

# Advocacy Strategies of Labour Unions in Demanding Workers' Rights during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Case of "Sejahtera Mandiri Jogja Bay Waterpark" Workers' Union (Spektram JBW)

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## Abstract

*This paper explores the strategies and advocacy steps taken by Serikat Pekerja Sejahtera Mandiri Jogja Bay Waterpark (Spektram JBW) during the COVID-19 pandemic causing 31 relieved of duty workers and 8 laid-off workers. This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. Through the analysis of advocacy theory from Sharma (2004) and contentious politics theory from Tarrow (2011), this paper shows that Spektram JBW's advocacy strategy follow five advocacy steps, namely identifying the root of the problem, formulating solutions, building political awareness, policy implementation, and evaluation. The five steps illustrate the process of contentious politics (movement process) with the formation of the union, and the unity of ordinary workers against the corporate elite. The advocacy resulted on two main demands were achieved but demand for worker status failed, and the process continued to the Industrial Relations Court (Pengadilan Hubungan Industrial, or PHI). The success of Spektram JBW is an example of success story providing a bright spot for other unions in Yogyakarta. The failure stems from the union culture in the area of DIY which lacks unions and the small scale of industry which makes it difficult to mobilise large numbers of workers.*

**Keywords:** *Industrial Relations Disputes, Advocacy, Spektram JBW, Labour.*

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## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on labour conditions in all countries around the world. In the early phase of the pandemic, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that approximately 25 million work activities stopped during the COVID-19 pandemic (ILO, 2020). This was due to the company's policy of laying off workers due to the company's bankrupt situation. In the context of Indonesia, a journal article written by Ngadi et al. (2020) shows that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in as many as 15.6 per cent of workers in Indonesia being laid off, and 13.8 per cent of them did not receive the right to severance pay. According to data from Economic Growth of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (D.I. Yogyakarta) Quarter IV, published by BPS Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (2021), D.I.

Yogyakarta during the pandemic experienced an economic contraction of 2.69 per cent compared to 2010. As a province that relies heavily on the tourism industry, the pandemic led to a dramatic drop in both domestic and foreign tourists. As a result, there were 11 business sectors that contracted, six of which were service sectors. The highest contraction was in transportation services at 20.21 per cent, followed by other service sectors that experienced a double-digit contraction, namely services for providing accommodation and eating and drinking (16.91 per cent), other services 15.74 per cent, and company services 14.89 per cent (BPS Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 2021). In this province too, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the tourism industry.

In Sleman Regency, there are 1,084 unemployed workers with details of 499 people



experiencing termination of employment (PHK) and 585 workers being relieved of duty. This number is obtained from accumulated data with details of 202 people being relieved of duty and 383 people being laid off (Sintasari, 2021). The increase in layoff cases and cases of workers being relieved of duty has raised new problems related to labour conditions in several companies, including the non-fulfillment of workers' rights, including severance pay for laid-off workers and delays in providing health insurance for laid-off workers.

This paper explores advocacy strategies for the prosecution of workers' rights, using the case of Serikat Pekerja Sejahtera Mandiri Jogja Bay Waterpark (hereinafter referred to as Spektram JBW) in conducting advocacy for the prosecution of the rights of workers relieved of duty and laid off by PT Taman

Jogja (hereinafter referred to as PT TWJ). PT TWJ itself is one of the tourism businesses under the ownership of the Yogyakarta Sultanate (Nugraha, 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, PT TWJ "relieved of duty" (meaning reducing numbers of working hours into half), approximately 200 workers and laid off eight workers. In the process, the relieved of duty process occurred in February 2021 while the eight people who were laid off occurred between April and June 2021. Of the hundreds of workers who were relieved of duty, plus the eight laid-off workers, there are different views that divide them into two groups of workers. The first group is the one that demands workers' rights while being relieved of duty, while the second group agrees and accepts all company decisions while relieved of duty workers. The first group belonged to a labour union called Spektram JBW with

39 members, consisting of 31 relieved of duty workers and 8 laid-off workers. The second group accepted the company's decision (approximately 150 workers) and did not join the union. This second group later formed their own union under the name SP Sahitya and affiliated with Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia (SPSI).

Spektrum JBW's demanded the company to provide severance pay to eight workers who were laid off, pay wages to thirty-one workers who were relieved of duty, and provide holiday allowances (THR) in 2020 and 2021, along with BPJS benefits that were also not paid by the company. Workers have been relieved of duty from April 2020 to mid-2022.

## Research Method

This paper tries to answer the questions, how has the advocacy strategy process carried out

by Spektrum JBW, and why is this strategy used by Spektrum JBW in an effort to demand the rights of workers who were relieved of duty and laid off during the pandemic by PT Taman Wisata Jogja? To answer these questions, this research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected using in-depth interviews and secondary data through media, documentation, and government publications.

The analysis technique used is the interactive model data analysis, proposed by Miles and Huberman (1984). In this interactive model of data analysis, there are three main components, namely: (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification.



## Theoretical Framework

This paper uses two main theories, namely, contentious politics theory by Tarrow (2011) and advocacy strategy theory by Sharma (2004). The contentious politics theory (Tarrow, 2011) is the theory used to analyse the industrial relations dispute between the PT TWJ workers' union Spektrum JBW and PT TWJ. The industrial relations dispute between the union and the company can be seen as a political agenda in the form of collective action that leads to a feud. According to Tarrow (2011), contentious politics occurs when ordinary people who are often allied with more influential groups of people who can bring about changes in public views, then allied to confront elites, authorities, and other opponents. The contentious politics theory aligns with the Spektrum JBW advocacy case by looking at the industrial relations dispute by

Spektrum JBW, which is a group of ordinary workers, trying to seek help from other influential parties to fight PT TWJ, as an elite in the form of a company that has more power over its workers.

The second theory analyses Spektrum JBW's political movement by viewing it as an advocacy strategy. Strategy in the advocacy process is a dynamic process because it involves various parties, ideas, and agendas that are constantly changing. To implement an advocacy strategy, Sharma (2004) highlights five important steps that need to be considered, namely identifying the root of the problem, formulating and selecting solutions, building awareness and political will, implementing policies, and conducting evaluations. The

five steps do not have to be implemented linearly and some stages can be done simultaneously.

## Disputes Chronology

The conflict between Spektram JBW and PT TWJ is documented in the Sleman Department of Labour Recommendation No. 565/0590 of 2022. The document states that the process began with the decision of PT TWJ management meeting on 15 April 2020 through a text message in the Jogja Bay Engineering WhatsApp group, which is a communication medium for information notification of the engineering division at PT TWJ. The message from the PT TWJ managerial in the engineering division was sent by P as the Maintenance and Utility Supervisor. The notification of PT TWJ's management decision contains the following statements:

- a. Some staff will be laid off and a picket system will be implemented,
- b. April salary is set to be paid 100% but gradually,
- c. As of 16 April 2020, all field maintenance/operational activities will be stopped (only a few departments will remain on duty),
- d. For May 2020 progress and payroll will be informed next,
- e. Memo will be issued soon.

The decision notification was not in the form of an official letter and only a decision from a text message on WhatsApp. Furthermore, an official letter from the company was issued with the title Internal Office Memo dated 15 April 2020 with number: 033/IOM/HRD-TWJ/IV/2020 issued by HRD, which stated:



- a. The closure of Jogja Bay Waterpark to the public will be extended by looking at the situation and conditions related to handling and overcoming the Corona/ COVID-19 outbreak;
- b. With the non-operation of Jogja Bay Waterpark, we regret to inform you that workers are temporarily relieved of duty;
- c. Workers will return to work normally after further notice from management;
- d. This memo is effective as of the date of stipulation and is submitted to all workers with the provision that if there are errors and/or matters that have not been sufficiently regulated, they will be corrected accordingly.

Management also informs that on 24 April 2020, the proportion of April 2020 salary paid for relieved of duty workers

was 25% of the total salary, for picket workers is 30% of the salary, and the remaining April 2020 salary will be paid after PT TWJ resumes operations. There has been no decision or notification regarding the May 2020 salary. This message was also sent via text message in the Jogja Bay Engineering WhatsApp group by P.

On 15 May 2020, through a text message in the Whatsapp group Engineering Jogja Bay conveyed information containing:

- a. THR will be paid to workers by 20 May 2020,
- b. The amount of THR is around 25%-30% of salary (the exact percentage will be announced on Monday or Tuesday (18/19 May 2020),
- c. BPJS health is still paid by the company,
- d. Payroll for the month of May 2020 will be informed on 25 May 2020,

e. Jogja Bay Waterpark owes workers the remaining 75% of the April 2020 salary and the remaining THR for Idul Fitri 2020 which was promised to be paid after Jogja Bay Waterpark (PT Taman Wisata Jogja) is normal or operating again.

Starting from 18 November 2020, workers gradually began to be called back to work because it was planned that on 1 December 2020 Jogja Bay Waterpark would resume operations. However, there are two union members, RD and KBS, who have not been called back to work until now. During the period of being laid off from April 2020 to 18 November 2020, workers were only paid 25% of their salary in May 2020. Between 17 and 27 February 2021, HRD summoned all workers to sign a Letter of Agreement for the Period of Cessation of Employment Relations. Workers who are members of Spektram

JBW refused to sign it, with the exception of one member, SD. The refusal to sign the agreement was for several reasons that were taken into consideration by Spektram JBW, namely:

- a. Spektram JBW members still want to work at Jogja Bay Waterpark and feel that there is no report whatsoever that Spektram JBW members have made fatal mistakes that have resulted in layoff issues;
- b. There are overlapping issues in the letter, namely the matter of Termination of Employment Relations with the matter of payment of salaries in April 2020 and THR 2020. That these issues are two very different things that should be separate agreement;





- c. There is a difference in the amount of repayment of the remaining April 2020 salary which should be 75%, but only 20% of the remaining salary will be paid;
- d. And all of the above issues have never been communicated before to Spektrum JBW.

## Two Groups of Workers

As mentioned above, in the agreement process, there are two groups of workers at Jogja Bay Waterpark (PT TWJ), namely the group of workers who agree and the group of workers who reject the agreement letter. The group of workers who agreed to the agreement letter consisted of approximately 150 individuals and were not part of the Spektrum JBW. On the other hand, the group of workers who rejected the agreement letter belonged to Spektrum JBW, which had 39 members, although only 31 were

called to sign the letter. It can be concluded that the workers who agreed to the agreement have lost their employment status at Jogja Bay Waterpark, while those who rejected it remains the workers and demand to retain their employment status. However, there was a discrepancy in practice, as the group who agreed to the Agreement Letter for Employment Termination were recalled to work as casual labourers, while those who refused to sign the letter were not rehired and were not given work schedules.

Meanwhile, eight members of Spektrum JBW were not called to sign the Agreement Letter for Employment Termination in February 2021 and continued to receive work schedules. These eight individuals were gradually laid off between April and June 2021. The company claimed that their contracts had expired and

would not be renewed, although the eight workers argued that they were permanent workers. Their claim relied on the fact that they had never been provided with a prior contractual agreement, and according to Article 59, Paragraph 7 of the Labour Law, they should be regarded as permanent workers. However, their entitlements arising from the termination of employment have not been fulfilled to date.

With 31 Spektram JBW workers not being called, alongside the additional eight workers who were laid off, the company experienced a shortage of workers in several divisions previously staffed by those who rejected the agreement letter. As a result, the company recruited new casual labourers via the PT TWJ website and job search platforms around April, May, and October 2021. Labourers were taken from new people because

the vacant division needed people with the same skills as those who were relieved of duty but reject the agreement letter, resulting in the search for new labour. This situation led to a sense of injustice among the Spektram JBW workers.

The rights of the Spektram JBW members remain unmet. As the group that rejected the Employment Termination Agreement Letter and who are technically still employed by Jogja Bay Waterpark, Spektram JBW believes they are entitled to the 2021 religious holiday allowance (THR), which has yet to be paid. Additionally, reports from Spektram JBW members indicate that, during the pandemic, the healthcare provided through BPJS was not accessible, and contributions to BPJS employment benefits were not paid by the company.



At the time this document was completed, PT TWJ had settled the outstanding payment for April 2020 wages and the 2020 THR. However, there remains uncertainty about the continuation of employment, as no recall notices have been issued. By the time mediation occurred in April 2022, the total period of furlough had extended to 18 months. No agreement was made regarding the duration of the furlough, and as a result, Spektram JBW workers have not received wages for more than three months, entitling them to request termination of employment in accordance with Article 169 of the Labour Law. Alongside their request for termination, Spektram JBW submitted several additional demands, including:

1. Unpaid wages;

2. Severance pay, service recognition compensation, and entitlements due to termination of employment; and
3. The 2021 religious holiday allowance (THR).

In summary, two disputes can be identified. The first pertains to the wages for April 2020 and the 2020 THR, which have been resolved. The second dispute relates to the workers' employment status, wages for those furloughed, and the 2021 THR. The cause of the first dispute was the discrepancy in the April 2020 wages and the unpaid 2020 THR. The second dispute arose from the absence of a formal agreement on the furlough process and the request for an employment termination letter when workers still wished to continue working for the company, as well as the unfulfilled rights of eight Spektram JBW workers who were



laid off. This was followed by the failure to recall workers who had rejected the agreement letter. Ultimately, the workers felt discriminated against and unclear about their employment status within the company.

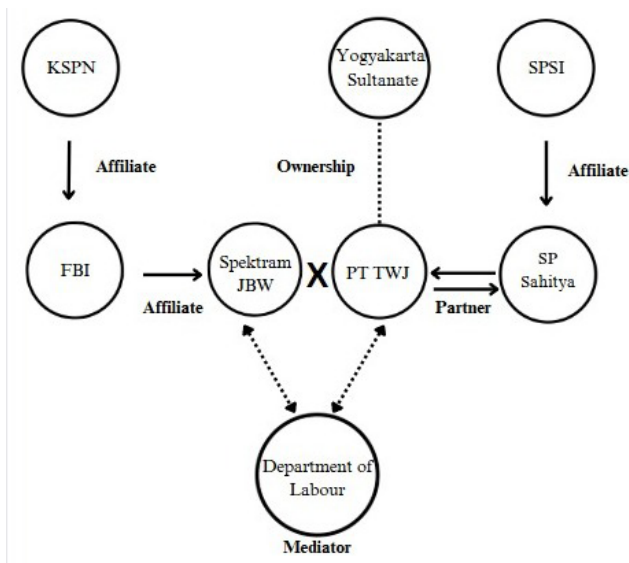
## Actor Mapping

This conflict involves multiple actors. Based on the research findings, there are key actors directly or indirectly involved in the advocacy process. Mapping these actors helps to clarify both positive and negative

relationships regarding the demands of Spektrum JBW against PT TWJ. The actors are divided into three groups:

1. The pro-demand group, consisting of Spektrum JBW, Indonesian Federation of Labour (Federasi Buruh Indonesia, or FBI), and Confederation of Labour Unions of Nusantara (Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Nusantara, or KSPN).
2. The neutral group, consisting of the Sleman Department of Labour (Disnaker Sleman).

**Figure 1. Actors Mapping**



*Source: Processing research data (2023)*

- The opposing group, comprising PT TWJ, SP Sahitya, SPSI, and the Yogyakarta Sultanate (Keraton Yogyakarta), decided to formally address the company. They requested clarification regarding the wages for April 2020, which had only been paid at 25%, and the 2020 Religious Holiday Allowance (THR), which had not been paid at all. The letter to the company was sent in November 2020, and the response was an invitation to meet with the Human Resources department in December 2020.

### **Wage Demands**

After being placed on furlough for six months, from May 2020 to November 2020, Spektrum JBW initiated negotiations and



This correspondence aimed to initiate bipartite negotiations in accordance with Law No. 2 of 2004 concerning the Settlement of Industrial Relations Disputes.

The first mediation session (bipartite meeting) between Spektram JBW and PT TWJ resulted in a decision to escalate the matter to senior management. A second letter requesting further bipartite negotiations was sent, but the company did not respond. A third letter was sent, again without any response from PT TWJ. Due to the lack of replies, Spektram JBW concluded that the company was not acting in good faith to resolve the wage issue.

In February 2021, PT TWJ issued a “Work Termination Agreement” to all workers, except for eight Spektram JBW members who were dismissed several months later. The agreement included clauses regarding the April 2021 wage

and the 2020 THR, stating that the THR would be 20% of the salary. Spektram JBW considered this unacceptable, as the initial announcement promised 75%, not 20%. Consequently, Spektram JBW rejected the agreement.

As a result of this rejection, Spektram JBW members involved in the dispute were not given work shifts, leading to a second demand concerning job status clarification. However, Spektram JBW prioritized resolving the issues surrounding the April wage and the 2020 THR, as they believed the amounts paid were incorrect. Spektram JBW planned a demonstration and sought permission, which was eventually revoked at the company’s request. PT TWJ then requested for a mediation meeting at Depok District. Spektram JBW accepted the invitation, emphasising the importance of a familial approach in industrial relations



disputes. The mediation would be attended by PT TWJ's general manager, who had the authority to make company decisions.

The mediation took place in mid-May 2021, attended by 20 Spektrum JBW members, a legal representative, and 20 PT TWJ representatives, including the general manager, supervisor, human resources staff, and security. Also present were the Head of the Depok District Office (Camat Depok) and two representatives from Disnaker Sleman. The mediation was chaired by Camat Depok, with the aim of facilitating a calm discussion. However, with over 40 participants, the large forum quickly became chaotic as everyone tried to voice their opinions. Consequently, Camat Depok proposed forming a smaller group to facilitate a more productive discussion.

Based on information from the interview with EY, the Chairman of Spektrum JBW, in the smaller forum held in the evening, Camat Depok moderated a conversation with a few key representatives. Spektrum JBW was represented by their union leader, EY, and legal counsel, AM, while PT TWJ was represented by the general manager, CI, and a human resources representative, AY, alongside two mediators from Disnaker Sleman. The small forum proceeded more calmly, with relaxed conversations and some humour. Spektrum JBW's leader and lawyer presented their demands, referencing a text message from the division supervisor stating that the full April wage would be paid. They also outlined the legal basis for the workers' rights to full wages.

*"We are actually very open to mediation in a family manner because negotiations are also more*

*comfortable, so revoking the licence is also not a problem. But of course, there were many of us who wanted to talk at the mediation, so it was not conducive. Then the head of the Depok sub-district invited us to a small forum so that the discussion would be more relaxed and there would be no tension and humour. At that time, there was a small forum with Mr. CI, who was the General Manager, and AY from HR, while from Spektrum it was just me and Mr. AM as the legal representative. In the forum, I explained everything that the company did was wrong and of course used the legal basis that I knew, assisted by Mr. AM. Finally, there was a negotiation, but the percentage was still quite small. So, I discussed*

*it again with the members,” (EY, Chairman of Spektrum JBW, interview conducted on 8 October 2023).*

The negotiation progressed, with PT TWJ initially offering 20% of the unpaid wages, but then raising the offer to 50%. However, the Spektrum JBW leader could not decide on the offer in the small forum, as the proposed percentage was still significantly lower than the amount promised in the initial text message. A discussion with other members was necessary. The final outcome of the small forum was an offer of 50% of the remaining 75% of the unpaid wages and the 2020 THR, with Spektrum JBW asked to discuss the offer with their members.

Both sides reconvened in the larger forum to discuss the results. The Spektrum JBW leader informed the gathered members of PT TWJ's offer, but the members still could





not accept the proposed wage percentage. Spektram JBW continued to reject the offer, and PT TWJ stated that any further decision on raising the percentage required discussion with higher management. The mediation returned to its initial stage, but PT TWJ promised to invite Spektram JBW for a further negotiation session after consulting with senior management about the wage increase.

Two weeks later, PT TWJ invited the union for further discussions on the April wages and the 2020 THR. In this session, both parties agreed on a final settlement: PT TWJ would pay 80% of the remaining 75% of the unpaid April wages and 100% of the 2020 THR. These payments were made on 3 June 2021. Thus, the first advocacy process concerning the April wages and 2020 THR was resolved.

## **Demands for Employment Status and Severance Pay: Roles of Local Government**

This demand arose due to the rejection of the agreement letter for 31 workers and the termination of 8 workers whose contracts had expired but had not yet received their entitlements. In this claim, Spektram JBW engaged with various government actors to find a mediator for the issue.

In early November 2021, Spektram JBW attempted advocacy by filing a report with the Department of Labour and Transmigration of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (Disnakertrans DIY). In December 2021, Spektram JBW was invited to Disnakertrans DIY for clarification and was brought together with PT TWJ's Human Resources, AY. However, after the clarification, no further

process was taken regarding the issuance of a supervisory note—only clarification from both sides. According to Spektram JBW, a supervisory note would have helped them in meeting their demands. As a result, no further steps were taken through Disnakertrans DIY, prompting Spektram JBW to contact PT TWJ for bipartite mediation again.

According to a statement from AS, the Head of General Affairs of Disnakertrans DIY, the absence of a supervisory note from Disnakertrans DIY was due to their view that the issue between Spektram JBW and PT TWJ was still an industrial relations dispute that could be mediated and did not yet require supervision. This is consistent with the principle of resolving industrial disputes through family-based negotiation. Disnakertrans DIY has mediators and is also authorised to

conduct mediation. In general, provincial Disnaker offices have supervisory authority since there are no supervisors at the city or district level, only mediators, although the provincial office retains mediation authority. Therefore, Disnakertrans DIY conducted clarification before issuing supervision to decide whether a case requires mediation or supervision. Based on this, Disnakertrans DIY decided to conduct simultaneous clarification from both disputing parties—Spektram JBW and PT TWJ—followed by joint mediation (Interview with AS, Head of General Affairs of Disnakertrans DIY, 2023). However, this was not in line with Spektram JBW's expectations, as they believed that Disnakertrans DIY should have more authority over supervision rather than mediation.



*"The reason no supervisory note was issued in this case is that it was deemed unnecessary. As long as mediation and family-based approaches are still possible, those are prioritised. Disnakertrans DIY is often thought to focus more on supervision because supervisors are only at the provincial level, but we also have mediators. We always assess the case first to determine the appropriate handling," (AS, Head of General Affairs, Disnakertrans DIY, interview conducted on 13 October 2023).*

As the clarification by Disnakertrans DIY and bipartite mediation with PT TWJ failed, a tripartite process was conducted at the Sleman Department of Labour. The tripartite process, held at the Sleman Department of Labour—which has the authority to handle dismissals

in industrial relations disputes—was overseen by a mediator who, at the end of the process, would issue a recommendation for both parties. The tripartite process took place three times on 7 April 2022, 21 April 2022, and 28 April 2022, and was recorded in the Sleman Department of Labour Recommendation No. 565/0590 of 2022. During the tripartite process, Spektrum JBW was represented by its chairman, legal counsel, and several members, while PT TWJ was represented by AY from Human Resources and PT TWJ's legal counsel. Throughout the three tripartite meetings, Spektrum JBW presented the chronology of the dispute and supporting data.

PT TWJ responded to the chronology presented by Spektrum JBW, which was recorded in Sleman Department



of Labour Recommendation No. 565/0590 of 2022. Their response included the following points:

- a. PT TWJ had implemented a policy to furlough workers while PT TWJ (Jogja Bay Waterpark) was not operational, and an agreement had been made to facilitate this furlough;
- b. PT TWJ confirmed that the termination of employment for 8 workers was based on the expiration of their fixed-term employment contracts (PKWT), and certificates of employment had been issued;
- c. PT TWJ indicated that there was no decision or guidance from company leadership regarding a solution;
- d. PT TWJ referred the matter to the next stage of industrial relations dispute resolution.

After both sides had responded, the mediator issued conclusions and recommendations that could be used as a basis for resolving the industrial dispute. The mediator's conclusions regarding the dispute were as follows:

1. The employment relationship status was that of permanent workers.
2. There were two issues in this employment termination dispute:
  - a. A dispute over termination of employment due to a lack of agreement on the calculation of severance pay, service appreciation pay, and compensation for entitlements resulting from the termination of employment.



b. A dispute over termination of employment due to unpaid wages as stipulated in Article 36, Section g, Number 3 of Government Regulation No. 35 of 2021.

Following these conclusions, the mediator issued written recommendations to both parties, under No. 565/0590 dated 23 May 2022, which essentially stated the following:

1. The employer should pay severance pay in the amount of one time the provisions of Article 40(2), service appreciation pay in the amount of one time the provisions of Article 40(3), and compensation in accordance with the provisions of Article 40(4) of Government Regulation No. 35 of 2021, as well as wages

that were unpaid during the furlough and the 2021 religious holiday allowance (THR).

2. The workers should accept the calculation of payment as specified in point 1 above.

The recommendation from Disnaker Sleman demonstrated the government's neutrality in this case, based on Government Regulation No. 35 of 2021. The recommendation upheld Spektrum JBW's demands regarding employment status, unpaid wages, and severance pay for those terminated. Based on the statement of EY, Chairman of JBW Spektrum from the interview, the recommendation was not legally binding as it was the result of a family-based deliberation. Nonetheless, the recommendation from Disnaker Sleman could serve as leverage in the next advocacy stage, such as litigation through the PHI.

*"The recommendation from Disnaker Sleman is not legally binding, so the company may not respond, but it is enough to help us to use it as leverage in the trial later," (EY, Chair of Spektram JBW, interview conducted on 2 August 2023).*

The recommendation had to be responded to within 10 days of issuance. Spektram JBW accepted the recommendation, while the employer did not respond, which was interpreted as a rejection. Therefore, the tripartite advocacy process was deemed unsuccessful, and no resolution was reached. As the deadline passed without a response, Spektram JBW decided to proceed with litigation by registering the case with the PHI.

*"After the final tripartite session, a recommendation was made by the mediator,*

*and both parties were given 10 days to respond. If there's no response within that time, it means rejection. Spektram accepted because it aligned with what we wanted, but the company didn't respond, meaning they rejected it. From there, we held another meeting and decided to proceed to the next step, which was to file with the PHI." (EY, Chair of Spektram JBW, interview conducted on 2 August 2023).*

During the tripartite mediation process, Spektram JBW's advocacy efforts were not limited to formal procedures but also included informal actions. These advocacy strategies included staging protests and holding collective prayers in front of Jogja Bay Waterpark to attract public attention to the issue. The protest took place at 1 pm on 22 April 2022, the day after



the second tripartite session. In this advocacy strategy, Spektram JBW followed the proper bureaucratic procedures for obtaining permits, from the neighbourhood head (RT), community head (RW), sub-district, district, Depok Timur police, and PT TWJ. In addition to onlookers at the protest site, the event was covered by various media outlets, which disseminated information through online articles, thereby spreading the issue more widely.

After the tripartite process failed to reach a resolution, Spektram JBW proceeded to file the case with the PHI. The court hearings began nearly a year after the tripartite mediation. During this time, Spektram JBW held regular monthly union meetings to conduct advocacy and union education with the assistance of FBI affiliates. They also transferred knowledge from members who had received

advocacy and union education from external parties. These efforts aimed to equip them with the necessary skills for courtroom advocacy.

The first court hearing took place on 27 March 2023. Before the hearing, Spektram JBW and other unions affiliated with FBI staged another protest, displaying banners to raise public awareness about the issue. Once again, the media helped disseminate information through articles, making the issue more widely known. The court proceedings are still ongoing and Spektram JBW continues to hold meetings for training and preparation ahead of future hearings.

## Analysis

In the first demand regarding the April salary and the 2020 Religious Holiday Allowance (THR), Tarrow's (2011) theory of contentious politics is evident

in the steps taken by Spektrum JBW, particularly in the collective discussion to invite bipartite meetings and seek explanations from PT TWJ management. When the company failed to respond, Spektrum JBW followed the contentious politics strategy by seeking support to bolster their efforts. This is seen in their attempt to obtain permits from relevant authorities for organizing protests aimed at pushing the company to act. However, PT TWJ had the power to revoke the protest permit later and insisted that Spektrum JBW follow the company's preferred process, which involved mediation with other influential actors in the dispute. The subsequent conflict between the two sides was reflected in the larger forum's mediation process, where Spektrum JBW members collectively voiced their grievances about the company's broken promises. Eventually,

after various negotiations, the dispute over the April salary and the 2020 THR was resolved. After this agreement, Spektrum JBW shifted its focus to the second demand regarding worker status, unpaid furlough wages, the 2021 THR, unpaid advocacy wages for 31 Spektrum JBW members who refused to sign the Work Suspension Agreement, and severance pay for 8 laid-off workers.

In the second demand, Tarrow's (2011) contentious politics theory is once again reflected in Spektrum JBW's numerous actions against PT TWJ. They sought help from various actors, with the first being Disnakertrans DIY, though Spektrum JBW disagreed with Disnakertrans DIY's approach. Consequently, they turned to DisnakerSleman, which Spektrum JBW believed could better assist them in resolving the industrial relations dispute. Disnaker





Sleman facilitated mediation, where the mediator sided with Spektrum JBW based on the data they provided, concluding that they were entitled to the benefits they sought. In addition, Spektrum JBW sought public support through protests, subtly pressuring the company by framing PT TWJ as unjust. Despite these efforts, Spektrum JBW did not succeed in getting PT TWJ to comply. Ultimately, Spektrum JBW escalated the matter by seeking assistance from the PHI and staging a protest before the first hearing.

Using Sharma's (2004) advocacy theory, advocacy can be viewed through five steps: identifying the root problem; formulating a solution; raising political awareness; implementing policy; and evaluation. In the salary dispute, these advocacy steps can be identified as follows. First, problem identification was

evident in the recognition of salary and THR issues for April 2020. Second, formulating a solution involved issuing three mediation requests and obtaining permits for protests. Third, raising political awareness was achieved through bipartite mediation with the company, as well as mediation involving Depok sub-district officials, the regional police, and Disnaker Sleman. Fourth, policy implementation occurred with the agreement to pay the April salary and THR on 3 June 2021. Finally, evaluation took place when Spektrum JBW assessed the effectiveness of their advocacy strategy and prepared for the next round of advocacy regarding the second demand.

In analyzing the second demand regarding worker status and severance pay using Sharma's (2004) advocacy theory, the first step was problem identification, which involved recognizing the

potential loss of severance pay rights, the unclear employment status of 31 workers, unpaid furlough wages, entitlement to the 2021 THR, and the rights of the 8 laid-off workers. Second, formulating a solution involved reporting to Disnakertrans DIY, seeking bipartite mediation, filing a complaint with Disnaker Sleman, and obtaining permits for protests. Third, raising political awareness was seen through clarification at Disnakertrans DIY, bipartite mediation with PT TWJ, tripartite mediation at Disnaker Sleman, protests and prayers outside Jogja Bay Waterpark, and union advocacy education with external affiliations. Fourth, policy implementation did not occur due to a lack of agreement on salary and severance pay. Fifth, evaluation involved discussions that concluded the failure of the advocacy was due to external factors, such as PT TWJ rejecting the mediator's

recommendations. Spektrum JBW then prepared for Industrial Relations Court proceedings and further training in advocacy and labour law for its members.

## Conclusion

The analysis of Spektrum JBW's advocacy strategy in its fight for rights against PT TWJ demonstrates that the advocacy process was dynamic, involving several stages to achieve success while acknowledging the potential for failure. Spektrum JBW's advocacy strategy evolved through internal and external challenges, reflecting the complexity of contentious labour relations. The two theories used in this analysis, Tarrow's (2011) contentious politics and Sharma's (2004) advocacy strategy, are well-aligned. Contentious politics is embedded within the third stage of the advocacy process—raising political awareness.



In contentious politics, actors seek cooperation with influential allies to challenge elites, which parallels the third step of the advocacy process, where political will is mobilized to strengthen the union and garner external support. Thus, these two theories are interconnected, as contentious politics forms part of the broader advocacy strategy. In evaluating Spektrum JBW's advocacy steps using Sharma's (2004) framework, two analyses emerged. The first pertains to the salary demand, where all five stages of advocacy were followed. In the demand for worker status and severance pay, the policy implementation stage was not realized due to the lack of resolution from PT TWJ.

Despite this, the overall advocacy process adhered to applicable labour laws and was executed effectively, especially considering the challenges posed by the COVID-19

pandemic. Although the second demand's policy implementation failed, Spektrum JBW remained committed to advancing their advocacy through the PHI. Throughout these five advocacy steps, Spektrum JBW encountered both internal and external obstacles, including communication difficulties during the pandemic, local cultural tendencies to accept situations, conflicts among workers, declining membership, and limited understanding of advocacy processes among union members. The Spektrum JBW leadership addressed these challenges by organizing protests, reinforcing solidarity among remaining union members, and providing continuous education in advocacy and union matters.

The Spektrum JBW case highlights the difficulties faced by a small union in confronting a company with powerful ownership ties. Although

Spektrum JBW's advocacy faced significant obstacles, it also demonstrates the potential for successful small-scale union movements in Yogyakarta, a region where union activity is relatively limited compared to large industrial centers. This movement could serve as a reference for other small unions in fighting for their rights in the face of injustice and company misconduct. Although it may take a long process to achieve a massive union movement in Yogyakarta, it is not impossible if there is a strong awareness and political will to organise and establish good cooperation with external partners. Furthermore, the stages of the advocacy strategy must comply with the regulations concerning the resolution of industrial disputes as stipulated in the Labour Law, focusing on the issues that have been raised as demands.



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