

From Communal Violence to Negotiated Peace: Civil–Military Cooperation and Security Governance in Poso, Indonesia, 2000–2001

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Keywords:	Abstract
Civil–Military Cooperation; Communal Conflict; Malino Peace Process; Poso; Security Governance	This historical case study examined how civil–military cooperation and security governance shaped the transition from communal violence toward negotiated peace in Poso, Indonesia, between 2000 and 2001. The study employed qualitative document analysis and within-case process tracing, drawing on scholarly literature, human rights and policy reports, and legal instruments governing Indonesia's security sector restructuring during the Reformasi era. The formal separation of military and police responsibilities created opportunities to strengthen democratic civilian oversight while revealing institutional coordination challenges in responding to communal violence. Military logistical capabilities, territorial knowledge, communication networks, and operational mobility offered potential support for civilian protection. However, ambiguous operational mandates and perceptions of partiality threatened institutional legitimacy and public trust. The December 2001 Malino peace process marked a shift toward positioning security operations as supporting mechanisms for civilian-led mediation, law enforcement, humanitarian access, and postconflict recovery rather than substitutes for political negotiation. Based on these findings, the study developed a bounded civil–military cooperation framework emphasizing civilian authority, police primacy in routine law enforcement, clearly defined military support missions, operational impartiality, institutional accountability, and reviewable conditions for military disengagement. The Poso case suggested that sustainable conflict de-escalation required the integration of effective security capabilities with institutional restraint, democratic civilian oversight, and credible political negotiation. The proposed framework represented an interpretive synthesis of documentary evidence rather than a quantitative assessment of the causal effects of individual military or police operations.

INTRODUCTION

The Poso conflict represents a critical case for understanding how states transition from communal violence toward negotiated peace during periods of institutional transformation. Violence that began in late 1998 escalated significantly during 2000 and 2001, as localized disputes evolved into organized cycles of violence between Muslim and Christian communities, accompanied by population displacement, retaliatory attacks, and the involvement of actors from outside the district (Aragon, 2001; Human Rights Watch, 2002; McRae, 2013). The conflict cannot be adequately explained as a spontaneous manifestation of deeply rooted religious antagonism. Instead, existing scholarship identifies the interaction of local elite competition, shifting access to political and economic resources, ethnoreligious boundary formation, armed mobilization, and failures of impartial state protection as important contributing factors (Diprose, 2008; Toha, 2021; van Klinken, 2007). These interconnected

dynamics make Poso particularly relevant for examining not only the factors underlying violent escalation but also the extent to which security institutions and civilian political actors established, or failed to establish, conditions conducive to de-escalation and negotiated settlement.

The analytical significance of the Poso conflict was further heightened by its occurrence during Indonesia's Reformasi period. During the most destructive phases of the conflict, the post-authoritarian government was restructuring the integrated military–police security system inherited from the New Order regime. In August 2000, the People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, MPR RI) formally established the institutional separation of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) and the Indonesian National Police (Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia, Polri), while differentiating their respective responsibilities (People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia [MPR RI], 2000a, 2000b). This restructuring represented an important step toward strengthening democratic civilian oversight but simultaneously created new requirements for institutional coordination during domestic security crises. Consequently, the Poso conflict unfolded amid a fundamental institutional transition in which the state needed sufficient security and logistical capabilities to protect civilians and contain collective violence while avoiding the reestablishment of military-dominated domestic governance. The case therefore illustrates a central challenge in civil–military relations: determining who possesses legitimate authority to authorize the use of force, under what circumstances, for which objectives, and through which mechanisms of institutional accountability (Feaver, 1999).

Existing scholarship on the Poso conflict is extensive but remains distributed across several research traditions that are not always systematically integrated. Studies examining the origins and escalation of violence have emphasized the roles of local political competition, identity-based mobilization, decentralization, and institutional weaknesses in transforming localized disputes into prolonged communal conflict (Aragon, 2001, 2005; Diprose, 2008, 2009; McRae, 2013; Toha, 2021; van Klinken, 2007; Wilson, 2008). Research on criminal justice and postconflict security has further demonstrated that negotiated settlements may remain fragile when criminal accountability, institutional impartiality, and public trust are contested (International Crisis Group, 2004; McRae, 2007). Meanwhile, scholarship on Indonesian civil–military relations has examined the military's transition toward democratic civilian control, the continued influence of territorial command structures, and recurring institutional pressures for military involvement in domestic security affairs (Kingsbury, 2003; Laksmana, 2019; Mietzner, 2009; Rabasa & Haseman, 2002; Teo, 2022). Despite these contributions, comparatively limited attention has been devoted to integrating these perspectives to explain how relationships among civilian authorities, military institutions, and police organizations shaped the transition from violent escalation toward negotiated peace in Poso.

A further conceptual gap concerns the tendency to interpret domestic security responses through a binary distinction between military intervention and military withdrawal. Such a dichotomy overlooks a more fundamental governance question concerning the conditions under which civil–military cooperation can remain legitimate, effective, proportionate, and reversible when police capabilities are constrained and security threats arise primarily from conflict among civilians rather than conventional external military aggression. Indonesia's

historical doctrine of Total People's War and the Sistem Pertahanan dan Keamanan Rakyat Semesta (Sishankamrata), or Total People's Defense and Security System, provides relevant institutional context because these traditions emphasized the interconnected roles of security institutions, territorial structures, and civilian communities (Cribb, 2001; Reza, 2017). However, the documentary sources examined in this study did not establish that the Indonesian government formally designated security operations in Poso during 2000–2001 as a Total People's War campaign. Accordingly, these doctrines were treated as historical and institutional background rather than as direct explanations for the conflict or its resolution. The primary analytical focus remained on the governance of cooperation among civilian authorities, the TNI, Polri, and communities affected by communal violence.

Within this analytical framework, security governance encompasses the institutional arrangements, regulatory provisions, coordination mechanisms, and accountability procedures through which coercive and noncoercive security responsibilities are allocated, implemented, and supervised. Civil–military cooperation is understood more specifically as mission-defined coordination between civilian authorities and military institutions in support of legitimate public security objectives while preserving the institutional distinctions among national defense, law enforcement, and political mediation. These distinctions are particularly important in communal conflicts because affected populations may simultaneously require protection, provide essential local intelligence, participate in political networks, and become involved in conflict dynamics. Although close engagement with local communities can improve situational awareness and operational responsiveness, it may also create risks of perceived partiality, patronage relationships, selective information gathering, and institutional capture by competing local interests. Consequently, impartiality, transparency, and accountability constitute essential operational conditions for legitimate and effective security governance rather than merely supplementary normative principles.

The principal contribution of this article lies in providing an integrated interpretation of Poso's transition from communal violence toward the December 2001 Malino peace settlement through the perspective of security governance. Specifically, the analysis connects the institutional differentiation of the TNI and Polri with challenges involving crisis coordination, operational legitimacy, institutional impartiality, and civilian-led political mediation. Building on these relationships, the article proposes a bounded civil–military cooperation framework in which civilian authorities retain responsibility for directing security policy, Polri maintains primary responsibility for ordinary law enforcement, and military assistance remains mission-specific, proportionate, accountable, and subject to clearly defined oversight and review procedures. This framework contributes to the theoretical understanding of civil–military relations in communal conflict settings by emphasizing the relationship between operational security capacity and democratic institutional restraint. However, the study offers a qualitative interpretation of documentary evidence rather than an empirical estimate of the independent causal effects of particular military or police deployments.

Accordingly, this study addresses three interconnected research questions. First, how did the restructuring of Indonesia's security institutions influence state capacity, institutional role clarity, and public legitimacy during the escalation of communal violence in Poso between 2000 and 2001? Second, which forms of civil–military cooperation potentially supported civilian protection and crisis management, and which practices risked intensifying public

mistrust, institutional ambiguity, or communal polarization? Third, how did security governance arrangements interact with civilian political mediation during the transition toward the December 2001 Malino peace settlement? By addressing these questions, the study aims to explain how operational security capabilities and democratic institutional restraint interacted during the transition from organized communal violence toward negotiated peace. It also seeks to develop an analytically transferable framework for understanding the conditions under which bounded civil–military cooperation may contribute to conflict de-escalation, civilian protection, and legitimate security governance in other communal conflict settings.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative historical case study design focusing on the Poso conflict in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, during 2000–2001. The selected period encompassed the escalation of communal violence, the formal institutional separation of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) and the Indonesian National Police (Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia, Polri) in 2000, renewed violence in 2001, and the transition toward the Malino peace settlement in December 2001. Events preceding 2000 were examined to contextualize the origins of the conflict, while selected post-2001 studies were reviewed to assess the consistency of the institutional interpretation with subsequent developments in justice, security governance, and military involvement in domestic security. The unit of analysis comprised interactions among civilian political authorities, the TNI, Polri, and conflict-affected communities, particularly their roles in conflict escalation, containment, mediation, and negotiated settlement.

Data were collected from four categories of documentary sources: peer-reviewed journal articles and academic monographs addressing communal violence, decentralization, civil–military relations, and postconflict recovery; reports published by Human Rights Watch and the International Crisis Group documenting conflict developments and institutional responses; legal instruments, including Law No. 20 of 1982, People's Consultative Assembly Decrees No. VI/MPR/2000 and No. VII/MPR/2000, and Law No. 3 of 2002, which provided the regulatory context for changes in security responsibilities; and subsequent studies examining Poso and Indonesian security governance (Diprose & Azca, 2019; Haripin et al., 2024). Sources were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research objectives, scholarly or institutional credibility, verifiable provenance, and contribution to understanding institutional coordination and security governance.

Data analysis was conducted through structured document analysis and within-case process tracing. The documentary evidence was examined using five analytical dimensions: institutional responsibilities among civilian authorities, the TNI, and Polri; mechanisms of interagency and civil–military coordination; institutional impartiality, accountability, and civilian protection; community participation, political mediation, and humanitarian recovery; and relationships between security practices and conflict escalation, de-escalation, negotiation, and stabilization. Within-case process tracing was applied to examine changes across the escalation of violence in 2000, renewed conflict in 2001, and the transition toward the December 2001 Malino peace process. This approach facilitated the interpretation of institutional developments and helped distinguish short-term violence containment from security arrangements that potentially supported political negotiation.

Source triangulation was employed to compare scholarly interpretations, contemporaneous reports, and legal documentation. Given the contested nature of the Poso conflict, accounts of institutional conduct and responsibility were critically examined to distinguish documented legal and organizational changes from reported allegations, community perceptions, and retrospective interpretations. Particular attention was given to differentiating historical military doctrines and inherited territorial security structures from documented evidence of their operational application during the conflict. This procedure supported a cautious interpretation of civil–military cooperation, institutional responsibilities, and accountability without attributing specific operational practices to doctrines lacking sufficient documentary evidence.

The study relied exclusively on secondary documentary evidence and did not involve primary interviews with political negotiators, military or police personnel, conflict survivors, former combatants, or local government officials. Differences in source perspectives and the limited availability of operational records constrained the verification of specific security practices and their consequences. Although within-case process tracing supported an interpretive examination of institutional developments and conflict sequences, it did not establish the independent causal effects of individual security operations. Consequently, the proposed bounded civil–military cooperation framework was presented as an analytically derived interpretation requiring further examination through archival research, stakeholder interviews, and comparative studies of communal conflict.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Security Governance at the Institutional Fault Line of Reformasi

The first finding is that Poso's most destructive escalation coincided with a profound reorganization of Indonesia's coercive institutions. Under the New Order, military and police functions had been integrated within an authoritarian security architecture in which territorial commands also penetrated local administration and social life. Reformasi sought to reverse that arrangement. MPR Decree VI/MPR/2000 formally separated TNI and Polri, while MPR Decree VII/MPR/2000 differentiated their roles (MPR RI, 2000a, 2000b). The reform was normatively essential to democratic consolidation, but institutional differentiation occurred while communal violence was already testing local state capacity. Tajima (2008) argues more broadly that the withdrawal of the military from routine policing during Indonesia's transition initially reduced coercive capacity in some areas. Poso shows that this temporary gap was fundamentally a governance problem: democratic separation needed to be accompanied by workable crisis coordination, not reversed through renewed institutional fusion.

The security gap mattered because conflict escalation required more than grievances; it also required repeated failures to interrupt mobilization and retaliation. Poso's violence developed through episodes in which localized disputes became linked to wider ethnoreligious narratives, elite competition, and organized collective action (Aragon, 2001; van Klinken, 2007). Varshney et al. (2008) demonstrate that large-scale group violence in Indonesia was geographically concentrated, while Toha (2021) emphasizes the importance of local political exclusion and elite configurations. The implication is that national institutional transition did not mechanically produce violence. Rather, ambiguous or insufficient security capacity interacted with local political organization. Where authorities could not credibly protect

citizens, stop attacks, investigate crimes, or reassure both communities, armed self-protection and retaliatory logic became more attractive.

The central security-governance problem was therefore not simply too little or too much military involvement. Human Rights Watch (2002) documented serious failures by security forces to prevent attacks and reported episodes in which interventions aggravated tensions. Contemporary accounts also recorded mutual perceptions that members of the security apparatus favored the opposing community. Whether every allegation could be verified is less important for conflict dynamics than the institutional effect of such perceptions: a coercive actor that is seen as partisan can become incorporated into the conflict narrative. This means that capacity without legitimacy may contain an incident while simultaneously deepening distrust, impunity, and incentives for communal self-defense. Conversely, institutional withdrawal without adequate police capacity can leave civilians exposed. Poso therefore demonstrates why effective security governance must combine presence, impartiality, and accountable role allocation.

The institutional lesson is one of sequencing, clarity, and governed coordination. Civilian control and the separation of defense from policing are prerequisites for legitimate democratic security, but role differentiation must be matched by clear command relationships, sufficient police capability, interoperable crisis procedures, reliable communication, and transparent rules for requesting military assistance. Poso's timing exposed what happens when institutional boundaries change faster than coordination mechanisms. The appropriate response is not to reconstruct an integrated military-centered system, but to create a bounded interface through which military capabilities can support civilian authorities and Polri without acquiring open-ended domestic authority. In this sense, the transition from violence to peace depended as much on the governance of state capacity as on the quantity of force available.

From Integrated Security to Differentiated Civil-Military Cooperation

The second finding concerns the institutional inheritance carried into the Reformasi period. Indonesia's independence-era strategic experience emphasized territorial depth, popular support, and dispersed resistance, later associated with Nasution's concept of Total People's War (Cribb, 2001). Elements of this experience were institutionalized in Sishankamrata and in a broad understanding of security that linked the armed forces, territory, and society (Reza, 2017). During the Poso period, Law No. 20 of 1982 remained in force until its replacement by Law No. 3 of 2002 (Republic of Indonesia, 1982, 2002). This background helps explain why territorial structures and close social embeddedness remained available to the state. Yet communal conflict posed a fundamentally different problem from external war: the task was to protect rival groups of citizens, restore impartial authority, and reduce mobilization, not to organize society for armed resistance.

The movement toward democratic security governance therefore required differentiation rather than the simple abandonment of all military capabilities. Ordinary law enforcement, investigation, arrest, evidence handling, and prosecution belong under police and civilian judicial authority. Political reconciliation and bargaining require civilian leadership. Military institutions may contribute only where their distinctive capabilities are necessary to support these processes. This division matters because institutional fusion can blur responsibility and allow coercive power to substitute for political settlement. In Poso, the question was not whether the state needed security capacity it clearly did but whether that capacity was

organized in a way that could protect citizens on both sides while preserving the legitimacy of the emerging democratic order.

Several military capabilities were potentially transferable to this bounded support role. Territorial organizations could provide granular knowledge of geography, transportation routes, settlement patterns, local leadership, and emerging security concerns. Military units could provide logistics, communications, engineering, medical support, route security, and rapid mobility when civilian agencies were overwhelmed. Long-standing local presence could also contribute to early warning. These capacities, however, are not equivalent to governing authority. Their democratic value depends on who authorizes their use, whether information is verified across communities, whether Polri retains legal responsibility for ordinary policing, and whether the mission is specific and reviewable. Civil-military cooperation becomes legitimate when capability is separated from political entitlement.

Poso therefore supports a model of differentiated cooperation rather than institutional integration. Territorial awareness, logistical reach, and crisis support can strengthen the state's capacity to protect civilians, but population militarization, informal civilian auxiliaries, political guardianship, and military substitution for criminal justice create serious risks in an identity-polarized setting. The practical challenge is to retain capabilities while removing assumptions that security institutions may organize or supervise political society. Bounded civil-military cooperation addresses this challenge by treating the military as a supporting institution within a civilian-led security architecture, not as the lead manager of communal relations.

Civil-Military Cooperation, Local Proximity, and the Neutrality Problem

The third finding is that local proximity is simultaneously an operational advantage and a political vulnerability. Security personnel embedded near villages and local networks may obtain information more quickly than distant bureaucracies and may understand routes, population movements, and local leadership structures. Yet proximity can also generate selective reporting, patronage, communal labeling, or perceptions that state institutions have been socially captured. Aragon's (2005) analysis of fragmented media narratives demonstrates how competing accounts of violence circulated through distinct religious and political networks. In such an environment, 'local knowledge' is not automatically neutral. Civil-military cooperation must therefore include procedures for cross-checking claims rather than relying on a single territorial or communal information channel.

This requirement makes civil-military cooperation broader than a bilateral relationship between the armed forces and local communities. Civilian district authorities, Polri investigators, religious leaders, humanitarian organizations, community representatives, and TNI units each possess different kinds of information and different forms of legitimacy. A multi-source early-warning and coordination arrangement can use territorial reach while preventing any single institution from monopolizing the interpretation of conflict. It also fits the post-2000 division of responsibilities: information may be shared across institutions while legal authority remains differentiated. Such an arrangement is particularly important in communal violence because reports of threats, perpetrators, and victimization can themselves become instruments of mobilization.

Neutrality is therefore a conflict-management capability. Human Rights Watch (2002) concluded that ineffective and biased or perceived as biased security responses contributed to

impunity and repeated retaliation. McRae's (2007) study of criminal justice in Poso likewise shows how prosecution that is viewed as inconsistent or politically selective can reinforce group grievances rather than reduce violence. When one community believes the state punishes only its members, enforcement becomes evidence within the conflict narrative instead of a mechanism for restoring order. Every coercive intervention consequently requires an accountability architecture that can show who authorized the action, what legal basis applied, why force was necessary, and how complaints can be reviewed across communal lines.

The military's appropriate contribution is thus narrower than an expansive reading of 'civil-military cooperation' might suggest. TNI units may secure key routes, protect designated critical sites under lawful tasking, support humanitarian movement, provide logistics and communications, and reinforce public safety when civilian capacity is temporarily insufficient. They should not replace criminal investigation, prosecution, local political mediation, or the determination of collective guilt. The more strongly communal identity maps onto particular villages or territories, the more important it becomes to separate physical security from political adjudication. Bounded cooperation protects this distinction while still allowing the state to mobilize specialized capabilities in an emergency.

Malino and the Transition from Communal Violence to Negotiated Peace

The fourth finding is that the December 2001 Malino process marked a shift in the governing logic of the conflict. The settlement was a government-brokered political agreement among representatives of the conflicting communities. Its agenda included ending hostilities, supporting law enforcement, rejecting outside interference, promoting religious tolerance, restoring property, facilitating the return of displaced people, rehabilitating economic assets and infrastructure, and establishing joint arrangements related to security and socio-economic recovery (Diprose, 2009). These provisions treated Poso not as an enemy to be defeated but as a fractured political community requiring order, justice, coexistence, and reconstruction. The movement from communal violence to negotiated peace therefore depended on changing the relationship between coercive security and civilian politics.

Security forces remained essential to this transition because negotiation requires a minimum level of physical safety. Delegates cannot bargain credibly if armed actors can attack meeting participants, block roads, punish communities that cooperate, or prevent displaced people from returning. Yet this does not make coercion the primary peace mechanism. The Malino framework re-centered civilian political mediation and sought to bind enforcement to agreed rules. Security institutions were most constructive when they protected the space in which political negotiation, humanitarian access, and recovery could occur. Force supported a negotiated order rather than substituting for one. This interpretation is consistent with Barron et al. (2016), who argue that improved security intervention helped prevent large-scale re-escalation when embedded in a changed political settlement.

Malino also demonstrates the limits of agreement-centered accounts. Violence did not disappear immediately after the accord. The International Crisis Group (2004) documented continuing attacks and grievances, including dissatisfaction with unresolved justice, while Hwang et al. (2013) later showed that disengagement from violent jihad in Poso involved relational, emotional, and pragmatic processes that extended beyond formal settlement. Durable peace therefore required more than an elite pact or a temporary reduction in violence. It depended on whether communities experienced greater security, more credible justice,

restored mobility, improved social relations, and declining incentives for armed mobilization. Civil-military cooperation could facilitate these conditions, but it could not itself produce reconciliation.

This sequence resolves an apparent paradox. Poso required stronger state capacity at the same time that it required tighter constraints on how state coercion was used. Too little capacity left communities exposed to attack and encouraged self-help security. Unbounded intervention risked deepening fear, partiality, and military dependence. The transition toward negotiated peace was therefore supported by institutionally bounded capacity: enough coercive and logistical capability to deter renewed collective violence and protect political processes, combined with sufficient legal and political restraint to ensure that security institutions did not become another actor in the communal contest.

A Bounded Civil-Military Cooperation Model for Security Governance

The central theoretical contribution of the study is a bounded model of civil-military cooperation. The concept begins from the observation that communal conflict requires coordination across civilian government, police, military institutions, and communities, but coordination should not erase institutional differentiation. It rejects both a silo model, in which institutions act independently despite shared security problems, and a fusion model, in which military logic dominates domestic governance. Cooperation is ‘bounded’ because democratic rules specify purpose, lead authority, competence, accountability, proportionality, duration, and termination. The model explains how specialized military capabilities can be made available to civilian-led conflict management without normalizing military primacy in political life.

Table 1. Governance risks and democratic safeguards for civil-military cooperation in communal conflict

Cooperation / governance feature	Risk in communal conflict	Democratic safeguard
Territorial embeddedness	Social capture, selective information, perceived partiality	Multi-source early warning; cross-community verification; civilian oversight
Community participation	Militia formation and militarization of identity groups	Nonviolent participation in mediation, humanitarian support, recovery, and resilience
Interagency coordination	Blurring defense, policing, and political authority	Police primacy for law enforcement; military support only under explicit civilian tasking
Rapid security deployment	Escalatory presence or open-ended emergency deployment	Mission-specific deployment with necessity, proportionality, periodic review, and exit criteria
Protection of public order	Treating domestic communities as security objects or enemies	Equal citizenship, rights protection, coexistence, and support for locally legitimate political settlement

Source: Authors’ synthesis of the Poso case and security-governance literature reviewed in this study

Six institutional boundaries emerge from the Poso analysis. First, civilian primacy must be substantive: political authorities define the objective, authorize military support, and remain accountable for the overall conflict-management strategy. Second, police primacy should

govern ordinary law enforcement, investigation, arrest, and evidence handling. Third, military support should be mission-specific and limited to capabilities such as logistics, engineering, route security, communications, medical assistance, and protection of designated critical assets when civilian capacity is insufficient. Fourth, community participation should be organized around mediation, early warning, humanitarian assistance, return, recovery, and resilience rather than armed mobilization. Fifth, oversight and complaint mechanisms must operate across communal lines so that allegations of partiality can be investigated rather than absorbed into rumor networks. Sixth, military support should contain periodic review and explicit exit criteria to prevent emergency assistance from becoming a permanent expansion of domestic military authority.

These boundaries shift the focus from mobilizing society for security toward governing cooperation among institutions and citizens. The useful insight of Indonesia's broader total-defense tradition is that security cannot be produced by armed forces alone. A democratic security-governance approach, however, assigns society a non-militarized role: citizens contribute through resilience, information sharing, lawful civic institutions, social cohesion, humanitarian cooperation, and participation in political settlement. The military remains one component of state capacity rather than the organizer of society. This interpretation is consistent with the democratic principles reflected in Law No. 3 of 2002, which situated national defense within democracy, human rights, national and international law, and peaceful coexistence (Republic of Indonesia, 2002).

Institutional boundaries can improve effectiveness rather than merely constrain it. Clear mandates reduce duplication, limit rivalry between TNI and Polri, clarify responsibility for coercive acts, and strengthen public confidence that force is being used for a defined purpose. Indonesia's post-authoritarian civil-military literature repeatedly shows that ambiguity can create opportunities for institutional expansion and political bargaining (Laksmana, 2019; Mietzner, 2009). A bounded model therefore converts cooperation from an informal relationship into a governed interface. Its effectiveness rests on the combination of capacity and legitimacy: actors must be able to respond quickly, but communities must also understand who is responsible, what rules apply, and how abuses or errors can be challenged.

Implications for Democratic Security Governance

Poso's relevance extends beyond the 2000-2001 episode because the same region later became a site of counterterrorism operations and renewed debate over military involvement in domestic security. Diprose and Azca (2019) show how memories of communal conflict interact with contemporary security narratives and concern over an expanded military role. Haripin et al. (2024) examine military participation in counterterrorism operations in Poso from 2015 to 2022. Those later developments involve a different threat environment from the communal violence studied here, but they demonstrate the persistence of the same institutional question: how can the state use military capabilities against serious threats without normalizing military primacy in civilian governance? The bounded-cooperation framework provides criteria for answering that question rather than treating all domestic threats as institutionally equivalent.

Threat differentiation is central to democratic security governance. Communal unrest, terrorism, insurgency, and external aggression should not be collapsed into a single continuum that automatically produces the same institutional response. The legal basis, lead agency, permissible force, intelligence requirements, accountability arrangements, and exit conditions

should vary with the threat. In communal conflict, where rival citizen groups seek security and political recognition, the threshold for military involvement should be high and the mission narrow. Even when armed actors exceed ordinary police capacity, military support should remain politically authorized, legally reviewable, and tied to a defined objective. This approach avoids both institutional paralysis and the normalization of emergency powers.

The Poso case also has comparative relevance for transitional democracies whose armed forces retain extensive territorial structures, political histories, and disaster- or crisis-response capabilities. The real policy choice is rarely between ‘military’ and ‘no military’; it is between different architectures of involvement. Poso suggests that the decisive variable is the governance of proximity. Military institutions can contribute to public safety when their local reach is channeled through lawful, impartial, and reversible support to civilian institutions. The same proximity becomes a conflict risk when it is converted into partisan social networks, political guardianship, informal coercive partnerships, or substitution for police and judicial functions.

The broader lesson is that the transition from communal violence to negotiated peace is an institutional process, not merely a decline in battlefield intensity. Security forces must be capable enough to protect civilians and deter spoilers, but restraint, neutrality, role differentiation, and political accountability determine whether that capacity contributes to peace or becomes another source of grievance. In Poso, the Malino process worked as a turning point because it reconnected physical security to civilian political settlement, law enforcement, community return, and socio-economic recovery. Civil-military cooperation is therefore most valuable when it is designed to make negotiation and civilian governance possible, not when it becomes an alternative to them.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how civil–military cooperation and security governance influenced the transition from communal violence toward negotiated peace in Poso, Indonesia, during 2000–2001. Documentary evidence indicated that the institutional separation of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) and the Indonesian National Police (Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia, Polri) during Indonesia's Reformasi era heightened the importance of clearly defined institutional responsibilities, effective coordination, and accountability amid escalating communal violence. Although military and police capabilities could support civilian protection, humanitarian access, and conflict containment, ambiguous operational mandates and perceived institutional partiality risked undermining public trust and the legitimacy of security interventions. The December 2001 Malino peace process highlighted the importance of aligning security operations with civilian-led political negotiation, impartial law enforcement, humanitarian assistance, and postconflict recovery. Based on these findings, the study proposed a bounded civil–military cooperation framework emphasizing civilian authority, police primacy in routine law enforcement, mission-specific and reviewable military assistance, operational impartiality, institutional accountability, and clearly defined conditions for military disengagement. However, the findings did not establish that coercive security operations independently caused the negotiated settlement or demonstrate a measurable causal effect of specific interventions. Future research should integrate archival records, stakeholder interviews, and comparative analyses of communal conflicts to examine the conditions under

which bounded civil–military cooperation contributes to sustainable conflict de-escalation, institutional legitimacy, and durable peace.

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