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Producing the Self-Regulating Subject: Liberal Protection in Indonesia's Migration Infrastructure

Andy Scott Chang

ABSTRACT

Labour protection has become a dominant agenda in global migration governance, particularly for sending countries whose diasporic citizens are denied political rights in host states. Despite having limited authority to arbitrate extraterritorial disputes, sending countries like Indonesia have deployed novel techniques of statecraft to improve migrant protection. Through the prism of the professional competence exam and pre-departure orientation seminar, this article investigates the Indonesian state's regulatory practices that focus on migrant conduct. Although outbound domestic workers are subject to a prolonged process of skill formation, other Indonesian contract workers pursue emigration upon acquiring basic legal knowledge without undergoing accreditation. While both programs are designed to inculcate migrant capabilities for self-protection, the state's professionalization of domestic workers constitutes a liberal strategy of exclusion that is predicated on their master status as "vulnerable victims" in public discourse. To understand Indonesia's increasingly mediated migration infrastructure, then, requires attention to the liberal rationality of protection that involves the transformation of migrants into self-regulating subjects.

Keywords: international migration, infrastructure, governmentality, ethnography, Indonesia, domestic workers, gender, skills training

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With the help of a sister working abroad, Nur, an elementary-school graduate and former migrant to Saudi Arabia, secured an employment contract for Taiwan.¹ The forty-five-year-old previously failed a state-mandated credentialing examination, which delayed her overseas departure. During Nur's retest in Ponorogo, Indonesia, on 3 August 2016, Yuni, a licensed assessor, instructed Nur to speak Mandarin and to pretend that I was her employer: "Make a phone call to your boss to tell them that granny is ill." Nur stuttered and gazed into space. Unable to produce a desired response, she wrote on the chalkboard the daily chores she would perform, in transliterated Mandarin. Yuni then turned to me and said, with a grin, "Would you recommend her?" Out of Nur's earshot, the assessor intimated that Nur, despite her "slow wits," was an ideal candidate for foreign elders because she possessed humility. As Nur's linguistic performance became a spectacle, three trainees began sobbing, one of whom explained while wiping her cheeks, "The exam's tough ... I pity her. She's taken the test twice but still hasn't passed." Six hours into the examination, thirty-three women squeezed against each other, eyeing their results on the bulletin board. Four crestfallen women welled up after discovering they were appraised as "not yet competent" (*belum kompeten*), and would have to retake the exam. Meanwhile, fellow classmates scrambled to embrace Nur in joyful outbursts mixed with tears: "Thank God! *Alhamdulillah!*" Nur had just been accredited by the Indonesian government to work as a live-in caregiver in Taiwan.

As part of Indonesia's mission to professionalize its transnational workforce, prospective domestic workers like Nur must obtain a certificate of competence before working overseas. Depending on the destination country, they undertake 200 to 600 hours of training in hotel housekeeping, foreign language proficiency, and culinary and hospital caregiving skills that culminate in the professional competence examination (*Uji Kompetensi Profesi*; UJK).² Instruction in privately run training centres is enforced via an online biometric platform: trainees clock in and out daily with their fingerprints to provide documented evidence of their progress to the National Authority for the Placement and Protection of Migrant Workers (*Badan Nasional Perlindungan dan Penempatan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia*; BNP2TKI). To prevent brokers from forging credentials, examination institutes licensed by another government body, the National Authority for Professional Certification (*Badan Nasional Sertifikasi Profesi*; BNSP), are entrusted to evaluate candidates' skills. Irrespective of gender and occupation, migrants are further required to attend a daylong pre-departure orientation seminar (*Pembekalan Akhir*

¹ Pseudonyms are used for most informants, and acronyms for government officials, to protect their confidentiality.

² As of 2016, the state-mandated training duration for Taiwan and Hong Kong was 600 hours, while for Singapore and Malaysia it was 400 and 200 hours, respectively.

Pemberangkatan; PAP) informing them of their rights and responsibilities as Indonesia's diasporic citizens.

The post-Suharto state has designated the UJK and the PAP as instruments for protecting Indonesia's emigrant population, most of whom are low-skilled contract labour to Asia and the Middle East. State rhetoric notwithstanding, outbound guest workers in the formal sector, such as construction, fishing, and manufacturing, do not undergo the accreditation that is compulsory for domestic workers.³ Not only is there no analogous examination in place, a training program of a similar level of difficulty and duration has not been created for formal migrants despite being mandated by law. The latter, moreover, are not assessed on their mastery of destination country languages and professional knowledge as a precondition for overseas employment. In other words, whereas a protracted process of skill formation conditions domestic workers' mobility through interlocking networks of public and private intermediaries, others pursue emigration without experiencing a similar level of labour control. Based on participant observation and interviews with sixty-five government officials and personnel of training and credentialing firms, this article addresses why and how Indonesia has pursued a bifurcated approach to governing its mobile population in an era of global angst about migrant insecurity.

Although students of migration have examined how host governments induce migrant precarity through entry and settlement restrictions and denial of social rights,⁴ less attention has been paid to how sending states ameliorate it while sustaining migrant access to global labour markets. This article explores governmental management of migrant workers in the context of sending states' circumscribed authority to oversee labour conditions outside their sovereign domain. A burgeoning corpus of literature has revealed that origin countries moderate their citizens' extraterritorial marginality by negotiating bilateral agreements and deploying labour attachés to enhance worksite protection.⁵ However, the manner in which source countries address migrant vulnerability through enacting exit procedures, such as pre-departure programs, remains understudied. Some analysts stress that the Indonesian government's weak oversight has permitted brokers to erect despotic regiments of training to instill the obedience needed

³ I focus on migrants who are deployed by private recruitment agencies, as they constitute the bulk of Indonesia's labour migrants. Those deployed through Indonesia's "government-to-government" schemes with South Korea and Japan undergo training as part of host state entry requirements. For migrant domestic workers, accreditation is imposed solely by the Indonesian government.

⁴ Didier Fassin, "Policing Borders, Producing Boundaries. The Governmentality of Immigration in Dark Times," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40, no. 1 (21 October 2011): 213–226; Nicholas De Genova, "Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31, no. 1 (October 2002): 419–447.

⁵ Nana Oishi, *Women in Motion: Globalization, State Policies, and Labor Migration in Asia* (Stanford University Press, 2005).

for profitability in a cross-border debt-bondage system.⁶ Others maintain that state-driven education is of dubious quality, given that it is less concerned about safeguarding migrant welfare than rendering labour outflows governable by delegating management to recruitment agencies.⁷ Both perspectives highlight the Indonesian government's leniency towards the migration industry as contributing to the abuse of women migrant domestics. But while lax regulations and state-industry collusion characterized emigration policies in Indonesia's illiberal, developmentalist era,⁸ the post-Suharto state's intensifying regulation of contract labour in recent years has garnered scant analysis.⁹ Despite documenting migrant powerlessness in a commercial migration infrastructure, researchers have not fully explained why formal guest workers are not subject to training like domestic workers, if labour exploitation is the state's overarching goal. In this article, I consider how state strategies to manage migrant conduct are deployed for an end distinct from exploitation: labour protection. Under public outcry concerning the mistreatment of women domestics abroad, Indonesia's nascent democracy has altered its erstwhile neglect of migrant wellbeing by regulating contract labour through discourses and practices of paternalistic protection. Building on Xiang and Lindquist's discussion about migration infrastructure's regulatory dimensions and feminist scholarship on state paternalism,¹⁰ I contend that central to Indonesia's project of migrant protection is the production of rights-bearing subjects capable of governing themselves in precarious transnational labour markets. However, not all migrants are considered equally capable of self-protection. Since women domestics are perceived as vulnerable due to their limited education and gendered occupational hazards, they are targeted by the Indonesian government to elevate their workplace autonomy through skilling. Rather than viewing

⁶ Daromir Rudnyckyi, "Technologies of Servitude: Governmentality and Indonesian Transnational Labor Migration," *Anthropological Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (2004): 407–434; Olivia Killias, "The Politics of Bondage in the Recruitment, Training and Placement of Indonesian Migrant Domestic Workers," *Sociologist* 59, no. 2 (2009): 145–172.

⁷ Killias suggests that the Indonesian government's emigration programs have the effect of reinforcing the power of the recruitment industry by requiring migrants to utilize their services for all steps of the migratory process. See Olivia Killias, *Follow the Maid: Domestic Worker Migration from Indonesia* (NIAS Press, 2018): 40, 42, 48; Ellen Prusinski, "Becoming Siap Mental: Education for Transnational Labour Migration," *Ethnography and Education* 12, no. 3 (September 2, 2017): 329–346.

⁸ Despite setting licensing and training procedures, the Ministry of Manpower rarely enforced them during the Suharto era. Weak oversight was also evidenced by the large scale of migrant women exiting the country via irregular channels. See Wayne Palmer, *Indonesia's Overseas Labour Migration Programme, 1969–2010* (Brill, 2016): 43, 45.

⁹ A notable exception is Johan Lindquist, "Labour Recruitment, Circuits of Capital and Gendered Mobility: Reconceptualizing the Indonesian Migration Industry," *Pacific Affairs* 83, no. 1 (2010): 115–132.

¹⁰ Biao Xiang and Johan Lindquist, "Migration Infrastructure," *International Migration Review* 48 (September 2014): S122–48; Maria Platt, "Migration, Moralities and Moratoriums: Female Labour Migrants and the Tensions of Protectionism in Indonesia," *Asian Studies Review* 42, no. 1 (2 January 2018): 89–106.

labour management and protection as incompatible logics, I draw on Foucault's critique of liberalism to argue that Indonesia's scheme for managing female émigrés embodies a paternalistic logic of protection that demands their subjection to a prolonged course of mental and bodily discipline.

Sending States and the Governmentality of Migration Infrastructure

Recent scholarship has underlined the growing clout of developing countries in regulating labour migration. From promoting return investment to alleviating social unrest, sending states engage their overseas citizens by devising "diasporic strategies" to harness remittances for development.¹¹ They also arbitrate transborder labour relations through a variety of policy instruments, such as brokering memoranda of understanding and imposing moratoriums on countries with an appalling record of rights violations.¹² In Asia, there has been sustained interest in the Philippine model of labour migration, with international organizations hailing it as worthy of emulation by other sending countries like Indonesia.¹³ The Philippine state is remarkable for inculcating contract labour's competencies in myriad occupational categories to foster the country's comparative advantage in labour export, even while moulding them into entrepreneurial agents who actively undertake professionalization, through higher education and credentialing, in their preparation to work abroad.¹⁴ My study complements Ortega's work in this special issue in noting how human capital ideologies influence sending state strategies to nurture emigrant capabilities. However, while the Philippines deploys skilling as a means of capturing remittances from higher-value niches of labour markets such as the hospitality industry, Indonesia follows a different pattern of state-regulated emigration, in which only the most vulnerable migrants—domestic workers—are compelled to meet credentialing requirements. I engage Foucauldian and feminist debates on liberal government and state paternalism to underscore the ethical concerns

¹¹ Justin Peñafiel, "Regulating Migration to Australia and Back to the Philippines: Applying a 'Diaspora Strategies' Framework," *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 36, no. 2 (July 2015): 201–214; Natasha Iskander, *Creative State: Forty Years of Migration and Development Policy in Morocco and Mexico* (Ithaca: ILR Press, 2010).

¹² Jaya Ramji-Nogales, "Under the Canopy: Migration Governance in Southeast Asia," (2017): 36; Maureen Hickey, "Diaspora Strategies in the Sending States of Southeast Asia: Rights, Skills and Questions of Value: Diaspora Strategies in Sending States," *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 36, no. 2 (July 2015): 147–163.

¹³ International Labour Office, ed., *Using Indonesian Law to Protect and Empower Indonesian Migrant Workers: Some Lessons from the Philippines: ILO Project on Mobilising Action for the Protection of Domestic Workers from Forced Labour and Trafficking in Southeast Asia* (Jakarta: International Labour Organization, 2006).

¹⁴ Anna Romina Guevarra, *Marketing Dreams, Manufacturing Heroes: The Transnational Labor Brokering of Filipino Workers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009).

about domestic workers' vulnerability that underpin Indonesia's liberal migration infrastructure, which is distinct from the Philippines' neoliberal, market-oriented emigration program.¹⁵

According to Foucault, the operation of modern power is made possible not only by the institutions of the state as they are commonly understood, but also by the refined management of human conduct.¹⁶ As it is difficult to regulate in detail the behaviour of every member of a social body, government operates more efficiently "by educating desires and configuring habits, aspirations, and beliefs" so that individuals comport themselves in compliance with prescribed ethical values.¹⁷ Scholars have incorporated Foucault's insights to interrogate liberalism as an art of government with its distinctive mode of thinking. A fundamental premise of liberalism is that human beings are born equal, free, and rational, with the aptitude for self-conduct. Liberal practitioners, however, construct a dichotomy between "free individuals" and those lacking the capacity to exercise their citizenship, proposing technical solutions—through schooling and other disciplinary institutions—to "create individuals who do not need to be governed by others, but will govern themselves, master themselves, care for themselves."¹⁸ Uday Mehta elucidates liberalism's paradox of unfreedom with regard to the management of subordinate groups: colonial subjects, for example, were denied self-rule due to cultural deficiencies that could only be remedied through benign tutelage.¹⁹ Tania Li further extends Mehta's thesis to illustrate how expert knowledge is employed to discipline marginal groups through liberal strategies of exclusion. As she points out, coercive interventions are often reserved for subordinate populations, like peasants, even as other groups are permitted to manage themselves with minimal interference: "[g]roups found not to possess the necessary capacity—women, children, the sick, the pauper, other races, colonial subjects—[are] governed differently, in idioms of trusteeship, stewardship, benevolent protection, paternalism."²⁰ Liberal reason thus presupposes the illiberal exclusion of some individuals, whose

¹⁵ The Philippines has a well-institutionalized emigration program, with training and orientation seminars for diverse employment sectors that seek to transform contract labour into neoliberal subjects who are responsible for sending remittances and will return to the Philippines at the end of their contracts. See Robyn M. Rodriguez, *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

¹⁶ To manage a population involves more than an arsenal of laws: it entails, in addition, rational principles that combine techniques of discipline and the self. See Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991): 93.

¹⁷ Tania Murray Li, "Governmentality," *Anthropologica* 49, no. 2 (2007): 275.

¹⁸ Nikolas Rose, "Government, Authority and Expertise in Advanced Liberalism," *Economy and Society* 22, no. 3 (August 1993): 291.

¹⁹ Central to this paradox is the distinction between humankind's universal capacity for freedom and the preconditions for its realization. See Uday S. Mehta, "Liberal Strategies of Exclusion," *Politics & Society* 18, no. 4 (1 December 1990): 428.

²⁰ Tania Murray Li, "Fixing Non-Market Subjects: Governing Land and Population in the Global South," *Foucault Studies*, no. 18 (2014): 39.

incapacity merits paternalistic protection to cultivate their self-regulation.²¹ It is important to note that liberalism does not assume a marginal group's permanent inability to transform into rights-bearing subjects. Like children whose potential to become rational beings is accomplished through parental supervision, their ineptitude may be overcome through a finite period of trusteeship.

I argue that the Indonesian state's approach to labour migration is predicated on liberal governmentality: it has designated contract labour as a subordinate population whose conduct must be reconfigured to achieve self-sufficiency in the transnational workplace. State actors adopt a liberal ethos of protection, partly because they carry class assumptions about the psychological flaws of labour migrants: rural, less-educated, and underprivileged individuals who are unable to fend for themselves. Unlike formal guest workers, however, women domestics are exceptional targets of state paternalism because of their master status as "vulnerable victims" in popular discourse. I turn to the feminist literature to demonstrate how this victim narrative has been appropriated by the Indonesian state to legitimate paternalistic protection for domestic workers.

Feminist scholars maintain that migrant domestics are susceptible to abuse, because they lack leverage in a private employment relationship that is poorly regulated, because of their subordinate status as women, and because they are deprived of labour standards that accrue to citizens.²² The dearth of legal protection, the perception that migrant women are docile, coupled with widespread media coverage about their torture at the hands of employers,²³ has generated a public discourse in origin communities that frames domestic workers as defenceless women who require protection. Yet, as many source countries have a material interest in the sustainability of labour migration, the demand for foreign exchange may overshadow that for migrant wellbeing. A contradictory gendered morality, in which migrant domestics are simultaneously constructed as "national heroes" and "vulnerable victims," underscores the dilemma between economic development and labour protection in sending states' relationship to contract labour.²⁴ Rachel Silvey elucidates this tension in the Indonesian government's constitution of gendered mobility, positing that while the New Order regime

²¹ Antina von Schnitzler, "Citizenship Prepaid: Water, Calculability, and Techno-Politics in South Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 34, no. 4 (December 2008): 901.

²² Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, eds., *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2004).

²³ ILO states that a major reason why Indonesian domestic workers are vulnerable is "their exclusion from the coverage of general labour legislation both in Indonesia and abroad." Evidently, the Indonesian state has adopted this position in its reform of the migration program. International Labour Office, *Using Indonesian Law*, 3.

²⁴ Carol Chan, "Gendered Morality and Development Narratives: The Case of Female Labor Migration from Indonesia," *Sustainability* 6, no. 10 (3 October 2014): 6949–6972.

promoted female emigration to bolster its development agenda, its neglect of labour protection placed women at risk of abuse by brokers and employers.²⁵ However, Maria Platt postulates that the post-Suharto state has embraced a contradictory gender ideology that treats migrant domestics as not solely agents of development, but also as vulnerable women in need of both protection and surveillance.²⁶ While Platt suggests that the Indonesian state has utilized a moratorium on “maid export” to orchestrate concern for emigrant women, my study demonstrates that this paternalistic rationale extends to its pre-departure programs as well. I build on Mehta and Platt’s work by showing how the Indonesian state deploys a liberal logic of protection, crafts graduated emigration policies, and regulates migrant groups unequally based on their imagined degrees of vulnerability. The post-Suharto state, I argue, has compelled outbound domestic workers to undertake both accreditation and orientation, because they are discursively constructed as “vulnerable victims” and hence exemplify classic subjects of liberal exception as described by Mehta. In particular, skill formation under the state’s guidance is viewed as the most effective vehicle for self-protection, due to the premise that those with a modicum of professional aptitude possess bargaining power in the employment relationship. In the rest of this article, I analyze the Indonesian government’s rationality and practices of liberal protection by documenting its management of outgoing migrants during the UJK and the PAP.

Research Methods

This article is based on nineteen months of ethnographic research in metro Jakarta; Ponorogo, East Java; and Manado, North Sulawesi. From October 2014 to May 2015 and January 2016 to December 2016, I conducted participant observation at four licensed private international placement companies (*Perusahaan Penempatan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia Swasta*)—three in Ponorogo and one in Jakarta—and at the Jakarta firm’s offshore office in Manado. The four firms annually dispatch 300 to 800 women to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and Malaysia to serve as housekeepers, babysitters, and elderly caregivers. The Jakarta firm additionally deploys around 1,000 industrial migrants per year to Taiwan, and has an in-house training unit for factory operators of both genders. This company’s specialization in formal and informal sectors has given me a unique platform from which to examine the logic of the credentialing program. Through snowball sampling involving recommendations from recruitment agencies and government personnel, in the period stated above and from December 2017 to January 2018, I carried

²⁵ Rachel Silvey, “Transnational Domestication: State Power and Indonesian Migrant Women in Saudi Arabia,” *Political Geography* 23, no. 3 (March 2004): 249, 252.

²⁶ Platt, “Migration, Moralities,” 90, 95.

out sixty-five semi-structured interviews in Bahasa Indonesia composed of management, trainers, and recruiters of forty-six licensed employment agencies; four professional certification boards; and fifteen government officials at the BNP2TKI, the Ministry of Manpower, and manpower bureaus at the provincial and regency level.

Employment agencies are legal intermediaries that enlist, market, and supply Indonesian contract labour to foreign employers. I draw on multi-sited ethnographic methods by investigating the major procedures that prospective migrants undertake prior to overseas employment.²⁷ My positionality as a Taiwanese American who speaks Mandarin fluently granted me relatively smooth access to recruitment agencies and prospective migrants, probably because many of them had social ties with Taiwan and perceived me as unthreatening. I spent two to four months at each training centre as a volunteer language instructor for Taiwan- and Singapore-bound factory and domestic workers. I observed fifteen UJK tests for prospective migrant domestics, three PAP seminars in Jakarta and Surabaya, and observed over 1,200 hours of classroom training. Using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo, I inductively coded interview transcripts and field notes to focus on the tensions between respondents' narratives and practices concerning the government's skill training and orientation seminars.

From Developmentalism to Protection: Shifting Logics of Migration Infrastructure

Although Indonesia has a long history of international migration dating to the Dutch colonial era, it was not until the early 1980s that the postcolonial state instituted a bureaucratic structure for regulating labour migration. Unlike neighbouring countries such as China and Vietnam, whose guest worker schemes were initially run by state-owned enterprises,²⁸ the private sector has dominated Indonesia's program since its inception. Amid plummeting oil revenues in the 1970s, the emergence of remittances as an alternative source of foreign exchange induced the New Order state to shift its approach to labour export towards active sponsorship.²⁹ However, the absence of a global regulatory framework, along with Indonesia's labour repression, meant that migrant protection was not a priority. According to Silvey, to buttress its developmental objectives, the authoritarian regime

²⁷ Michael Burawoy, *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

²⁸ Biao Xiang, "The Base: A Case of Infrastructural Governance of Labour Outmigration in China," *Mobilities* 12, no. 2 (4 March 2017): 175–87; Le Thu Huong, "A New Portrait of Indentured Labour: Vietnamese Labour Migration to Malaysia," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 38, no. 6 (1 January 2010): 880–896.

²⁹ Riwanto Tirtosudarmo, "The Indonesian State's Response to Migration," *SOJOURN: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* (1999): 212–228.

constructed working-class women as “sacrificial mothers” to lure their incorporation into weakly protected transnational domestic work, spawning a lucrative industry for Indonesian housemaids in Saudi Arabia.³⁰ Weak oversight, in turn, gave rise to innumerable broker malpractices. By the 1990s, the late Suharto state was under pressure to handle spiralling incidents of migrant abuse. Commenting on the New Order’s inaction toward industry at the time, a former attaché to the UAE states, “there arose many problems both within and outside the country, the problem of [migrants] becoming commodities, as business objects.”³¹ Media reportage on extreme cases of employer violence, in the form of torture, rape, and capital punishment, further galvanized public scrutiny towards the plight of migrant women.

It was not until the early 2000s that domestic and international developments converged to place migrant protection on the agenda. Globally, suppression of human trafficking, control of irregular migration, and migrant protection emerged as hegemonic norms diffused by transnational civil society actors and supranational organizations.³² Indonesia’s ongoing democratization provided an additional impetus to emigration reform, leading to the passage of the country’s landmark legislation, Law No. 39, in 2004, which has dramatically intensified the state’s mediation of the migration infrastructure.³³ The state, nonetheless, remains bound by competing goals. Despite its growing reluctance to facilitate the export of maids as evidenced by the recent moratorium on twenty-one Middle Eastern destinations, the burgeoning democracy is obligated to guarantee its citizens’ economic right and adequate labour standards in host countries.³⁴

This “will to improve”³⁵ a population’s welfare has inaugurated novel political technologies to render labour outflows legible by defining “procedural migration” (*migrasi prosedural*) as the centrepiece of Indonesian statecraft. This term refers to emigration that satisfies Indonesia’s exit procedures, irrespective of a migrant’s state of legality in a recipient country. Procedural migration focuses on the pre-departure phase of the migratory process, as problems occurring overseas are difficult to regulate and can only be mediated by embassy personnel.³⁶ Reminiscent of colonial anxieties about

³⁰ Silvey, “Transnational Domestication,” 260.

³¹ HI, former labour attaché to Abu Dhabi, interview by author, Jakarta, 29 November 2016.

³² Susan Kneebone, “The Governance of Labor Migration in Southeast Asia,” *Global Governance* 16 (2010): 383–396.

³³ Under this law, the state has produced dual structures of authority to reorganize its migration bureaucracy: the newly established BNP2TKI, formerly headed by a labour activist, has been tasked with executing the Ministry of Manpower’s policies, though it has created rival, pro-migrant administrative organs at the subnational level and embassies abroad. See Palmer, *Indonesia’s Overseas Labour*: 55–59.

³⁴ TC, director of the Labor Protection Division, BNP2TKI, interview, Jakarta, 24 November 2016.

³⁵ Tania Murray Li, *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

³⁶ FD, Research Division, Ministry of Manpower, interview, Jakarta, 28 November 2016.

unscrupulous brokers,³⁷ the state has identified irregular recruitment, training, and placement as impediments to migrant wellbeing, and deployed accreditation of recruitment agencies, licensing of brokers,³⁸ and electronic documentation as their solutions. As part of its infrastructural innovations, the state has developed a computerized biometric database, called SISKOTKLN, that permits the BNP2TKI to track migrant identity through all phases of the pre-departure process, including prospective migrant domestics' training duration. A senior bureaucrat describes this database as a groundbreaking technology for improving industry oversight, a sentiment also echoed by the recruitment agencies I interviewed.³⁹

While it is impossible to ascertain to what extent recruitment agencies engage in fraudulent practices to exploit migrants, based on interviews with labour recruiters and government officials, they have become less common due to the implementation of the biometric database and the BNP2TKI's assertiveness to impose sanctions on recalcitrant firms.⁴⁰ Furthermore, to enforce training and prevent agencies from purchasing credentialing certificates, the state has mandated third-party organizations, discussed below, to administer the professional certification examination.⁴¹

Regulation of the Migrant Population

The Indonesian government has taken a two-prong approach to managing its migrant population as a cost-effective measure to forestall abuse. Accreditation is outsourced to two licensed intermediaries that observe national standards for professionalizing domestic work. Supervised by the BNP2TKI, overseas employment training centres (*Balai Latihan Kerja — Luar Negeri*)⁴² train would-be care workers in accordance with UJK benchmarks, which cover fifteen examination units for babysitters and housekeepers, and twenty-two units for elderly caregivers. Professional certification boards (*Lembaga Sertifikasi Profesi*) are credentialing firms licensed by the BNSP that administer the UJK test at the conclusion of training. Though the state's intervention in credentialing is limited to employment skills and is indirect, its regulatory effects on women domestics' conduct are far-reaching.

As the “final face-to-face meeting between the government and Indonesian migrants,”⁴³ the PAP seminar covers a broad range of issues encountered by

³⁷ Adam M. McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

³⁸ Johan Lindquist, “Reassembling Indonesian Migration: Biometric Technology and the Licensing of Informal Labour Brokers,” *Ethnos* (25 February 2018): 1–16.

³⁹ HS, director, Finance Division, BNP2TKI, interview, Jakarta, 14 December 2016.

⁴⁰ DS, Bureau of Manpower, interview, Ponorogo, 6 November 2017.

⁴¹ DA, director, Promotion Division, BNP2TKI, interview, Jakarta, 16 January 2018.

⁴² Although training centres are usually owned by recruitment agencies, they have separate personnel and managerial teams as mandated by law.

⁴³ FJ, chief of Pre-Departure Seminar, BNP2TKI, interview, 27 December 2017.

all contract labour, from labour codes, cultural etiquette, physical and mental health, to debt bondage structures and employment contracts. It is a site where the state effect is direct but brief, and where information on rights and obligations is universally disseminated. The seminar exemplifies the state's awareness that Indonesian migrants, regardless of gender and employment sector, lack structural leverage because their entitlement to legal rights in host states is tethered to their contracts.

Professional Competence Examination

When I stepped into a poorly ventilated classroom in Jakarta on 23 March 2016, a woman in a yellow hijab told me to leave. Sensing my incredulity, recruits from a local agency where I had been based intervened to explain my purpose. With a deep frown, the assessor, Ani, scanned me from top to bottom, before returning to the classroom, where forty-four women from five recruitment agencies were about to take the UJK test. Resting in a chair with a backrest, she ordered several women to rise up from their iron benches, their shoulders craning forward and their hands folded behind their backs. Ani interrogated them in a smattering of Cantonese, Mandarin, and English, but finding them unable to respond to her satisfaction, she lectured them for the next half hour: "You aren't mentally ready. Employers don't wanna hire maids who can't speak their tongue ... It's hard to find employers. Why? You're lazy, that's why." Recounting her experience as a domestic worker in Hong Kong in the early 2000s, Ani compared Indonesian migrants of the post-reform era with her cohort, who served their employers with perseverance. Hong Kong bosses these days are "pitiable" (*kasihan*), she said. Despite receiving high wages, Indonesians lacked the will to align their economic motive with employer needs: "In the olden days, we'd request contract renewal with the same employer ... These days, we'd look for another employer after just one contract." Two hours later the women were made to read out loud instructions in an exam booklet. Ani's supervisor, Mariati, walked around to reprimand examinees for filling out forms incorrectly. Twitching her eyebrows, Mariati swung her wrist to land her palm on a woman's cheek. She then snatched another candidate's packet, knocking on her desk several times. "Geez, didn't I just tell you? My head's hurting so bad already!" Mariati barked at another woman, whose body was visibly shaking.

The hierarchical relationship as embedded in the UJK acclimates women to the emotional hurdles of performing cross-border domestic work. As a cornerstone of migration statecraft marking the end of schooling in private training centres, the UJK has a broader purpose beyond assessing the skills of candidates. Even before the test, women have been conditioned by over ten weeks of socialization to develop their expertise in household management, capacity to perform care work, and linguistic proficiency. But

what underlies the government's stated intent to certify women in the "theory and practice" (*teori dan praktek*) of domestic work is a subtle process to transform them into self-regulating subjects capable of achieving workplace autonomy, through the creation of pliable minds and useful bodies.

While Prusinski has documented mental readiness (*persiapan mental*) as a belief cultivated by migrant domestics during their overseas sojourn,⁴⁴ what is often overlooked is that this ethical outlook has been incorporated into state-mandated training even before they work abroad. To forestall abuse, prospective migrants are made to withstand status disparities in the domestic employment relationship. Evaluators like Ani and Mariati feign anger, aloofness, and impatience as a psychological tactic to inure women to accept their subordination in the employer's household. The Indonesian terms, *galak* and *cerewet*, or harsh and nagging, are invoked to describe the stereotypical employer behaviour that must be endured. During training sessions, overseas employers are portrayed as prone to anger and difficult to please, in contrast to Indonesian employers, who are patient and tolerant of their maids' shortcomings despite offering low remuneration. A Mandarin instructor asserted that trainers like her behave harshly so that candidates will be used to dealing with difficult employers later on: "We've all had experiences working abroad, so we already know what employers abroad are like. We're mean towards them so they ... won't be shocked (*haget*) when they reach there."⁴⁵

Issues stemming from employer mischief, even abuse, can be attenuated by a solid work ethic that mental preparation is designed to instill. A work ethic (*etika kerja*), according to assessors and trainers, is about developing an employer-first approach and tolerance for being confined in the employer's home. One way to nurture this mindset is to recognize that being proactive at work is in one's material interest, as revealed in Ani's advice to candidates: "You must possess a sense of responsibility, initiative and gratitude. If you work according to employer desires, employers will have a greater desire to hire you again." A good ethic also entails being accommodating and malleable, rather than erecting professional boundaries to shirk responsibilities. During a sermon for Christian recruits from Sulawesi in a Jakarta training centre, a female priest likened one's dedication for helping an employer to serving God, and described an imaginary workplace scenario to underscore the utility of a work ethic. The employer in this scenario asks the maid for help. Thinking the task she is being requested to perform exceeds her contractual obligations, the maid replies that she does not want to. The priest recounting the scenario disapproved of the maid's lack of initiative, and, in a mixture of Indonesian and English, emphasized that "[i]f you're lazy at work, *forget it you won't get* [success]. If you're obedient,

⁴⁴ Prusinski, "Becoming Siap," 339.

⁴⁵ Training instructor, interview, Ponorogo, 6 September 2016.

you'll get more than you expected [sic].”⁴⁶ A fundamental goal of mental readiness, as characterized by Ani and the priest, is to modify a worker’s moral values so that she may accomplish a successful contract, narrowly construed as material improvement and the absence of employment discord. Indeed, Susanto, the head of a Madiun-based professional competence board that collaborates with Yuni—mentioned in the opening vignette—pointed out that mental preparation comprises a major unit of assessment in the UJK called “developing emotional maturity” (*pengembangan kematangan emosi*). Noting that migrant domestics’ past unprofessionalism had induced innumerable woes such as torture and exploitation, Susanto claimed that the UJK alleviates migrant vulnerability through a course of mental discipline that enables the worker to harmonize labour relations on their own:

What would workers feel like, when they’re being reprimanded by employers even though workers aren’t usually wrong? That’s why we tell them never to get angry. There are ways to control one’s emotions ... so that we can achieve harmony between the worker and employer ... [Migrants] must be mentally prepared concerning work conditions abroad ... They must be able to resolve these problems. That’s the essence (*inti*) of competence, which includes politeness and work attitude, all of which we evaluate during the exam.⁴⁷

Besides pliable minds, credentialing produces professional bodies that are useful for employers in innumerable aspects of their lives. Rather than being restricted to housework that is the traditional domain of social reproductive labour, state curricula for accrediting migrant domestics are modelled after the accreditation of nursing assistants in Australia.⁴⁸ Would-be domestics are assessed on caregiving skills that require meticulous observance of protocol, precision in bodily comportment, and basic knowledge of health care. Trainees are further evaluated on how well they comprehend their patients’ health conditions, measure blood pressure, feed them via nasogastric tubes, and perform a sponge bath on immobile patients. When caring for elderly employers in hospitals, women are taught to defer to nurses and doctors as authority figures, rather than make decisions on their own. Some caregiving procedures are imparted not only to render caregivers beneficial to employers, but also to maintain the safety of both parties. An example of a strenuous wheelchair drill designed to minimize injury is described below:

Two trainees weighing above 80 kilograms are instructed to sit in wheelchairs, whose movement is to be assisted by trainees half their body weight. Many fail their first try while pushing loaded wheelchairs up a carpeted slope tilted at a steep angle. A seated woman shrieks when the

⁴⁶ Field notes by author, Jakarta, 10 March 2016.

⁴⁷ Director, professional certification board, interview, Ponorogo, 20 July 2016.

⁴⁸ Telephone interview with LSP accessor, Surabaya, 13 June 2017.

wheels veer off to an edge, nearly causing her to fall off. Several trainees volunteer to demonstrate the correct procedures. To prevent the wheelchair from sliding, a carer must straighten her arms while pushing the chair up the slope in quick motion. To descend backwards, she supports the seat with one knee and steps on the slope with the other leg, gradually alternating between the two positions.⁴⁹

Language instruction generates supplemental value for employers by improving domestic workers' ability to manage their ties with host families. From the Indonesian government's perspective, language instruction works in tandem with mental preparedness to lessen discord by encouraging women to follow employer commands. An official explains the dual purpose of language training in this way: migrants "must understand the languages of countries of reception ... because if they don't understand those languages, [they] will not be able to understand the orders or directions made by users (*pengguna*), and cannot serve them well."⁵⁰ The post-Suharto state's emphasis on language as a medium for conflict resolution is reflected in the weight it carries in the UJK, failure of which guarantees a candidate's inability to be certified. In all four training centres I observed, language lessons were held at least six hours a day for five days of the week, imparted through rote memorization, quizzes, self-study, and individualized discipline. Instructors simulated exam conditions by summoning individual candidates to stand in front of the class and be drilled on language questions along with those tailored to their contracts.

Assessors further acclimate migrants to employer interests by incorporating their needs into language interviews. Common questions for gauging Muslim women's work ethic include their work history, their motives for going abroad, whom they will be taking care of, how they will cope when leaving behind their children, and how they will react when forced to eat pork against their will. A standard response in Mandarin as to how a carer shall behave if she is treated unwell is: "If my employer is nitpicky (*luosuo*), I will endure it (*rennai*) and will not take it to heart." Diligence and politeness, which forms an integral part of a work ethic, is also implanted into language training. Trainees in one agency in Surabaya, for example, are expected to master at least 800 words and phrases, and to stand still, bow down, smile, and greet staff in Mandarin whenever they see them in the hallway.⁵¹ The language drill is also combined with caregiving exercises to synchronize the trainee's speech and movement so as to maximize her usefulness. Prior to carrying out care procedures, such as soaking patients' fingernails in warm water before cutting them, trainees are to explain clearly what they are about to

⁴⁹ Field notes, training centre, Jakarta, 29 February 2016.

⁵⁰ EM, bureaucrat, Provincial Bureau of Manpower and Transmigration, interview, Surabaya, 4 November 2016.

⁵¹ Field notes, Surabaya, 13 June 2017.

do so as not to take them by surprise. The importance of language acquisition as an aspect of migrant domestics' self-regulation cannot be underestimated: by cultivating a work ethic, language proficiency constitutes an embodied skill that is believed to reduce the propensity of worksite disputes and, ultimately, abuse.

While some of these language exercises seem overly calculated to produce docility, even seasoned migrants accustomed to this style of training told me that the language examination was the most challenging part of the UJK. Many migrants with strong Mandarin or Cantonese language skills described how they *nge-blank*, or “went blank,” under the scrutiny of evaluators. For neophytes without prior exposure to a foreign language, the intensity of linguistic immersion into the employer household sometimes led them to break down in tears. More than a performance for the state, it is evident that some prospective migrants view accreditation as a milestone, if not an accomplishment, in their preparation for working abroad.

Why is skill formation viewed as the best form of protection? I consider a state discourse that exemplifies the liberal logic of protection. Government officials claim that possessing skills is the most effective means for self-protection, because it will raise the domestic worker's bargaining position in the employer's household without the need for external intervention. This view is underscored by a senior bureaucrat: “If [migrants] are skilled in a foreign language, they can negotiate ... and, if they're experts (*ahli*), they can negotiate. But if they don't have skills what can they do? ... The best form of protection is protection from workers themselves.”⁵² Another bureaucrat postulated that the foremost strategy of protection is skill upgrading as it will reduce migrant dependence on the state: “To ensure ... self protection, we're trying to *up skill* [sic] migrants, because if we don't do that, they're always going to rely on others for their protection.”⁵³ As both officials implied, training migrant domestics is intended to improve their self-regulation with the hope that it will undo abusive situations. However, missing in this discourse is the recognition that the skills assessed in the UJK are not concerned with a structural resolution of unequal relations: migrant domestics are not taught to demand their rights from host state institutions. Rather, this narrative embodies the liberal reason that, by rendering workers useful, employers will come to respect them, refrain from mistreating them, and grant them some autonomy in the workplace.

That skill formation constitutes the best means of self-protection is a liberal strategy of exclusion that is predicated on domestic workers' position as “vulnerable victims.” Women domestics are regarded as needing state tutelage because “they are vulnerable (*rentan*) and still need government [resources] for their protection.”⁵⁴ Indeed, it is often believed that migrant domestic

⁵² HS, Directorate of Complaint Services, BNP2TKI, interview, 21 January 2018.

⁵³ SA, Directorate of Pre-Departure Briefing, BNP2TKI, interview, 27 December 2017.

⁵⁴ FD, interview, 28 November 2016.

workers' lack of agency stems from certain cultural defects related to their rural origins, low levels of formal education, and lack of skills, as described by another bureaucrat: "Generally speaking they come from rural regions, where job opportunities are very scarce, their capabilities (*kemampuan*) are also limited, their education low, and they have no skills."⁵⁵

This paternalistic attitude can be attributable to recurring public demands for the state to extend protection to women migrant domestics. More than the unique prejudices of state actors, Robinson suggests that broad segments of Indonesian society perceive the abuse of migrant domestics as derived from their position as unskilled labour and "because of their vulnerable status as unregulated workers in the home."⁵⁶ Silvey further postulates that moral panics about migrant domestics' "sexuality, obligations, and rights reflect broader Indonesian hopes and anxieties" about the reversed gender order induced by globalization.⁵⁷ Evidently, that domestic workers are discursively constructed as victims has bolstered the state's legitimacy for disciplining them in the name of their protection. I now turn to a discussion of the pre-departure orientation seminar (PAP) and the liberal rationality that undergirds its functioning. While less intrusive than credentialing, this procedure is geared toward the creation of migrant subjects who can regulate themselves in a variety of circumstances beyond labour relations.

Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar

On 16 February 2015, I arrived at the BNP2TKI's Surabaya field office in a van along with company recruits preparing for their final stage of departure. In an air-conditioned room decorated with a *Garuda Pancasila* emblem, sixty-three women and seven men in *batik* shirts, hijab, and company polos were summoned, one by one, to receive photocopies of contracts that were notarized by Indonesia's de facto embassy in Taipei. Mur, a bureaucrat, began the PAP by addressing her audience as "brothers and sisters" and inquiring into their motives for going abroad. Amid the crowd's laughter, some shouted out, "To alter destiny (*nasib*)!" and "To earn New Taiwan Dollars!" Mur proceeded to explain the government's intent for facilitating emigration: to alleviate unemployment, to ensure remittances are sent home for household consumption, and to elevate the material welfare of Indonesian citizens. Besides assuring citizens of their economic right, the government is obligated to extend protection to all Indonesian workers, she said. Just as migrants

⁵⁵ HI, interview, 29 November 2016.

⁵⁶ Kathryn Robinson, "Housemaids: The Effects of Gender and Culture on the Internal and International Migration of Indonesian Women," in *Intersextionis: Gender/Class/Culture/Ethnicity*, ed. Gill Bottomley et al. (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991), 44.

⁵⁷ Rachel Silvey, "TKW (Tenaga Kerja Wanita): The Overseas Female Migrant in 'Figures of Indonesian Modernity,'" *Indonesia*, no. 87, ed. Joshua Barker et al. (2009): 55.

expect to earn higher wages from working abroad, however, they must be cognizant of employment risks stemming from differences in customs, languages, and regulations. To protect themselves from these dangers, Mur beseeched her audience to “safeguard the image of the Indonesian nation” (*jaga nama bangsa Indonesia*). As Indonesia’s “ambassadors” (*duta besar*), they should be professional, possess a work ethic, and be equipped with legal documents. Mur concluded by discouraging migrants from absconding (*kabur*): “If you are illegal, by law, it means there’s no protection ... Hence, do not abscond. *Stop* running away from employers.”

Mur’s presentation underscores the Indonesian state’s rationale for managing temporary labour migration, which is dictated by two systemic interests: to guarantee citizens’ constitutionally enshrined right to a decent livelihood (*kehidupan yang layak bagi kemanusiaan*), as well as some protection in a commercially mediated infrastructure. But as Mur stated, serving as Indonesia’s emissaries entails migrants’ recognition that they must respect the laws and customs of sending and recipient countries. To ensure a successful contract, the Indonesian government invites outbound guest workers to manage themselves appropriately in an array of moral conduct, from legal and professional to sexual and spiritual, during their overseas sojourn.

An important PAP session that elicits sustained attention is the “Employment Agreement,” during which bureaucrats field questions regarding contracts that agencies have surrendered for migrants’ perusal. This intervention is aimed at combatting a common industry practice to withhold employment information, which can result in contractual violations such as underpayment, work mismatch, and rest deprivation. The rights that government officials expound during the PAP are limited to their entitlement to just compensation, decent accommodation, insurance, and sufficient rest time, reflecting the limitations of host state labour codes for guest workers. Along with providing some transparency regarding legal rights, bureaucrats address agency overcharging by providing detailed schedules of fees—called “cost structure”—that are levied by recruitment agencies and sending and host governments, legally permissible wage deductions, and take-home pay as determined by employment sector and destination country. Finally, this session instructs migrants on conflict resolution mechanisms. In the event of disputes, migrants shall complain to overseas agencies as the first point of contact, and to Indonesian embassies and the BNP2TKI’s 24-hour crisis hotline as the last resort. To give an example, in one such session, Anto, another bureaucrat, outlined the types of labour abuses that may occur, and advised migrants on how to pursue their resolution:

If I were told to work as an elderly caregiver, but I ended up working in a factory, that’s a contractual violation ... You should work as stated on the contract that you signed. But if the work conditions aren’t consistent with the contract, you must reject them with grace ... Then you should

report to the agency or to the Republic of Indonesia's representative office in Taiwan ... Never stay quiet! Usually workers don't report problems because they're afraid of being deported, but you have the right to report them.⁵⁸

As the above quote indicates, Indonesians' status as guest workers whose rights are bound to the contract places them in a weak structural location. However, Anto, the bureaucrat at this session, also performed the state's legitimacy by informing migrants that they may strengthen their leverage with the assistance of the Indonesian embassy. While Indonesian NGOs have often chastised the government for not providing adequate legal safeguards, it is apparent that recent reforms to the PAP to cover complaint procedures address some of these flaws, even if they remain hamstrung by the government's inability to persuade host states to improve labour standards. By disseminating information about contractual rights, debt ceilings, and conflict resolution mechanisms, the seminar seeks to elevate the legal and financial standing of migrant workers within the limits of state capacity.

The PAP is further designed to motivate migrants to seek resolutions for everyday problems in host states. In session after session, migrants were urged to fulfill their duties (*kewajiban*) by becoming professional, law-abiding, and morally righteous. In one session, a bureaucrat encouraged her audience to become successful migrants, by which she meant they shall be God-trusting individuals with a genuine desire to work, to make their "end users" happy, and to be "honest, hardworking, disciplined, polite, patient, sincere, and healthy."⁵⁹ Such injunctions extend to the regulation of sexual conduct, and are couched in an idiom of gendered morality. While acknowledging that male factory workers face physical violence, the bureaucrat subjected women domestic workers' sexual conduct to greater scrutiny. This bureaucrat asserted that the most effective means of prevention against sexual harassment came from oneself. To thwart employer advances, domestic workers are to resist the temptation to wear revealing clothes, and shall present their unwashed bodies as evidence to local police if they suffer an assault. Feminist scholars have noted that the Indonesian government harbours a paternalistic stance toward migrant women's sexuality.⁶⁰ However, the convergence of patriarchy and protection is also evinced by the state's fixation on migrant domestics' peculiar employment predicaments, where sexual violence is a distinct possibility for live-in care work.⁶¹

In a narrative infused with fears about irregular migration, the Indonesian

⁵⁸ Field notes, BP3TKI, Jakarta, 16 June 2016.

⁵⁹ Field notes, BP3TKI, 16 June 2016.

⁶⁰ Chan, "Gendered Morality," 6957.

⁶¹ This paternalistic concern for migrant sexuality is noticeably absent when it comes to the treatment of women migrant factory workers, who presumably enjoy a separation between employment and residence that shields them from sexual abuse.

state, through the medium of the PAP, portrays illegality as a preeminent threat to migrant security. On the walls of the BNP2TKI's classrooms and spacious compound in Surabaya are affixed large posters emblazoned with slogans such as "Running Away = Danger" and "Migrants Banned from Running Away from Employers." Bureaucrats reinforce these visual messages by warning migrants about how illegality will make them "easily exploited" (*muda dieksploitasi*), at risk of deportation, unable to access health care, and susceptible to human trafficking. In her discussion of pre-departure orientation seminars, Killias contends that the Indonesian government's attempt to regularize labour migration through private intermediaries has unwittingly subjected migrants to subordination by tying them to legal forms of debt bondage.⁶² However, the state's concern with illegality may also be related to its broader aim to ensure the legal and economic interests of its migrant population. Maintaining migrants' contractual status in host states is a vital means of ensuring minimal standards of protection, given that sending states do not always have the leverage to influence host state immigration laws in an international labour market dictated by buyers.⁶³ Perhaps more importantly, migrant illegality may trigger host state sanctions in the form of detentions, deportations, and moratoriums, all of which hinder migrants' access to international employment. In 2003 to 2005, the Taiwanese government imposed a freeze on the entry of Indonesian guest workers, as Indonesia's volume of runaway migrants had exceeded the nationality-based quota of 10 percent. The disruption of Indonesians' admission into major destination countries like Taiwan is a major reason Indonesia has made migrant legality a policy priority.⁶⁴

In short, as a technique of government, the PAP is aimed at improving migrant decorum in diverse milieus by instructing them about the laws and customs of recipient countries and the dangers of improper conduct. Attendance at this one-day event, albeit mandatory, has limited disciplinary effects on migrant workers, because it is assumed that with sufficient knowledge of their rights and obligations, they are capable of protecting themselves upon arrival in host states. For women domestic workers, however, the PAP follows the UJK, and reinforces the ethic of self-regulation instilled during pre-departure training.

Conclusion

In recent years, the Indonesian government has sought to improve the security of its low-skilled workforce by regulating the country's migration

⁶² Olivia Killias, "'Illegal' Migration as Resistance: Legality, Morality and Coercion in Indonesian Domestic Worker Migration to Malaysia," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 38, no. 6 (1 January 2010): 897–914.

⁶³ Oishi, *Women in Motion*, 61.

⁶⁴ DA, interview, 16 January 2018.

infrastructure. Nevertheless, the unwillingness of host states to extend legal rights to guest workers has meant that their claims to labour protection are confined to their contractual status, rendering sending state policies alone insufficient to guarantee their protection. Given the private sector's role in employment provision and recipient states' power to restrict immigration, the Indonesian government has sought to balance the interests of industry, migrant labour, and host states to ensure the sustainability of labour migration as a safety valve for its surplus population.

Amid these structural constraints, the post-Suharto state has deployed myriad policy instruments to promote safe migration. Despite overseeing work conditions on behalf of labour migrants through bilateral agreements, moratoriums, and embassy personnel, the Indonesian government is frequently criticized for not protecting women domestic workers through labour codes that comply with international conventions on migrant rights.⁶⁵ This article suggests that while juridical norms constitute an important yardstick for assessing a sending state's mechanisms of labour protection, they do not adequately account for the emergence of liberal techniques of government that are shaping migrant livelihoods. Designed to protect migrants from abuse, these practices are sometimes implemented in a paternalistic, coercive, and technical fashion without consultation with migrants, in ways that are detrimental to their aspirations for more egalitarian employment conditions.

The PAP and the UJK, in particular, have arisen as the Indonesian government's liberal response to the perils of a poorly protected transnational labour market. Existing scholarship suggests that Indonesia's migration statecraft is imbued with apprehensions about labour illegality.⁶⁶ However, the function of pre-departure programs is not merely to reinforce migrant exploitation by legitimating indentured servitude. Rather, I have argued that state practices to safeguard migrant wellbeing also display an ethos of paternalistic protection. I draw on Foucauldian and feminist insights to demonstrate that anxieties about migrant vulnerability, as derived from their lack of skills, education, and knowledge, have underpinned the progressive rationalization of Indonesia's migration infrastructure. In particular, a vast infrastructure of credentialing and orientation seminars has been created to place low-skilled migrants under government trusteeship in the aim of cultivating their self-regulation. But while formal migrants are required to attend orientation seminars, their overseas passage is relatively unimpeded.

⁶⁵ Atik Krustiyati, "Optimalisasi perlindungan dan bantuan hukum pekerja migran melalui promosi Konvensi Pekerja Migran tahun 2000" [Optimizing protection and legal assistance for migrant workers through promoting Migrant Workers Convention 2000], 13, no. 1 (2013): 12; Anita Kristina, "Potret kegagalan asuransi Tenaga Kerja Indonesia: perlindungan yang mengecewakan," [A portrait of insurance failures for Indonesian Migrant Workers: protection that disappoints], *Media Trend* 13, no. 1 (2018): 58–67.

⁶⁶ Killias, *Follow the Maid*, 42, 44.

Women domestics, by contrast, are subject to the PAP and accreditation that necessitates their corporeal and mental reform.

I maintain the Indonesian state's liberal strategies of exclusion rely on the demarcation of migrant groups into different categories of vulnerability, derived from the intersection of their gender, class, and occupational status. Formal guest workers are permitted more freedom to pursue emigration because they are assumed to approximate rights-bearing subjects. Indeed, government officials I interviewed claimed that industrial migrants are not vulnerable because this category is largely comprised of male migrants, they tend to possess higher education and skills, and are already protected by host-state labour codes, all of which grant them a degree of autonomy unavailable to domestic workers.⁶⁷ Paradoxically, the gender trope of domestic workers as "vulnerable victims" has been deployed by the post-Suharto state to justify their protection through labour discipline.

Hickey postulates that contemporary policy debates in the "migration-as-development" paradigm construct a binary between unskilled and skilled migrants, with the former perceived as vulnerable while the latter are seen as reservoirs of talent needing no protection.⁶⁸ The Indonesian government has apparently adopted these human capital ideologies to reduce its administrative overload regarding migrant labour. By accrediting housemaids as "skilled professionals," government officials assume that outgoing migrant domestics, now reclassified as "household managers" (*pelaksana rumah tangga*), will eventually be able to bargain, on their own, with foreign employers for better work conditions. The growing significance of liberal techniques of protection is illustrated by the diffusion of pre-departure orientation seminars and training as "best practices" for regulating low-skilled migrants in Asia. These programs have been incorporated, to varying degrees, as central tenets of migrant protection for labour-exporting countries, such as Nepal and Sri Lanka.⁶⁹ Rather than being mutually exclusive, discipline and protection are integral to liberal government, and increasingly fuel Indonesia's intensively mediated migration infrastructure.

University of California, Berkeley, USA, September 2018

⁶⁷ HS, interview, 14 December 2016. This is not to say that formal migrants are not vulnerable. Rather, the Indonesian state has appropriated women domestics' discursive construction as "vulnerable victims" to justify targeted protection for them. In fact, labour migrants regardless of gender share similar predicaments as precarious workers in host states. See Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

⁶⁸ Hickey, "Diaspora Strategies," 157.

⁶⁹ Maruja Asis and Dovelyn Rannveig Agunias, "Strengthening Pre-Departure Orientation Programmes in Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines," Issue in Brief (Bangkok and Washington, DC: International Organization for Migration Mission in Indonesia, September 2012); Patrick R. Ireland, "The Limits of Sending-State Power: The Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Female Migrant Domestic Workers," *International Political Science Review* 39, no. 3 (June 2018): 322–337.