

Karaeng in Service

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the conduct of local politics of the Karaeng group serves and citizens in Kampala Village, Arungkeke District, Jeneponto Regency, South Sulawesi. The Karaeng group has the highest status in South Sulawesi's social structure when compared to the Daeng and Ata groups. Even though the Karaeng group is the ruling elite, this does not mean that its citizens always serve them. However, it is quite the opposite. The method used is a case study. The choice of case studies is based on the idea that cases are limited, actual, and unique. Meanwhile, the data collection mechanism is by combining interviews and literature study. When the data has been collected, the next step is to analyze it critically. Field findings indicate that the Karaeng group uses two instruments to provide services to their citizens. First, large land ownership. Residents are free to use this land for living and housing purposes free of charge. Second, position as an instrument to help and serve the needs of its citizens. Proper use of land and positions strengthens the power base of the Karaeng group as a traditional elite and as the ruling elite in Kampala Village. These findings confirm that political changes at the village level require the Karaeng group to adapt in order to remain powerful through the choice to provide services to the community. In this way, the Karaeng group has a stronger position in front of its citizens

Keywords: power, karaeng, serving

ABSTRAK

Tulisan berusaha menjawab bagaimana golongan Karaeng melayani warganya di Desa Kampala, Kecamatan Arungkeke, Kabupaten Jeneponto, Sulawesi Selatan. Golongan Karaeng merupakan status tertinggi, jika dibandingkan golongan Daeng dan Ata. Meskipun, golongan Karaeng sebagai elite yang berkuasa, bukan berarti selalu dilayani warganya. Namun, justru sebaliknya. Ada pun metode yang digunakan adalah studi kasus. Pilihan studi kasus berdasarkan pada pemikiran bahwa kasus terbatas, aktual, dan unik. Sedangkan mekanisme pengumpulan datanya dengan menggabungkan wawancara dan studi pustaka. Ketika data sudah terkumpul, maka langkah selanjutnya menganalisa secara kritis. Temuan lapangan menyebutkan ada dua instrumen yang digunakan bagi golongan Karaeng dalam memberikan pelayanan kepada warganya. Pertama, kepemilikan tanah yang luas. Tanah tersebut bebas digunakan warga untuk keperluan hidup dan tempat tinggal secara gratis. Kedua, jabatan sebagai instrumen untuk membantu dan melayani keperluan warganya. Pemanfaatan tanah dan jabatan secara baik memperkuat basis kekuasaan golongan Karaeng sebagai elite tradisional maupun sebagai elite yang memerintah di Desa Kampala. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa perubahan politik di tingkat desa mengharuskan golongan Karaeng beradaptasi agar tetap kuat dan berkuasa melalui pilihan memberikan pelayanan kepada masyarakat. Dengan cara ini golongan Karaeng semakin kuat posisinya di depan warganya

Kata Kunci: kekuasaan, Karaeng, melayani

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INTRODUCTION

The article tries to answer how the *Karaeng* group serves its citizens in Kampala Village, Arungkeke District, Jeneponto Regency, South Sulawesi Province. This question is important to ask considering that the *Karaeng* group is a traditional elite - which in Pabottingi's (2000) analysis is described as a ruling class, accustomed to being served, and all the pleasures and luxuries they receive come from the hard work of the lower class. Meanwhile, Wertheim (1999) said that *Karaeng* live on the labor of farmers and *ata*. This analysis is not completely wrong. In one of Mattulada's (1982) articles, it is stated that a *Karaeng* is the holder of power, so that the lower strata of society or what is usually called *ata* become servants.

The mindset above is certainly different from the *Karaeng* group in Kampala Village. The difference is that the *Karaeng* group often helps its citizens, both as landowners and as members of the legislature in Jeneponto Regency. As an illustration, the Kampala residents could freely use the land for living purposes and those who in need can live there without charge (interviews, Daeng Tola, 7/4/2023; Karaeng Bintang, 27/6/2023). As a member of the legislature, he always helps residents who need help (interview, Irwan, 15/4/2023). The political practices carried out by the *Karaeng* group are part of service. Placing oneself as a public servant is a choice to gain political support. Therefore, serving *Karaeng* is the right choice to strengthen its position as a traditional elite who supports and benefits the community at large (interview, Daeng Tola, 7/4/2023).

This article wants to examine the role of *Karaeng* in providing services to the community. As traditional elites, *Karaeng* are always required to be role models and symbols of nobility in their behavior and building social relations with other people (Salle and Hamdat, 2004). Providing services to citizens is an act of exercising power as a member of the legislature. This article consists of three parts. The first part explains the study of *Karaeng* through reading literature in order to gain information and understanding of the study of *Karaeng*. Second, explains two forms of resources in providing services to its citizens. Position and land really help the lives of the people of Kampala. Third, draw conclusions critically and at the same time provide suggestions regarding the urgency of conducting a *Karaeng* study from a different perspective. This choice is important in providing a different understanding of previous findings. Thus, shifting the study of *Karaeng* as public servants is the same as providing a new horizon in understanding the role of *Karaeng* in the study of government science.

INTERPRET KARAENG

The term *Karaeng* is more or less the same as aristocracy, nobility, *andi*, and *opu*. All of these names are always used interchangeably to refer to *Karaeng*. In Makassar society, the term has various meanings. Historian from Unhas, Poelinggomang (2004) said that *Karaeng* were the top layer in society, having political, social and economic positions. However, not everyone who has a position in society is *Karaeng*. This understanding is reflected in Mattulada's (1974) review which found that a new elite had emerged who did not have blue blood, but held positions in government, were economically rich, and highly respected in society.



In another part, Mattulada (1974) said that *Karaeng* were royal descendants whose origins came from *To-manurung*. This understanding is reinforced by Putra's analysis (2007; Mattulada, 2011) which says that *Karaeng* are direct descendants of the *To-manurung* figure who has white blood because the descendant of a god who came down from heaven to rule over humans. Because they come from *To-manurung*, the *Karaeng* group feels different and has privileges compared to the *daeng* and *ata* groups. This is very visible in *Kampala* society which places the *Karaeng* group in the top position, both social, governmental and economic status. All that makes *Karaeng's* position strong and entrenched in the multi-layered society of *Kampala*. Because, the existence of *Karaeng* is part of local wisdom (interview, Ishak, 10/10/2018). Long story short, quoting Bintoro (1988), *Karaeng* is confirmed as superior, so that he is still seen by society as a traditional elite who is worthy of occupying leadership positions.

Once again, this judgement is still strong in *Kampala* society. Therefore, in maintaining the position of the *Karaeng*, they strictly maintain this social stratification. Poelinggomang (2004) said that society in general will maintain social stratification in various ways. For example, organizing marriage patterns between *Karaeng* groups. The aim is twofold. *First*, to establish closer kinship relations. In this way, blood purity can be maintained and the unity of the *Karaeng* group from generation to generation. *Second*, so that the wealth of the *Karaeng* group is not spread to other people, especially land control as a symbol of feudalism. The result is that the land owners are the *Karaeng* group. This right to control land can be exchanged for community loyalty to the *Karaeng* group (Bintoro, 1988). This is because land control is a group of people and sees citizens as political objects (Pabottingi, 1999).

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper is closer to case study research. The reason is because case studies are an integral part of government science research, that are very useful for the limited cases studied (Johnson, 2013), and are contextual (Harison, 2007). Meanwhile, Tawakkal and Rohman (2022) summarize that case studies are intensive research, studying cases, certain contexts, and using several data collection methods. These explanations are interrelated and reinforce each other. For example, Johnson says that case studies are useful for limited cases. Limited cases can be single cases or specific cases. In addition, the case can be both contextual and contemporary.

Based on the explanation above, this article is part of a case study. By examining the *Karaeng* group in *Kampala* Village, it certainly includes limited case study, contextual and single case research. There are also methods used to obtain the required data through two methods, namely interviews and literature review (Harsson, 2007; Tawakkal and Rohman, 2022; Johnson, 2013). Both interview data and data sourced from literature are used to try to understand how the *Karaeng* group in *Kampala* Village provides services to its residents.

Through reading interview data and literature review, concentration and the ability to describe information accurately and in detail are required (Tawakkal and Rohman, 2022) regarding the role of *Karaeng* in providing services to community leaders. In the context of a traditional ruling elite, actually providing services to the community is very possible.



Because, one of the functions of the traditional elite is to serve and help citizens who need help. This shows that *Karaeng* is part of the solution and not a problem for the people of Kampala (Rasyid, 1997).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Study of *Karaeng*

Karaeng is the highest social class in Kampala society. *Karaeng* are descendants of kings, represent a supernatural power, are seen as holy, and are recognized without dispute by the people as holders of the reins of power (Mattulada, 1982). The history of the monarchy shows how the *Karaeng* group came to power in a number of regions in South Sulawesi. The presence of the *Karaeng* group in the power structure as government holders has long historical roots. Kartodirjo's (1990) article states that long before the Dutch arrived, the *Karaeng* group had ruled in the form of a kingdom spread across the Makassar ethnic peninsula. The peak of power is always based on the hereditary cycle or *Karaeng* family. In fact, government assistants also come from the *Karaeng* group. This proves that the *Karaeng* holds the authority because it has been passed down.

Research conducted by Buntoro (1988) in Tolo Village, Jeneponto Regency, agrees with Mattulada and Kartodirjo's findings. As an illustration, all officials in the village government power structure come from *Karaeng*, who are related by blood to the village head. Apart from that, Abubakar's (2019) study in Maero Village focused more on community perceptions regarding *Karaeng*. The result was that *Karaeng* as a symbol of social status still has a strong position in Jeneponto society. *Karaeng* is a special class and is considered to have knowledge and skills in leading. Therefore, they are always involved in political and governmental life (Markoff, 2002). Pabotting (1999) said that power can never be separated from the *Karaeng* group.

Meanwhile, Ningsi's research (2018) highlights the shift in the position of *Karaeng* in Empong Village. The shift in *Karaeng*'s position occurred due to ownership of wealth and education. It means that wealth and education are increasingly open to access by all social levels. In fact, rich and highly educated people come from non-*Karaeng*¹. It shows the importance of competition to be the best in society. Becoming rich and educated needs to be pursued because it prioritizes work ethic and achievement. That is what the *Empoang* community is celebrating with its success in shifting the position of the *Karaeng* group in the sub-district government structure. This explanation is reinforced by a study by Graves (2007) which found the elimination of traditional elites who were considered old-fashioned in changing, so that educated people controlled the government structure.

The shift in position and role from *Karaeng* to non-*Karaeng* in Kartodirjo's (2001) terms is called the collapse of the power of the nobility. This collapse is common in stratified and hierarchical societies. Historical studies have long shown that modern education will shift the role of *Karaeng* who are unable to adapt to developments and changes. When *Karaeng* are not rich and do not have high education, the non-*Karaeng* group will take this opportunity as an opportunity to raise their social status. The 'noble'

¹ The title *Karaeng* is the highest status in Kampala society. The non-*Karaeng* group consists of *Daeng* and *Ata* or slaves.



brand that has been in power will be replaced by the 'educated' brand in the power structure (Zed, 2002). Wertheim (1999) said that groups that had previously been in power would lose their role in government and society with the presence of educated people. Meanwhile, Kartodirjo (1990) said that the path to wealth and education will break through the closure with the birth of new people who will fill the fields of professionalism. Borrowing Markoff's (2002) term here, on this day a new history begins. The new history is the emergence of non-*Karaeng* groups in government. Pabottingi (1999) responded with the sentence that the *Karaeng* group had become stagnant and dull.

All the articles above forget one important issue of how the *Karaeng* group provides services to its citizens. The basis of the argument is that for the last twenty years the *Karaeng* family has been in power and ruled Kampala Village. In fact, there was a *Karaeng* group who were elected as members of the legislature for two terms. With their positions as village heads and members of the legislature, the *Karaeng* group is of course expected to be able to respond to the needs of their residents. Moreover, they live in a village which requires them to be closer to the community. Being close to the people means providing services, fighting for the aspirations and interests of the people of Kampala in parliament. Because, as representatives of the people, the *Karaeng* group can claim to represent Kampala Village in particular and Arungkeke District in general². In addition, the *Karaeng* group tries to fight for the aspirations of the residents and at the same time can act on behalf of the people of Kampala (Lippmann, 1999).

Resources to Serve

Position

The *Karaeng* group held position for the last twenty years. Position is a person's position in the government structure (Suharso and Retnoningsih, 2005). Position is a symbol of social status. Position is a political resource that can be utilized to strengthen one's standing as a traditional elite. Every power holder can do what he wants to achieve (Mattulada, 1982) while ruling. What the *Karaeng* group in Kampala Village does is beneficial to many people. Empowering the community, developing the economy, and encouraging development. All of these activities are part of using his position to help his citizens. His position is not in the interests of the family and *Karaeng* groups, but solely for the interests of his citizens. In line with that, the *Karaeng* group is also accustomed to helping the community (Hasan Interview, 25 June 2023) as a form of social responsibility.

Meanwhile, the *Karaeng* group who sit in the local parliament fight for the interests of their citizens through development programs. For example, citing Daeng Ngawing (interview, 9/7/2023):

“Karaeng Sutte, who is a member of the legislature, has succeeded in fighting for the aspirations of the people of Kampala through infrastructure development in the form of good roads. This is evidence of the working of political lobbying by council members with their regional government partners”

² Arungkeke, Tarawang, and Batang sub-districts have 7 seats in the Jeneponto DPRD.



Meanwhile Daeng Sewang (interview, 6/7/2023) added:

“There are many development projects coming in Kampala Village. A lot of development has come to the village due to the hard work of the Karaeng group. The success of this development is also proof that Karaeng's position as a politician is very helpful in advancing Kampala Village in Arungkeke District”.

The two quotes above show how strong the influence of position is in providing services. With a position, a *Karaeng* can fight for the aspirations and interests of the people of Kampala in formal institutions. The positions of Village Head and legislative members are used to respond creatively to the problems faced by the community. Because these two positions allow direct contact with the community. With the authority they have, they can make decisions (Dwiyanto, et al. 2002) that stand with the community. The responsiveness of the *Karaeng* group is always required to improve society. The ruling *Karaeng* group wants to prove that they are working for the people of Kampala.

This proof is essential in Kampala society which is changing and critical. Therefore, the performance of the *Karaeng* group as good public servants needs to be highlighted. Because, the *Karaeng* group is a role model and a place where the *daeng* and *ata* depend on. Again, the *Karaeng* group must be an example and a place to rely on for the people of Kampala (Mattulada, 1982). Apart from these achievements, the *Karaeng* group is also known for their manner in speaking and being very polite to everyone (Interview, Daeng Sewang, 6/7/2023). In addition, the *Karaeng* group must also speak well and behave well in relations with other strata (interview, Daeng Lau, 7/7/2023). What's even more interesting is that the *Karaeng* group likes to go *blusukan* to look closely to needs of their community, while asking questions and inviting community discussion to solve their problems. In other words, the *Karaeng* group practices how they serve their position and serve the community (Rasyid, 1997) based on the values of *ygakatau* (mutual humanization).

Land Ownership

Apart from positions, land owned by the *Karaeng* group can also be an instrument in serving the needs of the people of Kampala. The large land is a social symbol of a *Karaeng*. Land is a means of production for agricultural communities like Kampala. One symbol of feudalism is land control by the *Karaeng* group. *Karaeng* power was built on extensive land ownership (Laeyemdecker, 1983). This opinion is not wrong. Because, field findings show that the *Karaeng* group indeed owns and controls land in Kampala Village (Interview, Karaeng Bintang, 27/6/2023).

Even though the land belongs to the *Karaeng* group, that doesn't mean it can't be accessed by the people of Kampala. This land is free to use for gardening, as rice fields, and even as a place to live for residents in need (Interview, Karaeng Bintang, 27/6/2023; Ngawing (interview, 9/7/2023). According to several sources, *Karaeng* land used to serve the community in various forms. First, land owned by *Karaeng* can help Kampala residents provide for their families (Hasan interview, 25 June 2023), means that the land becomes an



economic resource for farming and fishing families. As reported in Arungkeke in Figures (2022) among 2,507 occupations, 90 percent of its residents earn their living as farmers and fishermen.

Second, the *Karaeng* group is increasingly respected because they are land owners and many people are indebted to them (interview, Daeng Sikki, 8/7/2023), because society has been spoiled all this time. The land is used by the community for free. Because, those who pay the land tax are the *Karaeng* group as the owners (Daeng Lau interview, 7/7/2023). The *Karaeng's* treatment of the residents who occupy their land slowly but surely creates a pattern of dependency and binding.

Third, residents who work on rice fields, gardens, and who occupy land belonging to the *Karaeng* group are very obedient to him. A *Karaeng* will be respected if he has a lot of followers. And the followers are protected and prosperous. As Abidin (1983) said, a *Karaeng* must create security and prosperity for its citizens, because the personality of the *Karaeng* group is to help, protect and provide prosperity.

The three points above describe how a *Karaeng* helps its residents. Unequal land control shows the face of a noblemen's generosity towards their community. Even though the *Karaeng* group controls hundreds of hectares of land in Kampala, this does not mean that they enjoy a surplus of income as drawn by Suyatno (2019) in his article on land tenure inequality. Why is that, because the land cultivated by farmers is not subject to profit sharing or in Makassar language it is called "tesang" (Interview, Karaeng Bintang, 27/6/2023). In other words, citing Buntoro (1988): the land is indeed worked by residents, but not for *Karaeng*. But for yourself and your family. In other words, the proceeds are redistributed to citizens for their welfare.

This mechanism strengthens relations between *Karaeng* and residents in Kampala. This is because the *Karaeng* group prioritizes the values of mutual help and a place for weak people to take refuge. Therefore, the relationship between the *Karaeng* group and the people of Kampala can be described by quoting Sikki (1991) as follows:

*The wind is you and we are the leaves of wood
Wherever you blow, there we are all carried
Your will, our will too
We will uphold your orders
We fulfill your orders
Ask from us will give you
You call, we come.*

Formation of Patron-Client

Karaeng's way of providing services to the community has a positive impact on the relationship structure of both parties. *First*, socially, the image of *Karaeng* in the eyes of society is always good. *Karaeng* is described as society helper and protecting economically weak people, as revealed by a number of informants. For example, *Karaeng* is a figure who often helps his citizens (interview, Iksan 16/4/2023). Residents occupy the land for free



(interview, Sukku 24/6/2023). The *Karaeng* group are good people, not arrogant, easy to get along with, and very accepted by the residents (interview, Sudirman, 24/6/2023).

All these opinions show that the *Karaeng* group is very good in people of Kampala's oint of view. Therefore, it is undoubtedly not a mistake if someone says that this is the real *Karaeng* group (interview, Hamzah, 10/10/2018). The *Karaeng* group is indeed capable and skilled in leading (Abidin, 1983). With this greatness, they are trusted by society.

Second, politically, the way the *Karaeng* group provides services to Kampala residents will have an impact on the pattern of patron-client relations. In this relationship, the *Karaeng* group plays the role of superiors and the people who have been assisted by followers. Conceptually, this patron-client relationship tends to have a material -based relationship pattern, namely fulfilling needs and non-material, providing protection to the community (Dwiyanto, et al. 2002). This patron-client pattern is created in such a way that, to a certain extent, very profitable for the *Karaeng* group as political subjects. As an illustration, in the 2021 village head election, the *Karaeng* group represented by Rosmiati *Karaeng* Ke'ngang was elected unanimously. Search after search revealed that Rosmiati was very strong to oppose and was certain to win the village elections (interview, Akbar 28/6/2023).

Third, culturally, holding the title *Karaeng* is an important part of Kampala society. In a hierarchical society, the *Karaeng* group is in a special position because it is part of the strategic elite in society (Najamuddin, 2015). Moreover, the *Karaeng* group in Kampala Village is able to accumulate other social capital, such as being educated, rich, in office, landlords and entrepreneurs (Daeng Ngawing interview, interview, 9/7/2023). The accumulation of all modalities is increasingly respected by the citizens of Kampala. In fact, residents who receive assistance and protection show respect, become loyalists, and willingly provide political support when needed during election season, both village heads and legislative members. For example, *Karaeng* Sutte was elected as a member of the legislature for two terms without providing any compensation to voters. Meanwhile, his wife *Karaeng* Ke'ngang was the Head of Kampala Village for three consecutive terms (Interview *Karaeng* Ca'di, 7/7/2023; Daeng Lau, 7/7/2023).

This brief description provides information that the *Karaeng* who serve the community have strong political motives. Utilizing one's position to help, assist, and free up *Karaeng* land for the community can be read as a form of strengthening one's position of nobility and power as a ruling elite. Therefore, in the relationship between the *Karaeng* and the people of Kampala, the nobles themselves always benefit. Moreover, in political years, the *Karaeng* group will mobilize citizens for political support needs. And the obligation of citizens is to provide support to the *Karaeng*. However, for KNPI activists, the behavior of Kampala residents is seen as a form of lack of independence in determining their political choices apart from the *Karaeng* family (interview, Hasan, 25/6/2023).

That is the advantage of *Karaeng* and proves community dependence-on them (Rasyid, 1997). This shows the intelligence of the *Karaeng* in utilizing resources: position and land to bind many people (Abidin, 1983). Meanwhile, Pobottingi (1999) calls it *Karaeng's* intelligence in managing power, so that people appear helpless as political subjects. In other words, the people of Kampala really have no power.



CONCLUSION

Karaeng that serves residents is legitimate. However, this is interesting because it shifts the perspective that has been dominant where the *Karaeng* group is always positioned as the central figure who is always served. The context of the *Karaeng* group in Kampala Village actually shows something different. The difference is that the *Karaeng* group expresses its nobility and power in the form of providing services to its citizens. In fact, according to Dwiyanto (2002) every *Karaeng* will try to express himself as required by the applicable cultural norms. The norm that *Karaeng* always adhere to is that they tend to place themselves higher than most people. Therefore, the *Karaeng* group is required to behave in a noble, educated manner and its policies must be pro-citizens (interview, Hamzah, 10/10/2018). If they are not capable, then people will not trust them and their offspring will be disabled in the eyes of society (Abidin, 1983).

Sejalan dengan pemikiran tersebut, golongan *Karaeng* juga harus menunjukkan keunggulan dirinya kerja dan pelayanan kepada masyarakat. Karena itu, peran *Karaeng* yang melayani bisa menggugah memori kolektivitas masyarakat tentang bagaimana sumber daya diakses dan dinikmati secara bersama (Haboddin dan Afala, 2019). Menariknya lagi adalah jabatan dan tanah sebagai sumber daya politik golongan *Karaeng* dikreasi sedemikian rupa dalam kerangka mengontrol loyalitas warga kepadanya. Tidak berhenti sampai di sini. *Karaeng* yang melayani sebagai upaya membangun kebesaran bahwa mereka hadir di tengah-tengah masyarakat dan kekuasaan diabdikan untuk rakyat. Sebagaimana Sikki (1991) menulis baris-baris berikut ini;

In line with that, the *Karaeng* group must also show their superiority in work and service to the community. Therefore, the role of serving *Karaeng* can awaken the community's collective memory about how resources are accessed and enjoyed together (Haboddin and Afala, 2019). What is even more interesting is that positions and land as political resources for the *Karaeng* group are created in such a way as to control the loyalty of citizens to them. It doesn't stop here. *Karaeng* who serve as an effort to build greatness that they are present in the midst of society and power is devoted to the people. As Sikki (1991) wrote the following lines;

*Golongan Karaeng yang sedang berkuasa
Berdirilah pada kebesaran Anda
Duduklah pada kemuliaan Anda
Bersandarlalah pada kerja dan pengabdian.*

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