



Countries Without Migrant Voices: A Participatory Study Woman Indonesian Migrant Workers in the 2024 Election in Taiwan

Okta Purnama Sari*, Pardamean Daulay

University Terbuka, Indonesia

*Corresponding author e-mail: 0490418116@ecampus.ut.ac.id

Abstract

Women's participation in politics still often faces obstacles, particularly for Indonesian Migrant Women Workers (PPMI), many of whom are still denied the right to vote in the 2024 general election. This study aims to identify the political participation of PPMI in Taiwan in the 2024 presidential election. This study employed a qualitative approach and collected data through questionnaires and interviews with election officials and several PPMI (Indonesian Student Associations) registered as UT students in Taiwan. All collected data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. The results of the study indicate that the political participation of PPMI in Taiwan is still low, where of the 155,145 women registered for the voter list, only 37,844 people or 24.4% exercised their right to vote. The low political participation of PPMI is due to the nature of PPMI's work, which is mostly isolated in the employer's home, which limits them when they want to leave the house, including when going to the polling station. This study also revealed that PPMI's involvement in the success of the election stages is already visible, such as discussions or exchanging ideas through social media, forming study groups and participating as election officers. This PPMI involvement shows a positive indication, so it is necessary to continue efforts to increase PPMI's awareness of their constitutional rights, and increase election socialization through the involvement of UT students in Taiwan.

Keywords: Political Participation, Indonesian Female Migrant Workers, General Elections, Foreign Country, Taiwan

1. Introduction

Women's participation in politics often face obstacles, especially for Indonesian Migrant Women Workers (hereinafter referred to as PPMI). Even though PPMI's participation in Politics is very important in determining the political landscape in Indonesia because the number of PPMI is greater than that of men. Referring to data from the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BP2MI), during the 2019-2024 period, women occupied a higher number than men in terms of working abroad as migrant workers, as shown in the table below (BP2MI 2024b).

Table 1. 2024 Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement and Protection Data

Year	Sex		Total Placements
	Female	Male	
2019	191,237	85,316	276,553
2020	90,500	22,673	113,173
2021	63,855	8,769	72,624
2022	122,147	78,614	200,761
2023	167,863	107,102	274,965



Year	Sex		Total Placements
	Female	Male	
Jan–Sept 2024	156,419	71,107	227,526

Source: 2024 Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement and Protection Data Publication Report, accessed from (BP2MI 2024) and processed by the author.

The table above shows that the number of migrant worker placements each year is dominated by women (BP2MI 2024), and approximately 23.2 percent are domestic workers (Women's Solidarity, 2024). While working abroad, PPMI experienced various cases, including unpaid wages, inadequate social security, physical violence such as beatings, verbal abuse, and economic violence (BP2MI, 2024). Furthermore, there are also problems experienced by PPMI stands for the fulfillment of political rights in elections. Unfortunately, previous studies have rarely covered PPMI, even though political participation is crucial.

Literally, political participation is defined as the participation of citizens in various political processes. not only supporting decisions or policies that have been outlined by their leaders, but also involving citizens in all stages of policy, starting from decision making to implementation. assessment of decisions, including opportunities to participate in the implementation of decisions. Samuel P. Huntington And Joan M. Nelson (2022) mentions Political participation is the activity of citizens acting as individuals to influence decision-making by the government. Participation can be individual or collective, organized or spontaneous, steady, sporadic, peaceful or violent, legal or illegal, effective or ineffective (Budiardjo, 2000). Through this political participation, the public hopes that the policies made by the government can bring about positive change. in society. The political participation referred to in this study is the participation of Indonesian female migrant workers in participating in the stages of the presidential election. and vice president in 2024, as seen from their participation in election preparations, election socialization, campaigning, and voting rights during the election.

As we know, 2024 is a political year for Indonesia, as the Indonesian people will once again elect presidential and vice-presidential candidates for the next five years. The political climate in Indonesia is also felt by Indonesian migrant workers in various countries, including those in Taiwan. Taiwan is a major destination for Indonesian migrant workers, with the majority of workers working in the domestic and industrial sectors. Although they live far from their homeland, their political rights, such as the right to vote, are still recognized. president and vice president in 2024.

The results of media coverage show that the implementation The 2024 elections are still far from achieving the desired goal of advancing and protecting the Indonesian Women's Empowerment and Migrant Workers Association (PPMI) in Taiwan. Rather than providing political rights, the chaotic governance and implementation of the 2024 elections have resulted in hundreds of thousands of Indonesian migrant workers, most of whom... Women are losing their right to vote. According to the Migran Carre report in Taiwan, there are 175,145 migrant workers



working as domestic workers (PRT) with postal voter lists, but only around 25% exercised their right to vote. Ironically, even though migrant workers had exercised their right to vote, approximately 31,276 ballots were deemed invalid because they were sent ahead of schedule. Referring to the Migran Carre report (2024), it shows that the 2024 election in Taiwan has failed to become a political instrument to advance the political agenda of gender equality and the advancement of migrant workers. The 2024 election also further distances the majority of female migrant workers from meaningful political participation.

In fact, the challenges of fulfilling political rights for Indonesian Migrant Workers (PPMI) are not limited to the 2024 elections, but also to previous elections. In the 2014 elections, for example, various problems were discovered, including duplicate Permanent Voter Lists (DPT), missing passport numbers, indiscriminate filling in of passports of underage migrant workers (PMI), and the continued registration of deceased PMI. Although there was an increase in the number of PMI voters from the 2014 to 2019 elections, the increase was not significant. Another problem that arose in overseas elections was the use of mobile ballot boxes (KSK) that were not guarded by witnesses or Election Supervisory Committees. Furthermore, voting at Overseas Polling Stations (TPS LN) often resulted in long queues without clear DPT separation. Furthermore, postal voting is also vulnerable to fraud and voter misuse (Migrant CARE 2019).

Suryani and Azmy's (2017) research on the political participation of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia in the 2009 and 2014 elections showed that there was an increase in the number of migrant workers (PMI) votes, not due to their socialization or political literacy, but rather due to the personalities of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates who were running. These candidates were new figures who were believed to be able to change working conditions and side with migrant workers (Suryani & Azmy 2017). Huntington and Nelson, in their book (1984), stated that the voluntary nature of participation is crucial. This means that PMI votes should not be easily mobilized for the benefit of political elites in elections. While it is important to acknowledge that the form and degree of autonomous participation and mobilization are not entirely clear, Huntington and Nelson (1984) believe that autonomous participation will have a higher impact in a democratic government system (Huntington & Nelson 1984).

Fridiyanti (2022) stated that political participation in Indonesia is influenced by several factors, such as education level, access to political information, and social environment. The results of this study are relevant for understanding how Indonesian migrant workers, particularly women, engage in political activities despite living abroad. This is due to the awareness of self-identification as a member of a community. The same principle can be applied to the context of identity awareness as PMI when examining the phenomenon of PPMI political participation, assuming that awareness of collective identity can impact political participation. However, unfortunately, according to the author, PPMI who work in Taiwan do not have the opportunity to gather with fellow PMI friends, even though meetings and organizing allow PPMI to discuss, exchange opinions, and form associations.



Numerous studies have been conducted on the protection of migrant workers (PPMI). However, these studies still focus on protection from violence faced by PPMI, including pre-departure, departure, travel to the destination/transit country, and while working in the destination country (Retno, 2017; Daulay, 2023). In addition to violence, another common issue faced by PPMI is the fulfillment of political rights in elections. Unfortunately, the issue of PPMI's political participation in the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential elections has not been widely studied, making it an interesting and important topic to address.

Based on this idea, this paper will describe and identify the level of PPMI political participation in Taiwan in the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential elections and reveal the factors that influence the level of PPMI political participation, as well as propose appropriate strategies to increase PPMI political participation in Taiwan.

2. Research Method

This research uses an approach descriptive qualitative. The reason for choosing a qualitative approach is based on the post-positivist philosophy that researchers use to study the state of primary natural objects (not experiments), but to understand the factors that influence women's political participation in the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential elections. The method used was purposive sampling of data sources. The survey method used triangulation (combination), data analysis was inductive or qualitative, and qualitative observations did not imply generalization (Sugiyono 2009:15). This made it easier for researchers to choose a focus, which was then described in the research report.

The location of this research was conducted in Taiwan. The reason Taiwan is a major destination for migrant workers (PMI) and represents a significant number of women in Taiwan. Furthermore, the researcher currently resides in Taiwan as both a PMI and a UT student. Data collection was conducted through interviews, observation, documentation, and questionnaires with PPMI (Indonesian Student Associations), some of whom are UT students. Interviews were conducted with PPMI in Taiwan who have resided for more than three years, overseas polling officers in Taiwan, activists from organizations, NGOs, and employees of the Indonesian Economic and Trade Office (KDEI). All data obtained was analyzed using qualitative data analysis.

3. Results and Discussions

Political Participation of Indonesian Female Migrant Workers in Taiwan

General elections, as an implementation of democracy and a constitutional mandate, grant citizens the right to elect representatives to their executive and legislative bodies, including those residing abroad. The ideas and arguments supporting the implementation of general elections abroad are related to the democratic principle of universal suffrage. The basic idea is that everyone



has the right to participate in direct elections for representative state organs, as formal-judicial equality is guaranteed by law and the constitution, including migrant workers residing abroad.

Based on interviews conducted by researchers with PPMI in Taiwan, they stated that they were happy to be able to participate in politics for the progress of the Indonesian nation for at least the next 5 years. However, the data findings in this study indicate that PPMI's involvement in politics has not always been smooth. This is because PPMI members in Taiwan have limited access to election information, as they generally reside in remote areas with the employer not in boarding houses or apartments. The isolated nature of their work at home means they have less freedom to socialize with other migrants, including keeping up with political developments in their homeland. Furthermore, the nature of their work, which relies on employer permission, also limits their ability to leave the house, including when going to the polling station. The limitations of PPMI in the political mobilization process influenced the low participation of PPMI in Taiwan in the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential elections.

Based on data from overseas voters, the total number of voters on the permanent overseas voter list, the additional overseas voter list, and the special overseas voter list is 229,608 (two hundred twenty-nine thousand six hundred and eight). The results of the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential election ballot count at several polling stations in Taiwan can be seen in Table 1.

Table 2. Voter Data in Taiwan

Voters		Voter Rights Users		Percentage of Voters: Users	
Gender	Amount	Percentage	Amount	Percentage	Suffrage
Man	74,463	32.5	28,194	42.7	37.9
Woman	155,145	67.5	37,844	57.3	24.4
Amount	229,608	100	66,038	100	28.8

Source: Data Processed by the Indonesian General Elections Commission

Based on ballot count data for the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential elections, the participation rate for the Indonesian Women's Association (PPMI) in Taiwan was 24.4%. This percentage is very small when calculated from the total number of registered female voters. Of the 155,145 female voters, 37,844 voted, either by mail or in person at polling stations. Meanwhile, 74,463 male voters voted, and 28,194 voted.

PPMI's passive political stance is not without reason, considering that they work from home full-time during the week. This study's findings differ from Wulan's (2023) research in Hong Kong, as Hong Kong regulations and legislation allow migrant workers to take Sundays off to unwind.

PPMI's Participation in the 2024 Election Stages

Although PPMI's political participation in Taiwan is low, they are still involved in the 2024 general election stages. Eighty-seven respondents stated that they were involved in the 2024 Election socialization stage. The questionnaire data can be seen in Figure 2 below.

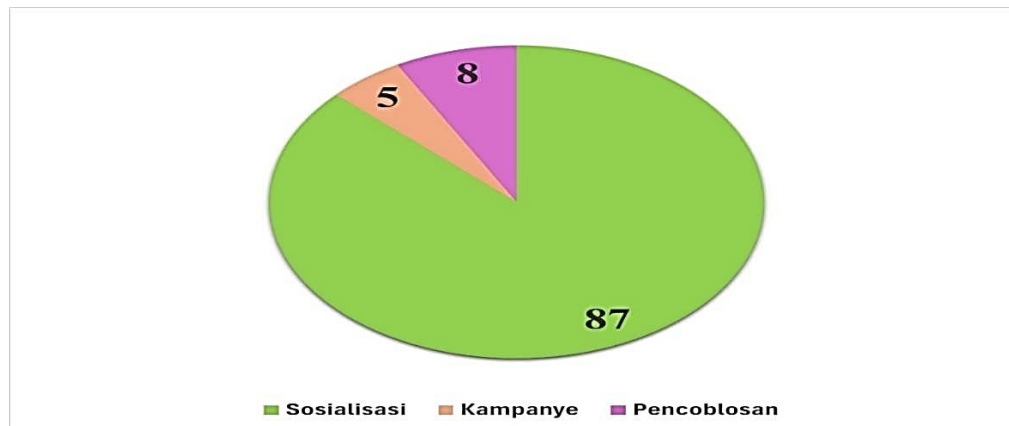


Figure 1. PPMI's Involvement in the 2024 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election Stages

Figure 1 shows the dominant stage of respondents' participation. 87 respondents stated that they began their involvement at the socialization stage, followed by 5 respondents who stated that they began their involvement at the campaign stage, and 8 respondents at the voting stage. Based on the respondents' answers above, it is clear that the campaign to encourage Indonesian migrant workers to exercise their right to vote in every presidential election conducted by the General Elections Commission (KPU), the Election Supervisory Body (BOD), and election observer institutions in Indonesia is considered ineffective. The agenda implemented through political education in various forums, socialization, and training is considered insufficient to achieve the desired change, and there is still a permissive attitude towards unwillingness to participate in politics. Based on this analysis, it can be understood that expecting high political participation from PPMI circles is a practice that has its own challenges.

Despite their limited participation in the 2024 general election, interviews also show that several Indonesian Student Associations (PPMI) in Taiwan are actively involved in the election process, particularly in promoting the 2024 election. Their enthusiasm for election promotion activities can be seen in various forms, such as discussions or exchanges of ideas, social gatherings (arisan), forming study groups, and participating in religious and regional organizations. These activities carried out by PMI in Taiwan are in accordance with research. Wulan (2022) showed that there were social remittances received while working in Hong Kong. In the context of political activities, the activities carried out by Indonesian migrant workers in Taiwan can be referred to as political remittances. Deinla, et.al (2022) stated that Remittances are the political principles, norms, and practices that migrants acquire during the migration process and their implications for



democratization, particularly in their countries of origin. Furthermore, Deinla et al. show that the experiences of Filipino migrant workers abroad in managing the pandemic and distributing aid successfully in receiving countries can influence them to expect and demand similar measures from the Philippine government. Referring to the research of Deinla, et.al (2022), it can be identified that pThe political remittance processes undertaken by PPMI during the 2024 Election socialization phase in Taiwan include discussions about the election process via social media, relationships with family to discuss the most appropriate choices, and active involvement in organizations or associations. The detailed forms of PPMI's political remittances in the 2024 Election in Taiwan can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Forms of Political Remittances from Indonesian Female Migrant Workers in Taiwan

Forms of Political Remittances	Benefits obtained by PPMI
Use of social media	The use of social media and communication tools is used to access political content in the country which can influence their decisions in choosing presidential candidates.
Relationship with family	The communication process to provide news through intensive interaction with families in Indonesia, often leads to discussions about the political situation in the country and candidate preferences during the election.
The existence of migrant worker organizations and associations	Presence association worker And organization migrant This has influenced PPMI's awareness of the country's electoral politics. As a result, migrant workers are encouraged to seek out leaders and make decisions about whether or not to participate in the process.

Source: processed by research

Based on Table 2, we can see several forms of political remittances made by PPMI in Taiwan. First, the use of social media. The use of social media and short message communication tools.very commonly used by domestic workersto stay connected with family in Indonesia. They can also use it to access domestic political content that could influence their decisions in choosing presidential candidates.

Second, relationships with family. Migrant domestic workers will developlong-distance parentingas a form of role negotiation when leaving their children. The communication process to support this, including providing news through intensive interaction with family in Indonesia, often leads to discussions about the political situation in the country and candidate preferences during elections. Migrant domestic workers can adapt their family's preferences to their own, or vice versa.



Third, the presence of migrant worker organizations and associations abroad can facilitate information regarding elections, such as voter registration information or the dissemination of voting methods. workers' associations and migrant organizations This has more or less influenced PPMI's awareness of the fulfillment of their rights. This has also stimulated their awareness of identifying power relations, including in domestic electoral politics. As a result, migrant workers are encouraged to seek out leaders and make decisions about whether or not to participate in this process.

PPMI's involvement in various forms of political remittances demonstrates positive indicators of increasing PPMI's awareness of their constitutional rights. Therefore, increased election outreach through the involvement of organizations and associations, such as the UT student organization in Taiwan, could be beneficial.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn regarding PPMI's political participation in Taiwan during the 2024 general election. First, PPMI's political participation in the 2024 elections remains low due to weaknesses in the election process, limited access to election information, and a lack of vacation time, which restricts opportunities to socialize with other migrants. Second, despite these limitations, PPMI remains engaged in the 2024 general election, as evidenced by 87 respondents who participated in various election-related socialization activities, including discussions, exchanges of ideas, social gatherings (*arisan*), study groups, and organizational involvement. This engagement reflects a form of political participation known as "political remittances." Third, these political remittances manifest through the use of social media, interactions with family, and participation in organizations. Finally, the processes observed within these political remittances indicate positive signs of increasing political participation among Indonesian migrant workers (PPMI) abroad, suggesting the need for further, in-depth research on political remittances among PMI.

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