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**The Chinese Migrant Worker in Indonesia:
The Local and Migrant Workers Context**

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THE CHINESE MIGRANT WORKERS IN INDONESIA: THE LOCAL AND MIGRANT WORKERS CONTEXT

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Abstract

Based on empirical findings, this article concludes that the influx of Chinese migrant workers is a serious threat against Indonesian local and migrant workers in the overseas, amidst the high number of unemployment. The local and migrant workers have struggled to seek for a better job under uncertain situation in Indonesia. The Indonesian government attempts to create more job vacancies, yet the government has welcomed more migrant workers especially from China. Furthermore, Indonesian migrant workers are also recognized as the highest contributor for Indonesian remittance for many years. The influx of Chinese migrant workers blatantly hit both Indonesian local and migrant workers. In addition, this was a humiliation against Indonesian workers, which have struggled to migrate overseas through illegal and very risky ways. Conversely, a large number of Chinese migrant workers have been deployed in various projects, which basically can be handled by local workers. The arrival of Chinese migrant workers, of course, became a controversial issue especially among Indonesian local and migrant workers, who have faced difficult situation such as exploitation, humiliation, and contract abuses. This is a qualitative research enriched with semi-structured interviews with some key respondents specifically those who have experiences and expertise on migrant workers issues.

Keywords: *Indonesian Local Workers, Migrant Workers, Chinese Migrant Workers, Unemployment*



A. Introduction

Indonesian migrant workers are included in the global migration phenomena. They mostly moved abroad to seek for job opportunities and improve their lives. The main destination countries, for example, are Malaysia, Taiwan, and Saudi Arabia. The National Agency for Placement and Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (BNP2TKI, *Badan Nasional Penempatan dan Perlindungan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia*) recorded that Malaysia, Taiwan and Saudi Arabia are among the major host countries for many Indonesian migrant workers. In 2016 alone, the BNP2TKI has placed and recorded the number of Indonesian migrant workers approximately as the following: 87.616 (Malaysia), 77.087 (Taiwan), and 13.538 (Saudi Arabia) (PUSLITFO BNP2TKI, 2016). Many Indonesian workers are in fact are employed illegally in some countries. Further, the recorded data probably does not reflect the actual number due to only the documented workers or those who have been legally registered and worked overseas were accounted for. Surprisingly, according to the Indonesian embassy in Kuala Lumpur, up to 2012 there are around 2 million Indonesian workers in Malaysia and half of them were reported illegal (Caraka, October 2012). Due to immigration issues, the Malaysian authority has regularly conducted arrests and mass-deportations on these illegal workers, while all were prosecuted and sentenced before their deportation. The BNP2TKI revealed that statistically 20,000 Indonesian workers have been deported from Malaysia or nearly 300 per week (Antara, 30 August 2014). Officially, according to the Department of Statistic Malaysia, until June 2017 the number of migrant workers in Malaysia is about 1,866,369 and around 40.6% (758,487) of the total number of foreign workers came from Indonesia (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2017).

The incursion of migrant workers to Indonesia especially from China was obviously problematic and have slapped local workers. In this context, the employment of migrant workers including from China basically recognised by Indonesian law. Nevertheless, the procedures are not easy and have to consider local workforce first that still under high



number of unemployment. According to Presidential Regulation (PP, *Peraturan Presiden*) No. 20/2018 on the use of migrant workers, clearly mentioned two important aspects:

“Tenaga Kerja Pendamping adalah tenaga kerja Indonesia yang ditunjuk dan dipersiapkan sebagai pendamping dalam rangka alih teknologi dan alih keahlian”

[Co-workers are local Indonesian workers who have appointed and assigned as a partner in order to conduct transfer of technology and expertise] (PP, no. 20/2018, Section 1, Article 1, no. 2]

“Penggunaan TKA sebagaimana dimaksud pada ayat 1 dilakukan dengan memperhatikan kondisi pasar kerja dalam negeri”

[Employment of migrant workers as stipulated at the Article 1 has to consider local workforce condition] (PP, no. 20/2018, Section 2, Article 2, no. 2]

The two articles above is a strong indication that local workers should be prioritized rather than foreign workers. However, it was a paradox during implementation. At the end of 2018, approximately 95,335 foreigners were employed in Indonesia with various sectors. The largest migrant workers in Indonesia came from China about 35,000 followed by other nations such as Japan, Korea, India and Malaysia (Tribunenews.com, 13 January 2019). Therefore, migrant workers should employed as a professional and posted in a specific position where local workers unable to work. Migrant workers also hired temporarily and must be “supervised” by local workers in order to transfer of technology as mentioned in Indonesian laws. From economic and globalizations point of views, Indonesia should receive and welcome migrant workers as consequences of global market. Yet, the economic situation is slightly different where Indonesia still grouped as developing countries that still consider local consequences such as local workforce including local cultures and values (Hamdi, 2013; Yuniarto, 2014).

In some countries, Indonesian migrant workers faced similar issues, but most of them were involved in legality issues. In Japan for instance, although closed-door immigration policies focused heavily on



controlling population movements and curbing illegal immigration, policies towards foreign residents settled in Japan has treated these illegal immigrants as de facto citizens with social welfare rights almost on par with Japanese nationals (Chung, 2010: 149). In the latest update, Japan has around 300,000 to 400,000 illegal immigrants and most of them are Korean. Yet, the Japan immigration court tends to be more flexible in dealing with them in the midst of the government's tougher policy (Hays, 2013). Further, Japan's policy is strict without discriminating their rights as a worker. It means, although Japan was classified as developed country that is seen as more professional, there are still some problems on migrant issues (Altanchimeg, Battuya, Tungalag, 2016). Nevertheless, in destination countries like Japan and others, such as Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Korea, the situation is totally different. Those countries have problem on worker shortage and the local workers tend to avoid the so-called 3D (dirty, difficult, and dangerous) sectors. In contrast to this, the influx of Chinese migrant workers in Indonesia was seriously perceived as hurting for many Indonesian migrant workers including in Malaysia. This is because, Indonesia is still extremely facing unemployment rate amid the limited job opportunities provided by the Indonesian government even in the 3D sectors in Indonesia. In fact, the unskilled workers from China have been paid more compared to the Indonesian local workers (Maksum & Surwandono, 2017).

In the meantime, the exodus of Chinese migrant workers across the world including to Indonesia theoretically accepted. Certainly, Chinese government has gained huge advantages from globalization campaigned by the US. Interestingly, although the participation of Chinese into global system arguably late, yet enormously impacted on Chinese economy (Overholt, 2005). Further, the Chinese engagement in globalization system constructively embedded through an ambitious project called as "New Silk Road." Chinese governments totally believe under this project, China could revive glorious as of previous old empires (Nobis, 2017). Unsurprisingly, the Silk Road project along with labour

investment eventually became major issue since the arrival of Chinese migrant workers has strongly refused by host countries. In the US, Latin America, European countries have blamed China for stealing jobs. In fact, under Silk Road project using globalization ways has helped Chinese government to reduce poverty and unemployment rate in the country (Izurieta & Singh, 2010; *The Economist*, 10 December 2016). To Indonesia as developing country, receiving huge investment from China under Silk Road project is beneficial. Yet, domestic consequences in the host country like Indonesia should be considered. Some issues for instance, local resistance, poor record of Chinese diplomacy in foreign countries and geopolitical and security impacts became a critical problem in host countries (Chi, 2015; Jin, 2018; Qian, 2019).

In Mojokerto, East Java, for instance, these Chinese migrant workers have received about IDR 6 million (USD 420) or almost double compared to local workers. The salary of local workers, which according to the local minimum salary regulation (*UMR, Upah Minimum Kabupaten*) No. 78/2015 the amount is about IDR 3 million a month (Detik, 18 November 2016). They were also unable to communicate in Bahasa. This is a serious offence against the law. This is because according to East Java local regulation called *Peraturan Daerah* No. 8/2016, migrant workers must be able to communicate in Bahasa (Detik, 23 December 2016). An expert from Bandung, West Java have witnessed and admitted that all Chinese workers in Indonesia cannot speak the Indonesian language. He mentioned:

“During my journey, I deliberately stopped my trip to observe and ask the Chinese workers in a factory in Serang, Banten Province. And it is true, they cannot speak Indonesian language. The owners of the company also tend to employ foreign workers, especially China due to their performance and they can work non-stop and he said this is more efficient compared to local workers” (Interview A).

Therefore, this is an important topic since the issues on Chinese migrant workers in Indonesia became a controversial discourse, especially among Indonesian local and migrant workers especially in Malaysia.



Nonetheless, at least there are four main reasons why this research is significantly critical to be examined in the context of Indonesian local and migrant workers in Malaysia vis-à-vis Chinese migrant workers. First, the largest number and the highest contributor of Indonesian remittance is the Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia. Malaysia has also been benefited by the influx of Indonesian migrant workers almost in all of its economic sectors. Second, the main purpose of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia is for job opportunities, and for better living condition. Three, since majority of Indonesian migrant workers were based in Malaysia; this is reasonable why the influx of Chinese migrant workers was perceived as a contradiction and dilemmatic with their efforts amid the high number of unemployment in Indonesia. Four, this was a humiliation against Indonesian workers who have struggled to migrate to Malaysia even through illegal and risky ways. In contrast to this, the government has welcomed a large number of Chinese migrant workers which have been deployed and classified as unskilled labours in various projects. The arrival of Chinese migrant workers, of course, became a controversial issue especially among Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia who have faced difficult situation such as exploitation, humiliation, and contract abuses. Understanding this topic, to be sure, is critical in order to push the government to have high attention on Indonesian migrant workers as well as to create more job vacancies inside the country.

B. Literature Review

Much has been written about Indonesian migrant workers. However, very few analysts have tried to examine Chinese migrant workers and the response of Indonesian migrant workers especially in Malaysia, where many Indonesian workers were placed. Most of them are more focused on specific countries and themes such as Indonesian workers in Malaysia (Liow, 2003; Azmy, 2012; Lin, 2006, and in Saudi Arabia (Husson, 1997; Silvey, 2004; Diederich, 2004). Saudi Arabia and Malaysia are the two main destination countries of Indonesian migrant



workers. Nevertheless, in both countries, Indonesian workers generally faced similar unsavory experiences whether from their employers or from the government. This study is, therefore, a relatively novel undertaking, which can modestly contribute to enrich the related body of literature by providing an assessment of the influx of Chinese migrant workers (phenomena) based on the perspective of Indonesian migrant workers especially in Malaysia.

In the context of Chinese migrant workers, Indonesia also has faced similar problem as in Malaysia, namely, illegal workers amidst the high unemployment rate in Indonesia. This is because the workers and the employers attempt to avoid tax obligations or circumvention and non-compliance with other laws (Feige, 2016). In contrast to this, Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia faced a serious challenge compared to Chinese workers in Indonesia. Consequently, some abuse cases emerged, which are commonly faced by Indonesian migrant workers especially forced labour. According to International Labour Organization (2014), forced labour refers to “situations in which persons are coerced to work through the use of violence or intimidation or by more subtle means such as accumulated debt, retention of identity papers or threats of denunciation to immigration authorities.” The force labour cases, of course, became a sensitive issue among migrant workers in Malaysia including Indonesia. Most of the cases involving migrant workers are in the manufacturing industries. A research revealed that approximately one third of migrant workers in manufacturing industries—for instance in electronic sectors—have experienced forced labour (Lee, 2016). In contrast, there has not been any Chinese migrant workers involvement on forced labour cases committed by Indonesian employers. Therefore, the existence of Chinese migrant workers is different compared to the Indonesian migrant workers’ situation in Malaysia. In addition, the government has a tendency to allow more Chinese migrant workers in Indonesia amidst the high number of unemployment faced by local workers. This is a current issue in the Indonesian modern history, which required a comprehensive research.



C. Method

This is a qualitative-based research combined with content analysis. Data resources are obtained through library research, such as books, journals, articles, and newspapers whether online based or through resource centers including libraries. This research is also enriched by non-structured interviews with selected person. In order to get the access to the respondents, the researchers have arranged strategies to conduct the interview whether through direct interaction such as personal contact, or correspondence by e-mail, and also through social media.

This is a document-based research with content analysis. Moreover, this approach requires a deep understanding on texts. The researchers could also narrative make own their interpretation on the texts (analytics or critics) which have been academically accepted (White & Marsh, 2006). In this context, framing analysis is also conducted through identification on specific cases/issues; examination and comparison especially from selected media which has relationship with research focus (Chong & Druckman, 2007: 106). Through comparison on specific issues among media, including social media as an alternative media, this research is expected to yield description and typology of issues/cases.

The qualitative research is run concurrently starting from data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation. This is because the data of qualitative research is subjective, interpretative, descriptive, comprehensive, and the number is massive. The findings are presented mainly in quotation forms (Ahmad Naqiyuddin Bakar, 2008) or preliminary description of the data, including statistical data obtained from official resource (Ruenwai, 2006). In addition, data presentations are also in forms of key quotation, table, matrixes, charts, graphs or model. Moreover, direct quotes, statement/story or quotation from interviews, FGD, fieldwork notes or primary data are the main method used in qualitative research. However, basically the data presentation from data analysis in qualitative research is flexible (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Since this is a qualitative research, this research used purposive sampling.

Accordingly, purposive sampling is important to obtain quality data, yet the researcher must be seriously aware and ensure the reliability and competence of the selected informants (Tongco, 2007).

D. Research Finding

The perspective of local people, specifically labour community on the inflow of Chinese migrant workers, can be demonstrated in this section. To start the discussion, we begin with the cases involving Chinese migrant workers in some areas in Indonesia. Most of them are involved on immigration issues, especially the problems related to residential and working permissions. For instance, an immigration office in Palembang, South Sumatra, has arrested about five Chinese migrant workers in a raid. The immigration officers discovered that these five workers were deployed in a highway project near Ogan Komering Ilir Regency in South Sumatra. They have been posted in the Lampung-Palembang highway project under PT Geotekino and PT Waskita Karya companies. Surprisingly, all of them were employed illegally due to overstay (Republika, 27 July 2017).

In Sukabumi, West Java, another Indonesian immigration office also detained six Chinese illegal workers. As occurred in South Sumatra, all Chinese workers in Sukabumi are involved in immigration problems. The six workers were a representation of the total number of Chinese workers in Sukabumi, which is nearly 243 people based on the local authority record. Nonetheless, the arrest was conducted by the immigration office after a report made by local communities (Republika, 24 October 2017). In the following month, another Indonesian immigration office also made an arrest in Gresik, East Java, and detained around ten Chinese workers. Interestingly, they were not employed in an Indonesian-China project, but they worked in a storage building owned by a private company. At the beginning, the ten Chinese workers were arrested by a local labour department office and transferred to the immigration office. The local labour department office argued that the office only has a monitoring task, but does not have the authority to



deport the illegal workers. Deportation assignment is the authority of the immigration office (Duta, 6 November 2017).

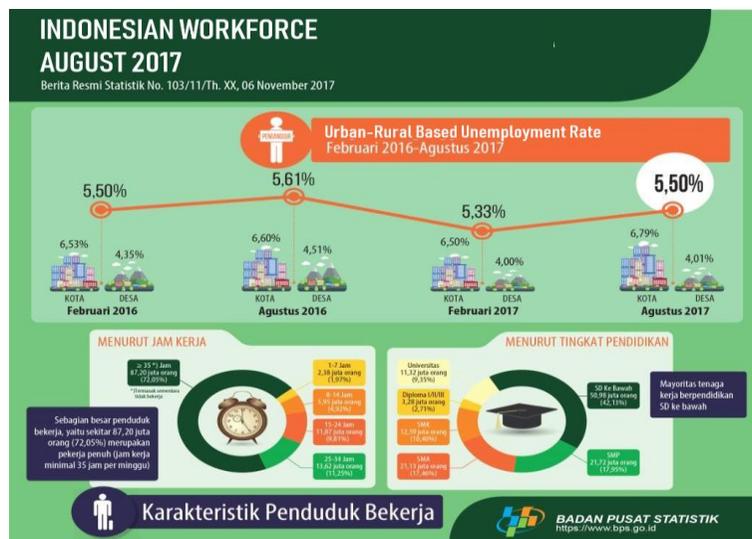
At the end of December 2017, the local labour department office of Central Java, arrested thirteen Chinese illegal workers. All the arrested workers were employed in a government project, namely the Pemalang-Semarang highway project in Central Java and also under the same company, i.e., PT Geotekino and PT Waskita Karya companies. The raid was conducted by local authority following the report and complaint from the local community. The local community protested against the Chinese workers due to the former often caused disturbances in their residential complex. As a result, 18 Chinese workers were detained, which consist of 13 persons identified as illegal workers, while the remaining were also basically problematic (Tribun Jateng, 23 December 2017). Unfortunately, some Chinese citizens and migrant workers were allegedly involved some serious criminal cases. During December 2016, for instance, there were at least two cases involving individual Chinese citizens and illegal workers. First, in Bogor City, West Java, the local police arrested around 31 people due to illegally planting "poisoned chilli." This has gained huge attention from the Indonesian people who accused the Chinese government of attempting to "infiltrate" Indonesia (The Jakarta Post, 17 December 2016). The second case occurred in end of December, where 11 Chinese citizens have been detained by the Indonesian national narcotics agency (BNN) in Cilacap, Central Java, due to drug trafficking and smuggling. In addition, all of these Chinese citizen workers could not show their legal immigration documents (Liputan 6, 29 December 2016).

The above cases depict that Chinese migrant workers have involved in various activities against Indonesian regulations and laws. Most of them have problems related to immigration documents. This led to the spread of Chinese illegal workers across the countries. Not only involved in immigration cases, the Chinese migrant workers also have blatantly threatened Indonesian people through drug trafficking cases. The Chinese illegal workers have also contributed to the increase of human trafficking issues. In Jakarta for instance, the Indonesian

immigration arrested 76 Chinese females which were employed illegally as prostitutes in some nightclubs within the city (Okezone, 3 January 2017). The local apparatus could not comprehensively take actions against them due to the power-sharing problems among government agencies. Each of the department tends to implement what have been assigned based on their own related regulations. It means that there has been a regulation gap which has made illegal migrant workers' issues unresolvable. From the perspective of policy-making process, the illegal migrant worker issues in Indonesia require a comprehensive and holistic monitoring as well as a good synergy among government departments.

From the perspective of local labour, the influx of Chinese migrant workers has been perceived as a threat against the locals. This is because the arrival of migrant workers, specifically from China, contradicts with the actual situation in Indonesia, which basically has a serious problem in unemployment rate. The Statistics Indonesia reported that up until August 2017, approximately 7 million people in Indonesia were unemployed. Although the number decreased compared to the previous year, this was still a problem (BPS, August 2017). The details are shown in the following figure.

Figure 1. The Indonesian Unemployment Rate



Source: BPS (August 2017).

Meanwhile, according to the Indonesian Employers Association (APINDO, *Asosiasi Pengusaha Indonesia*), for instance, the unemployment rate in Indonesia declined to 5.61% in 2016 compared to the 7.48% in 2011, where the total labour source was about 125.44 million. In contrast, the number of foreign workers significantly increased to 74,183 workers and most of them were Chinese. Roughly 71,776 foreign workers per year come to Indonesia in various sectors from 2011-2016 (*Asosiasi Pengusaha Indonesia*, 2017). At the end of 2017, the number of migrant workers especially from China, extremely mounted up to 27, 211 workers compared to the previous years. These migrant workers have been deployed in all sectors and have occupied all positions from the highest till the lowest levels which basically can be filled by local labours (*Republika*, 28 November 2017).

One of the experts from Indonesian Institute of Science argues as follows:

“The influx of migrant workers is a consequence of the increase in foreign investment in Indonesia. Indonesia as an open economic system have welcome to foreign investors to engage in the domestic economy through foreign direct investment. The arrival of foreign capital creates more job opportunities whether for locals or foreigners. On the one hand, the existence of migrant workers as opportunities for the transfer of knowledge and technology. However, on the other hand, without strict regulations led to the increase of migration violations such as illegal foreign labour” (*Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia*, 13 July 2017).

Conversely, the Investment Coordinating Board of the Republic of Indonesia (BKPM, *Badan Koordinasi Penanaman Modal*) pointed out that the existence of migrant workers is important. This is because Indonesia had already received huge foreign direct investment along with a number of mega-projects, such as railways, ports, airports, highways, and others. These projects demand more migrant workers if Indonesia wants to move forward to be a developed nation. In fact, as mentioned by the head of BKPM, some developed countries have had more migrant workers

compared to local workers. For instance, Qatar (94%), United Arab Emirates (96%), Singapore (36%), USA (16%), Malaysia (15.3%), and Thailand (4.5%). Meanwhile, the number of migrant workers in Indonesia reached to 74,000 or only 0.062% of the 120 million Indonesian labour force (Kontan, 29 December 2016). The Indonesian government realised that this is as a consequence of globalization which made transnational movements including migrant workers be unavoidable. Yet, according to the Indonesian President Joko Widodo:

“... at the same time, in line with foreign direct investment, we can also receive migrant workers with a specific qualification required during investment projects” (Kompas.com, 6 March 2018).

The Indonesian government policy is likely “pro-migrant workers” since the statement tends to allow these migrant workers to come to Indonesia. The government also hopes that the influx of migrant workers should be welcomed and the process should be made easier. Although this is a part of foreign direct investment, it was dilemmatic amidst the high number of unemployment rate in Indonesia. The speaker of Indonesian People’s Consultative Assembly strongly condemned that the inflow of migrant workers will damage local workers. He insisted in response to the migrant workers in West Java in the following:

“Amidst the high unemployment rate in West Java, we employ migrant workers. This is anti-Pancasila attitudes [...] local leaders must ensure that the companies in their areas employ local labours. Once again this is the mandate of Pancasila” (Republika, 27 April 2017).

At the same time, one of the staffs at the Ministry of Villages, Underdeveloped Regions, and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia also expressed his disappointment on the government policy on Chinese migrant workers. He directly witnessed the existence of Chinese migrant workers in some projects. He argued:

“In my views, this kind of government policy related to Chinese migrant workers is obviously not wise. Actually, our local labours have the skills as migrant workers. I have observed especially in



the rural area in Eastern Indonesia, for instance, in East Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, Merauke (Papua) there have been Chinese migrant workers. I saw at the airport, I knew them. I guessed, they will be employed in plantation and mining industries owned by big corporation" (Interview B).

Furthermore, he added that the influx of Chinese migrant workers has silently been disguised. As a result, many local workers and communities were not aware of the existence of these Chinese migrant workers. Probably, the recruitment of migrant workers from China was due to technical issues such as detailed in the following statement:

"I think, the intake of Chinese migrant workers was due to the employers did not want to have so much problem with the local. Such as often to hold protest, complaints, and hunger strike actions. For me, using migrant workers will make management easier to manage workers with certain conditions. At the same time, in the rural area, basically, local workers and community were not aware on Chinese workers. This is because their existence in the local areas is likely being disguised for security reason. They also did not have any communication at all with the local community due to they have been housed in a very secretive area" (Interview B).

Meanwhile, the response from Indonesian migrant workers especially in Malaysia varies. An Indonesian migrant worker based in Penang, Malaysia argued that:

"I think this a common issue wherever Chinese investment areas were located, they usually brought the money as well as workers originally from there like in the Second Penang Bridge Project. But, after that they disappeared and returned to China. This needs strong supervision and control from the government. If, once the project finished they still stay in Indonesia, it is a problem. And the nature of our government supervision is so weak. I hope, Indonesia will not become like other countries which is finally "occupied" by China" [...] There is no relationship with Indonesian migrant workers abroad, this is the consequences of Chinese investment in Indonesia" (Interview C).

In contrast, an Indonesian migrant worker based in Kedah, Malaysia admitted that this is a controversial policy of the Indonesian government. He condemned the Indonesian government by saying that:

“When I confirmed it to the Indonesian consulate here, they said this is fake news. Whatever the reality is, for me and friends who are unfamiliar with politics, this is a strange policy. At the time when Indonesians need more jobs, and choose to go abroad, Chinese migrant workers came in. I totally disagree. But, we cannot do anything” (Interview D).

At the local level, a former Indonesian local worker in a factory in Morowali Regency, Central Sulawesi, witnessed that the arrival of Chinese migrant workers is a serious threat against local labour. This is because once Chinese migrant workers arrived; local workers lose their job due to unilateral dismissal by the companies. He stated the following:

“I was a former supervisor at that factory. At the beginning, they (Chinese workers) asked me to teach them about the duties and tasks. But once they understood about the duties and tasks, suddenly the company dropped me from my position and I lose my job. Replaced by them” (TVOneNews, 2018, May 2).

In the meantime, the security issues obviously became critical issues when some experts in Jakarta suspected that the Chinese migrant workers were former prisoners and military troops. This is because according to the Military Service Law of the People’s Republic of China (2011 Amendment), Article 12 mentioned the following:

“Each year, male citizens who have reached 18 years of age by December 31 should be enlisted for active service. Those who are not enlisted during the year shall remain eligible for active service until they are 22, and the age limit for enlistment of graduates from regular institutions of higher learning may be relaxed to 24” (Military Service Law, 2011).

The former Minister of Justice and former Minister of Secretary of State, Republic of Indonesia, Yusril Ihza Mahendra said:



“This is a serious violence against Indonesian constitution. [...] this is a demand issues. Other countries need Indonesian workers, whereas Indonesia did not need migrant workers (from China). [...] We must remember, China has employed a military service. It means, those who came here were soldiers, or at least, former soldiers. [...] We must perceive this problem not as business as usual and from narrow perspective such as investment, workforce, and economic growth per se, but must be comprehensively, namely national sovereignty and the unity of the nation” (TVOneNews, 2018, May 2).

At this point, this section demonstrates that the influx of migrant workers especially from China has threatened Indonesian local workers. Migrant workers have seized job opportunities of the local workers. This also raises the questions about the extent to the nationalism of the Indonesian leaders. Along with all the consequences from the arrival of migrant workers such as human trafficking as well as drug trafficking and smuggling, the existence of migrant workers has led to some problems. In terms of regulations, it is also not well prepared by the Indonesian government. In the long term, the migrant workers in Indonesia may potentially become a new threat to Indonesian sovereignty (Tirto, 2 August 2016).

E. Conclusion

This paper concludes that the influx of Chinese migrant workers has been perceived as a threat on Indonesian local workers. This arguably became a controversy and debatable not only among those who are concerned on labour issues, but also for all of the national elements. This is due to the Chinese citizens and migrant workers in Indonesia have been involved in so many issues, such as crimes and violence against the Indonesian laws. As mentioned above, they have committed felony against immigration issues, being illegal workers, involved in drug smuggling and human trafficking, especially prostitution. Furthermore, they have been deployed in some “Indonesia-China” projects, which basically can be filled by local workers. In contrast, Indonesian local

labours faced a serious problem especially with the limited job opportunity and the high number of unemployment. This is an abuse against Indonesian people's political legitimating due to it contradicts with the political campaign of the current Indonesian leader, which promises to provide more job vacancy and to decrease unemployment rate. At the same time, local leaders could not take a serious action due to these issues are arguably under the central government's supervision. The G-to-G agreement made local administration difficult to resolve the Chinese migrant workers. Unfortunately, in the lowest level there were mismanagement and dis-coordination pertaining migrant workers issues. Lack of coordination among departments was the main issue in the local administration. Finally, from the security perspective, the presence of Chinese migrant workers has been seen as a threat against national security and sovereignty following their involvements on some issues, such as drug trafficking, human trafficking (prostitution), and illegally planting poisoned chilli.

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Interview

Interview A. Interview with anonymous, a lecturer from Universitas Pasundan, Bandung, 24 April 2018.

Interview B. Interview with anonymous, staff from the Inspectorate Division, Ministry of Villages, Under Developed Regions, and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia, Jakarta, 18 March 2018.

Interview C. Interview with Mr. Khozaeni, an Indonesian migrant worker based in Penang, Malaysia, 4 April 2018.

Interview C. interview with Mr. Muhammad, an Indonesian migrant worker based in Kedah, Malaysia, 4 April 2018.



