

## DECENTRALIZATION AND THE UNRAVELING OF POWER RELATIONS IN SANGKARRANG ISLANDS, CITY OF MAKASSAR.

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**ABSTRACT.** How does decentralization provide good public services among traditional fisherfolk and diminish the exploitation of marine resources? This article discusses the positive impact of decentralization on the patron-client relationship of the fishing community by depicting the articulation of social relations and power relations tied among the fisherfolk Sangkarrang Islands, City of Makassar. By employing the theory of access, this study revealed that the proliferation of the Sub District of Sangkarrang had configured the landscape of socio-political interaction. This condition was restructured by the relation of production among producers and successfully eliminated the over-exploitation of marine resources in Sangkarrang Islands. Social hierarchy became more opened and allowed the vulnerable group to access the services provided by the government. They could also channel their political aspiration without being interfered with by a higher social class. At the same time, the political landscape had been rearranged and control from elites tended to be declined. In conclusion, decentralization had increased democratization for local people and had brought public services to be more efficient, including the decreasing of marine exploitation.

**Keywords:** Politics; Power relations; Social cohesiveness; Fisherfolk.

### DESENTRALISASI DAN PENGURAIAN HUBUNGAN KUASA DI KEPULAUAN SANGKARRANG, KOTA MAKASSAR.

**ABSTRAK.** Bagaimana desentralisasi menyediakan pelayanan publik yang baik? Artikel ini membahas tentang dampak positif dari desentralisasi terhadap hubungan patron-klien di dalam masyarakat nelayan melalui penggambaran artikulasi hubungan sosial dan hubungan kekuasaan yang mengikat masyarakat Kepulauan Sangkarrang, Kota Makassar. Dengan menggunakan teori akses, studi ini mengungkapkan bahwa pemekaran Kecamatan Sangkarrang telah mengubah lanskap interaksi sosial dan politik masyarakat. Kondisi ini dibentuk oleh hubungan produksi diantara nelayan dan berhasil mengurangi eksploitasi berlebihan atas sumber daya perairan di Kepulauan Sangkarrang. Hierarki sosial menjadi lebih terbuka dan membolehkan kelompok-kelompok rentan untuk mengakses layanan yang disediakan oleh pemerintah. Mereka juga dapat menyalurkan aspirasi politiknya tanpa diintervensi oleh kelompok kelas sosial yang lebih tinggi. Pada saat yang bersamaan, lanskap politik mengalami perubahan dan kontrol dari kelompok elit cenderung berkurang. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa desentralisasi telah meningkatkan demokratisasi penduduk setempat dan membawa layanan bagi masyarakat menjadi lebih efisien, termasuk menurunnya eksploitasi sumber daya laut.

**Kata kunci:** Politik; hubungan kuasa; kohesifitas sosial; masyarakat nelayan.

#### INTRODUCTION

Decentralization is seen as the best solution to cultivate local democracy in Indonesia after the collapse of centralized governance under Soeharto's regime. The aspiration of the community is expected to be channelled into the decision-making process. They can access the resources equally and cultivate them responsibly. However, failure has appeared since the control of resources and social relations were determined by the capacity of power relations tied among the producers. Their extensive control implied the socio-economic livelihood of the islanders, including the exploitation of marine resources to generate their livelihood (Amorim, et al. 2020).

The challenges among fishing communities in Indonesia are depicted as complicated issues that were constituted from a socio-ecological context (Chapsos et al., 2019; Eriksson et al., 2019). Fishing production

currently is configured by human behaviour around the fishing ground, mostly characterized by the operationalization of illegal fishing methods, issues of marine debris, and other climate events. Unfortunately, control from the local authority is so limited for efficiency reasons. Decentralization that has been implemented by the municipality of Makassar City was intended to bring the public services closer to the local community who live on the islands, including to optimize the control of local government regarding the potential illegal fishing method.

The use of illegal fishing in Sangkarrang islands has been revealed by many scholars. Mostly, they contested this issue as the impact of weak law enforcement (Nurhidayah & McIlgorm, 2019). Fishing blasting is so easy to find on this site. Cyanide injection is also performed by local traditional divers to increase production, particularly to collect high-economic commodities. These methods are triggered by the high demand of the global market. Hence, it can

be assumed that these illegal methods are performed by the global market network and controlled under the global market mechanism.

Moreover, the study of Radjawali (2012) reveals that the authorities cultivate these conditions to take more advantages and benefits. They collect a small amount of money frequently as a consequence of illegal fishing methods performed by local producers. As it is commonly found, local people prefer to overcome their criminal problems by giving the authorities some money. By reinforcing the decentralization, it is expected that the deal with the local elite (who are also the illegal fishing producers) can be settled.

From the lens of politics and administration, natural resources management faces the weaknesses of government policies to overcome poverty issues, food security, social protection policies, and the representation of local people in a formal community institution. In the coastal area, the poverty issue emerged from the failure of the administration to put correct indicators of poverty based on its local context. Although the local government strives to elevate community representation in formal institutions, some local elites utilize the issue to control the mechanism of the decision-making process (Indriani, D., & Sudarmono, S. (2021), including a cash transfer policy for local people. Consequently, the policy does not reach the core of the issue. By reinforcing the decentralization, local people can be represented in a local formal institution.

Despite the enactment of promising new laws and policies, implementation still faces a number of challenges. It is argued that these challenges resulted from strong pressures of the social institution to accommodate the interest of elites. They have a chance to steer and interfere with the formal mechanism conducted by the local government. Unfortunately, this articulation has actually begun since capitalism penetrated into traditional articulation of power and has continued until today. Apparently, the legal framework has resulted from ineffective governance due to the complicated regulation, and also it indicates the implementation of inefficient public services. Moreover, the disempowered situation of the poorer ecosystem largely continues (Wever et al., 2012). It is argued that leakage in governance extensively influences the social relation of producers.

In general, the fishing community is characterized by its cohesive social relation. Mostly, they are tied in a reciprocated patron-client relationship. Patrons are usually responsible for providing social protection for their clients. Consequently, the client must follow all of the patron's directions. From the lens of social capital, the patron controls the network that connects all the social systems of the community, including

dealing with local government. For instance, patrons usually have access to interfere with the timing of cash transfer programs from the government for their clients. If the local government cannot provide the cash, they will provide money/debt for their client immediately, without formal procedures.

As this relationship indicates a strong power relation, the relationship is maintained as peripheral capitalism and reflects a political relation, particularly between the patron to local elite, as well as the patron to local politicians. From the lens of local politicians, the patrons are seen as stationary bandits (Yusoff, 2010) who obviously control the production flow. It is assumed that the real votes from a patron are their clients and the clients' family members who have been eligible to vote. On the other perspective, patrons assume that they should expand their influence broadly to strengthen their power among the fisher-folk. Strong access to politicians will also ensure their control of the distribution of the community. Patrons need politicians to protect their businesses.

For business purposes, market information plays a significant role, particularly in controlling the fluctuation of commodities' prices as well as their distribution. However, since the establishment of the new sub-district, it is argued that the patron has been unable to control the market information. The patron needs to reset the way of interpersonal communication with the local elite; politician, government official, and another local elite. Due to the rearrangement of administrative governance in Sub District Sangkarrang, the local officials should penetrate the existing cohesive political structures, particularly the patron-client relationships.

The objectives of this study are 1) to overview the dynamic of social relations after the implementation of decentralization and 2) the articulation of political ties among the community. As Osei-Tutu et. al. (2021) explained that decentralization seemed to devastate natural resources. However, this study firstly indicates that decentralization has brought the bureaucracy closely to the fishing ground, which finally eliminates the destructive fishing activities.

To scrutinize the articulation of power relations affected by decentralization, this research utilizes the theory of access developed by Jesse Ribot and Nancy Lee Peluso (Ribot, Jesse & Peluso, Nancy, 2003). They argue that this theory can be utilized to explain the way of actors to gain, maintain, or control resource access. Furthermore, the actor who get advantages will be discovered. They explain the definition of access as the certain possibility to get an advantage from material objects, people among the networks, institutions, and symbols of power. In a broader context, it brings attention to social

relationships that can disturb or support producers to benefit from resources. They theorize access and then examine a broad set of factors that constitute and configure webs of access. It is intended to enable scholars and others to map dynamic processes and relationships of access to resources. They intend to facilitate a grounded analysis of who actually benefits from things and through what processes they are able to do so. Access analysis also helps us understand why some people or institutions benefit from resources, and whether or not they have rights to them.

Access is about all possible means by which a person is able to benefit from things (Ribot, Jesse & Peluso, Nancy, 2003). The analysis is focused on the dynamic of access relation, depending on the actors' role and power in the social relations. Social control emerges as a significant variable, depending on how these relationships were established. These bundles of powers become nodes in larger webs and, simultaneously, can be disaggregated into their constituent strands (Ribot, Jesse & Peluso, Nancy, 2003). By placing this frame as political analysis, it is expected that whoever is involved and obtained benefits will be revealed.

Therefore, it is important to analyse social action as access control and access maintenance. Access control is defined as the ability of an actor to mediate the access of other actors. It refers to the checking and direction of action, the function or power of directing and regulating free action, while maintenance of access needs expanding resources or powers to ensure the flow of resources and their accessibility.

Furthermore, the analysis of access theory is required to identify the circulation of the benefit of interest; identify the articulation of power by which different actors involved gain, control, and maintain the benefits flow and its distribution; and an analysis of the power relations underlying the mechanisms of access. If the benefits are discovered, the multiple mechanisms will also be identified by which individuals, groups, or institutions gain, control, or maintain access within particular political and cultural circumstances. This shapes the access processes and relations, including technology, capital, markets, labour, knowledge, authority, identities, and social relations (Ribot, Jesse & Peluso, Nancy, 2003). However, this theory must take administrative dynamics into account. By justifying these processes as 'decentralization processes', it is assumed that citizen participation had been mainstreamed. Though obviously developed from the social relations of a community, the distribution and access of resources equally still need to be discovered.

Decentralization was commonly understood as a process of transferring the authority from a higher level of a government institution to a lower hierarchy of government institution. The aim was to improve accountability and public participation (Ribot, 1991; Satria & Matsuda, 2004), yet it was simultaneously a threat to higher authorities and elites who feared the loss of income or patronage resources. The degree of decentralization and its outcomes were shaped by many factors, such as local capacities; incentive structure; political and social histories; the form of local social organization; degree of social stratification; and government, NGO, and development agency commitment to 'traditional' or private and third-sector institution over democratic authorities (Larson & Ribot, 2004).

In general, Indonesia was facing a complicated legal framework of natural resources management as marine ecosystems and coastal resources are managed and controlled through a very extensive and complex policy and regulatory framework (Dirhamsyah, 2006). The analysis of the current Indonesian legislation has indicated that the current sectoral legislation does not provide adequate protection for groups with existing social, economic or physical vulnerability. Poor communities were less likely to be able to afford to rebuild their infrastructure following extreme climate events (Nurhidayah & McIlgorm, 2019). In addition, remote and indigenous people would generally have less access to emergency services during natural disasters. Gaps between the theory and practice of decentralization were persistent. Although it aimed to improve the 'voice' of the local community, the reality was quite different. There was a reluctance from authority holders to delegate their authority and resources significantly (Colfer & Capistrano, 2012).

This study reflected a decentralization mechanism, where the mayor (district level) transferred his authority to the new form of sub-district government (kecamatan). By establishing this new administration unit, the municipal government distributed a broader authority to the sub-district governments to manage these islands, including promoting local indigenous ways of protecting the coastal ecosystem. To strengthen the authority, some potential staff has been appointed to run the administration process. This new form was dominated by local people, so the local context was embedded with a formal administration. This phenomenon indicated democratic decentralization (Ribot, 2002).

However, it is important to anticipate the potential threats when the decentralization policy is brought to the lower level of governance. Definite resistance would be issued by those who feel threatened. In some traditional communities, this power was taken over by local strongmen or

roving bandits (Yusoff, 2010). In the context of local democracy, the powerful influence of informal rulers was commonly found at the micro-level of local government. For instance, the composition of local staff in sub-district administration (including the village government and kelurahan) was interfered with by informal power. Their appointment was beyond an administrative process or public service. It reflected a patronage relationship and indicated compartmentalized social status.

In this study, the patron-client relationship was scrutinized extensively, more than a production relationship. The patron-client relationship was conceptualized as the same as indicated by Platteau (1995) and Roniger (2004). These relationships were understood as asymmetrical relationships, established in long-term and multifaceted relations that consisted of a strong element of affection and stretched over a wide and loosely defined domain. This latter feature implied that the mutual obligations of the two parties did not end with the exchange of specific goods and services because these relations were mainly motivated by the need to insure against unforeseen or random fluctuations, such as fluctuations in labor requirements for the patron or fluctuations in income for the client. More precisely, by establishing clientage relations, the patron secured access to a readily available, trustworthy, and compliant workforce, which enabled him to economize on a variety of transaction costs. As for the client, by entering into such a relationship, he obtained guaranteed access to the necessities of life through regular employment and/or various kinds of flexible assistance provided by the patron when special (emergency) needed arise.

This study examined the occurrence of patron-client relationships, caused by decentralization, in political context. However, this relationship was not always running as expected by the patron. Resistance and rebellion also existed between them. A study by Firth (1946) explored the resistance of clients among the traditional fishermen in the Malay Peninsula. On the other hand, Satria, A., & Matsuda, Y. (2004) also explained the resistance of fishermen in East Java, Indonesia. There were various forms of resistance but usually started by being disobedient.

Social polarization in fishing communities was ultimately inevitable. The patron-client relationship among the fishermen was not only to strengthen their engagement socially and economically, but this relationship had also brought patrons to the social class which was increasingly high, leaving their clients who are experiencing social involution. In addition to the manifest social system in this relationship, capitalistic economic relations also frequently led the client to a difficult situation. They were not only weak, but

they also manifested themselves in underdeveloped conditions.

However, under certain conditions, decentralization could provide positive results and can contribute to poverty reduction by utilizing local resources in a sustainable manner (Colfer and Capistrano, 2005). They also stated that the reform of territorial administration was an effort for local government to manage the size of governance according to administrative and political objectives. In this study, the creation of a new sub-district was defined as redistricting. Based on experiences in several developing countries, there were three variants of this form of policy. One of them was regional proliferation which prioritizes geographical proximity.

## METHOD

This study discussed the socio-political dynamic that resulted from decentralization policy using a case study design to reveal the dynamic of social cohesiveness and power among fisherfolk. It focused on the proliferation of Kecamatan Sangkarrang as the main context of the study. Since being established at the end of 2016, Kecamatan Sangkarrang had triggered some discussion on the sustainability of indigenous livelihood that was configured by formal regulation enactment.

This qualitative case study examined the real-life context in Sangkarrang islands as an effort to investigate a contemporary phenomenon, where this context needed to be discovered. Yin (2009) stated that the all-encompassing feature of a case study was its intense focus on a single phenomenon within its real-life context. To do so, this case study investigated how embedded social relation was configured by a decentralization phenomenon, where power relations tied among the traditional fishing community were also undergoing significant dynamics. In specific, this study was also bounded by intimate patron-client relations that existed in the small archipelago, where social norms emerged traditionally and continued to be practiced. As stated by Miles and Huberman, the study case should have occurred in a bounded context.

The research approach used in this study was an instrumental case study, in which the proliferation of Sangkarrang islands followed by fishing behavior is assumed as a particular case. At the beginning of this policy, this phenomenon brought a significant impact on social relations, power relations, and sustainability.

### *Research site*

This study was carried out on three small islands in the sub-district of Kepulauan Sangkarrang (KKS),



involved in the political process during the elections. Their statement would be divided into two contexts, some informants agreed with the policy, while some others were resistant.

3. Finally, data were verified for the synthesis process before drawing a conclusion.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Arguably, the most significant impact of the decentralization and the improvement of public services was the presence of the government who serve the traditional community on these small islands. Before the proliferation policy was implemented, there were no accurate data available in the *kelurahan* (sub-district) offices. Administrative data were also rarely updated, so the available data did not reflect the real situation. There was also another problem which was related to work-hour flexibility. To ensure the office-hour appointment, people usually tend to contact the staff at their home for public service affairs. Consequently, the public services were running in a very traditional manner. Since the establishment of *Kecamatan Kepulauan* (islands district) Sangkarrang, administrative data began to be recovered. The capacity of staff was improved and some authorities were delegated to the lower layer of governance (*kelurahan, RW, RT*). In order to optimize the public services, *Kecamatan Kepulauan* Sangkarrang decentralized some authorities to the *kelurahan*, namely Kodingareng, Barang Caddi, and Barang Lompo.

Kodingareng is occupied by the highest density of population within the smallest size of the island. It also indicates the complexity of problems faced by the people who reside there. Undoubtedly, insufficient basic needs (water, electricity, and housing) and climate issues (marine debris, abrasion, and other unpredictable geographical circumstances) are among the critical issues faced by the people. Consequently, public services would be available based on the availability of electricity.

The livelihood of local people in the islands highly depends on economic activities which are determined by some peripheral capitalists and indigenous local leaders. This condition was determined by how close their economic activities were to the patron-client relationship tied among them (Sudarmono et al, 2012). One of the significant influences was identified in the public service changes, as displayed in Table 1.

Since the proliferation of Sangkarrang was implemented at the end of 2016, the political dynamic in these islands has escalated. The local politicians should adjust the pattern of communication to

strengthen their political influence among the fishermen community. If they failed to maintain communication with the patrons, they would lose a large number of ballots. For instance, In Cambayya (the largest fishermen community on the mainland of Makassar city), political events (presidency election, mayor election, and legislative election) become an opportunity for clients to show their resistance to the patrons. If the clients did not want to obey the patrons anymore, the clients would choose a candidate who was not recommended by the patrons (Ferrol-Schulte et. al., 2014)

**Table 1. The general characteristic of the governance process of public services**

Type of services	Pre-decentralization	Post-decentralization
Accessibility for citizen	Limited	Accessible
The role of patron	1. Control the process 2. Strong intervention in process	1. Have similar way to identify the process 2. Weak intervention in process
Mode of interaction with the citizen	1. Conventional, 2. paper-based and 3. indirect communication	1. Some are digital, 2. begin to introduce paperless method and 3. directly connect to costumers
Bureaucracy process	1. Too bureaucratic 2. patriarchy 3. Social norm has strong influence in process of delivering the services	1. Partially bureaucratic, especially legal document 2. Égalité

Source: Data analysis

### 1. The impact of decentralization on social relations against the patron-client relationship.

#### a. Market

Concerning the fishery products marketing, the establishment of the sub-district of Sangkarrang did not trigger any change in social relations. Due to the high demand of the global market, marketing relation is fully determined by the flow of globalization which has no relation to government affairs at the subdistrict level.

From the interviews with sea cucumber traders (Dg. M, 67 years), it is revealed that the high pressure resulting from the global market network has shaped the pattern of resource exploitation. It appeared from the use of air compressor machines as the main instrument in catching sea cucumbers on the seafloor. The demand of global market causes the price of this commodity to be very expensive so these risks were increasingly being ignored by the fishermen. These global controlling traders are already involved in a complex network of markets, so the efficiency is being improved constantly.

Meanwhile, the results of interviews with HS (55 years old), it is known that marketing for fish commodities is more volatile. The price often declines to occur due to unpredictable weather factors, market speculation at auctions, and decreasing fish stocks. Most of the fish are caught by illegal fishing (fish bombing) to meet domestic market demand, especially in Makassar City. Closed market information had pushed the inability of local governments to manage this marketing network. Their marketing network is getting stronger because each of these export collectors has a network of fellow retainers. Thus, the relationship between the production economies continues to strengthen.

Due to the high demand for commodities (fish and sea cucumber), it is clear that the social relations were triggered by the marketing aspect, either before the expansion or after the expansion takes place.

#### b. Labor

In terms of labor relations, power relations have undergone relatively many changes. An informant (HS, 55 years old) stated that since this area emerged as a potential fishing ground, labor was a significant issue, especially to meet the demand for sea cucumbers in the global market. Based on the period of traditional fishing trajectory, he divided this issue into two periods; New order (before 1998) and after the collapse of New Order (1998 until now). In the decade of 1990s, the workforce for traditional fishing was still dominated by local people on the island. It slightly transformed at the end of 1999 when the global market penetrated massively and boosted illegal exploitation from local capitalists. Consequently, these have led to the following phenomena:

- a. Many patrons began to apply for capital loans through banking schemes. Without any bankable asset, many loan providers lend them money for the high demand of the global market and the availability of marine resources in Sangkarrang.
- b. Desired to recruit new workers so that the capital they borrow can be used immediately. For catching sea cucumbers, they have to find extra workers.
- c. As a consequence of high global demand, many patrons recruited traditional divers from outside the island. Mostly they are people from the Bajo tribe who originally come from Banggai, the Southeast Sulawesi islands, and the Bima islands, West Nusa Tenggara.
- d. The formation of the Bajo working network has encouraged social mobility among the local people. Local people no longer want to be laborers. Consequently, most of the work as laborers was operated by traditional divers from the Bajo tribe.

Social relations between patrons and clients also experienced dynamics related to the availability of credit guarantees (debt) among clients. For clients who are natives of the island, there is usually no difficulty in requesting a loan from the patron. In addition, the imposition of loan interest is now rarely found. Patrons usually provide flexibility in terms of time and method of paying off debt. Native islanders can pay off their debts flexibly. This is quite reasonable because clients are usually very easy to find at their homes. Thus, the level of their social relationship is very cohesive.

## 2. *The impact of decentralization toward political relation against the patron-client relationship.*

### a. Technology

Establishing the Sangkarrang sub-district has encouraged the disclosure of information obtained through formal activities from the local government or social media. They received real-time information regarding the national and local political dynamics by accessing information from social media. Regardless of social status, each community member could express their opinion and discuss more sensitive political issues. The conservative patron disliked disclosing information and worried that client resistance would arise. Nevertheless, the political position of clients became more independent than previously. A patron had to rearrange the communication method they have practiced so far.

This study reveals that the articulation of power relations has changed since the implementation of proliferation. It appeared in the pattern of political communication conducted by local politicians, patrons, and local indigenous leaders. Before establishing the Sangkarrang as a sub-district, political communication among the patrons and politicians did not count the clients as a significant variable in political events (such as local elections). The politicians only considered the patron, then the patron would drive the client to vote based on the patron's reference. The direction of the patron would extensively influence the choice of the client's family members.

After the formation of the Sangkarrang sub-district, political communication channels were more open. Information can be distributed directly from politicians to subordinates without the need to go through courtiers. Although there might be differences in political views, this would not happen openly. However, from the results of an interview with HM (55 years old), it is known that subordinates' obedience to their retainer is still absolute, including in terms of political choices. Although there might be differences of opinion, there were moral and

economic aspects in the people's daily life in Sangkarrang, where the subordinates are still very obedient to their retainer.

b. Authority amidst the capital flow dan market protection

The practice of illegal fishing has sparked the formation of power relations between groups that have authority in the security sector and their retainers. This research reveals that at least two main patterns were practiced. Both before the formation of the Sangkarrang sub-district and after the sub-district was formed.

c. Compradorization practices to protect illegal fishing

Before establishing the Sangkarrang sub-district, comparative practices were prevalent around the Sangkarrang islands. Unscrupulous officials often exploit the amount of capital turnover managed by a retainer. The officers took advantage of the courtiers' dependence on illegal fishing mechanisms (fish bombs, anaesthetics, and diving). They let the retainer do illegal fishing and provide legal protection if the retainer got into legal trouble. That way, the practice of illegal fishing continues as long as the police officers apply a pattern of 'protecting' the perpetrators. According to one informant, it was known that each retainer would deposit 5 million for one arrest trip. Each retainer does this.

It is also known that this has been practiced since the New Order. Informants in this study who have been operating for 30 years admit that during the New Order era, bribery was carried out by giving money to village officials. The money is handed over at night, which is considered safe. Regarding the amount, there is no information on the exact amount. It all depends on the margin of fish sales. Informants consider that these patterns have persisted to this day. The only difference is the method.

A similar thing was found in the relationship between the retainer and the local government. Before decentralization was implemented, patrons always followed directions from the Ujung Tanah sub-district government. Usually, patrons must allocate a small budget to maintain their good relationship with the Ujung Tanah sub-district. However, this is only an initiative from the retainer to anticipate often unexpected requests, as for the celebration of national holidays. This caused the patron to have to allocate a small budget for this. Thus, the relationship with the government should be maintained so that aid distribution will still be distributed to the islands.

After the reforms, the police received a strong delegation of authority, particularly in regional security. This then encourages the formation of a new

pattern, where previously fishermen gave deposits to government officials turned into payments to security forces.

d. Monopoly practice

The informant also admitted that in addition to the pattern above, a monopoly practice happened. For example, police officers' ice to be bought by the patron. Although it seems like ice sales in general, the patron assumed that this as an unwritten obligation. If the retainer did not buy ice from the police, their illegal fishing activities would not be safe. That kind of practice created unhealthy business patterns. This monopoly has forced the patron and retailers to allocate a small budget in the hope that their business can continue to run.

As the controller of the economic cycle in Sangkarrang, the courtier's power went beyond the mere economic aspect. This power was also often used to gain political influence from their subordinates. Based on the interview with Rny (42 years old), a retainer's capital capacity can reflect his social and political strength. The more enormous the capital controlled, the stronger the political influence. Observing this, politicians would try to approach the retainer in the hope that the retainer could recommend the politician to be elected by followers (followers and their families). This pattern of power relations is obvious and has become a common understanding.

## CONCLUSION

This study finds that decentralization is an effective tool for decreasing the spread of destructive fishing methods. Local government should strengthen the controlling system by decentralizing the authority to the sub-district level. Besides, the role of the indigenous community system can be more effective in channeling the voice of local people. This study indicates that this new sub-district provided better services than the previous institution. Hence, the new sub-district has placed its control and supervision to reduce destructive fishing methods.

Several vital points are related to power relations (politics), especially after the proliferation implemented:

1. The establishment of this new subdistrict has reshaped the form of political relations between the patron and the client. The patron's political power greatly influences the clients' political choices because client loyalty is the primary indicator for the patron to have subordinates. Therefore, the client has no choice but to follow the direction of the patron.
2. If the patron did not provide direction for making political choices, the client might have had different political views from his patron at that time. However, this is very rare.

3. Whenever there is political momentum, money politics is prevalent among fishermen in Sangkarrang. That phenomenon has implications for the political choices available. The greater a candidate's gift in the election process, the greater the patron's determination to his client.

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