

NEGOTIATING POWER AND COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY STRATEGIES AMONG JAKARTA'S HOME-BASED WORKERS IN A PUTTING-OUT SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the collective advocacy strategies of the Jakarta Home-Based Workers Network (JPRJ) in addressing structural inequalities affecting women home-based workers under the putting-out system. Although collective organizing can generate counter-power at the community level—manifested as power within, power with, and power to—the movement continues to face structural barriers. These obstacles emerge from state strategies that dilute labor demands through tokenistic participation and by reframing home-based workers as micro-entrepreneurs rather than as legal subjects entitled to labor rights. Using John Gaventa's Power Cube and Jo Rowlands's empowerment framework, the study analyzes how hidden and invisible power sustain exploitative labor relations. Through a qualitative case study in North Jakarta, the findings show that JPRJ cultivates critical consciousness, strategic alliances, and actions that strengthen collective advocacy. These efforts include a judicial review of the Manpower Act and the creation of alternative community spaces such as the Pos UKK and worker cooperatives. The study concludes that the success of home-based worker advocacy at the macro level depends on collective solidarity and on dismantling state-led identity reframing that obscures workers' legal status. Policy recommendations include ratifying ILO Convention No.177, establishing national regulations recognizing home-based workers, and integrating their data into official labor statistics.

INTRODUCTION

Pekerja rumahan (home-based worker) refers to a labor group that works from the domestic space to produce goods or services for the market, typically without formal contracts or legal recognition. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 1996), a home-based worker is an individual who works at home or a location of their choosing at the employer's request, with or without the provision of materials and equipment. In Indonesia, home-based workers play a significant role in supply chains for industries such as garments, handicrafts, and footwear, and the majority are women from low-income households (Tamyis & Warda, 2019). The choice to work from home is often



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not a true preference, but rather a result of limited access to formal employment and the burden of domestic responsibilities (Delaney et al., 2019).

However, the position of home-based workers in national labor law and policy remains highly marginal. To date, there is no legal framework explicitly recognizing them as subjects of labor protection. They work without written contracts, have no social security, and are not recorded in official labor statistics (Putri, 2019; Sofiani, 2010). This lack of data has consequences: it limits their access to social assistance, labor inspections, and data-driven government programs. In practice, home-based workers often receive substandard wages and must bear production costs themselves (such as electricity and materials) that should be the employer's responsibility (Otang, 2018).

The putting-out system has become the predominant labor arrangement for home-based workers. In this system, companies or intermediaries outsource production processes to workers' homes by distributing materials and instructions, then collect the finished goods without any obligation to provide work facilities or ensure labor rights (ILO, 2015). Under this arrangement, workers' bargaining position is very weak because the work relationship operates with no transparency, no negotiation, and no grievance mechanism. Field findings show that most workers labor over 10 hours a day and are paid per piece at rates unilaterally determined by the employer. They work in unsafe conditions with respect to occupational health and safety (known in Indonesia as K3 – Kesehatan dan Keselamatan Kerja). In fact, the involvement of children and the elderly in production is common as families attempt to meet quotas (Dewi & Nugroho, 2020; TURC, 2022).

Facing this structural marginalization, a collective resistance initiative emerged from the community through the Jakarta Home-Based Workers Network (Jaringan Pekerja Rumahan Jakarta, JPRJ). Together with supporting civil society organizations such as the Trade Union Rights Centre (TURC), JPRJ has built a multi-layered advocacy strategy that represents an evolution in Indonesia's social movements.

The rise of JPRJ as a community-based organization is not coincidental, but rather reflects the broader landscape of Indonesia's labor movement. After the 1998 Reformasi, the labor movement in Indonesia became highly fragmented and has often failed to form a unified political force (Amin, 2011). The legacy of state corporatism under the New Order era which centralized unions under a single federation (SPSI) fostered depoliticization and distrust toward formal union structures (Silaban, 2009). Existing formal unions have struggled to reach and organize workers in the informal sector, whose legal status is unrecognized (Rochadi, 2016). In this void, JPRJ can be understood as a new social movement that uses community-based organizing and bottom-up empowerment strategies, since traditional labor advocacy channels have proven ineffective for them (Habibi, 2013).

Academically, studies on home-based workers in Indonesia have generally focused on aspects of working conditions, legal status, or bargaining power in a piecemeal way. Research such as Solechan (2018) and Dewi and Nugroho (2020) have not deeply examined how power is exchanged, negotiated, or maintained in the process of policy advocacy led by the worker communities themselves. This is the literature gap that this article seeks to fill: through analysis of JPRJ's collective strategy and the power contestations involved, the article offers new insights into how community resistance and advocacy operate within a framework of unequal power relations.

The original contribution of this research lies in the analytical synthesis of three critical dimensions that have so far been fragmented in the literature: the exploitative putting-out work system, JPRJ's collective resistance strategies, and power as an arena of



negotiation over basic workers' rights. By integrating Gaventa's Power Cube framework and Rowlands's empowerment concepts in depth, this study not only identifies oppressive forms of power, but also reveals the mechanisms by which home-based workers, through collective agency, challenge and shift unequal power relations. This provides a more comprehensive understanding of the structural challenges and opens pathways for designing more transformative, community-based policy interventions.

This article aims to analyze power contestation in the collective advocacy strategies of home-based workers in Jakarta, using the case of JPRJ. By applying John Gaventa's Power Cube approach and Jo Rowlands's empowerment theory, the article maps the forms, spaces, and levels of power that interact in the advocacy process, and how collective strength is built from the grassroots by an excluded community. Through this approach, the article is expected not only to enrich academic literature on community-based advocacy and informal labor, but also to provide conceptual and empirical foundations for formulating more just and contextual labor protection policies.

METHOD

This research aims to analyze power contestation in the collective advocacy strategy of home-based workers in Jakarta, using the case study of the Jakarta Home-Based Workers Network (JPRJ). To achieve this goal, the study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study strategy, designed to deeply understand a social issue through rich, word-based data obtained in a natural setting (Creswell, 1994). This approach was chosen to gain in-depth insight into complex power contestations in the specific context of home-based workers, and how power is used, negotiated, and contested in their advocacy.

The research was conducted in Penjaringan Subdistrict, North Jakarta, Indonesia. This location was selected due to its stark socio-economic inequality between luxury residences and slums, its high concentration of home-based workers in various trades (including shoe-gluing piecework), and the presence of the JPRJ secretariat which facilitated direct access to primary data. Research informants were selected via purposive sampling, i.e. choosing informants based on specific criteria relevant to the research questions (Bryman, 2012). The study involved 15 key informants, consisting of women home-based workers who are JPRJ members, community organizers, facilitators from a civil society organization (the Trade Union Rights Centre, TURC), and government officials from the Ministry of Manpower dealing with informal labor issues.

Data collection techniques included literature and document studies, participant observation, and in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured and unstructured manner with all informants. Participant observation was used to understand the social situation and work processes of home-based workers in the field. Literature review and document analysis (including campaign materials, draft regulations, and judicial review documents) provided secondary data to triangulate and enrich the primary data. Data analysis followed Miles's interactive model (Miles & Huberman, 1994), encompassing data collection, data reduction (filtering out information not aligned with the theoretical framework or Gaventa's power concepts), data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation, as well as member checking of interpreted results with key informants to ensure accuracy and credibility of the findings.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Putting-Out System in Practice and Its Impact on Home-Based Workers

The putting-out system is a common work pattern in the informal sector, involving outsourcing production tasks to home-based workers whereby a company or intermediary provides materials and production targets to be completed at home. This arrangement is characterized by extremely long and pseudo-flexible working hours: to meet daily output targets, home-based workers often work up to 18 hours per day (approximately 126 hours per week), far exceeding the legal limit of 40 hours per week. Wages are paid on a piece-rate basis at very low rates (for example, only a few hundred rupiah per piece), so their monthly earnings are minimal often around Rp1 million per month, which is far below the Provincial Minimum Wage in Jakarta. Besides low pay and excessive hours, there is no written contract governing this working relationship. As a result, home-based workers are not recognized as formal employees and have virtually no legal protection: they are not guaranteed a minimum wage, receive no rights to leave or overtime pay, and are not enrolled in employment or health social security by the employer. The continuation of their work depends entirely on orders from the employer; when orders stop (as happened during the pandemic), they lose their source of income with no safety net whatsoever, reflecting the extreme insecurity and lack of safeguards in this work.

Furthermore, a clear gender dimension underpins these conditions. The majority of home-based workers are women who bear a double burden: in addition to performing production work to meet industrial targets, they remain fully responsible for domestic household work (childcare, cooking, cleaning, etc.). These two spheres of work occur simultaneously every day, leaving them virtually no time to rest or socialize. Often family members, especially husbands and children, are drawn in to help with the production process at home in order to chase daily quotas or urgent orders. This family involvement turns the household into a single informal production unit: on one hand it helps to shoulder the heavy workload, but on the other it shows that the work pressure is indirectly borne by the entire family.

From a power analysis perspective, the working conditions of home-based workers in the putting-out scheme are influenced and sustained by hidden power and invisible power, as per the Power Cube framework. Hidden power is evident in how the positions and interests of home-based workers are sidelined in decision-making and formal policy formulation: at both the company and state levels, their voices are barely heard. They are excluded from wage negotiations and setting of work terms, and their issues rarely surface in public agendas or labor regulations. This allows exploitative practices toward home-based workers to escape attention and correction, remaining “hidden” behind the industry’s supply chain. Meanwhile, invisible power operates through deeply ingrained socio-cultural norms and values, particularly regarding women’s roles. Patriarchal views widely accepted in society regard women’s home-based work as merely a “side activity” to help the family income, rather than a primary job worthy of rights and decent conditions. This norm internalizes limitations in the workers’ own minds: many accept low pay and poor conditions as a natural consequence of working from home, or feel they have no power to demand more because they are seen as “not the main breadwinner.” These two forms of power hidden and invisible reinforce each other, keeping home-based workers in a marginal position with very weak bargaining power. This power constellation explains why it remains so difficult for them to improve their lot: their structural vulnerability is maintained by exclusion from formal protection (hidden power) and by mental-cultural constraints that make them hesitant or afraid to claim their rights (invisible power).



Table 1. Forms and Manifestations of Power in the Putting-Out System

Type of Power (Gaventa)	Manifestation in Practice	Effect on Home-Based Workers
Visible Power	Employers and state agencies control rules (e.g., wage setting, labor law excluding home-based workers)	Workers lack bargaining power; excluded from formal negotiations
Hidden Power	Industry supply chains obscure employer responsibility; government agendas exclude informal workers	Exploitative work relations remain unseen; limited access to decision-making
Invisible Power	Patriarchal norms make women see home work as “family help,” not real labor	Internalized powerlessness; weak motivation to claim labor rights

Thus, the putting-out system in Jakarta presents a paradox of urban economic development: industry gains a cheap and flexible workforce, while women home-based workers endure exploitative working conditions with no security, no protection, and no voice.

Collective Advocacy Strategy of the Jakarta Home-Based Workers Network (JPRJ) and Partner Organizations

Our findings show that JPRJ, together with supporting partners like TURC, adopted an integrated multi-level collective advocacy strategy. This strategy aligns with John Gaventa’s “Power Cube” framework and Jo Rowlands’s empowerment concept, encompassing community empowerment from within (power within), building collective alliances (power with), and advocacy in the formal power arena (visible power). At the grassroots level, JPRJ has focused on organizing the community of home-based workers to build critical awareness and self-confidence as workers. JPRJ successfully coordinated hundreds of home-based workers in Jakarta; by the end of 2022, a total of 375 home-based workers all women and predominantly housewives had joined and become organized in this network. Through regular meetings, mentoring, and education on labor rights, the women home-based workers began to foster “power within,” manifested as increased personal capacity and awareness of their collective rights. This is crucial given that previously they tended to be isolated and unaware of their bargaining position as workers especially since their status is not recognized in the formal employment system. Because home-based workers are not acknowledged by regulations, they have long been denied basic rights such as occupational safety and health guarantees and fair wages. Through community organizing, JPRJ cultivated solidarity and a collective identity among home-



based workers, so they no longer see themselves merely as “part-time housewives,” but as part of a group of workers with rights and interests to fight for. Empowerment at the personal and community level is in line with Rowlands’s concept of power within, whereby individuals gain internal strength to act as their awareness of rights and abilities increases.

Table 2. JPRJ’s Multi-Level Advocacy Strategy

Level of Power	Strategy Type	Key Actions	Theoretical Link
Power Within	Awareness building	Rights education, regular meetings, mentoring for women workers	Jo Rowlands’ empowerment: developing self-confidence and critical awareness
Power With	Collective alliance	Collaboration with TURC, HomeNet Indonesia, and local leaders; creation of cooperative	Collective solidarity (Rowlands & Gaventa)
Power To	Action capacity	Filing judicial review, creating Pos UKK, lobbying government	“Power to act” transforming awareness into policy action
Power Over (challenged)	Structural advocacy	Legal challenge to Manpower Act, pushing for policy recognition	Contesting visible and hidden power

In addition to internal community empowerment, JPRJ developed alliances and collaborative work with various stakeholders as an embodiment of power with. The network built strategic partnerships with labor NGOs, informal worker networks, and local community figures. TURC’s involvement as a supporting organization is a concrete example of this “power with.” TURC provided legal support, research, and advocacy facilitation for instance, assisting JPRJ representatives (under the Indonesian Home-Based Workers Network, JPRI) in filing a judicial review of the Manpower Act to the Constitutional Court. Such alliances strengthened the bargaining position of home-based workers by combining resources and expertise: local community knowledge was paired with the professional advocacy capacity of an NGO. JPRJ is also connected to national networks like HomeNet Indonesia (JPRI), thereby linking Jakarta’s home-based worker issues to a broader movement. This cross-organizational collaboration exemplifies power with by adding legitimacy and collective strength to the movement. With support from various parties,



home-based workers gained greater access to forums and dialogues with government and related agencies spaces that would have been difficult to reach if they were acting alone. In Gaventa's Power Cube perspective, this effort can be seen as an expansion of "invited spaces" (pushing to include informal workers' voices in formal public dialogue) as well as the creation of "claimed spaces" (alternative forums shaped by the community itself).

Through the collective power that was built, JPRJ and its partners also engaged in formal advocacy to challenge visible power structures. One of their key strategic steps was filing a judicial review of Indonesia's Law No. 13/2003 on Manpower. This legal action aimed to have the rights of home-based workers recognized in the legal framework for example, to include them as recipients of employment social security (BPJS Ketenagakerjaan) subsidized by the government. The judicial review challenged the narrow definitions of "worker" and "employer" in that law, which result in home-based work relationships not being legally recognized. During the Constitutional Court proceedings in 2022, home-based worker representatives from JPRJ, accompanied by the TURC legal team, voiced the marginal conditions experienced by home-based workers due to this regulatory gap. The outcome was that the Constitutional Court rejected the judicial review petition in January 2023. Although this legal action formally failed, it had a positive side effect in increasing policymakers' attention to the issue. In its decision, the Court acknowledged that home-based workers have distinctive characteristics and urged the government to promptly issue specific regulations to protect them. The Court even emphasized the need for both central and regional governments to take strategic steps such as regional regulations to guarantee the protection and welfare of home-based workers. Thus, this legal advocacy succeeded in opening discourse in the visible power arena that had previously been tightly closed to home-based workers. In Gaventa's terminology, the struggle in the legal sphere attempted to enter a "closed space" in the state power structure, namely the legislative and regulatory realm that typically gives no room to informal sector voices. Although the court's ruling did not grant the workers' demands, at the level of political discourse it provided a legitimate footing that the state is obliged to recognize the existence and rights of this group.

In tandem with these formal efforts, non-formal and local advocacy was intensified as a complementary strategy. After the defeat of the judicial review, JPRJ immediately shifted focus back to strengthening its grassroots base and engaging in dialogue with local stakeholders. Muhayati, the Chair of JPRJ Jakarta, asserted that the struggle did not stop despite the legal case being rejected; she and her colleagues became even more active in organizing at the neighborhood (RT/RW) level. This move illustrates a strategic adaptation: after attempting the national legal route, they refocused on the grassroots to build a more solid community power. Through forums at the urban ward (kelurahan) level, JPRJ involved local officials (neighborhood and community leaders) as mediators so that home-based workers could access public services that had previously been neglected. One important innovation was the establishment of a Pos UKK (Pos Upaya Kesehatan Kerja, or Occupational Health Post) specifically for home-based workers in the community. JPRJ reached an agreement with the local community health center (Puskesmas, e.g. the Penjaringan Puskesmas in North Jakarta) to hold regular occupational health service forums for home-based workers. Through this Pos UKK, home-based workers receive occupational safety and health (K3) outreach and regular health check-ups in their own community. Such non-formal advocacy effectively opened new "spaces for voice" at the community level, where the state (through the Puskesmas) comes directly to serve an informal worker group. This is an example of an invited space initiated from below: JPRJ



used the community's collective power to invite the state into their arena, instead of waiting for formal recognition from above.

Table 3. Power Spaces in Advocacy (Based on Gaventa's Power Cube)

Type of Space	Example from JPRJ	Outcome / Challenge
Closed Spaces	Legal system and state policy (Judicial review of Law No.13/2003)	Petition rejected; issue gained national attention
Invited Spaces	Dialogue with Manpower Office, health center partnership (Pos UKK)	Opened limited participation for informal workers
Claimed (Created) Spaces	Community meetings, cooperative, health posts	Grassroots empowerment and service access from below

Beyond health forums, JPRJ has promoted community economic initiatives as part of its empowerment advocacy. One outcome has been the formation of a home-based workers' community cooperative. Since August 2020, JPRJ established a savings-and-loan cooperative and a basic commodities (sembako) cooperative managed by its members. The sembako cooperative provides staple goods at affordable prices for home-based workers, helping to ease their economic burden and break dependence on moneylenders or high-interest loans. Through the cooperative, home-based workers practice power with in the form of economic mutual aid: pooling resources together for collective benefit. This initiative also indirectly strengthens their bargaining position; as the community's economy becomes more self-reliant, workers feel more confident voicing their rights because a support network exists. In addition, JPRJ continues to hold community dialogue forums such as regular discussions among home-based workers and meetings with village officials. These forums function as claimed spaces spaces claimed by citizens themselves to discuss their problems and seek solutions together, which can then be conveyed to the authorities. For example, JPRJ plans to lobby company owners or employers directly to be more attentive to the workers' conditions. The demands raised are not only about wages, but also fulfillment of basic needs such as providing protective equipment (e.g. masks for workers handling glue) and in-kind support like staple food packages during holidays. This informal lobbying of employers shows that JPRJ's advocacy includes a relational dimension: it is not purely confrontational, but also seeks to change key actors' behavior through dialogue and negotiation. This strategy aligns with the concept of "power to" (or broadly, a form of power with), whereby the community's collective capacity is used to influence others for better working conditions. With community forums, the Pos UKK, and the cooperative in place, advocacy is proceeding holistically combining empowerment agendas with the fulfillment of rights outside formal bureaucratic channels. This underscores Muhayati's view that the struggle "from the grassroots to the top must continue simultaneously," meaning local empowerment efforts are not separate from structural advocacy endeavors, but rather mutually reinforcing.

Structural barriers remain the primary challenge in this home-based worker advocacy. Institutionally, home-based workers' status is still largely "invisible" in the legal



and policy framework an embodiment of invisible power that hampers their access to formal power spaces. To this day, Indonesia's labor laws do not recognize the employment relationship of home-based workers. The term "pekerja rumahan" (home-based worker) does not even appear in the Manpower Act, so their rights are not protected de jure. This lack of recognition creates multiple obstacles: home-based workers are difficult to include in formal employment social security schemes, are not represented in official tripartite dialogues, and are vulnerable to exploitation with no formal complaint mechanism. From Gaventa's perspective, this is an example of a "closed space" where decisions about worker protection are made without involving or considering informal workers. JPRJ's effort to enter that space via the judicial review provided a lesson that the state's visible power (through laws and legal apparatus) is immense and not easily penetrated with a single intervention. The Court's rejection of the petition indicates the persistence of strong structural barriers in the legal system. On the other hand, the Court's urging of the government to regulate home-based workers suggests that a door to change has started to open, although implementation depends on the government's political will.

Aside from formal-legal obstacles, there are hidden (structural) and cultural (invisible) challenges that home-based workers face. Hidden power in this context lies in the power relations along the industry supply chain, which place home-based workers in a subordinate position: they are bound by a putting-out pattern in which employers/entrepreneurs can evade responsibility for worker rights. Home-based workers often do not know the brand owner or final company to which their products go, making it difficult to direct demands at the responsible business actors. This hidden power is apparent in one-sided wage and working condition negotiations; for example, piece rates are set extremely low (often below the minimum wage) and production costs (electricity, tools) are passed on to the workers. When workers attempt to demand improvements, the looming threat of unilateral termination of their work is ever-present. Meanwhile, on the invisible power front, patriarchal social norms and the stigma of informal work also create barriers. The majority of home-based workers are women who are seen as "just housewives," and their voices are often undervalued both in their families and in society. The low social appreciation for home-based work meant that their problems went long unacknowledged. Even the workers themselves, before undergoing consciousness-raising, tended to feel they had no right to make demands because they had internalized the notion that their work was "not formal." This situation fits Jo Rowlands's concept that disempowerment can occur through invisible power in the form of beliefs, culture, and attitudes that position women workers as inferior. Therefore, JPRJ's empowerment strategy to awaken power within is crucial for overcoming these unseen barriers.

Overall, the findings of this study underline that JPRJ's advocacy strategy is comprehensive and multi-layered, combining internal empowerment, collective solidarity, and structural pressure. This approach aligns with Rowlands's framework of four forms of power: JPRJ develops power within (inner strength of the community) through education and organizing, power with (collective strength) through alliances and community cooperatives, and power to (power to act) by leveraging empowerment gains for concrete advocacy actions. They also challenge oppressive power over the structural power held by the state and industry through a combination of policy lobbying and collective action. In Power Cube terms, JPRJ has sought to open new spaces for home-based workers both locally and nationally from creating community forums (claimed spaces) to trying to influence policy in the state arena (invited and closed spaces). The results are starting to show: the issue of home-based workers is now receiving more serious attention from



policymakers, and at the community level there are empowerment models that directly improve welfare (such as the Pos UKK and the cooperative). Although macro policy changes are slow, the collective strength that has been built serves as valuable social capital. JPRJ has demonstrated that with a multi-strata advocacy strategy combining grassroots capacity-building, strategic alliances, and advocacy inside and outside the formal system a marginalized informal worker group can more effectively fight for their rights, while also weathering the structural challenges that exist.

Contestation of Power Relations among Home-Based Workers, JPRJ, Employers, and the State.

The advocacy process for home-based workers reveals a complex contestation of power among four main actors:

Table 4. Power Contestation among Key Actors

Actor	Power Resource	Role/Behavior	Impact on Advocacy
Home-Based Workers	Labor/time	Weak individually, rely on JPRJ for representation	Begin forming collective identity and confidence
JPRJ (Network)	Collective organization, alliances	Bridges workers, NGOs, and state	Expands advocacy spaces and visibility
Employers	Capital and control of production	Dominate wage setting and supply chains	Maintain hidden structural power
State	Policy and law-making authority	Ambivalent; partial recognition via training programs	Maintains structural exclusion; selective inclusion

Home-based workers, JPRJ, employers, and the state. In general, it was found that power is not distributed evenly; employers and the state wield visible power in the form of control over rules and resources, whereas home-based workers are relatively weakly positioned. In the putting-out scheme, for example, employers dominate access to raw materials and set wage levels, reflecting a structural hegemony that is difficult to resist. JPRJ, as an advocacy network, attempts to counterbalance this imbalance by bringing home-based worker issues into public forums and policy discussions. In practice, JPRJ acts as a communication bridge organizing hearings, media campaigns, and dialogues with the government to put collective demands of the workers on the policy agenda. Field findings indicate that through these efforts, some hidden power can be activated in the workers' favor; for instance, JPRJ succeeded in inserting the issue of home-based workers' social security into discussions with the local Manpower Office, an issue that was initially closed off. However, because formal policy structures still exclude home-based workers from labor law protection, such agenda gains are often only symbolic. This illustrates hidden power in the form of agenda-setting and defining of issues: for example, the central



government has been reluctant to acknowledge home-based workers in standard labor regulations, so the issue rarely appears in formal discussions. This condition shows how established discourse and policy systematically favor the more powerful economic actors, while the needs of home-based workers remain sidelined.

Moreover, the contestation of invisible power also shapes each actor's behavior and expectations in advocacy. The influence of invisible power can be seen in entrenched cultural norms and beliefs for example, the common assumption that home-based work is "just family help" rather than professional employment, so efforts to claim rights are often viewed as taboo or naive by some. The internal belief of many home-based workers that their current conditions are simply "fate" further diminishes the courage to seek change, even when those conditions are exploitative. JPRJ faces the challenge of changing this perception, which is why much of its early advocacy focused on raising collective awareness (conscientization). For instance, JPRJ's mentoring that educates workers about the right to fair wages and safe work shows that through the empowerment process, some workers slowly begin to believe that change is possible. However, the legacy of social and economic structures still strongly influences the legitimacy of their demands; on the employers' side, for example, their response to advocacy often exploits these traditional assumptions by arguing that policy changes would actually harm the local economy an argument reflecting invisible power in shaping public discourse.

The roles of each actor clarify their interests and power strategies. Home-based workers are in a subordinate position; they rely on JPRJ to amplify their voice. The findings show that workers often persevere under the pressures of production quotas and low wages, but physical separation and lack of information make it hard for them to self-organize. In some cases, subtle forms of resistance emerge, such as delaying work tasks or demanding wage recalculations signals that they are not entirely submissive. JPRJ serves as the collective actor that channels these aspirations. Interview data highlight, for example, that JPRJ initiated regular meetings with local government representatives and business associations, striving to "claim" participatory space that did not exist before. In invited spaces like multi-stakeholder forums, JPRJ operates carefully: pushing for worker welfare issues to be openly discussed, but often compromising within the limits set by officials. Similarly, in closed spaces of national policymaking, JPRJ's presence is very limited; negotiations occur through informal persuasive means, indicating a gradual shift in hidden power.

Meanwhile, employers hold dominant economic power in the putting-out arrangement. They use their leverage to dictate production levels and wages without consulting workers. The research indicates that employers often coordinate with local governments to create a business climate "friendly" to cottage industries unfortunately, at the risk of sacrificing worker rights. For example, there is a tendency for them to lobby against strict enforcement of labor standards in informal work. However, not all interactions between employers and JPRJ are marked by open conflict. There are also pragmatic alliances, especially when JPRJ offers training or product certification to employers, leading some business owners to see partnership as an opportunity to improve product quality and social image. Such coalitions show that power can be negotiated through resource exchange: employers grant JPRJ a limited space (e.g. supporting joint product exhibitions), while JPRJ tempers demands for more radical structural changes.

The state, as an actor, holds a special position. Formally, national and regional governments possess the ultimate power to set policies that can strengthen or weaken social groups. In this context, the state's stance on home-based worker advocacy is



ambivalent. On one hand, there are some entrepreneurship training programs and policy dialogues that acknowledge JPRJ's existence (manifesting visible power via public policy); on the other hand, the state has yet to develop specific regulations to protect home-based workers (indicating a hidden power maintaining the status quo). The research found that government officials tend to view home-based worker issues as peripheral compared to macroeconomic priorities, so even official discussions often remain focused only on technical "empowerment." This creates tension: when JPRJ demands legal recognition or social security, the state's response is generally slow and conditional, implying that state power remains selectively controlled.

In this situation, collective advocacy practices and structural inequalities interact closely. The collective advocacy carried out by JPRJ and the home-based workers serves as an adhesive of their own power. Each time the workers gather to demand change (for example, in demonstrations or community meetings), they independently claim participatory space that they previously lacked. This collective organizing shows how some hidden power can be temporarily seized through mass solidarity. Nonetheless, the structural inequality of the putting-out system remains a primary impediment. This structure fragments workers' bargaining power by separating them physically and administratively from formal production processes, so collective efforts often have to grow from local community bases with JPRJ's assistance. Workers who are not yet fully organized remain vulnerable to being defeated by the invisible forces of the broader market.

Overall, our findings affirm that in home-based worker advocacy, power relations are the product of continuous negotiation among the four actors. No single party dominates completely; instead, there is constant struggle at various levels (closed, invited, and created spaces) reflecting ongoing change and resistance. Home-based workers and JPRJ have managed to expand their influence through collective advocacy strategies, yet much of the power contestation still favors employers and the state, who control resources and rules. The manifestations of visible, hidden, and invisible power identified in this study are interwoven with advocacy practices and the inequities of the putting-out structure. These findings imply that any progress in advocacy requires a simultaneous understanding of all three dimensions of power, so that advocacy efforts not only demand changes in visible policies but also challenge the hidden and invisible norms behind these informal work relationships.

CONCLUSION

The findings show that under the putting-out system, companies shift production burdens and risks onto women home-based workers without formal protection, using extremely low piece rates that force excessive working hours in poor conditions such as cramped spaces, inadequate ventilation, exposure to toxic glue, and the need to purchase their own tools. These practices weaken workers' bargaining positions and undermine their socio-economic rights, resulting in health risks, reduced rest time, and unstable income due to informal work arrangements. In response, JPRJ strengthens collective advocacy by developing power within, power with, and power to act, raising members' awareness of their right to decent work, and building cross-sector alliances with NGOs like TURC to support joint policy advocacy. This strategy opens access to public and closed decision-making spaces—including campaigns, media engagement, policy discussions, and a judicial review of the Manpower Act—while revealing power contestations in which the state remains passive in recognizing home-based workers' legal status and employers profit from maintaining informal, unregulated labor arrangements.



This study recommends that both national and local governments formally recognize home-based workers within labor regulations by revising Law No. 13/2003 so that they are included in social protection schemes and decent work standards, while also ensuring practical support such as access to microfinance, strengthened cooperatives, and safe work infrastructure in urban areas with high concentrations of informal labor. To promote more inclusive policymaking, organizations such as JPRJ should be involved in regulatory processes, for example through the establishment of Learning Forums that facilitate dialogue between workers, policymakers, and civil society, thereby connecting grassroots realities with policy formulation. In addition, civil society organizations and informal workers' unions must strengthen workers' collective capacity through rights education, community-based economic development, and public awareness campaigns. The approaches of power within, power with, and power to serve as essential elements for enhancing bargaining power and driving structural change for home-based workers.

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