

Towards Unbiased Resolution for Conflict between Street Vendors and Local Governments: Evidence from Central Java, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Current research into conflicts between street vendors (SVs) and city/local governments (C/LGs) is limited. This study investigates the factors that cause conflict in urban areas and seeks to find a holistic resolution by addressing the root causes. The study uses an ethnographic approach to identify five issues where nine root causes of conflict rise. The reasons include a difference in goals, interests, values, perceptions, economic motive; lack of communication; abuse of authority for maximising self-interest; the limited participation of SVs in decision making; and poverty. The findings indicate that the C/LG need to establish effective communication that involves SVs in decision making on issues threatening their livelihood. They could establish a communication forum based on face-to-face dialogue, revise regional regulations to accommodate SVs' interests, exercise discretion in implementing regional regulations, and support SVs.

Keywords: conflict, conflict resolution, government action, local laws, street vendors.

Introduction

Street vending is usually small-scale selling activities in public areas. As part of the self-employed sector, street vending provides a means of livelihood for many workers who have lost their jobs following economic crises (Moniruzzaman, Amin, & Alam, 2018). The controlling of informal street vending through C/LG policy actions can result in the collapse of SVs' livelihood and create conflicting relationships between SVs and the C/LG.

There is a lack of research into the factors that cause conflict between SV and C/LGs. However, there are some studies related to street vending that focus on a range of issues. Some focus on how street selling is an essential source of income for the urban poor and unskilled households (Tshuma & Jari, 2013), women's economic autonomy (Mashambe, 2017), and for creating profitability (Tsai, 2018). Further studies focus on the entrepreneurial implications of street vending, an investigation into vending as an expression of empathy (Estrada, 2016), and the problems impeding the street vending segment's governance (Njaya, 2014). Other studies

emphasise marginalised SVs' empowerment (Syamsir, 2016) and the relationship between the district government and SVs (Batréau & Bonnet, 2015). More studies highlight the relationship between street vending and urban space usage (Sharma & Konwar, 2014) and social capital for survival (Njaya, 2014). However, these studies do not provide enough content related to conflict resolution.

The conflict between SVs and C/LG stems from government actions and their treatment of SVs. Some studies on the impact of policy on conflict issues investigate the overall idea of conflicts through the polarity of public opinion (Iyengar, Sood & Lelkes, 2012), distinctive ethical and moral reinforcements in policymaking (Welch, 2014), contrasts in framing policy successes and failures (McConnell, 2010), cooperation (Stefano et al., 2010), and the power of stakeholders (Weible & Heikkila, 2017). However, in these studies, policy conflicts remain in the theoretical background, and they mainly focus on other subjects. Although some studies paid attention to conflict issues and provide diverse options for conflict resolutions (Babbitt & Hampson, 2011; Brück, Naudé, & Verwimp,

2011; Wani, 2011), they do not reveal sufficient empirical information concerning the solutions based on the root causes of conflict.

This study focuses on the post-reform era in the City of Semarang, a capital city of Central Java Province (CJP) and Solo Raya (Great Solo), which includes the City of Surakarta and six other Regencies. These constitute eight out of 35 Cities/Regencies in CJP, and they are areas where street vending has seen a mushrooming effect and conflicts between SVs and C/LGs are common.

Background

The intense relationship between SVs and their C/LG is evident in government policymaking, and a lack of integration of SVs in decision making has detrimental implications. The collection of daily payments and enforcement of rules can cause conflict between vendors and the government. When interactions in society are intense, conflicts are inevitable. The challenges encountered by recent conflict resolution practices underline the lack of a fully comprehensive and holistic approach.

Many of the SVs grew in CJP, mainly Semarang city and *Solo Raya*, including Surakarta (Solo) city and the other regencies of Boyolali, Sukoharjo, Wonogiri, Sragen, Karanganyar and Kalaten. Some were there before the post-1998 era of reform, but numbers have increased dramatically since the economic crisis in 1997. The rapid growth of SVs in CJP, particularly Semarang and the Great Solo, occurred from 2000–2005. It was the beginning of the reform era and included around 20,000 SVs from the previous regime. At that time, SVs felt free to determine where they operated their informal businesses. The number increased from year to year in line with increased levels of poverty. SVs living in poverty were more focused on surviving through their economic activities than in the broader political world.

At the same time, the dismissal of workers from private corporations in CJP occurred sporadically. Data from Manpower and the Transmigration Office of Central Java Province showed layoffs of approximately 20,000 workers in 1998-2003; 10,000 in 2005; 8,301 in 2008; and 2,490 in 2015. About 70 per cent of total dismissals were in Great Solo and Semarang.

The World Bank statistics show that in 2018, 25.9 million persons among the Indonesian population were poor, and 48 million were susceptible to dropping back

into poverty (Sari, 2020). About 25.1 million out of the combined number entered the informal sector, and 4.8 million of those ran an informal street vending business in the 35 Cities/Regencies of CJP (Pujangga, 2018). It is estimated that currently, 1 million SVs are running their business in Semarang City and Great Solo.

The C/LG tend to see SVs negatively and believe they are part of an increasing urban slum, rather than appreciating the economic benefits they provide. This situation has encouraged the C/LGs to control them firmly through regional regulations. Between 2006–2014, the authorities implemented a structured program that included relocation, prohibition and eviction, increased regulations, and daily fees. From 2015 and the following year, C/LGs continued to control and regulate SVs' growth and activities. During that time, conflicts between SVs and the C/LG were frequent, and solutions offered by the C/LG were not based on the root causes. As a result, disputes between SVs and their C/LG continue to occur. The government solutions are not practical, and they do not yet have the right solution to overcome it completely.

Research into the causal factors of conflict between SVs and C/LG is rare. This research is necessary because it investigates factors that cause conflict in further depth and provides a holistic problem-based conflict resolution strategy. The study identifies and discusses the causes of conflict between SVs and C/LG. It focuses on C/LG's policy actions, regulations, the treatment of SVs. Diverse areas of conflict are identified and discussed, and this paper describes the core factors behind disputes and offers solutions based on the root causes. This study emphasises the following five issues/cases where conflict may arise from the interaction between SVs and their C/LG: (i) policy implementations through relocation, evictions and prohibitions; (ii) communication between the C/LG and SVs; (iii) C/LG services to protect all stakeholders; (iv) resource distribution and daily fee collection; and (v) the decision-making approach.

Theoretical Review

Conflict is a dynamic process that does not occur abruptly, and it takes time to increase and progress through several phases (Spaho, 2013). Conflicts can be destructive when not managed effectively (Omisoro & Abiodun, 2014). In contrast, well-managed conflicts promote harmony, well-being, and justice (Huong, Zheng, & Fujimoto, 2016). Conflict resolution encourages innovation and creativity through a variety of ideas (Wobodo, 2019). Conflicts are

also essential in generating new government policies, actions, and behaviours (Samuel & Chukwuma, 2019; Weible & Heikkila, 2017). Conflict refers to any form of disagreement, opposition, or friction between two or more individuals or parties (Abiodun, Dele, & Abimbola, 2015; Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012). Conflict can also come in disputes, protests, demonstrations, anger, and other harmful behaviours (Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012). In this study, conflict is defined as any form of disagreement, opposition, friction, dispute, protest, demonstration, anger, and other harmful actions between two or more individuals or parties.

Sources of conflicts vary and include differences in personalities, backgrounds, perceptions, emotions, and attitudes (Abiodun, Dele, & Abimbola, 2015). Conflict can also arise because of a clash of goals (Bukari, 2013), interests or values, and incompatible identity issues (Samuel & Chukwuma, 2019; Weible & Heikkila, 2017). Other sources of conflict may include the non-involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process (Samuel & Chukwuma, 2019; Serrat, 2011, Weible & Heikkila, 2017), economic motives (Charles & Osah, 2018), poverty and power imbalances (Tobias, Mair, & Barbosa-Leiker, 2013), power abuse (Rangelov & Theros, 2012), and ineffective or weak communications (Huan & Yazdanifard 2012). Therefore, in this study, the causes of conflict between SVs and C/LG include the following factors: abuse of power, ineffective communication, differences in goals/interest/values, poverty, lack of involvement in the decision-making process, and a difference in perceptions.

As each conflict is unique, it is essential to identify the reasons they occur and a suitable course of action. Conflict is resolved when the core causes are recognised and addressed (Bukari, 2013). Conflict resolution is about ideas, theories, and methods that improve the understanding of conflict, reduce violence, improve political processes, and balance interests (Federman & Castel, 2019; Wani, 2011). However, conflict resolution is not intended to eliminate conflict since it is impossible and undesirable to do so; it is meant to alter a violent situation into a peaceful process. Fair resolution of conflict in this study implies that solutions are based on the root causes of conflict. They are practicable for those involved in the conflict, and the controlled or the ruled party will follow them because they are functional, reasonable, and satisfying (Ariana, Kazemian, & Mohammadi, 2020; Moura & Teixeira, 2010). Scholars have proposed conflict resolution methods such as arbitration, adjudication, bargaining, persuasion, communication, reconciliation, cooperation, encapsulation, negotiation, and

mediation (Wani, 2011). Also, the exploration of dialogue strategy and improvement of communication networks (Adeyemi & Ademilua, 2012), the fulfilment of basic human needs and resolving collective fears (Doucey, 2011), poverty reduction, and entrepreneurship (Tobias, Mair, & Barbosa-Leiker, 2013). One of the informal sector forms of entrepreneurship are street vending activities; they are prevalent in underdeveloped countries, and, for many participants, they provide an occupation and poverty alleviation (Garg, Kulkarni, & Garg, 2014). The bulk of conflict resolution theories cannot be formulated unless the conflict source is identified, recognised, and defined correctly.

Methodology

This study consists of descriptive qualitative research, as opposed to the more common exploratory statistical hypothesis-testing. The study also utilises an ethnographic method that involves three phases of fieldwork carried out from June-November 2016, July-November 2017, and February-June 2018 using participant observation. Data collection involved watching people, talking with them about what they were doing, thinking, and saying. This approach was designed to gain an insight into the SVs' viewpoints and how they understood their world. It includes triangulation through several methods to gain different perspectives. The people who were approached were selected based on purposive and snowball sampling. This approach was combined with interviews with local people who were not SVs and detailed content analyses of secondary research and regional newspapers.

Combined with observations, the study also uses in-depth interviewing. During the interviews, the researcher's questions were presented as part of a discussion rather than a pre-structured questionnaire. The researcher was actively involved and encouraged the respondent to discuss the research issue.

There were 281 SVs who met the criteria of having worked as SVs for at least five years by 2016, had been evicted and relocated once or more. Twenty-seven of them were leaders of SV groups, and the rest were members. Some C/LG officials, daily fee payment collectors, local people, traditional market leaders, pedestrians, and vehicle drivers were selected as informants.

The validity of this research was achieved by data source triangulation and methods triangulation. All participant identities are confidential.

Results and Discussion

Policy Implementation through Relocation, Eviction and Prohibition

Policy implementation represents local laws' execution, including techniques for control (Khan & Khandaker, 2016). C/LG bureaucracies agreed that SVs' existence is a problem, perceiving them as a disturbance to other citizens that undermine the city's development and beauty. They also tended to share the same understanding of the consequence; the SVs must be controlled. In controlling SVs, C/LG tended to implement one of three policy options, including relocation to a predesignated area; removal justified by claiming the area occupied by SVs is declining, and prohibition because the area is restricted according to the Regional Regulations on the Arrangement and Development of SVs (RRADSV). The Regional Regulations concerning City/Regency Spatial Plans (RRC/RSP) limit or control SVs' livelihood in public areas.

The study showed 278 out of 281 (or 98.93 %) reject the relocation system, and 100 % rejected both eviction and prohibition against SVs in specific locations. SVs reject relocation policies because the areas chosen by the government are far away from the public. The relocation policy has forced the SVs to adjust to new environments, with the same merchandise or sometimes changing the merchandise. It can take between eight and 12 months for SVs to adapt to a new environment. During the transition process, around 40 per cent of the relocated SVs do not survive.

The study presents that the implementation of government policy does not satisfy SVs. These bad policy decisions lead to conflict (Maselesele, 2010) between SVs and C/LG. The study also shows that because the SVs reject the relocation program, which affects their livelihood negatively, there is disagreement among the majority of SVs and C/LG. The difference in interest among the two parties causes conflict (Peters, 2012).

Similarly, SVs view evictions and prohibition negatively because government actions force them to find alternative locations by themselves, which can be difficult. The government is not an influential factor when SVs decide to enter the street vending sector. Among those who enter the street vending sector, 213 out of 281 (or 75.8%) pursue this line of work due to the termination of previous employment, and so they can maintain family life. The government's action to prohibit or remove SVs can be harmful to SVs because its effect may destroy their

future and marginalise them. Usually, the C/LG remove and restrict SVs based on the regional regulations representing different values. Most of the SVs' values are guided by opportunistic behaviour; they prefer to use public areas to create more profits, although at others' expense. The differences in values between SVs and C/LG creates conflict (Peters, 2012).

SVs are aware of C/LG regulations governing zones during certain hours. However, most 279 out of 281 SVs (or 99.29%) do not follow the government regulations because they are during peak business hours when customers are abundant. The government are fully aware that SVs break these rules, and the SVs desire tolerance to let them operate freely. However, most SVs (267 out of 281, or 95%) feel that C/LG's tolerance of SVs is minimal. The government issues warning letters to SVs instructing them not to violate the rules of the C/LG. Most SVs want the government to provide ample space and time for them to carry out their activities because the number of customers they receive determines their income. They recognise that when they do not make sales, there is the possibility of hunger and increased poverty, so they do not want authorities to adhere to the law. SVs also claimed that their poverty was exploited by the authorities, the business sector, and elite families supported by the C/LG. Moreover, local people were encouraged by C/LG through the leaders of *Rukun Warga* (village association) but below the village level, and the leader of the *Rukun Tetangga* (neighbourhood association), the lowest level of government administration, to oppose SVs and force them to relocate.

SVs admit that conflict could be reduced if the government allowed them to participate in informal economic activities in specific locations authorised by the C/LG. However, the government claims that it does show tolerance to SVs by providing three warning letters and by giving SVs a grace period of several weeks to remove themselves from prohibited locations before any action is taken.

The study shows that instead of removing the SVs, who are poor and politically powerless, they need stimulation and support because their powerlessness is the factor causing them to remain in poverty (Nussbaum, 2011; Schweiger & Cabezas, 2017). Persistent poverty may lead to conflict (Tobias, Mair, & Barbosa-Leiker, 2013). Many scholars suggest that employment and income distribution can be reduced by introducing and promoting an urban informal sector (Asian Development Bank, 2011; Williams & Lansky, 2013). Thus, an informal sector, mainly the street vending sector, is a vital source of employment

and income for the poor, a seedbed of local entrepreneurship, and a potent instrument in the campaign to combat poverty and social exclusion. Therefore, encouragement from the informal sector is an essential policy since the C/LG cannot provide adequate formal employment. Unfortunately, government agencies have disdain towards the informal sector as an abnormality, a cause of disturbance, and an impediment to contemporary wealth advancement (Paskarina et al., 2017; Widjajanti & Wahyono, 2018).

There is also a difference in perception between SVs and the C/LG. The C/LG has tried to be tolerant towards the SVs to use the restricted area for a specific time, but the SVs perceive the C/LG tolerance as limited. The study also shows a strong economic motivation among the SVs to get profits from their informal business to the extent that their activities are at others' expense. A difference in perception (Abiodun, Dele, & Abimbola, 2015), economic motives (Charles & Osah, 2018), and attempting to improve economic efficiency (Hegre, Oneal, & Russett, 2010; Keshk, Reuveny, & Pollins, 2010) undermines others and causes conflict.

Communication between C/LG and SVs

Communication is conveying information from one or more persons to one or more other persons or from one place to another (Deep, Salleh, & Othman, 2017). It is the process by which ideas in one's mind are transmitted to others' minds (Nöth, 2013).

Communication between C/LGs and SVs is characterised by poor communication that results in misunderstandings. SVs are compelled to obey the Regional Regulations about where they are and cannot run businesses. They have to pay a daily fee and have a license for their businesses. If they break the rules, they are punished. One of the primary compulsions SVs are worried about is the obligation to not operate their business in several strategic areas, including the green belt/major arterial roads, in the vicinity of monuments, river embankments, city gardens, cultural preserves, military cemeteries, as well as schools and places of worship. Most SVs (267 out of 281, or 95%) stated that when the government determines that a violation has been made, they send written warning letters. It is sometimes sent to the chairman of the association or directly to the SV concerned. The government claims that before evicting SVs, it sends three warning letters. Most SVs who receive warning letters panic or feel intimidated and ask the leader of SVs or other community members for help. The warnings can create

rumours and concern among SVs and strengthen the sense of solidarity in opposition to government actions. Sixty-seven SVs who received warning letters stated they only received the first letter and were evicted before receiving the second and third letters.

The second and third warning letters do not reach the relevant SVs because they tend to move around frequently and cannot always be found at the same address. Warning letters are often given to the SVs' friends who can lose or forget to pass them along to the intended receiver. In the absence of written evidence, the SV is understandably reluctant to believe hearsay and does not act upon the warning. In this situation, it is difficult to avoid conflict because both parties feel they are right. The government distributes the relevant notifications, but the SV thinks they should not be held accountable because they often do not receive them. These situations in which communication includes only a part of the required information and contains uncertain information represents ineffective communication (Hener, 2010).

Another problem is that the government does not effectively communicate new policies or changes to existing policies. It is common for the government to monitor and record the SVs in specific locations without informing them why. The SVs suspect that when this happens, they are about to be moved to another location. When questioned about the matter, the government do not provide reasons for the data collection, which causes suspicion because of the lack of transparency and communication.

All evidence shows that ineffective communication between SVs and C/LGs regarding the warning letters results in misunderstandings and conflicts (Huan & Yazdanifard, 2012). Even poor communication between the two parties may seriously prolong conflicts (Deep, Salleh, & Othman, 2017).

The C/LG Service to Provide Protection for All Stakeholders

The development of the C/LG is part of the National Development Policy, which is concerned with developing people and society, including material and spiritual aspects. The C/LG should recognise that the informal sector, including SVs, is a potential force for advancing the policy.

The C/LGs state in the articles and preamble of the RRADSV that they need to provide protection, legal certainty, guidance, and regulation for the SVs to improve their welfare. However, the Articles of RRADSV also

regulate how SVs should behave in public areas. SVs are compelled to obey local laws concerning where they are allowed to run businesses or are punished if they break the rules. One of the primary compulsions SVs are worried about is the obligation not to operate in several strategic areas. This ambiguous role of the RRADSV created negative SV perceptions, and the details of the RRADSV articles are challenging to understand. There is no consistency between the formal statement of the RRADSV and the actual implementation of it. Most SVs (274 out of 281, or 97.5%) perceived that C/LG regulations are inhumane and threaten their future. They also feel that the government implements rules selectively and does not treat all SVs equally.

However, C/LGs have short-term or annual development work plans and five-year strategic plans as long as they have an elected regional head or mayor in office. The Government Work Plan and Strategic Development Plan refer to Law 25 of the 2004 National Development Planning System. C/LGs plans to provide public services and prioritise areas according to urgency. The programs are based on the central government's commitment to providing services for all citizens.

The C/LG must focus on locations and objectives that meet the region's short and medium-term development plans. A government pilot project encouraged SVs with specific merchandise to attract tourists. The sites included sheltered areas, electricity, water, and waste disposal. However, many SVs were still prohibited from operating freely by the government because they must obey the RRADSV and RRC/RSP. They felt threatened, unfairly treated, and marginalised.

The study shows that the C/LG intended to protect the public by providing conditions under which self-contained activities may be controlled, conditions believed to be detrimental are prohibited, and beneficial activities are encouraged. Such a policy requires a situation where a sector of society conforms to the general law (Theron, 2010; Allsop, 2016). However, if this informal street vending sector is controlled firmly by the formal rule of law, it raises doubts concerning the survival of vulnerable and marginalised SVs. Moreover, although the informal vending sector has grown fast and could alleviate unemployment and poverty (Garg, Kulkarni, & Garg, 2014), it also creates a question of whether regulatory norms should be strictly enforced at the risk of reducing these opportunities.

The study also shows that local laws are inconsistently implemented. The unfair implementation of the law

is worse than no law because it creates confusion and exaggerates conflict. This inconsistency creates disputes over the rules (Magsi, 2014), which causes conflicts between SVs and the C/LG. This situation also represents unbalanced power between SVs (the vulnerable group) and the C/LG (the powerful group). Conflicts occur because of unbalanced power (Bahgat et al., 2017). If the power relations between the C/LG and the SVs are not balanced, the conflict between them will continue. There must be a change in the unequal power relationship between those experiencing conflict and sustainably resolving them (Bahgat et al., 2017).

This study emphasises that the C/LG has goals that nobody should disturb, including SVs because the government must protect all stakeholders. Conversely, the SVs base their activities more on personal goals, which is to obtain as much profit as possible and pay less attention to others' interests. The difference in goals between SVs and C/LG causes conflict (Bukari, 2013).

Resource Distribution and Daily Fee Collection

Law 23/2014, which is replaced by Law 9/2015 concerning regional government, mandated that the C/LG has the autonomy to regulate its administrative territory, maintain and develop resources, provide services for its population, and raise revenue. The provision of kiosks is part of the C/LG's obligation to provide services and distribute resources to SVs. Furthermore, the collection of daily fee payments from SVs is part of the C/LG's efforts to raise revenue.

Every C/LG that relocates SVs has prepared plots of land or kiosks to accommodate them. Some C/LGs always prepare more parcels of land or kiosks than the number of registered SVs. For example, in the case of relocation in Surakarta and Sragen, the number of SVs in Surakarta relocated to Notoharjo is 989, and the city government provided 1,018 kiosks for them. However, the kiosks in *Pujasera* of Sragen were initially prepared for SVs, but they were all given to others suspected to have links to public officials. In many cases, the stalls or land are left empty, sometimes for up to a year. The stalls were empty because they were already owned by officials who asked for rations despite not having trading skills, or they did not intend to use them for personal use, such that many people did not know of its possession. Thus, the stalls were not rented to relocated SVs but instead to outside traders with significant capital. Other C/LGs provided fewer kiosks than the number of relocated SVs. For example, the Local Government of Klaten provided only

48 stalls in the City Forest for 80 SVs operating on Bali Street. The City Government of Semarang provided only 45 kiosks in the traditional market of Karimata for more than 200 SVs on Kartini Street. In order to have the stalls, the SVs tried to approach the officials. The C/LG sometimes also co-opted SVs' influential leaders by distributing opportunities for personal profits in return for loyalty and support and used them to influence others. Those with close links to officials tended to be accommodated, but those without tended to be excluded. Although the C/LG occasionally offers other new locations to the SVs without a kiosk in the determined place for relocation, they were not well prepared. Such that SVs compete with their friends to get the expected stalls.

Most SVs (271 out of 281, or 96.44%) know that corruption exists in the government. Abuses often occur in the distribution of locations for relocated SVs. The government provided plots or kiosks that far exceed the number of SVs registered as recipients. The SVs also knew that those running the additional stalls were not registered SVs. Many plots or kiosks were left unoccupied because they were owned and used by private individuals or sold to other parties.

Similarly, SVs also noticed that as the C/LG provides kiosks than required for the relocated SVs. The SVs often approached officials in the hope of getting a stall. Those with a close relationship have more success than others, and the availability is limited. As a result, there was an opinion among SVs that the distribution of plots or kiosks to SVs was implemented for government officials' benefit.

Likewise, most SVs (272 out of 281, or 96.79%) believe that SVs in new locations get more plots than those in existing areas. Some also get facilities that can generate additional revenue. Those who receive other benefits are usually the people who have close ties to C/LG officials. These ties arouse suspicion among SVs and have led 21 out of 27 leaders of SVs groups to ask officials to engage in debates because they suspected foul play.

Also, 187 out of 281 SVs (or 66.54%) question the transparency of the daily payment system and state that the system is prone to corruption and abuse by officials. They comment that *infaq* payments to mosques are transparent and monitored, and they would like the SV system to be similar. Daily fee collectors do not always provide proof of payment to SVs. As a result, 102 SVs (36.29%) question that the payments are processed correctly. They would like some of the money they pay to the government to be returned to them through services like business facilities, soft loans, and protection for them

to move comfortably and safely. However, this hope has not been fulfilled despite increased public awareness. Additionally, the authorities generally do not respond well to corruption accusations, which further aggravates the situation.

Similarly, many other SVs experienced the impact of power abuse and economic motives conducted by unscrupulous officials as it was happening in Semarang after operating for three months in the new area. They were faced with a situation where they experienced very unhealthy competition. Among these SVs, 61 out of 281 (or 21%) have experienced unfair competition among traders. For example, sometimes, SVs are only allowed to provide food. In contrast, some private enterprises are given special rights by unscrupulous government officials who seek payments. The traders usually have significant capital and can offer other products like drinks. The SVs recognise that the income from drinks is substantial and feel they are losing out on potential profits. The conditions cause frustration among SVs because their income can fall by up to 40% due to unfair restrictions. Unhealthy competition causes conflicts between SVs, third parties, and unscrupulous government officials, who often favour larger businesses.

The evidence shows some public officials maximise personal interests (Bukari, 2013; Weible & Heikkila, 2017; Samuel & Chukwuma, 2019) and profits through power abuses (Rangelov & Theros, 2012) they commit in the relocation program and daily fee collection, which causes conflict.

Decision-Making Approach

The end of the Suharto New Order regime has been followed by the era of *reformasi* (reform). This reform involves the transition towards a broader democracy in Indonesia, where SVs at a grassroots level can speak out in favour of better governance that is responsive to their demands, values, and preferences. A government that can provide consistent and non-inequitable treatment, emancipating them from disregard and embracing them in policy decision-making through dialogue and negotiation. Better governance in *reformasi* also means protecting SVs from corrupt practices and promoting their human rights. Nonetheless, although the reform era with its increasing democracy provides more chances for SVs in Semarang and Solo Raya to speak out or participate in the public decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods, this democracy still has specific limits because the C/LG can exercise some pre-existing legal

limitations. These include local laws on the RRADSV and RRC/RSP limiting or controlling SVs' livelihood in public areas. However, participation in public decision-making that affects SVs' lives is essential to limit the possibility of conflict.

An official government comment representing their domination in decision-making is from their data rather than SVs. He said:

“Those who were speaking in the forum represented the manifested aspirations, and those who were not speaking out represented the latent aspiration that was larger than the manifested aspiration. We have our method to collect data as the basis for us to make decisions.”

Because SVs experience hardships in their locations as they are not allowed by the RRADSV and RRC/RSP to run their businesses in certain public areas, they are very concerned about the law's substance and implementation. As they perceive it, the law does not consider their interests and requires revision. In the post-Suharto era, the SVs' desire to participate in the policy formulation has been high. However, the C/LG underestimates the potential of SVs as stakeholders. It additionally suspects those who speak out were not representing their community but themselves. Consequently, the city government prefers to use its approach rather than accommodate their voice in making decisions because they believe they can accommodate all parties' interests.

Regrettably, SVs have struggled since 2000 to revise the RRADSV and have so far been unsuccessful. One of the reasons is the lack of political will of the C/LG, DPRD, and local people's assembly. The C/LG's promise to accommodate the SV interests turned out to be only lip-service and has never materialised. The C/LG still firmly control the structure and process of participation and has restricted SVs from expressing their interests due to the incompatibility with the priorities of the C/LG and DPRD. This situation has created friction between the SVs and C/LG because the SVs' interests are not accommodated sufficiently.

The study shows that 276 out of 281 SVs (or 98%) are not fully involved in SVs' decision-making processes. The C/LG deliberately limits their involvement because they argue that the decision-making process is the responsibility of DPRD and C/LG. The SVs also claim that the C/LG tends to use a top-down approach when formulating and implementing policies. SVs believe a bottom-up process of decision-making would be far more beneficial for all parties. Five out of 281 (or 2%), who were invited to a forum

of public dialogue performed by the C/LG, reiterated this same tone that although they proposed demands to the C/LG to accommodate SVs interests and empower them, the C/LG did not consider their proposal because it did not match with the C/LG priorities. The C/LG already has its lists of priorities that could not be changed. Their presence was intended to justify that the C/LG plan of policy actions has been communicated to the public, including SVs.

It is clear that the decision-making process is still dominated by the C/LG and carried out through a top-down approach, which centralises the decision-making in the hands of the C/LG and represents their interests. Their agenda often differs from what the SVs demand, prefer and think. The lack of SV involvement in the decision-making process causes conflict between SVs and the C/LG (Welch, 2014).

Finding a Resolution Based on the Root Causes of Conflict

This study found that differences in interests cause conflict between SVs and the C/LG. The C/LG is interested in maintaining the city's cleanliness and beauty. Therefore, the C/LG usually relocates SVs to other locations, evicts them, or prohibits them from operating. Conversely, SVs tend to be opportunistic; they are interested in maintaining a strategic location to obtain the maximum economic benefit.

Furthermore, differences in perceptions between SVs and the C/LG leads to conflict. The C/LG feels that it has given sufficient tolerance to SVs before taking firm action by moving them from prohibited locations. Still, SVs demand more tolerance because they desire the maximum economic benefit in areas that the C/LG prohibits. The SVs cannot easily find other sites because they are also prohibited from doing as such by the established regulations.

Also, conflicts between SVs and the C/LG occur due to ineffective communication between the two parties, especially concerning C/LG actions that adversely affect the SVs. The warning letters often do not reach SVs determined to have violated the rules. Punishment should not occur if the officer carelessly entrusts the letters to the SVs' friends. It must instead be delivered directly to the addressee.

Conflicts between SVs and their C/LG also occur due to an abuse of authority by unscrupulous officials/officers who try to maximise personal interests. These cases arise

primarily in the distribution process of kiosks or plots during relocation and in the collection of daily fees from SVs.

Conflicts between the C/LG and SVs also occur because SVs cannot participate in making decisions concerning their future. Conversely, making decisions further reflects a top-down approach dominated by the C/LG and DPRD.

For differences in interests, goals, values and perceptions between SVs and the C/LG to be eliminated or minimised, it is necessary to conduct intensive and effective communication through face-to-face dialogue. This dialogue should involve all SVs, or at least the SVs' representatives, who truly represent all SVs' interests in a regular forum. If necessary, a facilitator from an impartial academic community could be involved; the aim would be for the facilitator to help SVs express their interests so that the C/LG can understand them. The forum could identify problems and seek solutions in the interaction between SVs and C/LG, which cause current and future conflicts.

The C/LG must also open up formal sector employment to absorb all workers. If this is difficult or impossible to realise, then the C/LG needs to revise RRADSV to accommodate the interests of SVs. They should also alter RRC/RSP to provide adequate legal spaces for SVs to operate.

Since the way the C/LG perceives SVs is guided by the current RRADSV and RRC/RSP, they cannot accommodate SVs' interests. Therefore, the C/LG needs to conduct discretion in implementing these regulations, which can promote justice and minimise conflict. Well-managed conflicts stimulate law and order and improve overall well-being.

However, the study also found that there is one root of the conflict behind all the conflict sources, namely poverty. Because of poverty, unemployed people enter the street vending sector. Unfortunately, street vending activities are considered by the C/LG to be detrimental. SVs realise they have economic motives, but they have no intention to take other people's rights or disturb the public order. They entered the street vending sector to maintain their livelihood due to unemployment and poverty. For SVs, there is no choice to survive except by entering the street vending sector. The C/LG always sees SVs negatively and believes they are part of an increasing urban slum, rather than focusing on the positive aspects of SV like the economic benefits. The SVs existence will continue to be controlled by the application of the current C/LG laws. Consequently, conflicts between SVs and the C/LG will continue to occur.

Conclusions and Implications

There is a conflict in the interaction between C/LG and SVs because of differences in interests, goals, values, and perceptions. The disagreement between the two parties is also due to the absence of effective communication and SV involvement in making decisions that can threaten their survival. The conflict between SVs and the C/LG will also continue to recur because street vending activities to alleviate poverty among the unemployed people are always controlled by the applications of local laws by C/LG.

The following suggestions can be made: the C/LG needs to establish effective communication with SVs so that conflict is more functional. The C/LG needs to involve SVs in making decisions on issues that threaten their lives; a periodic and integrated communication forum based on authentic dialogue (face to face) needs to be established. The C/LG needs to provide sufficient formal sector employment to reduce the rise in informal employment. The C/LG needs to revise its regional regulations to accommodate SVs' interests and provide legal land for SVs to carry out informal economic activities. Finally, if the C/LG is still unable to revise its regional regulations to accommodate the SVs, they should exercise discretion when implementing the regional laws.

Finally, to ensure that conflict does not recur and solve the problem, the C/LG needs to support street vending as an alternative solution to poverty, which is the core factor behind the causes of conflict. Also, street vending entrepreneurship helps the lives of people who live in poverty. Therefore, the SVs need to be backed up and empowered, not opposed. They should be allowed to provide self-employment since the C/LG cannot offer sufficient formal employment. These policies would alleviate poverty and aid with conflict resolution.

Methodologically, this study's limitation is that it only focuses on the phenomenon of conflict in eight regions covering two cities and six regencies in CJP as a sample. The areas were chosen because they are where conflict is more common. Examples from other areas where conflict is sporadic should be included as a comparison. Because disputes are often unique, to find the causes of disputes and resolve them, this research needs to broaden the scope of issues and locations to cover the whole of CJP or take samples from other provinces outside CJP in Indonesia. Moreover, this study was conducted before the Coronavirus disease pandemic hit Indonesia.

Theoretically, future research on the conflict between SVs and C/LGs may include the theory of social capital because

it can explain the quality of relationships between the two groups and how this influences conflicts. Alternatively, future studies may use postmodernism-grounded narrative research because it provides authentic voices of marginalised people and avoids control by dominant groups of people (Wu, Salim and Chano, 2019).

Competing Interests Statement

I declare that no competing interests exist. The funders had no role in study design, data collection and analysis, the decision to publish, and in the manuscript preparation.

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