CONTESTED WATERS: THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THE PLIGHT OF CAPTURE FISHERIES IN MASINLOC, ZAMBALES

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ABSTRACT

China's militarized presence in disputed waters around Scarborough Shoal (Bajo de Masinloc) adversely affected capture fisheries in the area. Filipino fishers with low income and lacking advanced fishing technology faced greater vulnerabilities in the face of competition, threats, and harassment from foreign fishing vessels. The study examines the relationship between these Filipino fisherfolks and the Philippine government, in terms of security provided. The research utilized a state-centered relational approach and the concept of governance in explaining the dynamics of the relationship, the government being the law making and enforcing body in ensuring the protection of Filipino fisherfolks. The findings suggest a lack of compatibility and failure in communication in the relationship of the Philippine national government and the fisherfolks. This is due to the continued campaign of the fisherfolks for their safety and livelihood despite government undertakings. There is a greater need for measures by the Philippine government to secure the fisherfolks from the presence of Chinese fishing vessels in their traditional fishing grounds.

Key Words: West Philippine Sea, Filipino Fisherfolks, Scarborough Shoal (*Bajo de Masinloc*), Philippine National Government, Republic of the Philippine, People's Republic of China