

Assessing the Extent of Precarious Work Arrangements in Tuna Catching: The Case of General Santos City, Philippines

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Abstract

Attaining global competitiveness is a major challenge in the business world nowadays. This challenge posed the need to produce goods and services with the highest quality and lowest cost of production. The need to reduce labor cost led to the adaption of precarious work arrangements (PWA). However, it is worth noting that PWA have existed in tuna catching even before the offshoot of the globalized economy. This research aimed to study the extent by which PWA is applied, the terms and conditions of employment, and other coping mechanism developed by both labor and management. Key informant interviews were done with three groups of catchers composed of *piado* (the vessel captain, master fisherman), assistant engine mechanic, *pokotero* (net maintainer), *bosero* (area checker/guard), fishermen (fish hauler and crew), *kusinero* (cook), and other utility workers. The results revealed that the scheme is covered by a contract between the master fisherman (vessel captain) and vessel owner. There is no fixed rate of compensation. Wages and benefits would depend on the volume and value of the catch. There is no security of tenure, minimal fringe benefits, and high risk. Workers mobility (from one group to another) is dependent on the choice and reputation of the *piado*. Additional benefits were awarded by vessel owner to maintain loyalty of the workers. It is recommended that the contract of engagement must be improved to include workers protection, welfare, and insurance to reduce risk taking.