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Workplace and Community

Workers' Politics of Representation in Semarang
and Pekalongan, Central Java

Hari Nugroho

Workplace and Community

Workers' Politics of Representation in Semarang and Pekalongan, Central Java

Since the fall of Indonesia's authoritarian New Order, workers have faced a paradox of political and economic changes, as seen in the emergence of a new labour regime. This book examines two forms of unionism that have developed in response to these shifts: traditional workplace-based unionism, centred on collective bargaining, and community unionism, which fosters collaboration between unions and local organisations to address broader social issues.

Focusing on union activities in Semarang and Pekalongan, two industrial regions in Central Java, the author argues that the development of these models is shaped by both local structural forces and the strategic responses of unionists as movement agents. While both forms emphasize welfare struggles and have equally ventured into community activism through social advocacy and electoral politics, they differ significantly in the scale of resources mobilised and the values they promote within their constituencies. These differences influence how unionists engage with the diverse groups they represent, as they navigate the complexities of managing a broad and varied constituent base, reflecting the consequences of each union model.