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Environmental and Procedural Justice in a Housing Development Conflict: A Conflict-Transformation Analysis in Medan

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Abstract

Urban development is frequently accompanied by conflict between local communities and developers. This study analyzes the dispute between residents of Gedung Johor Subdistrict and the developer of the Oasis Delipolitan housing project in Medan, Indonesia, where residents attribute worsened flooding, traffic congestion, and structural cracks to the project, while the developer contends these problems predated it. The purpose is to diagnose the conflict, map its dynamics, and propose transformation strategies. Employing a mixed-methods design—a survey of 100 residents in three affected neighborhoods, semi-structured interviews with the developer, community leaders, and officials, and field observation—the study applies the Conflict Transformation frameworks of Galtung and Lederach, including the conflict triangle (contradiction–attitude–behaviour) and the transformation of relationships, structures, and discourse. Findings show that material impacts (flooding, congestion, damage) triggered relational impacts (eroded trust, polarization) and procedural impacts (inconsistent grievance handling and perceived tokenistic participation), which residents frame as a breach of environmental justice because they bear the risks while benefits accrue elsewhere. The study proposes a transformation matrix combining substantive technical fixes, relational repair, structural reform of participation, and discursive reframing, arguing that repairing relationships, governance, and narratives can turn development disputes into opportunities for community cohesion and sustainable justice.

Keywords

conflict transformation; environmental justice; procedural justice; urban conflict; stakeholder dialogue

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1. INTRODUCTION

Urban infrastructure development is frequently accompanied by conflict between local communities and project developers. Such conflict commonly arises when residents feel threatened by the environmental and social impacts of a development project (Sarkheyli et al., 2025). A concrete example is the dispute in Gedung Johor Subdistrict, Medan Johor District, Medan City, North Sumatra, between residents of Neighborhoods (Lingkungan) IV–VI and the developer of the Oasis Delipolitan

housing project. Residents allege that the elite housing project has produced a series of negative impacts: increased surface runoff that triggers flooding in their settlement, intensified traffic congestion from the movement of trucks and heavy machinery, and physical damage such as cracks in walls and fences caused by vibrations from land compaction. The developer, by contrast, contends that flooding and congestion predated the project, pointing to wider problems of municipal drainage and road density, and reports having shown good faith by repairing the cracked fences of directly affected homes as part of its corporate social responsibility.

Nonetheless, the developer's response has not allayed residents' unease. Persisting tension is evident in informal protests and complaints lodged with the subdistrict office. Residents of Neighborhood V, whose homes are closest to the project site, report that flooding has intensified since the project elevated its land above the surrounding area, causing rainwater to flow toward their lower-lying houses. Similar complaints concern the surge of congestion on Jalan Karya Jaya, the main access road, especially at peak hours, attributed to project material trucks. Cracks in nearby houses have likewise been reported, reinforcing the perception that piling and soil-compaction activity has directly harmed residents' assets. Local government—the Medan Johor District and Gedung Johor Subdistrict offices—occupies a dilemmatic position, having summoned the developer to review permit documents and signalling readiness to take firm action should official warnings be ignored (Tanjung, 2025). This indicates an escalation of the conflict into the institutional arena.

Sociologically, this conflict is not merely a difference of opinion but reflects structural and cultural tensions in urban governance. First, it has a distributive dimension: residents bear the burden of flooding, damage, and pollution, while the developer and future homebuyers enjoy the benefits, generating a sense of environmental injustice consistent with the environmental-justice tradition that stresses the fair distribution of environmental burdens and the inclusion of affected communities (Bullard, 2000; Schlosberg, 2004; Schulz et al., 2025). Second, it has a procedural dimension: residents feel they were not meaningfully involved in decision-making, perceiving the environmental impact assessment (AMDAL) and public consultation as mere formalities—a tokenistic form of participation that sits low on the ladder of citizen power (Arnstein, 1969; Innes & Booher, 2004). Third, it has a relational dimension: prolonged conflict has eroded residents' trust in the developer, whose claim that flooding is an old problem is read as a denial of responsibility, while the developer may see residents' opposition as an obstacle rooted in misunderstanding. This pattern of mutual suspicion deepens the conflict if left unaddressed (Galtung, 1990).

Accordingly, this study addresses several key questions: (1) How can the conflict be diagnosed—identifying the principal issues, the actors involved and their power relations, and each party's needs and interests? (2) To what extent can the conflict be mapped using Galtung's conflict triangle—the

contradiction underlying the conflict, the attitudes of the parties (emotions, perceptions, ideologies), and their observable behaviour? (3) How can conflict-transformation strategies be applied to shift destructive dynamics toward constructive ones across the domains of relationship, structure, and discourse? (4) What recommendations can be offered to stakeholders for achieving a sustainable, win-win transformation of the conflict?

Theoretically, this study draws on the Conflict Transformation model pioneered by Lederach and Galtung. Rather than focusing solely on short-term resolution, conflict transformation views conflict as an opportunity for long-term social change (Lederach, 1995, 2003). Lederach argues that conflict should be engaged as a dialectical dynamic rather than forcibly terminated; transformation does not mean eliminating conflict but redirecting its interactions from destructive to constructive patterns (Galtung, 1996). Galtung adds that transformation also requires changing the structures that perpetuate conflict—such as power imbalances—and the perceptions or discourses that fuel aggressive behaviour (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000; Galtung, 1969). Within a peace-sociology frame, the Oasis Delipolitan conflict must therefore be examined holistically across its material, relational, and structural dimensions, which are deeply interrelated. Urban conflict sociology regards the city not merely as physical space but as a complex arena of social interaction in which conflict often reflects who holds voice and access to resources, and how institutions respond when discontent emerges (Guzmán et al., 2024).

To situate the study, three clusters of literature are relevant. The first concerns conflict transformation itself. Galtung's conflict triangle distinguishes three constituent elements—contradiction, attitude, and behaviour—and holds that destructive conflict occurs when these mutually reinforce one another negatively (Galtung, 1969, 1990). Lederach extends this with a focus on long-term relational change, defining transformation as redirecting human interaction from cycles of destructive violence toward relationships of dignity and mutual respect, and emphasizing reconciliation and relational dialogue as keys to success across personal, relational, structural, and cultural levels (Lederach, 1997, 2003). Recent scholarship in the micro-sociology of peace underscores that reconciliation and the rebuilding of relationships are central to transforming entrenched disputes (Bramsen, 2023). Both traditions agree that relationships lie at the heart of transformation, and that negative peace (the absence of direct violence) must be complemented by positive peace (harmonious relations and the fulfilment of justice) (Galtung, 1969).

The second cluster concerns environmental justice and urban conflict. The environmental-justice movement foregrounds distributive justice (the equitable distribution of environmental burdens and benefits) and procedural justice (the inclusion of affected communities in decision-making), as well as recognition of marginalized groups whose voices and identities are too often discounted (Schlosberg, 2004; Young, 1990). In many cases, local communities bear the burden of pollution, flooding, and noise

from development while the benefits accrue elsewhere, breeding a sense of injustice and resistance (Bullard, 2000). Meaningful public participation is the foundation of procedural justice; communities must be able to influence decisions that affect their environment (Schulz et al., 2025). Yet conventional, legally required participation methods—one-way socialization and symbolic consultation—frequently breed anger and mistrust rather than genuine engagement (Arnstein, 1969; Innes & Booher, 2004). The concept of NIMBYism (Not In My Backyard) is also relevant: rather than blanket opposition to development, local resistance is often a place-protective response rooted in legitimate environmental concern, place attachment, and a deficit of trust in those managing a project (Devine-Wright, 2009). Studies of urban environmental conflict further show that meaningful participation must be matched by attention to power asymmetry, since formal inclusion is hollow if residents' bargaining position remains weak (Guzmán et al., 2024; Sarkheyli et al., 2025).

The third cluster concerns infrastructure conflict, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and stakeholder dialogue. Empirical studies reveal a recurring pattern: communities feel that risks and impacts are inadequately managed, and conflict erupts. Developers often attempt to defuse conflict through CSR, but its effectiveness depends on approach: where CSR is merely a risk-management tactic that does not address root causes, residents' trust does not recover, and chronic environmental harm sustains distrust despite gestures of transparency (Bian et al., 2025). This is why scholars advocate a social license to operate (SLO)—the ongoing, informal acceptance granted by a community—which can only be earned through genuine engagement and the resolution of substantive grievances (Gunningham et al., 2004; Prno & Slocombe, 2012). Stakeholder dialogue and alternative dispute resolution are correspondingly advocated in environmental governance: effective environmental conflict resolution must overcome power asymmetry and limited participation through multi-level, flexible methods (Bakhtiari, 2025), and stakeholder participation yields both normative and pragmatic benefits when it grants communities real influence and is supported by shared, credible information (Reed, 2008; Wood, 2004). Such deliberative, inclusive decision-making is also a foundation for self-governing local institutions capable of managing shared resources and risks (Ostrom, 1990).

On the basis of the above, this study aims to produce a field-grounded, in-depth analysis of the conflict between residents and the developer at Oasis Delipolitan and to propose applicable conflict-transformation strategies. By integrating the perspectives of environmental justice and conflict transformation, the study offers an interdisciplinary approach—combining environmental, social, and conflict-resolution analysis—whose findings are intended to be relevant not only to the Medan Johor case but also to similar urban conflicts elsewhere, in the service of urban development that is sustainable and just.

2. METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods design with a qualitative emphasis, combining a simple quantitative survey with in-depth qualitative inquiry, in order to obtain an empirical understanding of the conflict in Gedung Johor Subdistrict. The research was conducted in three affected neighborhoods bordering or adjacent to the Oasis Delipolitan site: Neighborhoods IV, V, and VI. The local population is socioeconomically heterogeneous, comprising owners of permanent and semi-permanent houses as well as small traders. Participants comprised (a) residents of the three neighborhoods; (b) formal local figures, namely the heads of Neighborhoods IV, V, and VI and the head of Gedung Johor Subdistrict; and (c) a representative of the Oasis Delipolitan developer (the company's public-relations officer).

A survey of 100 resident respondents was conducted with a proportional distribution: 15 respondents from Neighborhood IV, 55 from Neighborhood V, and 30 from Neighborhood VI. The survey used a practical sampling technique that considered respondent accessibility and the recommendations of neighborhood heads in reaching affected households. The principal data, however, were generated through semi-structured interviews with key actors: the project's public-relations officer; small informal group interviews with five to seven residents from each neighborhood; individual interviews with the three neighborhood heads; and interviews with subdistrict officials to capture the local-government perspective. Interview data were analyzed thematically: transcripts were coded into recurring themes.

Quantitative survey data were used primarily to support factual claims in the findings, while interview data informed in-depth qualitative interpretation. Analysis proceeded through triangulation—comparing residents' reports, the developer's account, and officials' statements to obtain a complete picture—supported by limited field observation of the drainage system around the project, road conditions, and documentation of structural cracks. Although this is not an inferential quantitative study, validity was pursued through source and method triangulation, and reliability through a consistent interview guide and researcher cross-checking of transcripts. Direct field involvement over a one-month data-collection period helped ensure the context was correctly understood.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Three Core Conflict Triggers: Flooding, Congestion, and Structural Damage

Field analysis confirms three core issues driving the conflict: flooding, traffic congestion, and damage to residents' buildings. In the survey, 85% of respondents stated that the frequency and depth of flooding in their neighborhood had increased since the housing project began, with the highest response in Neighborhood V (93%), followed by Neighborhood VI (80%) and Neighborhood IV (67%). As one resident of Neighborhood V (AB, 47) put it, the land "used to be a swamp that held rainwater;

now it has been filled one to two metres high, so the water runs off into our homes." Residents also noted that the existing drainage system could not absorb the new runoff, and that neighborhood ditches frequently overflowed.

Table 1. Respondents Reporting Increased Flooding Since the Project Began

Neighborhood	Reporting increased flooding	Of sample	Percentage (%)
Neighborhood IV	10	15	67
Neighborhood V	51	55	93
Neighborhood VI	24	30	80
Total	85	100	85

Source: Author's analysis, 2026.

Respondents described that, before the project, inundation occurred only during very heavy rain and subsided within one to two hours; now it occurs more often and takes longer to recede. Interviews revealed that the project had filled a sizeable tract of vacant land to elevate its site, so that rainwater which previously infiltrated there now flows toward the lower-lying surrounding settlement.

Figure 1. Location map of the Oasis Delipolitan housing project (to be inserted by the author).

The second issue, congestion, was affirmed by 76% of respondents, who felt that traffic on Jalan Karya Jaya and adjacent minor roads had become denser and more disrupted since project activity began.

Table 2. Perceptions of Increased Traffic Congestion Since Project Activity

Neighborhood	Reporting increased congestion	Of sample	Percentage (%)
Neighborhood IV	9	15	60
Neighborhood V	44	55	80
Neighborhood VI	23	30	77
Total	76	100	76

Source: Author's analysis, 2026.

Residents found that large material-hauling trucks frequently passed during commuting hours, creating long queues on the relatively narrow Jalan Karya Jaya, an inter-neighborhood connector. A homemaker from Neighborhood VI recounted that a school run that once took ten minutes could now take twenty-five. The third issue, physical damage to houses, was more localized: five homes reported cracks to fences and walls since the project began, all in Neighborhood V, nearest the soil-compaction zone, where residents attribute the cracks to vibrations from vibro and piling machinery.

Table 3. Reports of Cracked Fences and Walls Since Project Activity

Neighborhood	Reporting damage	Of sample	Percentage (%)
Neighborhood IV	0	15	0
Neighborhood V	5	55	9
Neighborhood VI	0	30	0
Total	5	100	5

Source: Author's analysis, 2026.

Actors, Interests, and Power Dynamics

The principal actors are the affected residents (homeowners, tenants, and the surrounding community), the developer (the Oasis Delipolitan property company and its field contractors), and local government (chiefly the Gedung Johor Subdistrict and Medan Johor District offices, and relevant agencies such as the Medan Public Works Office for drainage). Informal actors also emerged on the residents' side, notably neighborhood heads and respected senior figures; interviews indicate that the neighborhood heads served as residents' spokespersons to the subdistrict and the developer. The city government had not directly mediated up to the time of this study, though residents invoked it as the party that ought to intervene. The developer maintained that it had followed procedure, holding an environmental approval (AMDAL) and a building approval (PBG), and had acted in good faith by repairing five cracked fences and installing new drainage around the site—though residents judged that this drainage merely redirected water into neighborhood ditches without increasing capacity.

Power relations among the actors are visibly asymmetric. The developer holds economic power

and bureaucratic access, whereas residents' strength lies in numbers and local solidarity. When residents complained individually, the developer was initially unresponsive; only after collective mobilization did it convene a meeting—underscoring the importance of collective action in raising residents' bargaining position. Local government holds formal authority to impose administrative sanctions but tended to act cautiously: the subdistrict head acknowledged a difficult position, having facilitated meetings and obtained promises from the developer while preferring consensus before legal confrontation. A conflict-assessment lens clarifies each actor's underlying needs. Residents need a safe and comfortable living environment—freedom from routine flooding, reduced disturbance, and assurance that their homes will not be damaged—together with recognition and respect, that is, the sense that their voices are heard and their dignity honoured (Young, 1990). The developer needs the project to proceed and sell, requiring stability and an unblemished reputation, while seeking to contain costs. Local government needs to maintain public order and residents' welfare while remaining within legal and investment constraints. As one respondent observed, "We are just ordinary people; how could we fight a wealthy developer—but if we stay silent, our homes will keep flooding." Residents' principal resources are numerical strength and moral legitimacy; the developer commands financial and technical resources; local government sits in between, with formal but bounded authority.

Mapping the Conflict Triangle (Contradiction, Attitude, Behaviour)

The central contradiction is the misalignment of goals between residents and the developer over the use of space and the distribution of impacts. For the developer, land in Gedung Johor is an economic asset to be optimized through the construction of the elite Oasis Delipolitan estate; for residents, the same locale is a living space whose comfort must be protected. Residents do not oppose development in principle but reject the increased environmental risk it imposes—a stance consistent with rethought NIMBYism as place-protective action rather than blanket obstruction (Devine-Wright, 2009). A further contradiction concerns the attribution of responsibility: residents hold the developer accountable for every negative impact, whereas the developer points to external factors such as extreme rainfall and poor municipal drainage, producing a "conflict of truths" in which both sides believe themselves correct.

Residents' attitudes toward the developer are generally negative—anger, frustration, and distrust; 88% of survey respondents were "dissatisfied" with the developer's response to their complaints. Disappointment hardened into cynicism after the AMDAL socialization had reassured them, citing a retention pond in the design, that the project "would not worsen flooding," whereas flooding in fact intensified. On the developer's side, the official stance expressed empathy, but a defensive posture of deflecting blame was also evident—for example, the claim that "flooding in Medan

Johor predates our project." Under mounting pressure, the developer's attitude shifted toward accommodation, evidenced by its willingness to attend mediation and to repair fences, though officials noted a lack of urgency in implementing promises. Local government's attitude was relatively sympathetic to residents yet careful toward the developer.

In the early phase, residents' behaviour was relatively passive—complaining among themselves and to neighborhood heads. After repeated flooding and cracking, they organized collective action, with roughly twenty residents visiting the subdistrict office to request a meeting with the developer. The action remained largely peaceful, though tensions ran high at the first mediation when some residents raised their voices and one struck the table—an overflow of accumulated frustration into verbal aggression. Afterward, residents shifted to monitoring and pressure, documenting floods and cracks and threatening to take the matter to local media. The developer's early behaviour was minimalist—sporadic responses to individual complaints—but after formal mediation it deployed repair crews (repairing seven homes within a month by severity), installed signage, and restricted truck movements at peak hours, though residents reported loose enforcement; it also paused regular direct communication after mediation. Local government facilitated dialogue, issued warning letters, and coordinated across agencies, with the district head reportedly reporting the conflict to the mayor and weighing administrative sanctions. The conflict triangle that emerges is summarized below.

Table 4. Galtung's Conflict Triangle for the Oasis Delipolitan Dispute

Element	Manifestation in the case
Contradiction	Elite housing development versus residents' environmental safety; responsibility for flooding contested.
Attitude	Residents: anger and distrust. Developer: defensive, not fully at fault. Government: empathetic to residents but obliged to remain neutral.
Behaviour	Residents: collective protest, demands for mediation. Developer: partial repairs, minimal mitigation. Government: mediation, warning letters, technical coordination.

Source: Author's analysis, 2026, adapted from Galtung (1990).

These three elements reinforce one another: the developer's early refusal to acknowledge fault worsened residents' anger, which drove more assertive protest, which in turn pressured the developer to change behaviour. Because the response was deemed insufficient, residents remained suspicious and the cycle continued—supporting Galtung's thesis that, in intense conflict, the pattern of interaction tends to deepen the conflict itself (Galtung, 1990).

Material, Relational, and Procedural Impacts

The principal material losses are more frequent and deeper flooding, worsened congestion, and structural damage. Survey data indicate strong perceptions of harm: 90% reported increased flooding, 84% noise, 81% social conflict, 77% air pollution (dust), and 65% damage to nearby buildings; while only 30% acknowledged increased job opportunities and 22% improved business prospects. Over the three-month observation period, at least four significant floods struck Neighborhoods V and VI, with water 20–50 cm deep entering riverside homes, damaging furniture, imposing clean-up costs, and raising disease risk. Although most cracks were minor, they generated lasting anxiety about structural safety; one family in Neighborhood V temporarily evacuated to relatives' homes during heavy rain—a material impact that is simultaneously psychological.

The conflict has also damaged relationships. Trust between residents and the developer has deteriorated sharply; many residents now believe the developer "wants profit for itself," and feel excluded—"when selling expensive houses they court wealthy outsiders; we who live here and bear the impact were never consulted." The absence of relationship-building from the outset has made resolution harder. Internally, however, residents' solidarity has strengthened in facing a "common adversary," with mutual aid in cleaning up after floods, though minor friction arose with the few residents who benefited from project employment. Residents' relationship with local government improved as the subdistrict head proved responsive, countering the stereotype that officials inevitably side with investors; relations between government and developer grew formally tense following warning letters. Overall, a "us versus them" pattern has emerged that endangers long-term social cohesion, especially since future estate residents will eventually live alongside the existing community—making relational transformation an important agenda (Bramsen, 2023; Lederach, 1997).

The conflict further exposes procedural and policy weaknesses. Residents felt that information access and participation were inadequate from the outset; many were unaware of project details at groundbreaking, and the AMDAL socialization was perceived as a formality whose inputs were not followed up—a hallmark of tokenistic participation (Arnstein, 1969; Innes & Booher, 2004). A community figure who had asked, in the AMDAL meeting, how the estate's drainage would prevent runoff was told a retention pond would be built, but received no design update or inspection invitation; some residents doubt an adequate pond exists. Residents also lacked a clear grievance mechanism, uncertain whether to report to the subdistrict, district, environmental agency, or the company directly; the subdistrict, in turn, had no standard operating procedure for handling resident–developer conflict beyond summoning the parties. From an urban-governance standpoint, the case demonstrates the need for an official mediation mechanism embedded in the permitting of large projects—at present, mediation is ad hoc, contingent on the subdistrict head's initiative. A standing community-liaison

forum from the outset might have managed the conflict earlier. The weak enforcement of sanctions, moreover, signals to residents that the system favours capital, eroding public trust in institutions (Guzmán et al., 2024; Sarkheyli et al., 2025). In sum, the conflict is multidimensional—material (tangible losses), relational (social cohesion and trust), and procedural (governance deficits)—and the three are interlinked, so that solutions must address all three rather than technical fixes alone.

Discussion: A Conflict-Transformation Analysis

The findings can be read through the Conflict Transformation model of Lederach and Galtung. The Oasis Delipolitan conflict is not merely a technical problem of flooding or an administrative matter but a complex social phenomenon encompassing a contradiction of interests, damaged relationships, and weaknesses in decision-making structures. The model helps assemble a comprehensive approach: addressing root causes (contradiction), repairing relationships (attitude), changing interaction patterns (behaviour), and reforming the structures and discourses that surround the conflict (Lederach, 2003).

Addressing the contradiction requires integrative solutions in the spirit of Galtung's TRANSCEND approach—creative options that meet the needs of all parties rather than a dissatisfying middle compromise (Galtung, 1996). Concretely, expert-facilitated discussions involving residents and the developer could formulate technical measures: additional retention ponds on or near the site, widened neighborhood drainage co-financed by developer and city, and infiltration wells around the project. For congestion, traffic management in cooperation with the transport agency could restrict truck operations to off-peak hours, station traffic officers at critical points, or open a dedicated project access route. For structural damage, a transformative response goes beyond patch repairs toward a compensation/guarantee scheme—for instance, periodic joint structural inspections of homes within a defined radius, with the company bearing the cost of any new damage. Where the principal contradiction is treated seriously, conflict intensity declines because the root grievance is resolved (Bakhtiari, 2025); the developer, in turn, earns a social license to operate while residents gain infrastructure that may exceed pre-project conditions (Gunningham et al., 2004; Prno & Slocombe, 2012). Yet, as conflict transformation stresses, this is not enough—relationships and structures must also be addressed so that similar problems do not recur.

Relational transformation aims to rebuild eroded trust. The literature emphasizes reconciliation—rebuilding relationships through acknowledgement, apology, or at least a shared understanding of what happened (Bramsen, 2023; Lederach, 2003). It would be effective for the developer to openly acknowledge that its project contributed to the problem (even if not the sole cause) and to express regret—such impression-managing, dignity-restoring gestures are often scarce in environmental disputes yet substantially reduce residents' anger (Goffman, 1959). Symbolic gestures

done sincerely—company representatives visiting flooded homes, providing pumps, or simply being present—can quickly de-escalate tension. Regular dialogue should be institutionalized, not convened only in crisis, and facilitated by a third party such as the subdistrict or a local NGO; in it, not only technical issues but also perceptions and feelings should be addressed, with a facilitator safeguarding the power balance by allocating equal speaking time and clarifying technical jargon for residents (Guzmán et al., 2024; Reed, 2008; Wood, 2004). The goal is to shift the relationship from adversaries to partners who share a common problem.

Behavioural transformation seeks to convert mutually defensive or aggressive behaviour into collaboration. Concretely, new rules of interaction can be established: instead of residents blockading trucks, a small Communication Task Force—comprising neighborhood heads, resident representatives, a developer representative, and local security personnel—could receive and route complaints daily, enabling rapid response and reducing confrontation. The developer, in turn, should notify the task force before potentially disruptive activities. Such routines prevent miscommunication and build habits of cooperation. Galtung describes the need for an "infrastructure for peace"—institutions or procedures that sustain dialogue and cooperation within a conflicted community (Galtung, 1996); at the local scale, this task force is precisely such an infrastructure. Over time, residents' behaviour can shift from reactive-emotional to proactive-solution-oriented, and the developer's from minimal compliance to pro-community action.

Structural transformation targets the rules, policies, and institutions that frame the conflict. The case indicates several needs: (a) reforming AMDAL and permitting procedures to be more participatory—for example, requiring a Community Engagement Plan and periodic developer–resident meetings during construction as permit conditions (Innes & Booher, 2004); (b) upgrading public infrastructure, since the flooding is partly driven by inadequate municipal drainage, through accelerated river/ditch normalization and integration of new estate drainage into the city master plan; (c) developing a legal framework for environmental compensation where projects cause incidental harm; and (d) establishing a permanent dialogue structure, such as a district-level Community–Business Communication Forum. The aim is to forestall power asymmetry and ensure channels for participation, so that issues are managed upstream. Such locally embedded, self-governing arrangements echo the design principles for durable common-resource institutions, in which those affected share in monitoring and rule-making (Ostrom, 1990; Young, 1990).

Discursive transformation concerns how the conflict is understood by actors and the public. The initial narrative was mutual blame—"residents are selfish anti-development" versus "the developer is a greedy environmental destroyer." Transformation replaces a confrontation narrative with one of shared problem-solving: flooding is a common adversary of both the existing community and future

estate residents, to be tackled together. Reframing the issue—from "stop the project or not" to "how the project can proceed while residents' environment is protected"—creates a win-win frame, and inclusive language replaces adversarial terms. Local media coverage that highlights solutions rather than sensationalism reinforces this shift. Galtung situates such discursive change within a "peace culture" that replaces mutually destructive mindsets with the search for shared value (Galtung, 1996). Analyzing the conflict through this multi-dimensional model gives confidence that it can be resolved constructively if all dimensions are addressed: technical measures without relational repair leave residents' grievances to fester, while dialogue without concrete action to reduce flooding ends in "talk without walk." A complete package—material, relational, structural, and discursive transformation—is therefore required, consistent with a multi-track peacebuilding perspective that links grassroots and institutional levels (Lederach, 1997, 2003).

Environmental Justice: Distributive and Procedural

The conflict crystallizes the question of environmental justice in urban Indonesia. Distributively, there is a clear imbalance: the local community bears the environmental costs while the economic benefits accrue largely elsewhere (Bullard, 2000). Transformation must redress this imbalance—for instance, through community-relevant CSR such as support for neighborhood drainage, green open space, or priority local employment in estate operations. Such measures shift part of the project's benefits to residents, easing the sense that "only we are harmed," in line with the idea of creating shared value where a project delivers social value while remaining commercially viable (Bian et al., 2025). Material compensation is not everything, but it is symbolically important as a signal of willingness to share gains.

Procedural justice requires residents' inclusion in decision-making. A practical innovation would be to involve resident representatives in environmental monitoring—for example, a neighborhood Environmental Monitoring Committee comprising residents, local officials, and a developer representative, reporting openly on environmental quality. This would give residents a genuine sense of voice and control, since procedural justice is achieved when communities can meaningfully influence decisions that affect their environment (Schulz et al., 2025), and when their standing and identity are recognized rather than dismissed (Schlosberg, 2004; Young, 1990). In practice, residents might hold a say over night-time work hours if noise is excessive, or propose drainage designs; pragmatically, the developer should invite resident representatives when finalizing drainage design as a gesture that their input is valued.

Long-term sustainability must also be considered. After completion, new residents—likely of a different social class—will live alongside the existing community, a potential source of friction. The

current intense interaction offers momentum for a Community Integration program—joint activities between prospective residents and the community, such as neighborhood greening or sport—to build good relations early and avoid the "gated complex versus surrounding kampung" divide that often fuels later conflict. On the government side, procedural justice means opening wider channels for aspiration; a project-impact complaints post at the district office, obliged to follow up by summoning the project, would strengthen residents' trust in the system rather than leaving them to struggle alone. Comparative experience shows that collaboration and community empowerment in policy improve procedural justice and reduce long-term conflict (Guzmán et al., 2024; Schulz et al., 2025).

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that the conflict between the residents of Gedung Johor Subdistrict and the developer of Oasis Delipolitan is a complex urban conflict triggered by a collision of environmental and economic interests that cannot be resolved through a single-dimensional (purely technical or purely legal) approach. Through the Conflict Transformation framework of Galtung and Lederach, the study finds that peacebuilding must encompass the fair resolution of substantive issues (flooding, congestion, damage), the repair of relationships and trust between residents and developer, the reform of participatory structures and procedures, and a change in each party's outlook. Field data show that the conflict produced tangible material impacts, damaged social relations, and exposed procedural deficits; the mapping of Galtung's conflict triangle confirms a contradiction of goals, reciprocal negative attitudes, and initially confrontational behaviour. Opportunities for transformation opened, however, once the developer began responding to grievances and residents agreed to deliberate.

The conflict-transformation approach offers more sustainable outcomes than partial solutions: rather than "the project finishes and residents fall silent," it can produce a constructive new relationship in which residents gain a better environment and respect for their rights, the developer secures a social license to continue, and the government acquires a replicable model of conflict resolution. The study underscores environmental justice—both distributive and procedural—as the foundation of urban peace: where residents experience justice, the potential for conflict declines sharply; where it is ignored, latent conflict may eventually erupt. Academically, the study contributes by demonstrating the application of conflict-transformation theory to an urban infrastructure conflict in Indonesia, enriching the literatures of urban sociology and peace studies, and confirming that power asymmetry and limited participation are principal obstacles to environmental conflict resolution. It is recommended that future research test these recommendations empirically—through the proposed community-liaison and monitoring mechanisms—and that policymakers integrate public participation from the earliest stages of project development so that the physical advance of the city does not come at the cost of social

tranquillity.

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