

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

Maria Cecilia F. Macabuac

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Sociology

Dr. Wilma A. Dunaway, Committee Chair  
Dr. Dale W. Wimberley, Committee Co-Chair  
Dr. Carol A. Bailey, Committee Member  
Dr. John Ballweg, Committee Member  
Dr. Colette Harris, Committee Member

July 15, 2005  
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: export aquaculture, fishing household, coastal degradation, subsistence, food extractive enclave, global food chain

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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*

## Acknowledgments

There are many supporters and friends I need to thank.

My children-- BJ, Ai and Udot-- bore the greatest sacrifice for all my struggles and efforts. With their truest love, understanding, support and warmth all throughout, notwithstanding my limitations, they gave me a wondrous life. They are my inspirations.

My family-- my father, my mother, Manoy Carlos and Elma, Junjun and Lulu, Celeste and Bobby, Mencit and Philip and Boyet and Divine-- gave their unconditional love, understanding, unfailing support, and tender care to my children while I have been am away earning my doctoral degree.

Dr. Wilma A. Dunaway, Chair of my dissertation committee, has been an indefatigable mentor, professor, editor and friend. Her tenacity in challenging graduate students to make a well-informed stand derived from a critical understanding of the deeper, usually not obvious, underpinnings of global political economy made my graduate study in sociology worthwhile. Without her mentorship, my study in the US would not be as meaningful and productive.

Dr. John Ballweg has not only challenged my cynical articulation of Philippine development and politics *vis-à-vis* his half-a-century engagement in the country as an American academician. He has also been a champion of the Filipinos in Blacksburg, and his support and encouragement brought me to the US to pursue a doctoral degree. I cannot even thank him enough.

Dr. Dale W. Wimberley, Dr. Carol A. Bailey and Dr. Ellsworth R. Fuhrman have always provided me with their unfailing support during my entire graduate study at Virginia Tech.

Dr. Don Clelland has provided me wonderful and rare opportunities for exciting intellectual and informative discussions and one-on-one lectures. He has also helped me locate online articles and published works from all over the world which enriched in a very significant way my graduate study and research.

I will forever treasure my beloved friends who made up my two big wonderful families in Blacksburg - the **Pinoys** and the **Saathis**. They have become part of me.

Mindanao friends and colleagues who have extended invaluable support to my research and warm friendship, all through out, especially to Dr. Erlinda Burton, Project Director of RIMCU, Xavier University, who provided my research an institutional back up.

Juni extended me the love, encouragement and emotional support.

There are not adequate words to thank the women and men of the fishing households in Silanga, Lapinig and San Roque who provided the depth and substance of my dissertation. They shared their lives, their minds and their thoughts with me so I could pursue my study. Let this dissertation be a living witness to their lives and their struggles for survival as people belonging to the fishing sector, the most impoverished in the Philippines. As they faithfully stand witness to the fate of Panguil Bay, it is shaped by national and global development policies beyond their control. Because these fishing households coexist with the ecosystem, the dying of Panguil Bay also signals the demise of the traditional fishing upon which these subsistent fishing households once thrived. Let my dissertation be a loud protest in their behalf!

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the James Moran Memorial Foundation for providing grant support for this research.

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