



## Struggling Against Global Capitalism: Women's Fight for Social and Economic Justice in Indonesia

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This study examines the struggle of women in Indonesia against the inequalities caused by capitalism, in particular will explore the aspect of Gender Pay Gap. The research aims to provide an explanation of the methods employed by women, particularly those working in the manufacturing sector, to achieve economic justice and equality in the face of capitalist forces that lead to job terminations. Additionally, this study reveals the strategies used by workers to attain social and economic justice in their workplaces.

**Methods:** This research employs an exploratory, descriptive, and analytical approach, utilizing qualitative methods. The study focuses on the struggles of female workers in Indonesia, with a specific emphasis on the industrial manufacturing centers in Jakarta and East Java, particularly in the cities of Surabaya and Sidoarjo. Data collection was conducted through interviews, direct observations, and the use of secondary data sources.

**Results:** The research findings indicate that the struggle of female workers to obtain their rights is severely constrained. Female workers face threats when seeking wage increases, making it exceedingly difficult for them to achieve higher wages. The study also highlights that participation in protests by female workers often leads to the risk of job termination without severance pay. The lack of government support for workers' efforts to secure wage increases is seen as a stance aligning with global capitalism. Simultaneously, feminist politics often fail to adequately represent women within decision-making institutions. The power dynamics necessary to address social and economic inequalities have not been effectively managed by advocates of gender equality and justice.

**Conclusions:** Based on the aforementioned results, this study recommends enhancing government intervention programs to empower female workers in achieving social and economic justice through wage policy reforms.

**Keywords:** Gender inequality; social and economic injustice; power dynamics; postcolonial

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### النضال ضد الرأسمالية العالمية: كفاح المرأة من أجل العدالة الاجتماعية والاقتصادية في إندونيسيا

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### ملخص

الأهداف: يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة نضال النساء في إندونيسيا ضد عدم المساواة الناتجة عن الرأسمالية، مع التركيز الأكبر على اتساع فجوة الأجر بين الجنسين. ويسعى البحث لتقدير تغير المنهجيات التي تستخدمها النساء، وخاصة العاملات في قطاع الصناعة، لتحقيق العدالة الاقتصادية والمساواة في مواجهة القوى الرأسمالية التي تؤدي إلى إنهاء العمل. كما تكشف هذه الدراسة عن الاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمها العمال لتحقيق العدالة الاجتماعية والاقتصادية في أماكن عملهم.

المنهجية: تعتمد هذه الدراسة على منهج استكشافي، وصفي، وتحليلي، باستخدام الأساليب النوعية. وتركز على نضالات العاملات في إندونيسيا، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على مراكز التصنيع الصناعي في جاكرتا وشرق جاوة، وخاصة في مدينتي سورابايا وسيودارجو. تم جمع البيانات من خلال المقابلات والملاحظات المباشرة، واستخدام مصادر البيانات الثانوية.

النتائج: تشير نتائج البحث إلى أن نضال العاملات للحصول على حقوقهن مقييد بشكل كبير. حيث تواجه العاملات تهديدات عند السعي لزيادة الأجر، مما يجعل من الصعب جدًا علمن تحقيق أجر أعلى. كما تبرز الدراسة أن مشاركة العاملات في الاحتجاجات غالباً ما تؤدي إلى خطر إنهاء العمل دون الحصول على تعويضات. وتنظر إلى نقص دعم الحكومة لجهود العمال في تأمين زيادات الأجر على أنه موقف يتماشى مع الرأسمالية العالمية. في الوقت نفسه، غالباً ما تفشل السياسات النسوية في تمثيل النساء بشكل كافٍ داخل مؤسسات اتخاذ القرار. ولم يتم إدارة ديناميات القوة الازمة لمعالجة عدم المساواة الاجتماعية والاقتصادية بفعالية من قبل دعاة المساواة والعدالة بين الجنسين.

الخلاصة: توصي هذه الدراسة بتعزيز برامج التدخل الحكومية لتمكين العاملات من تحقيق العدالة الاجتماعية والاقتصادية من خلال إصلاح سياسات الأجر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عدم المساواة بين الجنسين: الخلل الاجتماعي والاقتصادي؛ ديناميات القوة؛ ما بعد الاستعمار.



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## Introduction

In today's global political landscape, the assertion made by Cynthia Enloe more than two decades ago that "gender makes the world go round" (Enloe, 1989) remains a profound and pertinent statement. The phrase is a central theme of her argument and it refers to the idea that gender is a fundamental aspect of international politics. She argues that gender is a socially constructed concept that has been made by individuals with certain kinds of power and by investigating the gendered dynamics of power and decision-making, Enloe aims to uncover the underlying power structures and inequalities that shape global politics by emphasizing the gendered dimensions of international affairs (Enloe, 2014). Enloe makes the story in her work by highlighting the diverse experiences of women in different global contexts. She prompts the reader to imagine themselves in the shoes of women who are fleeing conflict, working as domestic servants, or interacting with foreign military bases (Enloe, 2014). By doing so, Enloe encourages us to empathize with the experiences of women in different roles and circumstances and to recognize the unique challenges and vulnerabilities they face and simultaneously, it elucidates several issues that have not been thoroughly analyzed within the international relations framework. Enloe underscores the necessity to recognize the profound impact of gender on power dynamics, individual experiences, and responses to global challenges. Through this recognition, she contends that a deliberate acknowledgment of these gendered dimensions provides a pathway for cultivating a more inclusive and equitable global politics, offering a compelling call to action for reevaluating and reshaping the paradigms that govern our understanding of international relations by emphasizing the gendered dimensions of international affairs (Enloe, 2014).

Another crucial aspect underscoring the imperative of employing a gender analytical framework in understanding global politics is Enloe's assertion that conventional power structures and inequalities are frequently veiled (Peterson, 1992). The intersection of feminism with international relations theory is a critical topic that sheds light on the often overlooked gendered aspects of global politics and governance. By examining how gender influences power dynamics, decision-making processes, and policies within the realm of international relations, this paper delves into the complexities of state interactions and the profound impact of gender norms on the dynamics of global governance. Through feminist analyses, a critical perspective is offered on traditional IR theories, revealing inherent biases and oversights in mainstream approaches. Recognizing the gendered nature of the state and international relations theory allows for a more inclusive understanding of global issues, conflicts, and cooperation. Moreover, incorporating feminist perspectives not only empowers marginalized voices and promotes gender equality but also challenges existing power structures in international relations. This paper aims to explore the essential role of feminism in enhancing the understanding of global politics, advocating for a more equitable and effective approach to addressing international challenges and promoting peace and security on a global scale (Peterson, 1992).

Through an exploration of the gendered mechanisms of power, Enloe's challenge extends to assumptions regarding women's roles in international affairs, debunking notions that ascribe their roles solely to tradition, cultural preferences, or timeless norms (Jones, 1996). Moreover, Enloe underscores the imperative of acknowledging the agency and resilience of women across diverse global contexts (Jones, 1996). By comprehending the gendered dimensions of power and decision-making, fostering a more inclusive and equitable global politics necessitates recognizing the myriad experiences and perspectives of women. In essence, the overarching goal of the "gender makes the world go round" (Enloe, 1989), is to unearth and challenge entrenched traditional power structures and inequalities shaping global politics. By accentuating the gendered facets of power, decision-making, and experiences in international affairs, the feminist strives to foster a more critical and inclusive understanding of global politics (Jones, 1996). This endeavor aims to contribute to a paradigm shift towards a global political discourse that is not only more discerning but also embraces a diversity of voices and experiences.

Since the third wave of feminism, the diversity of perspectives on feminist issues has become increasingly fascinating, leading to the emergence of paradigms such as postcolonial feminism. Postcolonial feminism is an essential framework for analyzing phenomena in Global South countries because it addresses the unique intersections of gender, race, class, and colonial history that shape the experiences of women in these regions. Unlike mainstream feminism, which often centers on the experiences and perspectives of women in the Global North, postcolonial feminism acknowledges the historical and

ongoing impacts of colonialism and imperialism on women in the Global South. This perspective is particularly relevant for understanding how global power structures and historical legacies of oppression continue to influence gender dynamics and economic disparities in these countries (Mohanty, 2003).

In the context of Indonesia, postcolonial feminism provides a critical lens to examine the multifaceted struggles of women against both neoliberal capitalism and the remnants of colonial-era policies. Women in Indonesia, particularly those in urban slums and rural areas, face a complex array of challenges rooted in historical and structural inequalities. These include limited access to education, healthcare, and political representation, as well as systemic economic disparities such as the gender pay gap (McEwan, 2001).

Postcolonial feminist scholar Gayatri Spivak's concept of the subaltern underscores the importance of amplifying marginalized voices, particularly those of women in the Global South, who are often silenced in dominant discourses (Spivak, 1988). By applying this framework, we can better understand how Indonesian women navigate their socio-economic realities and resist marginalization through various strategies. For instance, women in urban slums rely heavily on informal economies and social networks to supplement their household incomes, utilizing group savings and credit associations like arisan to access small business capital. This form of economic participation highlights the resilience and agency of women in the face of systemic barriers.

Comparatively, women's struggles in other Third World countries often involve similar strategies of resistance but are shaped by different cultural and historical contexts. In many parts of Africa, for instance, women engage in cooperative farming and community-based savings groups to sustain their livelihoods and resist economic exploitation (McEwan, 2001). In contrast, Indonesian women in rural areas often face challenges related to land ownership and access to natural resources, issues that are deeply rooted in colonial-era agrarian structures. Interviews with female farmers in Indonesia reveal the difficulties they encounter in maintaining their livelihoods due to restrictive land policies and unequal access to agricultural resources (UN Women, 2018). Comparatively, women's struggles in other Third World countries often involve similar strategies of resistance but are shaped by different cultural and historical contexts as such: Comparatively, women's struggles in other Third World countries often involve similar strategies of resistance but are shaped by different cultural and historical contexts. As highlighted in the study "The Journey to Empowerment: Evaluating Women's Political Progress Through Jordan's Legislative Reforms," Jordanian women have significantly influenced the amendment of legislations, securing enhanced political and economic empowerment (Bani Salameh & Alslem, under publication). These efforts have led to increased representation in parliamentary councils through changes in electoral laws, including the implementation of quotas. This demonstrates how local contexts and historical legacies can shape the approaches and successes of women's movements in different regions, emphasizing the importance of tailored strategies in achieving gender equality.

Building on that framework, this research will explore power dynamics and economic disparities in Indonesia, with a specific focus on the gender pay gap and the socio-economic dynamics of urban slums and rural areas in Indonesia. The gender pay gap in Indonesia highlights persistent economic inequalities and unequal power relations between men and women. Globally, women's struggle for economic justice and equality remains unfulfilled, highlighting the shortcomings of feminist politics in ensuring adequate representation in decision-making bodies. Advocates of gender equality and justice have yet to resolve the power dynamics perpetuating social and economic inequalities. Women in Indonesia earn, on average, about 30% less than men for similar work (OECD, 2023), with disparities even more pronounced in industries like manufacturing and agriculture (World Bank Group, 2020). These economic disparities contribute to a cycle of inequality, limiting women's access to education, healthcare, and political participation (UNDP, 2020), and perpetuating a system where their voices and needs are marginalized. Addressing the gender pay gap is crucial not only for improving women's economic status but also for empowering them to participate more fully in societal decision-making processes.

This paper aims to explore the essential role of feminism in deepening our understanding of global politics and advocating for more equitable and effective approaches to addressing international challenges. Feminism offers critical insights into the ways gender dynamics influence political structures, power relations, and global interactions. By incorporating feminist perspectives, we can uncover how traditional political theories often marginalize or overlook the

experiences and contributions of women and other marginalized groups. Feminist analysis highlights how gendered power imbalances impact international relations, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding efforts. It challenges existing frameworks and practices that may perpetuate inequality and suggests alternative approaches that prioritize inclusivity and justice. This perspective not only enriches our comprehension of global political issues but also advocates for policies that better address the needs of diverse populations. In promoting peace and security on a global scale, feminism emphasizes the importance of addressing root causes of conflict, such as gender inequality and discrimination. By integrating feminist principles into international diplomacy and policy-making, the paper argues for a more holistic approach that fosters sustainable development, human rights, and genuine security for all. Ultimately, embracing feminism in global politics can lead to more comprehensive and equitable solutions to the pressing challenges faced by the international community.

### **Literature Review**

The examination of gender within the field of international relations has undergone a significant transformation over the past few decades. Traditionally marginalized, feminist critiques have now become central to understanding the intricate power dynamics that govern global politics. This chapter delves into the scholarly discourse surrounding gender and international relations, emphasizing the intersection of gender pay gaps and economic disparities with broader power structures. By synthesizing key feminist theories and empirical studies, this review aims to highlight the multifaceted nature of gender inequalities and their implications for international and domestic policies, particularly focusing on Indonesia.

Feminist scholars have profoundly reshaped the analytical landscape of international relations by foregrounding the importance of gender. As Enloe (1989) famously stated, "gender makes the world go round," underscoring the pervasive influence of gendered power dynamics in global affairs. This foundational assertion challenges traditional IR frameworks that often overlook gender as a critical variable. By incorporating gender as a central lens, feminist critiques have expanded the scope of international relations to include previously ignored perspectives and experiences (Jones, 1996). Moreover, feminist critiques have redefined traditional concepts of power and normative values within international relations. Rather than viewing power solely in terms of competition and domination, feminist scholars propose alternative values such as cooperation, caregiving, and compromise (Jones, 1996). This redefinition not only broadens our understanding of power dynamics but also prompts a reevaluation of ethical considerations in global politics. Cheryl McEwan's seminal work, "Postcolonialism, feminism and development: intersections and dilemmas" provides a robust theoretical foundation for analyzing the intersection of global capitalism and women's poverty through a postcolonial lens. McEwan (2001) argues that the legacies of colonialism continue to shape economic and social development in developing countries, creating structural inequalities that disproportionately affect women. Her framework elucidates how historical power dynamics and contemporary global capitalism perpetuate gendered poverty. This perspective is crucial for understanding the multifaceted challenges faced by Indonesian women in both urban and rural settings. McEwan's analysis underscores the need to deconstruct colonial legacies embedded in development policies and practices that marginalize women economically and socially.

In "Women and the Politics of Place," Wendy Harcourt and Arturo Escobar (Harcourt & Escobar, 2002) explore how women worldwide, including in Indonesia, navigate the challenges posed by global capitalism. Their work focuses on local case studies that highlight women's strategies to combat economic and social marginalization. Harcourt and Escobar emphasize the importance of place-based politics, where women leverage their immediate environments to build resilience and resist oppressive economic structures. This approach resonates with the experiences of Indonesian women who utilize social networks and informal economies to survive urban poverty and agricultural constraints. The book provides valuable insights into grassroots movements and the agency of women in the Global South, reinforcing the necessity of inclusive and context-specific policy interventions.

A significant focus of feminist has been the gender pay gap, which reflects broader economic disparities and power imbalances. The gender pay gap, defined as the difference in earnings between men and women for comparable work, remains a persistent issue worldwide. In Indonesia, this gap is particularly pronounced, with women earning, on average, about 30% less than men (OECD, 2023). Blau and Kahn attribute this disparity to a combination of occupational segregation, differences in work experience, and direct discrimination (Blau & Kahn, 2017). These factors are further compounded by

cultural norms and socio-economic conditions that limit women's professional opportunities (UNDP, 2020). The implications of the gender pay gap extend beyond economic inequality. It reinforces a cycle of marginalization, limiting women's access to education, healthcare, and political participation. This empowerment can, in turn, challenge entrenched power structures and promote more inclusive and equitable policies. Tickner's (1997) insights into the gendered nature of power further underscore the importance of integrating gender analysis into the study of economic disparities (Tickner, 1997). Recognizing the socially constructed nature of gender roles and their impact on economic outcomes allows for a deeper understanding of the systemic barriers women face. Additionally, Nash's (J. C. Nash, 2008) exploration of intersectionality enriches the analysis by highlighting the interconnectedness of gender with other social categories such as race, class, and ethnicity. In Indonesia, intersectional factors significantly influence the gender pay gap, with women from marginalized communities facing compounded disadvantages. By adopting an intersectional lens, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of the gender pay gap and its broader implications for economic and social policies. The overarching argument of this chapter is that recognizing and addressing gender dynamics in global politics is not merely a niche concern but a transformative approach. Integrating gender analysis into the examination of economic disparities allows for the development of more effective and equitable solutions.

### **Methods**

This article employs a qualitative research methodology to analyze the gender pay gap in the Indonesian labor market. The qualitative approach emphasizes detailed investigation to understand the underlying factors contributing to gender wage disparities (Hennink et al., 2020). The study begins with a literature review, gathering diverse sources such as academic articles and news reports (Pan, 2016). The process includes topic selection, data collection, and defining research objectives, focusing on exploring the factors behind the gender pay gap and examining the impacts of trade openness and socio-economic factors. Data is categorized, common themes identified, and findings synthesized to draw meaningful conclusions. The analysis addresses persistent wage gaps, occupational segregation, and the effects of societal norms. To tackle economic disparities faced by impoverished women, evidence-based policy analysis is essential. This method assesses government policies on poverty alleviation and evaluates current programs' effectiveness, incorporating data from sources like the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS). An evidence-based approach, grounded in postcolonial theory, provides concrete policy recommendations to address poverty and enhance women's welfare in Indonesia, bridging theory and practice within the context of global capitalism.

### **The Gendered Dimension of Global Challenges**

In navigating the complex terrain of global challenges, a nuanced understanding of the gendered dimensions is indispensable. This section of the essay dives into real-world examples to show how global challenges are impacted by gender. It will look at the effects of armed conflicts, economic disparities from gender inequality, and how gender plays a key role in dealing with climate change. Through these concrete illustrations, it endeavors to move beyond theoretical abstractions, providing a tangible lens through which the gendered nuances of these challenges can be comprehensively grasped and critically examined in understanding and addressing these challenges in international politics.

Analysis of the case of the Bosnian War (Helfrich, 2021) provides a nuanced examination of the gendered impact of armed conflicts, specifically shedding light on the experiences of women during the Bosnian War in the early 1990s. In the Bosnian War, women faced unique challenges that were intricately tied to their gender, which Sexual violence emerged as a pervasive and devastating weapon of war, disproportionately affecting women (Helfrich, 2021). It emphasizes that sexual violence was not merely a byproduct of the conflict but a deliberate strategy employed to assert power, control, and domination over women and their communities and women became targets, not only as individuals but as representatives of their ethnic or religious groups (Helfrich, 2021). Women, often with children, found themselves particularly vulnerable in the chaotic and dangerous conditions of displacement. Displacement also became a gendered experience during the Bosnian War, in this case showing how the responsibilities and risks associated with displacement were not evenly distributed between men and women, and the challenges faced by women were shaped by their gender roles in the society (Helfrich, 2021).

These examinations bring attention to the broader issue of how conflict impacts individuals differently based on their gender. The experiences of women during the Bosnian War serve as a powerful illustration of the gendered dimensions of armed conflicts, emphasizing that a gender-sensitive approach is essential for understanding the full scope of the impact of war on different segments of the population. Incorporating Helfrich insights into discussions about armed conflicts allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved, moving beyond a generic analysis to one that considers the specific and varied experiences of individuals based on their gender. This depth of understanding to recognize and address gender dynamics in global politics is crucial for informing policies and strategies that address the unique challenges faced by women in conflict situations and contribute to a more inclusive and effective approach to conflict resolution. On the other hand, Ann Tickner's exploration of gendered economic disparities in her seminal work, "Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era," lays the groundwork for comprehending the uneven distribution of economic resources between men and women with her broader insights on gender and economic inequalities offer relevance to this crucial issue (Tickner, 2001).

As explained in the previous section that economic structures unveils the pervasive influence of patriarchal norms in perpetuating gender-based economic disparities by challenging conventional notions of power within economic systems, it not only highlights the influence of gendered norms but underscores that power dynamics actively reinforce these norms and values. The intricate connection between power and gender in economic structures becomes evident as Tickner contends that these dynamics are not mere influencers but active agents in shaping economic disparities (Tickner, 2001).

Tickner goes beyond traditional power analyses and emphasizes a departure from conventional economic approaches. Rather than treating gender as a peripheral consideration, her advocacy for inclusive approaches urges scholars and policymakers to recognize the profound impact of gendered power dynamics on economic policies. This call for inclusivity signifies a shift from routine economic analyses that often overlook the intricacies of power structures influenced by gender norms and values to prompts a reevaluation of how we perceive and analyze economic structures (P. Nash, 2002).

Examining Eurostat data from 2020, it becomes evident that Germany, a developed nation, grapples with a gender pay gap, reinforcing the global prevalence of this issue (Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, 2021). The statistics reveal a stark disparity, with women earning approximately 78 cents for every euro earned by their male counterparts, signaling a gender pay gap of around 22%. Notably, the gap is exacerbated for older women, as those in the 55-64 age group earned only 56% of men's earnings, accentuating the lasting effects of this inequity throughout a woman's career (The Federal Statistical Office, 2021).

Tickner prompts an examination of how economic structures in developed countries contribute to and perpetuate gender pay disparities. Her challenge to traditional notions of power within economic systems resonates in the German case, where imbalances contribute to the enduring gender pay gap (Tickner, 2001). Aligning the case study with Tickner's insights reinforces the argument that gender operates as a cross-cutting force shaping economic disparities globally. This connection underscores that the gender pay gap is not exclusive to underdeveloped countries; it persists in developed nations, necessitating inclusive economic approaches to combat gender-based wage discrimination.

Moreover, examining climate-induced migration patterns reveals a stark reality for women of color in vulnerable communities. In scenarios like coastal regions grappling with rising sea levels and intensified weather events, these women find themselves disproportionately impacted, highlighting the intersectionality of their gender and race. Nash's work on intersectionality serves as a crucial lens through which to analyze their experiences, emphasizing the interconnected nature of identities. This lens unveils how women of color in these contexts face not only environmental challenges but also systemic inequalities rooted in both race and gender (J. C. Nash, 2008). These challenges encompass limited access to resources, heightened vulnerability to violence, and an increased likelihood of displacement without sufficient support.

Nash's insights, although not explicitly addressing climate change, offer a robust theoretical foundation. It encourages recognition of the complexity and fluidity of identities, challenging essentialist notions. In the realm of climate change, this recognition becomes pivotal, urging a nuanced understanding of the diverse experiences within the category of "women of color." Aligning Nash's theoretical framework with the climate change example reinforces the argument that an

intersectional approach is indispensable. This approach proves necessary for comprehending and addressing the varied impacts of climate change on different communities. In essence, Nash's exploration of intersectionality extends beyond her specific works, providing an intellectual toolkit to dissect the intricate challenges faced by women of color in the context of climate-induced migration.

Myanmar, a region vulnerable to its susceptibility to climate-induced disasters, faces significant vulnerabilities, ranking second globally in the 2016 Global Climate Risk Index (Kreft et al., 2015). Cyclone Nargis in 2008, exacerbating the country's fragility, resulting in substantial human and economic losses due to climate change (Foley, 2020). The intersection of gender and race magnifies challenges for women from marginalized ethnic communities, particularly the Rohingya, during this situation. The government's limited resources, diverted towards addressing climate-related challenges, hinder long-term development goals. The Rohingya refugee crisis unfolds as a consequence, driven by the government's inability to balance stability priorities (Foley, 2020). The Rohingya, denied recognition and citizenship, face ethnic cleansing, compelling many to flee to Bangladesh. The overwhelmed Myanmar government fails to hold forces accountable for violations, particularly against women. These women confront a myriad of difficulties, including displacement and the loss of traditional livelihoods such as agriculture and fishing, essential sectors in their communities (Foley, 2020). As primary caregivers, they bear the brunt of increased health risks, exacerbated by the prevalence of waterborne diseases and a lack of adequate healthcare infrastructure in the region. Moreover, the social dynamics of migration introduce the prospect of discrimination for these women, especially from ethnic minorities, as they navigate the complexities of integrating into new communities (Tanny et al., 2017). This case example illuminates the intricate ways in which gender and race intersect to heighten the vulnerabilities faced by women during climate-induced migration, emphasizing the imperative for comprehensive strategies that address these multifaceted challenges in vulnerable communities grappling with the impacts of climate change.

#### **In the Shadows of Urbanization: Understanding Women's Socio-Economic Realities in Indonesian Slums**

According to the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), approximately 3.5% of Jakarta's population lived in poverty in 2020, with a significant portion of this population being women involved in informal employment. These jobs, including street vending, domestic work, and other precarious forms of labor, offer no social security or stable income (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2020). In exploring the socio-economic dynamics of urban slums and rural areas in Indonesia, the case studies of Kampung Pulo in Jakarta and Muara Baru shed light on the distinct challenges faced by women in these settings. Within the urban slums of Kampung Pulo, women from impoverished households often engage in informal work, leading to precarious and unstable incomes (Mar'iayah, 2020).

These findings significantly impact women's household livelihood assets across financial, human, physical, and social aspects. Financially, the stability and well-being of women's households post-resettlement are influenced by their access to financial resources, which can determine their ability to sustain livelihoods (Mar'iayah, 2020). Transitioning from informal work in slum areas to modern apartment-style housing can disrupt income sources, leading to income instability for women (Mar'iayah, 2020). While some may experience improved income stability post-resettlement, others may struggle to recover from financial shocks (Mar'iayah, 2020). Human capital, encompassing skills and education, is crucial for women to adapt to new environments and livelihood opportunities (Mar'iayah, 2020). Skills training programs, such as makeup, cooking, and sewing training, provided by the Jakarta government, empower women to pursue alternative livelihood options and enhance their human capital (Mar'iayah, 2020).

Physically, the living conditions in modern apartment-style housing may differ from previous slum areas, impacting women's sense of safety and amenities (Mar'iayah, 2020). Home ownership and tenure security are critical for women's stability and security in their new living environment (Mar'iayah, 2020). Socially, community support and participation are vital for women's well-being post-resettlement (Mar'iayah, 2020). The loss of community participation during resettlement can affect women's social networks and support systems, leading to feelings of isolation and uncertainty (Mar'iayah, 2020).

In comparing the post-resettlement livelihood outcomes between Kampung Pulo and Muara Baru, distinct challenges and adaptations emerge. Kampung Pulo, a long-standing slum settlement prone to flood disasters, faced challenges related

to flood risks and inadequate housing conditions, leading to resettlement to modern apartment-style housing (Mar'iyah, 2020). The relocation provided a safer living environment but posed challenges in livelihood adaptation and community participation (Mar'iyah, 2020). In Muara Baru, residents also experienced resettlement to modern apartment-style housing, undergoing changes in livelihood strategies and social dynamics (Mar'iyah, 2020).

Addressing gender inequality in urban slum redevelopment is crucial for promoting sustainable livelihoods and gender equality. Implementing gender-sensitive policies and programs tailored to women's needs can empower them to participate actively in decision-making processes (Mar'iyah, 2020). Providing access to skills training, education, and economic opportunities can enhance women's human capital and economic independence post-resettlement (Mar'iyah, 2020). Promoting inclusive and participatory approaches to urban resettlement schemes prioritizing the needs of women and vulnerable groups can ensure equitable outcomes and sustainable livelihoods for all residents (Mar'iyah, 2020). By incorporating a gender perspective into urban redevelopment initiatives, policymakers can create inclusive, safe, and sustainable environments for women in urban slum areas undergoing resettlement (Mar'iyah, 2020).

The case studies of Kampung Pulo and Muara Baru illuminate the nuanced realities faced by women in diverse socio-economic contexts across Indonesia. As highlighted by Wakely (Wakely & Riley, 2011), public housing emerges as a critical solution for addressing housing shortages and providing shelter for low-income households in Kampung Pulo. Vanclay (Jijelava & Vanclay, 2017) emphasizes the negative repercussions experienced by evictees during resettlement processes in Kampung Pulo, underscoring the necessity of gender-sensitive approaches to ensure successful outcomes. Scones (Scoones, 2001) stresses the pivotal role of empowerment in enabling women to cope with resettlement challenges and participate equitably in development initiatives in both Kampung Pulo and Muara Baru. Therefore, it is imperative for policymakers to adopt participatory planning strategies that actively involve women in decision-making processes to mitigate the adverse impacts of relocation on women in these specific urban and rural settings.

The historical context of colonialism and global capitalism significantly shapes these economic and social structures, exacerbating urban poverty for women. Colonial urban development often ignored local needs, focusing on colonial economic interests, which created enduring inequality patterns. Today, rapid urbanization and economic liberalization further widen economic gaps, marginalizing poor urban women from better job opportunities and essential services, as such: The World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) face intense scrutiny regarding their roles in the global economy, especially in relation to the Global South. In "The World Bank and International Monetary Fund as Mechanisms of Western Domination: Historical and Contemporary Analysis," Mohammed Bani Salameh examines the foundational principles of these institutions and emphasizes the profound influence of the United States on their operational strategies (M. Bani Salameh, 2017). This analysis assesses the impact of these dynamics on less developed countries (LDCs) through historical and economic theories, revealing how the WB and IMF have shaped global economic policies to reflect U.S. geopolitical ambitions and economic interests. The study highlights the complex relationships these institutions maintain with recipient nations, critiquing issues of economic dependency and developmental challenges in the Global South. Advocating for reforms, it calls for increased transparency, democratization of decision-making processes, and realignment of objectives with sustainable development goals to better serve the needs of the Global South during this milestone anniversary. The historical context of colonialism and global capitalism significantly shapes these economic and social structures, exacerbating urban poverty for women. Colonial urban development often ignored local needs, focusing on colonial economic interests, which created enduring inequality patterns. Today, rapid urbanization and economic liberalization further widen economic gaps, marginalizing poor urban women from better job opportunities and essential services. Women leverage social and informal economic networks to resist marginalization and sustain their livelihoods. This analysis underscores the necessity for systemic reforms to address historical injustices and promote equitable economic development (M. Bani Salameh, 2017).

The lack of women's representation in political power positions can be one factor hindering efforts to create policies that comprehensively address women's economic interests and needs. In many cases, there is a noticeable disproportion between the number of women and men occupying political power positions, both at the local and national levels. This

phenomenon is reflected in the low representation of women in legislative and executive bodies. The insufficient number of women in these political power structures creates a gender representation imbalance, resulting in women's perspectives and experiences being less represented in political decision-making processes. The impact of low women's representation in political power is significant, especially in the context of women's economic empowerment. Policies produced may not adequately consider the challenges and unique needs faced by women in the economic realm. This imbalance can reinforce existing gender gaps, such as wage disparities and equal access to economic opportunities, as such: The lack of women's representation in political power positions can be a significant factor hindering efforts to create policies that comprehensively address women's economic interests and needs. Research by Mohammed, Salameh, and Shdouh (M. T. Bani Salameh & Shdouh, 2018) in "Feminist Elites in Democratic Jordan: Features and Characteristics: 1989-2016" highlights the disproportionate number of men versus women in political power positions at both local and national levels. This imbalance is evident in the low representation of women in legislative and executive bodies, leading to a gender representation gap that affects political decision-making processes. When women's perspectives and experiences are underrepresented, the resulting policies often fail to adequately consider the unique challenges faced by women in the economic realm. This situation can perpetuate existing gender gaps, such as wage disparities and unequal access to economic opportunities. The study by Mohammed et al. (M. T. Bani Salameh & Shdouh, 2018) emphasizes that the insufficient number of women in political power structures not only undermines gender equality but also impedes the economic empowerment of women. In Jordan, despite various legislative reforms aimed at increasing women's political participation, the progress remains limited. The study illustrates how the underrepresentation of women in political power contributes to policies that do not fully address women's economic needs, thereby reinforcing systemic inequalities. For instance, economic policies may overlook critical issues like wage inequality, job segregation, and access to financial resources, all of which disproportionately affect women. The research further argues that increasing women's representation in political power is essential for developing more inclusive and equitable policies. When women are involved in political decision-making, they bring valuable insights and perspectives that can lead to more effective solutions addressing gender-specific economic challenges. Thus, fostering greater gender balance in political power positions is not only a matter of fairness but also a crucial step towards achieving comprehensive economic development and empowerment for women. In conclusion, the low representation of women in political power structures creates a significant barrier to addressing women's economic interests effectively. As highlighted by Salameh, and Shdouh (M. T. Bani Salameh & Shdouh, 2018), bridging this gender gap is essential for ensuring that policies are inclusive and reflective of the diverse needs of the population. Enhancing women's political representation can lead to more balanced and equitable economic policies, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of gender equality and empowerment. Overall, the article presents a detailed and insightful examination of the struggles faced by Indonesian women in the context of global capitalism, emphasizing the need for a nuanced and intersectional approach to gender politics and economic justice. The acceptance of the article is contingent upon making the above mandatory changes. I look forward to your next version and am available for any further discussions or clarifications.

The study reveals a poignant narrative of women in urban slums engaging in resilience and resistance against the tide of global capitalism. In these marginalized spaces, women are the driving force behind innovative survival strategies, demonstrating agency and resourcefulness in the face of economic adversity. Their reliance on strong social networks within their communities underscores a collective approach to overcoming challenges, where sharing resources and information becomes paramount for survival. Through group savings and credit associations like arisan, women access the means to establish small businesses, thereby carving out opportunities for economic empowerment and autonomy. This informal economy, nurtured and sustained by women, serves as a vital lifeline to supplement household incomes, challenging the dominant structures of global capitalism that often marginalize and exploit vulnerable populations. In this way, the actions of women in urban slums reflect a form of grassroots resistance, where their everyday struggles intersect with larger socio-economic dynamics, illustrating the multifaceted ways in which they navigate and resist the hegemony of global capitalism.

In essence, the case studies of Kampung Pulo and Muara Baru offer a detailed understanding of the complex interplay between historical legacies, global economic forces, and gender dynamics that shape the livelihoods of women in urban slums and rural areas in Indonesia. By acknowledging the unique challenges faced by women in these specific contexts and implementing gender-sensitive policies, governments can empower women in Kampung Pulo and Muara Baru to overcome barriers and actively engage in sustainable development endeavors.

### **The Gender Pay Gap in Indonesia: A Persistent Challenge**

In the quest for economic equality, the gender pay gap remains a critical issue that demands focused attention and intervention. The discussion will focus on the specifics of wage discrimination in Indonesia. By examining both local and global contexts, it aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the gender pay gap's persistence and its broader implications. By doing so, it underscores the urgent need for targeted policies and actions to address this enduring problem, ultimately striving towards a more equitable economic landscape in Indonesia.

Recent research highlights significant wage discrimination against female workers in Indonesia's manufacturing sector. According to Laili et al. (2018), this discrimination is evident in the wages women receive, which are consistently below their productivity levels. The study analyzed data from 1996 and 2006, finding that the wage disparity remained robust when considering pooled cross-sectional data from both years. This persistence underscores the entrenched nature of the issue over time (Laili et al., 2018). On the other hand, the relationship between trade openness and gender wage disparities in Indonesia adds another layer of complexity to the issue. According to Maryam Jamielaa and Koji Kawabata (2021), trade openness has a differential impact on gender wage differentials across the wage distribution. The study reveals that trade openness affects wages for male and female workers differently, with a larger impact observed for male workers, particularly in high-skilled occupations (Jamielaa & Kawabata, 2018).

Several factors contribute to the differential impact of trade openness on gender wage disparities in Indonesia. Trade openness and globalization often lead to skill-biased technological change, favoring high-skilled workers, where men are traditionally overrepresented, thus benefiting them more and widening the gender wage gap (Jamielaa & Kawabata, 2018). Additionally, gender-based occupational segregation, with women concentrated in lower-paying and less-skilled occupations while men dominate higher-paying and more skilled positions, exacerbates these disparities when trade liberalization affects labor demand differently across these occupations (Jamielaa & Kawabata, 2018). Societal norms and stereotypes about gender roles further compound the issue by influencing hiring practices, promotion opportunities, and wage setting, which disadvantage women and limit their access to higher-paying jobs and career advancement (Jamielaa & Kawabata, 2018). Furthermore, disparities in access to education and training also play a significant role, as male workers often have greater opportunities aligned with the demands of a globalized economy, positioning them to benefit more from trade-induced changes in the labor market (Jamielaa & Kawabata, 2018).

Further, women in Indonesia are paid approximately 30% less than men without controlling for differences in characteristics (Weni Lidya & Kadir, 2021). The explained gap, accounting for factors such as work hours, experience, education, and skills, covers only about one-fourth of the total wage gap. Even when excluding casual workers, women still earn 30% less than men, but the explained gap increases to just over one-third of the total gap. The high proportion of the unexplained gap indicates the existence of unfair discrimination against women in the labor market (Weni Lidya & Kadir, 2021).

These findings align with previous studies focusing on individual worker-level data in Indonesia, consistently revealing evidence of ongoing wage discrimination against women (Weni Lidya & Kadir, 2021). The research not only confirms the presence of wage discrimination but also emphasizes the need for continuous attention and intervention to address this enduring problem.

The economic disparities by gender in Indonesia, especially regarding gender pay gap, underscore several critical issues. Despite progress in gender equality efforts, a persistent gender pay gap remains, with women earning less than men across various occupations and industries. This gap reflects broader societal inequalities and structural barriers that limit women's access to equal opportunities and fair compensation (Jamielaa & Kawabata, 2018). Gender-based occupational segregation

further exacerbates these disparities, as women are often concentrated in lower-paying and less-skilled jobs, and trade openness may reinforce these patterns by affecting the demand for specific types of labor, leading to unequal wage outcomes for male and female workers (Jamielaa & Kawabata, 2018). Additionally, disparities in access to education and training perpetuate economic inequalities; women with limited access to quality education or training programs face greater challenges in competing for higher-paying jobs and advancing their careers, thereby contributing to the gender wage gap (Jamielaa & Kawabata, 2018). Addressing these economic disparities requires comprehensive policy interventions aimed at promoting gender equality in the labor market.

#### **Economic Inequality and Gender: A Closer Look at Surabaya and Sidoarjo**

Surabaya City and Sidoarjo Regency, two leading industrial hubs in East Java, exert significant influence on both regional and national economies. These areas have set relatively high Regency/City Minimum Wages (UMK). Surabaya City has established a UMK of IDR 4,525,479.19, making it the highest in East Java, while Sidoarjo Regency follows closely with a UMK of IDR 4,518,581.85. These regions not only function as economic centers but also serve as crucial locations for various manufacturing, trade, and service industries.

Despite the competitive UMK rates in Surabaya and Sidoarjo, which indicate rapid economic development, a persistent challenge remains: the gender pay gap. The gender pay gap refers to the average difference in earnings between male and female workers for similar or equivalent work. Although the UMK is set uniformly without gender distinctions, data obtained through interviews conducted in 2023 reveal that women often receive lower wages than men. Several key factors contribute to the gender pay gap in Surabaya and Sidoarjo, including gender stereotypes influencing job placements, disparities in access to education and training, and structural discrimination in the workplace. For instance, in many industries, women are more frequently placed in positions considered less "risky" or in less recognized sectors such as domestic work, textiles, and handicrafts. These jobs often receive lower pay compared to the roles typically held by men in sectors like heavy manufacturing, engineering, or logistics.

In the industrial sectors of Surabaya and Sidoarjo, although women play a vital role in productivity, they still face significant barriers to attaining managerial positions or roles with greater responsibilities that are usually accompanied by better wages. These barriers are often exacerbated by the limited access women have to relevant training and skill development, as well as workplace cultures that do not always support gender equality.

The gender pay gap not only affects the individual welfare of female workers but also exacerbates economic and social inequalities within society. When women are paid less, it impacts their purchasing power, which in turn affects the well-being of the families and communities they support. Addressing and ultimately eliminating the gender pay gap in Surabaya and Sidoarjo requires more pro-women and sustainable policy interventions. Steps that can be taken include implementing more transparent and equitable wage standards, improving skills training and career development opportunities for women, and establishing corporate policies that support gender equality in promotions and decision-making processes. Local governments and private sectors can collaborate in awareness campaigns on the importance of pay equity. By addressing the gender pay gap, not only will the welfare of female workers improve, but the productivity and competitiveness of industries in Surabaya and Sidoarjo will also be enhanced. Pay equity will create a fairer and more prosperous work environment and support more sustainable economic growth in the region.

To further understand the challenges faced by female workers in Surabaya and Sidoarjo, it is essential to place these local dynamics within a broader, global context. The earlier discussion highlighted the significant influence that Surabaya and Sidoarjo exert on Indonesia's economy, particularly through their relatively high minimum wage levels. However, despite these competitive wages, a persistent gender pay gap continues to disadvantage women in these regions. This issue is not unique to Indonesia; it mirrors global patterns of wage inequality that are evident across various countries, including those in Europe.

The gender pay gap remains a significant issue across Europe, with notable disparities persisting in various countries. In 2014, the unadjusted gender pay gap across the EU-28 was estimated to be around 14.2%, slightly lower than the 16.7% reported by Eurostat for the same year. However, this gap varies considerably by country, reflecting a complex landscape

of wage inequality (Boll & Lagemann, 2019). For instance, Romania recorded the smallest gap at 0.96%, while Estonia had the largest at 23.51%. These figures underscore the diverse experiences of gender pay disparities across the region, with Eastern European countries generally exhibiting lower gaps, while Scandinavian and Western European nations either saw decreases or stability in their gaps. In contrast, Southern European countries presented mixed results, with Spain experiencing a decline in the gap, whereas Italy and Portugal saw increases.

A detailed decomposition of the gap revealed that approximately one-third of the unadjusted pay gap (4.8%) could be explained by measurable factors such as worker and job characteristics. However, a significant unexplained gap of 9.4% remained, suggesting that factors beyond these measurable characteristics—potentially including discrimination—play a substantial role in the wage discrepancies observed across Europe. The study also highlighted considerable variation in the sources of the gender pay gap among different countries. In some cases, the gap was largely attributed to gender differences in measurable characteristics, while in others, the gap actually favored women (Boll & Lagemann, 2019).

These findings are particularly relevant when comparing the gender pay gap in European countries to the situation in Surabaya and Sidoarjo, Indonesia. Similar to the disparities observed in Europe, Surabaya and Sidoarjo face persistent gender wage gaps, despite having relatively high minimum wages in the context of Indonesia. In these regions, while minimum wages are set uniformly without distinguishing between genders, women frequently earn less than men for similar work. This reflects broader structural and societal issues, such as gender-based occupational segregation, limited access to education and training for women, and entrenched cultural stereotypes that undervalue women's labor.

Just as in Europe, where countries like Estonia, Germany, and Finland struggle with significant gender pay gaps, Surabaya and Sidoarjo also exemplify the ongoing challenges in achieving wage equality. In both contexts, the gender pay gap is not merely a reflection of differences in education, experience, or job type, but is also influenced by deeper, more ingrained societal norms and potential discrimination. Addressing these disparities in Surabaya and Sidoarjo will require targeted policies and interventions that challenge existing stereotypes, promote equal opportunities for career advancement, and ensure that wage-setting practices are transparent and equitable.

In conclusion, the gender pay gap in Surabaya and Sidoarjo, much like in various European countries, reflects complex and multifaceted issues. To effectively close this gap, it is essential to address both the measurable factors contributing to wage disparities and the underlying societal norms and discrimination that perpetuate gender inequality in the labor market. By doing so, Surabaya and Sidoarjo can work towards creating a more equitable and just economic environment for all workers.

### **Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women in Indonesia: Unpacking Power Dynamics and Gender Wage Disparities**

Empowering women's economy in Indonesia is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by a number of complex power dynamics. Power here is not merely understood as political domination or economic control, but also encompasses structural, cultural, interpersonal, political, economic, and technological dimensions (Gray et al., 2022). Structural power, as one primary example, conceptualizes the social, political, and economic structures affecting women's access to economic resources in Indonesia (Firmansyah & Sihaloho, 2021). This phenomenon is not limited to the Indonesian context but occurs in many other countries worldwide. These power structures tend to favor men in ownership and control of resources, including land, capital, and the labor market. In Indonesia, this structure is reflected in various aspects of social, political, and economic life. For instance, in land ownership contexts, patriarchal traditions often place men as primary property holders, while women may face legal or cultural barriers to accessing or controlling land independently. This can hinder women's efforts to utilize land as a significant economic asset.

Furthermore, in the labor market, women often encounter challenges in achieving equal access and opportunities with men. This phenomenon is reflected in the gender wage gap, where women tend to receive lower compensation for equivalent jobs to men (Wijaya & Wisesa, 2023). Factors such as gender-based job segregation and gender stereotypes in performance evaluations can also affect women in reaching equivalent positions in the workplace. Regarding capital, women may also face difficulties in accessing financial capital to support their own ventures or expand their businesses (Anggadwita et al.,

2017). Differences in access to credit and financial services, along with social and cultural factors influencing risk perceptions related to lending to women, can be barriers to obtaining sufficient capital for their economic development. Therefore, understanding the structural power dynamics affecting women's access to economic resources is crucial in efforts to advocate for gender equality and women's economic empowerment. This requires in-depth evaluation of various structural aspects affecting women's access to economic resources, as well as the implementation of policies and programs supporting women in overcoming these barriers.

Additionally, cultural power plays a central role in shaping the norms, values, and gender stereotypes underpinning social structures in society. Rooted cultural phenomena, especially in the context of the still-dominant patriarchy in many regions of Indonesia, have significant impacts on the economic roles and responsibilities of women, both in the private realm of the family and in the public sphere (Ida, 2001). Patriarchal culture depicts attitudes and behaviors that place men as primary controllers in social and economic structures, while women are often seen as homemakers or informal workers. These norms not only marginalize women's economic potential within the family context but also hinder their participation in formal sectors or significant economic decision-making on a broader scale.

Gender stereotypes ingrained in patriarchal culture not only affect society's perception of women but also create various barriers for them to achieve full economic empowerment (Hamdani et al., 2023). Views that demean women's roles in the economic realm often trigger restrictions on women's access to education and training that can enhance their skills in the workforce (Ma'arif, 2023). As a result, women tend to be confined to low-paying, unstable, and less rewarding jobs, which directly impacts their income gap. The impact of these stereotypes is not limited to income levels alone but also affects women's social mobility. Limitations in women's access to better educational and job opportunities can hinder their ability to improve their own social and economic status, as well as opportunities to participate in significant decision-making in society. This creates a negative spiral where women are trapped in cycles of poverty and limitations. Moreover, gender stereotypes can also limit women's access to critical economic resources, such as land ownership, business capital, and financial services. These restrictions not only impact women's individual economic sustainability but also affect their ability to contribute to the overall national economic growth (Firmansyah & Sihaloho, 2021).

Interpersonal power dynamics cannot be overlooked either. It's important to note the dynamics of relationships between individuals in social and family environments (Su Mustaffa & Asyiek, 2015). These power relationships significantly impact women's ability to make independent economic decisions. In the family environment, women often face pressure from family members or partners that can limit their choices in various aspects of life, including education, career, or property ownership. For example, women may be confronted with strong expectations to fulfill traditional roles as homemakers or caregivers, which can hinder their career ambitions or access to further education. Social and cultural pressures reinforcing gender norms can also limit women in seeking opportunities to participate in economic activities outside the household.

In addition to interpersonal power dynamics occurring within the family environment, a significant role is also held by power relationships outside the family environment, especially in broader social settings such as relationships with peers or coworkers (Su Mustaffa & Asyiek, 2015). Consequently, women may also experience pressure or discrimination affecting their ability to make independent economic decisions. In peer relationships, women may face social pressure to adhere to certain norms that may conflict with their economic aspirations. For instance, pressure to overspend on fashion trends or specific lifestyles can hinder women's ability to manage their finances effectively or invest in education or training that could enhance their skills. In the workplace, women may also experience various forms of discrimination affecting their economic independence. This can include restrictions on access to promotions or opportunities for larger responsibilities, or even inequalities in payment reflected in the gender wage gap. Social pressure to meet stereotypical expectations about gender roles in the workplace can also limit women's potential for full economic empowerment.

Meanwhile, political power also plays a crucial role in realizing women's economic empowerment. Power dynamics in the political realm have significant impacts on determining policies supporting efforts for women's economic empowerment. The lack of women's representation in political power positions can be one factor hindering efforts to create

policies that comprehensively address women's economic interests and needs. In many cases, there is a noticeable disproportion between the number of women and men occupying political power positions, both at the local and national levels. This phenomenon is reflected in the low representation of women in legislative and executive bodies. The insufficient number of women in these political power structures creates a gender representation imbalance, resulting in women's perspectives and experiences being less represented in political decision-making processes. The impact of low women's representation in political power is significant, especially in the context of women's economic empowerment. Policies produced may not adequately consider the challenges and unique needs faced by women in the economic realm. This imbalance can reinforce existing gender gaps, such as wage disparities and equal access to economic opportunities.

The lack of women's representation in political power can also create gaps in the priorities of proposed policies. Issues specific and crucial to women's economic empowerment may not receive adequate attention in political agendas due to the lack of women's representation in the political decision-making process. Therefore, increasing women's representation in political power becomes essential in efforts to address challenges and advocate for the unique needs of women in the economic realm (Yusartika et al., 2023). This requires efforts to generate more inclusive and gender-sensitive policies, considering various perspectives and experiences of women. In this way, women's economic empowerment can be strengthened, and society can move towards greater gender equality in both political and economic fields.

On the other hand, economic power plays a crucial role in determining women's access to various opportunities in the economic realm. This phenomenon encompasses access to employment, education, training, and capital necessary for participation in both formal and informal economic sectors. Limitations in accessing these economic resources can pose serious barriers for women in achieving full economic empowerment. Economic power encompasses not only material aspects such as ownership and control of financial resources but also involves factors such as access to social networks and equal opportunities in the workforce. Inequality in the distribution of wealth and economic opportunities often creates significant disparities between women and men in terms of income, economic security, and social mobility. Furthermore, technological power also plays an increasingly important role in the current digital era. Women's access to technology and information resources can have a significant impact on their ability to participate in the rapidly growing digital economy. Limited access to technology and inadequate digital skills can be obstacles to their participation in the digital economy, as well as limiting their ability to leverage technological innovations to improve their economic conditions.

An important aspect in analyzing women's economic empowerment in Indonesia is gender wage inequality. Gender wage inequality refers to the difference in average wages between women and men in the workforce. In Indonesia, gender wage inequality remains a significant issue despite progress in recent decades. According to data released by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2020, the wage ratio between women and men in Indonesia is approximately 0.87. This figure indicates that on average, women are paid around 87% of the average wages received by men in the workforce. Although there has been an improvement from previous years, gender wage inequality remains a significant issue, reflecting a striking disparity in pay between women and men in the Indonesian labor market. It is important to note that gender wage inequality not only reflects economic disparities but also underscores fundamental inequalities in social and economic structures. Factors influencing this inequality include: Gender Discrimination; Work and Education Experience; Unpaid Labor; Job Segregation; Representation in Managerial Positions; Policies and Regulations.

### 1. Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination practices in the labor market have significant implications for wage inequality between women and men, even when they possess similar qualifications. Gender discrimination can manifest in various aspects, ranging from recruitment processes to wage determination and promotions. In the recruitment process, discriminatory practices often demonstrate a preference for male candidates over females, despite both having equivalent qualifications. This reflects ingrained gender stereotypes within organizational cultures or recruitment systems, assuming that males are better suited for certain positions than females. Gender biases internalized in individuals' thinking or company policies can be determinants in recruitment decision-making processes. These gender stereotypes may relate to general perceptions of traditional gender roles in society, where males are often perceived as more competent or suitable for demanding jobs, while

females are often associated with more traditional roles and deemed less suitable for positions requiring leadership or high technical skills. Consequently, women may face barriers in obtaining equal job opportunities with men, despite having equivalent qualifications and competencies. Company policies that do not consider gender fairness in the recruitment process can also be a cause of discriminatory practices. Subjective selection criteria or assessments that do not equally consider achievements and qualifications between female and male candidates can influence recruitment decision-making. The impact of these discriminatory practices is inhibiting women's access to equal job opportunities with men and reinforcing gender inequality in the labor market. Additionally, discriminatory practices can also be reflected in wage determination. Discriminatory wage determination practices are a phenomenon often observed in the labor market, where women tend to be paid less than their male counterparts, even for the same or equivalent jobs. This wage inequality may reflect ingrained gender stereotypes within organizational cultures or wage-setting systems, inaccurately assuming that women are less competent or ambitious than men (Hallward-Driemeier et al., 2017). As a result, women are often paid less despite having the same qualifications and experience as their male counterparts. Gender discrimination practices can also affect promotion opportunities in careers. Women often face barriers in achieving management positions or higher career levels, even when they have the same qualifications and competencies as their male counterparts. Gender bias inherent in organizational thinking or performance evaluation systems can be a barrier for women to obtain the promotion opportunities they rightfully deserve. Bias in performance evaluation and promotion decisions can also contribute to gender wage inequality. Women are often considered less eligible for promotions or salary increases despite having the same or even better performance than their male counterparts, due to the perception that women have greater family responsibilities or are less competent than men in leadership roles. Therefore, it is crucial to address gender discrimination practices in the labor market through the implementation of policies that promote gender equality and the elimination of gender bias in recruitment decision-making, wage determination, and promotions. Only by creating a fair and inclusive work environment for all individuals can we reduce gender wage inequality and achieve true economic empowerment for women.

## 2. Education and Work Experience

Education and work experience play a crucial role in determining an individual's career opportunities and wage levels in the labor market. However, women often face barriers in accessing the education and training required for higher-paying jobs. Factors contributing to these barriers can vary, including limited access to formal education due to economic, social, or cultural factors, as well as gender stereotypes that lead women away from education to traditional roles such as household management. Women often encounter challenges in obtaining work experience equivalent to men. Greater family responsibilities often assigned to women can hinder their ability to pursue the training or additional work experience necessary for career advancement. In many cases, women may be forced to sacrifice their career opportunities to fulfill family responsibilities or other household tasks. Women consistently face challenges in gaining work experience equivalent to men. Greater family responsibilities often assigned to women can hinder their ability to pursue essential training or additional work experience necessary for career advancement. This is especially true in situations where women must prioritize household tasks or caregiving for other family members, sacrificing career opportunities that should be available to them. These factors can create ongoing gender injustices in access to career opportunities and professional development. Women limited in their access to training and additional work experience often struggle to compete in the competitive job market. Consequently, they may face difficulties in attaining higher positions in the job hierarchy or in achieving wage parity with their male counterparts. The impact of limited access to education and work experience for women includes reinforcing gender wage gaps and increasing inequality in career opportunities between women and men (Suharyono & Diggdowiseiso, 2021). This inequality is reflected in several ways, one of which is differences in the financial compensation received by women and men for equivalent or similar jobs. Women often receive lower wages compared to their male counterparts, even when they have the same qualifications and work experience (Susilowati, 2005). This phenomenon illustrates injustice in wage systems that do not fairly consider the value or contribution of workers but tend to be influenced by gender bias and detrimental stereotypes against women. Limitations in access to education and work experience also affect women's career opportunities. Women often face barriers in attaining higher positions in the job hierarchy, either due

to a lack of required experience or unfair selection criteria. As a result, women's opportunities for career advancement are often limited, and they may become trapped in jobs that are less supportive of professional growth or economic empowerment. Therefore, it is crucial to adopt policies that support gender equality in access to education and training, as well as to create a supportive work environment for women to balance their family responsibilities and professional careers. This includes efforts to improve women's access to formal education and vocational training, as well as the implementation of policies that allow flexibility in work schedules and support for childcare and family care. Only through these means can we create fairer opportunities for women to achieve economic empowerment.

### 3. Unpaid Work

Unpaid work, which includes household chores, childcare, and caring for other family members, continues to be a greater responsibility for women compared to men. This role, often seen as a natural responsibility for women within the family structure, can consume much of their time and energy, leaving little time to pursue paid work outside the home. The impact of these obligations is significant, especially in an economic context. Women who spend more time on unpaid work tend to have limited time and flexibility to pursue paid employment. They may be forced to take less lucrative jobs or have unstable work schedules to balance family and financial responsibilities. As a result, women's earnings are often lower than men who have more opportunities to focus on their careers. Unpaid work also affects women's long-term career development. The time and energy constraints required to carry out household tasks can hinder women from participating in training opportunities or further education that could enhance their career advancement. Thus, women may be trapped in a cycle where they are continually faced with unpaid work that inhibits their economic and professional growth. To address this inequality, efforts are needed to recognize and value the unpaid work performed by women. This includes adopting policies that support fair division of labor between women and men in households, as well as efforts to provide support and services that enable women to balance family responsibilities with their professional careers. Only in this way can women have equal opportunities to achieve economic empowerment and fulfill their full potential in society.

### 4. Occupational Segregation

Occupational segregation, referring to the tendency for women to be concentrated in certain sectors of work, is a phenomenon that continues to influence the dynamics of the labor market (Wilfred et al., 2023). Women are often encouraged to enter sectors related to caregiving, services, or administration, while men tend to dominate sectors related to technical, technological, or industrial fields. Essentially, occupational segregation creates an imbalance in the distribution of paid work, where sectors dominated by women tend to have lower wage levels compared to sectors dominated by men. Factors contributing to this phenomenon include gender stereotypes assuming that women are more suited to jobs requiring interpersonal skills or caregiving, while men are considered more suitable for jobs requiring technical skills or physical strength. As a result of occupational segregation, women often receive lower pay than men performing similar or equivalent work. This wage gap not only reflects gender injustice in wage systems but also reinforces economic inequality between women and men. To address occupational segregation and its impact on the gender wage gap, steps need to be taken to encourage women's access to sectors traditionally dominated by men and to reduce gender discrimination in wages. This can be achieved through promoting gender equality in education and training, as well as implementing policies that encourage fair job allocation in the workplace.

### 5. Representation in Managerial Positions

The representation of women in managerial or leadership positions remains a significant issue in various organizational and industry contexts. Despite increased awareness of the importance of gender equality in the workplace, women are still often underrepresented in managerial positions that offer access to higher wages and better career opportunities (Tabassum & Nayak, 2021). This phenomenon reflects various barriers and challenges faced by women in achieving managerial positions. Some contributing factors may include gender stereotypes that place women in more traditional roles and hinder their advancement to leadership positions, as well as a lack of support and mentorship from colleagues or superiors who could help them advance their careers. Additionally, there may be biases present in the selection and promotion processes that hinder women's career progression. These biases can manifest in preferences for male candidates, stereotypes

portraying women as less competent or ambitious than their male counterparts, and higher performance expectations for women in the same positions. As a result, women often struggle to attain managerial positions that offer access to higher wages and better career opportunities. Low representation in managerial positions also contributes to the formation of gender wage gaps and inequality in career opportunities between women and men. Comprehensive efforts are needed to promote gender equality in organizational leadership. This includes implementing policies that support the representation of women in managerial positions, creating an inclusive and supportive work environment for women, and efforts to eliminate gender bias in selection and promotion processes.

## **6. Policies and Regulations**

Policies and regulations implemented in the context of the labor market play a crucial role in determining working conditions and the welfare of workers, including gender equality. However, often these policies are insufficient in addressing gender or women's specific needs, which in turn can reinforce existing gender wage gaps. Several policies that overlook women's needs in the labor market can be significant factors in exacerbating gender wage disparities. For example, lack of support for maternity leave or adequate family leave can result in women being forced to leave their jobs temporarily or even permanently, ultimately reducing their income. Additionally, policies that fail to combat gender discrimination in the workplace or do not impose strict penalties for violations of women's rights can also reinforce the perception that women are undervalued in the labor market. Shortcomings in these policies can have significant impacts in reinforcing existing gender wage gaps. Women who are not supported by policies that address their needs tend to face more barriers in maintaining or increasing their income. This contributes to the justification and perpetuation of ongoing gender wage disparities. To address this issue, it is important to update and strengthen existing policies to ensure they encompass adequate protections for women in the workplace. This includes establishing appropriate maternity and family leave, enforcing rules prohibiting gender discrimination, and providing strict sanctions for violations of women's rights. Additionally, efforts are needed to increase awareness and understanding of the importance of gender equality at all levels of society, including among employers and policymakers.

Policy implications for reducing gender wage inequality in Indonesia include increasing women's access to education and training, empowering women in managerial positions, raising awareness about gender discrimination, and improving policies that support the balance between women's work and personal lives. Integrating gender considerations into trade policies can also help address structural barriers affecting women's access to decent work and equal income. Thus, to achieve gender equality in pay in Indonesia, concerted efforts from the government, private sector, and society at large are needed to address factors contributing to gender wage inequality and strengthen women's overall economic empowerment.

## **From Economic Exploitation to Economic Justice: Addressing Inequities in the Indonesian Labor Market**

Given the importance of social justice in inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development, it should be regarded as one of the pillars of the new multilateralism needed to address Indonesia's current challenges. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has released the World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2024 report, highlighting that global unemployment rates are expected to rise in 2024, with increasing inequality and stagnant productivity causing concern (Drishti IAS, 2024). The Trends 2023 report by the ILO noted a slowdown in the global economy, likely forcing more workers to accept lower-quality, lower-paying jobs. Women and young people fare far worse in the labor market. The labor force participation rate for women is below 48 percent, compared to 72 percent for men (ILO, 2023). Youth unemployment rates are three times higher than those for adults, with more than one in five young people not having a job, education, or training (ILO, 2023).

Global capitalism has exacerbated poverty and socio-economic inequality among industrial manufacturing workers in Indonesia. This uncertainty is reinforced by the enactment of the Job Creation Law No. 11 of 2020. This law aims to create jobs by making it easier to do business, providing protection, and empowering cooperatives and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), improving the investment ecosystem, facilitating business operations, and accelerating strategic national projects. The law covers ten areas: 1) enhancing the investment and business ecosystem; 2) employment; 3) facilitating, protecting, and empowering cooperatives and MSMEs; 4) ease of doing business; 5) supporting research and

innovation; 6) land acquisition; 7) economic zones; 8) central government investment and accelerating national strategic projects; 9) government administration; and 10) imposing sanctions. However, the law's implementation has diminished hopes for social and economic justice, especially for female workers.

The enactment of the Job Creation Law has harmed all workers and eroded the hopes of female workers to achieve a decent life as stipulated by the 1945 Constitution. Social and economic justice is increasingly elusive for female laborers, with the law contributing to heightened socio-economic disparities and perpetuating gender-based inequities. Therefore, a thorough examination of these dynamics is crucial for developing policies that truly promote fairness and equality for all workers in Indonesia. A significant issue faced by workers in the manufacturing sector is the prevalence of mass layoffs (PHK). The President of the Confederation of Indonesian Workers Unions, Nusantara (KSPN), reported that since early 2023, approximately 7,200 workers across eight textile companies have been laid off, with around 700 of these due to factory closures. "However, if we tally the numbers since 2020, the total number of layoffs in factories where KSPN members work has reached 56,976. This includes employees from 36 companies in Semarang, Pekalongan, Sukoharjo, Magelang, Demak, Karanganyar, West Java, and Banten," stated Ristadi. He noted that 14 of these 36 factories have closed permanently. This data represents the total layoffs from 2020 to early 2024, spanning various sectors such as textiles, garments, shipping, leather, furniture, retail, footwear, and spare parts. The locations affected include Central Java, West Java, and Banten.

These layoffs are partly attributed to flawed government policies and stagnating wages, which have not seen an increase in 2024, thereby reducing the purchasing power of workers (Kontributor Bekasi, 2024). This trend indicates that income inequality and poverty are likely to rise if the purchasing power of low-income households is not maintained. Moreover, the much-needed post-pandemic recovery could be jeopardized, potentially leading to further social unrest globally and undermining the goals of achieving prosperity and peace for all.

There is an urgent need for well-designed policy measures to help sustain the purchasing power and living standards of wage workers and their families. These measures are crucial not only for addressing immediate economic disparities but also for fostering long-term socio-economic stability.

The concepts of social justice articulated by John Rawls and Amartya Sen provide a robust framework for understanding the fight for social and economic justice in Indonesia. Rawls's notion of social justice, as outlined in *A Theory of Justice* (Rawls, 1971), revolves around the principles of "equal opportunity." Rawls divides this into two key principles: the "level-the-playing-field principle" and the "nondiscrimination principle." The first principle emphasizes providing equal opportunities to all individuals, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to access basic services, thereby enabling them to compete for jobs and other opportunities. The second principle calls for the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, and gender.

Amartya Sen, in *The Idea of Justice* (Sen, 2009), urges us to engage in public reasoning in the pursuit of justice, not by adhering to an ideal, but in practical terms, comparing the impacts of specific policies and reflecting on actions taken in the name of fairness and justice. Sen insists that justice involves a reasonable concern for the interests of others, and his theory of social choice strongly reflects this insistence, drawing heavily on his work in welfare economics, including his famous paper "Rational Fools" (Sen, 1977).

These perspectives are particularly relevant when examining the practices of state power that often neglect the interests of the working class. The Indonesian people entrust their aspirations for social justice to the government and its officials, from the President and Ministers to members of Parliament, Governors, and local bureaucrats. These representatives of the state are expected to act as servants and guarantors, ensuring that social justice is accessible to all citizens, regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, or race. They are tasked with providing equal treatment to all, based on the foundational principles of social justice enshrined in Pancasila, Indonesia's state philosophy. The realization and protection of social justice in Indonesia are enshrined in the 1945 Constitution, specifically Articles 27(1) and (2), 28, 29(2), and 31(1), which acknowledge and protect human rights, uphold an independent judiciary, and ensure legality in all its forms. As a nation committed to social justice, Indonesia's goal is to protect all its citizens and their homeland, promote general welfare, and

foster the intellectual life of the nation.

In the context of Indonesia, the struggle for social justice is manifested through the legal framework that emphasizes equal rights and protections for all citizens. Social justice is not about equalizing everyone's experiences but about ensuring fairness in law, employment, living conditions, education, and social interactions between the government and its people, as well as among the citizens themselves. Social justice aims for the greatest possible prosperity for all Indonesians, creating a nation characterized by mutual care, sharing, and service.

Economic poverty is one of the most entrenched and fundamental forms of social injustice. It is deeply rooted because it often underlies other societal issues, particularly disputes and human rights violations. Economic poverty represents a condition where individuals are unable to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. This form of poverty is particularly insidious as it affects the ability to satisfy essential human requirements.

Many jobs performed by women are undervalued or marginalized, reflecting societal norms that devalue their contributions. Marxism has long analyzed unpaid women's work as an integral part of capitalism. However, Marxist explanations of exploitation often fail to fully grasp or address the exploitation and oppression of women within capitalist systems. According to Marx's theory of exploitation, a worker is economically exploited if they are forced to sell their labor at a price lower than the value of the goods they produce. This creates a surplus value for the employer, who profits from the difference between the labor cost and the value of the produced commodities. In practice, this means an employer hires a worker who generates more value per hour than the wage they are paid. This discrepancy, known as surplus value, forms the basis of economic exploitation where capitalists expropriate the surplus value created by laborers to generate profit. This paper argues that Marx's explanation of exploitation is too narrow as it focuses solely on labor's role in production within the public sphere, neglecting activities outside the market environment that are also prone to exploitation.

In the Indonesian context, there are three distinct forms of exploitation often experienced by women: the exploitation of paid and unpaid care work, exploitation through labor production and reproduction, and exploitation through affective labor. By briefly dissecting Marx's labor theory, we can identify the theoretical elements that overlook these forms of exploitation. These elements include the commodity feature and the exchange value feature. Consequently, these different forms of exploitation together illustrate the inadequacy of Marxist explanations of exploitation, leading to workers feeling powerless and unable to effectively resist due to the threat of job termination.

Despite many critiques rejecting the core of Marx's exploitation theory—namely, the labor theory of value—the structural understanding of exploitation remains significant. Thus, exploitation is understood as the unequal transfer of labor between two groups structurally linked through their positions in the production relationship. The global overcapacity in several economic sectors has led some observers to assert that the world economy suffers from an excess of manufactured goods, or what Marxists term "underconsumption." This has led to claims that global capitalism is in a systemic crisis requiring radical structural reforms.

Painful adjustments can lead to massive layoffs, particularly affecting low-skilled or semi-skilled workers who might struggle to find similarly paying jobs. This disproportionately impacts female workers. More expansive economic policies could significantly reduce surplus capacity. Moreover, as seen in the past, overcapacity issues in certain sectors will eventually resolve themselves when supply is reduced to match demand. However, before this resolution, significant political challenges will arise for national governments and the global economy (Gilpin & Gilpin, 2000).

Returning to Sen's argument, justice must be understood as fairness that should be realized for all citizens' interests. This approach emphasizes that justice involves reasonable concern for the interests of others and requires public reasoning and reflection on the impacts of specific policies to ensure fairness and equity.

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