

Local Democracy in the Kingdom of Balanipa and the Genealogy of Civic Culture

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Abstract. Studies on local democracy in Indonesia are still dominated by modern institutional perspectives that tend to ignore local wisdom-based political practices, including the experiences of traditional kingdoms in the archipelago. The Balanipa Kingdom in Mandar is one of the local political entities that demonstrates practices of power based on deliberation, customary legitimacy, and collective participation, but it has not been widely studied in the context of political culture and the formation of civic culture. This study aims to analyze the transformation of the political culture of the Balanipa Kingdom from a traditional power structure to the formation of a civic culture among the Mandar people. The research uses a historical-interpretative approach and library research combined with a socio-political genealogy perspective using historical documents and academic studies on political culture and local democracy. The analysis is conducted through historical interpretation and conceptual synthesis to identify the relationship between customary values, government structures, and the civic orientation of the community. The results of the study show that the Balanipa system of government is not an absolute monarchy, but contains deliberative mechanisms through customary institutions such as *Appeq Banua Kayyang*, which functions as a check on Mara'dia's power. The values of deliberation (*sirumung karaya*), consensus (*assamaturuang*), and solidarity (*sikalulu*) form the participatory and collective political orientation of the community, transforming into a civic culture that shapes social participation and political legitimacy. This study concludes that local democracy has developed historically in the Mandar tradition through customary institutions. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of local political history analysis with political culture and civic culture theory. This study contributes an alternative perspective that Indonesian democracy can be strengthened through the revitalization of local political values as the foundation of substantive democracy based on cultural wisdom.

Keywords: *Civic; Culture; Genealogy; Local Democracy; Kingdom of Balanipa*

INTRODUCTION

Studies on democracy and political culture in Indonesia over the past few decades have tended to be dominated by Western liberal democratic perspectives that emphasize formal institutions such as elections, representative systems, political parties, and the rule of law as the main indicators of democracy (Muller & Seligson, 1994; Dalton & Shin, 2014; Budiarti et al., 2019; Djuyandi, 2023; Randiawan et al., 2023). This approach stems from the assumption of political modernization that places democracy as a product of historical evolution in Europe and North America (Arat, 1988; Bluhdorn, 2020). As a result, local political practices that do not fully comply with the parameters of electoral democracy are often positioned as pre-democratic or traditional. However, a number of recent studies on contextual democracy and vernacular

democracy show that the values of participation, deliberation, and accountability can flourish in socio-cultural configurations that differ from the liberal model (Street, 1994; Djuyandi, 2023). We can see that the local kingdoms in the archipelago actually hold a political legacy that is worthy of study as part of a more plural and contextual discourse on democracy in line with a national identity rooted in local wisdom values.

In Indonesia, the narrative of local political history is still dominated by discussions of large kingdoms such as Gowa, Bone, or Mataram, while regional kingdoms such as the Balanipa Mandar Kingdom receive relatively little academic attention. This situation creates a historiographical bias that ignores the rich dynamics of local politics, which are characterized by deliberation, consensus, and the limitation of power as democratic values. A number of early studies (Iqmal, 2016; Rahman, 2014; Hamid, 2022) show that the Balanipa Kingdom had a unique political structure and played a central role in the Mandar political configuration through the *Appeq Banua Kayyang* alliance and the *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* and *Pitu Ulunna Salu*. However, most of these studies still focus on chronological and genealogical aspects, without deeply examining the dimensions of political culture and its transformation towards the formation of civic culture.

Theoretically, the concept of political culture introduced by Almond and Verba (2014) emphasizes the importance of citizens' orientation towards the political system, participation, and level of trust as the foundation of a stable democracy. Wahyuni and Ni'am (2023) provide a brief overview that participatory political culture or civic culture does not only depend on the design of formal institutions, but also on the social values that shape the political behavior of society. In the context of the archipelago, Mattulada (1986) asserts that the principles of deliberation, consensus, and mutual cooperation have long been part of traditional political practices long before the influence of colonialism and Western democracy. This view is reinforced by Harry J. Benda's (1964) criticism, which warns of the danger of viewing Indonesia solely through Western eyes. There is a strong theoretical basis for placing local political experiences such as those in Mandar as part of the discourse on political culture and substantive democracy.

The main research issue that arises from this context is the tendency toward homogenization of democratic models that ignore the diversity of local political experiences. Contemporary democratic discourse often positions democracy as a set of uniform formal institutions, without considering the cultural foundations that underpin it (Huber et al., 1997; Hermansyah, 2022; Mazid et al., 2024). As a result, democracy is understood procedurally, rather than substantively. When viewed in the context of the Balanipa Kingdom, the practice of electing Mara'dia through *Ada' Kayyang* deliberation and the customary mechanism of oversight of the king demonstrate

the principles of participation and accountability that are not fully accommodated in the modern definition of electoral democracy. However, these practices have not been widely studied as part of the process of forming civic culture.

A common solution offered in the literature to the problem of democratic homogenization is a contextual approach to democracy that recognizes the importance of local culture in supporting democratic practices (Dalton & Shin, 2014; Teka, 2020; Siregar, 2024). Democracy is not understood as the transplantation of institutions, but as an adaptive process rooted in the social values of society. Within this framework, the study of the political culture of the Balanipa Kingdom becomes relevant as an effort to explore the deliberative, consensual, and moral values of leadership that live on in the Mandar tradition. This approach allows for a re-reading of local political history as a source of learning for strengthening substantive democracy today.

More specifically, literature on symbolic politics and cultural wisdom (Geertz in Kambo, 2021) shows that traditional power structures often contain symbolic meanings that shape legitimacy and social cohesion. In the context of the Balanipa Kingdom, the formation of the kingdom through a “government contract” between *Appaq Banua Kayyang* and I Manyambungi can be understood as a form of collective political agreement that resembles a social contract in modern political theory. The mechanism for appointing and dismissing kings by *Ada' Kayyang* shows that there are restrictions on power in line with the principle of checks and balances (Deni, 2023; Hamid, 2022). Thus, the literature supports the hypothesis that Balanipa's political culture has a democratic dimension that warrants systematic analysis.

However, there are significant gaps in the research. Previous studies tend to discuss the history of the kingdom's establishment, political alliances, and customary structures descriptively, but have not elaborated on how these customary values have been transformed into civic orientations that shape civic culture. Understanding the process of transformation from power structures to community culture is key to explaining the sustainability of local democratic values (Street, 1994; Dalton & Shin, 2014; Almon & Verba, 2014). It can be said that there is still room to examine the causal relationship between traditional values, governance practices, and the formation of the civic character of the Mandar community.

The uniqueness of this research lies in its attempt to integrate the study of local political history with political culture and civic culture theory into a comprehensive analytical framework. This research does not merely reconstruct the history of the Balanipa Kingdom, but also places it within the theoretical discourse on contextual democracy. The scope of the research focuses on the transformation of political culture since the formation of *Appaq Banua Kayyang*, the appointment of I Manyambungi as the first *Mara'dia*, to the formation of the political

configurations of *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* and *Pitu Ulunna Salu*, as well as their implications for the formation of the civic culture of the Mandar people (Asdy, 2003; Rahman, 2014; Mandra, 2015; Iqmal, 2016; Kila, 2016). The researcher attempts to reconstruct the narrative of how the Mandar community formed and maintained democratic values in its political life, and to place this local experience in a broader academic discussion of democracy beyond the liberal model. This article is also part of an effort to reaffirm the position of local culture as a source of knowledge and political inspiration that is relevant to the present day. In the context of a multicultural Indonesia, exploring and reviving local democratic value systems such as those practiced in Mandar can be an important contribution to strengthening a more meaningful, fair, and locally-rooted form of substantive democracy.

Based on this description, the purpose of this study is to analyze the political culture transformation of the Balanipa Kingdom from a power structure to the formation of a civic culture, as well as to identify the traditional values that contribute to the practice of local democracy. The research questions posed are: (1) How was the power structure and governance mechanism of the Balanipa Kingdom formed and implemented? (2) What traditional values form the foundation of its political culture? (3) How did the process of transforming these values shape the civic orientation of the Mandar community? and (4) To what extent can Balanipa's political culture be understood within the framework of contemporary civic culture theory? By answering these questions, this research is expected to provide theoretical and empirical contributions to the development of substantive democracy based on local wisdom in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on democracy have largely been dominated by modern institutional perspectives that emphasize the existence of formal structures such as elections, political parties, and systems of representation within modern nation-states. Such approaches often overlook political practices grounded in local traditions that have historically shaped patterns of participation and the legitimacy of power within society. In the Indonesian context, local democratic practices that developed within traditional kingdoms constitute an important source for understanding the contextual and historical roots of civic culture (Benda, 1964; Blühdorn, 2020).

Scholarship on local democracy highlights that democratic practices do not necessarily emerge from Western political modernization but may evolve through traditional social and cultural institutions. Studies of local kingdoms demonstrate that mechanisms of deliberation, social consensus, and limitations on authority existed long before modern democratic concepts were introduced (Ayundasari & Islam, 2021).

From a historical perspective, Indonesian democracy exhibits a hybrid character combining formal institutional arrangements with communitarian values. Huber and Stephens (1997) argue that democracy encompasses not only procedural dimensions but also social-participatory dimensions shaped by societal structures and political culture. Similarly, studies on local identity politics indicate that cultural values and customary institutions continue to function as sources of political legitimacy in contemporary Indonesian society (Hermansyah, 2022). Accordingly, local democracy can be understood as a community-based political practice that places the legitimacy of power on collective societal consent rather than solely on modern institutional legality. The concept of political culture provides an essential framework for understanding how social values shape citizens' political orientations. Classical political culture theory explains patterns of citizens' attitudes toward political systems, participation, and political authority.

Research on civic culture by Muller and Seligson (1994) emphasizes that democratic stability is strongly influenced by levels of social trust, citizen participation, and civic orientations embedded within society. Dalton and Shin (2014) further expand this concept by demonstrating the transformation of citizens from "allegiant citizens" to "assertive citizens," in which political participation becomes active and grounded in social awareness and collective values rather than passive compliance. Within traditional societies, political culture is not always expressed through formal mechanisms but through social practices such as mutual cooperation, solidarity, and deliberation. Suwignyo (2019) shows that such collective practices represent forms of non-formal political participation that strengthen the social legitimacy of governance. This finding indicates that local political culture can function as a foundation for substantive democracy.

Civic culture theory emphasizes the relationship between societal cultural values and democratic sustainability. Almond and Verba (as cited in Muller & Seligson, 1994) explain that civic culture emerges from a combination of active participation, social trust, and collective citizen orientations toward the political system. Contemporary research suggests that civic culture does not solely arise from modern state institutions but may also develop from local wisdom and traditional social practices (Halimah et al., 2025). Miura, Lee, and Kim (2025) reinforce this argument by demonstrating that grassroots participation constitutes a key factor in the formation of political efficacy and democratic legitimacy.

From a citizenship education perspective, the integration of local cultural values has been shown to foster democratic character and civic disposition within society (Mazid et al., 2024). Therefore, civic culture should be understood as a historical and cultural process rather than merely a product of modern political institutions.

Political anthropology studies indicate that legitimacy of power in traditional societies is often grounded in customary norms and moral authority. Koentjaraningrat (2009) emphasizes the importance of cultural context in understanding local power structures. Hadi (2018) demonstrates that relations between rulers and communities in customary societies are constructed through moral contracts and social responsibility rather than pure domination. Similarly, Fadruallah and Syam (2024) explain that customary elites function as socio-political mediators who maintain power balance through collective cultural values. This perspective is particularly relevant for understanding traditional governance systems that incorporate customary checks and balances, as observed in local political practices across the Indonesian archipelago.

A genealogical approach is employed to trace the origins and transformation of social values within political practices. Gerrard et al. (2017) argue that genealogy enables analysis of the relationships among history, power, and the production of social knowledge. This approach aligns with longitudinal qualitative research emphasizing the importance of historical continuity in socio-political change (Burgelman, 2011). Through this perspective, customary values are not viewed as residual traditions but as normative foundations continuously transforming into modern civic practices. Based on the literature reviewed above, three major research gaps can be identified: (1) the dominance of modern democratic perspectives that overlook traditional political practices; (2) limited integration between local historical studies and civic culture theory; and (3) the lack of genealogical analyses examining the transformation of customary values into civic culture. This study addresses these gaps by integrating the political history of the Balanipa Kingdom, local political culture, and civic culture theory within a socio-historical analytical framework. The findings reinforce the argument that Indonesian democracy possesses historical-cultural roots that developed through customary institutions and collective deliberative practices.

The literature ultimately demonstrates that democracy is not solely a product of Western political modernity but can grow from local social and cultural practices. Customary-based political culture provides mechanisms of participation, legitimacy, and power control consistent with the principles of civic culture. Therefore, the study of the Balanipa Kingdom contributes significantly to expanding the understanding of contextual Indonesian democracy rooted in local traditions and historical societal experiences.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Type and Approach

This study uses qualitative research with a historical-interpretative approach and library research combined with a socio-political genealogy perspective (Zed, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Burgelman, 2011; Gerrard et al., 2017). The qualitative approach was chosen because the

study aims to understand the meaning, values, and cultural constructions of local politics that developed within the Balanipa Kingdom's system of government and its relationship with the formation of civic culture within society. The historical approach was used to trace the development of local democratic practices chronologically, while the genealogical approach aimed to identify the origins, transformations, and continuity of civic values from traditional power structures to contemporary socio-political practices. Interpretive analysis allowed researchers to interpret symbols, customary norms, and deliberative practices as expressions of local political culture.

Research Subject

The subject of this research is the traditional political institutions of the Balanipa Kingdom, including the customary government structure and decision-making mechanisms. Local democratic values and practices, such as customary deliberation, leadership legitimacy, and community participation. Historical narratives and cultural texts, including local manuscripts and historiographical works. The research focuses not on specific individuals, but on social practices, value systems, and political cultural constructions.

Research Implementation Procedure

The literature search procedure was conducted systematically through the stages of identifying research keywords, such as: local democracy, the Balanipa kingdom, local political culture, civic culture genealogy, and traditional politics in the archipelago. Academic databases were searched using Scopus, Sinta using Google Scholar and Garuda (Garba Rujukan Digital), DOAJ, the National Library, and regional archives. Initial selection of sources based on title relevance. Further screening using academic quality criteria (peer-reviewed, publisher reputation, and theoretical contribution). Classification of sources into primary sources (historical archives, local manuscripts) and secondary sources (journal articles, academic books, dissertations) (Koentjaraningrat, 2009).

Research Instruments

This study uses a source evaluation matrix with the following criteria: Substantive relevance to the theme of local democracy and political culture; Credibility of the author or publishing institution; Originality and authority of the source, especially for historical documents; Historical contextuality, i.e., relevance to the period under study. The instrument is a literature review matrix that contains the source identity, main concepts, methods, findings, and contributions to the research.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through documentation studies, namely the collection of historical archives, traditional manuscripts, and academic literature. Textual analysis of cultural documents and local historiography. Analytical recording, namely the initial coding process of concepts such as legitimacy of power, traditional participation, and deliberation. Data organization using thematic categorization in accordance with the research focus.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis using Thematic Analysis was conducted through the stages of data familiarization, initial coding, theme identification, conceptual category development, and interpretation of relationships between themes (Jesson et al., 2011).

Data Validity

To ensure the quality of the research, a strategy of source triangulation was used, comparing historical archives, academic literature, and cultural documents. Historical cross-checking, namely fact verification through various references from different periods. Audit trail, systematic recording of the entire research process.

RESULT

The results of the study show that the Balanipa Kingdom's system of government was not entirely absolute monarchy, but rather exhibited a pattern of collective and deliberative power distribution. These findings are reinforced by previous research by Ayundasari & Islam (2021), which describes the structure of government as consisting of the Mara'dia as the highest political leader who governed together with traditional institutions and associations of nobles and community leaders.

Historical literature data shows that strategic political decisions were not determined unilaterally by the ruler, but through a customary deliberation mechanism. The presence of customary institutions served as a mechanism for social control as well as a limit on the king's power. Thus, the Balanipa political system exhibited proto-democratic characteristics that placed the legitimacy of power in the collective consent of the indigenous community.

These findings confirm that Mandar's traditional governance practices already contained the principle of social accountability before the concept of modern democracy was introduced. The study found that the political culture of the Balanipa Kingdom was built through the internalization of customary values that functioned as political norms and social ethics. Several key values identified from the literature sources processed by the researchers include:

Table 1. Findings from literature sources

Customary Values	Social-Political Meaning	Function in Government
<i>Sirumung Karaya</i>	Collective deliberation	Joint decision-making
<i>Assamaturuang</i>	Social consensus	Policy legitimacy
<i>Sikalulu</i>	Social Solidarity	Community participation

Overview of the Form and System of Government of the Balanipa Kingdom

The system of government of the Balanipa Kingdom was formed through a historical process that was not spontaneous, but rather the result of socio-political transformations within Mandar society, which had previously lived in local government units known as *Tomakaka* (Kila, 2016). The transition from the *Tomakaka* system to a kingdom marked the birth of a more organized power structure, as well as laying the initial foundation for the formation of Mandar political culture (Rijal, 2019; Deni, 2023; Sahabudin, et al., 2024). The Balanipa Kingdom was founded by I Manyambungi as the first mara'dia (king), appearing as a political entity capable of uniting autonomous regions into a single government without abolishing the role and authority of local customs.

The highest authority in the Balanipa kingdom was the Mara'dia (king). However, this did not mean that the position of mara'dia as king was absolute and his power was unconditional. The king's political power was limited by customary norms and collective mechanisms implemented through customary institutions. The Customary Council serves as an important institution that performs the roles of oversight, legitimacy, and balancing the king's power. The customary council has the authority to appoint, supervise, and dismiss the mara'dia (king), which demonstrates the principle of political accountability in the traditional Balanipa system of government.

The relationship between the center of royal power and the subordinate regions was built through a confederation structure, each with its own government (Taufik, 2024). This can be seen in its subsequent development into *Pitu Uhunna Salu* (seven upstream kingdoms) and *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* (seven downstream kingdoms). This confederation system reflects a collective and participatory pattern of government, in which each region has representation in strategic decision-making. The Balanipa government structure was not only oriented towards centralization of power, but also emphasized the importance of balance between central authority and regional autonomy.

If we examine it in depth, the political practices of the Balanipa Kingdom developed a political culture based on the values of deliberation and consensus. The decision-making process was carried out through deliberative forums involving traditional elites and regional

representatives, known in the Mandar tradition as *sirumung karaya*. Political decisions were not made unilaterally by the Mara'dia (king), but through a deliberative process aimed at reaching a mutual agreement (*assamaturuang*). This decision-making model shows the emergence of deliberative democracy in the context of traditional government in the Kingdom of Balanipa.

The democratic values in the Balanipa Kingdom's system of government are also reflected in the social relations between Mara'dia (the king) and the community. The existing social stratification does not give rise to rigid oppressive relations, but rather functions as a division of social roles. Each layer of society has basic rights that are recognized and protected by custom, including the right to protection and justice. This principle of moral equality is an important basis for building public trust in the government system.

The practice of mutual cooperation (*sikalulu*) and collective responsibility is a tangible manifestation of civic values in Balanipa society. These values not only function as social norms, but also as political instruments that strengthen solidarity, legitimacy of power, and governmental stability. Thus, the political culture of the Balanipa Kingdom does not merely regulate the distribution of power, but also shapes a civic ethos that is deeply rooted in the social life of the community.

This means that the Balanipa Kingdom's system of government represents a traditional form of government that integrates power structures with local democratic values. Although it was born in a pre-modern context, the principles of deliberation, leader accountability, balance of power, and collective participation that developed within this system show that democracy is not a foreign concept in local political traditions. On the contrary, democracy has taken root in the governance practices of the Balanipa Kingdom as an expression of the political wisdom of the Mandar people.

At the beginning of the Balanipa Kingdom, its government structure was still very simple, and its form of government was a kingdom rather than an authoritarian monarchy. This means that the Balanipa Kingdom had a royal form of government, but the Mara'dia (king) was limited in his authority by customary institutions represented by Puang Dipoyosang as the first customary member, which may be similar to the current House of Representatives. Although the traditional form of government in the Balanipa Kingdom was essentially led by a mara'dia, the basis of his power was democracy. This means that the Mara'dia's power is limited by the traditional council, as can be seen when I Manyambungi was inaugurated and sworn in as the first Mara'dia (king) of the Balanipa Kingdom by Puang Dipoyosang (chairman of the traditional council) representing *Appeq Banua Kaiyyang* (Four Great Kingdoms). The oath (*assitalliang*) was recited by I Manyambungi (Todilaling) as follows:

"*Nauwang I Puang Dipoyosang: Upakaiyangngo'o Todilaling mupakaraja, dimadondonna diduambongi anna marrattas-rattas ouake, marruppu-ruppu'o batu, uwalai membali akaiyangan*". This means that I, Dipoyosang, affirm: I appoint you, Todilaling, as the head of government, but you must respect me (as the holder of traditional authority). The day after tomorrow, when you decide on traditional matters and destroy customs, I will revoke the greatness I have given you" (Rahman, 2014).

The oath of office above clearly shows that the mara'dia (king) must follow the contents of the agreement in running the government during his reign. In addition, the limits and authorities of each mara'dia (king) are very clear, so that in running the government, he is always controlled by the royal high council. The basis of this oath has a very deep meaning, containing the basic characteristics of a person who is worthy of being a role model.

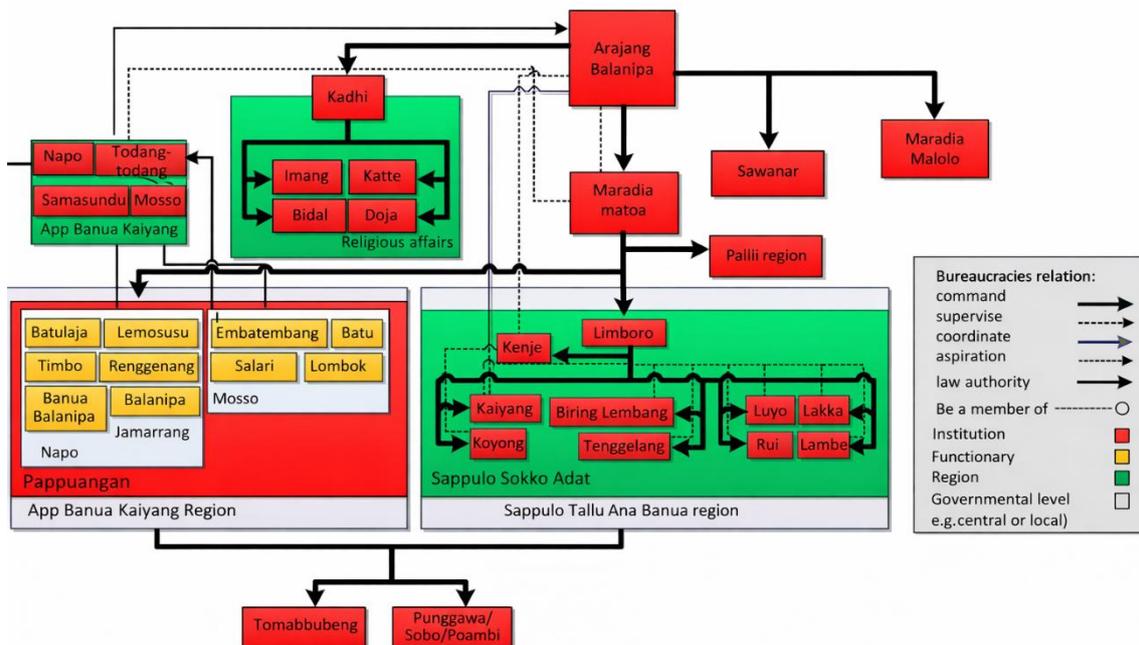


Figure 1. Structure of the Balanipa Kingdom Government (Source: Regional Library Archives, 1990)

The structure of the Balanipa Kingdom's government reflects a collective and customary-based system of power, in which political authority is not absolutely centralized in the king, but rather exercised through institutional relationships, including:

1. Mara'dia (King of the Balanipa Kingdom)

- a. Position: Mara'dia is the highest leader in the Balanipa Kingdom's governmental structure, holding executive and symbolic authority (Rahman, 2014). However, his position is not absolute because the legitimacy of his power depends on the approval of traditional institutions, particularly *Appaq Banua Kayyang*. Mara'dia is regarded as a moral leader and

guardian of the kingdom's socio-political balance. Mara'dia acts as the executor of collective decisions, not as a sole decision-maker.

- b. Duties: Leading the kingdom's government, maintaining political stability and regional security, implementing decisions made through customary deliberation, representing the kingdom in relations between kingdoms, ensuring the welfare of the people and social order.
- c. Functions: Executive function, implementing political and customary policies. Symbolic function, as the unifier of the Mandar community. Moral function, upholding customary values and leadership ethics. Diplomatic function, building regional political relations.

2. *Appeq Banua Kayyang* (Four Great Kingdoms)

- a. Position: *Appeq Banua Kayyang* is a confederation of four main regions that form the foundation of the Balanipa Kingdom. This institution has a very strategic position as the holder of customary sovereignty and the source of the kingdom's political legitimacy. *Appeq Banua Kayyang* is the main source of legitimacy for Mara'dia's power (Kila, 2016). Conceptually, this institution can be analogized as the highest consultative authority in the traditional political system.
- b. Duties: Electing and appointing Mara'dia, providing legitimacy to the royal government, overseeing the king's power, representing the interests of the confederation regions, and maintaining political agreements between regions.
- c. Functions: Customary legislative function, establishing norms and joint decisions. Power control function, limiting the king's authority. Representative function, representing the regional community. Political stabilization function, maintaining balance between Tomakaka.

3. *Sappulo Sokko*

- a. Position: *Sappulo Sokko* is a traditional element that plays a role in the symbolic legitimacy and political rituals of the kingdom (Rahman, 2014). This institution is related to cultural and sacred aspects in the Balanipa government system, especially in the procession of appointing kings and performing traditional rituals. Its position demonstrates the integration between political power and the spiritual values of the Mandar people. *Sappulo Sokko* ensures that power is not only politically legitimate, but also customary and spiritually legitimate. The *Sappulo Sokko* Customary Council has the authority to supervise and dismiss mara'dia who violate their oaths or act tyrannically.

- b. Duties: Carrying out royal traditional rituals, confirming the appointment of Mara'dia according to tradition, preserving the purity of traditions and customary laws, and safeguarding the sacred values of the kingdom.
- c. Functions: Cultural legitimization function, providing symbolic validation of power. Spiritual-political function, connecting power with traditional cosmology. Tradition preservation function, maintaining the continuity of cultural values.

Traditional Values as the Foundation of Political Culture

The political culture of the Balanipa Kingdom is deeply rooted in traditional values and religion. Leaders are seen as role models who must maintain social harmony. The principle of balance between power, morality, and social responsibility is a key feature of this kingdom's political system.

The results of the study show that the political culture of the Balanipa Mandar Kingdom is fundamentally built on traditional values that function as norms governing political, social, and governmental life. Sodikin & Maranjaya (2025) state in their research that tradition is not only positioned as a cultural tradition but also as a value system that has normative and legitimizing power in regulating power relations. This research provides a fairly concrete picture that customs are the main source of political legitimacy, both for Mara'dia (King) and for the royal government institutions as a whole in the Balanipa kingdom.

Customary values serve as ethical references in the exercise of power (Fadrullah & Syam, 2024; Hadi, 2018). Political power in the Balanipa Kingdom is not absolute but is limited by customary provisions that regulate the authority, responsibilities, and behavior of rulers. Mara'dia (the king) is seen not only as the holder of political authority, but also as a moral figure who is obliged to maintain social balance, justice, and harmony in society. In another sense, customs function as a mechanism of social control that limits the potential for abuse of power and ensures that the government runs in accordance with the collective values of the Mandar community.

We can see that customary values are manifested in a tangible way through the mechanisms of deliberation and collective decision-making. The customary deliberative forum known as *sirumung karaya* serves as a deliberative space where various political and social interests are openly discussed. This process confirms that political decisions are not made through the unilateral will of those in power, but rather through a shared consensus (*assamaturuang*) that reflects the collective will. These findings show that traditional values have shaped a participatory political culture that places dialogue and consensus as the main principles in the governance of power.

1. Deliberation (*sirumung karaya*) and Consensus (*assamaturuang*)

Deliberation is the main mechanism for decision-making in the Kingdom of Balanipa, including the election of Mara'dia and the resolution of political conflicts. Decisions are not made unilaterally, but through collective dialogue between traditional leaders and the community (Kila, 2016). This pattern demonstrates a participatory political culture, in which citizens are not passive towards power. Traditional deliberation serves as an early form of deliberative democracy, showing that political participation has been institutionalized in local traditions.

2. Limitations on Power

The Mara'dia does not have absolute power. The appointment and dismissal of the king are under the authority of customary institutions, so that power is accountable. This is in line with the concept of political culture that emphasizes a balance between authority and social control. The limitations on customary power indicate the existence of traditional checks and balances that support political stability without modern democratic institutions.

3. Solidarity (*sikalulu*)

Social relations in Mandar society are built on the principles of togetherness and collective interests, so that politics is not understood as individual competition, but as a shared social responsibility. Social solidarity is the foundation for the formation of a stable civil society. The value of solidarity strengthens social integration, which is a key prerequisite for the sustainability of democracy according to civic culture theory.

Customary values also shape relatively egalitarian power relations between rulers, customary elites, and the community (Pradana, 2019; Suminar, 2020). Although there is social stratification within the Balanipa community structure, these differences are more functional than hierarchical. Each social group has a recognized role and function in the kingdom's socio-political system and enjoys protection of their basic rights through customary provisions. This confirms that customs serve as an instrument of social justice that maintains a balance of power relations and prevents excessive domination by certain groups.

Customary values such as togetherness, solidarity, and mutual cooperation (*sikalulu*) are important elements in strengthening the political culture of the Balanipa Kingdom. Suwignyo (2019) states that the practice of mutual cooperation not only functions in a socio-economic context but also as a form of political participation by the community in supporting joint decisions. The implementation of *sikalulu* values shows that political participation in traditional Balanipa society is not always realized through formal mechanisms, but rather through the active

involvement of the community in maintaining stability, security, and the continuity of government.

Several sources obtained in this study indicate that traditional values in the Kingdom of Balanipa have a dual function, namely as normative guidelines and as instruments for shaping political culture. Customs not only regulate the manner of ruling, but also shape the political orientation of society, which emphasizes collective responsibility, compliance with mutual agreements, and trust in government institutions. Several opinions and studies (in Halimah et al., 2025) provide a perspective from political culture theory, stating that these traditional values reflect the character of civic culture rooted in local wisdom, where participation, trust, and orientation towards common interests are dominant elements.

This study shows that traditional values can be understood as the main foundation of the political culture of the Balanipa Kingdom, which enabled the establishment of a relatively stable, inclusive, and moral system of government. Although born in a traditional context, these values have strong relevance for the development of contemporary political culture and citizenship, particularly in efforts to build a democracy rooted in the history and local identity of Indonesian society.

DISCUSSION

The Process of Transforming Political Cultural Values into Civic Democratic Values

Values such as deliberation (*sippa' musyang*), collective agreement (*sattu*), and principles of etiquette in speech and action are the main elements that determine who is worthy of becoming a leader (Arun & Gedik, 2020; Inayati et al., 2024). The study of the Mara'dia (king) selection process in the Kingdom of Balanipa aims not only to reconstruct local political history, but also to explore the value system that forms the foundation of democracy in Mandar society.

One interesting aspect of the political system in the Kingdom of Balanipa is its social structure and decision-making mechanism, particularly in electing the Mara'dia (king) through deliberative meetings in front of the community or traditional council (Rahman, 2014; Kila, 2016). The main criteria are not only noble blood, but also integrity, leadership skills, adherence to customs, and a willingness to maintain harmony. There is even the concept of *Sappo' Adaq* (customary support), which requires a king to submit to customary values, rather than becoming an absolute ruler. Customary law acts as an unwritten law that binds the Mara'dia (king) and the people in the same moral order.

However, the local democratic value system in Mandar faces challenges from modernization and the loss of local cultural space (Saputra et al., 2024). Globalization, political centralization, and the dominance of electoral democracy discourse have shifted the appreciation

of deliberative and consensual values in indigenous communities. Many young people are no longer familiar with the tradition of indigenous deliberation, while the system of electing village or regional heads is often adopted in a formalistic manner without considering the value structure that exists in the local culture. Therefore, the reconstruction of local democratic values is very important in order to build a model of democracy that is rooted in the cultural identity of the community.

First, Mara'dia (king) is elected based on deliberation and agreement from the *Appeg Banua Kayyang* union (the four founding nations of Balanipa: *Napo*, *Samasundu*, *Mosso*, and *Todang-todang*). This mechanism shows that the king is not automatically determined by lineage alone, but must meet the criteria for ideal leadership in accordance with the customary rules established by the ancestors.

Second, the power of the Mara'dia (king) is limited by the customary constitution. The Mara'dia (king) must take an oath before Puang Dipoyosang on behalf of the people (Rahman, 2014). The oath emphasizes that a king must not violate customary law, as such violations could lead to impeachment. This control mechanism is carried out by the *Sappulo Sokko* Customary Council, which has the authority to warn and even dismiss a Mara'dia (king) who is tyrannical. Historical records show that the dismissal of kings in Balanipa is not uncommon, indicating a strong principle of political accountability.

Third, Balanipa democracy is reflected in the concept of “*Mengga Lenggoq Mengga Belawa*,” which is rich in egalitarian meaning. These values include:

1. *Manu' Tandi Pessisi'i* (a chicken whose scales are invisible) signifies the supremacy of customary law that applies to everyone regardless of status.
2. *Beang Tandi Gati* (rice that does not need to be measured) symbolizes a people's economy and social justice.
3. *Beluwa' Tandi Biti* (neatly combed hair that does not need to be tied) describes continuous unity.
4. *Ara Ratang Tandi Dappai* (a rope that does not need to be measured) signifies non-discriminatory legal justice.

In addition, the political system of the Balanipa Kingdom was built on the spirit of collectivity. Important decisions such as war, alliances, and the appointment of Mara'dia (king) always involved other royal alliances in Mandar through the *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* and *Pitu Ulunna Salu* forums in the *Allamungan Batu* agreement in Luyo. This confirms the practice of deliberative democracy at the inter-kingdom level.

Local democracy in the election of Mara'dia (king) of the Balanipa Mandar Kingdom is based on three main principles, namely: public deliberation, supremacy of customary law, and leadership accountability. These values show that long before the concept of modern democracy was introduced by the West, the Mandar people already possessed political wisdom that placed the people at the center of sovereignty. This system not only affirms the independence of local political traditions, but also shows that democracy in Indonesia has strong cultural roots in its history.

Table 2. Local Democracy Values in the Kingdom of Balanipa

Aspects of Democracy	Practices in the Kingdom of Balanipa-Mandar	Values Contained
Leader Selection	Mara'dia was chosen through deliberation by <i>Appeq Banua Kayyang (Napo, Samasundu, Mosso, Todang-todang)</i> and agreed upon by all.	Deliberation, collective agreement, public participation through customary institutions.
People's Sovereignty	Leaders are appointed by the will of the people, not just by heredity.	The people are the holders of the highest sovereignty.
Limits of Power	Mara'dia took an oath before Puang Dipoyosang on behalf of the people; power is limited by customary law.	Supremacy of customary law, limitation of power, checks and balances.
Oversight and Accountability	The <i>Sappulo Sokko</i> Traditional Council has the authority to supervise and dismiss mara'dia who violate their oath or act unjustly.	Leader accountability, public oversight, anti-authoritarianism.
Egalitarian Principle	The Concept of <i>Mengga Lenggoq Mengga Belawa</i> : - <i>Manu' Tandi Pessisi'i</i> (supremacy of law) - <i>Beang Tandi Gati</i> (social and economic justice) - <i>Beluwa' Tandi Biti</i> (continuous unity) - <i>Ara Ratang Tandi Dappai</i> (non-discriminatory legal justice).	Equality, justice, unity, social solidarity.
Inter-Kingdom Collectivity	Important decisions (war, alliances, election of kings) were discussed in the <i>Pitu Ba'bana Binanga</i> alliance.	Deliberative democracy, regional solidarity, consensus among small countries.

(Source: compiled by Researchers, 2025)

The selection of leaders is based on historical records of the appointment of the first Mara'dia, I Manyambungi, by the *Appeq Banua Kayyang* alliance. Historical sources show that

leaders did not automatically ascend to the throne based on lineage, but through deliberations by traditional leaders representing the *Napo*, *Samasundu*, *Mosso*, and *Todang-todang* regions.

People's sovereignty stems from historical narratives that emphasize that the appointment of Mara'dia was carried out at the will of the *Appeq Banua Kayyang* political community, not merely as an aristocratic inheritance. In historical materials, the legitimacy of leadership has always been linked to public acceptance and the leader's ability to protect the people.

The limitation of power is based on historical sources regarding Mara'dia's oath before Puang Dipoyosang. The oath was not merely a symbolic ritual, but a political-customary contract that bound the ruler.

The existence of the *Sappulo Sokko* Customary Council in historical sources became the basis for the formation of the category of supervision and accountability. Historical records explain that customary institutions have the authority to evaluate and even dismiss Mara'dia who act tyrannically.

Egalitarian values are built from an analysis of the philosophical concept of *Mandar Mengga Lenggoq Mengga Belawa*, which is recorded in customary traditions and local legal norms. Categories of democracy such as equality, justice, and social solidarity are the result of the conceptualization of these philosophical values.

The category of regional deliberative democracy originates from historical materials about the *Pitu Ba'bana Binanga* (seven river mouth kingdoms) and *Pitu Ulunna Salu* (seven river upstream kingdoms) alliances. Historical sources show that strategic decisions such as war, alliances, and regional stability were discussed collectively between kingdoms.

Formation of Civic Culture

The research findings indicate that the civic culture of the Mandar community was not formed instantaneously; rather, it constitutes a historical product resulting from the internalization of political cultural values of the Balanipa Kingdom, which have been deeply rooted in social life and traditional governance. The political culture of Balanipa functions as a medium for transmitting civic values that shape the political orientation of the community, both in relation to authority, governmental institutions, and fellow citizens.

Customary values such as deliberation (*sirumung karaya*), consensus (*assamaturuang*), the limitation of power through customary norms, moral leadership, and mutual cooperation (*sikalulu*) serve as the primary foundations for the development of participatory and collective civic orientations. In this context, customary law functions not merely as a cultural norm but also as a political pedagogical instrument that transmits values of social responsibility, public trust, and adherence to collective agreements.

The process of civic culture formation begins with the internalization of political cultural values through traditional governance practices (Zhai, 2018; Sulanjari, 2025). The community directly participates in deliberative processes and in the implementation of collective decisions, thereby fostering an awareness that power constitutes a shared trust rather than the exclusive possession of an individual or a monarch. Miura et al. (2025) argue that such participation generates a sense of political efficacy, namely the belief that individuals and communities possess a meaningful role in political life.

Subsequently, these values undergo social institutionalization, whereby customary political principles are translated into everyday social practices, such as mutual cooperation, solidarity, and adherence to shared norms. At this stage, the political culture of the kingdom operates not only within the sphere of governance but also shapes civic ethos in broader social life. The relatively egalitarian relationship between rulers and the people strengthens trust in the political system and reduces the social distance between elites and citizens.

The final stage involves the transformation of political values into civic virtue, defined as civic character marked by collective responsibility, commitment to the public interest, and respect for law and social norms (Pamungkas et al., 2023). These values encourage the emergence of citizens who are not only normatively compliant but also socially and politically active (Chien, 2025). The resulting civic culture is participatory in nature and oriented toward social harmony, in accordance with the characteristics of Mandar society.

This study confirms that the civic culture of the Mandar community constitutes the result of a historical transformation of the political culture of the Balanipa Kingdom. This civic culture is rooted in local wisdom and demonstrates that the formation of civic culture does not necessarily depend on Western models of democracy; rather, it can emerge from traditional political practices that uphold deliberation, justice, and collective responsibility.

Table 3. The Structure of Civic Culture Formation in Mandar Society

Formation Stage	The Value of Balanipa Political Culture	Socio-Political Process	Results of Civic Culture Formation
Internalization of Basic Values	Deliberation (<i>sirumung karaya</i>)	Community involvement in decision-making	Political participation in awareness
Social Legitimacy	Consensus (<i>assamaturuang</i>)	Political decisions based on mutual agreement	Public compliance and trust
Limitation of Power	Custom as a controlling norm	Social control over those in power	Orientation towards accountability
Leadership Exemplarity	Moral leadership of <i>mara'dia</i>	Leaders as ethical figures	Citizen trust and loyalty

Social Justice	Moral equality and protection of rights	Recognition of the basic rights of all citizens	Sense of justice and inclusiveness
Collective Participation	Representation of customs and territories	Citizen involvement in policy implementation	Sense of belonging to the community
Social Solidarity	Mutual cooperation (<i>sikalulu</i>)	Cooperation in implementing political decisions	Community-based civic engagement
Normative Obedience	Compliance with customs and agreements	Social and political discipline	Culture of law and responsibility
Public Interest Orientation	Loyalty to the community	Placing the common good above individual interests	Civic virtue and public orientation
Social Harmony	Custom-based conflict resolution	Resolving conflicts through dialogue	Stability and sustainability of civic culture

(Source: compiled by Researchers, 2025)

The table outlining the stages of civic culture formation in Balanipa society is constructed and interpreted as an inductive analytical framework derived from the process of interpreting the study's historical and cultural data, rather than as a pre-established theoretical model. This framework represents a synthesis between empirical findings concerning the political practices of the Balanipa Kingdom and the conceptual categories of political culture and civic culture found in academic literature. Accordingly, the table represents a process of analytical abstraction grounded in the socio-historical realities of Mandar society.

The construction of the table was carried out through stages of historical qualitative analysis, beginning with the identification of socio-political practices documented in customary sources and royal historical narratives, followed by thematic categorization of recurring values within governance practices and community life. Values such as deliberation (*sirumung karaya*), consensus (*assamaturuang*), solidarity (*sikalulu*), and adherence to customary norms were not immediately assumed to constitute dimensions of civic culture; rather, they were first analyzed as concrete social practices possessing specific political functions within the context of the kingdom.

The first column of the table presents the stages of formation, illustrating the process of value transformation from the normative level toward civic orientation. The second column contains the political cultural values of Balanipa derived from historical data as the primary units of meaning. The third column explains the socio-political processes, namely the concrete mechanisms through which these values were operationalized within governmental structures and social relations of the community. Meanwhile, the final column displays the outcomes of civic

culture formation, referring to the cultural consequences that emerge continuously within the political orientations of society.

Through this mode of interpretation, the table demonstrates a causal–interpretative relationship between custom as a system of values and the formation of civic behavior. In this sense, civic culture is not positioned as a concept imported from modern theory, but rather as the result of the historical evolution of local political culture. This framework further indicates that customary values function as mechanisms of political socialization that generate participatory awareness, public trust, accountability of power, social solidarity, and an orientation toward the common good.

This table is understood as a data-driven analytical framework that explains the genealogy of civic culture formation within Mandar society. The framework emphasizes that the transformation from customary values into civic culture occurs through processes of social internalization, political institutionalization, and the reproduction of values in collective life practices. Accordingly, the table functions not merely as a summary of findings but as a conceptual representation derived from the empirical analysis of the research.

The structure of civic culture formation in Mandar society demonstrates a clear causal relationship between traditional political cultural values, socio-political processes, and civic outcomes (Rahmawati & Maulana, 2023). The resulting civic culture is participatory, consensus-based, and oriented toward the common good, positioning the political culture of the Balanipa Kingdom as an important foundation for strengthening contextual citizenship in Indonesia.

From the perspective of civic culture theory as proposed by Almond and Verba (2015), the political culture of a society is determined by citizens’ orientations toward the political system, their roles as citizens, and patterns of political participation. This study demonstrates that the political culture of the Balanipa Kingdom exhibits strong conceptual alignment with the characteristics of civic culture, despite having developed within a traditional context.

Table 4. Dimensions of Civic Culture

Political participation awareness	Theory Almond & Verba	Findings on the Kingdom of Balanipa
Public obedience and trust	Trust and acceptance of the system	Legitimacy of customary and consensus-based governance
Orientation towards accountability	Citizen participation in the political process	Deliberation (<i>sirumung karaya</i>) and customary representation
Citizen trust and loyalty	Compliance with political decisions	Obedience to <i>assamaturuang</i>
Sense of justice and inclusiveness	Citizens' belief that they can influence politics	Direct involvement in deliberation

Sense of belonging to the community	Orientation toward the public interest	Mutual cooperation (<i>sikalulu</i>) and community loyalty
Community-based citizen participation	Trust in institutions and elites	Moral leadership of mara'dia

(Almond & Verba, 2015)

These findings reinforce the argument that civic culture is not universal in a singular form but rather contextual and historical in nature. The political culture of the Balanipa Kingdom demonstrates that substantive democratic values—such as participation, deliberation, and accountability—had already existed within traditional governance practices long before the emergence of modern democratic institutions.

In contrast to political modernization assumptions that regard traditional culture as an obstacle to democracy (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2021; Yi-Shou, 2007), the results of this study indicate that customary institutions and local political culture can serve as normative resources for the formation of democratic citizenship. Within the Indonesian context, these findings are relevant as a foundation for developing a civic culture rooted in local identity, while also enriching the discourse of citizenship education grounded in local wisdom.

Empirical findings reveal the existence of a collective distribution of power through customary institutions, deliberative mechanisms, and limitations on the authority of the Mara'dia (king) imposed by customary norms and the Customary Council. This structure demonstrates conceptual alignment with the participatory political culture theory proposed by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, which emphasizes that democratic stability emerges from citizens' participatory orientations toward the political system rather than solely from the formal institutions of the modern state. In the context of the Balanipa Kingdom, such participation is manifested through the practice of *sirumung karaya* (customary deliberation), which functions as a space for collective political deliberation.

These findings also reinforce the approach of local democracy, or vernacular democracy, which asserts that democratic values can develop from socio-cultural contexts distinct from Western liberal models. The practice of selecting the Mara'dia (king) through the consensus of *Appeq Banua Kayyang* demonstrates that political legitimacy is constructed through social agreement rather than solely through hereditary lineage. Democracy within Mandar society is therefore more deliberative and moral in character than electoral-procedural. This indicates that substantive democratic principles—participation, accountability, and social legitimacy—were already embedded in local political practices long before the process of political modernization.

When compared with previous studies on the Balanipa Kingdom, most earlier research has primarily focused on genealogical aspects and the historical chronology of the kingdom. This study expands that body of scholarship by demonstrating that the political structure of Balanipa

is not merely a historical phenomenon but also a value system that actively shapes the civic orientations of society. In other words, this research shifts the analytical focus from political history toward the study of political culture and the process of forming the genealogy of civic culture.

This study is also aligned with the political anthropology approach developed by Clifford Geertz, which views power as a system of symbolic meaning. In the Balanipa Kingdom, customary law functions not only as a social regulation but also as a symbol of moral legitimacy that binds rulers and society within the same ethical order. The oath of the Mara'dia before Puang Dipoyosang (the Customary Council), representing *Appe Banua Kayyang* (the four great polities), reflects the existence of a moral-political contract resembling the concept of the social contract in modern political theory (Rousseau, 2023), yet rooted in the local Mandar cosmology.

Based on empirical findings, the process of civic culture formation in Mandar society occurs through three principal stages: the internalization of customary values, social institutionalization, and transformation into civic virtue. Values such as deliberation (*sirumung karaya*), consensus (*assamaturuang*), and solidarity (*sikalulu*) shape a participatory and collective political orientation within society. This condition demonstrates strong alignment with the dimensions of civic culture proposed by Almond and Verba, particularly in relation to political efficacy, trust, and civic virtue. However, this study advances a further argument: civic culture does not necessarily emerge from the modernization of democratic institutions but can also develop through enduring local political traditions.

The argumentative position of this study affirms that local political culture is not a traditional residue that must be abandoned, but rather a normative resource for the formation of substantive democracy. The primary academic contribution of this research lies in the integration of local political history studies with civic culture theory within a single socio-political genealogical analytical framework. The study demonstrates that Indonesian democracy possesses strong historical and cultural roots; therefore, efforts to strengthen national democracy should not focus solely on institutional reform but also on the revitalization of local values.

This research proposes several strategic measures. First, the integration of customary deliberative values and moral leadership into locally grounded citizenship education curricula. Second, the revitalization of customary forums as spaces for social participation in regional development. Third, the development of an Indonesian contextual model of democracy that combines modern institutions with traditional deliberative values. Fourth, further research should be conducted through a political ethnography approach to examine how Mandar civic culture values persist or transform within the context of contemporary democracy.

CONCLUSION

The governmental system of the Balanipa Kingdom did not represent an absolute monarchy; rather, it demonstrated a pattern of power distribution that was collective, deliberative, and grounded in customary legitimacy. Mechanisms of deliberation (*sirumung karaya*), social consensus (*assamaturuang*), and the limitation of authority through customary institutions reflect principles of participation, accountability, and social control consistent with the values of substantive democracy.

Customary values functioned as the normative foundation of political culture while simultaneously serving as instruments for shaping citizens' civic orientations. The process of civic culture formation occurred through three principal stages: the internalization of customary values within governance practices, social institutionalization in community life, and the transformation of values into civic virtue characterized by collective responsibility, public trust, and an orientation toward the common good. The implications of these findings affirm that local democracy in the Indonesian archipelago possesses strong historical and cultural roots; thus, democracy does not emerge solely from modern institutions but also from local political traditions.

The academic contribution of this study lies in integrating local political history with political culture theory and civic culture within a socio-political genealogical framework. This research expands democratic discourse by demonstrating that traditional political culture can serve as a normative resource for strengthening contextual democracy in Indonesia. Future studies are recommended to adopt a political ethnography approach to examine the continuity of Mandar civic culture values within contemporary democratic practices, as well as comparative analyses with other local political systems in order to enrich theories of democracy grounded in local wisdom.

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