

## Weakening Participation in A Chain Reaction: Facts on Two Interrelated Decentralization-based Programs

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**Abstract:** *The debate over whether the concept of decentralization is related to the concepts of democracy, participation, and empowerment has become a topic of interest in the scientific literature. Some scientists argue that there is a link between decentralization and democracy, while others do not. The government expects decentralization to strengthen democracy at the local level. Decentralization has enabled many countries, particularly Indonesia, to improve democracy. Is it true that decentralization and democracy always go hand in hand? By looking at the consequences of decentralization-based programs, this article examines two programs, one of which is a continuation of the other. The two programs are management of the fish auction sites and management of fisherman's welfare funds, revealing the continuity of community participation, which is now managed by local government. In 2020, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted with administrators of fish auction sites, administrators of fishermen's welfare funds, and fishermen in Pati Regency. The data shows that the design of decentralization has contributed to the weakening of democracy in a chain reaction.*

**Keywords:** *Democracy; Decentralization; Participation; Welfare*

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## **Introduction**

Political decentralization, or devolution (Berg, 2021), has received a lot of attention from researchers who have studied democratization over decentralization; in particular, how offices are filled through elections and political parties (see Ali & Mufti, 2022; Adams & Agomor, 2020). However, democracy is more than just that. Even Che Guevara (1961) believed that democracy would be fictitious if it relied only on elections. While acknowledging that election manipulation has happened in the past, Schedler (2002) seemed to agree. Some scholars have provided clarification by defining conventional and non-conventional (Kwan, 2021; Kitanova, 2020). Voting, party affiliation, work on political party campaigns, and participation in elections are examples of conventional participation. They were described as mass electoral politics by Mair (2013). Online activism, public protests or demonstrations, and other forms of advocacy, such as civic engagement and social involvement, are examples of non-conventional participation (Ekman & Amn, 2012).

Whatever, but this article will focus on the unconventional form, decentralization and democracy are two interconnected concepts (Treisman, 2007). In fact, Manor (1999) mentions democracy as one of the components of decentralization. Although initially pushed for power consolidation, decentralization is now being implemented to promote community participation in development (Yaqub et al., 2018; Faguet & Pöschl, 2015; Wunsch, 2014; Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2006). It is hoped that the autonomous function of the sub-national government

will provide more opportunities for community participation. Sodaro (2004) defines democracy as the idea that government is the right of the people in terms of selecting public officials who manage the government. In most cases, the people not only choose who will manage, but they also hold them accountable for the management that is performed. Aside from management, democracy provides legal certainty related to government integration and citizen rights. Bühlmann et al. (2008) mention three basic principles of democracy: freedom, equality, and control. Both Sodaro and Bühlmann explain the function of control that must exist in a democracy.

Decentralization is one strategy for supporting this function, as well as the modernization function. Decentralization can be defined and interpreted in a variety of ways. It is sometimes referred to as a term, a concept, a process, a theory, a methodology, a policy, or even a trend (Sabir et al., 2021). Decentralization is defined as the transfer of government responsibilities from higher to lower levels of government via various fiscal, political, and administrative instruments (Dwicaksono & Fox, 2018; Litvack et al., 1988). Decentralization is also defined as the transfer of authority from a central apparatus with relatively large jurisdiction to a central apparatus with a smaller jurisdiction or lower level (Darvishmotevali, 2019; Power, 1998). Political decentralization, administrative decentralization, and financial decentralization are the three types of decentralization (Manor, 1999). The government is easier to control the closer it is to the people. The simple logic is that decentralization facilitates popular

control, resulting in good democratic institutionalization. Along with control, democracy necessitates the institutionalization of public participation. Community involvement in development can be a form of community participation. Decentralization as a means of strengthening democracy must result in increased community participation in development.

Finance is one of the policies that changed during the decentralization era and became a central focus of decentralization studies (Arif & Chisthi, 2022; Sanogo, 2019; Su, Li, & Tao, 2019; Faguet & Sánchez, 2008; Enikolopov & Zhuravskaya, 2007; Barankay & Lockwood, 2007; Lindaman & Thurmaier, 2002). The fish auction site reflects one type of financial management delegation, which includes auction management and the management of fishermen's welfare funds. The presence of a fish auction site (TPI) is one of the factors influencing the economic development of the fisheries sector. TPI has enormous potential to benefit the economy and the well-being of fishermen. Fish auctions first appeared on the island of Java in 1922, when a fishing cooperative ran them. The fish auction activity aims to eliminate the price game played by middlemen, which can be harmful to fishermen. Auctions can help fishermen keep a fair price while also encouraging the development of the fishing sector. The fish auction, as it is commonly known in auction activities, is a market in which the price of fish is determined by the highest bidder.

A fisherman's cooperative is one of the administrators of fish auction sites under Provincial Regulation of Central Java 1/1984, which provides Guidelines for

Organizing Fish Auctions in Central Java. The provincial regulation governing fish auction guidelines also governs the goals and benefits of TPI's existence. One of the objectives and advantages is to improve the well-being of fishermen and their families. Fish Auction Sites, which are primarily intended to benefit fishermen, also provide revenue to provincial and local governments through retributions on fish auction sites. The amount of retribution for auction activities varies by region, but ranges between 5% and 13%. This figure is regarded as large and burdensome for fishermen, and it has the potential to harm the fishing industry. This situation was addressed in 1971, when the Minister of Home Affairs issued a Circular Letter prohibiting sub-national government heads from charging a retribution of more than 5%. In practice, retribution is still not uniform, falling below 5%. This is because TPI is managed by various parties, including fishermen's cooperatives, the fisheries service, and even the sub-national government revenue office.

Then, in 2000, the Central Java provincial government issued Provincial Regulation of Central Java 3/2000 regarding retributions for fish auctions in Central Java. The regulation specifies 5% for fish auctions. Fishermen and traders must pay the retribution. Fishermen must pay 3% of the 5%, while bidders pay 2%. The 5% is distributed by the fish auction administrator for a variety of purposes, including famine relief (0.50%), funding for fishermen's insurance (0.15%), auction fees (0.80%), fish auction site maintenance costs (0.10%), funding for the development of fishermen's cooperatives (0.30%), funding for accident

assistance in the sea (0.45%), income for the provincial government (0.90%), and income for the district government (0.90%).

When Indonesia implemented decentralization, the regulations mentioned above changed. The passage of Law No. 32 of 2004 marked the start of changes in the management of fish auctions. The regulation modifies local retribution policy and then serves as the foundation for local governments to obtain locals' original income. Local retributions contribute to one of the locals' original revenues. The auction site retribution is one of the local retributions, according to Article 3 of National Government Regulation 66/2001 about local retribution.

Local regulations were then created as a result of Central Government Regulation Number 66 of 2001. Pati Regency, as one of the local governments that received decentralization and has an economy based on fisheries, issued Local Regulation of Pati Regency 22/2009 about Fish Auction Sites Retribution, which regulates retributions for fish auctions. The amount of retributions for fish auction sites is specified in Article 8 of the Local Regulation of Pati Regulation 22/2009 about Fish Auction Sites Retribution. A Regent Regulation of Pati Regency 8/2010 was issued as a regulation for their welfare. The regulation establishes a legal framework for the existence of fisherman welfare funds. As a result, the local government took over the welfare affairs at the fish auction site, which were previously managed by fishermen's cooperatives.

Based on this description, the research investigated whether community

participation persists despite changes in management during the decentralization era. The purpose of this research is to identify the barriers to the institutionalization of democracy, particularly community involvement in development, in the era of local autonomy. As previously stated, implementing local autonomy has a democratization mission at the local level, where the community is expected to be more participatory. In general, this research is expected to provide benefits in the form of a reference for designing effective and efficient collaboration between government and society through the combination of bureaucratic values and community values.

## **Method**

As a research project that makes one aspect of decentralization an object, this research on participation is focused on actors and aspects that exist at the local level. This study uses a series of in-depth interviews conducted in 2020 with administrators of fish auctions, administrators of fisherman welfare funds, and fishermen in Pati Regency to answer this question. Data was also gathered by reading a variety of documents, including laws and regulations pertaining to fishermen's welfare funds, as well as documents implementing the fishermen's welfare fund program. The information will be analyzed to see the causal patterns of participation and decentralization.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Democracy and Decentralization: An Argument and Research Battle**

The argument that the concept of decentralization is related to the concepts

of democracy, participation, and empowerment has become an interesting debate in the scientific literature. Some scientists believe there is a link between decentralization and democracy, while others do not. Qiao and colleagues (2019), Olowu (1997), and Brian Smith (1985) are among the researchers who see a link between decentralization and democracy. Qiao and colleagues (2019) show how, in 76 countries, democracy is closely linked to the positive impact of fiscal decentralization. Faguet's (2014) research in Bolivia demonstrates that decentralization has a positive impact on local democracy through increased public participation and government accountability.

According to Olowu (1997), the relationship between decentralization and democracy can take the following forms. For starters, local governments can assist citizens in learning about the arts and disciplines of responsible governance and democracy. Second, local governments can assist in the recruitment and training of new political leaders who can then be promoted to national-level positions. Third, it has the potential to increase citizen involvement in political and democratic processes. This is because the local government is closer to the community than the central government is. As a result, local governments can provide democratic opportunities for the people. This process is aided by the fact that local politicians are geographically, socially, and economically closer to the community than other levels of government. Simply put, local government fosters democracy at the national level.

Olowu (1997) also contends that local governments contribute to economic

development by assisting in the mobilization of resources required to provide and maintain the basic services required by local people and that they contribute to allocative efficiency by reflecting local people's preferences and facilitating the exchange of information, services, and innovation. They also assist in the coordination of central and local government services in the community.

Smith is another researcher who believes in the connection between decentralization and democracy. According to Smith (1985), the relationship between decentralization and democracy, as well as participation and empowerment, is parallel. Decentralization delegated some authority to local institutions, increasing civic awareness and political maturity. Communities learn more quickly when they must accept responsibility for the decisions of local officials. Communities learn to choose between priorities and leaders through their involvement in local government. Communities can practice holding government officials accountable. As better-trained politicians emerge from the grassroots, such a learning process could eventually benefit the central government.

Participation also has a positive impact on local communities by increasing their awareness of their needs (Amat & Falcó-Gimeno 2014; Gadenne & Singhal, 2014; Bandiera & Levy, 2011; O'Neill 2003; Boone 2003), strengths, vision, and the need to effect positive change, which leads to well-being. According to Smith (1992), participation produces experienced, skilled, and knowledgeable leadership, and the learning process acquired at the local level improves community

performance in decision making and management. Participation also allows citizens to take responsibility, launch self-help initiatives, and negotiate with local government and other institutions, thereby strengthening and broadening a community's democratic ethos. As a result, the quality of community participation in decisions and processes that affect their lives demonstrates empowerment. Participation can take four main forms: sharing information, consulting, making decisions, and taking action (Eade & Williams, 1995).

Other scientists do not fully accept Olowu and Smith's argument about the interconnectedness of decentralization and democracy. Although not all scientists agree, the findings of their research cannot be ignored. Rejecting scientists argue that there is no relationship between these two concepts. Fundamentally, these scientists argue that such a relationship is based on the expectation that decentralization will provide benefits when implemented, but no one can guarantee that it will. Those who argue in this manner include Kosec and Mogues (2020) and Crook and Manor (1998). Kosec and Mogues (2020) explain how decentralization persists in the absence of democracy through research in Ethiopia.

Crook and Manor (1998) conducted extensive and comparative empirical research in India, Bangladesh, Ivory Coast, and Ghana to assess the benefits of decentralization on increasing participation and democracy at the local level. Although they discovered some changes in citizen participation as a result of decentralization, Crook and Manor remain skeptical of decentralization's impact on democracy and participation at

the local level. Decentralization, they argue, does not imply democracy, participation, or empowerment. Decentralization's impact is determined by the relative weight of devolution and deconcentration in institutional and fiscal structures, as well as their combination with legitimacy and accountability (Crook & Manor 1998). According to Crook and Manor, decentralization, democracy, and participation are not always causally related (cause and effect). Even in Crook and Manor's (1998) study, the success of Karnataka (an Indian state) demonstrates that democratic participation is not a direct result of decentralization. Rather, as previously stated, it is the result of good governance, which is based on existing accountability systems and other mechanisms.

In line with Crook and Manor, Harold Wolman (1990) contends that the potential benefits of decentralization and the relationship between decentralization and democracy must be empirically validated rather than simply assumed because levels of democracy, participation, and empowerment vary within and across regions of a country. He contends that the virtue of decentralization is "being local," and that it does not always enlighten citizens about their political, social, and economic rights. In contrast to national-level politics, local-level politics is more elite-based, dominated by specific interests, and closed to participation (Wolman 1990). The arguments advanced by Crook, Manor, and Wolman above demonstrate that the assumption that there is a relationship between decentralization and democracy, as well as the potential benefits of decentralization,

requires rigorous empirical research to prove.

Differences in opinion among researchers about the above-mentioned relationship between decentralization and democracy are primarily related to whether the impact is direct or indirect. Recent research has confirmed the link between decentralization and the development of democracy. Meanwhile, newer research is beginning to refute studies that deny connectedness, such as the research by Heller and colleagues (2007), which refutes Crook and Manor's (1998) argument. That is, current research findings tend to confirm the existence of a link between decentralization and democracy. Faguet (2014) demonstrates how decentralization improves local democracy by increasing public participation and government accountability. Smith (1992) mentions the emergence of self-help initiatives as one of the democratic values that can emerge as a result of decentralization. Self-help initiatives can be defined as community-based initiatives. Communities actively participate, even if in their own unique way, in resolving their collective interests. According to Olowu (1997), the impact of decentralization is that it contributes to allocative efficiency by reflecting the preferences of local communities. Olowu's argument demonstrates that decentralization encourages local government sensitivity to capture local people's wishes, including accommodating social practices that are treasures at the local level. Accountability, participation, self-help, and sensitivity are relevant indicators to argue for the relationship between decentralization and democracy.

The preceding debates and explanations serve as the foundation for this research's work. While decentralization and democracy are debated as mutually beneficial forms of connectedness and disconnection, this study departs from the debate by explaining whether decentralization undermines participation. While the previous scientists focused on whether decentralization can increase community participation, some answered no, this study focuses on whether decentralization reduces community participation. Accountability, participation, self-reliance, and sensitivity are explained through TPI and welfare institutionalizing research to determine whether decentralization is related to, or actually weakens, democracy.

### **Weakening Participation in the Decentralization Umbrella: An Administrative Rigor**

Community participation in development is one of the democratic principles. Participation does not only include voting in elections, criticizing the government, holding demonstrations, or other activities with input value. Participation also includes community involvement in the implementation or management of government programs. In terms of participation in program management, local autonomy actually weakens community participation efforts. At the very least, the findings of TPI research demonstrate this phenomenon. In the case of TPI in Pati Regency, the weakening occurred in two areas: community participation in the management of the fish auction site and community participation in the fishermen's welfare fund program.

First, community involvement in TPI management can be interpreted as community involvement in running fish auction sites. In this regard, the TPI administrator changed during the era of local autonomy. Prior to local autonomy, the Central Java Government issued Provincial Regulation of Central Java 1/1984, which served as a guide for fish auctions. TPI is defined in the regulation as a site to auction fish, with the government providing the location. The regulation states that the Department of Fisheries is in charge of its management, while the auction is carried out by cooperatives representing fishermen's groups. This means that, despite the fact that the government provides it, the administrator of the fish auction site is a fisherman in the form of a fisherman's cooperative. As the administrator of the fish auction site, the community has an arena for development participation.

The economic interests of the fishermen, which served as the foundation for the formation of TPI, were later expanded to include the government's desire to generate revenue through retributions at both levels 1 and 2. TPI's nominal retributions were not consistent, ranging from 5% to 13% of the auction value. The Minister of Home Affairs issued a decree in 1971 requiring governors or local heads to charge no more than 5%. However, there are differences in practice. Some TPI are managed by the agency rather than by fishing cooperatives. For example, in Central Java, there are 77 TPI managed by fishing cooperatives. This means that the community is actively involved in a number of fish auction sites.

When referring to Provincial Regulation of Central Java 1/1984 about

Guidelines for Organizing Fish Auctions in Central Java, there are at least three roles of community participation, namely fishermen as producers, traders as buyers, and TPI, which is run by fishermen through fishermen's cooperatives. Fishermen play an important role in the operation of the fish auction site because they are producers. In fact, the fish auction can come to a halt if fishermen do not simultaneously anchor their catch in the TPI. Non-fishing communities, whether as buyers or consumers, contribute to the economy without even realizing it. The community's desire to consume fish has shifted the location of the fish auction. The role of fishermen as administrators of fish auction sites is the most visible form of community participation. Fish auction sites are run by fisherman's cooperatives and have become a driver of the economy and the welfare of fishermen.

When Indonesia adopted local autonomy, this participation weakened. Local autonomy has altered the location of fish management. National Law 32/2004 modifies the policy on sub-national government taxes and retributions as a foundation for regions to explore the potential of local revenues, particularly local original revenues. Article 157 of National Law 32/2004 explains local income as a reflection of the locals' ability to implement local autonomy. The source of local income is local revenue, one of which is the result of local retribution. Local retributions are governed by National Government Regulation 66/2001. The auction site retribution is listed as one of the local retributions in the regulation. Pati district issued Local Regulation of Pati Regency 19/2009 about Fish Auction Sites (TPI)



based on these regulations at the central level, which states that TPI management is carried out by the local government. This means that the fishing community is no longer involved in the administration of the fish auction. This change reflects the decline in participation in TPI management.

Second, community involvement in the management of fisherman welfare funds is associated with community involvement in the operation of fisherman welfare funds. Prior to local autonomy, the Fish Auction Site's initial economic purpose evolved into a source of government revenue at both levels 1 and 2. TPI's nominal retribution varied from 5% to 13% of the auction value. The Minister of Home Affairs issued a decree in 1971 prohibiting governors or local heads from collecting retribution in excess of 5%. The authority to carry out this is delegated to the fisherman's cooperative as administrator of the fish auction site. TPI administrators charge a retribution of 5%, which is derived from a 3% discount imposed on fishermen and a 2% discount imposed on traders, according to Provincial Regulation of Central Java 3/2000. The retribution (0.50%) will be used to fund fishermen's famine relief, 0.15% for fishermen's insurance funds, 0.80% for auction fees, 0.10% for PPI/TPI maintenance, 0.10% for PUSKUD MINA development, 0.5% for fishermen's savings, 0.30% for KUD Mina development, 0.45% for accident funds at sea, 0.90% for the Provincial government, and 0.95% for the Regency government.

According to the explanation above, fishermen's welfare funds are managed by fishermen's cooperatives. Following the implementation of local autonomy,

however, the Regent issued a regulation concerning the Fisher Welfare Fund. It can be explained as follows, based on the Regent's Regulation concerning the Fisher Welfare Fund and the documents obtained. The administrator of the Fish Auction Site, the Local Revenue and Asset Management Office, the Marine and Fisheries Office, the Verification Team, and the Regent are examples of these individuals. Each party's responsibilities and functions are as follows:

The TPI administrator is the party in charge of collecting Fish Auction Site retribution, a portion of which is allocated to fishermen's welfare funds. The regulation requires the TPI administrator to take 2.85% as a distribution. 1% is set aside for fishermen's welfare funds. Local Revenue and Asset Management Office, specifically as a party that accommodates fish auction retribution. The revenue generated by the retribution is deposited with the Local Revenue and Asset Management Office. Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Office, specifically as an agency in charge of TPI and fishermen's welfare funds. After passing through the Local Revenue and Asset Management Office, 1% of the retribution is transferred to the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Office as an allocation for fishermen's welfare funds. According to this explanation, the management of the welfare fund has shifted. The existence of local autonomy, which takes retribution from fish auction sites as the local's original income, as well as the transfer of management of TPI from the community to the local government, which automatically manages the welfare funds, have halted community participation in the management of fishermen's welfare funds.

Third, in theory, democracy is a means of bringing prosperity to the people. The weakening of democracy in the form of reduced participation in the management of fish auction sites during the era of local autonomy resulted in a decrease in the enthusiasm of fishermen to access fisherman welfare funds. There are several obstacles that make it difficult for fishermen to access. First, consider the submission limitations. When the funds are still managed by the KUD, fishermen can simply complain to the KUD and receive compensation funds right away. When managed by the local government, however, fishermen must exert more effort and patience in order to obtain fisherman welfare funds. Fishermen, like the rest of us, must complete various documents, such as accident certificates, death certificates, and so on. And must be submitted to central government agencies. For example, in Juwana, which is far from the capital. This makes it difficult for fishermen to obtain their rights.

Another barrier is disbursement. Fishermen believe that the time it takes from filing to disbursement is excessive. Fishermen must use their own money to complete it. In the event of an accident, fishermen must first use personal funds to pay for treatment. When the fishermen are financially capable, it is not a problem. However, if they cannot afford it, fishermen must go into debt. Because of this situation, funds that should have been used for disaster relief could not be used on time. The Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Office, which manages the welfare fund, submits a welfare fund proposal to the Regent every three months. For submissions from fishermen that have been collected for three months,

the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Office makes a submission to the Regent. So, if a fisherman has an accident at the start of the three-month period, he will receive it after the next three months. It has been a long time since there has been a compensation fund.

The following are some of the facilities obtained by fishermen prior to autonomy: First, fishermen do not need to register or be verified in order to be recognized as fishermen. In a rural community, society fosters close social interaction. Values, norms, and status all flow and appear in tandem with the social process of society. As a result, individuals do not need to go through a documentation process to prove that they are fishermen. There are no administrative procedures required to obtain fishing licenses. Second, fishermen are not required to file an application to obtain their rights. Frequent communication and a high level of trust between individuals make determining the truth or validity of data very simple. When a fisherman has an accident, information is immediately transmitted to the administrator via a standard procedure. There is no need for administrative filings or formal reports to show that he was involved in an accident. Third, fishermen do not have to deal with the lengthy bureaucracy. When the administrator receives information about the condition of the fishermen, he will immediately disburse the funds that were set aside in case the fishermen were involved in an accident. The disbursement procedure is straightforward. The administrator's assumption is that truth and social agreement emerge from the process of social interaction. Fourth, the location is close to the site of residence or

activity. As stated in the preceding regulation, every fishing community that manages the Fish Auction Site has a cooperative. Each TPI has its own administrator. The cooperative is situated in a fishing environment. The administrator is well known in the fishing community.

As previously explained, when the era of autonomy was implemented, there was a change in management. Each has advantages and disadvantages in the management of pre-autonomy and in the era of autonomy. Weaknesses are classified into two types: those related to the management structure and those related to public transparency and distribution. The weakness in the management structure is the disbursement mechanism specified by the district head's regulation. Several flaws can be identified as a result of this. The first is the Regent's approval mechanism. The Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Office requested permission from the Regent to submit funds submitted by fishermen. The Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Office must wait three months. After collecting for three months, I requested permission from the Regent. The disbursement flow is slowed during this three-month period. Second, fishermen can communicate directly with the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Office. Interacting with bureaucracy is difficult for fishermen. It is difficult to communicate with bureaucrats when you have a low level of education. Furthermore, the long distance between the fishing area and the government center discourages fishermen from taking care of it. At least one day off is taken by fishermen to visit the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Office. One day

without working is one day without earning.

In addition to weaknesses in the management structure, weaknesses in public transparency and distribution were discovered. This refers to flaws in the disbursement of fisherman welfare funds caused by a lack of clarity and inequality. This reveals several flaws. First and foremost, there is a lack of clarity. This uncertainty includes whether fishermen who apply for fisherman welfare funds will be guaranteed to receive them. Fishermen believe there is no certainty. Fishermen have no site to look for information about the scope of their application process. Is it processed, rejected, or approved? Fishermen do not have access to this information. When a fisherman's application is denied, he is not notified. Second, there is no complaint procedure. The administrator of the fishermen's welfare fund does not have a complaint form. For example, the location is inaccessible to fishermen. The administrator allegedly sited the device below as a site for complaints. Fishermen find it difficult to identify irregularities in the disbursement process because they have nowhere to complain. Fishermen, for example, do not receive the full amount stated in the provisions. Fishermen will complain about their treatment to whom and where. This tool can also act as a go-between for fishermen and administrators. Third, payment is made based on submission. Based on requests from fishermen, the Office of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries seeks approval from the district head. Fishermen who are injured or killed while fishing but do not apply for welfare funds will not be compensated. Even though everyone is

aware of the accident. This means that the government has been unable to identify fishermen in need of fisherman welfare funds on its own.

The benefits are divided into two categories: technical benefits and benefits of the fishermen's welfare fund program. Technical advantages are advantages that can be obtained by local government management. Several benefits can be deduced from this. First, there is accountability. There was no clear accountability mechanism in site when the KUD was still managing fishermen's compensation funds. The KUD reports only to the provincial PUSKUD. Now that it is managed by the local government, the Office of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries reports to the Regent. The Regent Regulation governs this. Second, there's the financial audit. There was no audit mechanism for KUD finances when it was still managed by KUD. As a result, tracking where the money is flowing is difficult. These question marks appear in the fishermen's minds. Fishermen, on the other hand, are unable to enter the financial realm. After being managed by the local government, there is now an audit mechanism. BPKD is one of the organizations that will conduct financial management audits. This means that financial management will be more tightly controlled through the use of an audit mechanism. Finally, formalistic.

The formal procedures that fishermen must follow in order to receive fishermen's welfare funds have a positive side effect. First, fishermen's engineering should be reduced. If an accident certificate is not required, for example, fishermen may admit to having had an accident. Second, it is legally binding.

Administrators can avoid misappropriation of fishermen's welfare funds by following the procedures outlined in the regulations. For example, retribution must be deposited first with the Local Revenue and Asset Management Office, and then 1% of it must be submitted to the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Office for fishermen's welfare funds. If such a mechanism does not exist and the Department of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries manages finance from upstream to downstream, then misappropriation of these funds is likely.

Apart from technical advantages, there are also advantages. First, fishermen's welfare funds as insurance funds. The benefit of fishermen's welfare funds is that they can serve as insurance, providing funds in the event of a disaster (accident, death). Even though the fishermen affected by the disaster are capable individuals, they will receive the funds as part of their rights. For example, accident or death funds. If a fisherman has an accident, he is entitled to an accident assistance fund. Not based on the economic level of the fisherman. This is in accordance with the Regent's Regulation on Fishermen Welfare Funds, which does not require an economic level for recipients of fisherman welfare funds. Second, as an emergency fund, the fishermen's welfare fund. The next advantage is that it can function as an emergency fund, a fund to cover the inability of fishermen when they experience a disaster or famine, especially for those who really need it. Such as famine funds. For fishermen who experience financial problems with difficult fishing conditions, logistical assistance, usually rice, will be given to the fishermen's

families. This means that for the basic necessities of life, fishermen's welfare funds can still be used. Third, as a cultural fund, the Fishermen Welfare Fund. Another distinctive advantage is that it can function as a cultural fund for the cultural activities of coastal communities. Based on the Regent's Regulation regarding fishermen's welfare funds, it is stated that there is a marine alms fund for each fishing area. Sea alms is a traditional ceremony carried out in coastal areas, aiming to show gratitude for the seafood that fishermen get as well as hopes for abundant seafood in the future. So far, the costs of the sea alms event are being met by the fishermen themselves. However, after the Regent's regulation was issued, there was an allocation of funds for marine alms events.

Weakening access does not always imply that a change in management is a bad thing. These changes continue to have some positive effects in some areas. There are advantages and disadvantages in various aspects of evaluation. The Fisher Welfare Fund program's suitability has been determined to be appropriate for the level of risk faced by fishermen. Extreme sea weather, logistical shortages at sea, technical constraints at sea, and other factors have made shipping one of the least secure professions. As a result, the program is appropriate. However, the mechanism for distributing aid is ineffective for fishermen. The long and winding bureaucratic flow makes it difficult for fishermen to manage. As a result, the program is not appropriate. An examination of the Fisher Welfare Fund program's funding source reveals that it is derived from the fish auction site retribution, which is 1% of the auction value. As a result, this program has a clear

funding source. The administrator of the Fish Auction Site, the Local Revenue and Asset Management Office, the Marine and Fisheries Office, the Verification Team, and the Regent oversee the Fisher Welfare Fund program. Although bureaucratic, the involvement of multiple parties is beneficial.

Evaluation of the adequacy of the program shows that in terms of the objectives to be achieved, this program has short- and long-term goals. Short term, meeting the needs of fishermen when a disaster occurs. Long term, improve the welfare of fishermen. So it can be said that this program has a good purpose. However, fishermen consider that the value or funds set have not been enough to cover their needs when a disaster occurs. So it can be said that this program has not been able to meet the needs of fishermen. Evaluation of the distribution of the program shows that the disbursement of fishermen's welfare funds is still based on submissions by fishermen. When a fisherman experiences a disaster, but doesn't apply, the disbursement does not occur. So it can be said that this program is passive. Fishermen who are entitled to receive funds are those who are registered with the government. Meanwhile, there are still fishermen in Pati Regency who have not been registered, despite the fact that they work as fishermen. So it can be said that the fishermen's data collection carried out by the government is not good.

The government's socialization used the method of forming a socialization team, as well as utilizing village officials, according to an evaluation of the program's responsiveness. So the government was correct in conducting socialization and receiving a positive

response from fishermen. Fishermen have opposing views on the program and its administration. Some fishermen recognize the significance of this program and agree that management is the responsibility of the local government. Some fishermen believe it is important, but want the management to be carried out by the KUD, as it was before the government took over. Based on program accuracy, this program serves as an insurance fund, an emergency fund, and a cultural fund. Insurance funds to be used if a fishing accident occurs. As a famine fund, an emergency fund is established. As a result of a sea alms ceremony, cultural funds were raised. As a result, this program is appropriate. Given the large number of residents who work as fishermen, the poverty rate of 15%, and the strong commitment to preserving the culture of marine alms, this program is the best policy for the community's circumstances. The effectiveness of a program can be measured in several ways. In accordance with the program objectives outlined in local regulations, the program has been successful in disbursing welfare funds proposed by fishermen. As a result, this program can be considered effective. However, when it comes to the state of fishermen, with all of their risks and difficulties, this program can be said to be ineffective in resolving their issues.

The evaluation results divide this into two categories: good and bad findings. The disbursement procedure is considered complicated and burdensome for fishermen, disbursement is passive, only refers to submissions from fishermen, data collection on fishermen has not been able to reach all fishermen, this program is only able to meet some of the needs of fishermen, has not been able to achieve an

increase in welfare, and this program is only formally effective as stated in local regulations, but is not effective.

### **Conclusion**

Changes in the management of fish auction sites as a result of local autonomy, as well as ongoing changes in the management of fishermen's welfare funds, lead to a weakening of democracy. This transformation has taken over what has been happening in a society with a high level of participation. The weakening of democracy in the form of lower participation is directly proportional to the deficiencies and weaknesses in the local government's management of fish auction sites; even lower participation occurs in programs aimed at the welfare of fishermen. This conclusion shows that through testing two programs, one of which is a continuation of the other, decentralization is proven not to always go hand in hand with democracy. It appears that the design of decentralization has contributed to the weakening of democracy in a chain reaction.

Does this imply that a decline in participation in one sector will be followed by a decline in participation in the next? Is this indicative of a drop in participation as a result of program complexity or distrust of program outcomes? This study cannot provide an answer to this question. More research is needed to investigate the relationship between participation and program sequences.

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