





The AGUSTIF Model: An Adaptive Governance Framework for Hybrid Electoral Conflict Management in South Sulawesi



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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the transformation of the Mobile Brigade Unit of the South Sulawesi Regional Police in dealing with post-election riots, identify internal and external driving factors, evaluate operational effectiveness, and formulate a strategic model that is adaptive to modern conflict dynamics. This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with key informants from the police, local governments, election organizers, and community leaders, supported by observations and documentation studies. The data analysis technique applied the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The findings reveal a structural transformation from a reactive and repressive operational pattern toward a preventive, proportional, and community-oriented security approach. This transformation is reflected in the strengthening of early warning mechanisms, negotiation-based intervention, inter-agency coordination, and culturally embedded mediation practices grounded in local values. The study also finds that preventive conflict engagement strategies contribute to improved operational responsiveness and enhanced institutional trust in conflict-prone environments. Based on these findings, this study formulates the AGUSTIF Model (Anticipatory, Gradual, Measured, Culturally Sensitive, Technological, Integrative, and Futuristic) as an integrated framework combining anticipatory intelligence, proportional response, collaborative governance, technological adaptation, and organizational learning. The study contributes theoretically by repositioning tactical policing within the broader perspective of adaptive public security governance in hybrid conflict settings. Practically, it provides policy implications for strengthening democratic security management in socially complex and digitally mediated conflict environments.

1. INTRODUCTION

The existence of police institutions in a democratic country rests on the concept of a social contract, where the community gives a mandate to the state to maintain order [1, 2]. The performance of elite units such as the Mobile Brigade (Brimob) is no longer measured only by its physical ability to suppress crime, but also by its ability to maintain public trust as the foundation of institutional legitimacy. In the context of the polarized post-Regional Head Election (Pilkada), the transformation of Brimob's strategy is crucial to ensure citizens' democratic rights and security stability through a serving approach, not just steering [3-5].

Today, the anatomy of unrest has undergone a drastic metamorphosis towards the characteristics of "hybrid conflict", i.e., the combination of conventional physical action with information warfare in the digital space [6-8]. In South Sulawesi, data show a decrease in the effectiveness of handling riots with the traditional reactive-repressive approach from 78% to 62% [9, 10]. In addition, the speed with which disinformation spreads on social media (WhatsApp, TikTok,

Facebook) triggers a massive escalation of conflict within hours, which is often exacerbated by the local cultural sentiments of *Siri' na Pacce* [11, 12].

Several previous studies have explored the effectiveness of the security pattern of election stages [13, 14] and the importance of coordination with local stakeholders [15, 16]. Other researchers highlight historical and cultural factors as triggers of conflict [17, 18] and the need to adapt strategies to the local context [19, 20]. In addition, international studies show that preventive-dialogical strategies are much more effective than repressive approaches [21].

Most earlier work on hybrid conflict has zeroed in on wars between states and military doctrine, leaving a gap when it comes to how subnational policing bodies operate inside decentralized democracies. Likewise, research on electoral security tends to focus on coordination arrangements or the ideal of legal neutrality, but it rarely asks how tactical police units structurally and culturally reshape themselves when digitally fueled mass unrest erupts.

At the same time, frameworks like New Public Service, Collaborative Governance, and Organizational Learning are

often treated as separate conversations in public security scholarship, rather than woven into a single lens that can explain how riot management is strategically evolving.

This study addresses that gap by proposing the AGUSTIF Model (Anticipatory, Gradual, Measured, Culturally-Sensitive, Technological, Integrative, Futuristic): an integrated governance-and-security framework that brings together anticipatory intelligence, step-by-step force escalation, cultural embeddedness, technological adaptation, and collaborative command. In doing so, it contributes to the hybrid conflict literature by reframing tactical policing as a public-value institution—one defined less by rigidity and more by its capacity to adapt.

Theoretical Framework for Framing Hybrid Conflict Management as Adaptive Public Security Governance

Hybrid conflict is frequently examined within macro-geopolitical narratives—cyber warfare, interstate rivalry, or strategic destabilization [6, 22]. At the subnational level of democratic governance, hybrid conflict manifests differently. It manifests itself in digitally amplified electoral tensions, emotionally charged public gatherings, and rapid escalations informed by cycles of misinformation [12].

Within such contexts, riot management cannot be understood in militaristic or purely coercive paradigms. One approach does not suffice — it is thus necessary to consider institutional transformation with a vision appropriate for governance, a lens that facilitates understanding across the normative, structural, adaptive, and cultural dimensions of institutions. It will develop this lens further by combining four theoretical strands: New Public Service, Collaborative Governance, Organizational Learning, and culturally embedded governance.

Normative Layer: From State Control to Protection of Public Values

The New Public Service [23] insists that public institutions ought to serve citizens rather than to lead them. In democratic policing, this means not only that the aim of law enforcement is not to maintain or enforce order through its dominance but also to protect public value and dignity. Much contemporary policing scholarship also highlights legitimacy, procedural justice, and community trust as core elements of the democratic order [24, 25]. This normative shift becomes crucial in a situation of post-electoral turbulence. But managing public disorder is not just a matter of crowd dispersing; it is also a matter of sustaining institutional legitimacy and safeguarding rights based on the rights of the Constitution. A security posture of preventiveness, proportional force use, and dialogue is consistent with value-based public services [23]. In this sense, the anticipatory and gradual aspects of the AGUSTIF Model have their basis in the assumption that security cannot take root at the expense of democratic legitimacy, but should rather be part of that very legitimacy.

Structural Layer: Security as Collaborative Governance

Hybrid unrest is a complex interplay of actors — police forces, military assistance units, electoral commissions, local governments, civil society actors, and digital platforms. Confronting this degree of complexity involves much more than hierarchical command structures. Ansell and Gash [26] and Emerson and Nabatchi [27] introduced the theory of Collaborative Governance to help comprehend how inter-

sector coordination facilitates policy effectiveness in sectors marked by interdependence and uncertainty. Under this viewpoint, the Unified Command System is not only an important mechanism of operational synchronization (SES), but also its role in governance by aligning institutional mandates and communication mechanisms of information and crisis response. Collective security mechanisms avoid fragmentation by creating shared situational awareness. Theoretically, the integrative dimension of AGUSTIF is therefore premised on the proposition that democratic security is grounded in organized interdependence rather than unilateral authority. That structural layer positions riot management within a larger governance ecology.

Adaptive Layer: Adaptation through Learning and Capability

Fast and digital information distribution and digitally mediated mobilization deflate bureaucracy. Organizations lacking adaptive capacity risk delayed responses or disproportionate operational actions. Organizational Learning Theory provides a useful analytical lens to explain how institutions transform operational experience into institutional knowledge, engage in critical reflection, and continuously refine operational procedures based on internal evaluation processes. Organizational Learning Theory [28, 29] provides analytical support for explaining how institutions convert experience into knowledge, engage in critical reflection, and modify their routines on the basis of internal learning processes. In public administration, adaptive governance has increasingly been associated with dynamic capability, a system or approach in managing resources, particularly the capacity to integrate, build, and reconfigure capabilities as needed, in response to evolving and changing processes [30]. The institutionalization of learning is exemplified by mechanisms such as After Action Review (AAR), performance data collection, and policy change. Instead of episodic reform, the change is seen as cumulative and cyclical. AGUSTIF exhibits this adaptive bent as it is characterised by measured, technological, and futuristic aspects of its progressive dimensionality. Decision-making is guided by an intelligence system and the feedback loop to minimize reliance on instincts and just reacting to a situation by nature, while avoiding impulsive or sheer reaction. In a way, then, riot management is a step from tactical containment to learning governance.

The Cultural Layer: Legitimacy in Context and Local Wisdom

Security governance has social dynamics, and does not occur within a social vacuum. Cultural norms inform conceptions of authority and shame, solidarity, and justice. Embedded governance proposes the importance of aligning institutions by setting the right norms for those on the ground and informal authorities [31, 32]. In South Sulawesi, the local value of Siri' na Pacce is tied to a deeply embedded ethic of dignity (SiRi') and empathetic solidarity (Pacce). Behaviors that are considered humiliating to them may spur people toward a swift mass mobilization. In this study, the concept of local wisdom is constructed not as symbolic rhetoric but as a contextual legitimacy variable. The sensitivity to culture affects a range of negotiation, mediation, and communication strategies. By adapting operational practices and behaviour to local cultural expectations, the institution has reduced the risk of escalation and enhanced trust in relationships. The

culturally sensitive nature of AGUSTIF, in turn, reflects governance based upon socio-cultural embeddedness.

Towards an Integrated Hybrid Security Governance Framework

Instead of taking these theories as parallel references, this study unifies them behind a composite hybrid security governance framework:

- a. Normative layer: The protection of public values and democratic legitimacy [23, 24].
- b. Structural layer: Cross-actor coordination and collaborative command [26, 27].
- c. Adaptive layer: Learning organization and dynamic capability [28-30]; and
- d. Cultural layer: Contextual legitimacy in the form of embedded norms [31, 32].

In this synthesis, the AGUSTIF Model is conceptualized less as an operational checklist to follow and instead as a governance theoretician's fine-tuning of hybrid conflict. It reconceives tactical policing as a democratic institutional agent that safeguards public value, can adapt and learn among sectors, and works within culturally embedded legitimacy frames. In situating the model in the context of established theoretical traditions and extending them to the subnational management of hybrid electoral unrest, this framework contributes both to the development of a bridge between public administration theory and modern practices of security governance.

In this study, Siri' na Pacce was operationalized through three observable dimensions:

- 1) involvement of customary leaders in mediation,
- 2) incorporation of cultural language in negotiation strategies, and
- 3) avoidance of actions perceived as publicly humiliating.

These indicators were used as analytical codes during thematic data analysis.

2. METHOD

The Mobile Brigade Unit (Brimob) of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) serves as the primary case examined in this study. The General Elections Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum – KPU) and the Election Supervisory Board (Badan Pengawas Pemilu – Bawaslu) are also referred to in this research.

2.1 Types of research and rationalization

This research uses a qualitative type of research. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena, particularly regarding the dynamics and performance of security institutions in critical situations [33]. The rationale for using this method is to explore non-quantitative aspects, such as decision-making processes, adaptive operational tactics, as well as psychosocial challenges and ethical considerations of informants in the field that cannot be captured through numbers.

2.2 Research context

The research was carried out at the Mobile Brigade Unit of

the South Sulawesi Regional Police Command Headquarters and several locations in South Sulawesi that have a history of mass riots in the 2020-2025 period, such as Makassar City, Gowa Regency, and Jeneponto Regency. This location was chosen to provide comprehensive data on Brimob's strategy in terrain that has high socio-political complexity.

2.3 Informants and sample criteria

Eighteen informants were carefully chosen using purposive sampling: five senior Brimob officers, four field operations commanders, three election administrators (KPU/Bawaslu), three local government officials, and three leaders from community and religious groups. Interviews were carried out in a structured way from March through July 2025, each lasting roughly 60 to 120 minutes.

We considered the data saturated once the 15th interview produced no new themes; the remaining interviews mainly reinforced the categories already identified. To strengthen the study's credibility, we used triangulation (across both sources and methods), along with member checking and peer debriefing.

2.4 Research instruments

The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself (human instrument). To support the accuracy of the data, the researcher used semi-structured interview guidelines, field observation guidelines, and documentation study guidelines.

2.5 Data collection procedures

Data is collected through three main techniques:

- (1) In-Depth Interview: Conducted to obtain detailed information from key informants.
- (2) Participatory Observation: Direct observation of physical conditions, activities, and interactions at the research site recorded in field notes.
- (3) Documentation Study: Assessment of policy documents, regulations, operational reports, and internal archives of Brimob's strategy.

2.6 Data analysis techniques

Data analysis was carried out using an interactive model from the study, which consists of four stages:

- (1) Data Collection: Collect all the results of interviews, observations, and documents.
- (2) Data Condensation: Selecting, simplifying, and transforming raw data into specific categories or themes.
- (3) Data Presentation: Organizing information into narrative text, tables, or matrices to understand relationship patterns.
- (4) Conclusion Drawn: Giving meaning and interpretation to the data that has been analyzed.

2.7 Ethical considerations and data validity

The validity of the data is guaranteed through triangulation techniques (sources, methods, time, and theory) to ensure the validity of the findings. The researcher also conducts member checking to confirm interpretation to informants, peer debriefing to avoid bias, and compiles trail audits for

transparency of the research process. In the ethical aspect, the interview recording process is carried out only after obtaining explicit permission from the informants.

To ensure data integrity, all empirical findings were cross-checked across interview transcripts, observation records, and institutional documents. Data presentation in tables and narrative descriptions was reviewed to ensure internal consistency. No data were excluded from the analysis without methodological justification. All interpretations were derived from validated qualitative evidence obtained through triangulation. All findings presented in the Results section are derived from the eighteen informants described in the Methods section.

3. RESULT

Empirical data derived from interviews, comprehensive document analysis, and systematic direct observation suggest that the management of conflict throughout the electoral period of 2024 adhered to a methodical operational framework comprising proactive engagement, sequential response, and subsequent event stabilization.

To ensure data consistency and analytical rigor, all qualitative findings were verified through triangulation across interview transcripts, field observations, and institutional documents. The convergence of evidence from these sources confirms the reliability of the identified operational patterns, particularly regarding preventive conflict engagement strategies, staged response mechanisms, and collaborative coordination practices. This triangulation process strengthens the internal validity of the findings and reduces the risk of single-source bias.

In order to augment the document analysis and field observations delineated in the Results section, the research also employed comprehensive interviews with pivotal stakeholders engaged in post-election security administration in South Sulawesi. These interviews investigated operational methodologies, coordination frameworks, early detection approaches, and community involvement in the management of conflicts.

The data obtained from the interviews furnish direct empirical insights into the implementation of operational practices in situ. The informants articulated a growing focus on preventive conflict management strategy, early detection, and a methodical escalation in the management of potential unrest scenarios.

For instance, one informant emphasized the importance of anticipatory engagement in preventing escalation:

“We primarily focus on preventing escalation. We try to identify tensions before demonstrations occur.” (Informant 03)

Other informants highlighted the role of digital monitoring in identifying early warning signals:

“We monitor social media traffic through hashtags and coordination channels to detect early warning signals.” (Informant 07)

Operational informants also described the staged approach used in crowd management:

“We always begin with persuasion and warnings before any enforcement action.” (Informant 05)

Similarly, negotiation and communication were frequently mentioned as the first operational response to prevent confrontation:

“In most situations early dialogue with the crowd prevents escalation.” (Informant 06)

Engagement with community and religious leaders also emerged as an important operational practice:

“Officers usually contact community leaders before demonstrations take place.” (Informant 11); and

“When religious leaders are involved in calming the community, people tend to listen.” (Informant 14)

These statements illustrate the operational dynamics of preventive conflict management strategy, negotiation-based response, and multi-stakeholder coordination in managing potential unrest situations.

From the interview results, data classification was also carried out based on the question indicators that had been compiled in the interview guidelines (Table 1). As summarized in Table 1, the interview evidence demonstrates consistent patterns of preventive conflict management strategy and staged operational response.

Table 1. Interview evidence supporting empirical findings

Theme	Evidence from Interview	Informants
Preventive conflict management	“We primarily focus on preventing escalation. We try to identify tensions before demonstrations occur.”	Informant 03
Early detection through digital monitoring	“We monitor social media traffic through hashtags and coordination channels to detect early warning signals.”	Informant 07
Gradual operational escalation	“We always begin with persuasion and warnings before any enforcement action.”	Informant 05
Negotiation as primary response	“In most situations early dialogue with the crowd prevents escalation.”	Informant 06
Community engagement	“Officers usually contact community leaders before demonstrations take place.”	Informant 11
Cultural mediation	“When religious leaders are involved in calming the community, people tend to listen.”	Informant 14
Inter-agency coordination	“Operations are coordinated through a unified command involving police, military, and local government.”	Informant 04
Personnel competencies	“Negotiation skills and emotional control are critical when dealing with large crowds.”	Informant 06
Post-event stabilization	“After the incident we return to the location and communicate with community leaders.”	Informant 09
Operational evaluation	“Every operation ends with an evaluation session reviewing response time and coordination.”	Informant 03

Source: Results of data processing from informant interviews

Table 2. Coding matrix of interview data

Analytical Theme	Informants	Representative Quotation
Preventive strategy	Informant 03	“We anticipate tensions long before the demonstration.”
Digital early warning	Informant 07	“Social media monitoring helps detect potential mobilization.”
Gradual response mechanism	Informant 05	“We cannot immediately begin enforcement; persuasion comes first.”
Negotiation approach	Informant 06	“Early dialogue usually prevents escalation.”
Community engagement	Informant 11	“They contact community leaders before protests occur.”
Cultural mediation	Informant 14	“When community leaders are involved, people listen.”
Institutional coordination	Informant 04	“Coordination involves multiple institutions under unified command.”
Personnel capability	Informant 06	“Restraint and situational awareness are essential in the field.”
Post-conflict stabilization	Informant 09	“We revisit the area to ensure that the situation remains stable.”
Organizational learning	Informant 03	“Every operation is followed by an evaluation meeting.”

Source: Results of data processing from informant interviews

The thematic classification derived from the coding process is presented in Table 2.

To rigorously examine the qualitative evidence, the transcripts of interviews were systematically categorized into various analytical themes that encapsulate operational practices and organizational methodologies in the realm of conflict management. The coding procedure aggregated analogous statements into thematic classifications based on recurring patterns identified within the interview data (Table 2).

The outcomes of the coding process reveal multiple persistent themes, including preventive strategies, digital early warning systems, incremental escalation protocols, community involvement, and institutional collaboration. These themes elucidate the operational dynamics discerned

throughout the field investigation and serve to enrich the empirical evidence acquired from operational reports and observational records.

In addition to qualitative data derived from interviews and comprehensive document analysis, empirical field observations were conducted to elucidate operational methodologies employed during the preparatory and coordination activities of security measures. The focus of these observations encompassed operational briefings, inter-agency coordination meetings, and simulation exercises pertinent to crowd management in the context of electoral security.

In addition to collecting interview data, observation data were also collected. Several aspects that were reviewed were arranged as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Field observation record

Observation Code	Observation Context	Location	Data Collected
Obs-01	Pre-deployment operational briefing	Security simulation venue	Intelligence reports and deployment planning
Obs-02	Inter-agency coordination meeting	Regional coordination office	Institutional coordination mechanisms
Obs-03	Crowd management simulation exercise	Tactical training field	Operational escalation procedures
Obs-04	Post-operation evaluation session	Operational command office	Organizational learning and evaluation

These observations yielded empirical insights into the dynamics of interaction among various institutional actors, the procedural frameworks of operational command, and the preventive conflict engagement strategies that were employed in anticipation of potential civil unrest scenarios.

Records of observations were meticulously documented throughout the pre-election security simulations, inter-agency coordination meetings, and post-event evaluation sessions. The annotations underscore several recurrent operational methodologies, which include intelligence briefings, coordinated command structures, pre-planned response preparations, and mechanisms for community engagement.

Observation Note 1 - Pre-Deployment Briefing

Date: May 2024

Location: Regional Security Simulation Exercise

Prior to the simulation exercise, operational informants gathered for a briefing session led by the operational command unit. The briefing included the presentation of intelligence reports identifying potential crowd mobilization points and areas with heightened political tension.

During the briefing, officers discussed the planned deployment structure and communication protocols between

field units and the command center. The presentation included digital monitoring reports indicating social media narratives related to political mobilization.

Officers were instructed to prioritize negotiation and crowd communication before any tactical deployment.

Observation Note 2 - Inter-Agency Coordination Meeting

Date: June 2024

Location: Regional Coordination Meeting

A coordination meeting was attended by representatives from multiple institutions, including police, military units, regional government officials, and electoral management bodies.

During the meeting, operational plans were discussed regarding the protection of electoral logistics and potential demonstration areas. Intelligence updates were presented regarding crowd mobilization patterns and political tensions in several districts.

Participants emphasized the need for continuous communication between institutions during the electoral period. The meeting concluded with the establishment of communication channels for rapid coordination in case of

emerging security situations.

Observation Note 3 - Crowd Management Simulation

Date: July 2024

Location: Tactical Training Field

A simulation exercise was conducted to practice staged crowd management procedures. Informants practiced different operational phases, including negotiation, defensive formation, and controlled dispersal procedures.

The exercise involved negotiation teams approaching a simulated crowd to deliver warnings and engage in dialogue. Tactical units remained in standby positions while negotiation attempts were conducted.

Communication between field teams and the command center was maintained through radio coordination. Each phase

transition was recorded by the operational control unit.

Observation Note 4 - Post-Operation Evaluation Session

Date: August 2024

Location: Operational Command Office

Following a training exercise, informants participated in an evaluation meeting reviewing operational procedures. Video recordings from the simulation were reviewed to assess response timing, communication effectiveness, and coordination between units.

Participants discussed operational strengths and areas requiring improvement. Notes were recorded regarding communication gaps and coordination adjustments for future operations.

Table 4. Observational evidence supporting operational practices

Observation Context	Key Observed Activity	Empirical Evidence
Pre-deployment briefing	Intelligence presentation and operational planning	Officers reviewed intelligence reports and discussed deployment strategies before simulation exercises
Coordination meeting	Inter-agency communication	Representatives from multiple institutions coordinated operational plans
Simulation exercise	Crowd management procedures	Personnel practiced negotiation and staged escalation mechanisms
Tactical preparation	Operational command communication	Field teams communicated with the command center through radio coordination
Post-operation evaluation	Organizational learning	Evaluation meetings reviewed operational performance and coordination

Source: Results of data processing from observation

Table 5. Triangulation evidence table (interview - observation - document)

Empirical Theme	Interview Evidence	Observation Evidence	Documentary Evidence
Preventive conflict management	“We try to identify tensions before demonstrations occur.” (Informant 03)	Officers received intelligence briefings prior to field deployment during security simulations	Operational report (Ops/SS-2024/BRIMOB) documenting preventive monitoring activities
Digital early warning system	“Social media monitoring helps detect potential mobilization.” (Informant 07)	Intelligence updates presented during operational briefings	Internal intelligence monitoring reports during the electoral period
Negotiation-based response	“We always begin with persuasion and warnings.” (Informant 05)	Negotiation teams engaged simulated crowds before tactical deployment during exercises	Crowd control operational guidelines emphasizing negotiation phases
Gradual escalation procedures	“We move step by step depending on the situation.” (Informant 06)	Simulation exercises demonstrating staged escalation phases	Post-event operational reports documenting phased responses
Inter-agency coordination	“Operations are coordinated through unified command.” (Informant 04)	Coordination meetings involving police, military, and government institutions	Coordination meeting minutes and operational planning documents
Community engagement	“Officers contact community leaders before demonstrations.” (Informant 11)	Officers observed interacting with community representatives during field visits	Community outreach reports during election security operations
Cultural mediation	“When religious leaders are involved, people listen.” (Informant 14)	Informal dialogue between officers and community leaders observed after incidents	Local conflict mediation documentation
Personnel capability	“Negotiation skills are essential in the field.” (Informant 06)	Training simulations emphasizing negotiation and communication	Training curriculum revision documents (2024)
Post-conflict stabilization	“We return to the area to ensure the situation remains stable.” (Informant 09)	Post-event visits and interaction with local leaders	Post-operation evaluation reports
Organizational learning	“Every operation ends with an evaluation session.” (Informant 03)	Evaluation meetings reviewing operational recordings	After Action Review (AAR) documentation

Source: Results of data processing from field data

From the results of these observations, a classification was carried out according to the research context. The observation records supporting these findings are presented in Table 3.

To augment the validity of the qualitative outcomes, this research utilized data triangulation by synthesizing evidence

from three distinct sources: comprehensive interviews, observational fieldwork, and analytical document review. The triangulation methodology enabled the researcher to corroborate persistent operational trends discerned during the examination of conflict management methodologies in South

Sulawesi.

The interview data yielded valuable insights into operational viewpoints from informants, representatives of the community, and institutional stakeholders. Field observations documented real-time operational activities during coordination sessions, simulation drills, and operational briefings. The analytical document review corroborated these findings by offering official operational records, internal documentation, and coordination materials.

Additional observational evidence supporting these operational practices is summarized in Table 4 to demonstrate the alignment between field observations and interview findings.

The triangulation results integrating interview data, field observations, and documentary analysis are presented in Table 5 to demonstrate the consistency of empirical findings across multiple data sources.

Through the comparative analysis of these three sources, several coherent empirical trends materialized, particularly concerning preventive conflict engagement strategies, staged escalation protocols, inter-agency coordination, community mediation mechanisms, and organizational learning frameworks.

The triangulation of qualitative methodologies, encompassing interviews, observational studies, and documentary analysis, reveals coherent operational patterns across diverse sources of empirical evidence. The synthesis of these results underscores several pervasive dimensions within conflict management practices, including proactive monitoring, negotiation-centric engagement, incremental escalation protocols, and frameworks for institutional coordination.

These empirical dimensions establish the analytical groundwork for the conceptual interpretation articulated in the discussion section, wherein the findings are scrutinized in relation to overarching paradigms of hybrid security governance and strategies for conflict management.

4. DISCUSSION

The empirical findings reveal a clear shift in riot management practices from reactive enforcement toward preventive conflict engagement strategies. Interview evidence indicates that operational personnel increasingly prioritize early detection, dialogue with community actors, and anticipatory monitoring of potential tensions. Observation data also confirm that intelligence briefings and digital monitoring activities are conducted prior to operational deployment, while documentary records show that a significant proportion of potential unrest incidents were resolved at the negotiation stage.

This transformation reflects an important normative shift in the philosophy of public security institutions. Within the perspective of the New Public Service, public organizations are expected to prioritize the protection of public values and citizen dignity rather than relying solely on hierarchical control mechanisms [23]. In the context of electoral unrest, preventive conflict management strategy represents a governance approach that seeks to maintain democratic stability while preserving institutional legitimacy.

Rather than perceiving crowd management as an act of coercive control, the empirical evidence suggests that operational actors increasingly interpret security interventions

as a process of public service. Early engagement with community leaders, negotiation-based responses, and the avoidance of premature enforcement illustrate how operational practices align with the normative principle of “serving rather than steering” emphasized in democratic governance literature.

4.1 Collaborative security governance and institutional coordination

Another recurring empirical pattern concerns the importance of inter-agency coordination in managing electoral unrest. Both interview data and field observations demonstrate that riot management operations are conducted through coordinated structures involving police units, military support forces, electoral management bodies, and regional government institutions.

Coordination meetings observed during the electoral security preparation stage indicate that information exchange and joint planning mechanisms are central to operational decision-making. These coordination mechanisms enable institutions to develop shared situational awareness regarding potential conflict triggers and operational responses.

This pattern can be interpreted through the lens of collaborative governance theory. According to Ansell and Gash [26], collaborative governance emerges when public institutions recognize that complex policy problems cannot be effectively addressed through hierarchical authority alone. Instead, interdependent actors must coordinate resources, information, and authority across institutional boundaries.

In the case of electoral conflict management in South Sulawesi, the Unified Command structure represents a practical manifestation of collaborative governance in the security domain. The integration of multiple institutional actors within a coordinated command framework reduces fragmentation in decision-making and allows for more adaptive responses to rapidly evolving crowd dynamics.

4.2 Organizational learning and adaptive capacity in security institutions

The empirical evidence also highlights the importance of organizational learning mechanisms in shaping operational transformation. Observation records and interview responses consistently indicate that operational evaluations are conducted after major security operations through formal review sessions.

These evaluation sessions allow operational units to analyze response time, communication patterns, and coordination effectiveness during field deployments. The documentation of these processes suggests the institutionalization of learning mechanisms within the organization.

From a theoretical perspective, this phenomenon corresponds with the concept of learning organizations proposed by the study [28]. Learning organizations continuously refine their operational routines by reflecting on past experiences and integrating new knowledge into institutional practices.

Similarly, the concept of dynamic capabilities emphasizes the ability of institutions to adapt their resources and operational routines in response to changing environmental conditions [30]. In the context of hybrid conflict environments characterized by rapid digital mobilization and misinformation flows, adaptive capacity becomes essential for maintaining

institutional effectiveness.

The presence of evaluation mechanisms, operational simulations, and training revisions suggests that riot management practices are increasingly shaped by institutional learning processes rather than static operational doctrines.

4.3 Cultural embeddedness and contextual legitimacy

An additional dimension emerging from the empirical findings concerns the role of cultural context in shaping conflict management practices. Interview responses and field observations consistently highlight the involvement of community and religious leaders in mediation processes during potential unrest situations.

These practices reflect the significance of local cultural norms in influencing community responses to security

interventions. In South Sulawesi, the concept of *Siri' na Pacce* represents an important cultural value associated with dignity, solidarity, and collective responsibility.

Embedded governance theory emphasizes that institutional legitimacy often depends on the ability of formal organizations to align their actions with locally embedded social norms [31, 32]. When security interventions are perceived as culturally respectful and socially legitimate, communities are more likely to cooperate with institutional authorities.

The empirical evidence suggests that mediation involving local leaders serves as an informal mechanism for de-escalating tensions and maintaining social cohesion during politically sensitive periods. Cultural mediation, therefore, functions as a critical bridge between formal security institutions and community-based conflict management practices.

Table 6. Theory-based strategy transformation matrix [1, 23, 25-30]

AGUSTIF Dimension	Existing Model (Reactive)	AGUSTIF Model (Transformative)	Theoretical Foundation	Reference
Anticipatory (A)	Waiting for riot to occur	Predictive red-zone mapping via intelligence and social media monitoring	Intelligence-Led Policing; Dynamic Capabilities	[1]
Measured (U)	Subjective, unilateral success claims	KPI-based AAR as mandatory post-operation accountability	New Public Management; Accountability Theory	[23]
Technological (T)	Manual — HT radios and barriers	Drone surveillance, body cameras, real-time cyber patrol	Dynamic Capabilities	[25]
Cultural-Sensitive (S)	Generalist — ignoring local culture	<i>Siri' na Pacce</i> protocols; indigenous mediators in Phase 1	Human Security; NPS	[27]
Integrative (I)	Brimob alone (single-actor)	Unified Command System: Polri-TNI-Pemda-KPU	Collaborative Governance	[28]
Gradual (G)	Maximum physical force directly applied	3-phase escalation: negotiation → defensive PHH → ultimatum remedium	Fisher et al. Principled Negotiation [26]; Glasl Escalation [29]	[26, 29]
Futuristic (F)	Static, routine training	Scholar-Warrior model with adaptive curriculum and AAR	Organisational Learning	[30]

Note: AGUSTIF = Anticipatory, Gradual, Measured, Culturally Sensitive, Technological, Integrative, and Futuristic; KPI = Key Performance Indicator; AAR = After-Action Review; Polri = Indonesian National Police; TNI = Indonesian National Armed Forces; Pemda = regional government; KPU = General Elections Commission.

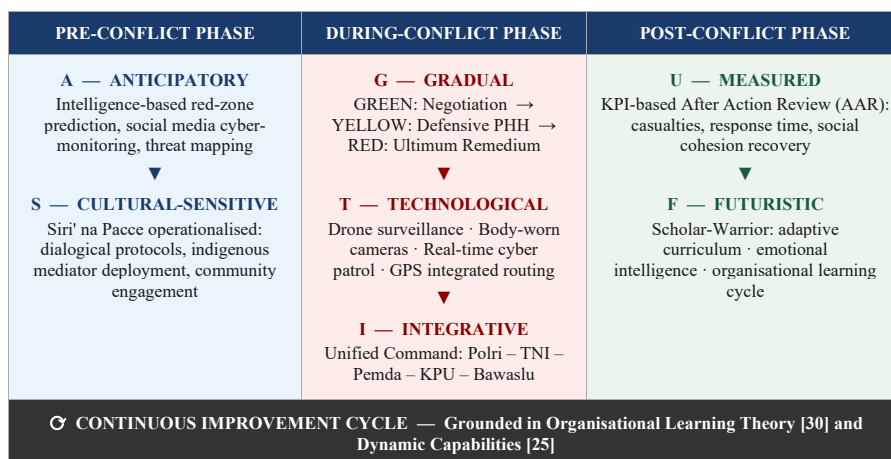


Figure 1. AGUSTIF Model — integrated architecture for hybrid conflict management

Note: AGUSTIF = Anticipatory, Gradual, Measured, Culturally Sensitive, Technological, Integrative, and Futuristic

4.4 The emergence of the AGUSTIF Model

The transformation of Brimob's strategy reveals a fundamental paradigm shift — consistent with Kotter's eight-step change model [24] — from a Reactive-Repressive operational pattern to a Preventive-Proactive and Humanist pattern, organised around three interdependent pillars:

Preventive, Responsive, and Restorative Strategy.

The Preventive Strategy pillar focuses on Early Warning System development through integrated intelligence detection and social media monitoring, Community Engagement through dialogical patrols, and cross-stakeholder coordination under a Unified Command framework. This pillar operationalises the New Public Service principle [27] that

public servants should 'serve citizens, not steer them': deploying negotiator and mediator teams sensitive to Siri' na Pacce dynamics creates a grassroots conflict-cooling system.

The Responsive Strategy pillar transforms use-of-force from direct repression to a graduated, proportionate protocol aligned with Glasl's conflict escalation model [29]: Green Phase (negotiation and persuasion), Yellow Phase (defensive PHH formation deployment), Red Phase (ultimum remedium as last resort only). The Green Phase protocols are further grounded in Fisher, Ury, and Patton's principled negotiation framework [26]: negotiators are trained to separate people from the problem, focus on underlying interests rather than positional demands, and generate face-saving options for mutual de-escalation — skills directly applicable to defusing crowd tension rooted in the honour-sensitive dynamics of Siri' na Pacce. The Restorative Strategy pillar positions Brimob as a neutral reconciliation facilitator, integrating adat and religious leaders guided by Siri' na Pacce values, and institutionalising AAR as a mandatory learning mechanism — consistent with Senge's learning organisation framework [30]. Table 6 maps the transformation against prior operational patterns and theoretical foundations.

Figure 1 presents the integrated architecture of the AGUSTIF Model, illustrating how the seven dimensions operate across three operational phases — Pre-Conflict, During-Conflict, and Post-Conflict — within a continuous improvement cycle grounded in organisational learning theory [30].

Finally, the involvement of community and religious leaders illustrates the culturally sensitive dimension of the model, highlighting the importance of contextual legitimacy in maintaining public trust during security operations. Rather than functioning as a rigid operational protocol, the AGUSTIF Model represents an integrated governance framework that combines preventive intelligence, proportional response mechanisms, collaborative coordination, technological adaptation, and culturally embedded legitimacy.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study examines the institutional transformation of electoral conflict management practices in South Sulawesi and positions the AGUSTIF Model as an empirically grounded framework for hybrid security governance. The findings suggest that conflict resolution during the 2024 election cycle had been heavily based on pre-emptive outreach, organised escalation routes, inter-agency cooperation, and post-event learning. Instead of domination based on coercion, operational effectiveness was increasingly identified with the ability to prevent escalation, lessen the use of force, and maintain institutional legitimacy.

In theory, it makes a new contribution to the corpus of hybrid conflict and security governance by moving the focus away from interstate conflicts and towards a subnational approach to democratic policing. The AGUSTIF Model delineates preventive intelligence, proportional response, command cooperation, and adaptive learning in an interdependent governance system.

By empirically generating this configuration, the study contributes to hybrid security scholarship by moving beyond tactical and military paradigms and by integrating them into wider public administration concepts about collaborative governance, public value, and organizational learning. The

contribution has been to generate a mid-range analytical framework that provides a clear interpretation of the operations inside hybrid security governance in the context of democratic institutions.

The practical implications of the findings suggest that effective conflict management in the digitally enhanced context requires capabilities other than enforcement. The existence of preventive intelligence, staged escalation criteria, inter-agency coordination processes, and formalized post-action review framework systems strengthens the resilience of institutions. However, their effectiveness rests on the continuity of leadership, moral oversight of the systems of digital monitoring, and institutionalization of processes of learning. Without these requirements, preventive governance may slide back into the reactive enforcement paradigm.

The present study has a number of limitations. This empirical data comes from a single regional case, and, as such, has limitations, with reliance on internal operational records, and/or institutional classification criteria being an issue. Triangulation was used to augment validity, but external validation is required in the wider regional or national context. In addition, when environments are unique, socio-cultural configurations or institutional capacities emerge that may change their applicability. More studies are warranted to examine the transferability of an AGUSTIF configuration across diverse electoral contexts, the contrast between hybrid security governance styles in different provinces (if any), and the quantifiable relationship between preventive conflict management strategy mechanisms and escalation. Cross-regional comparative studies would also help to elucidate whether the governance domains outlined here represent contextual considerations of adaptation or more widespread institutional change in democratic security domains. Lastly, the AGUSTIF Model does not endorse a one-size-fits-all approach for riot control. Instead, it offers an empirically grounded explanation for how democratic security institutions can recalibrate operational doctrine and thus how they can reconcile coercive power with legitimacy, coherence in coordination, and adaptive reflexivity within hybrid conflict environments.

CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Data collection and analysis were performed by the research team. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript. Conceptualization, (M.A. and R.N.); methodology, (M.A. and R.N.); data collection, (M.A.); analysis, (M.A. and A.C.N.); writing—original draft preparation, (M.A.); writing—review and editing, (R.N. and A.C.N.); supervision, (R.N.). All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. This research was conducted independently without financial sponsorship from any commercial or political organization. All interpretations and conclusions presented in this study are solely the responsibility of the authors.

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