

# A FEMINIST ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY FOR CROSS-COUNTRY MIGRATION

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**Abstract.** This article is written based on the experience of conducting a feminist ethnographic research method for the study of Indonesian domestic workers in the UAE between 2009-2011. The study is a longitudinal study, where female migrant workers are traced from the origin to the destination in the UAE. The results of the study show many hidden issues about the deterioration of women migrant workers. Venue of their work location, in particular, becomes their fundamental problem. The policy of the destination country is also difficult to reach and intervene in case of employer-labour conflict. By using the method of circle of life, dioramas, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions, the feminist ethnographic study found the root of the problem; it has found the social, economic, legal, and policy linkages that shape the framework of migrants' deterioration. The methods of the study proved to give women migrant workers space to describe the phenomena of their migration, the actors involved in the journey, and the unclear contract framework.

**Keywords:** ethnography feminist, cross-country migration, female migrant worker, migration policy

## 1 Introduction

There have been many social humanity studies on the issue of migrant workers, including studies of Indonesian migrant workers in the Middle East regions. Unfortunately, most of these studies apply ordinary social humanity methods, studies of migration between countries with feminist methods are still rarely conducted. Moreover, a study of global migration carried out by domestic migrant workers must contain extraordinary experiences of women within the context of international settings. The experience of low-income women workers in the context of international migration also needs to be written, as part of the struggle for recognition of the dynamics of international forms of migration [7],[10]. Journey of their lives is a knowledge of global migrations that needs to be revealed.

The study of cross-country domestic worker women is one of the most interesting migration studies. The scope is extensive, the notes contain comprehensive results; and it contributes to policy changes afterward. This article is part of a global migration study conducted by women domestic workers to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The main purpose of the study is to identify and analyze the socio-legal issues facing by Indonesian domestic workers. The study

also investigates about the way of the Indonesian government in the UAE cope with the migrant workers' problem. As the local authority in the UAE, it has a governance function in responding to the problems of migrant domestic workers in destinations. In addition, the study is documenting the situation of labor dispatching agencies, troubled domestic workers, employers, and some others who are tied to the phenomenon of migrant domestic workers. The study turns out to be a bridge to understand the issue of migrant domestic workers better, about the migration of women across countries. Deeply, the study narrative explains more than a description of domestic workers as victims; the study also proves that public policy on global migration is often established without complete elements.

After several years, the study results become one of the most useful sources of information to improve the lives of migrant domestic workers. Some regulations have undergone changes and improvements; which is all done to provide protection for women migrant domestic workers. In addition, research results contribute to the promotion of international migration studies in the context of female domestic jobs, and provide a pathway to better public policy change.

In particular, this article aims to elaborate between research, specifically the use of feminist ethnographic methods, key findings, and their contribution to better policy change. Changing women's lives is what is expected from migrating across countries. The purpose of their journey is full of risks in order to improve family conditions, school guarantees for children, have a permanent home, buy a vehicle, buy a rice field, or start a home business and stalls. This means that for those who succeed, there will be a change of bargaining position in the family.

## **2 Methodology**

This study uses feminist ethnographic methods that are applied to uncover the experiences of women domestic workers ranging from homeland to destinations in the UAE. Data collection technique used are in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and dioramas. Through feminist ethnographic methods, this study finds valuable roots of the migration problem. It is very fortunate because various social, economic, legal, and policy relations problems which are not previously thought are revealed. The research methods help providing a space for women migrant workers to describe the phenomena of their migration, the actors involved in travels, and unclear contractual frameworks.

Fieldwork takes place in two countries: the first stage is done in Indonesia, the context of the sending country. The second stage is done in the UAE as the context of the destination country. The international setting reflects a different experience; *firstly*, the research team starts with a study about migrant domestic workers from some areas of sending country. *Secondly*, the team are working in destination. Much research on female domestic workers in destination countries is conducted by non-Indonesian researchers. While research from Indonesian scientists focuses a lot on the domestic worker in sending areas.

Methods of collecting data in groups continues with the excavation individually. According to Stephens [15] ethnographic studies to explore culture data can be done from two levels: social / group, and individual. Researchers conduct follow-up interviews to some domestic workers who have a "unique" story. The interview process is quite intensive and long enough, from the second week to the fifth week of fieldwork. The experience of research in international setting gains some reactions from various parties in the UAE. The same reaction is shown by several connected sources in the study.

Data collection methods start from building rapport. Rapport began with an informal meeting with migrant domestic workers residing in the embassy shelters, one is in Abu Dhabi embassy shelter, and another one is in Dubai shelter of the Indonesian consulate general. The facts found by the research team that there are 8 people from 67 domestic workers who are in the safe house of Abu Dhabi were not able to write. It was then decided to develop a method of mutual help. A migrant domestic worker who is able to write helps a close friend to write her-story. Instead, the process encourages them to tell their story with pictures.

Learning from rapport, the team searched for an easy method of knitting stories, experiences, and reopening memories about the migration process, from departure, arrival in the UAE, placing period, and ending in safe homes of the Indonesian Embassy. Through internal team discussions, it is agreed to use how to unveil their migration story in the form of "*Circle of Life*".

Circle of life is a method in which migrant domestic workers who are temporary living in the Embassy Shelter are asked (individually) to draw a spiral circle on a flipchart paper. The story of the life cycle is to see the social and cultural storytelling that plays a role in the process of international migration. It shows clearly how migration unlocks the secrets of women's relationships with families, communities, countries, and global markets. The data revealing from this method is very interesting and crucial. In general, circle of life draws the decision of whether they go, or going not for their own sake, or going for helping the family out of poverty.

One way to explore the life experience of domestic workers is do a theater or diorama for revealing stories in survival. Researchers ask domestic workers who live in the Embassy Shelter to create their own group, and each creates a story design, then presents it in the form of dioramas. The core of the story is one of the travel experiences from the village in Indonesia to the UAE. From the diorama, the researcher gets an overview of the average experience experienced by migrant domestic workers: such as emotional pressure when leaving the village and separating from family, meeting Indonesian agencies, optimism of departure time to destination land adjacent to *Ka'bah*, handover from Agency to the employer, and the stories in the employer's home. Events of adaptation, conflict, tension, finding a way out, homesickness, despair, struggle against, hope - are phenomena that appear in the diorama shows.

After the entry process is sufficient, preparation of Focus Group Discussions<sup>1</sup> begins. At the next stage of the FGD is the extracting of data on access to justice which includes: knowledge of law, legal identity, and legal aid is also done by participatory methods and critical discussions using metaplan paper. Again, researchers are increasingly convinced that domestic

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<sup>1</sup> FGD participants were 67 people; they were "troubled" women who stayed at the Embassy Shelter waiting for the return ticket. Problematic, that means escaping from the employer's house or agency, for various reasons. There is a mild cause like accidentally destroying an abaya with an iron, instead of discussing it with an employer instead of running away. One of those living in the shelter has extreme experiences, both of which have a broken ear, a neck to a hole and other horrors that remain on her body.

"Escape" is a turning point in the fate of women migrant domestic workers. That way their status immediately turned into "illegal". Usually they run without any documents, because the employer keeps their passports and contracts. In this situation the employer is required to report directly to immigration or police, and there the employer may declare disconnect. All responsibility for the domestic worker is completed.

worker literacy is low, more than 50 percent of them have elementary school education or down. During the FGD process, the researcher ensured that there was a combination of writing and drawing, the purpose of this strategy was that participants who could not read had equal access to the discussion.

Fieldwork interviews are conducted with several domestic migrant workers at shelters, migrant workers who were at employers' homes (employers who were well known by researchers, and allowed their workers to be interviewed), a local female judge, translators, local academics, several agencies and staffs, Indonesian embassy employees, local residents who have lived in Indonesia, female University students, Filipino embassy staffs, drivers, and employees of local government institutions [6];[7].

In fact, the Indonesian embassy authorities restricted the activities of these interviews. They limit interviews to be conducted in Dubai and Abu Dhabi shelters. But during the fieldwork, the research team met with many parties, who were willing to talk, provide information, and provide an interview locus. Through a kind of snowballing process, the team met with many people who provided very good information, completed the picture of the lives of women migrant workers.

Thus, the facility of feminist ethnography occurs, so many local interviewed women who want to talk, and support research conducted by Indonesian women to uncover the phenomenon of women migrant workers from Indonesia. Many liaison persons voluntarily assist several meetings with several sources so that interviews were carried out. There seems to be something new for local people. Usually Indonesian women who come to the UAE are maids and work as helpers or domestic workers. For local people, their meeting with Indonesian female researchers was a surprise. Then their response is giving us a respect; it is a new knowledge that so many Indonesian women work as white-collar resources, even as scientists at universities.

### **3 Results and Discussion**

In this section there are four parts which are explained, namely; 1) review of feminist ethnography at International Migration; 2) Reflections from Methodological Experiences; 3) the Experience of Indonesian domestic workers; 4) Methods and Findings Linkages.

#### **3.1. Review Feminist Ethnography Method at International Migration Research**

There are some researches on inter-state migration conducted by low-income women's groups from poor areas to relatively developed and wealthy destinations, for example [11], [10], [16]. Examples of inquiries in African and Singapore settings are very interesting and invaluable. But the results of research Mkandawire-Valhmu, Rodriguez, Ammar\_&\_Nemoto [10] with feminist ethnography have findings that are very useful for changing policy. Mkandawire-Valhmu, Rodriguez, Ammar\_&\_Nemoto [10] make us easier to see the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and access to resources that arise from the inter-state phenomena of female migration. For the context of Southeast Africa, this research is able to demonstrate the reconstruction of power relations, especially between participants and researchers. For the issue of global migration and low-income women, the issue of power relations is very critical. Because feminist ethnography must guarantee the realization of an equitable relationship

method that potentially empower both participants and researchers. In feminist methods, there is a mandate to improve the lot of research participants.

This study uses a feminist ethnography. Basically, ethnographic methods have been chosen by feminist researchers as a method that is actually capable of disassembling and recasting the experience of women's deterioration in a scientific knowledge [14]. A feminist ethnography allows researchers to gain social and cultural meaning deeper to their roots. This is a kind of new knowledge, from the point of view of vulnerable women, and aided in a systematic form of thinking by feminist scientists.

Methodologically, feminist research stick to data from participants' life experiences [13]. By sticking to that principle, the experiences of migrant domestic workers move temporarily globally is living data. The data can take the form of storytelling [8]; and of self-strengthening narratives [4]. Like McNamara' postulate [8], data attached on stories and secrets to life experiences of the participants. As in the domestic migrant workers context, travel experience is a form of feminist ethnography. Feminist ethnography becomes "... the perfect window through which to access women's wisdom and experience ...". McNamara also affirmed that patriarchy remains the shadow of almost all qualitative research methods, including gender-sensitive research. Thus, we must state that participants are subjects of the inquiry, where the roles and contributions are equal to the researchers themselves.

From fieldwork, the research team has a wealth of experience on humanitarian issues that are closely related to the issue of migration of women migrant workers, both in broad economic, political, cultural, socio-legal contexts. It was inconceivable that the research team broke into this migration business network to the deepest inner circle. During the fieldwork the research team achieved tremendous access to migration actors, both men and women, some of which had already been mapped since the beginning before taking to the field. On the map there are employment agencies, representatives of the Indonesian government, police, prisons and even courts.

The ethnographic method, used as a reference, has made a room for the research team to explore some of the life stories and daily life experiences of domestic workers. Such research is very significant and necessary for the rational background of policy. Of course, policies that guarantee, improve, and change the fate of women who are desperate to find life in the Gulf-rich countries.

The field data not only provide an overview of the multilayered and unlimited societies in the ethnic and ethnic multicultural realities of the UAE; including the paradoxical individuals among the individuals studied. The international migration business network is described by many as "evil", "people's trade"; employers are often described as "violent", "cold-blooded", "stingy". On the other hand, there is a context in which there is kindness, friendship, compassion, humanitarian values being pursued, and solidarity that grows among women among countries. Interesting findings, stereotyping about domestic workers from Indonesia was first found at the University of Zayed. Indonesian maids have identities: submissive, polite, hard work, and Muslim. However, they also have other images, such as: stealing, having a boyfriend, and using witchcraft.

Paradox relation between agencies and migrant domestic workers – it is not a black and white relation. When there are sick and wounded, the agency massaged, unbuttoned her legs without disgust. He taught the woman how to use the crutches she had just bought. Also bought a flight ticket directly back home to avoid transit at the airport of another country. The way of

thinking that oppresses women, unleashes women, turns out to co-exist, mutually beneficial to the values of humanity exalted by activists of the women's movement. Is not this paradoxical?

Furthermore, analysis of feminist ethnography reflects the course of the researcher and her positionality in developing the theory of migration or reflexivity, particularly in the multi-vocal, intersubjective and postcolonial context of the storytelling, secrets and narratives of women [14], [11], in this case is of migrant domestic workers. The uniqueness shown during the fieldwork is part of the researcher's mandate, that is the aim for changing the subject's life. In different contexts, Stacey [14] and Nencel [11], Cornwall and Sardenberg [2], Burgess-Proctor [1], Mkandawire-Valhmu, Rodriguez, Ammar\_&\_Nemoto [10] called it an epistemological discussion of the involvement and empathy of researchers on the strengthening of subjects, whose situations are severely degraded. That is the power of feminist ethnography.

The reflection and participatory method, without hierarchy, and side with the women's thoughts and experiences as subjects, is the bottom line of feminist ethnography [3]; [1]. Sure enough, in the fieldwork, the narrative of travel experiences from the village of origin to the employer's home in the United Arab Emirates destination is able to show a picture and sketch of global migration from experiences of domestic migrant worker women. Through participatory methods, and storytelling about the migrant domestic worker's experience, as well as the involvement of the various parties at every stage of the moves, can be recorded clearly.

Innovations for feminist ethnographic field research occurs in cross cultures [8]. The domestic migrants' travel story is part of space and time in inter-state migration. Successful narratives are drawn from relationships between researchers, women migrant domestic workers, agencies, officials of the Indonesian Embassy in the UAE, as well as other resource persons. All happens in a dialogical way; especially to migrant domestic workers, researchers provide empathy for what they experience.

### **3.2. Reflections from Methodological Experiences**

This sub-chapter contains researchers' reflections on using feminist ethnographic methods. On methodological reflection, it is pivotal to rethink about thw experiences during fieldwork. First lesson is about meaning. The meaning of individual or community behaviors in the UAE context is interpreted as the others. Most of the behavior meanings are interpreted via mediators. Mediators could be Indonesian or locals. Both parties bring their respective cultures in interpreting participant behaviours. The contents of the culture certainly color the interpretation may contain biases of educational background, socio-political position, and psychological aspects.

There are interesting lessons from this research fieldwork. Participatory observation methods provide interesting experiences; for instance, studies on women's issues in the UAE have not been open as in Indonesia and other countries. It is more sensitive concerning the study focus is on domestic workers. The responses of some local people, whether experienced to employers or not, seem to have a negative impression on domestic workers. Although there are few of them who express empathy over the conditions of domestic workers. There is a lot of prejudice and self-defense in the reality appeal.

There is a problem taking photos. Taking pictures is not allowed, including among female fellows who have positions in formal positions. No taking picture to women who are in a special meeting amongst women, particularly when they are not using abaya and shela. It is prohibition to take pictures of women without abaya and shela. But for the issue of employment for women migrant domestic workers different provisions apply. For prospective domestic workers, they must make two versions of a photograph, one wearing hijab, and one without hijab. With the two versions of the photo, prospective employers can see prospective helpers clearly

It concerns with an unfairly visible class hierarchy in the relationship between domestic workers and their employers. It affects gender attributes. It is also embedded with legal politics at the macro level. On the class issue, which is the social concept of modern society, foreign workers in the domestic sector clearly have no class. It turns out that this is related to their position in employment status. The identity of domestic workers are not fully employees, their identity is a foreign "maid"; the management of foreign helpers are not under the administration of the Ministry of Manpower, but under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The diorama and interview methods of the participants gave researchers enrichment of knowledge. The study shows that the state legitimizes domestic workers as private workers. They are as an in-house worker, not a public worker. The narrative of the migrant domestic worker's experience indicates an irrational administration in the care of the working group within the house. As long as the destination country policy still incorporates migrant domestic workers under the Ministry of Domestic Affairs, the essence of employment and workers' rights practices is difficult to implement. The rules that apply are the rules within each home; meaning that the contract and its contents may not be executed. Thus, the status of migrant domestic workers is not categorized, and it is easy to be a *liyan* or the other.

Another experience is about a culture that governs public conversation on a gender basis. For example, there is a strong construction that governs the ultimate authority to talk about the issue of sexuality in the public sphere. Only men have an authority to talk about it, and women do not. The construction is obvious, for example, the team of researchers at a dinner party reported, local men joking about how many wives, how many domestic workers in their homes, and the topic was the same topic as food menu, or a destination plan of their summer's holiday. The roots of the practice of gender inequality that appears from daily conversations show a stratification of intersectionality across gender, class and race within the global migration.

Once again, a participatory observation method provides opportunities for researchers to become part of the subject. Let's see the experience of researchers participating in a social gathering event (*arisan*) among local residences. The *Arisan* culture in the UAE is an interesting fieldnote. There is a group of local women who had been expats in Indonesia, and they adopt a social gathering / *arisan* after returning to the UAE. For all members, Indonesian culture is a culture inherent in the daily life. For example, they visit an Indonesian restaurant called Sari Rasa, and order Indonesian cuisine, such as: Padang food, Sundanese and Javanese menus. In addition, in the tradition of *arisan* food, there are donated food and various snacks from home cooking. The snacks are *lemper* (sticky rice snack with chicken mince inside), *lotek* (salad with spicy peanut dressing), *bakwan goreng* (fried vegetable-wheat flour mix), *chendol* (a kind of sweet drink), *rujak buah* (fruit salad), and others.

After the meal, the ladies sang, karaoke. Their favorite songs are *dangdut* songs; while singing they danced. There is a melodious voice and there is a very fluent jig. Flowing songs like *Kopi Dangdut*, *Zaenal*, *Kembalikan Aku ke Ibuku*. *Jali-jali* is a favorite song that is constantly echoed. Their *dangdut* CD collection is amazingly complete.

They do maintain the ropes of friendship to their poor relatives in Indonesia. A wealthy life in the UAE encourages the Arab-Indonesian descent to make voluntary donations to orphans in Indonesia. Each period, they collect donations and distribute to the Foundation in Indonesia, such as the Foundation in *Pondok Kelapa*. Every time an *arisan* gathering, they are able to donate quite a lot of money. For example, in the *arisan* they collected about 1500 Dhs.

### **3.3. Experience of Domestic Workers of Indonesian Migrants**

Fieldwork gave so many touching stories from the women migrant domestic workers. There are at least three fragments of stories that can be shared in this article, namely stories about adaptation, in agency shelters, and account notes from Embassy shelters.

The first interesting note is the adaptation in the employer's home. Adaptation learning that must be undertaken, especially for those who are first to hold a contract, is to adapt to the local social system. The practice of living assistant households in Indonesia is very different from the context of "maid" in the UAE and also in most other Gulf countries. There is a big difference between the Indonesian culture brought by these migrant workers, with the local culture. So as soon as arriving at the destination home, cultural clashes and social orders cannot be avoided. This is where the conflict is actually at stake. Both physical as well as psychological conflicts are related to cultural clashes and continues to persecution.

Concerning to the adaptation issue, many domestic workers do not have any knowledge about the UAE, about their socio-cultural, especially about prospective employers. Many of them did not know at all that they would live in large houses that were closed off from other social environments. They are not ready for lockdowns for months, and only occasionally are allowed to go buy things to a small grocery or are invited by employers to shop at the mall. Employers who have large houses, usually have more than one domestic worker. they do not employ domestic workers from one country, because they worry that there will be a conspiracy between workers. This situation is also unknown to prospective workers. So their adaptation process is very difficult, because information from the home country is very limited.

Another experience is in agency shelter. This data is only available when we conduct participatory interviews. This also occurs at an advanced stage of good trust as a result of maintained rapport during fieldwork. Researchers were allowed by the agency to visit the agency shelter on the ground floor of the agency's office building. One of some interesting fieldnotes is a locked agency shelter. During their stay in the shelter, domestic workers from various countries were locked from the outside, and keys were carried by staff from the Agency. The occupants of the shelter are the workers who have just come from the country of origin, and the workers who are end their contract and ready to go home. They have to ask the staff if they were hungry. The staff decide when they allow the workers to walk outside the unit. Usually they get rations to eat one or two meals a day. The size of the portion is determined by the agency staff. The domestic migrant workers told to the researchers, if they



were hungry, and there were no food deliveries, they pounded on the walls of the adjoining rooms of the staff room. So that the food ration is immediately given.

On the locked unit it can be seen that all over the walls there is a lot of writing. The writings are narrative galleries, storytelling walls, where former residents wrote messages about their life experiences; the message was addressed to whomever the next occupant. The message shows identity; it is written in the local language and national language; not English or Arabic.

The wall of the diary is like a dialogue. Because the next inhabitants would answer, even gave advice on the previous writings. The diary becomes an important part of feminist ethnography, since the migrant domestic worker's life journey is also part of another migrant women's journey experiences - and there has been dialogue on the walls of the room.

The last crucial notes here is about the story of persecutions. Meet Tamèn, a domestic worker from Indramayu. Unlike other inhabitants of the Embassy shelter, she spent most of her stay in the UAE at the Hospital and Safe House. She is a single parent and migrate temporarily to support her child. She began to be persecuted from the first days of settling in the employer's house. She began to be tortured by the employer when she helped her friend. Within three months in the employer's house, there was no day without persecution. She was beaten, slapped, not fed, watered and then put in a room with the lowest air conditioning temperature. The worst torture is stabbing in the middle of her. The male employer initially defended Tamèn, but over time he was acting as cruel as his wife.

When Tamèn collapsed under torture, the employer took her to the hospital and left her there with her passport. The employer escaped irresponsibility. Tamèn was in a coma for two months in the hospital; she transferred to another hospital, underwent four operations, and spent overall nine months in the hospital. During that time, her family in Indramayu and the Embassy did not know at all. The doctor tried to contact the Tamèn's employer, but the employer reported her back to the police as a runaway case. Then, Doctor called the police, and the police came to catch Tamèn. The police handcuffed Tamèn's legs to the jail. "This is more painful, because I was slandered and put into the prison", said Tamèn.

Just because there was a policeman defending her, Tamèn did not get arrested. Then the police got help from the hospital cleaners who know the phone number of the Indonesian Embassy. The policeman, then, rang the number of the Embassy and he connected Tamèn to the Embassy staffs. Embassy staff picked Tamen from the Police Station and placed her in the shelter of the Embassy. "I demand justice to the employer and to the state of Abu Dhabi", Tamèn said. She feels she has been harmed because her body is damaged, disabled and impossible to work abroad again. Through in-depth interviews, notes about Tamèn case are well documented. Tamen's case is an example of mismanagement of the cooperation of international labor agencies.

#### **3.4. Methods and Findings Linkages: Are the story making better policies?**

Local regulations and practices for migrant domestic workers are relatively low. Actions and policies are made when there is a tragedy, such as death, murder; torture, wounds of unspeakable persecution, harassments, sexual assaults, and other offensive acts - almost no protection from the state. Does this apply to a lower job, which exists in the domestic territory, as well as the affairs of the Ministry of Home Affairs; there are questions that the answers are not "yes" and "no".

The research sources are expanded, researchers met with people related to the research focus. An Indonesian translator working at the Al-Ain Court, teamed up with a female Judge at the AL-Ain Court. She sent a message to the translator, asking to meet with a research team from Indonesia. The next day, a research team meeting up the only Judge women in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain was made. In the meeting discussed various cases, and how the vulnerability of migrant domestic workers when they deal with the law. One of the key factors is how the regulation governing the domestic migrant workers lies with the Ministry of Interior. Rules in the home became one of the things that also made it difficult for the state to intervene. Including interference in the case of protection, when signs of conflict arise. Through the conversation, the fieldwork obtained data about the judicial system in the UAE.

The development of cross-border migration policies, particularly from Southeast Asia to the UAE, takes place; despite running slowly. The feminist ethnographic findings conducted in 2009 through 2011 are still relevant. Cases affecting migrant domestic workers are recognized, and there is a willingness from the local Government to improve their systems and regulations. Protection of migrant domestic workers is an important agenda in their policies.

For example, there have been three meetings of Gulf states discussing the protection of migrant workers; the first meeting in the UAE, the second meeting in Manila, and the third meeting in Abu Dhabi. Human Rights Watch noted at the third meeting held on 26-27 November 2014; the Gulf Employment Ministers and Asian authorities managed to make important notes. Namely: it is recognized that there are approximately 2.4 million migrant domestic workers in the Gulf countries. Most of them are victims of widespread atrocities, such as unpaid, passports and contracts kept by employers, physical violences, forced labor. They also noticed that the UAE is a dangerous destination, where many violent cases occur.

From that recognition, the participants of the dialogue agreed to increase the protection of migrant domestic workers. To realize the agreement, there needs to be immigration policy reform, found one of the root of the problem is in the Immigration Office. Dialogue with trade unions and NGOs; and discuss the contracts of migrant domestic workers. Contracts must conform to ILO Conventions on Domestic Workers. Regional minimum wage standards should be set together, to avoid competition between countries, between agencies - potentially counter-productive to protection. The dialogue forum also encouraged the establishment of an Inter-Council Cooperation Board (GCC) to oversee the protection of migrant domestic workers. The call for protection of migrant domestic workers should be heard worldwide.

Domestically, Migrant Care is an Indonesian NGO that is adamantly fighting for protection against migrant domestic workers – uploaded a record of their advocacy agenda they run in online media. In 2016, in a headline newsletter, Migrant Care stated that the statistics of the exploitation of migrant workers, especially migrant domestic workers, remained high and took place systematically. Various forms of violence against women migrant domestic workers fall into the category of human rights violations. Almost entirely resembles slavery; unfortunately existing policies are still stigmatizing, discriminatory, exploitative, and criminalizing to the workers.

Migrant Care notes that there is an essential gap between the substance of policy in Indonesia and the convention on migrant workers. In relation to policies for Indonesian migrant domestic workers residing in the UAE, Migrant Care urges: (i) MoU improvements between Indonesia and the UAE; (ii) reviewing Law No.39 / 2004 on the Placement And Protection Of Indonesian Migrant Workers Abroad; (iii) Presidential Decree no. 45/2013 on the

Coordination Of The Return Of Indonesian Workers; (iv) Presidential Decree no. 8/2012 on the Task Force Of Indonesian Citizens who are threatened with capital punishment; (v) Decision of Ministry of Manpower No. 17/2015 on the Termination Of Domestic Worker Shipments To The Middle East; (vi) as well as encouraging the existence of Legal Instruments at the local level (*Perda*) and village level (*Perdes*).

#### 4. Conclusions

The first note, and most important, is that feminist ethnography contributes important findings to the situation of women migrant domestic workers. Methods of in-depth interviews, dioramas, participatory observations are very useful to get complete and good fieldnotes. All methods will not be useful if the rapport and "snowballing" process during fieldwork does not occur. Feminist ethnography is clearly very important in this study, very comprehensively revealing various aspects of inter-state migration of women domestic workers.

A straight forward ethnographic study illustrates the low level of protection against them, and biased policies. Before policy becomes the setting agenda of policy formulation, it requires recognition of migrant domestic workers' problems as the public problems. As with the struggles of Migrant Care and Human Right Watch and other NGOs, the Access to Justice study boosts to the emergence of state recognition. In policy studies, the existence of feminist ethnographic studies of global migration is part of the strength of policy entrepreneurs' insistences.

Technical policies that accompany the move towards better policy include (i) advocacy for migration of migrant domestic workers, from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Manpower. (ii) employment contracts, in addition to meeting regional standards and ILO Conventions, there should be a review of the existence of 2 - 3 work contracts, all of which are unknown and not held by workers. (iii) concerning the prospective worker's profile book in the destination country, it is necessary to balance the profiles of prospective employers and job descriptions in the homes of prospective employers, so that both workers and employers alike have access to contracted persons. (iv) policy improvement in destination countries, especially information on access to the Embassy, and the Embassy obtaining data on the presence of migrant domestic workers from Indonesia (temporarily from the Ministry of Interior).

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