
11.	Türkiye Earthquake Victims Irma's Path of Destiny: Moving to Diyabarkir 40 Days Before the Earthquake	Detik	19/2/23	F	TEV
12.	Indonesian Embassy asks Indonesian citizens not to accept ART jobs in Türkiye!	Detik	6/4/2021	NR	EHT, PM
13.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mentioned an Increase in TPPO Cases in Indonesia Throughout 2022	Detik	4/4/23	NR	EHT, PM
14.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs Reveals 3 Modes of Perpetrators Bringing Illegal Migrant Workers, Latest in Türkiye	Detik	28/4/22	NR	EHT, PM, NP
15.	Irma Lestari's Sad Story: Wanting to Buy a Bicycle and Pay for College	Detik	19/2/23	F	TEV
16.	The Sad Story of a Migrant Worker in Türkiye, stacked like Cats and Tortured to Broken Ribs	Kompas	23/2/18	F	EHT, PM, NP
17.	Indonesian Consulate General in Istanbul and Indonesian Embassy in Ankara Help Repatriate 144 Indonesians Detained in Türkiye	Detik	17/6/20	NR	CR

No.	News Article	Source	Date	Type	Theme
18.	Revealing the Stories of 6 TKW, Victims of Human Trafficking from NTB	Kompas	5/2/18	NR	EHT, PM
19.	Sad! Cirebon resident killed while working illegally in Türkiye	Detik	9/6/23	NR	EHT, NP
20.	Fate of 1,375 Balinese migrant workers in Türkiye after deadly quake	Detik	6/2/23	NR	TEV, P
21.	Indonesian Migrant Worker from Indramayu Mistreated by Employer in Türkiye for Not Wearing Mask	Kompas	12/12/22	NR	AWC, EHT, PM, NP
22.	Stranded migrant workers in Türkiye write to Jokowi, Bali Manpower Office opens up to respond	Detik	16/8/22	NR	PM, P
23.	Bali Police Takes Over Case of Alleged Fraud in Sending Indonesian Migrant Workers to Türkiye	Detik	29/3/22	NR	EHT, NP
24.	NTB Police Arrests 2 Perpetrators of TPPO Modus Illegal PMI, Victims Flee Türkiye	Detik	23/2/21	NR	AWC, EHT, PM, NP
25.	Police Receive 560 Reports of TPPO Cases in a Month, 649 Suspects	Detik	28/6/2	NR	EHT, NP
26.	Police: 1,000 Migrant Workers Victimised by Trafficking in Persons to the Middle East Since 2015	Detik	4/4/23	NR	EHT, NP
27.	Bali Trafficker Sentenced to 5 Years in Prison for Funnelling 13 Migrant Workers to Türkiye	Kompas	26/4/23	NR	EHT, NP
28.	Around 1,200 People Become Victims of Trafficking to Morocco, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye	Kompas	4/9/2018	NR	EHT, NP
29.	Tears Greet the Arrival of Wayan Supini's Body from Türkiye	Kompas	23/2/23	F	TEV, P
30.	Balinese migrant workers in Türkiye safe from earthquake, labor office creates quick reaction group	Detik	6/2/23	NR	TEV, P, PM

Orcid

Daffa Ramadhani Yanuar ⓘD *https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6702-0215*

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