

INDONESIAN LABOR WOMEN (TKW) HABITUS AND AGENCY

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Abstract

This paper aims to describe the habitat and agency of Indonesian Labor Women (TKW). The method used is text analysis using Bourdieu's perspective habitus. There are three selected texts on the consideration of the TKW theme and the different destination countries. Women migrant workers are women who strive and struggle to improve their standard of living. Habitus of TKW is low education, low skill, and poverty. There are three levels of an agency that women do. First, women break away from the shackles of poverty. Second, after becoming a female migrant worker, women break away from their employers. Third, women write the text. The TKW text contains the experience of women being TKW which aims to open reader and community awareness. TKW text is a narrative of Indonesian women's fortitude and fortitude in fighting for life and family life to be more prosperous and happy.

Keywords: *poverty; fortitude, text, writing*

INTRODUCTION

Female migrant or commonly referred to as Indonesian Labor Women hereinafter referred to as TKW become more interesting news material than TKI (*Tenaga Kerja Indonesia* – Indonesia Men Workers). The attraction lies in the sex that is the difference between the TKI and TKW. If the subject of a sex worker is male, the subject of a female migrant worker is female.

In the mass media of both print and television media, several times proclaimed how the inhuman treatment experienced by

TKW (Hugo, 1995; Silvey, 2004; Sim, 2009). The news can be quickly tracked by Google or Yahoo search engine. Shredded, cursed, cursed, kicked, beaten, slapped in hot water, or ironed into words and treatments that always associated with TKW. TKW is almost synonymous with tortured words or other abusive treatment. However, being a TKW is also a dream for some women (Anggraeni, 2006; Loveband, 2004; Sen, 2002; Silvey, 2004).

Kokom bin Bamay becomes TKW in Saudi. He was tortured and banished by his employer in the mountainous area of Mecca. Tutus Djuariah was tortured by the

employer. Her legs were paralyzed and her eyes were damaged. Papat Fatimah was also subjected to torture. He was beaten hard objects and kicked by employers (ROL, 2014). Sihatul suffered torture and became in a coma because of being tortured by employers in Taiwan. From 3 am to 10 pm, she was alone with 300 cows. If considered slow in her work, she is kicked and slapped (Ningtyas, 2014). Erwiana Sulistiyansih was tortured and threatened with death by employers while working in Hong Kong.

The employer does not hesitate to hit face and body. Her wrists and legs were seriously injured. Her face was bruised and swollen (Wismabrata, 2014). The miserable fate also happened to Ismawati, 27 years old, TKW originating from North Lombok. Ismawati worked as a maid in the city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia for two years. SHE returned to Indonesia with wounds all over his body. Ismawati admitted to being mistreated by the employer. Her face and skin blistered with hot water. Her neck and his hands are blackened from burns (Ren, 2010).

Especially in Hongkong, the problem of TKW is debt wasted recruitment fee, working on tourist visa, contract work not according to appointment, extorted and discharged by channeling company, deceived condition and type of work, passport seized by employer or channeling company, delayed payment or unpaid, employers, no longer days off and work, and physical and sexual abuse.

In one of the television stations once played the soap opera "Dunia Terbalik" associated with the TKW narrative. The "Dunia Terbalik" gets inspiration from a number of areas in West Java where men take care of households, while women work as migrant workers (Khasanah, 2017). Because women are earning money or earning income, women appear to be controlling and managing households, including controlling their husbands.

In addition to television, the subject of female labour is also presented in literary texts. Budianta (1998) analyzed the novel *Jasmine* by Bharati Mukherjee and *Lucy* by Jamaica Kincaid which tells the main character of a third world woman who works as a female worker in America. Women's labour is at the crossroads between women's issues and the issue of mastery over the oppressed. Due to entry in domestic territory, female workers are vulnerable to harassment. In patriarchal systems, abusers are men as heads of households who have power because they already hire female workers.

This research relates to TKW, which aims to reveal how the TKW habitus and agency contained in the book *Ketika Perempuan Bertutur: Kumpulan Pengalaman Buruh Migran Perempuan (When Woman Speaks: A Collection of Experience of Labor Woman)* published by LRC-KJHAM (Legal Resources Center for Gender Equality and Human Rights) Semarang.

METHOD

This research chose three material objects as research material. One, the text "*Gaji Dicuri Majikan, Pulang Masih Diperas (Pengalaman Saya Menjadi TKW)*" - Stolen Employer's Salary, Home is Squatted (My Experience Being a TKW, hereinafter referred to as GDM written by St. M. Two, the text "*Terbebas dari Perbudakan di Malaysia (Perjuanganku Jadi TKW)*" - Freed from Slavery in Malaysia (My Struggle So TKW), hereinafter called TDP was written by Karti. Three, the text "*Aku Pertaruhkan Nyawa untuk Melunasi Utang Keluargaku (Perjuangku menjadi TKW)*" - I Wager my life to Refinance My Family Debt (My Championship to Workers), hereinafter referred to APN which is written RMN.

The women's agency focused on research in St. M., Karti, and RMN. All three texts were selected for several

reasons. First, has the same theme of labour. Two, the subject is female. Three, the subject has the experience of becoming a worker in a different country so it is considered to represent a diverse experience. St. M to become TKW in Saudi Arabia, Karti in Malaysia, and RMN in Taiwan. Habitus is a sense of one's position (Bourdieu, 2017; Brubaker, 1993; Hillier & Rooksby, 2005; Sweetman, 2009). Habitus works at the subconscious level, language, and appears in trivial body skills such as how to talk, how to gaze, how to walk, how to dress, accent, or gesture. Habitus embraces one's knowledge and understanding of a world that contributes to reality. Habitus is an interstitial construct between structure and practice. Hence, by habitus, agents have the ability to create an original form of world reality (Harker, Mahar, & Wilkes, 2016; Lane, 2005; Lunnay, Ward, & Borlagdan, 2011; McNay, 1999; Parker, 1894).

Habitus survives in the life of an agent and is able to create a practice in various areas. Habitus incorporates objective social conditions in its formation and breeds practices appropriate to a particular situation (Kellner, 2003). Habitus manifests itself in three ways. One, at the head of the agency. Two, an interaction between the agent and the surrounding environment. Three, are in the body and rooted in a sensory accessible experience. Habitus is formed through experience and teaching. Thus, it can be distinguished between the habitus as part of the individual with habitus as a homogeneous and collective phenomenon adopted by the social class (Bourdieu, 2000). The agency is related to the action, creativity, originality, free will and possible changes made by the agent. Agency is a sensible cultural way of understanding oneself in facing and making choices (Barker, 2003). Agencies in this paper are the awareness and action in making choices made by TKW.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TKW Habitus

Since the Indonesian government in 1981 opened the opportunity for women to work as migrant workers abroad, many women who use it. Long before the independence of Indonesia, there had been women labourers sent to the Netherlands. Mentioned that Pinah is a domestic helper who was imported from Java. Pinah wears kebaya clothes and sarongs brought from his hometown. She only gets dry bread and cold water. The employer also treats him roughly (Agrawal, 2006; Lyberaki, 2011).

In 2012, the album was launched TKW sung by Soleh Akbar. TKW song created by Jujuk Eksa. As the title, TKW tells about my character who meets a TKW who has a beautiful face. One of the TKW song's videos can be found on YouTube and the lyrics of the song as follows.

*TKW / Kalaku di negeri orang /
Berjumpa dengan seorang wanita /
Parasnya cantik aduhai sangat
menggoda / Kusapa dia tiada curiga
// Kucoba tuk mendekati / Senyum
simpulnya tak menaruh benci /
Berbasabasi kumengenalkan dirinya
/ Dia tkw cantik jelita // Tenaga kerja
wanita / Jauh di manca negara / Asal
punya ketrampilan / oke saja //
Tenaga kerja wanita / Jauh di manca
negara / engkaulah srikandi /
Tumpuan keluarga // Pabila kau
pulang di kampung halaman /
Kecantikanmu akan selalu dikenang /
Di sana beda bahasa dan juga
berbeda budaya / Lindungilah dirimu
iman dan taqwa / Jagalah martabat
bangsa jujur syarat yang utama /
Ingatlah engkau pahlawan devisa*

TKW / When I'm abroad / Encounter
with a woman / Her face is pretty
teasing / I greet her unsuspecting // I
try to approach / Her smile does not
hate / Kindly I introduce herself /
She is pretty beautiful // Labor
woman / Deep overseas / Origin

have skill / okay // Female worker /
Far overseas / you are srikandi /
Family support // a When you come
home in your hometown / Beauty
will always be remembered / There
is different language and also
different culture / Protect yourself
with faith and piety / Keep the
dignity of the nation honestly the
main condition / Remember the
heroes of foreign exchange //

Soleh Akbar explains that the song's lyrics are not whiny, but are able to transmit positive things. In addition to beauty, in the text of the song mentioned the importance of the provision of faith and piety for a TKW. This is intended as a bulwark against the influence or adverse events both personally and culturally to TKW. Song Text TKW brings many messages to TKW have skills. In fact, it can be mentioned that TKW carries the name of the nation. TKW has a contribution in reducing the number of unemployed in the country. In addition, at the macro level, migrant workers have donations to foreign exchange (Hadiz, 2004).

Because it will enter a world or country that has a "different language and also different cultures" as shown in the lyrics of the song, before leaving for the destination country, TKW organizes certain rituals. The ritual, for example, conducts a ceremony of salvation, begging prayer and blessing to the ancestral grave, or to a clever person or shaman for salvation and success. The ritual is a means of release to a new life as.

In GDM, it says St. M to become TKW in Saudi Arabia. St. M has married and has one child. St. M also had never been out of the village. On the bus ride, he could not stand the air conditioner and his departure to Saudi Arabia was his first experience working abroad. The subject of education and social class is not explicitly stated. St. M to become TKW because of poverty. Poverty can be observed from St.

M who never went out of the village. Because of poverty, too, St. M low educated. For an Intelligence Quotient test, for example, he calls the "aexyu test".

In Saudi Arabia, St. M serves 4 people. It is not an issue because he has been accustomed to working. The problem is St. M often experience physical violence. There are two causes of St. M escaped from the employer. First, the harsh treatment of the employer. Second, his salary was stolen by the employer. St M works from 5 am to 12 pm. The next thing that makes St. M escape is a salary for 4 months work stolen by male employers. Up to 2 years of work, the salary is not given by the employer.

Habitus St. M is a poor family condition. Karti belongs to the lower social class. About education, St. M did not write it. Based on these data, St. M can be categorized as low educated.

In the TDP, Karti mentioned being a migrant worker and went to Malaysia because of the awareness of "seeking fortune for the future of my children". Karti also heard stories that work abroad because of having a large salary. Oral stories are an important narrative so that Karti decides to become a migrant worker. Karti has hopes and dreams "who knows I'll succeed". Karti is a mother. Not mentioned how many children. Her husband is sometimes unemployed farm labourers sometimes become construction workers in the city of Semarang. To leave as TKW, Karti ask permission to husband, mother, and child.

Both physical and psychological violence was experienced by Karti. Rough treatment has been experienced by Karti since leaving. Prior to Malaysia, Karti was at the Medan shelter. Violence with Indonesian actors started to happen. Lootings, bad food and less, and harsh words received by Karti. Abroad, Karti was placed one week in an ice factory, a week at an electronics factory, and one week later at a computer monitor factory.

Good first week. However, the following week is different. Karti was fed mouldy bread and daily washed more than 5 cars before leaving for the factory. The work that Karti did was physically heavy was that she entered the refrigerator for 3 hours. At the electronics factory, she raised the weights up to 60 kilograms. At the computer monitor factory, Karti should not sit and rest for only half an hour at lunch. At the ice factory, Karti worked until 9 pm.

After working 5 months, Karti could not take it, but the employer was not allowed to go home. If going home will be fined because Karti contracted for 2 years. Heavy work and harsh treatment occurred when Karti was ill. He is not treated, even ordered to continue working. She requested a day off but was not allowed. He was kicked by the employer. In addition, the agency also treats arbitrary TKW. Reporting to the police is considered an action that harms the agent. Agents can suppress migrant workers because they have thousands of TKWs who need work.

Habitus Karti is the economic condition of poor families. Karti belongs to the lower social class. Her husband is a farm labourer who is sometimes unemployed. Concerning education, Karti did not write it down. Based on these data, Karti can be categorized as low educated.

In the APN, mentioned after marriage and pregnancy, RMN experienced trials. At 7 months pregnant, her husband suffered from prolonged illness and was unable to work. They can survive because they rely on debt that is getting more and more accumulated. After her child was born and 10 months old, RMN signed up to become a migrant worker. RMN is in junior high school and she became a TKW in Saudi Arabia. RMN's employer is a newly married family and has twins. The heavy burden experienced by RMN is when taking care of the twin child, RMN always remembers her son who is in her hometown. Since the

employer's wife is jealous, RMN will once be splashed with hot water. Eighteen months of work in Saudi Arabia made RMN able to pay off its debts. The problem is that she has no home and other items needed for a family. Therefore, RMN went back to TKW to Taiwan. In Taiwan, RMN takes care of the life of a grandmother. This time RMN got a much better employer. Every week she is asked to call family in Indonesia. In the family, RMN worked for 3 years.

Same as with St. M and Karti, the RMN habitus is poverty, low education, and low skills. What has been analyzed can be seen in Table 1 TKW Habitus.

Tabel 1. TKW Habitus

| | GDM | TDP | APN |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Name | St. M | Karti | RMN |
| Place of work | Saudi Arabia | Malaysia | Taiwan |
| Education | Not mentioned | Not mentioned | Yunior High School |
| social class | Poor | Poor | Poor |
| skills | Low | Low | Low |

Habitus TKW is poverty, low education, and low skills. They are like circles that complement each other and effect. In addition, there is insufficient employment for women. This is in line with the findings of Kumalasari (2011: 108) and Subadi (2010: 165) which states that Women Workers abroad due to lack of employment, poverty, low education, and low skills. Purnamaningsih (2011: 25) added that the level of education, the number of dependents of the family, the family income related to the old TKW working abroad.

Agency: Writing Text

An experience becomes eternal when it is written and St. M, Karti, and KRM have written their experience as TKW in this research called text. The GDM text does not clearly mention the author's name except only by the initials St. M. Similarly, in APN text that mentions the author is RMN. There are several advantages of

mentioning the initials. First, protect the author from various threats. The TKW text is a narration full of torture and abuse. This makes a deep trauma not easy to cure. second, with the initials, the writer feels safer. Because of both of these things, the experience or narration presented has a high degree of "honesty". The author can write the text as it is. The author is not afraid to reveal things that are considered taboo or can offend other parties. In addition, to not afraid, the author is also not ashamed to convey the things that lack or weakness attached to him.

The term "helper" is used more than "worker". There are two reasons. One, the employer does not want to give a decent wage. Two, so that their degrees do not become equal with the employer (Hidayah, 2015).

There are three important things in the three texts. First, the hardness and fortitude of Indonesian women. Second, how is the life of Karti, St. M, and KRM after not being a migrant worker. Third, women's effort to write the text of TKW.

Indonesian women's ferocity and fortitude, in this case, TKW can be traced from words or diction when they face various situations and conditions. The word that often appears is "*alhamdulillah*" which is an expression of gratitude.

St. M. writes three times "*alhamdulillah*". During the English exam and passed the pass to get into the shelter; while waiting in Saudi Arabia shelter, she waited only 15 minutes; and when I got home after becoming a TKW. "During the education (training) is not given the Arabic language, even the exam is using English, so Alhamdulillah I finally pass the exam" (St. M, tt: 45).

The saying "*alhamdulillah*" in the text has various meanings. ST. M is an Islamic family and St. M is a woman who is easy to accept the situation and can accept all conditions under any circumstances. St. M did not complain

much despite running away from employers. Three, St. M realizes who he is. St. M acknowledges his poverty, education, and skills.

Karti was grateful to be a migrant worker, exposed from the expression "*alhamdulillah*". With that word, it can be seen that Karti is a Muslim.

Alhamdulillah KL time I got a good employer. Alhamdulillah after I worked outside for 26 days, suddenly there was a telephone call from the PT, it turns out I've got Visa, I'm very happy.

Like Karti and St. M, in the APN also found many diction "*alhamdulillah*" either at the time of KRM experience a favourable event or not. APN even closed and ended with "*Alhamdulillah hirrobbil Alamin ...*".

Secondly, after returning to the motherland, women return to their original life with economic level can be better or the same as before going to become TKW. Karti said that she woke up at 4.30 and then prayed at dawn and cooked and performed other activities. Karti also has a busy making chips and fried from cassava. In addition to selling chips, Karti sells rice curry in the stall (Umayya & Muhajir, 2018).

St. M is still the same as before going to become TKW. She became a friendly mother and took care of the children. Now he has two children. Originally, St. M is unemployed and takes care of two children and husband. He confessed when he became a migrant worker did not succeed so "have not got anything" (St. M, tt: 47). RMN uses its income other than to pay off debts, as well as to build houses and buy material needs. She admitted, "It does not feel now one year I have lived happily in the village with family" (RMN, tt: 83).

St. M and Karti were not successful in becoming female migrant workers because they did not get a good employer

so they could not fulfil their dreams of being "successful people". Meanwhile, KRM gets a good employer so that it can pay off debts even after it can have goods that are considered as a necessity in a household.

Despite having excessive income during being a migrant worker, nobody wants to stay abroad forever (Astuti, 2013: 279). In this case the proverb "it is better to rain stones in the land itself rather than the rain of gold in the land of the people".

Table 2. Condition of TKW

| | St. M | Karti | RMN |
|----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| encourage ment | to help families | to help families | pay off debt |
| Age | Not mentioned | Not mentioned | Not mentioned |
| Status | Married | Married | Married |
| Child | 1 | Not mentioned | 1 |
| Now | Equally | Equally | Better |

Third, the most important thing is Karti, St. M, and RMN write text. They retraced the life experiences that had been made and made the distance to the experience. They use the point of view and the way people speak first so the text becomes more alive.

"One morning, work time at my factory secretly went in search of a police station to ask for help" (Karti, tt: 7). St. M (tt: 45) writes, "My experience at the shelter, I am sad to leave my family, especially children and husband".

Writing Karti, St. M, and RMN flows as if spoken orally. They do not care about the rules of written text that usually fetter in storytelling. This is the advantage and superiority of their text. By Ong (t.t), this is referred to as one of the characteristics of society that is in the oral tradition.

The use of the I-am style makes Karti, St. M, RMN can experience in writing experience. I am not separate from my experience. I'm sticking with something I'm experiencing. I melted together at once with my grief. The

originality of the language appears as a different experience. Karti (tt: 5-6) writes:

Lalu saya tanya "lo Bang kok diambil semua, nanti kalau ada apa-apa bagaimana?" saya cakap gitu. Pegawainya malah bilang gini, "itu, nanti disana nggak dipakai, nggak bisa digunakan." Dan itu dipaksa. Saya kaget waktu baru datang itu kok dirampasin semua, padahal Pak Tanto (Kepala Dusun di Desa saya) pesan simpan alamat, nanti kalau sampai di Malaysia, ini kode pos Penawangan biar cepet nyampai, malah diambil semua.

Then I asked "Sir, why was it all taken, then if anything how?" I said so. The employee even said, "that, later there is no use, can not be used." And it was forced. I was shocked when I came to get all the stolen, whereas Pak Tanto (Head in my Village) told to save the address, later when arrived in Malaysia, this postal code Penawangan to quickly get, even taken all.

The rules between spoken and written languages mixed into something unique. The dialect of Jakarta or Java overlaps into something earthy, like the use of the words "diambil", "gitu", "cepat", "nyampai". In fact, should the standard word is taken, so, fast, and up. It animates and carries the local colour of Karti.

I went with my friend Suti when riding the bus mostly on a trip, because the bus is air-conditioned, and we can not stand the air conditioner. Understandably most of us have never been away and only this time left....

Then I asked the male employer; is my money in your cupboard taking? My employer says yes. I keep asking for the money but not given, he said the money will be given if I want to go home.

St. M uses the word "I" so that more smoothly narrative and enliven the atmosphere. The words "pada - on", or "dikasih - given" show a mixture of Indonesian with the structure of the Javanese language. The way of the narrative makes the narrative flow and shows the social background of St. M.

On St. M has not used quotation marks as a form of conversation. She also mentions the employer with "kamu - you". The word "you" has the meaning that the second person is in a lower position than the first person. The second person is the employer. The first person here in St. M. In fact, St. M works as a helper. There are several reasons why St.M uses the diction. One, St. M cannot distinguish the value of taste and meaning over the words "you" and "me". Two, St. M actually knows the value of taste and meaning of the words. That is, St. M deliberately lowered her employer. This is done because St. M feels superior to the employer. St. M occasionally uses the word "ku" instead of "me". These make the story and the language of St. M has a telling style that causes compelling text.

In contrast to Karti and St. M, RMN (tt: 82) has the awareness to write and record things that happen to him in the diary. "But I have an idea to always write in a diary book, so if at any time anything happens to me then my original address is already included in this book. While the address listed in the passport is a fake address."

Indonesia is in wisdom and literacy. Literacy makes people alienated, losing solidarity and togetherness. Abandonment has positive aspects such as togetherness and solidarity (Teeuw, 1994: 40-41). Printed and recorded, the text reaches an infinite number of readers. Includes infinite in geographical terms. The text may reach geographic areas outside the area of the printing or publishing place. In the condition of the development of technology and transportation, the text is

able to reach areas outside the author's territory.

Viewed from the reader side, the first target of TKW text written by St. M, Karti, and KRM are women as stated in the introduction of the book (tt: v) "very useful to be used as a medium of learning from other women's experience so that he does not become a victim and dare to resist the violence that befalls him". From that sentence, the Ideology to be taught both to the writer and the reader is against the violence that has happened to women

Women referred to in the introduction are women who are literate or who can read the writings of women who are still low-educated or highly educated. Included also, women who have experience as migrant workers or not. Because it is written, printed, and published, the intended audience is broad and growing. Male readers can feel how women act and try to improve the welfare of self and family. Narrative form is more effective than the form of poetry. Karti, St. M, and KRM flow more in conveying narratives as they do when they tell their neighbors.

CONCLUSION

There are three levels of the agency that the Women Workforce does. First, women are trying to escape from the poverty environment. The TKW text is a narrative of women trying to escape from the shackles of poverty. Second, after becoming a female migrant worker, women break away from employers. Not all employers behave well to TKW. Third, women write the text. These three levels are expected by the author and the publisher to open the reader's consciousness. The first and second levels have been done by many TKW. The third level that is writing is a very rare level TKW. By writing about self-experience into TKW, Karti, St. M, KRM can reflect on their experience.

Women become migrant workers because they replace men or husbands who cannot afford to fulfill household needs. The TKW narrative is a narrative of Indonesian women's fortitude and fortitude in fighting for life and family life to be more prosperous and happy. By becoming female migrant workers, women are able to pay off debts, have a home and stock in continuing life. TKW is an option for low education habitus and poverty. The presence of text that contains experience or narration is an attempt to improve the fate of migrant workers as well as open awareness of readers and the public.

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