Symbolic Politics of Karaeng Power in Jeneponto

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Abstract. This study explores the symbolic political phenomenon of Karaeng power in Jeneponto, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The main objective of this research is to understand how Karaeng traditional symbols of power are maintained and utilized in the local political context. Qualitative research methods are used by conducting in depth interviews with community figures and content analysis of related primary and secondary data. The research results show that traditional Karaeng symbols of power still have strong relevance in influencing local political dynamics, even in the modern era and ongoing democratization. The discussion in this paper highlights the importance of understanding the role of symbols in the local political context, as well as its implications for power dynamics and community political participation in Jeneponto.

Keywords: Politics, Symbolic, Karaeng, Sociology, Democracy

1. Introduction

Local politics in Indonesia are often influenced by cultural and traditional factors that are rooted in local society. One interesting phenomenon to research is the symbolic politics of Karaeng power in Jeneponto, South Sulawesi. As a region with strong cultural power, Jeneponto is the right context for understanding how traditional symbols of power are still relevant in local political dynamics. Reality shows that many political actors use this issue intensively to gain support [1]. Driven largely by globalization and intellectual projects to conceptualize politics abroad, local politics is one aspect of the region's resurgent intellectual agenda [2]. This resurgence of local politics suggests that there is a research agenda on spatial and policy differentiation, regional autonomy, and a wide range of political regulations, both formal and informal, that political scientists are too late to consider. This article aims to reveal how the symbols of Karaeng power are maintained and utilized in local politics, as well as the implications for community political participation in Jeneponto. Jeneponto is one of the districts in Indonesia that has a strong tradition of power inherited from the past, especially through a traditional leadership system called Karaeng. This condition is very likely to become an entry point for claims by certain groups or groups to claim power using symbols or identities [3]. This history and cultural context are an important basis for understanding how the symbolic politics...
of Karaeng power were formed and developed in the area. Symbols of royalty or nobility such as the identity of the nobility group, "Barani, Caradde’ na Bajik" (brave, intelligent and wise), then ownership of several strategic assets such as land and other property. This symbol has a significant role in the political context of society in general, including in Jeneponto. These symbols are often used to strengthen the legitimacy of power, affirm identity, and build social and political relationships between different communities. Even though these symbols can become ammunition for elites in the struggle and struggle for political power [4]. Apart from that, the symbolic politics of Karaeng power can also be a factor influencing sustainable development efforts in Jeneponto. It is important to understand how local political dynamics and the use of symbols of power can have an impact on development policies, resource allocation, and community participation in the process of accelerating development so that the role of voters is very important on the political stage [5]. Thus, it is important to carry out an in-depth analysis of how the symbolic politics of Karaeng power influences the political, social, and economic dynamics in Jeneponto, as well as its impact on development and overall welfare of society.

2. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a focus on descriptive analysis of the symbolic political phenomenon of Karaeng power in Jeneponto. A qualitative approach was chosen because it is more suitable for exploring the subjective meanings contained in traditional symbols of power and how these symbols influence local political dynamics [6]. The main data collection technique is in-depth interviews with community leaders who have direct knowledge and experience related to local politics and symbols of Karaeng power. In-depth interviews allow researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the community's perceptions, experiences, and meanings of traditional symbols of power [7]. Apart from that, content analysis of primary and secondary data was also carried out to strengthen research findings [8]. This analysis involves searching and analyzing documents, reports, articles, and other sources relevant to local politics and symbols of Karaeng power in Jeneponto.

3. Result and Discussion

The research results show that traditional Karaeng symbols of power still play an important role in local politics in Jeneponto. These symbols include various elements, such as symbols of nobility, traditional attributes, and traditional rituals that are an integral part of the political identity of local communities. The use of these symbols by local leaders, including the Karaeng, is not only a representation of power, but also as a tool to maintain their legitimacy and authority in the eyes of the community. The discussion highlights the complexity of the dynamics between traditional symbols of power and the ongoing democratization and modernization processes in Jeneponto. More details are illustrated in the following factors:

3.1 Representation of Power Symbols

The use of these symbols by local leaders, including Karaeng, is not only a representation of power, but also as a tool to maintain their legitimacy and authority in the eyes of the community. Traditional symbols of power are not only an integral part of the political identity of local communities but also function as instruments to maintain the legitimacy and authority of local leaders. Karaeng traditional symbols of power, including symbols of nobility, traditional attributes, and traditional rituals, still have a strong relevance in local politics in Jeneponto. Symbolic representations of power are visual, verbal or ritual manifestations used by nobles or Karaeng or elites in a society to emphasize and strengthen the identity and
legitimacy of their power. These symbols often include emblems, attributes and symbolic actions that have special meaning and contain strong symbolic power in the local political context. The symbolic power possessed by the Karaeng apart from the attributes of nobility is also articulated and converted into political power to maintain the legitimacy of political power inherited from their ancestors from generation to generation through a hierarchy of power.

Overall, the representation of symbols of power in the symbolic politics of Karaeng power in Jeneponto not only reflects complex social and political hierarchies, but also plays an important and strategic role in maintaining the legitimacy and authority of local leaders in the eyes of the community. These symbols become a bridge between the rich past of leadership history and the ongoing dynamics of modern politics, providing a strong foundation for local political identity and community participation in the political process. The symbol of nobility owned by the Karaeng in Jeneponto is certainly one of the ammunition and power that can be used in power struggles at the local level. With the symbolic capital of the Karaeng, it is very possible for strategic power to be perpetuated on the political stage in Jaeneponto, this is confirmed by historical facts that have been recorded for several decades. The wheels of government are led by the elite of the Karaeng group in Jeneponto, so that using the Karaeng's symbolic power feature will always be an alternative to be used as a tool in the struggle for political power in Jeneponto.

3.2 Local Power Dynamics

The symbolic politics of Karaeng power in Jeneponto reflects the complex dynamics of local power. This involves interactions between traditional leaders, political elites, and society in general. Much of the ancient world was made up of villages during various historical periods, leading to communities with collective institutions and traditional participation. Selama bertahun-tahun, lokal political opinion has been linked to the rise of the nation. From this point of view, the Chinese state, with a core territory and a dynasty that has been in existence for more than 2,000 years, has a different view of the beginnings of national politics [9]. The tension between political, economic, and social interests is often reflected in the use of power symbols by Karaeng and other groups. Like many regions with a strong tradition of power, Jeneponto also experiences dynamics and often even levels of political conflict related to claims to symbols of power and legitimacy. The dynamics that lead to this kind of conflict often require careful reconciliation efforts to manage tensions between competing parties. The local power dynamics of Karaeng in Jeneponto reflect the complexity of the relationship between tradition, modern politics, and social dynamics in a society rich in cultural heritage.

As a central figure in the traditional hierarchy, Karaeng has an important role in maintaining social and political stability in Jeneponto, while also interacting with emerging modern political dynamics. One important aspect of Karaeng's local power dynamics is their role in maintaining social stability and bridging various community interests. As leaders, Karaeng have the responsibility to resolve local conflicts, facilitate community development, and maintain traditions and cultural values passed down by their ancestors from generation to generation. Responding to several existing political dynamics, Karaeng in Jeneponto have certainly prepared themselves to be able to adapt and innovate in carrying out their role as traditional leaders. They need to elaborate traditional values with principles of democracy and justice and facilitate community participation in the decision-making process. Thus, the dynamics of local Karaeng power in Jeneponto is not only a reflection of cultural heritage, but also a meeting point between past and future, between tradition and transformation, which shapes the political and social identity of the Jeneponto community. In the increasingly complex modern political
context, Karaeng's local power dynamics are also experiencing challenges and changes. Economic developments, social changes, and external pressures can change the landscape or local political landscape, affecting the role and authority of Karaeng in society. One dynamic that is quite contradictory is the interaction between traditional Karaeng authorities and modern power structures, such as regional government and formal political institutions.

In some cases, there is harmony and cooperation between traditional authorities and modern powers to achieve common goals, while in other cases, there is tension and competition that affects local political stability. Apart from that, the local power dynamics of Karaeng are also influenced by changes in Jeneponto society, including changes in demographics, education, and cultural values. Integration with the global economy also brings new challenges for traditional authorities, affecting how the Karaeng maintain their relevance in an increasingly modern and globally connected society. In facing this dynamic, Karaeng in Jeneponto have prepared themselves to remain relevant and responsive to change, to survive in maintaining and maintaining the traditional values inherited from their ancestors. This requires a careful balance between preserving cultural heritage and adapting to the demands of changing times. Overall, the local power dynamics of Karaeng in Jeneponto reflect the complexity of the relationship between tradition and modernity, as well as the challenges of maintaining relevance and authority in an ever-evolving society. The study of these dynamics provides valuable insight into the understanding of local politics in Jeneponto, as well as its implications for political stability and community development in the area.

3.3 Implications in Political Studies

Social scientists and political scientists have long been interested in the complicated issue of local political power. Understanding local political power can be approached from five different angles. The first structural approach is functionalist, which holds that formal institutions and social structure are the primary factors that determine political power at the local level. They contend that people in formal positions of authority within the social structure such as public servants, corporate executives, and religious leaders concentrate power. The organizations and structures in question set the standards and guidelines that control the distribution of power and the methods by which it is used [10–12]. Second, a pluralist viewpoint that highlights the range of participants and concerns in regional politics. According to this viewpoint, power is divided among numerous groups and people with diverse interests rather than being centralized in one group. Through alliances, compromise, and negotiation, various factions exercise their power [13,14]. The third viewpoint challenges presumptions regarding the people and institutions in municipal politics. According to this viewpoint, power is also used to achieve covert goals through more covert means including discourse, knowledge, and daily behaviors, in addition to formal structures and prominent actors [15]. A feminist viewpoint that highlights the part played by women in municipal politics is the fourth. With this method, it becomes evident that women have less access to power and are frequently left out of local political processes. They investigate the ways in which gender norms and patriarchal systems influence power dynamics locally [16]. The fifth viewpoint is postcolonial, which examines colonialism's past and how it affected regional politics. According to this school, local power structures and intergroup relations are still impacted by the legacy of colonialism. They examine the ways in which colonialism and neoliberalism impact the exercise of power and the recipients of its benefits [17].

A deep understanding of the symbolic politics of Karaeng power in Jeneponto has relevant implications in comparative political studies and political theory regarding the
relationship between power, culture, and community political participation. Even in the modern era and democratization, traditional symbols of power remain relevant and influence local political dynamics and community participation [18]. By understanding and exploring the factors above, a more comprehensive understanding can be gained about how traditional symbols of power work to influence local politics in Jeneponto and their implications for community political participation as well as the power dynamics that continue to color the political cycle in Jeneponto. The study of local politics in Jeneponto offers important insights into understanding political dynamics at the micro level, as well as their relationship with national political dynamics. The implications of the symbolic politics of Karaeng power in Jeneponto have significant relevance in the context of studying local politics in Jeneponto as a whole. Besides that, it can provide a deeper understanding of the power structure and political dynamics at the local level.

By analyzing the role and influence of traditional power symbols, this also helps in understanding how local power in Jeneponto is organized, as well as how local political actors use these symbols to maintain their authority and legitimacy in the political power arena in Jeneponto. The positive implications seen from local political dynamics cover many aspects including contributing to the development of local democracy in Jeneponto. By highlighting the complexity of the relationship between traditional power and modern politics, the political studies packaged in Political Education can also help in identifying challenges and opportunities for the development of sustainable democratic institutions at the local level, as well as formulating strategies to strengthen political participation and accountability of local governments. Apart from that, understanding the symbolic politics of Karaeng power also has practical implications for decision making and development planning in Jeneponto. By understanding how symbols of power influence local political dynamics, stakeholders can design development policies and programs that are more sensitive to the cultural values and aspirations of local communities. Overall, the implications in the study of local politics in Jeneponto regarding the symbolic politics of Karaeng power are important in enriching understanding of political dynamics at the local level, as well as contributing to the development of democracy and inclusive political participation in the area.

4. Conclusion

In the local political context in Jeneponto, symbols of traditional Karaeng power still have a significant role in influencing political dynamics and community participation. Even in the modern era and democratization, these symbols remain relevant as instruments to maintain the legitimacy and authority of local leaders. Therefore, a deep understanding of the symbolic politics of Karaeng power in Jeneponto is not only important for understanding the local context, but also has relevant implications in comparative political studies and political theory regarding the relationship between power, culture, and community political participation.

References