



# Securitization of Migration and Kafala System Towards Indonesian Female Migrant Domestic Workers in the Gulf Countries

Muhammad Zahrul Anam<sup>1</sup> (✉), Ali Maksum<sup>1</sup>, Ali Musa Harahap<sup>2</sup>, Maharani Alifah Dhiya Rahmadhanitya<sup>3</sup>, and Muhammad Fariz Abdillah<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
zahrul@umy.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Islam Darussalam Gontor, Kabupaten Ponorogo, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup> Jawa Timur Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup> Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

**Abstract.** This article aims to shed light on the securitization elements practiced by migrant exporting countries in response to the Kafala system of major Middle East recipient countries addressed to foreign female domestic workers. The existing studies have inferred that the Kafala is a form of securitization. However, those works have little attention to other securitization of migration favored by sending countries. The receiving countries preserve the Kafala to protect their citizen from migrant workers. The system requires a sponsor who initially scrutinizes the workers. Those sponsors, who are employers the most, have frequently kept their passports and related official documents to ensure their safety and the compliance of their workers. This article investigates the securitizing actors, the referent objects, and the audience. The collected data for this paper are mainly from the online database. Data analysis employs word cloud, matrix, and crosstab analysis of the Nvivo 12 + software. The article argues that the securitizing actors of sending migrant countries are the interest groups; the referent objects are human life and dignity; the audience is individuals, groups, or institutions that are active and able to support formally and morally.

**Keywords:** Securitization · Migration · Indonesia · Female Domestic Worker · The Gulf countries

## 1 Introduction

The kafala system, a specific style of sponsorship aimed at informal foreign workers, notably female migrant domestic workers, is widely used in the Gulf countries of the Middle East. The system is an integral aspect of the hiring process. It must be followed by eligible domestic employees looking for jobs in Gulf countries. The kafala was formed in the first place to safeguard companies from the threat of foreign employees.

On the other side, the use of kafala has harmed female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs). It leads to a variety of physical and emotional abuse and sexual abuse. This

violence against human rights results in serious injury, trauma, depression, and unwanted pregnancy. Several female domestic employees, notably Indonesians, who are being abused or raped, are too afraid to speak up or report the abuse to the authorities. Workers have remained silent because of coercion from their bosses or family members who committed the crime. The incapacity of female workers to speak up is due to their willingness to submit passports and other documentation requested by employers.

Few Muslim countries in Central Asia have made it illegal for women to work as maids or in similar jobs for Gulf employers. In Bangladesh, Uddin (2021) argues that between 1981 and 1998, the government restricted the outflow of low-skilled women, resulting in migrant women laborers accounting for under one percent of all registered migrants until 2003. Meanwhile, Muslim-minority countries in South Asia, such as Sri Lanka and Nepal, have restricted unskilled migrant domestic workers from traveling to Gulf countries because of their vulnerability, abuse, and increased employment risk (Babar, 2021).

Historically, the kafala was from the colonialist during the British colonial period in the Middle East (Alshehabi, 2019). It is a means of controlling the flow of foreign workers. The British officials realized that the presence of migrant workers was essential for economic reasons. Nevertheless, the workers might pose a security risk to the colonialist. At that time, sponsorship in the pearling industry was to regulate and control migrant workers. In the sponsorship system, the state assigned legal responsibility for the existence of a foreign worker to a private individual (Alshehabi, 2019).

Despite advocating the employers' security, Kanchana points out that the kafala practiced by the Bedouin tribe was to show hospitality and protect foreign visitors or travelers from a hostile tribe in the desert (Chowdhury & Rajan, 2018). The sponsor (or the kafeel) took responsibility for ensuring the safe passage of travelers or visitors. In this regard, the Bedouin provides temporary shelter, food, and tribal affiliation. The Bedouin kafala tradition permits them to monitor outsiders' behavior during their stay (Chowdhury & Rajan, 2018).

Several scholarly publications have explored the kafala concerning enslavement El-Mumin (2020) believes that the kafala system found in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states demonstrated the failure of The Gulf Declaration of Human Rights (GDHR) to prevent slavery in the region Fernandez (2021) investigates racial issues of migrant workers and misused kafala. African and Asian laborers are mostly the target of mistreatment within the kafala. According to Fernandez, kafala represents a racially stratified occupational hierarchy of migrant workers (Fernandez, 2021). Parreñas and Silvey (2021) insist that cancellation and illegalization are two crucial features of the kafala that discipline foreign workers.

The kafala-based securitization of migration by migrant-exporting countries has received scant attention in studies. More research on migration security has focused on recipient countries. According to internet databases from Indonesian online media, internal NGOs, and international organization websites, the kafala signifies employers' dominance, violation, slavery, and lack of freedom for most Indonesian Female Migrant Domestic Workers. The data notifies that Saudi Arabia excludes domestic workers from the kafala reform program. The media recommends that Indonesia engage in bilateral

diplomacy with Saudi Arabia to stop kafala, notwithstanding the bill, lobbying, and moratorium policy.

## 2 Literature Review

The vast literature on the securitization of migration has placed a greater emphasis on receiving countries. Banai and Kreide (2017) believe that the growing Muslim population in Germany due to the open door policy for displaced Syrian people is a potential threat associated with religious extremism, social peace, and economic prosperity. Adopting the Copenhagen School introduced by Barry Buzan and Olive Weaver, Melati and Victoriana (2020) emphasize that a securitizing actor is crucial in politicizing migration as a security issue based on domestic concerns.

Sensenig and Eugene (2017) discuss the issue of sovereignty in Lebanon, which accommodates many refugees. Since its independence in 1943, Lebanon has experienced multiple waves of refugees, accounting for between 2.5% (Iraqis) and 25% (Syrians) of the country's total population, which is currently estimated to be a little over 4 million (Sensenig, 2017). Topulli and Enela (2016) argue that migration leads to the liberal paradox, in which migrant-receiving countries are in a dilemma whether to accept migrants following the Declaration of Human Rights or restrict the influx of migration by protecting their border for state's sovereignty.

Votradovcová and Hana (2017) emphasize that social and historical settings are the main reasons people across Europe have reacted differently to migrants. Zvada and Ľubomír (2018), who cited Matt McDonald, point out that securitization compresses three primary components. First, securitization relates to a specific activity by dominant individuals, namely, political leaders' speeches. Second, it has connected to the context of the securitizing actors' intervention behavior. Third, it links to the act's nature in which the actors identify security danger (Zvada, 2018).

Considering the Copenhagen School, the Arab Spring causing the influx of migration to European countries, especially Italia, led Berlusconi to react extraordinarily and request the European Union assist Italy as a recipient country (Kaleta, 2015). In dealing with the Arab uprising and the Copenhagen, Labitsch, S V (2014) argues that the political turmoil that took place in Tunisia, Egypt, as well as Libya is a politically constructed threat formulated by three different in Europe: the European Commission, the European Council, and the Council of Ministers. Additionally, Vallo, Jaworek, and Matlach (2020) focus on the Islamophobic responses of some Czech politicians and political parties in the 2015 migratory crisis.

Contrera, Mariano, and Menezes (2022), whose works are parallel to Vallo, Jaworek, and Matlach, point out that the securitizing migration by restricting Latin America Muslims is an objective of the changes in the US migration policy under Donald Trump, who addresses the threat rhetoric. According to Hirschauer (2021), the policy shaped by securitizing migration is not just an instrumental effect but also a sign of the ideological pattern. The scope of the securitizing actor could include either state or non-state actors. Mortensgaard (2020) claims that the media is a pivotal non-state actor framing news through securitization and de-securitization.

Furthermore, Karyotis and Patrikios (2010) believe that discursive securitization discourse addressed by two different competing parties has had a significant impact on



**Fig. 1.** Securitization of Migration. Source: Compiled by Author (2022)

public perception. By investigating Greece as a case study, the authors find that religious elites presenting securitizing discourse on migration in churches are more influential than political messages. Another non-state actor, as observed by Jakešević and Tatalović, is the International Governmental Organizations (IGOs). Jakešević and Tatalović (2016) investigate the European Union's response to the refugee crisis in 2015/2016. They also examine the EU migration and asylum policy and the disagreement of member states with preferences to overcome the refugee problem.

According to Sahu (2022), the essential parts of the securitization theory are the forceful actors, the referent object, and the audience. The first part, known commonly as the securitizing actor, is a dominant decision-maker such as political leaders and elites. Moreover, the agent can be anyone, including politicians, MPs (Members of Parliaments), government officials, and religious group leaders (Karyotis & Patrikios, 2010). Sahu (2022) maintains that those actors construct an argument about a threat and disseminate their construction by employing the speech act. Then, they consider the best solution to eliminate the threat.

The second part of the theory is a security-based construction of an object all possible actors comprehend. Sahu (2022) points out that the referent object is a fabricated threat issued by the securitizing actors. They consider the danger to be a security risk. In dealing with the referent object, political leaders, in particular, employ policing and defense. For example, the leaders have the power to suspend or override judicial review, public input on bureaucratic or executive decisions, and the democratic process in general. Besides, defense policy may stimulate security dilemmas in the global context among conflicting parties (Sahu, 2022). Lupovici (2019) insists that deterrence is an example of constructing external difficulties.

The last element of the theory is the audience. Sahu (2022) defines the audience as persons or people who become the target for the securitization move to succeed. Concerning the audience, securitization aims to achieve inter-subjectivity and equal capacity between the actor and the audience in defining the nature of the issue. In other words, the acceptance of the audience is crucial. For example, the Malaysian authorities perceive that Filipino and Indonesian migrant workers, especially illegal ones, have threatened state security since citizens rely on their presence. The reliance would hamper Malaysia from developing automatization (Dollah & Abdullah, 2018). Therefore, the Malaysian government employs persuasion power.

This research examines the implementation of the Copenhagen School from the standpoint of an exporting-migrant country, Indonesia. This study explores the dynamic interplay of the securitizing actors, the construction process upon the referent object, and the audience persuasion. The scholarly works on the School have rarely discussed the sending migrant countries that frame securitization (Fig. 1).

Concerning the illustration above, the securitizing agents of sending countries' viewpoints are often a combination and interplay of state and non-state entities rather than a single entity. In the case of the Indonesian migrant workers, the agents compressing the NGOs and the Indonesian authorities formulated the kafala system of the Gulf countries as an essential threat and persuaded the audience to have a common understanding of the danger.

### 3 Method

This article employs a qualitative research approach by focusing on text analysis. Data collection is mainly from the online news and database released from 2009 to 2020. Data that does not fit the required keywords, namely the kafala and the moratorium, was excluded. As a result, relevant data with the keywords is about 154 items. Then, according to the keywords, more texts are appropriate to the moratorium than the kafala, about 114 and 40, respectively.

The top-ten media more frequently discussing keywords are:

1. Detik
2. BBC Indonesia
3. Kompas
4. Antara
5. Berita Satu
6. Liputan 6
7. CNN Indonesia
8. Republika
9. Bisnis Com
10. Tempo

The rest of the online media and the Indonesian NGOs website explore the keyword at least once. After that, the NVivo 12 Plus is a platform chosen to code and analyze those selected data. The platform classifies data into nodes that help for further analysis. The data analysis of this research compresses the word cloud, matrix, and crosstab analysis.

### 4 Result

The selected data, in which the Nvivo 12 Plus analyzes the word frequency, highlights certain primary words, as demonstrated below (Fig. 2).

The first level of the most striking feature of the words, as shown above, is Indonesia, Pekerja, TKI (acronym of the Indonesian Workers), Saudi, Migran (Migrant), Pemerintah (Government), Majikan (Employer), Negara (State), Kerja (Work), Sistem (System) and Penempatan (Placement). The second level group of words includes the Moratorium and Perlindungan (Protection). The third level of the phrase compresses Kebijakan (Policy), Kafala, Pengiriman (Deployment), Perusahaan (Private Agent), and the PMI (the acronym of the Indonesian Migrant Workers) (Fig. 3).



Fig. 2. The Word Cloud of The Selected Data Set. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)

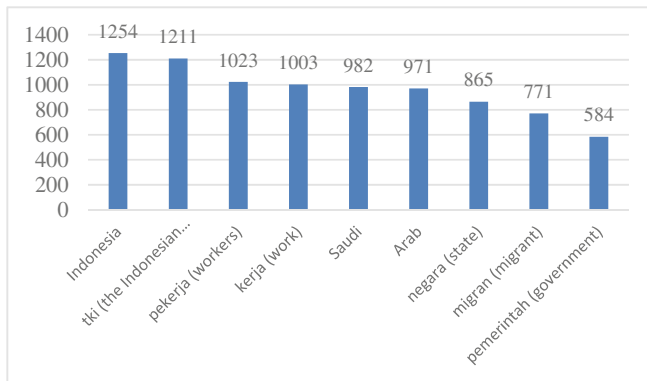
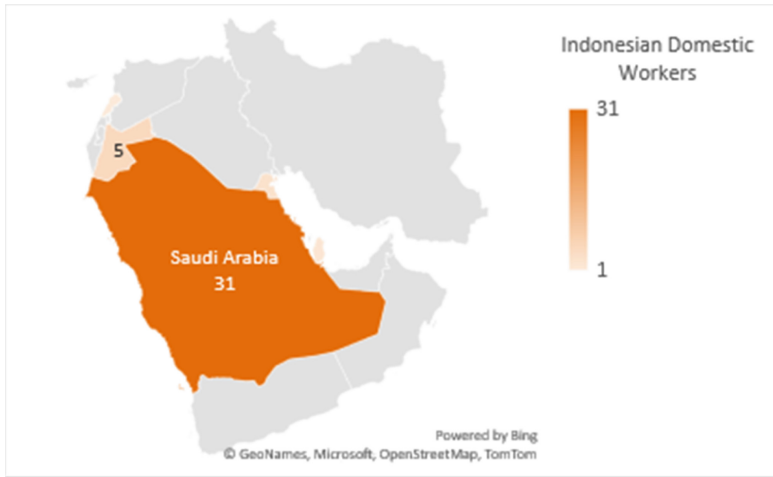


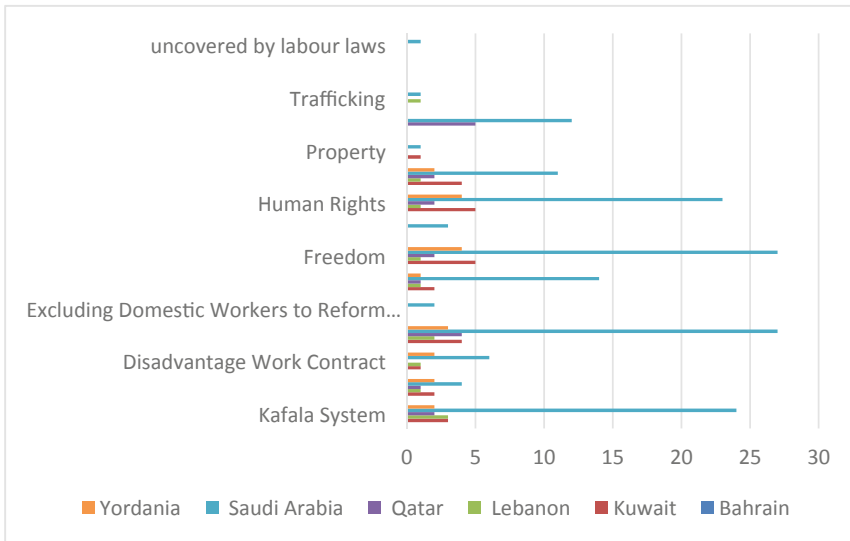
Fig. 3. The Most Frequent Words. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)

According to nodes extracted from the data, Saudi Arabia is the highest of other Gulf countries where domestic migrant workers seek employment. Then, the phrase associated with Indonesia and its migrant workers is at the top position. Meanwhile, the word of government and state is at a lower level. The nodes proceeded by the matrix analysis of the Nvivo 12 Plus notify that most Indonesian workers have headed to Saudi Arabia rather than Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar, and Jordan (Fig. 4).

Furthermore, matrix coding between the kafala system and some recipient countries of the Middle East emphasizes the impact of the existing kafala system in Saudi Arabia. As presented by the following image, it results in slavery, Human Rights, employer domination, exploitation, freedom, and the unease of resigning job (or less opportunity to return home) (Fig. 5).



**Fig. 4.** State Destination of Indonesian Migrant Workers. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)



**Fig. 5.** The Kafala System and The Middle East Recipient Countries. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)

Figure 6 depicts the relations between Detik, Berita Satu, Kompas.com, and the kafala system. It shows that Kompas.com delivers more phrases of the kafala than Detik and Berita Satu. Kompas.com covers nine nodes of the kafala, namely Employer Domination, Excluding Domestic Workers from the Reform System, Exploitation, Human Rights, Slavery, Disadvantage Work Contract, Decent Work, Sponsor, and No Return Home.

Detik, as shown in the image, includes seven nodes of the kafala, namely Sponsor, Employer Domination, No Return Home, Human Rights, Disadvantage Work Contract,

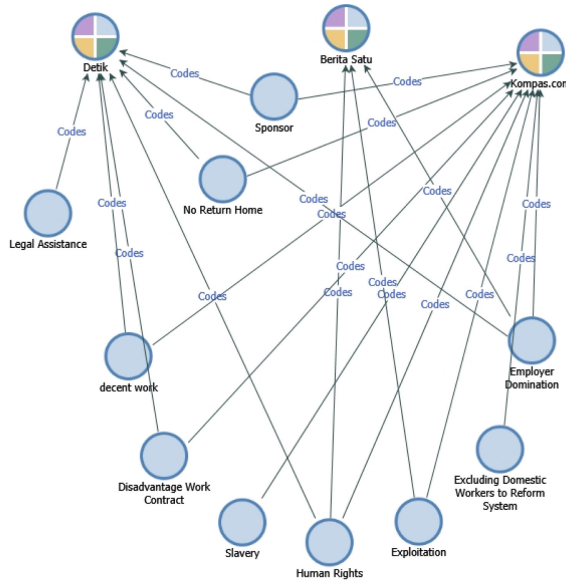


Fig. 6. Media and the Kafala System. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)

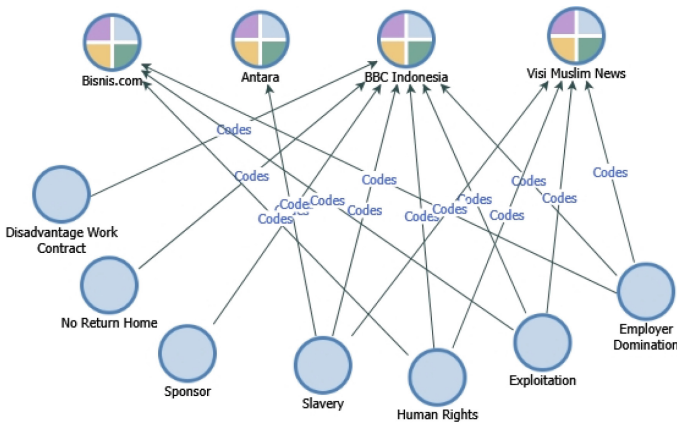


Fig. 7. Media and The Kafala. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)

Decent Work, and Legal Assistance. Compared to Detik and Kompas.com, Berita Satu only addresses three nodes: Employer Domination, Exploitation, and Human Rights.

Compared to the previous nodes in Fig. 6, several nodes are no longer available in Fig. 7: Excluding Domestic Workers from Reform System, Legal Assistance, and Decent Work. Figure 7 demonstrates that BBC Indonesia publishes seven nodes more than others. The nodes in BBC Indonesia are Employer Domination, Exploitation, Human Rights, Slavery, Sponsor, No Return Home, and Disadvantage Work Contract.



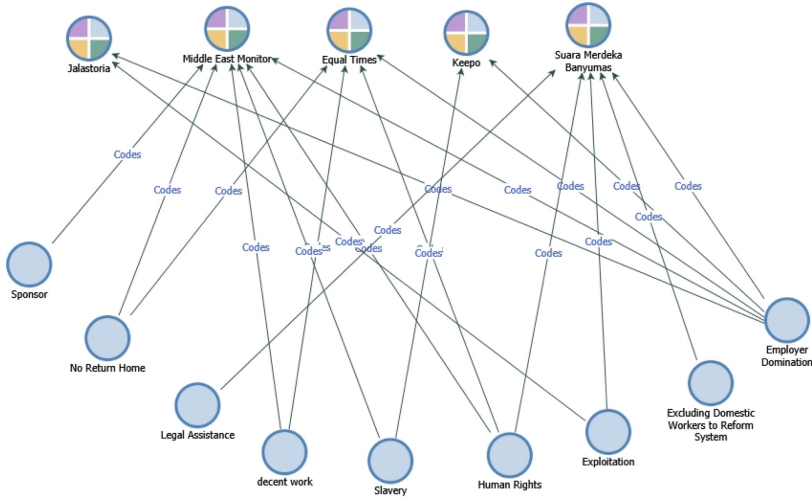


Fig. 8. Media and The Kafala. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)

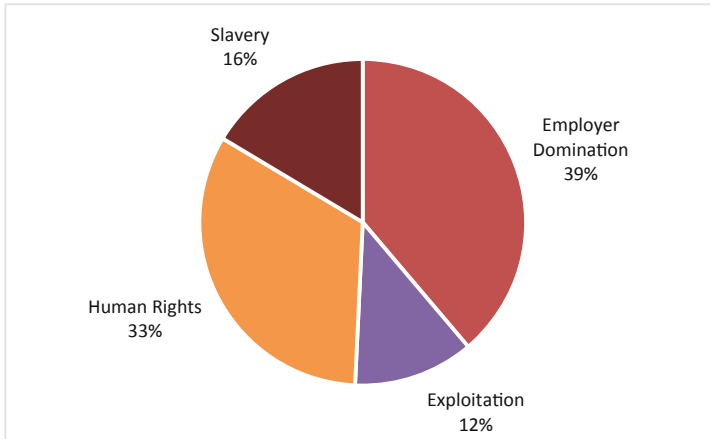
After that, Visi Muslim News is behind BBC Indonesia with four nodes: Employer Domination, Exploitation, Human Rights, and Slavery. Then, Bisnis.com is less than BBC Indonesia and Visi Muslim, covering three nodes: Employer Domination, Exploitation, and Human Rights. The bottom level is Antara which publishes only one node: Slavery. Those news publishers convey similar nodes: Human Rights, Slavery, Exploitation, and Employer Domination.

Figure 8 illustrates Employer Domination as the most node included by all five online news: Suara Merdeka Banyumas, Equal Times, Middle East Monitor, Jalastoria, and Keepo. Meanwhile, news publishers mentioning Human Rights are Suara Merdeka Banyumas, Equal Times, and the Middle East Monitor. Then, No Return Home, Decent Work, Slavery, and Exploitation are the nodes mentioned each by the two publishers. Regarding Figs. 6, 7, and 8, the extracted nodes of the kafala that arguably become securitization issues are Employer Domination, Human Rights, Slavery, and Exploitation.

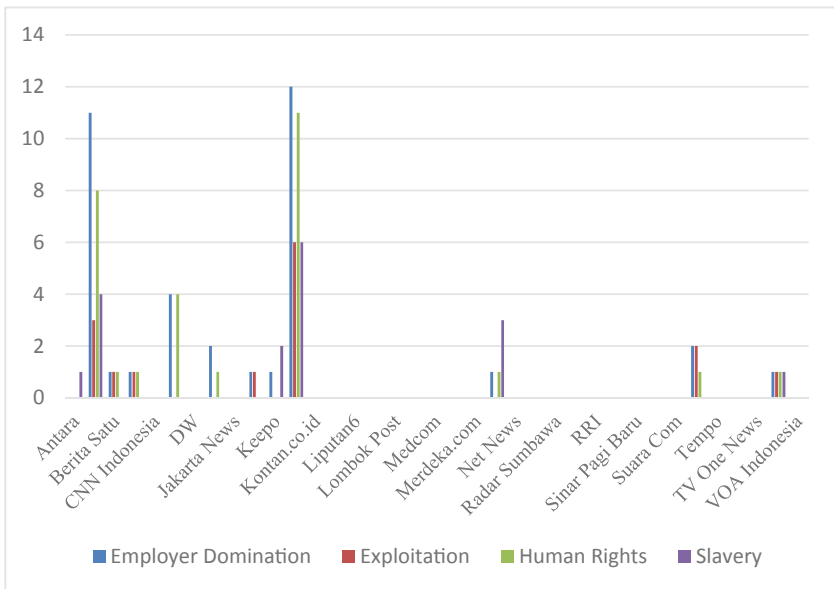
Figure 9 depicts the two main problems most Indonesian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia experience. The first challenge most online news focuses on is Employer Domination by 39%. The second position is the phrase Human Rights, which reaches 33%. On the other hand, coverage of Slavery and Exploitation is less than 20%.

Figure 10 depicts four key kafala factors that online news publishers discuss frequently. Employer Dominance and Human Rights are two phrases often mentioned on BBC Indonesia, Detik, Equal Times, Kompas.com, and Suara Merdeka Banyumas. Employer Domination, Exploitation, Human Rights, and Slavery are the nodes that Berita Satu, Bisnis.com, and Visi Muslim News examine in their publications. The rest of the web press has concentrated on the variables differently. Figure 10 depicts Antara and Keepo focusing on a single variable, enslavement.

In addition, Jalastoria is concerned with two variables: Employer Domination and Exploitation. The Middle East Monitor then places a greater emphasis on slavery than



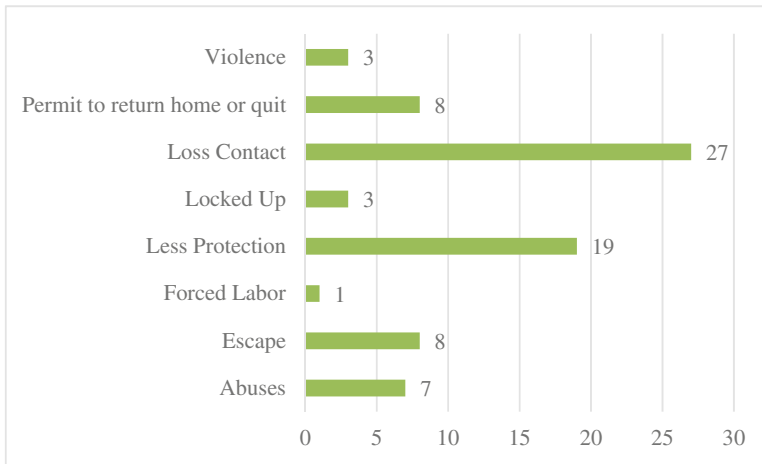
**Fig. 9.** Indonesian Workers and The Kafala in Saudi Arabia. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)



**Fig. 10.** Online News and The Kafala System. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)

the other three criteria. Furthermore, Employer Domination is the most discussed topic in Indonesian online news, followed by Human Rights, Slavery, and Exploitation. The following picture draws implications of employer dominance and the issue of Human Rights for the Indonesian domestic workers, who predominantly are females.

Figure 11 shows that more Indonesian domestic employees are missing due to a lack of communication with their families. Existing workers are not afforded the same legal



**Fig. 11.** Implication of the Kafala for the Indonesian Domestic Workers. Source: The Author's Analysis (2022)

protection as their counterparts in the formal sector. Employers have complete control over workers who want to quit or visit their relatives in their home country under the kafala system. Unfortunately, the kafala's disgruntled employees decided to flee their employers.

## 5 Discussion

This section elaborates on three essential elements of securitization in dealing with the kafala system. Unlike recipient countries, the securitizing actors of sending migrant countries involve multiple actors. Then, as conveyed by the actors, the referent object varies, threatening national security. After that, the audience to whom the securitization addresses could be diverse.

### 5.1 The Securitizing Actors

Within a debate among scholars and theorists, some believe that the political elite is one of the actors who have the ultimate power to decide and construct a phenomenon as a threat (Balzacq, 2019). Others point out that the power combines the elites and the audience (Balzacq, 2019). According to the elite theory, a society—no matter when and where—is divided into two diametrical groups: the ruler and the ruled people. Marriotti (2020) insists that the majority of available resources, which are economical, intellectual, and cultural, are concentrated in the hands of a tiny group of people who use them to exert authority over the rest of society. For example, in the US, the ruling elites, composed of three loosely linked groupings, are high-ranking politicians, the owners and board members of prominent corporate, and senior military commanders (Khan, 2020).

Weaver, one of the Copenhagen School thinkers, says that a securitizing actor should be in a position that is fully legal and acceptable to the audience (Noorzad, n.d.). In

addition, the failed or successful securitization process is not only based on the adequate and legitimate actor but also the audience. As a result, the Copenhagen School has a narrow perspective by focusing on the speech act of the actor. On the other hand, Balzacq, the proponent of the Paris School, conceives a broader view by utilizing a sociological standpoint rather than the speech act (Noorzad, n.d.). In this regard, Balzacq argues that policy-making and bureaucratic institutions are more imperative (Noorzad, n.d.).

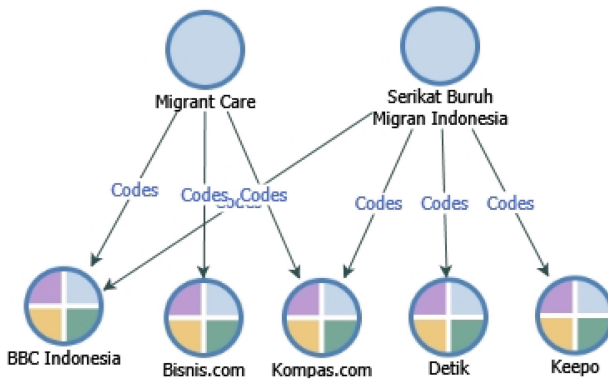
As an exporting-migrant country, Indonesia's securitization actor is neither what the Copenhagen School emphasizes nor what the Paris School talks about regarding migrant workers. In Indonesia, the initiative of securitization starts mainly from an interest group. Post-Suharto regime in 1998, the interest groups have developed rapidly and became more critical of the authority concerning its policy on sending female domestic workers to the Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia. Although researchers rarely agree on a specific definition, the interest group, according to Yoho (1998), has condensed four dimensions of its meaning.

First, interest groups encompass actual organizations rather than a collection of unstructured individuals. Next, the group makes an effort to sway the government. After that, they are not part of the government agencies. Fourth, neither are they political parties with authority to propose people for public office. (Yoho, 1998). Therefore, those dimensions exclude unorganized masses unwilling to change policy and include the private or non-governmental agencies. Additionally, numerous interest groups have different specific agendas to be imposed on state policy. Then, the lobby and shaping public opinion are two ways interest groups affect policy.

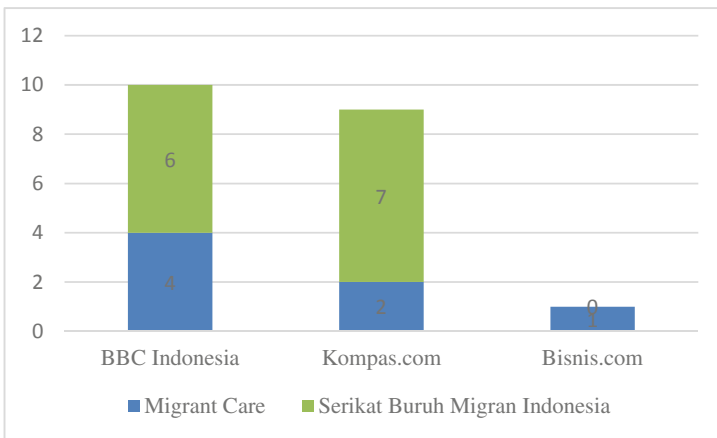
The lobby of interest groups is diverse, as discussed in several scholarly works or literature. Klüver, Mahoney, and Oppen (2015) argue that framing contributes significantly to public policy. Regarding framing implementation, the interest groups have intensively investigated a problematic aspect of a policy proposal and undermined others aimed at gaining an advantage in the policy debate in which the groups intend to attract enormous attention to their preferred policy (Klüver et al., 2015). Moreover, rhetoric and campaign could be the groups' appropriate steps to shape public opinion (Andsager, 2000). Therefore, advanced information technology allows the groups to utilize various media platforms, not only mainstream media such as printed media publishers but also social media, to promote their agenda.

In Indonesia, one of the migrant exporting countries in Southeast Asia, the labor union and migrant-oriented NGOs are the underlying actors for securitization. With the fall of the New Order in 1998, labor unions, including migrant worker unions and NGOs, have come up with specific rhetoric released in online media to criticize the policy of sending female domestic workers to Saudi Arabia. The following is the number of labor unions and NGOs, Serikan Buruh Migran Indonesia (SBMI, the Indonesian Migrant Worker Union) and Migrant Care, expressing their rhetoric in the media.

Figure 12 demonstrates the similarity between Migrant Care and SBMI in using wide-range coverage media to spread their interest and shape public opinion. Compared to Migrant Care, SBMI is more active by getting involved in four media: BBC Indonesia, Bisnis.com, Kompas.com, and Detik. Next, Fig. 13 illustrates that more SBMI representing migrant worker union writes in media than Migrant Care as NGOs. Concerning rhetoric, Migrant Care in BBC Indonesia insists that the G-to-G negotiation between



**Fig. 12.** Labor Union and NGOs Exposure in the Online Media. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)



**Fig. 13.** Labor Union and NGOs Rethoric in the Online Media. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)

Indonesia and Saudi Arabia on the kafala reform is urgently needed. Migrant Care also highlights asymmetric power relations between employers and their domestic workers, which Kafala leads the rights of employers to be more than employees. SBMI perceives kafala as an integral part of local Arab tradition, which is uneasy about being eliminated. According to SBMI, the practice of kafala is modern slavery. In addition, framing by focusing on state regulation of the migrant worker is also done by Migrant Care.

### 5.2 The Referent Object

As supported by Barry Buzan and colleagues, the referent object within the existing securitization theory of the Copenhagen School credits much more on state and social interest than human life. The state-centric theory suggests that the state or society is the

means of protecting human life and dignity. The distinct securitizing discourse of that theory consists of military, political, economic, societal, and environmental. Societal security is mainly related to the concept of identity. On the other hand, human life and dignity are the priorities of humanitarian security over the state and social interest (Watson, 2011).

Concerning the Indonesian policy of sending female domestic workers to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, the Indonesian authority during the New Order (1966–1998) and the early Reform Era of the 2000s, when Indonesia remained struggling for financial recovery, considered economic security. In the New Order, the government introduced transnational domestication in which low-income women of the social class were strongly encouraged to work overseas as domestic helpers to finance their families at home (Silvey, 2004a). Meanwhile, during the financial recovery of the 2000s, women who voluntarily registered to work informally as housemaids and alike in affluent Gulf countries snowballed enormously due to high inflation and the unemployment rate (Silvey, 2004b).

However, the referent objects of NGOs like Migrant Care and SBMI have intended human life and dignity. Therefore, those NGOs differ from the political elites in looking at the referent objects for Indonesian Female Domestic Workers (IFDWs) in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. Furthermore, while Migrant Care and SBMI critically assess the authority's policy on exporting domestic migrant workers, they place differing emphasis on four human-centric referent objects: slavery, employer dominance, human rights, and exploitation (as depicted in Fig. 9).

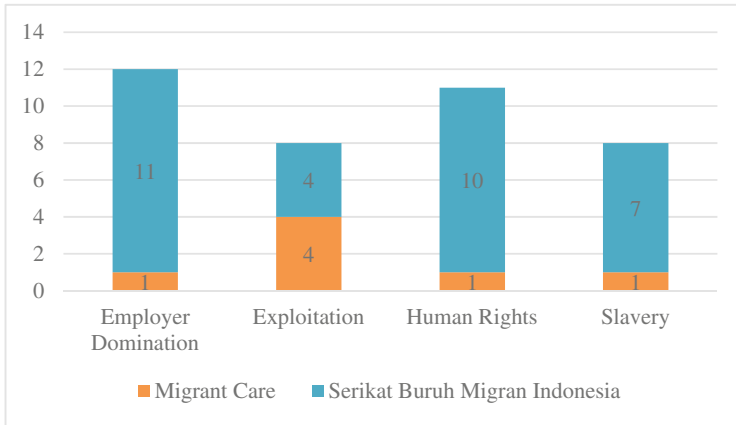
The result of matrix analysis using Nvivo 12 + reveals that while Migrant Care concentrates on exploitation, SBMI is more concerned with employer dominance and human rights. According to SBMI, workers lose touch with their families at home due to employer dominance. It also maintains that the domination of employers in Kafala resembles slavery in contemporary times. SBMI is pessimistic about kafala reform by arguing that kafala practice is a long tradition of the Arab society that is uneasy about eliminating immediately. In the meantime, Migrant Care believes that Saudi Arabia's switch from the kafala to the syirkah system is meaningless.

The extent to which Migrant Care and SBMI express the four referent objects is information presented in the following Figs. 14 and 15.

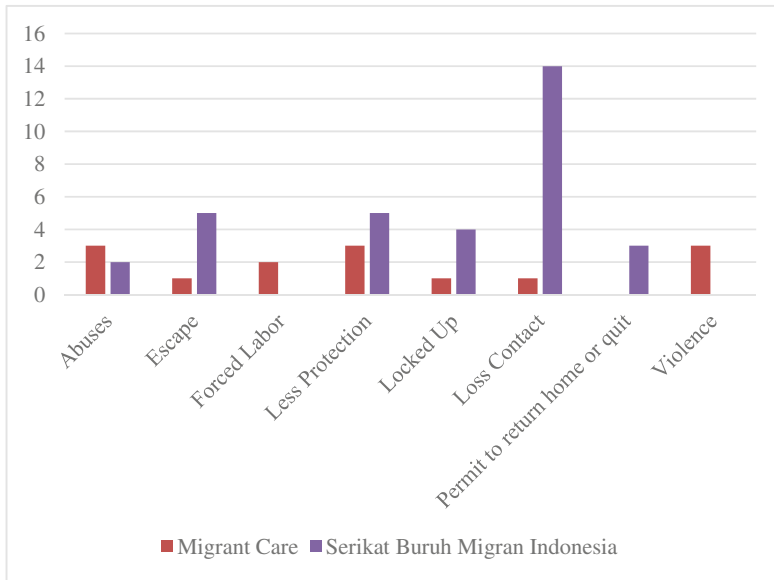
Because of those referenced items, Migrant Care and SBMI requested that the government announce a moratorium policy for the Middle East market. The government chose a soft moratorium in 2011 to pressure Saudi Arabia to negotiate treatment enhancements and protection for female domestic employees. The Indonesian government then pronounced the moratorium policy permanent in nearly all Middle Eastern nations in 2015 [28]. As a result, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia agree to apply a one canal system to protect Indonesian migrant workers [13].

### 5.3 The Audience

The audience is an essential part of the securitization theory. This notion functions to create intersubjectivity of shared security meanings and to justify security policy. Despite being a crucial element, exploration of the audience in the Copenhagen School remains unclear or underdeveloped (Côté, 2016). Côté (2016) defines the audience of



**Fig. 14.** NGOs and The Identified Human-driven Referent Objects. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)



**Fig. 15.** NGOs and Challenges of the Indonesian Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)

securitization as “the individual(s) or group(s) that has the capability to authorize the view of the issue presented by the securitizing actor and legitimize the treatment of the issue through security practice.” In other words, the audience is an active agent capable of getting involved in the intersubjectivity construction of security issues (Côté, 2016).

On the other hand, the audience rejects securitization through two strategies: depoliticization and (re) politicization. Depoliticization consists of a passive recipient strategy and the block strategy. According to (Biba, 2016), the former is a denial of securitization initiatives, which the actors are unsuccessful in addressing the issue. The latter is a counter-reaction in which the audience presents an alternate construction highlighting that the problem is not a security matter. The second strategy, namely (re) politicization, requires the audience to suggest a potential solution that differs from the actors (Biba, 2016).

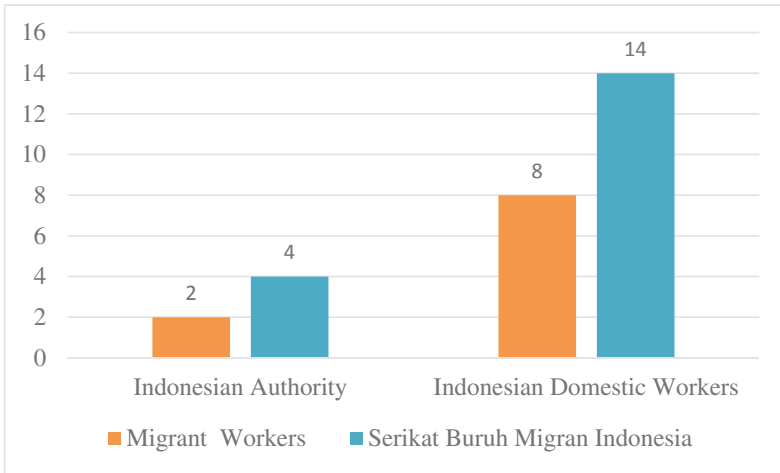
The format of target audience acceptance condenses moral and official support. Depending on the target audience, whether it comes from a formal agency or not, Balzacq (2005) insists that people should not conflate the use of those distinctions. Moral support delivered by the public is enough, while it is insufficient for the issue of the Hard Politics and supporters from institutions such as Parliament, Congress, and Security Council. In this regard, a formal decision should follow the moral support of the institution. For example, government officials have requested public and institutions for ethical and legal consent to wage war against a country (Balzacq, 2005). In addition, the condition that the government successfully obtains those consent is a good social relationship with the target individual group (Balzacq, 2005). For a shake of accomplishing the desired result, they must maintain their relationship.

Migrant Care requests official support from the Indonesian government in the form of bilateral negotiations with Saudi Arabia to reform kafala, based on matrix analysis of Nvivo 12 + looking at Migrant Care, SBMI (the actor), the Indonesian authority (institution), and the Indonesia migrant workers (a target audience from the public). Following Saudi Arabia's elimination of the kafala system for professional migrant workers, excluding domestic ones, SBMI urges the government to guarantee the safety of the Indonesian employees. SBMI is doubtful that the amended kafala system will lead to a severe problem for the workers.

To win the employees' moral support, Migrant Care and SBMI made the stories of the Indonesian domestic workers subjected to kafala. Migrant Care highlights the exclusion of domestic workers from the Labour Law of Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, some Indonesian domestic workers and assistants have experienced exploitation, abuse, and violence in Saudi Arabia. In addition, workers also face financial difficulties as a result of payment delays. In Saudi Arabia, the kafala restricts the workers from having legal assistance. SBMI concludes that the kafala reflects the neo-slavery system.

Migrant Care believes that despite the moratorium policy, it is insufficient without strict law enforcement and excellent service for potential workers. Weak law enforcement of the moratorium allows private agencies to depart female domestic workers illegally to Saudi Arabia. Migrant Care and SBMI have successfully appealed to both public and the authority to obtain moral and official support. Still, they have not yet won support from some private enterprises (a targeted institution) in the form of a commitment to protecting the employees (Fig. 16).





**Fig. 16.** Targeted Audience of Migrant Care and SBMI published online. Source: The Author’s Analysis (2022)

## 6 Conclusion

In conclusion, securitization is practiced by sending migrant countries and receiving ones with the same pattern but different content. The securitizing actors, the referent objects, and the audience are present in both countries. Nevertheless, those countries distinguish who will be an actor, the constructed issue, and the target audience. Recipient countries consider the political elites as the actors authorized to build the issue of security, whereas sending countries emphasize the interest groups. The method used by the political elites to securitize objects is the speech act, while the interest groups employ lobby and public opinion.

Regarding the referent objects, the receiving countries inspired by Barry Buzan perceive that the referent objects are state-driven political, economic, societal, and military interests rather than human-centered issues. Although societal within the recipient countries feature humans, it relates closely to national identity. On the other hand, the exporting countries prioritize human life and dignity or human-centered issues as referent objects. Concerning the audience, both exporting and receiving countries pay equal attention to active audiences (individuals/public or institutions) that contribute to moral and formal support. In addition, all downloaded online database on kafala shows human-centered challenges Table 1.

**Table 1.** Matrix of Securitization of Sending Migrant Countries.

	Receiving Migrant Countries	Sending Migrant Countries
The Securitizing Actors	Political Elites by speech act	Interest Groups by Lobby and Public Opinion
The Referent Objects	State-Centered Issues: Political, Economic, Societal, and Military	Human Security/Human-Centered Issues: Human Life and Dignity
The Audience	The Active Audience with moral and formal support	The Active Audience with moral and formal support

Source: Muhammad Zahrul Anam's Analysis (2022)

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