

Pre-Election Dynamics in Yogyakarta: Conflict Risks and Mitigation Strategies among Political Party Underbows prior to the 2024 Election

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Abstract

This study examines electoral conflict dynamics in Indonesia's Yogyakarta Special Region, which is identified as the second-most vulnerable region nationally, with a score of 63.67% on the 2024 Election Vulnerability Index (Indeks Kerawanan Pemilu/IKP). A significant driver of this vulnerability is the recurrent conflict among political party-affiliated groups or grassroots organisations (often referred to as "underbows"), which tends to escalate during election periods. This research aims to analyse the historical context and decompose the core factors contributing to these conflicts. It also seeks to formulate a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder roadmap for conflict mitigation ahead of the 2024 general elections. Employing a qualitative, phenomenological approach, the study is theoretically grounded in Paul Wehr's (2019) conflict anatomy framework and the patron–client political-economic perspectives developed by Gerry van Klinken & Ward Berenschot (2018). Our findings reveal five key conflict triggers: historical legacies, personal rivalries, "black campaigns" by political parties, ambiguous security strategies, and entrenched political-economic interests. This research contributes

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to scientific knowledge by applying and extending conflict anatomy and patron-client theories to the specific context of Indonesian sub-national electoral violence, providing a nuanced understanding of its underlying mechanisms. Based on these insights, we propose practical resolutions, including enhancing civic political education, strengthening law enforcement, and strategically mapping vulnerable areas. These evidence-based recommendations are critical for fostering a more peaceful, participatory, and democratic electoral environment in Yogyakarta.

Keywords: Political party underbow, conflict, election, Yogyakarta city.

Introduction

In modern democratic politics, the presence of political parties is not merely a hallmark but a structural necessity for the functioning of representative governance. Political parties serve as key vehicles for aggregating interests, articulating public demands, and recruiting political leadership. However, their ability to mobilise support at the grassroots level often depends on their outreach mechanisms, which, in the Indonesian context, have materialised in the form of party-

affiliated wings, commonly referred to as underbow. These organisations are typically composed of loyal sympathisers and serve as extensions of the party's ideological, political, and social agenda within civil society. Their strategic function is cultivating voter bases, mobilising campaign activities, and reinforcing the party's presence within local communities (Febrianty & Ghafur, 2020; Wijayanti & Iswandi, 2021).

Despite their functional significance, Indonesia's legal and institutional framework



has not imposed clear regulations on the formation, number, or scope of activities of these underbow groups. This regulatory vacuum has facilitated their rapid proliferation across party lines. As a result, underbow organisations have increasingly operated in a grey area, blurring the boundaries between political mobilisation and civil society engagement. Their day-to-day activities often resemble those of community-based organisations or NGOs, making distinguishing between civic activism and partisan allegiance difficult. This ambiguity not only complicates the categorisation of underbow groups but also raises concerns about their accountability, transparency, and the potential for instrumentalisation by

political elites for electoral or economic gain. The expansion of underbow entities, unchecked by comprehensive oversight, thus presents both a strength and a vulnerability in Indonesia's evolving democratic ecosystem.

On the other hand, Nope (2019) argues that the performance of party-affiliated wings (underbow) is relatively ineffective, as they often serve as a means for political elites to secure unilateral benefits. However, the tensions that frequently arise before elections are not always directly caused by electoral issues. Clashes are often triggered by underbow movements seeking to expand their spheres of influence to accumulate economic resources (Karim et al., 2019). In fact, in Yogyakarta, economic zones are divided based on the ideology of



party-affiliated wings: red (nationalist) and green (Islamist) (Subandi, 2021).

This situation aligns with the findings of the Masyarakat Anti Kekerasan (anti-violence movement), which recorded that conflicts between political party supporters frequently occur in Yogyakarta before elections. For example, clashes between underbow groups in the Ngabean area once led to the blockade of several neighbourhoods, such as Suronatan and Ngampilan. Moreover, individuals who were not affiliated with any particular party also became victims of mob violence by sympathisers of the Development Party (Wicaksono, 2014). Additionally, Andany (2023) reported a recent incident involving a misunderstanding between the Democratic Party, commonly identified

with the color red and the Development Party, commonly associated with the color green, sympathisers that escalated into a conflict at the Jlagran Intersection, Gedongtengen, Yogyakarta.

The 2024 Election Vulnerability Index (*Indeks Kerawanan Pemilu/IKP*) data released by the Election Supervisory Agency of the Republic of Indonesia (Badan Pengawas Pemilihan Umum Republik Indonesia/Bawaslu RI) recorded that the Special Region of Yogyakarta ranked second among provinces with the highest IKP in the contestation dimension, with an average score of 63.67 per cent (Bawaslu, 2022). Meanwhile, Masyarakat Anti Kekerasan noted that conflicts between political party sympathisers routinely occur in Yogyakarta ahead of elections, such as clashes



between the underbow of the Development Party and the underbow of the Democratic Party (Zakaria, 2014). Arifin (2023) further supports this by highlighting the territorial claims of neighbourhoods as private areas that are inaccessible to rival groups. Furthermore, Karim et al. (2019) provided recommendations regarding the role of the government and election organisers in anticipating conflict-prone areas based on the experience of the 2019 election. However, previous studies remain fragmented and largely focus on isolated case studies of individual election actors or specific events (Okthariza, 2023; Karim et al., 2019). There is a lack of comprehensive understanding of the historical context, spatial patterns, and conflict dynamics involving party-affiliated underbow

organisations (Puadi et al., 2025; Walther et al., 2023). In particular, the academic literature has not yet systematically addressed the role of multi-stakeholder mitigation efforts in reducing electoral conflict. To address these gaps, this study is guided by the following research questions: what is the historical background of the conflicts and the current conditions of the underbow organisations affiliated with Democratic Party and Development Party in the lead-up to the 2024 election in Yogyakarta city? And How do multi-stakeholders contribute to conflict mitigation efforts ahead of the 2024 election to promote peaceful campaigning in Yogyakarta city? In this study, party-affiliated underbow organisations are defined as community-based groups that

engage in social activities and are affiliated with political parties.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore the conflict dynamics between political parties and their affiliated organisations (underbows) in Yogyakarta city. Informants were selected purposively based on their knowledge and involvement in local electoral processes. They included election organisers—namely the Yogyakarta City General Elections Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum/KPU) and the Bawaslu—as well as law enforcement officials, political party representatives and their underbows, and members of the local community.

Fieldwork was conducted over a four-month period, from June to October 2023.

The most intensive phase of primary data collection occurred between August 7 and October 3, 2023, allowing the researcher to engage in sustained observation and in-depth interactions with key actors involved in the electoral context.

Data collection was conducted through a triangulation of sources, combining both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants, utilising a semi-structured interview guide to ensure both consistency and flexibility in eliciting relevant information. Secondary data were collected through a literature review encompassing institutional records, news articles, historical archives, and scholarly publications. The integration of these data



sources aimed to enhance the depth and validity of the research findings. Informants were selected through a non-probability sampling method, specifically employing snowball sampling to trace relevant actors within the political landscape. Initial informants were identified using purposive sampling, targeting individuals with direct experience in and knowledge of the electoral process in Yogyakarta. In total, 19 informants participated in the study, comprising two representatives from electoral bodies (KPU and Bawaslu), one representative from law enforcement (Yogyakarta City Police), two representatives from political parties (Development Party and Democratic Party), one peace election activist, three representatives from political party underbows,

and ten local residents. This diverse composition enabled a comprehensive representation of institutional, political, and community perspectives.

This study is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards, particularly in protecting the confidentiality of informant data. Every participant provided informed consent before engaging in the research, ensuring their awareness and agreement. To prioritise privacy, any potentially identifying information—including names, job titles, and organisational affiliations—has been carefully anonymised. The presentation of data in a generalised format guarantees the protection and security of all individuals involved. This proactive measure mitigates potential risks to informants and preserves the research



findings' integrity and reliability. This study adheres to strict ethical standards, particularly concerning the protection and confidentiality of informant data.

The data analysis in this research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Additionally, the study adopts a phenomenological method, as Creswell (2014) emphasised, which focuses on providing a detailed description of a case and its context. Phenomenology is primarily utilised to explore historical data. To enhance the analysis, the phenomenological approach is integrated with Paul Wehr's (2019) anatomy of conflict theory (Arsyad, 2022) and the patron-client political economy perspective of Berenschot & Van Klinken (2018).

This study uses Paul Wehr's (2019) anatomy of conflict

as its principal analytical framework to systematically dissect the multidimensional nature of conflict. Wehr's (2019) theory is particularly useful for understanding conflict not as an isolated incident but as a process with identifiable stages and structural components. The framework consists of five core analytical elements: the background of the conflict, the parties involved, the issues or problems at stake, the dynamics or escalation patterns of the conflict, and the possible resolutions or de-escalation mechanisms. Each component provides a lens through which conflict can be examined holistically, enabling the tracing of its origins, the mapping of its progression, and the evaluation of potential interventions.

In parallel, this research integrates the patron-client



political economy perspective, particularly as conceptualised by Berenschot & Van Klinken (2018), to deepen the analysis of empirical field data. This perspective emphasises the embeddedness of political relationships within material exchanges and reciprocal obligations, illustrating how economic incentives and informal networks shape political behavior. The patron-client framework (Berenschot, 2018) is especially relevant in the Indonesian context, where electoral politics often depend on informal structures of loyalty, favoritism, and the distribution of resources. Viewed through this lens, political conflicts involving underbow groups are not merely ideological or symbolic but are also closely connected to competition over access to economic opportunities and state resources (Klinken &

Berenschot, 2019).

The data analysis process in this study follows a qualitative, interpretative approach consisting of several sequential stages: data reduction, data interpretation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction phase, raw field data including interview transcripts, archival materials, and observational notes are sorted, selected, and simplified to retain only the most relevant information. This is followed by the interpretation phase, in which the filtered data are linked to the research questions and analytical frameworks. A triangulation process is then employed to cross-verify findings across multiple data sources, thereby enhancing the study's validity and reliability. Finally, the analysis culminates in the formulation

of conclusions that offer descriptive and thematic insights, addressing the core inquiries of the research and contributing to broader theoretical discussions on electoral conflict and political organisation.

Results

Historical roots of conflict and contemporary dynamics of Democratic Party and Development Party underbows in the lead-up to the 2024 election in Yogyakarta city

Rooted in Paul Wehr's (2019) conflict anatomy framework, this analysis systematically dissects the complex political tensions prevalent in Yogyakarta. It undertakes a comprehensive examination of the conflict's genesis, meticulously highlighting the underlying

issues and perennial problems that have emerged over time. This includes an in-depth exploration of the historical, political, and social factors that collectively shape the conflict's intricate context.

Subsequently, this study traces the evolution of the conflict, detailing its sequential phases—from initial escalation to subsequent de-escalation—which have culminated in the discernible undertow observed between the Democratic Party and Development Party in Yogyakarta city. This discussion explicitly explores both the internal dynamics operating within these parties and the external pressures that have influenced the broader political landscape. A thorough classification of the multi-stakeholders engaged in the conflict is then presented. This encompasses



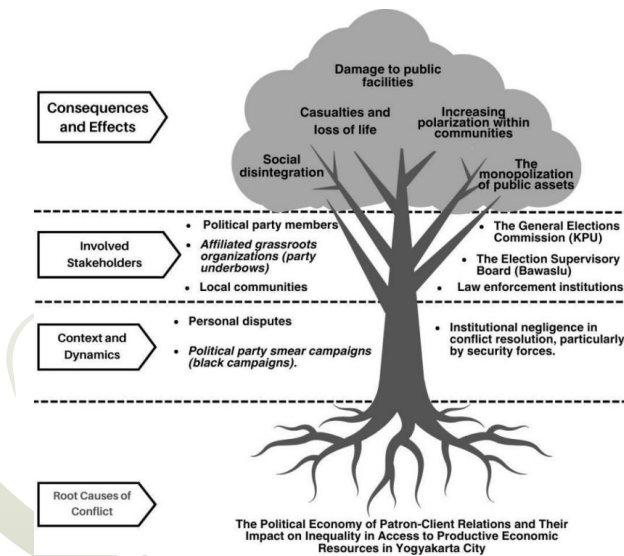
not only the directly involved political parties and their respective supporters but also other actors, both directly and indirectly affected, such as civil society organisations, local government institutions, and various community groups that possess a significant stake in the conflict's resolution. Finally, the paper systematically proposes and critically evaluates several potential conflict resolution strategies. These strategies draw upon both established theoretical frameworks and context-specific approaches, with their applicability and potential to alleviate tensions being thoroughly assessed effectively. The overarching aim is to contribute toward fostering a more stable and cohesive political environment within Yogyakarta city. The conflict between the

underbow of political parties in Yogyakarta city began during the New Order era. These groups originated from factions that later transformed into the underbow of political parties (Karim et al., 2019). At that time, pro-New Order political parties, which were in positions of authoritarian control, also had underbow factions to escalate their political power. One of the underbow elites of a major political party in Yogyakarta, identified as Adam, explained that during that period, both the underbow of the Democratic Party and Development Party, as opposition parties, shared a common enemy, the underbow of the Golkar party, known as Laskar Cakra. After the fall of the New Order regime, several members of Golkar's underbow factions migrated to the underbow of the Democratic Party as

they sought political and legal protection to ensure their safety. This event correlates directly with the frequent clashes between the underbow of the Democratic Party and Development Party, as the conflict shifted. Initially, the conflict was between the underbow of the Democratic Party and Development

Party against the underbow of Golkar, but due to these changes, the conflict turned to one between the underbow factions of Development Party and Democratic Party. "The history of these clashes continued, and eventually, the confrontation shifted to one with Democratic Party." (Interview with Adam, member

Figure 1. Anatomy of political party underbow conflict based on Paul Wehr's conflict anatomy theory



Source: data compiled by the authors, 2023



of Underbow H, 6 September 2023).

In the first element of Paul Wehr's (2019) anatomy of conflict, namely the background element, the author finds that the patron-client political economy is the root cause of the conflict between the underbow of political parties. The political economic roots that form the background of this conflict also serve as the core issue of the ongoing conflicts. This economic factor is reflected in the contestation over economic space, such as controlling parking lots and security services. Drawing from the work of Berenschot & Van Klinken (2018), the patron-client political economy in Indonesia is closely linked to the structure of its informal sector. They argue that Indonesian urban politics is shaped by a system

of patronage in which political elites distribute access to economic opportunities in exchange for loyalty and support. In this system, the informal economy—where the majority of urban lower-class workers such as street vendors, domestic helpers, and parking attendants operate—becomes a key arena for such patronage. The lack of formal legal protections for these workers compels them to depend on political patrons, often through ethnic or social networks, to secure their livelihoods (Kurniawan, 2025; Setiawan, 2024). This arrangement reinforces unequal access to productive economic spaces, as political elites selectively allocate benefits to their supporters while excluding rival groups. This framework helps explain how conflicts over economic space (Haryanto & Mahsun,



2024; Siregar, 2022), such as control of parking lots and security services, represent political struggles intertwined with patron-client dynamics.

The network of informal patronage relations frequently encompasses politicians, bureaucrats, and a range of intermediaries who serve as conduits through which ordinary citizens can gain access to the state's resources and regulatory advantages (Berenschot, 2020). In the specific context of the underbow organisations affiliated with political parties in Yogyakarta city, it is common for several grassroots supporters to cultivate informal relationships with political elites from the ruling parties. These interactions often result in the establishment of a mutually advantageous and symbiotic relationship,

where both the patron and the client benefit from the exchange. Political cadres who hold official positions often leverage their authority to influence public policy and regulatory decisions in ways that benefit their clients. This favoritism is not arbitrary; rather, it stems from a logic of reciprocal obligation in which the patron provides compensation to loyal supporters—many of whom are affiliated with the underbow and have played active roles in supporting the party during election campaigns. The form of compensation given by patrons can take various shapes, one of which is the provision of informal job security or employment opportunities for underbow members, particularly in sectors such as parking management or community-based security services.



These arrangements provide practical economic support while also reinforcing loyalty to the party structure. As one underbow member expressed, “Being under the party’s wing makes us stronger.” (Interview with Yuda, member of Underbow HD, 12 September 2023), emphasising the perceived benefits of affiliation with the party’s political machinery.

Another strategy commonly employed by political party elites in the distribution of compensation involves strategic intervention in government-funded projects through the use of affiliated companies. This approach allows party elites to extend patronage beyond direct political appointments by leveraging their influence within the bureaucratic and procurement systems. According to one of the

informants, Murai, certain political parties are not only aware of the mechanisms of public procurement but also actively engage in establishing or aligning themselves with companies specifically designed to compete in these processes. During the bidding for projects in various economic sectors—such as urban parking management and private security services—these politically aligned companies enter the competition with the tacit or overt backing of the party. Once the political party succeeds in securing the contract, it utilises the opportunity to provide employment for members of its underbow organisations, particularly those who played instrumental roles in supporting the party during the electoral period. This process serves both as a



reward for loyalty and as a means of sustaining the party's grassroots support base. As highlighted by Murai, "The party's strategic move lies in its ability to intervene at just the right time and place." (Interview with Murai, political activist, 22 August 2023), emphasising the calculated and opportunistic nature of such interventions within the political economy of patronage. The combination of limited economic opportunities and the patronage practices exercised by political party elites—often heavily skewed in favor of specific underbow factions—serves to exacerbate the existing tensions and contributes to the persistence of conflict.

When workers from underbow organisations affiliated with the political party that has won a

government contract are deployed into certain economic sectors, it can lead to a reconfiguration of control over key economic spaces. These sectors—such as parking management, security services, or other informal urban economies—may have previously been dominated by underbow members loyal to rival political parties. This displacement, both symbolic and material, creates a fertile ground for inter-group resentment and competition. The perception of exclusion and loss among those pushed out intensifies the likelihood of friction, making conflict not only probable but, in many cases, inevitable. As Murai, a political activist in Yogyakarta city, aptly notes, "Those who were once pushed aside now linger on the margins. From time to time, they try to re-enter and reclaim the spaces



or positions they used to see as theirs—and that is when the conflict begins.” (Interview with Murai, political activist, 22 August 2023). This statement reflects the cyclical nature of contestation over economic and political resources within the underbow ecosystem, driven by the broader dynamics of party-based patronage.

Furthermore, another element in the anatomy of conflict is its dynamics. The root cause of the conflict, namely the patron-client political economy, has implications for the unequal economic conditions between the underbow of political parties, resulting from the biased distribution of productive economic space. This condition triggers the dynamics of conflict between the underbow of political parties. The author identifies

several conflict triggers as part of the conflict dynamics based on the research findings. First, personal issues also serve as a trigger for conflict between the underbow of political parties. Members of the underbow often have personal issues with members of other underbow factions. However, in the resolution process, some underbow members frequently involve others within the same political underbow to confront the opposing party, which is part of a different political underbow. The implication is that a conflict initially involves only individuals, but escalates into a group conflict. “When I found out my friend had an event, I would get my mates together and say, ‘Let us block them.’ Otherwise, the situation would be reversed.” (Interview with Ari, founder of Underbow HD, 18 August 2023).



Secondly, there exists a growing suspicion among several informants that certain political party sympathisers deliberately engage in forms of black campaigning, utilising conflict not merely as a byproduct of political competition, but as a calculated strategy to strengthen internal group solidarity. According to a political elite in Yogyakarta city, sympathisers affiliated with the 'red' party, for example, are often perceived as lacking intrinsic cohesion. However, their sense of unity and collective identity tends to intensify significantly when they are positioned in opposition to an external threat. In light of this, it is believed that some party sympathisers intentionally fabricate or amplify conflicts through strategic propaganda efforts in order

to manufacture a sense of common struggle. This constructed sense of conflict is then used as a mechanism to mobilise internal loyalty and reinforce group cohesion. As one informant explained, "The 'red' group isn't as solid as people think; they become solid when attacked from behind, and then they design it as if they have a common enemy called Development Party." (Interview with Hari, founder of Underbow HD, 18 August 2023). This suggests that the dynamics of political confrontation are not solely reactive but can be intentionally orchestrated to create a unified front. From a sociological perspective, such behavior aligns with the understanding that conflict, particularly when perceived as originating from an external opponent, can function as a catalyst for



enhancing internal solidarity within a group (Chubb & Wang, 2023). Consequently, rather than undermining the unity of a political faction, conflict may paradoxically serve to strengthen the internal bonds among its members, especially those situated within the underbow structures of rival political parties.

In addition to being employed as a mechanism to strengthen internal group solidarity, conflict manipulation scenarios are also strategically used as tools to garner electoral support. Certain actors within the political landscape may deliberately orchestrate conflict situations with the intent of generating public sympathy and mobilising political backing. These scenarios often take the form of provocative acts such as the

burning of political party flags or targeted attacks on party headquarters. While these actions are typically executed by individuals associated with the same political group, the orchestrators of the scheme disseminate misinformation suggesting that sympathisers of an opposing political party perpetrated the provocations. This disinformation is circulated among underbow members and supporters of the party, giving rise to a distorted narrative that frames the opposing party as the aggressor. Such narratives tend to evoke strong emotional responses among sympathisers, which may escalate into direct confrontation with members of rival political groups who have been falsely accused. The cascading effect of these emotionally charged rumours not only heightens



tensions but also reinforces the loyalty and militancy of party supporters. As noted by Miki, an elite figure within a political party's underbow organisation, "In pursuing their interests, sometimes they have to create conflict intentionally." (Interview with Miki, political party underbow elite, 5 September 2023). This reflects a broader pattern in which conflict is not merely an unintended outcome of political rivalry but is, in some instances, purposefully engineered as a means of achieving specific strategic and electoral objectives.

Thirdly, there are serious allegations of deliberate inaction by individuals within security institutions in preventing conflict. Several informants believe some security actors lack genuine commitment to proactive

mitigation, possibly because they benefit from conflict escalation. Many suspect that conflict management funds are only disbursed after violence occurs, creating little incentive for early resolution. As one political party underbow elite stated, "If the allocated budget is already set at hundreds of millions, and there are no channels to distribute it, then what will happen to it?" (Interview with Azka, political party underbow elite, 20 September 2023). These concerns highlight how resource management may shape security priorities and conflict prevention efforts.

Furthermore, this suspicion is bolstered by the assumption that these institutions possess the capacity to act preventively and, as such, should be more effective in averting conflicts. This is particularly pertinent



considering that areas prone to conflict are already well known, as conflicts often tend to recur in the same locations. As one political party underbow elite noted, "The criminal investigation unit already has complete data on who the troublemakers are in a neighbourhood—the thugs, their names, even their parents' names." (Interview with Murai, political party underbow elite, 21 August 2023). This suggests that the necessary information for preemptive action is readily available, yet the failure to intervene raises questions about the effectiveness and priorities of security institutions in managing potential sources of conflict.

Furthermore, the evolving dynamics of the conflict can be more clearly understood by examining a time series of riots and unrest that have

unfolded amid tensions between the undercurrents—or "underbow"—of various political parties. This temporal analysis offers insights into how these tensions have evolved over specific periods, either escalating or de-escalating. The time series has been constructed using data collected from social media platforms, which serve as real-time mirrors of public sentiment and grassroots mobilisation. This dataset was carefully curated and processed by the authors in collaboration, enabling a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between online discourse and offline conflict. Through this approach, the study captures the frequency and intensity of these events and situates them within the broader sociopolitical context that fuels their occurrence.

Based on the explanation

regarding the findings on the background elements, the issues, and the dynamics of the conflict, the parties involved in the conflict between the underbow of political parties can be classified. These parties are categorised into two groups: directly and indirectly involved. The parties directly involved in the conflict include:

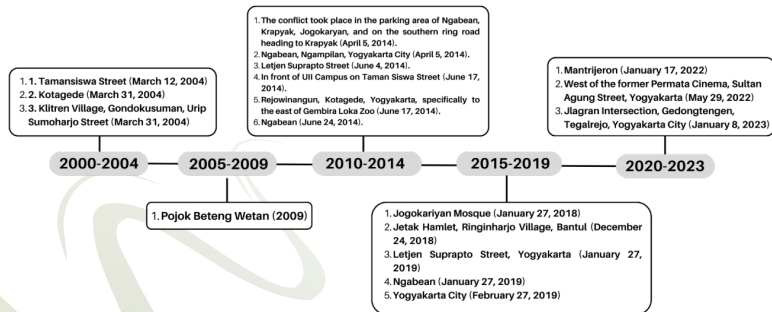
(1) political party cadres; (2) underbow of political parties; and (3) the public. Meanwhile,

the parties indirectly involved are (1) KPU, (2) Bawaslu, and (3) the police institution.

Strengthening political party education and accountability

This section expands upon the preceding discussion concerning the various elements of conflict anatomy by meticulously analysing proposed resolutions aimed at mitigating ongoing political party

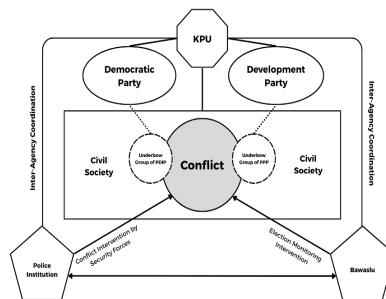
Figure 2. Time series of underbow riot dynamics in Yogyakarta city



Source: data compiled by the authors, 2023

tensions within Yogyakarta. Key recommendations advanced in this regard encompass: optimising the utilisation of state-provided political funding (*bantuan partai politik* or *banpol*) to strategically conduct robust political education initiatives targeting both party adherents and the broader populace; establishing an integrated and readily accessible complaint mechanism

Figure 3. Parties involved in the conflict (direct and indirect)



Source: data compiled by the authors, 2023

that encompasses all pertinent stakeholders, thereby providing a fair and transparent avenue for addressing grievances; and, critically, proactively mapping areas demonstrably prone to conflict across the region. This final measure serves as an indispensable preventive strategy, enabling the anticipation of potential flashpoints and the deployment of targeted interventions, which in turn minimises economic disruption and safeguards social cohesion. The constitution's mandate for political parties

to provide public political education is crucial. This obligation, as stipulated in Article 11, Paragraph 1(a) of Law Number 2 of 2011 concerning Political Parties (*Undang-Undang Nomor 2 Tahun 2011 tentang Partai Politik*, or *UU Parpol*), states: *"Political parties function as a means of: political education for members and the wider society, so that they become Indonesian citizens who are aware of their rights and obligations in community, national, and state's life."*

Political parties only conduct political education during open campaign events, often lacking substantive value. As noted by Nurdin (2019), these events rely on entertainment, leading to a lack of meaningful feedback from society and a resultant low public political literacy. Zahid, a former member of the

Development Party leadership, expressed that mass rallies in campaign periods have little impact on a candidate's electability, "Just because we win on the streets does not mean we will win votes at the polling stations—it is a waste. It is better if the underbows create programs that aim to win at the polling stations" (Interview with Zahid, member of Underbow X, 15 September 2023).

Field findings indicate that several underbows have already been conducting informal political education through *gethok tular*—a method of spreading information orally, from person to person. Efforts by underbow leaders (*pentolan*) to educate their members have become a routine agenda in every meeting (Interview with Kaka, member of Underbow H, 10 September 2023;



Interview with Zahid, member of Underbow X, 15 September 2023). Currently, most political parties underbow receive limited civic political education. Therefore, political education should ideally support their development into participatory members within a democratic society—individuals who contribute positively to political decision-making. For the wider public, educational content should focus on understanding their position, rights, and responsibilities as citizens, particularly concerning the national constitution and current political dynamics (Nurdin, 2019). Meanwhile, for party cadres, the material should be oriented towards party programme development, strengthening cadre loyalty and dedication, and enhancing the quality of their soft skills. In addition,

political parties must also promote a substantive understanding of democracy—one that encompasses justice and respect for every individual's civil and political rights.

On the other hand, the regulatory framework concerning the financing of political parties in Indonesia is governed by the Political Parties Law, which defines permissible funding sources and their intended uses. One of the key components of this framework is the provision of state-sponsored funding for political parties, such as *banpol*. These funds are allocated from both the national budget (APBN) and regional budgets (APBD), and are intended to strengthen the institutional capacity of political parties and enhance their role in democratic education and political



development.

The legal basis for *banpol* funding is further elaborated in Government Regulation 1 of 2018, which amends Government Regulation 5 of 2009 concerning Financial Assistance to Political Parties. This regulation stipulates that the financial assistance provided to political parties is calculated based on the number of valid votes obtained in the most recent general election. Article 5 of the regulation, as referenced in Article 2, Paragraph (3), establishes a tiered funding structure:

1. political parties with seats in the national legislature (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat/DPR) are entitled to Rp1,000 per valid vote;
2. parties in the provincial legislature (DPRD) receive Rp1,200 per valid vote; and

3. those with regency or municipal DPRD representation are allocated Rp1,500 per valid vote.

This allocation mechanism reflects a proportional approach, rewarding electoral performance while encouraging broad-based public support. Importantly, the regulation also permits and encourages using *banpol* funds to implement political education programmes, both for party members and the wider public. In principle, this provision aligns with Article 11 of UU Parpol, which mandates political parties to act as instruments of political education, civic participation, and national integration. However, while the legal framework supports political education, its implementation in practice often falls short. Political parties utilise *banpol*



primarily for operational or administrative expenses, and only a limited portion is allocated to substantive educational activities. This raises critical concerns regarding the effectiveness, accountability, and impact of public funding on political literacy and democratic consolidation. Moreover, vote share disparities mean larger, more dominant parties—such as Democratic Party—receive significantly more resources than smaller parties, allowing them greater leverage in maintaining patronage networks and influencing affiliated underbows. This imbalance underscores the need for more transparent, equitable, and programmatic use of *banpol*, particularly in regions marked by political conflict and low civic political awareness.

The regulation indicates

that the greater a party's share of votes, the larger its income will be. However, political party revenues are not solely sourced from the state's but also from membership fees and other contributions. This means that a party such as Democratic Party, with a higher vote count than Development Party, is more capable of financially supporting its constituents and affiliated underbows. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the equitable redistribution of informal economic resources at the level of political party underbows so that distribution is not determined solely by patron–client relationships. This issue must be urgently addressed to ensure a fair and just political landscape. The need for immediate action is crucial, and the audience should feel the urgency of this matter.



As the primary participants in the electoral process, the public plays a crucial role and should experience the positive impacts of this democratic celebration. Their role is significant, and they should feel empowered to contribute to a peaceful electoral process. However, conflicts between party sympathisers often cause harm to the community, particularly regarding security, social cohesion, and economic activity. Disruptions and losses suffered by the public during the pre-campaign period, caused by the actions of certain groups, are often not effectively communicated to the relevant authorities, resulting in repeated conflict during the official campaign period. The ineffectiveness of public reporting is largely due to the bureaucratic complexity that citizens must navigate.

According to the Yogyakarta City Police, the institution has no official record of campaign-related conflict reports: "There was much provocation from external parties, but since no reports were filed with the police, no legal action could be taken." (Interview with Bima, Yogyakarta City Police, 22 September 2023). Consequently, no legal measures were enforced against those involved in the conflicts, which further underlines the ineffectiveness of law enforcement agencies in mitigating tensions between political party underbows. However, it remains the duty of the police to maintain societal equilibrium.

One significant strategy to consider in analysing efforts to de-escalate conflict is the optimisation of law enforcement. Pualillian (2022) explains that law



enforcement is a rational and effective means of addressing criminal acts that inherently includes a dimension of justice. Within this framework, law enforcement is a reactive mechanism that can be directed toward conflict perpetrators through litigation or non-litigation measures. In cases of conflict among underbows, the weak application of law enforcement by police institutions has contributed to apathy among the involved parties, diminishing the deterrent effect that legal consequences are meant to uphold. Accordingly, the police must move beyond a taken-for-granted approach in managing such conflicts.

In this case, law enforcement may be carried out by establishing an integrated complaints service, serving as a reporting

instrument for the public when they observe indications of campaign violations or potential conflict. Such reports should be directed not only to the Yogyakarta City Police but also to Bawaslu of Yogyakarta city as the electoral oversight body and KPU of Yogyakarta city as the election organiser. This mechanism is expected to prompt firm action against political parties or sympathisers in violation. Sanctions could be a ban on participating in subsequent open campaign events or other prohibitions designed to create a deterrent effect.

Mapping conflict-prone areas for proactive prevention

Identifying and mapping areas susceptible to conflict in Yogyakarta city is crucial for preventing electoral disputes. The vulnerability



to election-related conflict in the city is reflected through several indicators, one of which is the recurrence of conflicts in particular areas. Sari et al. (2022) explain that vulnerability can be manifested through the frequency of conflict incidents. This underscores the notion that regions with a high degree of electoral vulnerability are often those repeatedly experiencing tensions between political parties under the surface. In this case, vulnerability may also be identified through the concentration of two large and opposing political support bases within a single locality. Unsurprisingly, friction frequently arises during street campaigns or mass parades and may escalate into conflict. "If someone wearing partisan attributes passes through that area, there will

be a problem." (Interview with Bima, Yogyakarta City Police, 22 September 2023). The territorial dominance of political underbows in certain areas is often marked by the display of party flags, serving as a symbolic claim of control over that space.

The results of the conflict-prone area mapping in Yogyakarta city were derived from a combination of secondary data on past conflicts and primary data gathered through interviews. At least seven urban village-level administrative areas were identified as highly vulnerable: Warungboto, Wirogunan, Klitren, Tegalrejo, Ngampilan, Notoprajan, and Mantrijeron (see Figure 4). These areas demonstrate a higher intensity of conflict than others, suggesting a heightened level of electoral risk. The 2024 Yogyakarta

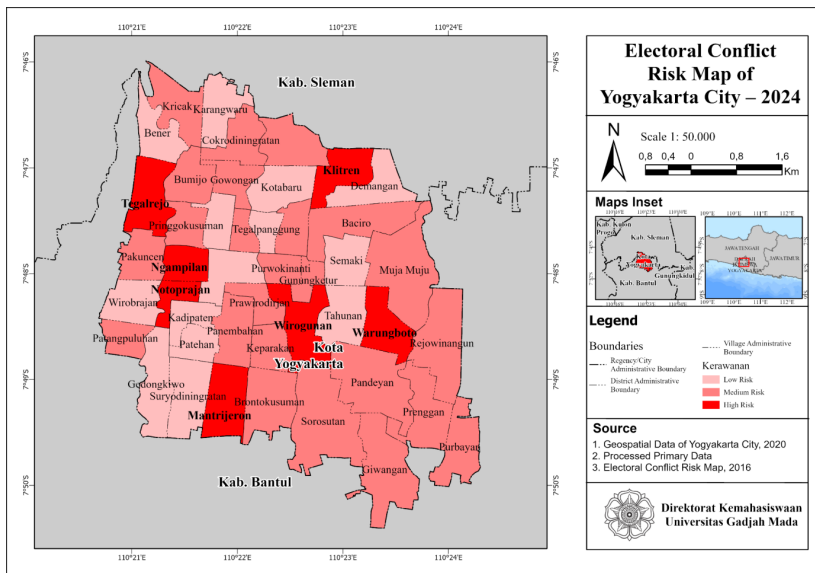
city electoral conflict risk map offers a potential solution for all electoral stakeholders to anticipate and mitigate the risk of conflict during the 2024 elections.

For Bawaslu and the KPU in Yogyakarta city, the map

can serve as a reference point for determining focus areas in electoral monitoring and targeting the implementation of civic and political education programmes.

Meanwhile, for the police, the map can provide a basis for deploying

Figure 4. Electoral conflict risk map of Yogyakarta city, 2024



Source: data compiled by the authors, 2023

security efforts in conflict-prone zones during the campaign period. Additionally, for communities residing in these areas, the conflict risk map may serve as a guide in adjusting their social and economic activities during the campaign season. In this way, the adverse impacts of underbow-related political conflict on local communities can be anticipated and minimised.

The conflict-prone area mapping conducted in Yogyakarta city combined secondary data, such as historical records of electoral disturbances, local conflict databases, and official reports, with primary data obtained through field interviews with key stakeholders, including community leaders, election monitors, and residents. This mixed-methods approach allowed for a more nuanced

understanding of the structural and situational drivers of electoral vulnerability in the urban context of Yogyakarta.

The analysis revealed that seven urban villages (*kelurahan*)—Warungboto, Wirogunan, Klitren, Tegalrejo, Ngampilan, Notoprajan, and Mantrijeron—exhibited a consistently higher frequency and intensity of political tensions when compared to other administrative areas in the city (see Figure 4). These locations were identified through the recurrence of past incidents and local perceptions of potential unrest, making them recognised hotspots for partisan confrontations, particularly between rival political party underbows (informal or grassroots-level supporters and mobilisers). The repeated emergence of these zones in electoral conflict narratives suggests



entrenched patterns of politicised competition and territorial contestation.

The development of the 2024 electoral conflict risk map for Yogyakarta city represents a proactive and strategic response to the evolving nature of electoral dynamics in urban Indonesia. Far from being a static representation of past events, the map functions as a forward-looking instrument designed to anticipate, mitigate, and manage potential electoral disturbances. The map serves as a critical operational tool for regulatory and supervisory institutions such as Bawaslu and KPU. It enables the targeted allocation of monitoring resources and the design of context-sensitive civic education initiatives to increase voter literacy, reduce political polarisation, and foster democratic resilience in

high-risk areas.

In parallel, the utility of the conflict risk map extends to law enforcement agencies, who can leverage the geographic information to inform the strategic deployment of personnel and preventive security measures. Security actors can more effectively manage public order and reduce the likelihood of violence by concentrating their efforts in zones with a high probability of conflict escalation, particularly during campaign rallies, vote counting, or result announcements. Furthermore, the map holds implications for community-level decision-making. Residents, particularly those whose livelihoods depend on daily economic activities, may use the map as a reference point to navigate and plan around politically sensitive



periods, thus minimising potential disruptions.

Ultimately, the preemptive identification of electoral conflict hotspots provides a foundation for multi-stakeholder collaboration. By drawing attention to specific geographic and social vulnerabilities, the map enables a more integrated approach to conflict prevention that acknowledges the role of political underbows, socioeconomic inequality, and local histories of contestation. Through coordinated interventions, stakeholders can work to de-escalate tensions before they erupt, reinforcing the integrity of the democratic process while safeguarding public safety and economic stability. This integrative strategy reflects an important shift from reactive to anticipatory governance in managing

electoral conflict within Indonesia's decentralised democratic landscape.

Conclusion

This study analyses the political party under bow conflict using Paul Wehr's conflict anatomy theory and Gerry Van Klinken & Ward Berenschot's patron-client political economy perspective. Based on Wehr's framework, the conflict originates from the patron-client political economy factor, which drives various dynamics, including historical grievances, personal disputes, black campaigns by political parties, alleged inaction by security institutions, and broader political-economic interests. The conflict involves two categories of actors: direct actors, including political party cadres, political party underbows, and the general



public, and indirect actors, such as KPU, Bawaslu, and law enforcement institutions. Ultimately, the conflict has significant socio-economic repercussions in Yogyakarta, including damage to public infrastructure, casualties, social disintegration, polarisation, and disputes over the control of parking spaces.

Based on these findings, the author proposes several recommendations to resolve conflicts within the framework of conflict anatomy theory. Relevant stakeholders, including political parties and KPU, should implement civic political education through their respective roles and responsibilities. Political parties can achieve this by optimising the use of political assistance funds. Collaboration with universities and relevant non-

governmental organisations can also enhance civic political education. The legislature should formulate policies to ensure greater accountability and transparency in using political assistance funds.

Furthermore, election supervision by Bawaslu must be strengthened, along with law enforcement institutions' enforcement of legal measures through criminal and non-criminal litigation. Law enforcement efforts should include establishing an integrated stakeholder complaint system to anticipate and address conflicts effectively. This system is expected to serve as a mediation platform to minimise conflicts involving political party underbows. Moreover, a deterrent effect is necessary for those involved in conflicts, such as



imposing restrictions on their participation in future election campaigns. These resolution strategies are expected to be implemented to mitigate and reduce the recurrence of political conflicts.

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