

**After the Aquaculture Bust:  
Impacts of the Globalized Food Chain on Poor Philippine Fishing Households**

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Abstract

The Philippines is a *food extractive enclave* in the bust stage of export-oriented aquaculture, and this globalization agenda has had several negative impacts. Aquaculture has not expanded fish and marine foods but threatens national food security by integrating Philippine aquatic resources into the globalized food chain. Following structural adjustment policies imposed beginning in the 1980s, the Philippines shipped massive levels of animal protein to world markets, but this country has grown less food self-sufficient. During the decades that shrimp aquaculture has boomed and busted in the Philippines, the living conditions of Filipino families have steadily worsened. This study of three Panguil Bay fishing communities of Northern Mindanao demonstrates that the survival of subsistent artisan fisher households is now threatened because export-oriented producers have severely degraded the ecosystem upon which they rely. Moreover, women and children are inequitably threatened by the ecological and economic changes that have accompanied the Philippine global aquaculture agenda. In reality, capitalist commodity chains of export-oriented aquaculture externalize to households and to nature much of the true cost of producers and of ecological degradation. As a result, malnourished and impoverished Philippine fishing households subsidize global aquaculture commodity chains. While Filipino fisher households can no longer afford local food costs, their hidden inputs into capitalist commodity chains keep prices of luxury seafoods cheap in rich core countries.

## **What Is Happening to Our Beautiful Land? <sup>1</sup>**

Go to my mountain cradle.

Go to my home and sea.

Look on my ruined forests.

And note what ye did to me.

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<sup>1</sup> Catholic Bishops of the Philippines, "Pastoral Letter on Ecology," 1988.

**Dedicated to**

*Bonn Joel, Aiza Alexa and Jose Eduardo*

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