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## **Pathways to Street and Spatial Politics on Homelessness in Metro Manila: In the Context of a Global City of Developing Country**

### **Abstract**

This article aims to analyze the problem of homelessness in Metro Manila, a global city of developing country, the Philippines. It has three purposes. First, it describes the pathways through which the poor people become homeless, that is, the process of *streetization* using the *push-pull hypothesis*. The squatter seems to be the biggest source of the homeless. Second, the article analyzes the spatial distribution of homeless persons in Metro Manila. It seems that while the squatter dwellers are *suburbanized*, the homeless are *centralized* to the inner city under the urban development. Third, the article analyzes the politics on the street among the squatter dweller, the vendor and the homeless. The private occupancy of the street was condoned or even permitted generously in Metro Manila. However, the urban development and beautification have now started and the regulation of the street has been strengthened. Thus, it has become more difficult for the homeless to live in the street. As such, this article aims to make clear the unique situation of the homeless of Metro Manila *and* the political process through which the homeless have been excluded from the street. Their situation has tended to become similar to those in Western cities. Thus, there appears to be a *westernization of homelessness* in Metro Manila.

Keywords: homeless, pseudo-public space, spatial politics

This article discusses the problem of the street homeless (*homeless* from bellow)<sup>1</sup> that have increased in Metro Manila, the Philippines. Most studies on the homeless regard them as a part of the squatter<sup>2</sup> dwellers who compose the majority of the urban poor population in Metro Manila. However, the homeless are people different from the latter. In the recent decade studies

focusing on the homeless as a distinct group have appeared in the developing countries. Olusola Olufemi (1998) refined the concept of homeless by contrasting them with the squatter dwellers in South Africa. S. M. Schor, Rinaldo Artes and V. C. Bomfirm (2003) analyzed the spatial distribution of the street people in Sao Paulo. In the Philippines, there are articles written by Cirilo Edgar Eboña (2000), Rodolfo B. Alcazar (2001), Gregory Vincent Omila Ferrer (2003), Huynh Thi Ngoc Dung (2003), Hideo Aoki (2008), Emily B. Roque (2011) and Ada A. Colico, Mark M. Garcia and Nilan Yu (2011), although most of them have not yet become published articles.

Those articles from the Philippines analyzed the pathways to the street of the homeless in Metro Manila, the spatial distribution, job, lifestyle and their living world. The studies also gave us information not only about the uniqueness of the homeless in Metro Manila, but also about the commonality with their counterparts in other areas of the world although key concepts such as homelessness, job, street and social identity etc. remain open to debate and susceptible to different definitions. Some articles seem to have a methodological difficulty, because they applied directly the concepts constructed in the Western society to the homeless in Asian society

There seems to be a difficulty in such direct application, because while Western society can be characterized as developed economically and individualistic behaviorally, Asian society, in contrast, can be characterized as developing economically and collective behaviorally.<sup>3</sup> We should not take for granted that those concepts are suitable to the unique-Asian social and cultural context.<sup>4</sup> What we need is a specific and distinct framework for analyzing the Philippine homeless. Proceeding from the same methodological and theoretical concern, the study of Lisa Drummond (2000) found that the streets of Vietnam have a more inclusive function for its urban dwellers than those in America, a finding that will be considered in detail later.

This article has three purposes. First, it describes the pathways through which the poor people become homeless - *streetization of poor people* - using the *push-pull hypothesis*. In the process of doing so, it also refines the sociological concept of who the homeless are by contrasting them with the squatter dwellers and examining what their composition is.<sup>5</sup> Second, it analyzes the spatial distribution of the homeless in Metro Manila. It appears

that while the squatter dwellers are *suburbanized*, the homeless are *centralized* to the inner city under urban development. The spaces which the homeless choose are determined not only by their personal needs but also by the politics surrounding the space. So third, this article analyzes the politics on the public space among the administration, the citizen and the homeless in relation to the squatter dweller and the vendor. This discussion raises an important issue on the definition of the public space in the political context of Metro Manila.

Data used in this article come from various sources such as observations, interviews, research articles, administrative documents and news articles collected mostly in the last three years. I thank sincerely the collaborators who gave me information on the homeless: homeless persons themselves, squatter dwellers, social workers, governmental officers, union activists, whose names are not listed up here. The data used are primarily ones given by the social workers and the governmental officers, because this article focuses *only* on the macro-structural level of the homelessness. It is not easy to get administrative data on the homeless because of their scarcity in Metro Manila. To avoid their misinterpretation, these primary sources are interpreted and analyzed in the light of other data particularly those from interviews with the homeless persons themselves.

## **1. Pathway to Street**

### **1) *Streetization* of Poor People**

I'm 70 year-old and my wife is 80 year-old. I collect recyclable garbage for a living and earn 150 pesos a day. We came from a province in the Visayas (the name for the group of islands of Central Philippines), our home in Payatas (garbage dumpsite in Quezon City) was demolished and hence we became homeless. We have nine children left behind in the province. I used to be a security guard assigned to various places. At present, we clean up the streets near the venue of a popular noontime show and get money. We use toilet in the church and get water from neighbors. We use tin cans and woods for cooking. The neighbors

sometimes give us food. When there is a storm, a neighbor allows us to come over (Jim,<sup>6</sup> a homeless person living in a waiting shade along Madison Street in Quezon City on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Summarized by John Francis Lagman, a survey collaborator).

### **Push-Pull Hypothesis**

A man's story is a typical one for the homeless in Metro Manila except that he and his wife are elderly. They came from a province, but have not cut off the relationship with their children. They entered a squatter community after arriving in Metro Manila and the husband intermittently made a living as a security guard (and maybe both were scavengers). But their house was removed by the government, and they lost their jobs at the same time. Thus, they were pushed out to the street and became street cleaners. They have stayed in the street by juggling odd jobs and by getting help from neighbors. They seemed hesitant to divulge information, when asked about the personal details probably because of fear being evicted from the street.

The above story gives us a peak into a particular situation of homelessness in Metro Manila, but what does the whole picture of the homelessness in Metro Manila look like? The population of homeless person in Metro Manila have increased, although we do not have data on their exact number. Extrapolating from data on street children, their parents and the inmates of the public shelter for the homeless, Hideo Aoki estimated that there might be more than 100,000 homeless persons in Metro Manila (Aoki, 2008:160).

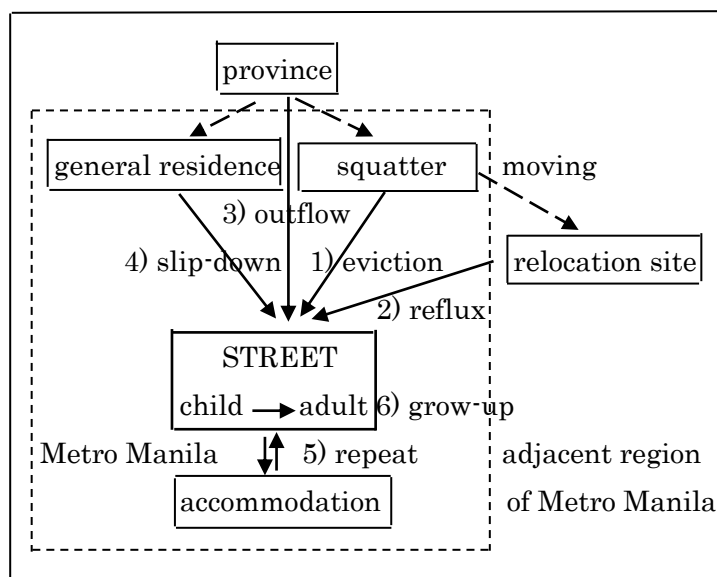
There are social, political and spatial factors which push out poor people to the street. Aoki summarized them in a *push-pull hypothesis* which consists of two pull-factors and three push-factors (Aoki, 2008:170-172). The pull-factors are; 1) an increase in the opportunity to get resources such as food and money in the street and 2) an increase in the number of possible informal job in the street such as vending, scavenging and begging. The push-factors are; 1) an increase of downward pressure of laborers' social status caused by the casualization of employment, 2) the eviction of squatter dwellers, which deprives them of a place to live in and 3) a deadlock of policies that are aimed at preventing the poor people from becoming homeless and at helping them leave their street lives. All of these factors are

the products of the transforming labor and housing markets in Metro Manila under globalization.

### Pathway to Street

The poor people are pushed out to the streets via six pathways determined by the aforementioned push/pull factors. These phenomena are illustrated as seen in Figure 1<sup>7</sup> which is a diagram of the *macro-structural* pathways extracted from various information on the homeless. We cannot specify the exact population size of each pathway because of lack of data. In the interviews with them, some homeless persons, especially the young ones, answered that they had come to the streets to escape from domestic violence or due to their families being broken. Others answered that they had come from the jails. The family and the jail here are the *micro-structural* pathways which directly trigger the poor people's becoming homeless personally in the macro-structural pathways. Behind the family abuse and the crime, there is poverty due to joblessness *and* the lack of shelter conditioned by the macro-structural circumstances.

Figure 1. Formation Process of Homeless



1) Many homeless come from the squatter dwellers. According to the National Housing Authority, there were 2.7 million persons (544,000 families) in the squatters or 23.4 percent of the total population of Metro

Manila in 2007 (UN-HABITAT, 2011:19). Many dwellers have been evicted from the squatters. The Urban Poor Associates, a NGO supporting the squatter dwellers facing the eviction from their houses, reported that 14,744 families or 73,780 residents lost their houses in 39 squatter evictions in Metro Manila in 2011, and that 2,453 families or 16.6 percent of the evicted families received nothing, not even a relocation site, from the national/local governments (Urban Poor Associates, 2012). More than half of squatter dwellers live in the *eviction priority areas* such as dangerous zones, areas earmarked for government infrastructure and areas for the priority development. The evictees do not leave their original places to transfer to another squatter area or go back to the province right after the evictions, because they cannot find jobs immediately in other areas or in the provinces. They instead stay in the streets and move to other places gradually. However, some people who have no means to earn livelihood in the other areas continue to stay in the streets. On the other hand, it is almost impossible for them to enter the squatter areas again, because they no longer accommodate therein due to congestion.

2) The government usually promises to provide relocation lot in government-owned lands to the evictee. However, only a small percentage of the evictees would get the alternate lot because of the financial shortage of the government. For example, only 23.8 percent of 1,591 families evicted from the squatters in 2005-06 were provided the alternate lots and 37.0 percent were provided money for the relocation (Karaos and Payot, 2006: 77). Moreover, the government relocation sites such as those in Bulacan, Cavite and Laguna are located more than two hours away from Metro Manila by bus. Thus, the evictees would not have job opportunities which are mostly available in Metro Manila. The evictees also would not have access to basic services such as market, hospital and school. These conditions have pushed many evictees to go back to Metro Manila. However, since they do not have their houses in Metro Manila anymore, the returnees who could find any place to live have become homeless.

3) The population of Metro Manila was 11.6 million in 2007, and its growth rate was 2.11 percent between 2000 and 2007 (UN-HABITAT, 2011:18). Many people have moved from the provinces to Metro Manila seeking jobs, although the number is said to decrease. The homeless include

many migrants from the provinces especially from the southern part of the Philippines such as Bicol, Visayas and Mindanao. Many arrived in Metro Manila only one or two months prior to their becoming homeless (Gary, a social worker of Jose Fabella Center on Aug. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010). They are divided into two subgroups; the permanent migrant who does not go back to the province and the transient migrant who works in Metro Manila and sometimes goes back to the province. The former includes people who cannot earn livelihood in the provinces and the refugees escaping from disaster or war in the provinces. The latter includes the farmers who come from the agricultural areas in the outskirts of Metro Manila during the agricultural off-season and the indigenous people who come only during the Christmas and New Year Season to seek income by begging in the streets. Most migrants go to the relatives living in the squatters after arriving in Metro Manila. However, the migrants who have nowhere else to go stay in the streets, work and go back to the provinces.

4) Globalization has brought the casualization of employment and the devaluation of laborer's real wage in the Philippines. This has resulted in increasing the number of laborers earning wages that are below the minimum daily wage rate mandated by law which is 350 pesos (equivalent to about 8.16 US dollars in April of 2012) per day and living below the poverty line, 674 pesos (equivalent to about 15.71 US dollars) per day in Metro Manila in 2006 (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007).<sup>8</sup> According to the Social Weather Station, a social research agency, 17.7 percent of respondents in Metro Manila answered that they had experienced hunger in three months before the survey in 2006 (*The Philippine Star*, Dec.20<sup>th</sup>, 2006). The economic environment produced by globalization has strengthened the downward pressure of socio-economic status among the laborers. Many laborers have slipped down the socio-economic ladder. Some laborers have become self-employed and engaged in various miscellaneous works. Others could not get jobs and remained in the informal sector. Those among them who do not have jobs, houses to live in and ties with whom they can depend on, that is, those who are jobless, houseless and helpless are driven out to the streets (Lina, a researcher of squatter problem on Apr.26<sup>th</sup>, 2012).

5) The national/local government agencies such as the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), the Local Government Units

(LGUs) and the Manila Police District (MPD) conduct the rescue operations for the homeless who would then be sent to public facilities such as the Jose Fabella Center (JFC) which provides them with shelter. The rescue operations are conducted for three purposes of urban policies; the mitigation of traffic congestion, the prevention of street crime and the beautification of the urban landscape. The MMDA works with two teams who operate in two shifts; 6:00am-2:00pm and 2:00pm-10:00pm. They rescue about 30 homeless persons per day and sends them to the JFC, which can accommodate around 300 homeless persons. These persons are sent to 13 facilities such as mental hospital, aged care center, child rearing facility, women shelter, job training center etc. according to the need of each. The final goal of the operation is to make these persons go back to their provinces by providing them tickets for transportation, when the government can afford to do it financially (Tom, a social worker of JFC on July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011). However, this policy is successful only partially because many of the rescued persons go back to the streets soon after being left at the JFC (Colico, Garcia & Yu, 2011: 29). Some of them, especially children, tend to become repeaters who go back and forth between the street and the shelter. There has been an increase in the number of repeaters; 67 persons in 2007, 325 persons in 2008 and 374 persons in 2009 (Colico, Garcia & Yu, 2011:30). There are two reasons for this. First, the JFC being a short-term (one week to three months basically) rehabilitation center cannot provide sufficient services to make the inmates escape finally from the street lives.

Second, it is the attractiveness of the street life. Many homeless do not like to be constricted by the strict house rules in the JFC. They *feel* that they cannot have the freedom they want and establish true human relationships there. In contrast, they *feel* that the street is a place which provides them not only jobs but also the shelter to sleep in. Moreover, they are able to establish social networks and peer support relationships in the street. Thus, the street becomes the convenient homes in which the homeless work, sleep and enjoy friendships with others, even though it is full of dangers. Thus, some homeless persons even *feel* that the rescue of operation of the MMDA is akin to the arrest or apprehension of criminals and that the shelter provide is just the jail (Kelly, a homeless, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012). Catherine Kennedy and Suzanne Fitzpatrick claimed that there are three conditions required for the homeless



to get off the life of begging in the street; to get rid of the need to beg in the street (*routes in*), to give the conditions for getting out of the begging in the street (*routes out*) and to solve the beggar's problems through the institutional collaboration and cooperation of various measures (*policy co-ordination*) (Kennedy and Fitzpatrick, 2001: 2010-2013).<sup>9</sup>

6) There are many street children in Metro Manila.<sup>10</sup> Although a survey estimated that there are 50,000 to 75,000 street children (Porio, Moselina and Swift, 1994:112), it is difficult to specify their exact number, because the figures are different from article to article.<sup>11</sup> The street children are classified into three subgroups (Ruiz, homepage. 12); 1) *Children in the street*, who work in the streets having the regular connections with their families living mostly in the squatters or living with them in the streets. They comprise around 70 percent of the street children, 2) *Children of the street*, who live in the streets and only sometimes go to the families, that is, who run away from the homes for a long-term. They comprise around 20 percent of the street children and 3) *Abandoned and neglected children*, who have completely cut ties with their families and live alone in the streets.<sup>12</sup> By the way, it is almost impossible for the street children to get out of living in the streets after growing up, because they cannot go to school, except the *children in the streets* and the lucky children who get educational assistance from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or from an NGO. The street children grow up in the streets, cohabit with other street boy/girl-friends in their mid-teens, give birth to babies and make families in the streets. Thus, they reproduce the street families inter-generationally.

## **2) Squatter Dweller and Homeless**

There are various people who work in public spaces like streets, markets, church's squares, park and cemeteries in the cities of developing country like the Philippines. Under such circumstances, two difficulties arise in identifying the homeless operationally. The first difficulty is how to distinguish the homeless from the working people who go back to their houses mostly in the squatters after finishing work in the evening. The second difficulty is how to distinguish the homeless from the squatter dwellers. Referring to the study of Arnold J. Padilla and material from the

National Housing Authority (NHA), Aoki discussed these difficulties with special focus on the contrast between the homeless and the squatter dwellers (Aoki, 2008: 166-167) (Padilla, 2000: 5-6) (NHA, 1993). And Olufemi also differentiated the two groups contrasted the homeless with the squatter dwellers in terms of twelve indexes (Olufemi, 1998: 227). The differences between them are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Squatter Dweller versus Homeless

	squatter dweller	homeless
place to sleep	permanent shelter	transient materials
space to live	fixed place	always moving
spatial location	urban periphery	city downtown
life style	living in group	living apart
social network	tight network	loose network
visibility of existence	invisible	visible

However, even with above differentiation, it is still difficult to distinguish the homeless from the squatter dwellers, because it is not easy to define what a house is and what the meaning of ‘moving’ is. In their examination of homelessness in nine developing countries, Suzanne Speak and Graham Tipple regarded the homeless belonging to a continuum between the squatter dwellers and the rough sleepers (Speak and Tipple, 2006:176). Olufemi, on the other hand, classified the homeless of Johannesburg in South Africa into three subgroups; the pavement or street dwellers (rough sleepers), those who live in temporary shelters such as bus and railway station, open hall, taxi stand etc. and those who live in the city shelters (Olufemi, 1998:229). Moreover, Kesia Reeve (2011) contrasted the rough sleepers with those who squat in the empty buildings in England and Wales. “Those who live in temporary shelter” (Olufemi) and “those who squat in the empty buildings” (Reeve) are the people occupying the midpoint of *squatter-street continuum*, although both of them are included in the homeless in this article. It may be reasonable to consider the difference between the homeless and the squatter dwellers in reality with such continuum hypothesis. However, in spite of such difficulty in distinguishing the homeless from the squatter dwellers, we must not overlook the

uniqueness of the homeless as a social category, because they are apparently different from the squatter dwellers as a definite social group.<sup>13</sup>

### 3) Composition of Homeless

The homeless persons are classified into subgroups through their personal attributes. Each subgroup has its specific social condition. Data from the MMDA, for example, show that it rescued 2,859 *adult homeless* and 460 *street children* in Metro Manila between January 1<sup>st</sup> and July 18<sup>th</sup> of 2011 and among them 2,680 persons were *male*, 813 persons were *female* (MMDA, 2011a), while data from the JFC facility shelter show that it accommodated 56 *abled persons*, 22 *disable ones*, 35 *mentally challenged*, 30 *elderlies*, 36 *improved mental patients*, 15 *indigenous people*, 16 *minors with family*, 80 *minors without families* on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011 (JFC, 2011a). It also accommodated 400 *mendicants*, 3,560 *vagrants* and 843 *transients* between January and December of 2010 (JFC, 2011b). Data from the DSWD-National Capital Region, on the other hand, show that the agency provided services to 960 *street children*, 517 *street families*, 851 *street single adults* and 141 *indigenous* on April 27<sup>th</sup> and May 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> of 2011 (DSWD-NCR, 2011). Those street families included 288 *adults* and 229 *children*. Those adult homeless included 502 *vagrants*, 238 *mendicants* and 111 *mentally ill*s.<sup>14</sup>

From those data we can see various classifications of the homeless. Analysing the data, we can observe four group tendencies of the homeless. First, it appears that the biggest group of homeless is the *vagrant adult single men*. Second, many handicapped and street children, especially those without families.<sup>15</sup> Third, there are also indigenous homeless persons who come from *Bajau* and *Aeta* in the provinces and do vending and begging in Metro Manila. Fourth, the homeless are classified based on their situation in the streets; mendicant, vagrant and transient. The JFC defined the “mendicants” as those who beg for money or foods in the streets and other public places, the “vagrants” as those who wander idly from place to place without lawful or visible means of support and the “transients” as those who need help to return to their homes (JFC, 2011c). We can note two things about these definitions. First, these four subgroups may overlap. Vagrants and transients also beg money and foods to survive in the streets. Second,

the vagrants are not necessarily idle people; they are discouraged from or unable to look for jobs and work because of their persistently severest circumstances.

The homeless may be classified based on their jobs too; those who sit on the streets to beg, those who go around to sell for vending at the street corners, those who walk around the towns with pushcarts to scavenge for sellable material from trash and those who work as car watchers, luggage carriers and *barkers* who call for passengers to take the *jeepney* (mini bus) in designated places. From all these, one can say that the homeless can be classified in any way. This arises from the need to scrutinize the composition of the homeless in order to grasp its whole picture. Indeed, while there is much discussion on the definition of the homeless in America, Europe and Japan, the conclusion seems to be that it is almost impossible to define the homeless uniformly, because their ways of existence are limitless.<sup>16</sup> Thus, we can only draw a picture of homeless persons operationally depending on the analytical purpose.

## **2. Spatial Politics on Homelessness**

### **1) Spatial Distribution of Homeless**

The homeless in Metro Manila work and sleep in public spaces such as pavements, sidewalks, street, buses terminals, commercial districts, markets, sea ports and parks, church's squares and cemeteries. Why do they stay in those places? There are four basic factors that the homeless take into consideration when choosing places to stay in; 1) the constant availability of life resources in place, 2) the suitability and security of a place for sleeping, 3) accessibility of a place to church and NGO services and 4) the street policy in particular places.

The first factor means that the homeless tend to choose a place in which they can get life resources such as money, food and others easily and constantly. It is a place in which a lot of people (passers-by, passengers, shoppers, tourists and churchgoers) and things (money, goods and services) are always flowing and in which there is a surplus of life resources being

thrown away as leftovers and alms. The homeless get these surplus by vending, scavenging and begging. There have been increased in the number of places in which the homeless can get money and foods in Metro Manila as a result of globalization. As for the second factor, the homeless choose a place in which they can sleep quietly and safely. They generally change their places to sleep on a daily, weekly, monthly or even yearly basis. Some homeless people sleep near their job-places, others far from them. Some homeless sleep alone, others sleep in groups. The homeless tend to move only in a range of area, because it is not easy for them to find places to sleep in quietly and safely. In terms of the third factor, the homeless choose a place where they are church and NGOs that can provide foods and services such as life and medical consultation generally for free. Roque analyzed the functions of churches feeding program for the homeless such those of the San Sebastian Church, Ermita Church and United Central Methodist Church in the City of Manila (Roque, 2011: 82-83).<sup>17</sup> A few homeless move from church to church during each service day. And they get alms from the churchgoers and sell them goods such as candles and flowers (usually *Sampaguita*). They not only get foods from churches but also places to sleep at the churches' squares. However, many churches prohibit them from entering the chapel wearing dirty clothes. As for the fourth and final factor, the homeless avoid places where city workers strictly manage the streets and constantly evict people who do *illegal* activities. It is worth noting that those places are usually the very same ones which provide the homeless many life resources. They are the places in which the *push-force* to the street and the *pull-force* from the street intersect each other intensely.

In particular, what places in Metro Manila do the homeless stay in and why? Table 2 below which I made using five indexes extracted from some materials roughly show geographical contours of homelessness of Metro Manila. For a better appreciation and understanding of the data in the table, I suggest that the reader refer to a map of Metro Manila provided after the table.

Table 2. Indexes on Squatter, Street Children and Street Homeless by Municipality

	A	B	C	D	E
	Squatter Household	Relocated Household	Ratio of Reloc. HH	Project for Street Chil.	Rescued Homeless
	(no.)	(no.)	(percent)	(no. of area)	(person)
North					
Caloocan City	67,292	2,360	3.5	1	192
City of Malabon	12,461	1,961	15.7	3	176
City of Navotas	19,030	1,736	9.1	2	0
City of Valenzuela	36,404	1,772	4.9	2	29
West					
City of Manila	99,549	28,545	28.7	2	t
City of San Juan	*	2,645	*	2	21
City of Mandaluyong	25,383	744	2.9	2	80
South					
City of Makati	27,024	3,378	12.5	2	0
Pasay City	57,436	8,719	15.2	2	533
City of Parañaque	29,790	2,406	8.4	2	10
City of Las Piñas	36,107	1,641	4.5	3	146
Taguig City	21,931	194	0.9	3	135
Pateros	3,502	271	7.7	1	21
City of Muntinlupa	40,457	336	0.8	2	52
East					
Quezon City	169,490	15,770	9.3	5	246
City of Marikina	28,580	94	0.3	3	108
City of Pasig	27,328	1,910	7.0	1	127

A. unpublished report made by Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, 2002 (Ragragio, 2003: 9)

B. number of relocated household between 1982 and 2001. (NHA, 2004: 12).

C. B divided by A.

D. number of area in which project was conducted by DSWD-NCR. unpublished report made by DSWD-NCR, 2011a.

E. number of rescued street homeless by DSWD-NCR. unpublished report made by DEWD-NCR, 2011b.

Map of Metro Manila



**Squatter**

Squatter areas are the biggest spatial source of homeless persons. We can infer some statistical tendencies of the squatter population from Column A to C, although data are a little old.<sup>18</sup> The policy on squatter relocation has not

progressed as a whole. The regions (municipalities or cities) with the biggest number of relocated households are Manila, Makati, Pasay, Parañaque and Caloocan. It is notable that these cities also happen to be the main commercial area of Metro Manila and include the oldest downtowns where land price has soared because of active land speculation. The exception is Quezon City, one of the more economically wealthy cities, whose percentage of the relocated household was small, because it has a huge land which can afford to absorb people without houses from other areas. Such statistical trend seems to show the squatter's *suburbanization* or *doughnutization* which means the transfer of the squatter from the urban center to the urban periphery where land price is cheaper. After the eviction of the squatter, some evictees remain making makeshift houses using carpets or the nylon-sheets right outside of the wired netting enclosing the places where they lived in. They are gradually scattered to other areas. But some evictees become homeless at the original places.

### **Street Children**

The street children play an important role meanings in understanding the homeless, for two reasons (Lily, a social worker at Baclaran on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011). First, there are many street children who grow up and become homeless as mentioned earlier. Second, most street children live in the streets with parents who also are homeless. In 2011, DSWD-NCR conducted activities to assist street children in 38 areas of 17 cities in Metro Manila as seen in the Column D of Table 2. The data shows that there were street children with families in all regions (cities and municipalities) of Metro Manila. There were many street children especially in the downtowns along the big streets where a lot of people, money, goods and services are always flowing and in which there is a surplus of life resources being thrown away as leftovers and alms. They exhibit the same spatial distribution characteristics as the adult homeless. However, the places in which the street children sleep are slightly different from those of the adult homeless. The street children tend to avoid sleeping at isolated places such as cemeteries and parks in order to protect themselves from danger at night. They tend to sleep at the downtowns. And the street children rescued by the JFC tend to become repeaters constantly moving between the shelter and the



streets (Rose, a social worker of JFC on Apr. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008). The *Kanlungan sa Erma* (Shelter in Ermita and Malate), a NGO supporting street children in Malate, City of Manila, is taking care of over 200 street children (Sally, a social worker on Apr. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008). Its main purpose is to send back the children to their families and has initially succeeded in many cases. However, some children go back to the street because of neglect and violence at home. Other children cannot go back to their families, because theirs have already become broken and dysfunctional.

### **Homeless**

The Column E of Table 2 shows the number of homeless rescued from the streets by DSWD on April 27<sup>th</sup> and May 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of 2011.<sup>19</sup> It informs us where DSWD concentrated its relief activities for the homeless. It can be noted firstly that DSWD made relief activities for the homeless in all cities of Metro Manila with the exception of Makati and Navotas. It means that the homeless are scattered throughout Metro Manila. But there are not many homeless in Makati and Navotas. Makati has the biggest business district and so its city government has strictly conducted the clearance and eviction of homeless persons from the district's landscape almost perfectly. Navotas, on the other hand, is a small city whose main economic zone is the fish and cargo port in which there are many working children but few street children (Roy, a squatter activist of Navotas, on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011). Secondly, it can be noted from the data that, in contrast, there are particularly many rescued homeless persons in the cities of Pasay, Manila and Quezon. In the case of Pasay, this may be due to the fact that it has a big church in Baclaran, and a big street, Roxas Boulevard. Manila, for its part, has some big downtowns such as Quiapo, Sta. Ana and Malate. It also has big parks such as Luneta and Rizal Park and a big cemetery, the North Cemetery. On the other hand, Quezon City has a big downtown, Cubao and a big street, EDSA.<sup>20</sup>

The number of homeless is strongly influenced by the street policy of a city government. According to Aoki's observation in the streets, there are many homeless persons including street families in Malate and Sta. Ana in the City of Manila and in the area of Baclaran in Pasay City during the daytime, because the city governments do not conduct strict spatial management operation in those areas. And in other areas it may appear that

there are few homeless person but they are actually there; they are just not visible, because they disappear from the streets in the daytime. Some disappear, because they transfer to another places for jobs while others take refuge in the back alleys in order to escape from the eviction and arrest by the city authorities. For example, it is hard to find the homeless persons in the morning in the area of Cubao in Quezon City, because the MMDA conducts round-up operation daily before the rush hour time. The homeless would come back to the main streets in the afternoon or in the evening. We know that there are many homeless in Cubao from the fact that the number of rescued homeless there is big as seen in the Column E of Table 2.

Finally, we can roughly infer and tentatively make three conclusions about the relationships between the squatter dwellers and the homeless based on the spatial distribution of the squatter population (Column B of Table 2) and the rescued homeless (Column E) again here. First, there is a tendency that when squatters are evicted from an area, the homeless persons increase in that area. Second, in contrast to the suburbanization of the squatter, the homeless tend to stay in the downtowns especially in the City of Manila and the Pasay City. We call it the *centralization* of the homeless. Third, all of these things result in the increase of the homeless in the center of Metro Manila.

## **2) Social Construction of Public Space**

The homeless work and sleep by getting in the niche of the urban space such as a street, a sidewalk, a pavement, a market, a shopping mall and a park. The places in which the homeless work and sleep are conditioned not only by their personal circumstances but also by the political, social and spatial situation of homelessness. These conditions change as constantly as the urban spatial structure is transformed under globalization. The issues or questions focused on here are proposed as follows. What social and spatial conditions influence the spatial distribution of the homeless? And how politics factored in the homeless persons' choice of places to work and sleep in? Previous articles and studies have discussed these issues.

Rob Kitchin and Robin Law (2001) analyzed the process of the socio-spatial construction of (*in*)*accessibility* of public space taking the case

of public toilets for the handicapped. Karen Malone (2002) analyzed the politicized and regulated process of people's movement in the public spaces contrasting the *open space* where the boundary is weakly defined with the *closed space* which has a boundary that is strongly defined. Mike Raco (2003) analyzed the process of remaking and securing space referring to strategies, tactics and practices in spatial politics and found that the place is reconstructed for spatial securitization leading to *zero-tolerance* measure against the *broken window syndrome*. Tom Richardson and Ole B. Jensen (2003) referred to the cultural sociology of space and claimed that the space is the product of the *dialectical* relations between socio-spatial practices on the one hand and symbolic and cultural meanings which the social agents attach to their environments, on the other hand. Nicholas Blomley (2007) critically analyzed the claim that the purpose of traffic code in America is not to exclude any human being but to regulate the spatial activity. He asserted that such position results in the acceptance of the exclusion of vendors and beggars from the streets eventually as an obstacle of the traffic after all. Henrik Gutzon Larsen and Anders Lund Hansen (2008) analyzed the merits and demerits of gentrification of urban space and they posited that gentrification makes the city a battlefield of the continuous *space war* resulting in the exclusion of the uncreative class. Jeremy Németh (2009) analyzed the political process in which the public space is privatized taking as an example the *bonus space* which is the public space of floor area ration (FAR) bonus for aiming the efficient market-driven production. He found that in the bonus space human heterogeneity is filtered and the undesirable such as homeless persons, activists and the *unconsumable* or poor people are excluded. Laura Huey (2010) analyzed the meanings which surveillance such as that done through CCTV (surveillance camera) has for the homeless. He found and explained that the function of surveillance is double-sided in the way that it marginalizes the homeless from the space as eyesore and the potential criminal on the one hand and as persons to be protected from danger on the other hand. Laura Nichoks and Fernando Cázares (2011) analyzed the homeless' riding a bus as a public transportation and found that for the homeless, the bus space becomes a valuable substitute for other public space, but only at night.

The above articles analyzed urban public space focusing on their

functions and meanings for the socially disadvantaged such as homeless persons. Their main assertions may be summarized into three points. First, space is constructed through conflicts of interests between various social agents and the difference in meanings that the agents attached to the space in their uneven power relationships with each other, that is, *space war*. Second, the privatization of the public space is going on and the regulation of the privately owned public space has been strengthened by business firms and national/local governments. Third, in this process the disadvantaged groups such as homeless persons have been excluded from privately used public space.

### **3) Philippine Context of Spatial Politics**

This article's concern is over how the discussion on the public space in the Western city can be applied to the context in the Asian city. In Metro Manila the public space such as street, market and park has been occupied privately by the poor people. Recently, the regulation of the public space is strengthened and its occupants such as vendor and homeless are excluded from the public space. However, we have to abstain from the direct application of the Western experience to the Asian context, because the social meaning which the public space has in the Asian city is different from in the Western city. Drummond (2000) claimed that the street has been the *pseudo-public space* occupied privately in Vietnam and that it has been granted openly there. The street has been a part of living space of people who live in the small no-room houses (*inside-out*). People have meals, take bath and do the small business activities in the streets. And such private occupancy of the public space has been accepted socially. Therefore, people resist any other agents which infringe the street spaces which they occupy, even if the infringer is the State. On the other hand, with the penetration of the market economy the public space has been commercialized as an entertainment zone and regulated by the business firms backed by the State. In this way, the street regulation of Vietnam has been converging to the Western one, that is, the westernization of the public space.

We can say almost the same about Metro Manila. The political situation surrounding the street where the homeless live in the Philippines is different

from in the Western countries and even from in Vietnam as a socialist country. The situation in Metro Manila is characterized in three points. First, it is that many poor people have squatted in the public lands as mentioned above. The squatter has been the pseudo-public space for the dwellers, because they have occupied the lots privately for many years, sometimes as old as their grandparents. Even the law (the *Urban Development Housing Act*) prohibits to evict the dweller forcefully from the squatter in the public land, although its actual effect is limited. The same can be said about the street but in the smaller degree. The vendors have set up stores in the fixed street corners, sometimes for many years. The poor people have occupied the streets as the extended spaces of houses for the multiple purposes. They wash faces, have meals, play, sleep and work as scavenger, sweeper, driver, carrier and beggar in the streets. Moreover, such occupancy of the street has been accepted as if it is the vested rights socially and politically. For example, the eviction of the vendor from the street sometimes is avoided intentionally. As such, the border of the publicness (government-owned) and the privateness (person-occupied) is not clear in the public space, that is, it is the pseudo-public space.

Second, it is that the squatter dwellers are always scared of the evictions from the lots which they occupy. The same can be said about the street but in the bigger degree. The policies of urban development such as construction of infrastructure, privatization of government-owned land, elimination of traffic congestion and street crime<sup>21</sup> and beautification of street have been conducted by the national and local governments. The land speculation has been stimulated by the interests of the companies, and the regulation of the street has been strengthened. In this way, the social and political situation surrounding the street in Metro Manila has converged to in the Western city. The MMDA regulates the homeless strictly based on Article 202 or the Anti-Vagrancy Law.<sup>22</sup> The Manila Police District (MPD) arrested 1,581 persons in 2008, 1,571 persons in 2009 and 1,091 persons in 2010 for vagrancy in the City of Manila (*Philippine Star*, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010). The MMDA has set its mission as the following; “To clear roads and public spaces of Metro Manila of street nomads and to ensure their safety, care and protection by removing them from the streets and other public spaces .....” ((MMDA, 2011b). And the it conducts the Street Dweller Care Program;

rescue of mendicants, solvent people, street children and vagrant psychotics along the *major thoroughfares* in Metro Manila and refer them to appropriate DSWD's and other facilities. The MMDA has regulated the main streets especially in EDSA, a highway which traverses Metro Manila from north to east, and Cubao in the Quezon City. On the contrary, the LGUs has conducted the beautification of downtowns and the mitigation of traffic congestion.

Third, it is that there is the dynamic politics on the public space among the several actors; squatter dweller, vendor, homeless, corporate entity and national/local governments. In general, the Right of Residence is composed of some rights; the right of land ownership (legal right), right of land occupancy (right to occupy the land exclusively), right of leasehold (right to lend the land) and right of renting a house. Many squatter dwellers live paying for getting the right of land occupancy, of leasehold or of renting a house. Therefore, they think that they have the 'legitimate right' to live in the lands (Hosaka, 1997: 160). The same can be said about the street vendor. Many (if not all) vendors pay for getting the right to occupy the fixed street corners. They think that they can occupy the lots legitimately. Therefore, both of the squatter dweller and vendor think that they should be compensated the alternative and convincing places, when they are evicted from the lots which they occupy. Therefore, such political situation inevitably brings out many collisions between the occupants of street corners and the street cleaning agents (SCAs) such as the removal crew of MMDA and the LGUs to crack down the occupants.<sup>23</sup> The SCAs evict the vendors from their working places. The vendors resist the SCAs. The SCAs' power is overwhelmingly stronger than the vendors'. Therefore, they escape from the SCAs at first, go back to the original places after the SCAs leave there, and resume their business. Such offense and defense between the SCAs and the vendors have been repeated every day. However, the degree of the social admission of street occupancy is smaller for the vendor than for the squatter dweller. Therefore, the collision is smaller in scale and less violent in the case of vendor than of squatter dweller too.

All of such situations are the social, political and spatial conditions of the homeless working and living in the streets. On the one hand, the ambiguity of the boundary of land ownership and occupancy is true for the

homeless too. The homeless work and sleep in the streets of the range of certain areas as mentioned above. Some homeless have lived in the fixed street for a long time.<sup>24</sup> For them the simple shields made of wood and galvanized plates in the streets which they occupy are just like their *homes*. On the other hand, the eviction of the homeless from the street has become frequent. However, they have no power to resist the SCAs and they can only escape from place to place. They are less admitted to occupy the streets socially and politically than the vendors, because their visual existence is regarded as an eyesore by the citizens who sometimes harass them. Therefore, they always become the first target of the eviction.

These analyses of the politics on the street in Metro Manila are summarized as follows. We can compare three groups, squatter dweller, vendor and homeless, in terms of the degree of the social acceptance of public land's occupancy and of its regulation. Three groups are lined up on the continuum that bipolar the complete acceptance and the complete exclusion. It is as follows in other words. The more the regulation of the street is strengthened, the stronger the street people feel the sense of crisis that the vested rights to occupy the streets are infringed and the more intensely they become to resist the SCAs. That is, the degree of the social acceptance of occupancy of the public land is bigger for the squatter dweller than the vendor, and for the vendor than for the homeless. The regulation of public space is weaker for the squatter dweller than for the vendor, and for the vendor than for the homeless. The resistance to the eviction is stronger in the case of the squatter dweller than of the vendor, and of the vendor than of the homeless. After all, the homeless are the most disadvantaged and marginalized people among the occupants of public space. And all of these stories are not the cases for the Western and Japanese cities which do not have the pseudo-public space.

## **Conclusion**

This article analyzed the pathways which the poor people go to the street, the spatial distribution of the homeless and the politics on the public space in Metro Manila. We must not miss the unique conditions of the homeless in

Metro Manila, an Asian city. At the same time, we must not miss the commonality which the homeless of Metro Manila share with the one of Western and Japanese cities. The homeless have increased in the city around the world. They are a product of globalization and a visual symbol of the transformative urban structure. We have to grasp the differences of the homeless in each country *and* the similarities with other countries.

Finally, this article focused on the analysis of the homelessness in the macro-structural level. The study must be advanced to the micro-structural level, that is, the subjective meaning which the homeless attach to their living world in the macro-structural context using the narratives of the homeless themselves.

## Note

1 The word of *street* here is meant to include the street, the sidewalk, the pavement, the park etc. where the street people work and sleep. The word of *homeless* is meant to include both of roof-less and house-less people.

2 The word of *informal settlement* often is used instead of the word of squatter in order to eliminate the biased connotation which the latter is thought to have. The informal settlement implies that squatting is not a criminal behaviour even though it is problematic legally. However, the *informal* is an ambiguous term, because it conveys various meanings; unofficial, subterranean and illegal etc. On the other hand, the word of *squatter* has been used as an academic term so far. This is why the squatter is used in this article. It is same to the word of *underclass* that had meant the hopeless criminal-like people in America and that was reconstructed as an academic term to specify the urban bottom people (Wilson, 1987).

3 Although Japanese homeless is regarded as same to American and European ones in those articles, the former is different from the latter. In Japan, the main group of the homeless came from the day labourer in the construction, they are over 60 year-old on average, there is no street child and there are very few female homeless, they are the singles who do not have the ties with their families, and they are harassed by the ordinary people who sometimes attack the homeless and escalate as far as to kill them.



4 Some articles written in the Philippines depicted the living world of the homeless using the phenomenological and ethnographical methods. They interpreted the living world laying it over the experience of American homeless directly. However, the interpretation is not easy, because the cultural and social context in which the living world of Filipino is embedded is different from the one of Westerner. In those articles such methodological problem was not taken into consideration.

5 Metro Manila is a global city. The homeless is a product of urban globalization. This article does not discuss the relationships among globalization, Metro Manila and the homeless. About this issue see the following article. (Aoki, 2008). And Aoki tried to compare the Philippine homeless with ones of Japan and America in the following article (Aoki, 2012).

6 All names of informant are the pseudonyms in this article except the names of scholars who wrote the articles referred in this article.

7 Ariel Geronimo, former professor of Saint Scolastica's College in Metro Manila classified the homeless into four subgroups; 1) people who were born in the streets in Metro Manila, 2) people who were the squatter dwellers, 3) people who were the returnees from the relocation sites and 4) people who came from the provinces (Sept.4<sup>th</sup>, 2010). It is suggestive here.

8 Aoki called jobs of poor working conditions and the starvation wages produced by globalization the *new labor* and the depressed standard of living resulted from it the *new poverty* (Aoki, 2006, chap.1).

9 There are many studies asking why the people become homeless. Yin-Ling Irene Wong and Irving Piliavin asked which cause is more influential for the people in becoming homeless; the individual deficit framework (ID) or the insufficiency of institutional resource framework (IR), and concluded that it is a positive correlation between ID/IR and the period during being homeless (Wong & Piliavin, 1997: 421).

10 The street children is mostly between 11 to 14 year-old, and 70 percent of street children are boy and 30 percent are girl (DSWD-NCR, 2011). The girl lives with the partner in the street in order to protect herself from the danger such as the police crackdown, the sexual harassment and the turf wars among the street children (Jeffrey, a social worker supporting the street children at Quiapo of Manila City, Dec. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011).

11 Catherine Scerri counted 11,346 street children in Metro Manila in 2001 (Scerri, 2009: 21). However, we cannot know how she counted the number of street children using what kinds of material.

12 Scerri also classified 70 percent of children on street, 30 percent of children of street and 25 percent of children living with the families based on the survey to 599 street children in four cities in Metro Manila (Scerri, 2009: 20).

13 The squatter dwellers think of themselves clearly that they are not homeless. “There is no homeless in our community. We always share the houses with the newcomers.” (Dan, a squatter dweller in the City of Taguig on Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006)

14 David Snow and Leon Anderson classified the American homeless into four categories; hobo as a migratory worker, tramp as a migratory non-worker, bum as a non-migratory non-worker and mentally ill (Snow & Anderson, 1993: 59-66). The mentally ill was understood as a person who spoke the meaning of unknown suddenly. However, such definition of mentally ill is not right and there are the mentally ill among hobo, tramp and bum too.

15 It is a characteristic of the developing country that there are the street children without families. They came from the poorest families which neglected and abandoned them or were broken because of their parents’ separation.

16 There are various definitions of the homeless in Japan, for example; *furōsha* (vagrant), *jūsyō futeisha* (person of no fixed address), *rojō seikatsusha* (person living in the street), *hōmuresu* (homeless), *nojuku seikatsusya* (person living a homeless life) and *nojuku rōdōsha* (homeless laborer). I adopted the word of *nojokusya* (rough sleeper) as the most flexible word, because it gives the minimum definition of the homeless (Aoki, 2006:107-113).

17 A Korean Baptist church holds the prayer meeting which serves foods to the homeless in front of Manila City Hall every Sunday. About 100 homeless took part in it (observation on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011).

18 It is not easy to define the *squatter*. The National Census Office has defined the informal settlements (squatter) as the “households occupying a lot rent-free without the consent of the owner” on the basis of the Urban

Development and Housing Act (UDHA) which covers the policies on the squatter problem in the Philippines (Cruz, 2010: 2). Jeanette E. Cruz (2010) discussed the operational problem with the definition in the UDHA.

19 MMDA rescued 3,493 homeless in the streets on the *barangay* (neighborhood association) base between January 1<sup>st</sup> and July 18<sup>th</sup> of 2011 (MMDA, 2011a).

20 It is said that there are around 2,000 homeless in Rizal and Luneta Park and around 4,000 homeless in North Cemetery (Eric, an activist of squatter on Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006). The Rizal and Luneta Park is the place which many migrants came from the Southern provinces of the Philippines by ship stay. The North Cemetery is the place which many migrants came from the Northern provinces by bus stay. Baclaran has the bus terminal of the migrants from Southern provinces and Cubao has the bus terminal of the migrants from Northern provinces. The migrants who do not have any networks to depend on are forced to stay in the streets near those places. The migrants are one of sources of the homeless as seen in Figure 1.

21 The National Capital Region Police wiped out 189 crime syndicates composed of 1,029 criminals in 48 districts of Metro Manila before the Christmas Day (*The Philippine Star*, Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006). The homeless often commit the various kinds of crimes and at the same time become the victims of those crimes.

22 The Anti-Vagrancy Law specifies ‘any person found loitering about public or semi-public buildings or places or trampling or wandering about the country or the streets without visible means of support. (omission) and any person found guilty of any of the offenses covered by this article shall be punished by *arresto menor* or a fine not exceeding 200 pesos, and in case of recidivism, by *arresto menor* in its medium period to prison correctional in its minimum period or a fine ranging from 200 to 2,000 pesos, or both, in the discretion of the court.’

23 The city government of Manila stopped to issue the new permit of the car wash and of the junkyard in the street in order to mitigate the traffic congestion (*The Philippine Star*, Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006). Only the new application of the shops which have the lots of 500 to 1,000 square meters was permitted. The city government of Quezon began the street regulation that the vendors could sell goods only in the permitted places of downtowns such as

Commonwealth Avenue, Philcoa, Balintawak and Novaliches (*The Philippine Star*, Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006). Any vending is prohibited strictly in other places including all sidewalks, pavements and overpasses. The violator is arrested, confiscated goods and imprisoned without any exception. The Court of Quezon City dismissed the appeal of the owner of *sari-sari store* (variety store), who was demolished the store in the street and confiscated goods by the MMDA two years ago (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007). The Court confirmed the authority of MMDA to remove the ‘obstacle’ in the public space.

24 A homeless in Malate, the City of Manila, told that he has lived in the same street corner in front of Malate Church with his family for 17 years (Bill, on Apr.22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010).

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