



## The Political Economy of Illegal Parking in Makassar City: Power Relations, Rent Practices, and Regional Revenue Leakage

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### ABSTRACT

Illegal parking has become one of the urban governance problems that continues to develop in various cities, including Makassar City. Beyond its impact on traffic congestion and the management of public spaces, illegal parking also reflects the dynamics of political economy involving power relations, informal institutions, and the struggle for access to urban public resources. This study aims to analyze how the political economy of illegal parking is formed and survives in Makassar City, identify the actors involved, understand the mechanism of economic benefit distribution that occurs, and explain its implications for urban governance and regional revenue management. The research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data was collected through field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies involving elements of local government, parking managers, informal parking attendants, business actors, and parking service users. Data analysis was carried out using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana using the perspective of rent-seeking theory, informal institutions, and urban governance. The results show that illegal parking practices operate through networks of actors connected by informal rules regarding land division, income distribution, conflict resolution, and social legitimacy. These informal institutions allow rent-seeking practices to take place through the control of public parking spaces and generate the distribution of economic benefits outside of the government's formal fiscal mechanisms. The study also found that illegal parking contributes to the leakage of regional revenues, weakens accountability, and gives rise to forms of governance that bring together formal and informal actors in the management of urban public spaces. The main contribution of this research lies in the development of a shadow governance perspective to explain that illegal parking is not just a parking administrative problem, but a political economy phenomenon formed by power relations, informal institutions, and urban resource contestation. The research recommends strengthening parking digitalization, increasing supervision, and integrating informal actors into a more transparent and accountable parking governance system.

**Keywords:** Illegal parking, political economy, rent-seeking, informal institutions, urban governance

### INTRODUCTION

The growth of economic activity and community mobility in urban areas has increased the need for parking spaces as an important part of the urban transportation system. However, in various major cities in Indonesia, the provision and management of parking spaces often face various governance problems, ranging from the use of road bodies as parking areas, fare discrepancies, weak supervision, to the emergence of informal parking management practices that operate outside the official mechanism of local governments. This phenomenon not only has an impact on the smooth flow of traffic, but also has the potential to affect the effectiveness of public space utilization, regional revenue, and the quality of public services received by the community (Shoup, 2018; Marsden, 2014).

In the urban context, parking can no longer be seen solely as a transportation support facility, but has become an economic arena involving various interests of formal and informal actors. Studies on parking governance show that parking management is closely related to the capacity of local governments to manage public spaces, control informal economic activities, and optimize regional sources of income (Kodransky & Hermann, 2011). In various developing countries, weak supervision and limited institutional capacity often encourage the growth of informal parking management systems that run side by side with formal systems built by the government (Goodfellow, 2017). This situation creates what some scientists call the practice of hybrid governance, which is when the formal rules of the state interact with informal mechanisms that develop in society (Helmke & Levitsky, 2004).

Similar phenomena can be found in various major cities in Indonesia, including Makassar City. As one of the centers of economic growth in the Eastern Indonesia region, Makassar has experienced a significant increase in trade, services, and vehicle mobility activities. At a number of strategic points such as the commercial area of Jalan Pengayoman, Jalan Ratulangi, and the commercial area around Panakkukang Mall, the use of the shoulder of the road as a parking lot has become a daily sight. These practices often reduce road capacity, hinder vehicle movement, limit pedestrian space, and raise public complaints related to parking rates, the absence of official tickets, and low vehicle safety guarantees. At the same time, the existence of informal parking attendants persists even though the local government has regulations and parking management institutions that are in charge of regulating the implementation of parking in urban areas.

In the context of Makassar City, the parking issue has developed into an increasingly complex urban governance issue with the increase in economic activity and vehicle mobility. Perumda Parkir Makassar Raya noted that the managed parking service area has covered all sub-districts in Makassar City with more than 1,100 parking points spread across various trade areas, services, and community activity centers. Other data shows that there are around 1,141 roadside parking points that are the object of city parking management. The large scope of these services shows that the parking sector has significant economic value as well as being an important instrument in supporting regional revenue and urban public space management. However, various reports and studies still show the existence of illegal parking on a number of strategic roads in Makassar City that cannot be fully regulated, raising questions about the effectiveness of current parking governance.

This phenomenon can be seen in a number of commercial areas with high activity intensity such as the Panakkukang area, the Pengayoman Street corridor, Jalan Ratulangi, and several other trade centers. In these locations, the use of road bodies as parking spaces often reduces road capacity, increases traffic density, and limits pedestrian movement space. At the same time, people often complain about fare incompatibility, the unavailability of official tickets, and the low certainty of protection for parked vehicles. Various control operations carried out by the Makassar City Government, the Transportation Office, and Perumda Parking in recent years show that illegal parking practices are still a recurring problem and have not been comprehensively resolved. This condition indicates that there are problems that are not only administrative, but also related to institutional aspects, supervision, interest relations, and governance of urban public spaces.

The urgency of this research is even stronger when it is associated with the Makassar City Government's efforts to increase regional fiscal capacity. By 2024, Makassar City's Regional Original Revenue (PAD) has reached more than IDR 1.13 trillion, so that the optimization of all sources of regional revenue is an important agenda in city governance. In this context, the parking sector is not only positioned as a public service, but also as one of the supporting instruments for potential regional revenue. Ironically, a number of previous studies have

shown that illegal parking practices are still one of the factors that cause parking acceptance potential to not be maximized. In other words, there is a possibility that some of the economic value generated from the use of urban parking spaces has not been fully integrated into a formal and accountable system of regional revenue.

The latest developments also show that the Makassar City Government has begun to encourage the transformation of parking governance through the implementation of a digital parking system and various technology-based supervision innovations. The trial of the digital parking system carried out on several main road corridors reflects the government's awareness of the importance of transparency and accountability in parking management. However, the success of these innovations is highly dependent on the government's ability to deeply understand the actors' structure, relationship patterns, and economic mechanisms behind the informal parking practices that have been developing in urban public spaces. Therefore, this study is important to explain how the political economy of informal parking operates, what actors are involved in it, and how its implications are for urban governance and the optimization of regional revenue in Makassar City.

Theoretically, this phenomenon can be understood through the perspective of urban political economy which places public space as an arena for the distribution of economic resources and power (Harvey, 2008). In this perspective, parking spaces not only generate official revenue for local governments through levies or parking taxes, but also have the potential to create various forms of informal economic benefits enjoyed by certain actors. The concept of rent-seeking introduced by Tullock (1967) and further developed by Krueger (1974) explains how individuals or groups can gain economic advantage through the control of access to public resources without creating new productive value. In the context of urban parking, the control of parking spaces can be a source of rent that is contested by various actors because it generates a relatively stable stream of income on a daily basis.

In addition, the informal institutional approach also provides a relevant explanation for the sustainability of informal parking practices in various developing cities. According to North (1990), institutions consist not only of formal written rules, but also of norms, customs, and unwritten rules that develop in social life. Helmke and Levitsky (2004) even show that informal institutions are often able to survive and function more effectively than formal institutions when state capacity is weak or supervision is not running optimally. In the case of parking management, the existence of informal mechanisms that regulate the division of territory, collection of levies, and relations between actors can be seen as a form of informal institutions that live and develop in urban spaces.

A number of previous studies have discussed various aspects of parking management. Kodransky and Hermann (2011) highlight the importance of parking policy reform to support sustainable urban mobility. Shoup (2018) emphasized that poor parking governance can cause economic inefficiencies and traffic congestion. In Indonesia, research on parking generally focuses on the effectiveness of parking levies, contribution to Regional Original Revenue (PAD), quality of parking services, user compliance, or the implementation of electronic parking systems (Prasetyo & Hidayat, 2021; Sari et al., 2023). These studies make an important contribution to understanding the administrative aspects of parking management, but are still relatively limited in explaining the dimensions of power relations, informal networks, and political economy mechanisms that allow informal parking practices to continue to survive in the midst of formal regulations.

Based on the literature search, there is still a significant research gap. First, most studies have positioned parking as an instrument of public service and a source of regional income, while few studies have examined parking as a political economy arena involving various formal and informal actors. Second, previous research used more evaluative-administrative

approaches so that it has not been able to explain how power relations, economic interests, and informal institutions shape parking governance at the local level. Third, studies on parking in Indonesia still rarely integrate rent-seeking and shadow governance perspectives to understand the sustainability of informal parking practices in urban spaces.

Departing from this gap, this research offers novelty by placing illegal parking as part of the phenomenon of shadow governance in urban governance. In contrast to previous research that focused on aspects of levy and service, this study analyzes how the relationship between formal and informal actors shapes the parking management mechanism in urban public spaces. The study also integrates rent-seeking theory, informal institutions, and urban governance to explain how parking spaces can be a source of economic rent that is contested by various actors. Thus, this research not only generates a new understanding of parking governance, but also enriches the discourse of urban political economy in the context of developing countries.

The urgency of this research is increasing considering that informal parking not only has implications for traffic order and the quality of public space, but also has the potential to affect the effectiveness of regional revenue, the legitimacy of government institutions, and public trust in urban governance. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how the political economy of informal parking is formed and survives in Makassar City, identify the actors involved in its management, understand the mechanism of economic benefit distribution that occurs, and explain its implications for urban governance and regional revenue management. The results of the research are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of urban governance studies and local political economy, as well as the basis for the formulation of parking management policies that are more transparent, accountable, and fair.

## **METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to understand in depth the phenomenon of informal parking as a social practice that involves the interaction of various actors, power relations, economic interests, and institutional mechanisms that cannot always be observed through quantitative data. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research allows researchers to explore the meanings, experiences, and processes that shape a social phenomenon in a real-life context. Meanwhile, the case study design was chosen because this study seeks to comprehensively examine the practice of informal parking management that takes place in urban public spaces in Makassar City as a contemporary phenomenon that cannot be separated from the social, economic, and political context that surrounds it (Yin, 2018).

The research was carried out in Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province. The selection of the location was carried out purposively by considering the existence of areas that have a high intensity of parking activities, often of public concern, and show prominent characteristics of informal parking practices. The research location is focused on several strategic points, including the area in front of Panakkukang Mall, the Jalan Pengayoman commercial area, especially around the Alaska Shop, the commercial area of Jalan Ratulangi around Toko Agung, and several other parking points which based on the results of initial observations show high roadside parking activities and interactions between formal and informal actors in parking management. The selection of several locations is intended to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the variety of informal parking management practices that are developing in Makassar City.

The focus of the research is directed at four main aspects, namely actors and power relations in informal parking management, economic mechanisms and the distribution of benefits formed in them, informal institutions that regulate parking practices in the field, and the implications of parking governance on public space and regional revenue optimization. These four aspects were chosen to answer research questions about how the political economy of informal parking is formed, operated, and survived in Makassar City's urban governance.

The selection of informants was carried out through purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. Purposive techniques are used to determine informants who are considered to have knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the phenomenon being studied, while snowball sampling is used to identify other relevant actors based on previous informants' recommendations. The research informants consisted of elements of local government which included officials of the Makassar City Transportation Office, the Greater Makassar Parking Regional Public Company (Perumda), members of the Makassar City DPRD in charge of transportation or regional revenue, and local law enforcement officials related to parking supervision. In addition, the research also involved official parking attendants, unofficial parking attendants, field coordinators, business managers, traders, community leaders, and parking service users as the main informants. The number of informants is not determined from the beginning, but follows the principle of data saturation, which is when the information obtained has shown a recurring pattern and no longer produces significant new findings.

Research data was collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were carried out directly at the research location to observe parking activities, interaction patterns between actors, use of public spaces, parking fee withdrawal mechanisms, ticket use, and physical conditions of parking locations. Observations are carried out at different times, both during peak hours and normal hours, in order to get a more complete picture of the dynamics of parking activities that take place.

In-depth interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner by giving the informant the flexibility to explain their experiences, views, and knowledge regarding parking management practices that occur in the field. The interviews focused on several main issues, including the history of parking location management, the mechanism for collecting and distributing parking revenue, the pattern of inter-sector relations, forms of supervision carried out by the government, conflicts that have occurred, and informants' perceptions of the effectiveness of parking governance in Makassar City. All interviews were recorded with the consent of the informant and transcribed for data analysis purposes.

To strengthen the field findings, this study also utilizes documentation studies on various relevant documents, such as regional regulations on parking, performance reports of Perumda Parking Raya Makassar, target documents and realization of Regional Original Revenue (PAD), regional development planning documents, official government reports, results of previous research, and mass media reports related to parking issues in Makassar City. The use of these various data sources is intended to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the institutional and policy contexts behind informal parking practices.

Data analysis was carried out using an interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), which includes the process of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis was carried out simultaneously from the data collection stage. In the initial stage, the researcher conducted an open coding process to identify important themes that emerged from observations, interviews, and documentation. Furthermore, axial coding is carried out to connect various categories that have substantive relatedness, so that a pattern of relationships between actors, economic interests, and governance mechanisms that develop in informal parking practices can be

found. The final stage is carried out through selective coding to build a theoretical explanation of the political economy of informal parking as a form of urban governance that involves interaction between formal and informal institutions.

The interpretation of the research findings was carried out using the perspective of political economy and urban governance. The rent-seeking theory is used to explain how parking spaces can be a source of economic benefits that are contested by various actors (Krueger, 1974; Tullock, 1967). Meanwhile, informal institutional theory is used to understand how unwritten rules and social networks shape parking management practices in the field (North, 1990; Helmke & Levitsky, 2004). The urban governance perspective is used to analyze the relationship between state capacity, non-state actors, and the management of public space in an urban context (Pierre, 2011). Through this procedure, the research is expected to be able to produce credible findings, be accountable academically, and make theoretical and practical contributions to the development of political economy studies and urban parking governance.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Configuration of Actors and Power Relations in Informal Parking Management**

The results of the study show that informal parking practices in Makassar City are not managed individually by parking attendants alone, but involve a network of actors consisting of field parking attendants, regional coordinators, business actors, and formal actors who have a direct or indirect relationship with the management of public spaces.

In a number of research locations such as the Panakkukang Mall area, Jalan Pengayoman, and Jalan Ratulangi, parking attendants play the role of actors who interact directly with parking service users. However, the results of the interviews show that most parking attendants do not have full control over the parking areas they manage. The area generally has an area division that is informally agreed upon and coordinated by certain parties who act as field managers.

The findings of the study show that the sustainability of informal parking activities is greatly influenced by the long-standing social relationship between parking actors and the surrounding community, business owners, and officials who have authority over the management of public spaces. This relationship creates stability in the control of parking spaces so that informal parking practices can continue despite various control efforts from local governments.

### **Economic Mechanisms and Benefit Distribution in Informal Parking Practices**

Research has found that urban parking spaces have evolved into an economic source that generates relatively stable daily income. In locations with high visitation rates, parking receipts per day can reach a significant amount, especially on weekends and peak trading hours.

The results of observations show that some parking transactions are carried out without the use of official tickets so that the income obtained is not entirely recorded in the formal administrative system. In practice, there is a multi-layered income distribution pattern, where part of the revenue is used as the income of the parking attendant, while the other part is deposited to the coordinator or party who has an influence on the management of the parking area.

These findings show that informal parking management forms a separate economic chain that runs side by side with the formal parking system of local governments. The system allows

various actors to obtain economic benefits from the use of public space without going through official regional revenue mechanisms.

### **Informal Institutions as a Parking Arrangement Mechanism**

The results showed that informal parking practices did not take place randomly, but were governed by a set of unwritten rules that were followed by the actors in the field. These rules include the division of work areas, operational hours, conflict resolution mechanisms, and revenue sharing.

Most of the informants admitted that conflicts over parking locations are relatively rare because there has been an understanding regarding the boundaries of their respective management areas. In the event of a dispute, settlement is generally carried out through negotiations between the actors involved without involving formal legal mechanisms.

The existence of these informal institutions shows that informal parking management has its own regulatory capacity that is able to maintain the sustainability of economic activities in the field. In some cases, informal rules are even more adhered to than formal rules issued by the government.

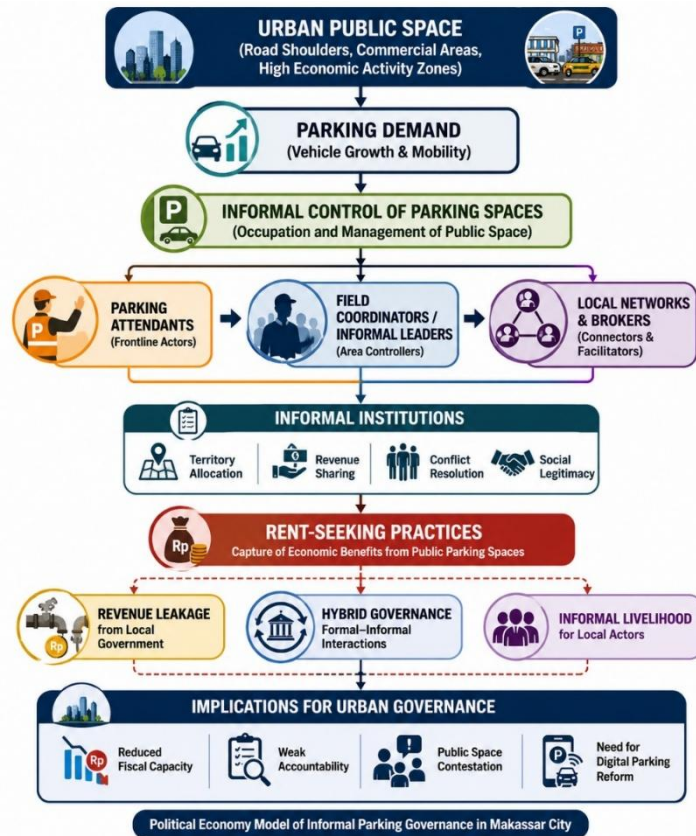
### **The Impact of Informal Parking on Urban Governance and Regional Revenue**

Research has found that informal parking practices have multidimensional implications for urban governance. From the transportation aspect, the use of the road body as a parking area causes reduced road capacity and increases the potential for congestion in major trade corridors.

From the aspect of public space governance, the existence of informal parking limits the space for pedestrians to move and reduces the function of public spaces that should be used more optimally by the community. Meanwhile, from the regional fiscal aspect, informal parking practices have the potential to cause revenue leakage because some parking transactions are not recorded in the official local government system.

Nonetheless, the study also found that informal parking serves as a source of livelihood for certain groups of people who have limited access to formal employment. Therefore, parking control policies need to consider socio-economic dimensions so as not to cause wider social impacts.

The results of the study show that illegal parking practices in Makassar City cannot be understood as a stand-alone informal economic activity. Field findings show a relationship between the high demand for parking space, the control of public space by informal actors, the existence of unwritten institutions, and the distribution of economic benefits that form a separate governance pattern outside the formal government mechanism. Based on the coding process and synthesis of field findings, this study develops a conceptual model that explains how the relationship between actors, informal institutions, rent practices, and urban governance shapes the political economy of illegal parking in Makassar City as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Political Economy Model of Informal Parking Governance in Makassar City**

Figure 1 shows that illegal parking practices originated from the increasing need for parking spaces due to the growth of vehicles and urban economic activities. This condition creates opportunities for informal actors to control and manage public parking spaces as a source of economic income. The control of the space is further supported by the existence of informal institutions that regulate the division of territory, deposit mechanisms, conflict resolution, and social legitimacy among the actors.

In this structure, public spaces no longer function solely as public facilities, but turn into a source of economic rent that generates profits for various actors. This process gave birth to rent-seeking practices that allowed some of the economic benefits of public space to be distributed through informal networks outside of the fiscal mechanisms of local governments. At the same time, the practice produces consequences in the form of leakage of regional revenues, the emergence of hybrid governance between formal and informal actors, and the economic dependence of some community groups on informal parking activities.

This model shows that the problem of illegal parking cannot be understood only as a violation of parking administration, but as a political economy phenomenon involving power relations, informal institutions, and contestation of the use of urban public space. Therefore, parking governance reform requires an approach that not only focuses on law enforcement, but also pays attention to the economic and social structures that underpin the sustainability of the practice.

## Discussion

### Illegal Parking as a Rent-Seeking Arena in Urban Governance

The findings of the study show that parking spaces in Makassar City have developed into a political economy arena that generates economic rents for various actors. This condition is in line with the rent-seeking theory put forward by Tullock (1967) and Krueger (1974), which explains that individuals or groups can gain benefits through the control of access to public resources without generating new productive value.

In the context of this study, the street space, which is a public asset, has turned into a source of economic profit that is contested by various parties. The income obtained does not go entirely into the regional treasury, but is distributed through informal networks that develop in the field. The phenomenon shows that illegal parking is not just an administrative offense, but a manifestation of institutionalized rental practices in urban governance.

### The Dominance of Informal Institutions in Public Space Management

The existence of unwritten rules regarding the division of territory, deposit mechanisms, and conflict resolution shows the strong role of informal institutions in parking management. These findings support the view of North (1990) that institutions are not only in the form of formal regulations, but also social norms and rules that develop in society.

The results of the study also strengthen the argument of Helmke and Levitsky (2004) regarding the ability of informal institutions to survive when the state's supervisory capacity has not run optimally. In the case of Makassar, informal institutions actually function as a regulatory mechanism that is considered more effective by field actors than existing formal regulations.

### Shadow Governance in Urban Parking Governance

The findings of the study show that there is a pattern of shadow governance, which is governance that takes place outside the formal structure but has a real influence on the management of public resources. The practice of informal parking is not completely outside the system of government, but operates in a gray area between legality and informality.

This condition shows that the state has not completely lost control of parking spaces, but has also not been able to integrate all parking activities into a formal system that is transparent and accountable. As a result, a hybrid form of governance emerged that brings together state and non-state actors in the management of urban public spaces.

### Implications for Urban Governance and Regional Revenue

From the perspective of urban governance, the existence of informal parking reflects the challenge of local governments' capacity to manage increasingly complex public spaces. The findings of the study show that the control approach alone is not enough to solve the problem of illegal parking because the root of the problem lies in the network of economic interests that have been systemically formed.

Therefore, parking governance reform needs to be directed at the integration of digital technology, strengthening the supervision system, transparency of parking receipts, and increasing collaboration between the government, business actors, and the community. Parking digitization can be an important instrument to reduce revenue leakage and strengthen parking management accountability.

In addition, the policy of formalizing parking attendants through partnership and training systems can be an alternative to reduce social resistance to the control program. Thus, the transformation of parking governance is not only oriented towards increasing Regional Original Revenue (PAD), but also on creating more inclusive and sustainable urban governance.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that illegal parking practices in Makassar City cannot be understood solely as administrative violations in the parking sector, but rather as a political economy phenomenon formed through complex interactions between formal and informal actors, economic interests, and social institutions that develop in urban public spaces. The practice of informal parking survives not only because of the high demand for parking space due to the growth of economic activity and vehicle mobility, but also because of the existence of a network of power relations that allows the control and management of parking spaces to take place relatively stably outside the formal mechanisms of government.

The findings of the study show that informal parking management in Makassar City involves various actors who form their own governance structures through unwritten rules regarding land division, revenue distribution mechanisms, conflict resolution, and social legitimacy. These informal institutions function as a regulatory mechanism that supports the sustainability of illegal parking activities while creating an economic system that generates benefits for certain groups. In this context, urban public spaces are transformed into a source of economic rent that is contested and utilized through rent-seeking practices.

The study also found that illegal parking practices produce multidimensional consequences for urban governance. In addition to contributing to traffic congestion and reduced quality of public spaces, the practice has the potential to cause a leakage of regional revenue because some parking transactions are not integrated into the government's official revenue system. At the same time, the existence of informal parking also serves as a source of livelihood for some people who have limited access to the formal work sector. This condition shows that the problem of illegal parking is at the intersection between fiscal interests, public space order, and the social welfare dimension.

The main contribution of this research lies in the development of a shadow governance perspective in understanding urban parking governance. Research shows that illegal parking practices are a form of hybrid governance that brings together formal and informal institutions in the management of public spaces. These findings expand the study of urban political economy by showing that the control of parking spaces is not only related to aspects of public services and regional levies, but also reflects the contestation of power, the distribution of economic resources, and the capacity of the state to manage urban space.

Based on these findings, parking governance reform in Makassar City needs to be directed at strengthening the supervision system, expanding parking digitalization, increasing transparency in parking revenue management, and developing formalization schemes and empowerment of parking attendants so that governance transformation does not cause social exclusion. Further research is suggested to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to more accurately measure the amount of parking revenue leakage, the distribution pattern of economic rents, and its impact on regional fiscal capacity and the quality of urban governance.

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