



Analyzing The Policy Conflict of Street Vendor Relocation In Malioboro, Yogyakarta: A Case Study Using Policy Conflict Framework

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Abstract

The relocation of street vendors from Malioboro Street to Teras Malioboro has sustained a policy conflict between authorities and vendors. Using the Policy Conflict Framework (PCF), this study examines how divergent policy positions, perceived threats, and low willingness to compromise shape conflict intensity and outcomes. The research draws on in-depth interviews with vendors, non-participant observations at Teras Malioboro 1–2, and document/media analysis to triangulate findings. Results show substantial income disruption linked to reduced visibility, weaker pedestrian spillover from Malioboro, and design/management issues in the new sites. Coalition dynamics coalesced around two blocs—vendors and allied civil society versus government and planners—while the symbolic authority of the Sultan moderated overt confrontation without resolving underlying grievances. Limited participatory feedback loops, procedural opacity, and asymmetric problem framing escalated conflict intensity across episodes of implementation. The study contributes to PCF by situating urban informality and cultural authority as contextual moderators in a Global South setting. Practically, it recommends conflict-sensitive adjustments: targeted transitional assistance, improved wayfinding and circulation to restore footfall, formal vendor representation in decision-making, and an institutionalized grievance channel with service-level agreements. These measures align modernization goals with vendors' economic security and strengthen policy legitimacy by responding to vendors' appeals.

Keywords: Policy Conflict Framework, Street Vendors, Urban Policy, Participation, Relocation, Malioboro

1 Introduction: Policy Conflict at Teras Malioboro

The relocation of street vendors (Pedagang Kaki Lima/PKL) from Malioboro, a symbolic and economic axis in Yogyakarta, represents a highly contested urban policy. Similar tensions have occurred in other Indonesian cities like Madiun and Bojonegoro, where relocation plans faced resistance due to non-transparent processes and disregard for vendor livelihoods (Prasetya & Komara, 2019; Agustina et al., 2024). In Yogyakarta, the 2022 relocation to Teras Malioboro 1 and 2 was justified as part of broader urban modernization efforts (Weng & Kim, 2016).

From the start, vendors expressed strong resistance. The policy reflects a neoliberal logic that prioritizes spatial order over social equity, often framing informal workers as urban disruptions (Mizes, 2021). Interviews revealed many vendors were excluded from planning and suffered income losses, up to 90% in some cases, due to poor visibility and customer access in the new sites. Rather than resolving spatial issues, the relocation intensified policy conflict due to diverging interests between government and vendors (Prasetya & Komara, 2019). Vendors organized protests and built coalitions, while the government stayed firm in prioritizing tourism and order. The resulting policy leaned heavily toward government goals, yet ongoing protests indicate potential for conflict transformation, even if vendor demands remain unmet.

This paper argues the conflict should be seen not as a spatial dispute, but as a deeper policy clash rooted in conflicting beliefs and power asymmetries. Applying the Policy Conflict Framework (PCF), the study explores how cognitive, behavioral, and contextual dimensions shaped the trajectory of this dispute.

1.1 Problem Statement and Rationale

The relocation of street vendors in Malioboro was driven by a broader urban agenda that emphasized tourism, pedestrian infrastructure, and spatial order, aligning with efforts to position Yogyakarta as a global cultural city. Informal street activities were increasingly seen as incompatible with this vision, leading to a relocation policy framed as a technical solution to congestion. However, this technocratic approach overlooked the social and economic attachments of vendors and excluded them from meaningful participation.

This exclusion triggered a prolonged episode of conflict, a concept central to the Policy Conflict Framework (PCF), where diverging policy goals escalated into street protests. Despite persistent vendor opposition, the government proceeded with implementation, culminating in large-scale demonstrations in mid-2023. Vendors rejected the relocation due to poor commercial viability and felt their concerns were ignored. According to *Tirto.id* (2024), a mass protest at Teras Malioboro 2 turned confrontational after failed negotiations. *Tempo.co* (2024) described the unrest as a buildup of disappointment over unilateral decisions, with legal aid groups backing vendor claims of exclusion.

The government's lack of participatory mechanisms allowed tensions to escalate. As PCF suggests, high-intensity conflicts persist when structurally excluded actors are denied institutional feedback. Although relocation policies are not uncommon in Indonesia, the Malioboro case stands out for its symbolic and political weight. It highlights tensions around equity, identity, and governance. While the government framed the policy as necessary for urban order, vendors viewed it as marginalizing and economically harmful. Competing interests within the policy network, from tourism offices to local planners, further complicated coordination. In contrast, vendors, NGOs, and urban scholars formed a counter-coalition advocating for inclusive policy approaches. This fragmentation underlines the need for conflict-sensitive policymaking.

Given the intensity and persistence of the conflict, this paper seeks to address the following questions: (1) What are the **cognitive and material** dimensions of the policy conflict surrounding the relocation of street vendors in Malioboro?; (2) How have **different coalitions framed the issue**, and **what strategies** have they employed to pursue their policy preferences?; (3) To what extent does the Policy Conflict Framework **help in understanding and addressing the conflict dynamics** in this context?

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 outlines the PCF and related literature; Section 3 details the methods; Section 4 presents findings aligned with the research questions; Section 5 discusses implications; Section 6 concludes

2 Methodological Approach

This study adopts a qualitative, bottom-up case design to examine how street vendors (PKL) experienced the relocation from Malioboro Street to Teras Malioboro. Fieldwork was conducted in August 2024, a period of renewed contention following the initial implementation in 2022, which enabled the capture of vendor perspectives amid heightened public debate and conflict.

Sampling and data collection: We used an on-site random-intercept approach to minimize selection bias while remaining sensitive to the rhythms of trading activity, furthermore we focused with street vendor at relocated location area. Enumerators walked predefined routes inside Teras Malioboro 1 and 2, approached every stall blocs (adjusted when vendors were busy with customers), and invited participation until reaching the target. In total, we conducted 18 in-depth interviews with vendors across merchandise categories and locations (near/far from entrances and main corridors). Informal conversations were recorded as fieldnotes. As part of our in-depth analysis, we used three important dimensions: position on relocation policy, impact from policy, and how participants respond to conflict with policymakers. To triangulate, we carried out non-participant observations during multiple site visits spanning morning, afternoon, and evening peaks, and reviewed policy documents, official statements, and press coverage to situate vendor narratives within the institutional and political context.

Ethics and power dynamics: Participants provided informed consent; identifiers were removed and pseudonyms assigned. The interviews were not limited to the age and gender of the participants and focused more on deepening the position of the relocation policy. Interviews were conducted at locations chosen by participants, with the option to pause/stop or decline audio recording. To mitigate power asymmetries, the researcher used open prompts, avoided evaluative language, and refrained from commenting on ongoing disputes.

Analysis and credibility: Analysis followed a directed thematic strategy grounded in the Policy Conflict Framework (PCF). We developed a codebook with deductive categories, policy positions, perceived threats, (un)willingness to compromise, and conflict intensity and added inductive subcodes that emerged from the data. Code–recode cycles were performed, disconfirming cases were retained, and triangulation across interviews, observations, and documents enhanced credibility. Where feasible, member checks or peer debriefing were used to validate descriptive claims. We conduct cross reviewing of coding in order to optimize reliability of data. Reflexively, the author acknowledges a scholarship affiliation with the Ministry of Finance (LPDP) and maintained an audit trail to separate institutional identity from the research process.

Framework linkage: PCF guided both data collection (probing for positions, threat perceptions, and compromise willingness) and analysis (linking coalition narratives to

observed interaction patterns), allowing us to connect vendor experiences with episodic fluctuations in conflict intensity across implementation.

2.1 Significance of the Study

Theoretical significance: This study extends the Policy Conflict Framework (PCF) to urban relocation in a Global South context by showing how urban informality and cultural authority operate as contextual moderators of conflict intensity. Empirically, we specify the mechanism linking intensity to the co-production of material (visibility/footfall losses), cognitive (expectations vs. outcomes), and procedural (voice and feedback loops) threats, and we trace how coalitional framing (“livelihood security” vs. “orderly tourism”) structures episodic escalation and moderation. These refinements help PCF travel beyond agenda dynamics to implementation-stage disputes in informality-rich cities.

Practical significance: Translating these insights into policy design yields conflict-sensitive, testable interventions: (1) Targeted transition assistance indexed to verified turnover decline; (2) Wayfinding and circulation redesign to restore footfall (signage, visibility corridors, anchor routing);(3) Formal vendor representation in site management and design changes; and (4) Institutionalized grievance mechanism with service-level agreements and transparent follow-up.

Cities like Yogyakarta can align modernization with equity by piloting these measures, monitoring with footfall counters and sales logs, and iterating based on vendor feedback. While findings derive from a single case in 2024, the mechanisms are portable to pedestrianized heritage districts facing similar relocation conflicts.

2.2 Conceptual Framework: Understanding the Policy Conflict Framework (PCF)

To examine the conflict over the relocation of street vendors in Malioboro, this study applies the Policy Conflict Framework (PCF) developed by Weible and Heikkila (2017) as we can see in Figure 1. Unlike traditional policy process theories that treat conflict as peripheral, PCF places conflict at the core of analysis by conceptualizing it as an episode of policy conflict, a dynamic interaction between opposing actors defined by both cognitive and behavioral elements.

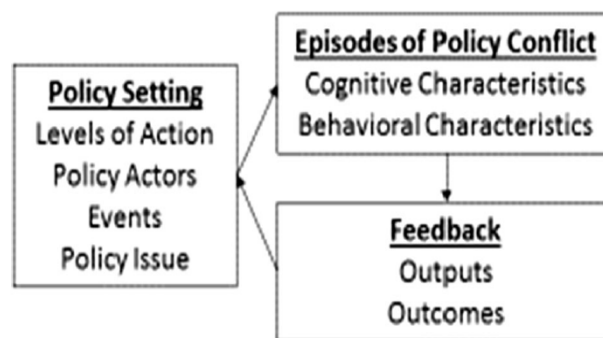


Figure 1. Flow diagram of the Policy Conflict Framework, Source : (Weible & Heikkila, 2017)

Cognitively, conflict is marked by: (1) Diverging policy positions, (2) Perceived threats to values or interests, and (3) Unwillingness to compromise. These tensions manifest behaviorally through lobbying, protest, coalition formation, and narrative strategies.

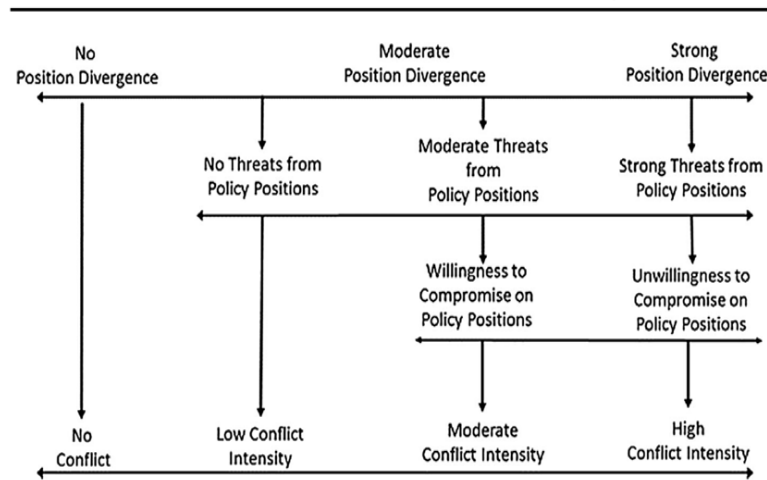


Figure 2. Policy Conflict Intensity, Source : (Weible & Heikkila, 2017)

PCF situates these episodes within broader policy settings, including political systems, issue subsystems (like urban development), and triggering events. These settings shape how conflicts emerge and unfold, based on actors' attributes, resources, and institutional context. Importantly, PCF does not view conflict as inherently negative. It explores how different intensities, especially high-intensity conflicts marked by entrenched beliefs and low compromise, can influence policy outcomes, ranging from stagnation to transformation, as reflected in the Malioboro case.

PCF offers an analytical lens to: (1) Trace conflict evolution; (2) Identify escalation triggers; (3) Examine actor strategies; and (4) Assess institutional factors in conflict resolution. In this study, PCF helps interpret the Malioboro relocation not just as spatial dispute, but as a deeper value-based conflict rooted in governance dynamics.

3 Literature Review

Street vendor relocation has been widely studied in both Indonesian and international contexts, revealing recurring patterns of policy conflict, exclusion, and resistance. The literature highlights the critical role of vendor organization, belief systems, governance structures, and socio-economic impacts.

- [1] Street Vending as arena of Conflict: Bromley (2000) viewing street vendors as a source of economic activity for urban communities, however, this often conflicts with environmental management, which then encourages the government to issue policies that put pressure on the position of street vendors in an unfavorable manner.
- [2] Vendor Organizations and Relocation Success: Weng and Kim (2016) show that strong vendor organizations, such as the Hsinchu Street Vendors' Union, can negotiate and manage relocation effectively. In contrast, weak or absent organizational capacity often leads to internal fragmentation and failed transitions, conditions also seen in Malioboro.
- [3] Policy Conflict and Diverging Beliefs: According to Weible et al. (2018), conflicts arise when actors hold fundamentally different beliefs about policy outcomes and fairness. These conflicts intensify when perceived threats and lack of compromise are present. In Malioboro, government framing focused on modernization, while vendors

feared economic displacement and exclusion. Lestari (2022) demonstrates how PCF offers a comprehensive view of such multidimensional conflicts.

- [4] Neoliberal Urbanism and Exclusion: Mizes (2021) critiques relocation policies as tools of neoliberal governance that prioritize sanitized urban spaces over inclusive economies. The Malioboro relocation reflects this pattern, with vendors displaced in favor of visual and tourism-driven urban order.
- [5] Indonesian Case Comparisons: Studies from Madiun and Bojonegoro affirm that lack of participation fuels resistance. Prasetya and Komara (2019) highlight protest due to unilateral planning, while Agustina et al. (2024) emphasize the value of co-design and conflict transformation approaches to improve acceptance.
- [6] Economic Risks and Livelihood Disruption: Sukmana and Safitri (2010) and Zamahsari (2017) note that relocation reduces customer access, raises costs, and introduces new barriers. In Malioboro, vendors reported sharp income declines post-relocation, worsened by limited government support or transitional aid.

In summary, relocation policies often struggle due to a mismatch between top-down planning and the lived realities of informal workers. Beyond infrastructure, successful relocation requires inclusive governance, socioeconomic support, and sensitivity to place-based attachments. The Policy Conflict Framework provides a strong analytical foundation for understanding the complexity of such conflicts.

The next section presents findings based on field interviews and observations, analyzing the conflict's drivers and intensity through the lens of PCF.

4 Results: Intensity of Conflict and Effect

The conflict surrounding the relocation of street vendors in Malioboro has evolved into a high-intensity policy dispute. This is characterized by a combination of material grievances, ideological differences, coalition behavior, and the absence of inclusive dialogue.

4.1 Nature of Conflict: Material vs. Ideological Dimensions

Policy conflicts may arise from material interests or ideological beliefs, each shaping the intensity and direction of disputes (Mock & Homer-Dixon, 2015). Raymond and Welch (2014) suggest that ideological conflicts often resist compromise due to deeply held values, while material conflicts are rooted in tangible concerns like resources and livelihoods. In the Malioboro case, vendor interviews conducted in 2024 highlight that the conflict is largely material. Most vendors cited income loss, ranging from 50% to 90%, as their main grievance post-relocation to Teras Malioboro 1 and 2. Reduced foot traffic, disconnection from Malioboro's commercial flow, and unfamiliarity of the new sites contributed to these losses. As one vendor put it, "Here we sell more to each other than to actual tourists." Though some ideological concerns emerged, such as the loss of historical and symbolic space, these were secondary to livelihood struggles. Mizes (2021) links such relocation policies to neoliberal urban governance, which prioritizes spatial order over inclusivity.

During the interviews, several vendors in Teras Malioboro 2 described dramatic declines in their livelihoods. One vendor estimated that "since I moved to Teras Malioboro 2, my income has dropped by around fifty to seventy-five percent. On the sidewalk in Malioboro I could still rely on passing tourists; here, especially on this floor, people just don't come". The other vendor recalled that "some days are so quiet that I go home with nothing. There was one day when I didn't sell a single item from morning until closing time. It feels like my stall is invisible here". Another vendor reflected that, if given the choice, she "would go back to selling on the

sidewalk tomorrow. It was not perfect there, but at least there were buyers. Here inside the building, everything looks more orderly, but our livelihoods feel even more fragile”.

The lack of visibility and poor location have undermined micro-enterprise sustainability. While ideological undertones exist, such as debates around spatial justice and access to public space, vendors’ resistance has been primarily pragmatic—focused on economic survival rather than organized ideological opposition. This case underscores how relocation, even when framed as modernization, can produce exclusion when material realities are neglected.

4.2 Cognitive Characteristics of Conflict

The relocation policy has generated a high-intensity conflict marked by starkly divergent positions. The local government frames the initiative around spatial order and tourism development, while street vendors view Malioboro as vital to their long-term livelihoods. These opposing interests reflect the kind of deep value-based divergence described by Weible & Heikkila (2017), where policy positions persist and resurface across different phases of conflict. Vendors argue that relocation disconnects them from the foot traffic and economic opportunities of Malioboro Street, threatening their financial stability. This perceived material loss is central to the conflict. According to Weible & Heikkila (2017), such perceived threats to one's policy position are key triggers of escalating disputes.

Moreover, the government's top-down approach, with limited dialogue or compromise, has reinforced perceptions of exclusion. Vendors interpret the unilateral implementation of the policy as evidence of bias, increasing their sense of threat and opposition. Cobb & Elder (1972) similarly note that perceived stakes and losses heighten actors’ sense of conflict. In this case, both parties remain entrenched. The government insists on enforcement, while vendors resist, believing their economic survival is at stake. These strong threat perceptions and mutual unwillingness to compromise underscore the conflict’s cognitive intensity.

4.3 Behavioral Indicators of Conflict

The conflict escalated in July 2023 when hundreds of vendors staged protests in front of Teras Malioboro 2, opposing the relocation and lack of public involvement. This shift from passive discontent to active mobilization signals high-intensity conflict, as outlined by Weible & Heikkila (2017). Vendors organized demonstrations, displayed protest banners, engaged media, and submitted formal demands for policy review and compensation. Media coverage described the unrest as “ricuh PKL Malioboro,” emphasizing its symbolic weight and social visibility (Tirto.id, tempo.co, iNews, 2024). The involvement of legal aid organizations and civil society groups further signaled the widening scope of resistance. However, the government's limited response, relying on public justification, security surveillance, and minimal engagement, reinforced feelings of marginalization. These dynamics resemble other relocation disputes in Indonesia, such as in Bojonegoro and Madiun, where exclusionary practices and weak participation led to organized resistance (Agustina et al., 2024; Prasetya & Komara, 2019).

Despite the intensity, protests eventually faded—not because of compromise, but due to official silence and vendor fatigue. This aligns with PCF's notion that unresolved conflicts may enter a dormant phase, where tensions remain under the surface. Without meaningful resolution, the risk of renewed conflict persists, particularly if vendors' grievances continue to be ignored or reignited by new policy actions.

4.4 Coalition Dynamics

The conflict gave rise to two opposing coalitions in two different values, environment and urban entrepreneur. It reaffirms Bromley (2000) opinion about the contradiction of values in street vending. The **conservative coalition**, comprising local government, tourism authorities, and spatial planners, prioritized spatial order and regulatory enforcement. In contrast, the **progressive coalition**, consisting of street vendors, civil society groups, and urban justice NGOs, advocated for participatory policymaking and protection of informal livelihoods. These coalitions diverged not only in goals but also in worldviews: the former viewed vendors as disruptive to urban order, while the latter framed them as integral to the city's socio-economic fabric.

A distinctive factor in Yogyakarta's context is the symbolic authority of **Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X**, who holds dual roles as governor and cultural monarch. The Javanese expression "*pejah gesang nderek sultan*" which means "in life or death, we follow the Sultan" captures the deep-rooted loyalty among citizens. Although the Sultan did not intervene directly, his implicit endorsement of the policy acted as a powerful moral-political signal. For many, this discouraged prolonged opposition, despite personal frustrations. Thus, the Sultan's symbolic leadership played a subtle but significant role in **containing protest intensity**, functioning as an informal yet effective mechanism of conflict moderation unique to Yogyakarta's sociopolitical landscape.

4.5 Episodes of Policy Conflict in the Malioboro Street Vendor Relocation

The Policy Conflict Framework conceptualises policy conflict as unfolding through discrete but interconnected episodes, each characterised by particular combinations of cognitive and behavioural conflict and conditioned by contextual factors. In the Malioboro case, at least five major episodes can be distinguished between the formal decision to relocate street vendors and the more recent disputes surrounding a proposed "second relocation".

Episode 1: Announcement and framing of relocation (late 2021 – January 2022)

In the first episode, the provincial government and the Sultan publicly framed the relocation of 1,838 street vendors from the Malioboro sidewalks to two new facilities, Teras Malioboro 1 and 2 as part of a broader effort to "beautify" the city and support the nomination of Yogyakarta's philosophical axis as a UNESCO World Heritage site. A *wilujengan* ceremony on 26 January 2022 symbolically marked the beginning of the relocation process and was used to communicate that operational costs at the new locations would be waived for one year. At this point, conflict remained mostly **cognitive**: some vendors voiced worries about losing spontaneous sidewalk customers, but public opposition was muted by the strong cultural authority of the Sultan and the promise of improved facilities.

Episode 2: Mass relocation and emerging grievances (February – mid 2022)

The second episode centred on the mass relocation itself. On 1 February 2022, vendors were formally prohibited from trading along the Malioboro sidewalks and instructed to move to Teras Malioboro 1 and 2. As vendors settled into their new stalls, many began to experience sharp declines in sales, especially those located on upper floors and back rows of Teras Malioboro 2. By mid-2022, local media and legal aid organisations documented widespread complaints about lost income, "dead" corners with very low footfall, and inadequate ventilation and drainage. Cognitive conflict intensified as vendors increasingly perceived the policy as threatening their livelihoods and unfairly distributing costs and benefits, but behavioural conflict remained limited to petitions, informal meetings, and media statements rather than large-scale protest.

Episode 3: Institutionalised discontent and early mobilisation (late 2022–2023)

In the third episode, vendor discontent became more structured and visible. Studies and news reports highlighted that a large share of Teras Malioboro 2 vendors reported significant income losses and some had temporarily closed their stalls or returned to informal peddling on the sidewalks. Vendor representatives submitted complaints to the municipal council (DPRD) and sought support from civil society organisations. Towards the end of 2023, demonstrations by Teras Malioboro 2 vendors drew attention to declining turnover and fears of being displaced again. Behavioural conflict thus moved from low-key lobbying to organised protest, while authorities tried to downplay the problems as temporary “fluctuations” in sales.

Episode 4: Escalation around the proposed second relocation (mid–late 2024)

The fourth episode was triggered by the city’s plan to relocate Teras Malioboro 2 vendors once more to streets such as Ketandan and Beskalan as part of a “second relocation” package scheduled for 2025. In July 2024, hundreds of vendors from Teras Malioboro 2 held demonstrations at DPRD DIY and at the relocation sites, protesting both the plan and the lack of open dialogue. Tensions escalated into physical confrontations when protests near Teras Malioboro 2 led to pushing and shoving with security officers and the temporary closure of one of the gates. This episode illustrates a clear increase in behavioural conflict intensity, from petitions and hearings to street demonstrations, attempts to reclaim the sidewalks, and clashes with enforcement agencies, while cognitive conflict remained high as vendors framed the second relocation as “relocation of the already relocated”.

Episode 5: Polarisation and contested authority (late 2024–early 2025)

A fifth episode emerged as vendor groups themselves became internally divided over whether to accept the second relocation. Reports from 2024 and early 2025 describe demonstrations where some vendors and allied groups demanded living allowances (jadup), transparent allocation of new stalls, and fair investigation of alleged irregularities in stall distribution, while other business actors in the Malioboro area confronted or even attacked protesting vendors. Conflict thus became multi-polar rather than simply a dyad between “government” and “vendors”. The palace and government were pushed to reassert their authority as cultural mediators, while vendor associations faced growing challenges in maintaining internal cohesion. From a PCF perspective, this episode highlights how the interaction of urban informality, fragmented representation, and strong cultural authority can produce complex patterns of both conflict escalation and partial de-escalation across successive episodes.

Taken together, these episodes show that the Malioboro relocation was not a single, one-off policy event, but a sequence of conflict episodes over several years. Each episode altered actors’ perceptions of threat, fairness, and feasible compromise, while also reconfiguring coalitions and available repertoires of action. The PCF’s focus on episodes of policy conflict is therefore useful for tracing how grievances over livelihood losses, the symbolism of Malioboro, and the authority of the Sultan intertwined over time, rather than treating “relocation” as a static decision point.

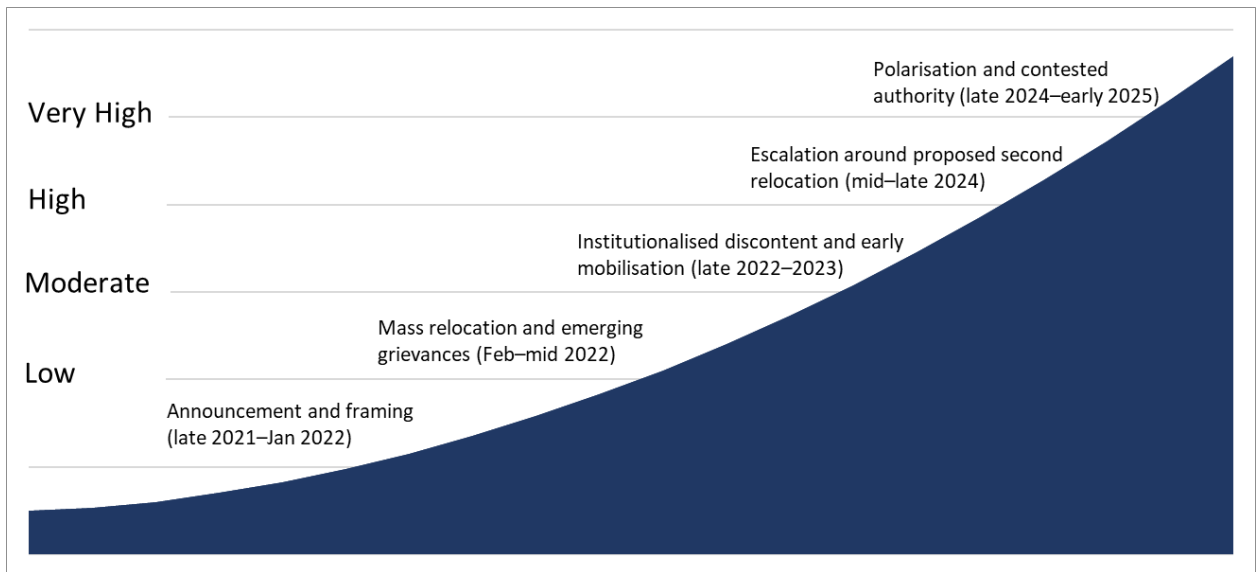


Figure 3. Episodes of Policy Conflict

Figure 3 visualises the five main episodes of policy conflict in the Malioboro street vendor relocation and their relative intensity over time. Conflict intensity is low in the first episode, when the relocation is framed as beautification and heritage protection under the Sultan’s authority, and increases in the second and third episodes as vendors experience income losses and begin to organise complaints and small protests. The fourth episode marks a clear escalation, with high-intensity conflict triggered by the proposed “second relocation” of Teras Malioboro 2 vendors, including mass demonstrations and confrontations with security forces. In the fifth episode, conflict remains at a high level but becomes more fragmented and multi-polar, as divisions among vendor groups and other business actors increasingly challenge both governmental and cultural authority. This pattern illustrates how the Malioboro case consists of a sequence of escalating policy conflict episodes rather than a single relocation event.

4.6 Consequences of the Conflict

The relocation conflict has largely favored government objectives aligned with conservative urban planning. The perceived threat to vendor livelihoods intensified policy divergence and reduced willingness to compromise, leading the conflict to its peak. Shifting coalition dynamics further reflect how contextual factors have shaped the trajectory of escalation.

The policy has produced multiple consequences: (1) **Economic decline**, with many vendors reducing hours or closing businesses; (2) **Loss of trust** in local authorities due to lack of inclusion; (3) **Social fragmentation** among vendors, split between those adapting and those resisting; (4) **Spatial exclusion**, reinforcing inequality through displacement from prime public space (Mizes, 2021). While the policy achieved some formal goals, improved pedestrian flow, visual order, and regulated vendor activity, these gains came at the cost of intensified social tension and eroded legitimacy. The root of the conflict lies not only in flawed execution (e.g., low foot traffic) but also in structural exclusion from planning processes.

In conclusion, although the policy was implemented administratively, it has yet to gain **sociopolitical legitimacy** among its core stakeholders. The following table summarizes how the components of the Policy Conflict Framework (PCF) apply to this case, consolidating field insights across multiple dimensions of the conflict.

Table 1: Policy Conflict Framework Applied to Malioboro Street Vendor Relocation Case

PCF Component	Malioboro Case Illustration
Divergence in Policy Position	Government promotes spatial order and tourism enhancement; Vendors prioritize income stability and economic access.
Perceived Threat	Vendors perceive the relocation as a threat to their livelihoods and visibility; the government perceives vendors as obstructing public space and tourism appeal.
Unwillingness to Compromise	Vendors demanded policy reversal or revision; Government continued enforcement without accommodating key concerns.
Behavioral Expression	Demonstrations in 2022–2023; protest banners; media coverage labeling the events as “ricuh”; legal support from NGOs.
Coalition Dynamics	Progressive coalition: street vendors, legal aid institutions, urban NGOs. Conservative coalition: local government, tourism planners
Contextual Setting	Relocation occurs in Yogyakarta's cultural and symbolic axis; the Sultan’s implicit endorsement moderates overt resistance (“pejah gesang nderek sultan”).
Conflict Output	Policy was implemented with minimal revision; protest faded without resolution; legitimacy of policy remains contested.

5 Summary: Coping with High Intensity Conflict

5.1 Conclusion

The relocation of street vendors to Teras Malioboro highlights a fundamental clash between government priorities for spatial order and vendors’ need for economic survival. While the policy advanced urban aesthetic goals, many vendors experienced sharp income losses and visibility decline. Limited and uneven participation sustained perceptions of exclusion, fueling resistance and prolonging the dispute. Over time, conflict intensity shifted: initial resistance was high, followed by partial de-escalation through informal dialogues and modest support, consistent with the PCF insight that feedback mechanisms can either escalate or mitigate conflict depending on institutional responsiveness (Heikkila & Weible, 2017). Overall, the case underscores that urban transformation must embed socio-economic considerations and credible voice mechanisms to avoid marginalizing informal actors. Synthesizing the evidence above, we summarize our answers to the three research questions below:

Cognitive & Material Dimensions: Conflict intensity persisted because material losses (sales declines linked to reduced visibility/footfall) combined with cognitive dissonance (a gap between promised benefits and lived outcomes regarding layout, signage, and circulation) sustained high perceived threat and reduced willingness to compromise.

Coalition Frames & Strategies: Two stable coalitions structured the dispute: vendors/allied CSOs framed livelihood security and procedural fairness, while government/planners framed orderly tourism and spatial regulation. Tactically, vendors relied on media advocacy, petitions, and informal negotiation; authorities leveraged administrative channels, design/management control, and symbolic/cultural authority, creating asymmetric access to agenda-setting.

Explanatory Power of PCF: PCF explains episodic escalation and moderation through shifts in positions, perceived threat, and (un)willingness to compromise, with cultural authority

operating as a contextual moderator that dampens overt confrontation without resolving underlying material/procedural grievances.

5.2 Implication

Viewing the Malioboro case through the PCF lens clarifies the levers to de-escalate high-intensity conflict while preserving policy goals. Practically, participation must be embedded across the policy cycle and tied to measurable design changes that restore vendor viability. Cities should invest not only in physical relocation but also in social and governance infrastructure to sustain legitimacy and reduce perceived exclusion. Accordingly, these implications resolve into a set of specific, testable interventions: [1] Wayfinding & circulation redesign to restore footfall (visibility corridors, anchor-point routing, clear signage), monitored with footfall counters and stall-level sales logs. [2] Targeted transition assistance indexed to verified turnover decline over a defined period (e.g., 3–6 months, phased and reviewable). [3] Formal vendor representation in site management and design revisions (scheduled design reviews; documented responses to vendor proposals).[4] Institutionalized grievance mechanism with service-level agreements (e.g., acknowledge ≤ 3 days; resolve ≤ 14 days) and transparent case tracking.[5] Capability support (training for digital markets, packaging, and pricing) to complement spatial fixes, prioritizing the most visibility-constrained aisles.

The study extends PCF to informal urban governance by specifying how material, cognitive, and procedural threat dimensions interact with coalitional framing and cultural authority to shape intensity during implementation, contexts often overlooked in traditional PCF applications.

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Data Availability

The qualitative datasets (audio files, transcripts, and field notes) generated and analyzed during this study are not publicly available to protect participants' confidentiality, but de-identified excerpts supporting the findings are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request. Data sharing is subject to institutional ethical requirements and participants' consent.

Limitations

Findings derive from a single case in 2024 with a modest sample and do not include longitudinal sales records for all vendors. While triangulation with observations and documents increases credibility, causal claims about design features and sales should be interpreted cautiously. Future work can pair PCF with micro-spatial footfall counters and experimental signage/layout trials.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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