

STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS:
SEARCHING FOR HAPPINESS ON THE STREETS OF MANILA, THE PHILIPPINES

by

Boonlert Visetpricha

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The dissertation is approved by the following members of the Final Oral Committee:

Katherine Bowie, Professor, Anthropology

Claire Wendland, Associate Professor, Anthropology

Maria Lepowsky, Professor, Anthropology

Alfred McCoy, Professor, History

Michael Cullinane, Associate Director, Center for Southeast Asian Studies

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the causes and the ways of life of homeless people on the streets of Manila, the Philippines. The researcher conducted participant observation with street people for 14 months from January 2014 to April 2015. Drawing upon Paul Farmer's concept of structural violence, instead of blaming homeless people for their conditions, this ethnography argues that high unemployment in the Philippines is the primary cause of homelessness. The other two major factors are family problems and lack of access to cheap housing in squatter areas. Next, this ethnography illustrates how homeless people in Manila survive on the street both in material and cognitive terms. Their survival involves getting food from soup kitchens, doing odd jobs, providing self-explanations of their homelessness, and thinking positively about their lives. The dissertation suggests that several faith-based organizations provide food for homeless people to survive from day to day, but are less concerned about how to help homeless people overcome homelessness. Accordingly, they are a part of everyday violence that routinizes street homelessness and perpetuates social injustice.

This ethnography includes a subjective dimension in its study of the victims of structural violence by investigating how homeless people think about their own lives. Despite the hard conditions of street life, homeless people in Manila adapt to their conditions and are able to find a certain level of happiness that is unexpected when compared to other ethnographies on homelessness. Not many homeless people are suffering in the sense of sorrow and losing their self-worth. Although this dissertation argues that homeless people in Manila can get used to street life, it does not mean that social injustice should continue. The author emphasizes that social exploitation, such as hiring people and paying less than minimum wage, must be solved.

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I have done my best to return the good-will offered by my friends on the street by accurately depicting the complicated life of homeless people. Street life is similar to the life of other human being in many places. It is not always full of suffering and it is not happy every day. It is just a way of life. Homeless people have different ways of life from mainstream society. But over all, they are human beings just like us. They have dignity and we should respect them for that.

Thank you very much.

Boonlert Visetpricha

LIST OF ACRONYMS

4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programs (a conditional cash transfer program)
CCT	Center for Community Transformation.
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
GA	General Assistance (US)
JFC	Jose Fabella Center
LRT	Light Railway Train
MCCT-HSF Program	Modified Conditional Cash Transfer-Homeless Street Families Program
MDSW	Manila Department of Social Welfare
MMDA	Metropolitan Manila Development Authority
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NPA	New People Army
NPDC	National Parks Development Committee
NTSB	National Training School for Boys
OASDI	Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (US)
RAC	Reception and Action Center
SDCU	Street Dwellers Care Unit
SSS	Social Security System
UC	Unemployment Compensation (US)

GLOSSARY

adobong manok	chicken cooked with soy sauce and vinegar
amor propio	self-esteem
bagansya	vagrancy
balik (balik- balik)	return (back and forth on the street)
balik probinsya	go back to the province (a government program for homeless people)
barker	one who herds passengers to get on a jeepney and gets a commission from a jeepney driver (slang)
batok	back of the neck
batchoy	a kind of noodle soup; to beg for food (slang)
biyaya	grace, blessing, any kind of gift
Bumbay	Indian-Filipinos
burado	ones who have many tattoos (slang)
chamorado	boiled sticky rice with cocoa powder, sugar, and milk
chapati	flatted Indian bread
cabo (kabo)	a leader of a small group of laborers
CR	comfort room, toilet
dusa	<i>see pagdurusa</i>
diskarte	improvised jobs
estafa, estapa	swindle
hanapbuhay	means of livelihood
hiya	shame
hopia	bean-filled pastry
huli	caught, apprehending
ikot (ikot ikot)	turning round and round, rotation
istambay	standby, act of spending one's time unprofitably, unemployed
istokwa	run away children (slang)
kaibigan	friend
kalakal	goods for sale; recyclable items (slang)

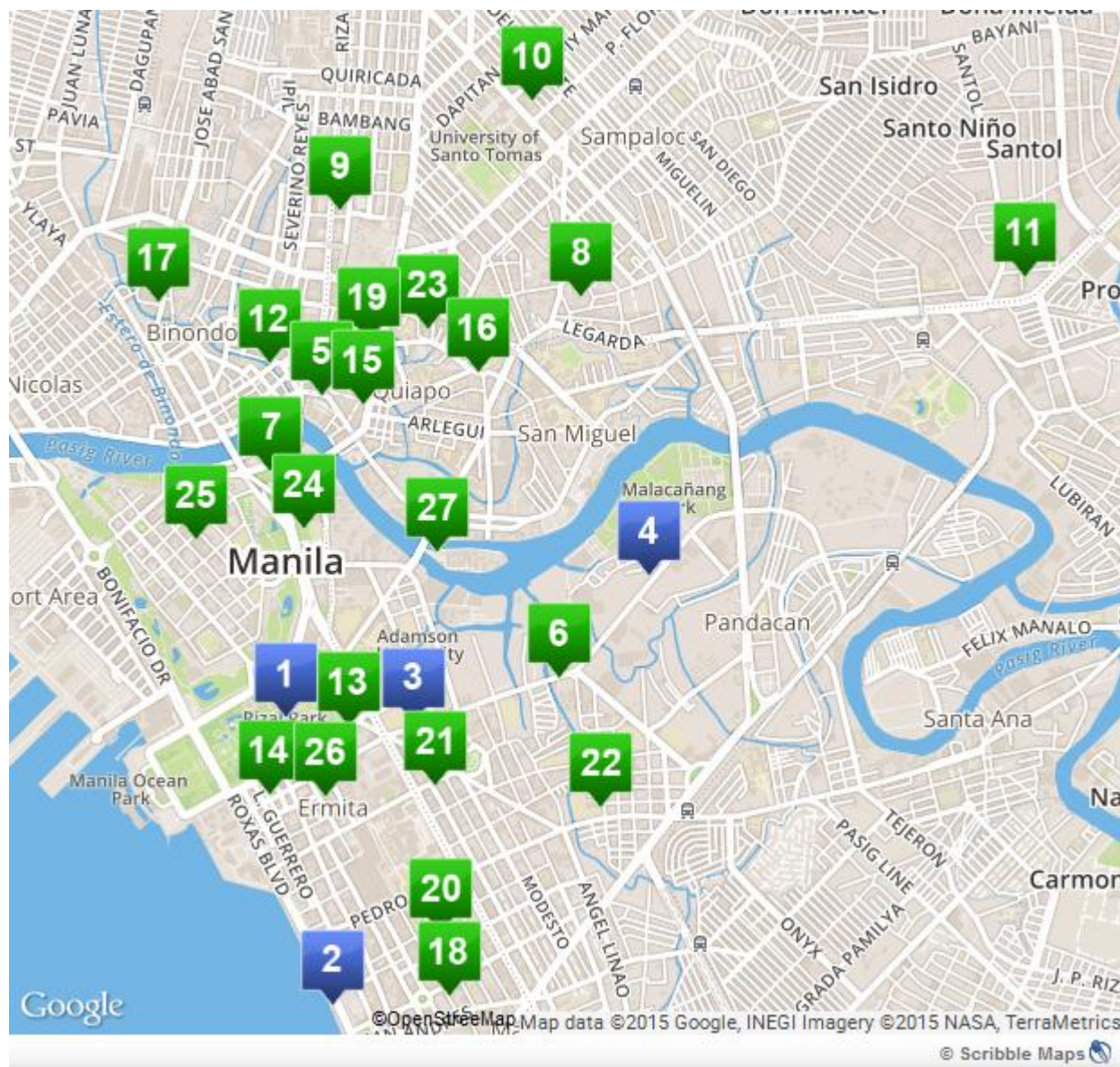
kasalanan	sin
kawawa	one who is pitiful
kuya	older brother
laboy	roaming, wandering around
lata	tin, can used as container for preserved food
laya	freedom
layas	running away from home
lechon baboy	roasted pork
lomi	noodle soup
longganisa	Philippine sausage
linis	clean; a plastic bottle with the label and cap removed to sale at a junk shop (slang)
magkalakal	to collect recyclable items (slang)
magulo	disorder, unlury, a mess
malaya	independent
manok	chicken, chicken meat
magpahinga	to take a rest
mahirap	difficult, hard life, poor
masarap	delicious
masaya	happy, joyful, content
munggol	bean
nanay	mother
nasanay	get used to something
nganga	to open ones' mouth; have nothing to eat (slang)
pag-asa	hope
pagdurusa (pagdudusa)	suffering in the sense of sorrow
pagtitiis	act of bearing, enduring or suffering pain, hardship, poverty, etc.
palaboy	wanderer, tramp, vagrant
panapin	anything used as underlayer for something
pansit	noodle
parker (parking)	one who helps drivers park on the street and looks after the car

pasalubong	a homecoming present
patay gutom	dying hunger; the act of doing frantically because of hunger (slang)
pila	line, row; form a line
pulubi (pulube)	beggar
puti	white; white paper for selling at a junk shop (slang)
sibak	mixed plastic for selling at a junk shop (slang)
sigá	ones who bully others
sopas	macaroni soup
taong grasa	human grease; bum (slang)
taong kalsada, taong kalye,	street people
taong langsgangan	street people
tatay	father
tiis	<i>see pagtitiis</i>
tinola	a soup cooked from sayote and chicken
tita	aunt, or fictive aunt
totong	burned rice
trabaho	employment, occupation, work
ukay ukay	places that sell used goods, such as clothes, shoes, bags, etc.
walang hiya	shameless
walang pakialam	do not care
yagit	rubbish, floating garbage; homeless people (slang)
young ones	homeless people used by some churches

MAP 1 : MANILA CITY

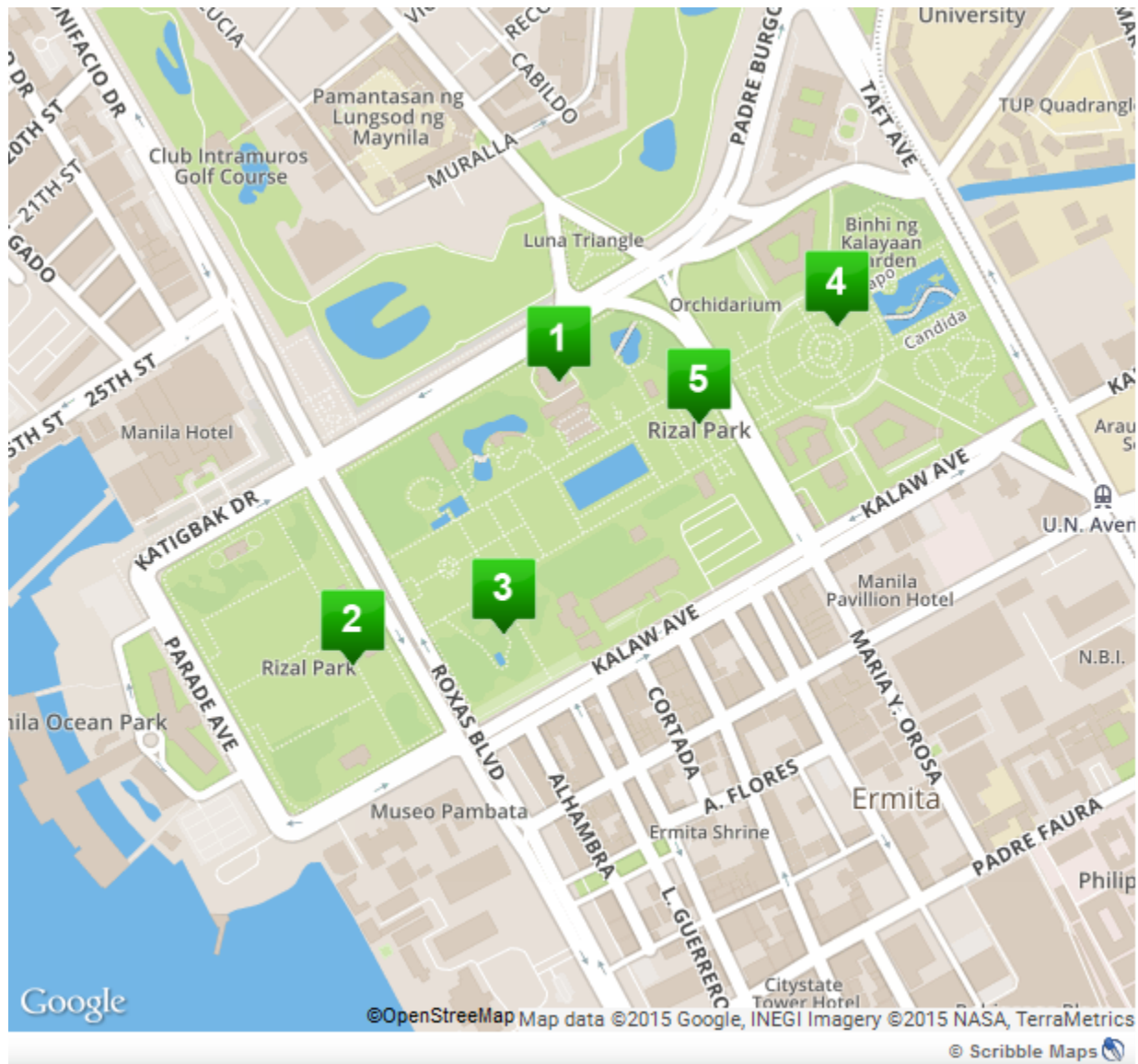


500m

MAP 2: SLEEPING PLACES AND SOUP KITCHENS

500 m

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Rizal Park (Luneta) | 10. Lacson | 19. Manalo |
| 2. Baywalk | 11. Calvary (go further) | 20. St. Paul |
| 3. UN Street | 12. Santa Cruz (II) | 21. Manila Baptism |
| 4. Otis Street | 13. CCT | 22. Paco |
| 5. Santa Cruz | 14. Ermita | 23. Morayta |
| 6. Bumbay | 15. Quiapo | 24. KKK |
| 7. Lawton | 16. San Sebastian | 25. Intramuros |
| 8. Loreto | 17. Binondo | 26. Seven Floor |
| 9. Knox | 18. Malate | 27. Food for Life |

MAP 3: RIZAL PARK (LUNETA)

1. Chess Plaza
2. Karabao
3. Kakayuhan
4. Lapu Lapu Statue
5. Flower Clock

Searching different stories of homeless people in developing countries

Pope Francis visited the Philippines during January 15-19, 2015. The major international news stories focused on the fact that he led the biggest mass in the world attended by six million people. However there was a significant side story related to his visit which centered on homeless people in Manila. The story began when a non-governmental organization in Manila exposed on its website that the Philippine government had removed the street people who stayed along the Roxas Boulevard to “hide” them from global eyes. “Hiding” homeless people became big news, both in the local and international media, including coverage by CNN, BBC, and the Guardian. The reports cited a congressman who commented that this “clearing operation” by the Philippines government to hide street people from the Pope was not necessary because the Pope visited the Philippines to meet the poor (The Guardian, January 23, 2015). He further criticized that this operation as useless, because after the Pope’s visit, these street people returned to the street. The Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) acknowledged that DSWD had taken street families to a resort in Batangas Province for the entire six nights of Pope’s visit. She justified these actions by stating that this operation sought to protect street people from syndicates and to let them attend training programs (Samson-Espiritu and Hume 2015).

In another context, during my pre-dissertation fieldwork in summer 2011, a homeless person liked to say to me “*Boonlert, mahirap....*” His ellipsis implied that he wanted me to complete the phrase. I would reply, “*pero masaya.*” He would then smile and say “*tama*” (correct). “*Mahirap pero masaya*” in Filipino means “hard but happy.” It signifies that the lives of homeless people are hard but happy.

The two stories above provide a significant contrast. While the government wants to remove homeless people from the public eye, homeless people find living on the street is not a problem. The first story reflects the reaction of many governments that seek to remove homeless people from public places (Herz and Hagler 1994; Amster 2003, 2004). Although in some cities homeless people and their supporters criticize and protest government plans (Wagner 1993; Wright 1997; Cress 1997; Cress and Snow 2000; Hasegawa 2006), there is still no movement in the Philippines to take action to protect the homeless people. On the other hand, the latter story of the happiness of homeless people in Manila is quite different from popular perception that the life of homeless people is miserable. Much research on homelessness in other cities has also described the life of homeless people as full of suffering, such as Seltser and Mille (1993), Lee and Schreck (2005) and Marsh (2006). Nonetheless, this dissertation does not argue that homeless people are really happy. Instead, it will show the complexity of happiness in the context of hardship on the street.

This introductory chapter reviews the background literature on homelessness, structural violence, and the Philippines. First, it compares literature on homelessness across regions to show that the explanation of the causes of homelessness and the ways of life of homeless people in developing countries are still unclear. Second, it reviews anthropological concepts of social suffering and various forms of violence. It challenges the assumptions that homeless people in Manila are suffering in ways that previous literature suggests. Therefore, it raises the proposition that structural violence might not always bring social suffering. This chapter then briefly explains my research methods and background of the Philippines and the City of Manila. The last section summarizes how the ten following chapters are organized.

Presently, street homelessness has become a global phenomenon, but the research on homeless people in developing countries is still much less than the research in developed countries, such as the US, UK, and Japan. The research on the urban poor in developing countries focuses far more on slum dwellers (Davis 2006; Kramer 2006), while ethnographies of homeless people in developing countries are still scarce (Tipple and Speak 2009). Without understanding the causes of homelessness and the conditions of life of homeless people, it is hard for both governmental and non-governmental institutions to provide effective programs to assist in meeting the needs of homeless people (Colico et al 2011).

This dissertation aims to investigate the causes of homelessness and the ways of the life of homeless people in Manila, the Philippines. First of all, I need to clarify the definition of homeless people. Research in different countries employs various definitions of “homeless people” (Daly 1996; Tipple and Speak 2009). The difference comprises both major and minor issues. The major difference in the definitions of homelessness is whether to include those who live in informal settlements or slum communities. In developed countries, although homeless people are defined differently in the laws of each country (Anderson 2004: 373; Anderson 2007: 626; Daly 1996; Robson and Poustie 1996; Sahlin 2001), in general “homeless people” refers to those who live in public spaces, such as streets, parks, and shelters (Daly 1996; Glasser 1994; Hasegawa 2006). In contrast, in developing countries, both scholars and policy makers consider slum dwellers as homeless people, such as in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and the Philippines (Olufemi 2001; Yu and Karaos 2004; Tuason 2010). In the Philippines, the majority of people in the Homeless People’s Federation Philippines live in informal settlements (Yu and Karaos 2004).

The definition of homeless people employed in this ethnography refers to those who live in public spaces and does not include people who live in slum settlements, mainly because this project aims to compare different causes and ways of life of homeless people in developed and developing countries. Therefore the definition of homelessness in my study is similar to the definition of homelessness in developed countries. By using a similar definition of homelessness to that used in developed countries, I am able to draw comparisons between the causes and the lives of homeless people in developed countries and the Philippines.

A cross-regional comparison of homelessness

Literature on homelessness has increased vastly since 1980s until the present (Shlay and Rossi 1992; Susser 1996; Lee et al 2010). Although it covers a range of topics, including gender issues (Passaro 1996; Song 2008; Tutty et al 2014), health status (Hopper 1988, Struening and Padgett 1990; Luhrman 2008; Hickler and Auerswald 2009), and public responses to homelessness (Stern 1984; Dehavenon 1999; Lankenau 1999; Lyon-Callo 2001), my review focuses on comparing the literature on homelessness in English publications, developed, post-Soviet countries, as well as developing countries with regard to two issues: the causes of homelessness and the survival strategies of homeless people.

There have been different approaches to explain the causes of homelessness across developed countries, post-Soviet countries and developing countries. In the US, the increasing number of homeless people in the early 1980s (Jencks 1994) represented “the incursions of increasing impoverishment into public space” (Susser 1996: 417). It provoked Americans to raise the question; why do many people live on the street (Wright 1989). Therefore several scholars examine the causes of homelessness with an aim that if they can understand the causes,

they will be able to find the solution (Robertson and Greenblatt 1992; Baumohl 1996). The literature reflects the question, why does this phenomenon happen in the US, where extreme poverty is not widespread (Gowan 2010:4). Baxter and Hopper suggest that “street people have become cultural tokens, living symbols of a species of alienation and dispossession peculiar to our time” (Baxter and Hopper 1981:11). The primary explanation of homelessness in the US is that people make themselves homeless, through personal problems such as drug abuse or mentally illness (Jencks 1994). No words represent this view better than the former President Ronald Reagan’s speech that many homeless people in the US “make it their own choice” and “a large percentage” of homeless individual are “retarded” people (Borchard 2005: 4). Similarly, Baum and Burnes argue that homelessness is not a problem of the system (1993).

Later, many scholars counter “personal-problem explanation” by pointing to the structural causes of homelessness, namely persistent unemployment, the shortage of affordable housing, and reduction of budget for social welfare programs. They argue that the economic transformation from the industrial sector to the service sector led to the decline of industrialized employment (Jencks 1994: 51; Wright 1989: 86). Moreover, as a result of flexible employment, such as subcontract and casual employment, employees in service sectors do not earn enough to rent accommodations (Lyon-Callo 2004; Wasserman and Clair 2010: 82-83). Next, gentrification of urban space causes many cities to lose inexpensive housing options, particularly single room occupation (SROs), and makes the cost of residence too high for the poor to afford (Burt 1992; Jencks 1994; Hopper 2003: 77; Daly 1996: 41). Another major factor that contributes to homelessness is the withdrawal of the government from social welfare programs during the Reagan’s neo-liberalist government, such as reducing mentally ill patients in hospitals

and federal's welfare programs, such as Food Stamps, federal housing and education programs (Jencks 1994; Burt 2001; Stern 1984:296).

Nevertheless, since the late 1990s many scholars agree that the cause of homelessness is too complex to explain by a sole factor (Metraux and Culhane 1999; Fitzpatrick and Christian 2006). They accept that the process of becoming homeless is a long process: some have been homeless since their childhood (Liebow 1995; Ravenhill 2008). Others argue that structural factors provide only conditions of homelessness, but personal characteristics determine who become homeless (Rossi 1989; Shlay and Rossi 1992: 138). Several scholars have suggested that specific factors, such as drug abuse and the stigmatization of ex-convicts, should be examined in conjunction with unequal social and economic structures, such as poverty and racism (Bourgois and Schonberg 2007).

In England, the debates over the causes of homelessness parallel the debates in the US. They center on arguments between structural and individual factors. Debates in the UK have most commonly offered integrated explanations that suggest structural factors provide the conditions in which homelessness might occur, while people with personal problems are more vulnerable to become homeless than others (Fitzpatrick and Christian 2006: 316; Anderson 2004). In Japan, several scholars argue that globalization brought about deindustrialization and economic restructuring in the service sector, which in turn created great displacement in the Japanese workforce (Hasegawa 2005; Aoki 2003; Kennett and Iwata 2003). This global shift resulted in unemployed persons becoming homeless.

In Russia, Tova Hojdestrand argues that the main cause of homelessness in Russia is administrative disjunction (Hojdestrand 2009: 3). The systems in the Soviet era that prevented the creation of homeless people, such as public accommodations and internal passports, have

been abolished (Stephenson 2006; Hojdestrand 2009:5, 8). In the post -Soviet era, the Russian government no longer guarantees housing for its citizens, and people can migrate freely. As a result, those who migrate to big cities, but cannot find jobs, become homeless. The next two important factors of the homeless are ex-convicts and people with family conflicts (Stephenson 2006: 85; Zykov 1999: 155; Beigulenko 1999).

Among developing countries, considerable research has been conducted on street homeless and pavement dwellers in India. Many studies similarly point out that the houseless population of India have a strong connection with their families in the provinces, yet stay on the street in cities to save their money (Dupont and Tingal 1997; Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan [thereafter AAA] 2001; Jain 2006; Mital 2006). They are “houseless by choice,” but they are not homeless, because they still connect to their families, and their “home” is in their hometowns (Mital 2006; Watson 1999; Speak 2004: 470-471). However, Sresoshi Gupta proposes that not all street people prefer to live on the street to save their money, yet he does not offer statistical data to explain the percentage of people who live on the street because of other reasons (Gupta 2006: 353). It is possible that houseless people who stay in the cities for many years might lose connections with their kin in the provinces (Glasser 1994: 96).

Research on homelessness in Puerto Rico indicates that family problems are the major cause of homelessness (Julia and Hartnett 1999). Maria Julia and Hellen P Harnett note that the number of homeless people living in shelters of Puerto Rico, 453 persons, is comparatively less than the number in Columbus, Ohio, 4,951 persons (1999: 323), while the populations of these cities are quite equal. Moreover, Puerto Rico government does not provide social welfare for their citizens. They argue that since Puerto Rico culture values taking care of family and

seniority, family members are protected from falling into homelessness. Therefore those who have family problems are vulnerable to become homeless (Julia and Hartnett 1999: 325).

In other developing countries, explanations for the causes of homelessness vary. In South Africa, several studies point to different structural causes of homelessness, such as apartheid in the past, poverty and unemployment, and cross-border immigration (Morrow 2010; Olufemi 1999: 485; Kok et al 2010). Other research, which draws on focus groups with shelter providers and homeless people in Cape Town, points to personal factors, such as retrenchment, alcohol abuse, divorce and domestic violence, as causes (Seager and Tamasane 2010). However, they do not provide further analysis whether such personal factors are related to structural factors, such as poverty. Factors given for the causes of homelessness in Dhaka, Bangladesh include pervasive poverty, absence of effective safety nets, natural disaster, political exclusion, eviction without rehabilitation, and lack of money/ income to rent a house (Ghafur 2004; Koehmoos et al 2009: 456; Ahmed et al 2011: 7).

Comparing literature on the homelessness above indicates that the causes of homelessness in different countries are dissimilar, because of their different socio-economic systems. Nevertheless, many studies of homelessness in developed and post-Soviet countries provide a useful framework to analyze the causes of homelessness. They recognize that the causes of homelessness are too complex to explain by a sole factor. Rather, they connect various factors together and explain how some people are susceptible to become homeless under a particular a socio-economic system. Accordingly, they avoid blaming homeless people themselves. By contrast, many studies of homelessness in developing countries explain the cause of homelessness with a single factor, raising the question whether they overlook other related factors.

Researchers on homelessness in developed and post-Soviet countries provide clear explanations about the causes of homelessness, in part because they examine homelessness in the historical context: what were the changes in social institutions that caused homelessness in a particular period. They ask why homeless people increased in 1980s for the US and England, and in 1990s for Japan and Russia. Such questions lead scholars to examine what was happening in such periods. For example, in the US and England, neoliberal governments in the 1980s cut the budget for social welfare programs and caused vulnerable people become homeless (Jencks 1994; Anderson 2004). In Japan, the contraction of the industrial sector in 1990s resulted in high levels of unemployment, which caused many people to become homeless (Aoki 2003). In Russia, the transformation to the market system and administrative disjunction resulted in an increasing number of homeless people (Hojdestrand 2009).

In contrast, research on homelessness in developing countries lacks a historical perspective. For instance, research in Bangladesh and South Africa mentions rural-urban migration and unemployment as the causes of homelessness (Ghafur 2004; Makiwane et al 2010). However, these factors are not new factors in the late twentieth century. In these countries, people have migrated from the countryside to urban areas and settled into burgeoning informal settlements for at least fifty years ago (Davis 2006). Therefore, one question worthy of investigation is why slum communities are no longer able to absorb people who migrate from the provinces as they did in the past. Furthermore, the conclusion that rural to urban migration is the cause of homelessness overlooks many homeless people who are urban natives. Likewise the unemployment rate in developing countries has not changed significantly over the last twenty years. Therefore research needs to examine why homeless people have increased during this time

period. Only listing possible factors of homelessness, but without linking them to historical context is not enough to provide convincing explanations of the causes of homelessness.

Second, several studies of homelessness in developed and post-Soviet countries explore how homeless people are coping with difficulties in everyday life in both material and cognitive dimensions (Snow and Anderson 1993; Ravenhill 2008; Wickens 2012). They illustrate that homeless people are not passive. On the contrary, homeless people excel at improvisation. Scholars have created different concepts to explain the odd jobs created by homeless people, such as “makeshift economy” (Hopper et al 1985: 214), “shadow work” (Snow and Anderson 1993: 145), and “refuse economy” (Hojdestrand 2009: 47). Through these odd jobs homeless people find resources that are overlooked or abandoned by others, such as collecting and selling recyclable items, selling plasma, selling newspaper and used books, begging, and pretending to be an injured army veteran to get assistance (Snow and Anderson 1993; Stephenson 2006).

Many scholars further point out that homeless people maintain social networks, both with individuals and organizations. They create networks to share information, support each other, and learn techniques for survival on the streets (Glasser 1988; Dordick 1997; Molina-Jackson 2008). Homeless people also interact with domiciled people to get some resources (Duneier 1999; Hojdestrand 2009).

Research in developed and post-Soviet countries also analyzes how homeless people maintain their self-value. Snow and Anderson propose two main methods of homeless people to make sense of their plight: invoking causal accounts and constructing identity-oriented meaning. Invoking causal accounts are the way that homeless people tell themselves why they become homeless (Snow and Anderson 1993:204). For example, some homeless persons tell themselves “I am down on my luck,” because to think of luck they can hope for a better day (Snow and

Anderson 1993: 204-206). Constructing identity is about how homeless people distance themselves from or embrace their identity as homeless people. For instance, some accept that they live on the street, but they are not used to it. Others distance themselves from bums, explaining that they are on the street temporarily. Snow and Anderson further explain that the longer people stay on the street, the more they are prone to accept their street lives (1993: 48-49). Their model, which is based on adaptive processes, is widely applied by many scholars, such as Kidd and Davidson (2007), Borchard (2005).

In Russia, homeless people prefer to identify themselves as vagrants rather than *bomzh*, a traditional term to call those who do not have a permanent address, because vagrants have positive implications of traveling and personal choice (Stephenson 2006: 56-57). Moreover, some homeless people like to share social space with housed people, such as drinking with people who live in homes, because homeless people can feel that they are not completely excluded by society. This makes them feel more human and they feel they are needed by somebody (Hojdestrand 2009: 89, 197).

In contrast, research on homelessness in developing countries focuses much more on demographic characteristics, health issues, and jobs. Only a few studies explore cognitive survival strategies, such as in Chile and my own work in Thailand (Bernasconi et al 2006, Visetpricha 2003). Since research on homelessness in developing countries employs a survey research method, it cannot describe the complex life of homeless people on the street and their cognitive survival strategies. Some studies in developing countries describe violence and hardship on the street, but only a few studies explore how homeless people cope with them (Uddin et al 2009; Seager and Tamasane 2010).

Since the late 1990s, several studies in the US examine how several assistance programs affect homeless people. Some suggest assistance programs have become tools of government to control homeless people. Several scholars criticize the “shelter industry” for employing medical discourses, making homeless people think about their homelessness as their personal failures, and overlooking structural causes (Mathieu 1993; Lyon-Callos 2000, 2004). Other services, such as the soup kitchens, can become a means to hide homeless people from tourists (Borchard 2005). Shelters for homeless women with children reproduce the dominant ideology that women have to be good mothers, but men are relatively excluded from getting access to transitional housing (Passaro 1996).

Assistance programs for homeless people are still limited in developing countries, including the Philippines. The direction of research questions on assistance programs are different from in developed countries. They do not ask how the assistance programs become a tool of the government, but seek to propose the assistance programs to support homeless people (Ghafur 2004; du Toit 2010). However drawing from the lessons of developed countries that assistance programs might become vehicle of government to control homelessness, proposal to develop assistance programs for homeless people need to recognize the possibility of unintended consequences. In the Philippines, although the assistance programs are fewer than in the developed countries, several faith-based organizations provide soup kitchens for homeless people. However there is no research in developing countries examine how faith-based organizations’ programs influence the life of homeless people.

Homeless people in Manila: an understudied prevailing phenomenon

Homeless people are prevalent in Metro Manila, but there is little understanding about how they live on a day-to-day basis. It is normal to see homeless families with a pushcart either on sidewalks or in front of neglected buildings along the roads. Single homeless people with their old bags can be observed in many parks. In the Philippines, as in other developing countries, a lot of research on the urban poor focuses on slum dwellers, rather than on homeless people (Aoki 2013). Moreover among street populations, several scholars study street children rather than adult homeless persons e.g. Torres 1996, Merrill et al 2010, Njord et al 2010, Sta. Maria et al 2014. Only a few scholars study street people in Metro Manila. Hideo Aoki, a Japanese scholar, emphasizes the influence of globalization in creating insecure jobs for the poor and leading to the eviction of poor people from slum communities (Aoki 2006, 2008, 2013). Unfortunately, his arguments are based on documentary analysis rather than field research. His analysis still needs empirical verification.

Other literature on homelessness in Manila, which is derived from students' Master's theses, offers limited insights into how homeless people live every day. Ferrer's thesis in geography explores the causes and life styles of homeless people (Ferrer 2003). This study, however, was based on survey methods and offers little information about the actual life of homeless people. Three MA theses from Asian Social Institution study the lives of people on the street. However the majority of the informants in two of these theses are not really street people. Only 25 percent of mendicants in Ebona's study live on the sidewalk (Ebona 2000). Similarly, many "street families" informants in Dung's study can pay rent of 1,500 - 3,000 pesos¹ a month (Dung 2003).

¹ 1 \$ = 44 pesos

Only Rodolfo B. Alcazan actually studies street people who live under the overpass at EDSA Street and Ortigas Street (Alcazan 2001). He described that these people survive through two ways of earning money, begging and selling several things. They live on the street to earn their money and some still connect to their families. A recent MA thesis by Emily Roque employs qualitative research methods to study the way of life of homeless people. Her research sites mostly were determined by the location of feeding programs. She does not directly observe homeless people on the street, so most of her information is derived from interviewing but not by direct observation (Roque 2011). In some cases, research has indicated that homeless people prefer to live on the street even when offered housing in a government shelter. For instance, research of DSWD officials reveals that clients who were taken to the government shelter, Jose Fabella Center, left the center and went back to the street, suggesting they can find a way to subsist on the street (Colico et al 2011).

The last three studies offer insight into both the prevalence of homeless people in Metro Manila as well as the ways they manage to survive on the street. However, these studies are limited because they do not directly discuss the causes of homelessness. They broadly discussed factors that lead to homelessness, such as poverty, rural-urban migration, and conflict with their family, but they do not systematically discuss the *process* of becoming homeless. Moreover, none of them employ participant observation to share the life experiences of street people. They do not convey life experience, feeling and worldview of street people as I seek to do in this dissertation.

Social suffering and several forms of violence

Research on social suffering is distinct insofar as it tries to understand the unspeakable experiences of sufferers, such as victims of mass rape, genocide, apartheid, and civil war (Kleinman et al. 1997). Many scholars agree that suffering is difficult to define and research (Frank 2001; Wilkinson 2005; Bradby and Hundt 2010; Seligman 2010). They similarly argue that suffering is an unspeakable experience, therefore it is difficult to convey (Das 1996; Seligman 2010). Tony W. Frank explains that “anyone who suffers knows the reality of suffering, but this reality is what you cannot ‘come to grips with’” (2001: 355). Similarly Davis Morris asserts that “suffering...exists in part beyond language” (1997: 27).

Traditionally, scholars have examined suffering from religious and medical science perspectives (Wilkinson 2005). On the one hand, all human societies ask the question: why are human beings suffering (Das 1997)? This question was raised seriously by Leibniz in 1710 when he asked: if human beings believe in God and if God is benevolent, why are human beings suffering (Das 1997; Morgan and Wilkinson 2001)? Scholars from different fields have approached these questions in contrasting ways. For instance, in religious studies scholars examine how different religions in various societies provide explanations of human suffering (Bowker 1970, 1997). One explanation is to experience suffering as a pathway to succeed in ultimate value. Leibniz calls an effort to explain suffering “theodicy” (Das 1997; Morgan and Wilkinson 2001:201). On the other hand, medical scientists approach suffering as the result of pain from disease, and emphasize the biological aspects of suffering (Davis 1992). Virginia Olesen explains that “the term ‘patient’ is derived from the Latin, *patero* to suffer” (Olesen 2010: xvi).

Three groundbreaking studies of social suffering are *Social Suffering* (Kleinman et al 1997), *Violence and Subjectivity* (Das 2000), and *Remaking the World* (Das 2001). Major contributors of these books include Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, to name but a few. They create a concept of social suffering that goes beyond the medical sciences' view of suffering, which treats suffering of the patient as an isolated individual. Kleinman and his colleagues argue that suffering is social and should be examined in social context. They emphasize social suffering as a result of social causes (Kleinman et al 1997). They explain that “[s]ocial suffering results from what political, economic, and institutional power does to people and, reciprocally from how these forms of power themselves influence responses to social problems” (Kleinman et al 1997: ix). This aspect leads many scholars to study suffering as a result of various forms of violence, which go beyond physical violence (Kleinman 2000; Farmer 2003; Scheper-Hughes 1992; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009; Green 1998). These scholars focus on different kinds of violence, namely structural violence, everyday violence, symbolic violence, and social violence.

The term “structural violence” is used originally by liberation theologians in Latin America, such as Johan Galtung, to describe social structures characterized by extreme social inequality and poverty (Galtung 1969; Farmer 2004:307). Later Paul Farmer develops this concept by defining structural violence as “the social machinery of oppression” (Farmer 1997, 2003). He emphasizes that anthropologists need to study history to understand poverty in the present and expand their view to analyze exploitation at the global level. For example, he analyzes suffering among Haitian people during the era of dictatorship, and healthcare during the era of post-Soviet Russia (Farmer 1997, 2003). Farmer argues that “extreme human suffering” is the result of “structural violence” (Farmer 1997, 2003). The major contribution of the concept of

structural violence is to go beyond “blaming the victims,” because poverty is a result of structural injustice, not the fault of the poor (Chopp 1986; Cohen 2003).

However, several scholars comment that Farmer’s concept of structural violence cannot explain how violence works and is reproduced in everyday life, therefore they have created other concepts of violence (Scheper-Hughes 1992; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992) developed the concept of “everyday violence” to explain the experiences of suffering of Brazilians living in a shanty town. Her ethnography describes various forms of suffering, such as infant death, hunger, and the disappearance of street children by death squads. She raises compelling questions asking why these phenomena are acceptable and happen routinely. Scheper-Hughes argues that the suffering remains because of institutional “indifference to the lives and deaths of ‘marginals,’ ” which results in routinization of suffering (1992: 220). For example, instead of trying to prevent infant death, churches and local government respond to infant death as an ordinary event, by donating a small and simple coffin for a dead child. Likewise, instead of acknowledging that people’s illnesses result from chronic malnutrition, physicians explain the illness by using a medical term, “nervous disorder”, *nevoso*. Scheper-Hughes’s concept of everyday violence is widely used by many scholars, such as Goldstein (2003), Lockhart (2008), Biehl (2005), and Garcia (2008).

Pierre Bourdieu (1984) and Phillip Bourgois (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009) stress *symbolic violence*. While the concept of everyday violence focuses on how social institutions lead to suffering, symbolic violence centers on sufferers themselves. Bourdieu argues that because of symbolic domination, people in an inferior position internalize oppressive ideology and accept their subordinated position, instead of protesting social inequality (Bourdieu 1984; Schwartz 1997). For instance, he analyzes symbolic violence in education. In the post-war era,

French education seemed open to all, but in fact upper- and middle classes could invest more for the education of their children. Therefore children in the upper and middle classes had more chances to succeed than the children in the lower classes. Yet in the context of “free” competition for education, children in the lower class blamed themselves for their failure, instead of blaming educational exclusion (Schubert 1994: 187-189).

Philippe Bourgois develops Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic domination by defining symbolic violence as referring “specifically to the mechanisms that lead those who are subordinated to ‘misrecognize’ inequality as the natural order of things and to blame themselves for their location in their society’s hierarchies” (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 17). For example, many drug users and homeless people blame themselves, including their perceived laziness, lack of intelligence or inadequate impulse control, as the causes of drug addiction and homelessness rather than consider structural inequality (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009: 133). Bourgois and Schonberg also create the concept of *intimate violence* from Levi’s concept of *gray zone* (Levi 1988). *Intimate violence* refers to exploitation among sufferers and the elusiveness of perpetrators and victims, because they are both perpetrators and victims at the same time (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009).

Moreover, Philippe Bourgois emphasizes the continuum of violence. He argues that several forms of violence work together and reproduce social suffering, from the structure to everyday and symbolic violence (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). Holmes’s ethnography (2013) of undocumented Mexican immigrants exemplifies how these several forms of violence interact. Holmes analyzes everyday violence in health care settings. He explains that poverty causes Mexicans to migrate to work in the US. He argues that although doctors in the US have good intentions in treating undocumented immigrant labors, physicians do not understand how the

unequal structure oppresses undocumented labors. They think that a laborer's back and knee pain results simply from their personal misconduct, rather than from being forced to work painfully for many hours a day. Holmes illuminates symbolic violence in that although they complain about their work, they are proud that they can do this job, because they are stronger than white people. They normalized their hardship by internalizing racism and claiming that a hard job is appropriate for them (Holmes 2013).

In contrast to other scholars, Arthur Kleinman does not emphasize poverty and exploitative systems, but his concept of *social violence* is helpful to understand social suffering (Kleinman 2000). In his view, social violence refers to norms and the normative social orders that affect not only the poor, but members of all classes. For example, he illustrates that lower middle class are suffering because they seek to live a middle class lifestyle, even if it eliminates their free time and causes stress (Kleinman 2000: 230). Accordingly, sufferers are not limited to marginalized people only. Those who cannot fulfill their social roles can suffer because their self-worth is threatened. For example, Vietnamese women who have abortion suffer to the extent they see their decision to abort as conflicting with Vietnamese values (Gammeltoft 2006).

Kleinman's concept of social violence points to another significant aspect of social suffering. It emphasizes psychological or moral dimensions of social suffering. In the same way, several scholars emphasize that suffering is related to values of the self. For instance, Marja-Liisa Honkasalo affirms that "suffering as a lived experience is conceptualized in terms of the harms done to person's sense of social values and moral worth" (2006: 28). Liz Frost and Paul Hoggett summarize that the cause of suffering is social, but the result of suffering "is individualized and internalized," such as a feeling of shame, humiliation, and loss (2008: 422). As a result, many scholars emphasize that the victims of violence who lose their self-esteem and

dignity are sufferers, such as victims of rape and HIV positive Haitians (Leavitt 1995; Seligman 2010; Das 2000, 2007; Perera 2001; Ingersoll 2010:23; Farmer 2003; Tereskinas 2009). Several anthropologists also explore how sufferers attempt to make sense of their suffering by negotiating and creating meaning for their lives (Bradby and Hundt 2010; Parish 2008). In some societies, endurance is the norm for sufferers, because endurance is a means to struggle to better their own and their families' position (Throop 2010).

However, when researchers study the “suffering” of marginalized people the subjective dimension is often eclipsed. For example, while Paul Farmer illuminates “extreme suffering” among Haitians who have been raped, starved, and tortured, it is devoid of their voices (Farmer 2003; Hodgetts et al 2014). His concept of “structural violence” illuminates oppression, but does not leave space for individual agency in coping with hardship (Lockhart 2008).

Literature on homelessness conceptualizes how homeless people in developed countries suffer in three different ways. The first view characterizes homeless people's suffering from medical science's point of view. It proposes that homeless people suffer from poor health, mental illness, and drug abuse (Hopper 1989; Wood 1992; Munoz et al 1999). For example, Surber and his colleagues proposed that due to lack of adequate shelter, “[h]omeless individuals suffer from a large number of severe medical and psychiatric illnesses” (1988: 116). Although the literature in this group is large, it is not “social suffering” that social scientists, particularly anthropologists, seek to understand. It does not make a connection between suffering and social conditions.

The second body of literature focuses on linkages between homeless people's suffering and the social causes of suffering (Lee and Schreck 2005; Borchard 2005). These scholars argue that people become homeless and face hardships in their life because of social causes, such as

chronic unemployment, gentrification of urban space, and racism, etc. Although these studies explore the social causes of suffering of homeless people, they do not explore how homeless conditions affect individuals' self-worth. They take for granted that people in marginalized positions are suffering. For example, Lee and Schreck explain that homeless people are marginal, because they are "excluded from full membership in society" (2005: 1056). Homeless people are marginalized in terms of residence as well. Therefore Lee and Schreck argue that "[b]y definition, homeless persons suffer from residential and spatial marginality" (2005:1056). Similarly, Kurt Borchard criticizes the management of a shelter for homeless people in Las Vegas that "often have difficulty providing any assistance programs beyond immediate shelter to homeless men who often suffer from a range of problems" (2005:99). Koegel and his colleagues compare how homeless people with and without chronic disorder and drug abuse have different subsistence adaptations, but overall they argue that homeless people are suffering. They describe that "homelessness is a sufficiently handicapping condition by itself that each homeless person's adaptation suffers radically" (1990: 104). Similarly, Lee and Greif examine homeless people's experience of hunger and argue that homeless people who "suffer from multiple deficits, appear particularly food-insecure" (2008:3).

Only a few studies on homelessness examine the subjective meanings of homelessness before making a conclusion that homeless people are suffering. For instance, Marsh (2006) examines how homeless women in New Zealand internalize the dominant ideology that they are abnormal and cannot know how to govern themselves appropriately. The women therefore feel that they are out of place in the society and cannot maintain their self-esteem. They are both marginalized and suffering. Likewise, Barry Jay Seltser and Donald E. Miller (1993) examine both the social causes of suffering and the subjective meanings of homeless women before

arguing that homeless women in their studies are suffering. They argue that people are suffering when their self-worth is threatened. In their study, homeless women living in a shelter think of their life as full of suffering and are prone to “blame themselves.” One thinks that “she must have done something wrong to earn the suffering she has been undergoing” (1993: 80). These homeless people think of their suffering as a result of their sin, and they are punished. Seltser and Miller point out that only “a few people explicitly deny the interpretation that they are being punished or judged” (1993: 81). They summarize that “being homeless threatens the essential dignity of human beings, undermining and often destroying their ability to be seen, and to see themselves as worthwhile persons” (Seltser and Miller 1993: 93). Accordingly they claim that these women are suffering because they lack feelings of self-worth.

Although these studies offer insights into the social causes and subjective meaning of suffering, they are exclusively based on the experiences of homeless people in developed countries. My dissertation raises the issue that homeless people might not be suffering universally, since social suffering depends on self-worth, and self-worth is reliant upon culture and norms. The social and cultural conditions of developed and developing countries are different in several aspects, thus it is possible that homeless people in Manila might think about their lives differently from homeless people in developed countries. Moreover many studies of homeless people in Metro Manila above indicate that homeless people have their own ways of life to survive on the street. Their status might be low, but they might be able to maintain their self-worth. Moreover being homeless in the Philippines where the unemployment rate is high might not affect their self-worth as much as being homeless in the countries where unemployment is low.

In addition, research on the well-being index by many scholars from different disciplines similarly points out that material indices, such as income, life expectancy, and access to clean water, are insufficient to reflect human well-being (Rapley 2003). Instead, subjective dimensions of well-being must also be considered, particularly how people think about their own lives. It is quite possible that people are “poor *but* happy” (D’Acci 2010: 47; emphasis in original). Drawing on this argument, my ethnography brings the subjective dimension back into the study of social suffering among marginalized people by exploring how homeless people conceive of their own lives.

Framing the research questions through violence and social suffering concepts

This ethnography employs the concepts of social suffering and several forms of violence to frame research questions anthropologically to study the life of homeless people in Manila, the Philippines. First, drawing from Farmer’s concept of structural violence, instead of blaming homeless people for making themselves homeless, I ask how the socio-economic structure of the Philippines creates chronic poverty and finally homelessness in the Philippines. Moreover, in order to grasp the roots of poverty in the present, I will examine the “deep history” of the Philippines by examining how the legacies of Philippine history, such as colonization and oligarchical governments, contribute to the chronic poverty of the present (Abinales and Amoroso 2005; McCoy 1993; Cullinane 2003). I will then investigate the problem of underemployment in the Philippines to understand why internal migrants cannot find formal jobs in the city (Balisacan and Hill 2003).

To avoid the argument that studying “structural violence” does not provide insights into the actual lives of human beings, I examine the life histories of homeless people before they

moved to the streets and then connect their lives to political, economical and social structures. For instance, I will clarify why some collective characteristics of homelessness, such as having family problems, being overage, and ex-convicts, connect to structural factors and result in homelessness. To do that this ethnography investigates how both macro and micro factors create homelessness.

Second, drawing from the literature on homelessness in developed and post-Soviet countries, this ethnography asks how homeless people in Manila are actively coping with difficulties in their lives. In the other words, I examine how homeless people cope with structural violence. Assuming that homeless people are heterogeneous, this ethnography seeks to understand their different survival strategies. I begin with how homeless people adjust to street life when they become homeless and how they fulfill their basic material needs in everyday life, such as food, clean water, and a safe place to sleep. Then I will explore different kinds of subsistence strategies used by homeless people in Manila, including regular employment, improvised jobs, which are called *diskarte* in Tagalog, and semi-volunteer work.

Third, drawing from the concept of everyday violence, this ethnography investigates how homelessness is routinized and reproduced. I will examine specifically how the governmental and non-governmental organizations deal with street people. Much research in the US and UK explores this issue, but little research studies this issue in developing countries, including the Philippines. Since the Philippines is the second largest Catholic country in the world, many faith-based organizations provide some programs for street people. It is important to examine how these programs affect the life of homeless people. Specifically, I ask how governmental and non-governmental institutes handle the homeless and to what extent they are concerned to support street people to overcome homelessness.

Fourth, this ethnography investigates how homeless people make sense of their homeless lives to maintain their self-esteem. I explore several aspects of homeless people's worldviews, namely what they tell themselves about their lives, their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with street life, and how their different backgrounds in becoming homeless and their different ways of subsistence on the street influence the ways they maintain their self-esteem. As I explained above, suffering is related to the loss of self-value. Yet, I suggest that it might be possible for homeless people to live with difficulty while maintaining their sense of self-value. If they do so, we do not need to conceptualize people in poverty and marginalized people as suffering.

Fifth, this ethnography conceptualizes the idea of social suffering by discussing the following questions: do homeless people think their lives are full of suffering? If so, in their own views, in what way are they suffering? Are they satisfied or dissatisfied with being homeless, and why? Moreover, I seek to understand the deeper meanings of a phrase like *mahirap pero masaya* (hard but happy). This last question will lead to the discussion of the concept of symbolic violence. I propose that when homeless people describe their hard life as acceptable, it does not necessarily mean that they have become the victims of symbolic violence. Their justification of their homeless life might derive from rational analysis and decision to deal with the existing structure. Homeless people cannot change social structure, but they can negotiate within it. They might decide to continue being homeless and do odd jobs, in order to avoid being exploited by the unfair employment system.

This ethnography will offer insights into how the causes and the ways of life of homeless people in the Manila, the Philippines differ from homeless people in developed and post-Soviet countries. Its findings will contribute to the knowledge on homelessness in developing countries. This ethnography, by not taking for granted that homeless people are

suffering, seeks to illuminate how homeless people conceive of their life. Moreover, by providing a deeper, better understanding about where homeless people come from and how they survive on a day-to-day basis, this ethnography will not only contribute to academic literature, but also to make suggestions to government and non-governmental institutions to develop assistance programs in accordance with homeless people's needs. At present, the Philippine government does not provide an effective assistance program for street people. Therefore this ethnography will provide a space for homeless people to speak out about their lives in order to understand homeless life from homeless people's points of view.

Research Methods

This ethnography employs two research methods, namely participant observation and life history interviews. I describe specific details of my fieldwork methods in Chapter Two. Doing participant observation with homeless people is significant in two aspects. First, participant observation is necessary for doing research with homeless people, because they might not offer sensitive information about their personal lives, such as having criminal record, to a researcher whom they do not trust. Second, ethnographic approaches are essential for studying experiences that are difficult to articulate in words (Das 1996; Bourdieu et al.1999; Kleinman 1997). Participant observation allowed me to share mundane experiences in everyday life, such as difficulties in finding a toilet, being hungry, and the risk of being a victim of violence. Furthermore, in being together with homeless people, I was able to share difficult experiences and talk with them in specific moments of hardship, such as being awoken late at night by the rain, or suffering a direct act of discrimination.

The second research method I used is life history interviews. Life histories of homeless people help to clarify how macro factors intersect with individual lives to produce homelessness. I conducted in-depth formal interviews with 100 homeless persons. Before interviewing them I received their oral consent. All names in this dissertation are changed to protect their identities. Mostly I communicated with homeless people in Tagalog. Therefore all conversations are translated from Tagalog to English. In some situations, particular persons spoke in English. In such cases I will specify that my informant spoke in English. I frequently used a recorder when I conducted formal interviews in private spaces. However, because showing a recorder in public places was often not safe, I did not use the recorder on a daily basis. Most of the stories in this dissertation are derived from my handwritten notebooks. In general, I recorded observations at least two – three times a day. In addition, I took notes immediately when I heard some keywords from street people that I could not record.

Furthermore, since I sought to gain deep knowledge about the background of homeless people, I asked permission to accompany some homeless people on family visits when they planned to visit their homes (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). This method was helpful to understand the background of homeless people. However I was only able to accompany a few individuals on these visits.

Background of the Philippines and the City of Manila

The Philippines is an island country in Southeast Asia region. The archipelago consists of 7,107 islands, approximately 344,000 square kilometers (115,831 square miles), but only 880 islands are habitable. In contrast with limited arable and habitable land, the population growth rate of the Philippine is still high at 1.7 percent, in part because the Catholic Church continually

protests government plans to educate people about family planning (Bautista 2010). In 2014, the Philippine population reached 100 million and became the twelfth most populated country of the world.

The Philippines is not among the poorest countries in the world. According to UNDP's Human Development Report 2014, the Philippines is ranked at 117 among all 187 countries (UNDP 2014:159). However, a chronic problem of the Philippine society is social polarization between the rich and the poor. The average Gini coefficient, which indicates social inequality, in 2003-2012 was 0.43 (UNDP 2014: 169). According to Human Development Report 2009, compared to other ASEAN countries, the Philippines was ranked as having the third highest income inequality in 2009, only behind Brunei Darussalam and Myanmar.

The income gap between the rich and poor is still wide. An average annual income of the richest ten percent families is 18 times that of the poorest ten percent families in 2009 (Ericta 2010). In 2008, 26.5 percent of the population (almost 24 million persons) lives under the national poverty line. Among them approximately 16 million persons (18.42 percent) earn below \$1.25 a day (UNDP 2014: 181). Furthermore, the unemployment rate of the Philippines is significant at 7.3 percent on the average from 2004-2013. Although the country's economic growth was high at 7.2 percent in 2013, the unemployment rate (7.2%) and underemployment rate (19%) have not declined substantially (Bersales 2014). This indicates that economic growth does not create widespread employment, mainly because job opportunities are concentrated only in the service sector, such as call centers, and not in the industrial sector. In addition, the GDP growth results from increasing remittance of the Oversea Filipino Workers (OFW), who work abroad to send money back to their families in the Philippines (Parrenas 2001; Bayangos and

Jansen 2011). A recent survey indicates that “one of every three Filipinos” wants to leave the country because ‘they have no hope’” (King 2008: 1).

The City of Manila is the capital of the Philippines, and is a part of the greater Metro Manila. Metro Manila is comprised of 17 local cities. Since World War II, Metro Manila has become a crowded megacity, because many poor people migrate from the provinces to seek a better life. Metro Manila has a population 11.86 million (Erica 2012). Although, its land contributes to 0.20 % of the country land area, its population represents 13 % of national population (Tomeldan et al 2014: 47). In 2007, it was estimated that about 21 % of households in Metro Manila live in informal settlements (Cruz 2010 quoted in Tomeldan et al 2014).

Social polarization can be seen clearly in the urban context of Metro Manila. Since the early 1990s, the Philippines has moved toward liberalization and Metro Manila has competed with other cities in Southeast Asia to become a global city and attract international corporations (Sassen 1991). Many skyscrapers are located in Makati City, the business district in Metro Manila. The Ayala family are major real estate developers who own precious land in this city (Karaos 1995: 35). Other global development projects are the Ortigas Center Business, the location of Asian Development Bank, and Fort Bonifacio Global city (Michel 2010: 389). These megaprojects similarly provide multi-purpose facilities including business, residence and recreation to make these areas exclusive for the millionaires, who will not be annoyed by the poor (Michel 2010: 397-398).

My research took place throughout the City of Manila, because I walked with homeless people to find resources for survival. My primary sites included Rizal Park and a nearby area, which local people call *Luneta*. In Luneta, the tension between the government and homeless people is high, because the area is close to popular tourist spots, and Luneta itself is where many

national ceremonies take place. Rizal Park is dedicated to Jose Rizal (1861-1896), a national hero. Baywalk is another place that I slept for several months. It is a tourist spot along the Manila Bay. Other places include Lawton, Ermita, Paco, Ayala Bridge, and Otis Street. I slept on the sidewalk on Otis Street for almost a year. Walking around and sleeping on sidewalks with street people allowed me to get insight into how street people search for resources for survival, and how they adapt to street life.

In Manila, it is not difficult to see people surviving in public places, such as scavengers roaming around with their sacks or puchcarts, vendors at street corners, beggars in front of a church, prostitutes on the streets, and street children in the market. However, I recruited participants in this study by considering those who had no place to go back to and had to sleep in public places as homeless people. Some people might spend a lot of time on the street. But if they could go back to some other place to sleep, they were not included in this study. This included people such as street vendors, prostitutes, or beggars who either could afford rent or stayed with their relatives. I will explain about prostitutes and beggars further in Chapter Six. In addition to homeless adults, Manila also has many street children. Some street children are accompanied by their parents, but others are not. Because street children have more protection than homeless adults, this dissertation focuses on the least protected, namely the homeless adults².

In addition, none of my participants were people with psychiatric problems. In Manila, this group of people can be seen on the street, but they are quite different and isolated from the

² In the Philippines, as in other countries, more NGOs support street children more than homeless people. For example, several NGOs, such as Child Hope Philippines, Bahay Tuluyan, Tulay ng Kabataan Foundation etc, provide assistance for street children, such as free housing, food and education. Some of these organizations get support from international organization because children are perceived as having to be protected. For further research and information about street children please see Panter-Blick 2000; Torress 1996; Njodr st al 2008; Merrill 2010; Maria et al 2011.

homeless people whom I studied. Their symptoms of mental illness were severe as many never bathed, wore dirty clothes, and some were almost naked. They did not associate with people who attended soup kitchens. Therefore, Filipinos perceive mentally ill persons on the street differently than other people on the street as you can tell from the different words they used to identify these people.

In the local language, homeless people are called by different terms. The most common term that was used among homeless people is *yagit*; literally meaning floating garbage. Examples of other terms for homeless people are *taong kalye* and *taong langsgangan*. Both terms similarly mean street people. These terms have different connotations and I will analyze them in Chapter Seven. People with psychiatric troubles who roamed the streets with dirty clothes are called *taong grasa* (human grease). Moreover, since I personally have no background knowledge about mental illnesses to study this group appropriately, this group was not a part of this study. This group of people needs to be studied in a specific project. Therefore, I do not claim that my study covers all populations on the street.

Description of chapters

This dissertation is comprised of 11 chapters. After this introductory chapter, Chapter Two describes my experience of learning to adjust to street life from my initial awkwardness to becoming a part of street people's society. Chapters Three and Four explain the causes of homelessness in the Manila. Chapter Three describes the life history of fourteen homeless persons. It reveals the complicated pathways of becoming homeless, pathways which cannot be explained by a single factor. Chapter Four employs Paul Farmer's concept of structural violence to analyze the causes of homelessness in Manila. It traces the history of the Philippines since it

was colonized to the Marcos era to analyze how the Philippines has become trapped in a state of chronic poverty. I analyze further how high unemployment rates affects the real lives of the poor. Next I examine why people with family problem are more susceptible to becoming homeless, and how to understand drug abuse in the context of family violence and economic hardship.

Chapter Five, Six and Seven explain how victims of structural violence cope with their hardship both materially and cognitively. Chapter Five is composed of two parts. The first part explains how people adjust to street life when they have to live on the street. The second part describes the simplest ways homeless people seek food to survive, namely attending soup kitchens provided by faith-based organizations. Chapter Six illuminates the subsistence strategies of homeless people; describing how they can earn money. I divide subsistence methods into three groups: being employed, creating improvised jobs, and volunteering to receive rewards. Chapter Seven discusses homeless peoples' self-narratives, and how they maintain their self-esteem.

Chapter Eight examines how governmental and non-governmental organizations' programs affect the lives of homeless people. This chapter is comprised of two parts. The first part analyzes the government's programs which includes both support for and arrest of homeless people. The second part shows that most faith-based organizations do not address ways in which homeless people may overcome homelessness. They only support homeless people to survive on the street day to day.

Chapter Nine illustrates the difficulties of street people to overcome homelessness. Some homeless people go back and forth between the street and having a job and residence. However, some homeless people can adapt to street life well, and do not plan to find accommodations elsewhere. Last, Chapter Nine tells the tragic stories of some homeless people who encounter

insurmountable difficulties, including those who turn to crime, are victims of street violence, and die on the street.

Chapter Ten analyzes how street life can be enjoyable and endurable. This chapter highlights the issue of social suffering. It begins by telling the stories of enjoyable moments of street life and further analyzes how such enjoyment happens. Next, it conceptualizes how homeless people in Manila think of suffering.

The last chapter offers my final thoughts on the ways in which homeless people just get used to street life. They calculate their possibilities to leave the street and their life on the street and decide to live on the street. When they get used to street life, many find that it is not so hard. Finally, I discuss the implications of the conceptualization that homeless people get used to street life. It proposes that marginalized people are not always suffering and victims of symbolic violence, as homeless people can live with their hardship, maintain their self-worth, and still criticize unfair system simultaneously.

Chapter 2

Immersion in street Life

“Why don’t you go to your embassy?” A homeless person asked me this while I was attending a soup kitchen on Sunday afternoon. I asked him what he was talking about. He replied that he heard I had lost my wallet and passport. He suggested, therefore, “You should contact your embassy, so that you can go back to your country.” This is an example how street people perceived me when I hung out and slept on the sidewalk with my homeless friends in 2011. I replied that I did not have a problem with my passport and further explained that I was there because it is a part of my study. I am not sure whether he understood my explanation. I have never heard of any other foreign students who immersed themselves in the daily life of street people as I did, sleeping on a sidewalk and eating free food at a soup kitchen. Therefore, it was difficult for the homeless people I met to understand what I was doing. Dissertation fieldwork for the PhD degree in anthropology sounds weird to many of them.

This chapter explains the process of my learning about and experiencing daily life with street people, how I went along with street people and created friendships in 2011, and 2013-14. It also introduces the research sites I used through the stories I tell of hanging out with street people. The stories will show the interaction between me and homeless people, what they think about me, and how I tried to immerse myself in street people’s society. This process illuminates how I learned, little by little, to adjust myself to street life, and to create rapport between me and them. Nonetheless, I also reflect on the limitations of my position. Finally, this chapter argues that doing participant observation with street people is necessary to create trust and a clear

understanding between the researcher and participants. Without trust and a clear understanding about the objectives of the research, homeless people are prone to not tell the facts about their lives.

I went to Manila the first time in 2004 to conduct research in slum communities for two months. During that visit I got to know some NGOs working with slum dwellers. Next, I went to Manila again in June 2010 to explore potential topics for my dissertation. I spent two weeks visiting slum communities and public places, talking with street people before finally deciding to focus my dissertation project on street people.

I went to Manila again for my pre-dissertation fieldwork for 10 weeks from May to July in 2011. This time I learned a lot from my experience on the street, such as what homeless people think about me, a foreign researcher. I also created friendships with some street people, many of whom helped me when I went back to do my dissertation fieldwork in 2013-2014. During this phase of the research, I spent 14 months total immersed in the everyday lives of street people, first, for seven months in January- August 2013, and later, for another seven months in September 2013 - April 2014.

Before embarking on my PhD program and conducting research in Manila, I had experience doing fieldwork with street people in Bangkok, Thailand and Tokyo, Japan. What I learned from these previous experiences, I was able to apply to my fieldwork in Manila. For example, I prefer to carry out my daily activities as similarly as possible to the street people I work with. I learned that this helps me become close to them in a short time. I came to realize that it takes time before homeless people understand my intentions and trust my objectives. Therefore, I did not expect that people will tell me the truth about their life at the beginning of

our conversations. Nevertheless, I still had to learn many things in Manila that were different from my previous experiences.

Pre-dissertation fieldwork with street people in 2011

Wondering about me

“Where is your companion?” a homeless person asked me in the late morning of June 2011 during my pre-dissertation fieldwork at Rizal Park also called Luneta. Rizal Park is the biggest public park in Manila City. Many street people hang-out in the park and nearby. The homeless person asked me this question, because in the previous two weeks when I went to Rizal Park, I had companions. They were student interns. My friend, a staff member of a non-government organization working with urban poor, helped me when he knew that I planned to do my dissertation fieldwork with street people in Manila. He assigned a group of students, who interned at his foundation, to collaborate with me by conducting a survey with street people at Rizal Park. Although his foundation does not work with street people, he kindly supported my research project. As a result, I was able to join the student interns and enter the world of homeless people in Manila. However, after two weeks, these students finished their program. I had to go to Rizal Park alone.

The homeless people at Chess Plaza in Rizal Park wondered why the students no longer accompanied me. I explained that the students did their internship only for a short time. The homeless people wondered further that if I was a student also, why I did not finish my project as quickly as those other students did. I explained that I am a PhD student and doing my pre-dissertation investigation for two months. I found that my explanation was useless, because my Tagalog at that time was not good enough yet. The way I explained my situation was too

complicated for them to understand. They do not have much experience with “research” and a “PhD student”. I tried to explain in a different way that I am a doctoral student. I was glad when a homeless person acted like he understood. He said, “I see. It means after you graduate and I am sick, you can treat me.” I had to explain that a doctoral student is not about being a medical doctor. I learned later that it is easier for some to understand if I simply say that I am studying for a doctorate degree.

Therefore, a better way to explain what I was doing on the streets is to show them, not just tell them. I told them that I was now alone. I had no companion. I said that I wanted to experience street life. At first, it seemed that they did not believe me. I said that I would like to sleep outside as they did. Pedro, my first homeless friend, asked me back “Are you sure? Do you want to sleep on a sidewalk? You will know how cold it is.” At that time, I felt ridiculous. I had already spent two winters in Madison, Wisconsin, where temperatures reached the negative digits. Manila is a tropical area. Its temperature should not be colder than in Madison, I thought. However, during the next week, I found that I was wrong, because when I lived in Madison, I lived inside a building and had a heater. In contrast, when I slept on a sidewalk without a sweater, it was quite cold. When a typhoon hit Manila and it was windy, I was so cold that I could not sleep.

My innocence and awkwardness

On the first day that I went to Chess Plaza alone, after asking me why I was alone, some street people approached to sell things to me and offer services for a fee. For example, one offered used items, such as CDs and books, but I declined. I said that it is not necessary for me. Another one asked me whether I wanted a massage. He would charge 300 pesos for his services.

I refused this, too. My experience told me that I should not give in to their requests easily, because they might do the same in the future. My aim was for them to understand that I want to experience street life, not live like a tourist.

On that day, I was impressed with Pedro. He had nothing to sell me and did not try to take advantage of me. Even though he could not speak English and my Tagalog was not good yet, we could communicate. While I was hanging-out and observing people at Chess Plaza, a vendor walked past selling fried noodles and rice. In fact, vendors were prohibited in the Rizal Park. I was so impressed that homeless people pooled their money to buy rice and noodle for 20 pesos. It was really cheap, because generally customers pay 40 pesos for a meal. I did not share the meal by saying I had eaten already. Then, four or five people ate together. They mixed the rice and noodles in a plastic bag and ate with their hands. I saw a beautiful picture of street life. Although they were poor, they shared their food and even asked me to join them.

Because my Tagalog was not yet fluent, Pedro looked for street people who could speak English so that we could better communicate. He found William and asked him to join us. William said that he was a new person at Chess Plaza. I was comfortable with William, because I could communicate with him and I felt that he did not ask things from me. I told him that I heard Bumbay provided a soup kitchen for street people, and I wanted to go there. Bumbay is the way Filipino call Indian Filipinos, but in this context it meant a specific Sikh Temple. Even though he had never gone there before, William asked others for information and offered to go with me to Bumbay.

William and I set out walking from Luneta to Bumbay at 6.00 PM. We understood that Bumbay would start offering food at 7.00 PM. However, when we arrived there around 6.30 PM, it was too early. A group of about ten persons were waiting on the street opposite the Sikh

Temple. William asked others about the procedure for receiving food and learned that recipients had to prepare their own plastic bag for rice and bean curry, but we had not known and had not brought any bags with us. He went to buy a plastic bag from a vendor. However when the vendor discovered that we needed the plastic bags for receiving free food, she gave us bags for free. We waited around until 8 PM. I felt hungry and hoped that the people inside the temple would finish their praying soon. I wrote in my notebook “now I really understand the meaning of being hungry.” In fact, we had to wait until 8.30 PM. Finally, a security guard waved his hand to signal that people could cross the street to wait in front of the Sikh temple.

I remembered that while falling in line to get food I was so hungry. I was too tired and hungry to say anything. I was afraid, even, to look at others who I was not familiar with yet. On the first round, I got *munggol* (bean curry), chapati (Indian bread), milk with rice and fried cauliflower. I ate, while we were walking back to Luneta. I was reminded of my mother’s instructions when I was young that I must not eat when I am walking. It is bad-manners, she said. If I am hungry after school, I have to sit down and eat. Today I was so hungry; I violated my mother’s instruction.

On the way back, I was so thirsty. I thought William was thirsty too. I led him to a convenience store and offered to treat him to a soft drink, but he declined. He said we were friends; I did not need to treat him. Therefore, I just bought juice in a small package for us. He further told me that many people at Chess Plaza had told him to ask for money from me, but he explained to them that I was not rich. I was a student and only had an allowance for daily expenses. At that time, I really appreciated him.

When we arrived at Chess Plaza, many people were surprised when they found out that I went to wait for free food at Bumbay. They thought that I was crazy to go to Bumbay. That night

Pedro, and William and I slept outside together at Baywalk. I sensed that Pedro was concerned about me. He taught me how to protect my bag from thieves, because he had previously been a thief himself. He taught me that I had to turn the front side of my backpack down, so that others could not open my bag easily. I also had to insert my arm into a bag strap, so that someone could not pull my bag away from me while I was sleeping. I must hide my slippers by putting them under my mat. He even suggested that I should use a slipper as my pillow, but I was uncomfortable doing this. Pedro arranged for me to sleep between him and William presumably for my protection.

After having been impressed by William's friendliness, I gained a valuable lesson. In the next few days, I had to go to Divisoria, a crowded market, to fix my cellphone. It was the first week that I was alone in Luneta. I carried a digital camera. My idea was that I would take photographs of homeless people at Chess Plaza and gave them a picture of themselves to create friendship. On the day I was scheduled to go to Divisoria, William asked me whether I was carrying my camera. When I replied yes, he said that I still looked like I was a foreigner, and I would be a target of pickpockets. He suggested, therefore, it would be better that he kept the digital camera for me. Then he went with me to Divisoria with another guy. When I was waiting for someone to fix in my cellphone, he said that he would go to a toilet. I did not realize that it was a trick. He left and did not come back. I paid for my lesson with my camera.

After having realized that William had already left, I did not care much about the camera. My first feeling was that I did not want to lose a friend. I thought that he was nice and helpful to me. If he needed money, he could have asked me, I would have supported him. However, many people told me that I was very innocent. William pretended to be nice and made me trust him.

Another homeless person told me a key statement that I kept it in mind for the entire remainder of my fieldwork. He said “don’t trust anybody, even me.”

After this incident, I was much more careful than before. Many homeless people are friendly and helpful, but I could not trust them completely. I never again carried a camera to Luneta. Although I still carried a cellphone for an emergency situation, I never used it in front of others. I hid my money. When I spent money, I showed that my small wallet had only coins and small bills, such as twenty pesos (half a dollar).

At the beginning of my pre-dissertation fieldwork in 2011, my appearance was still different from street people. Even though I was conscious of this issue and avoided wearing good clothes, my old clothes were still better than homeless people’s clothes. Particularly, the backpack that I usually used when I was in Madison, made me appear different from other homeless people. Santos, a homeless person at Chess Plaza, threw his small bag and shirt at me and said, “Boonlert, change your bag and your shirt. You know...many people look at your bag and think about what is in your bag, because your bag is new.” He further suggested, “Don’t bring your money to Luneta. You will know who your true friend is.” I used Santos’s bag for a week while I looked for a used bag. I returned Santos’s and began carrying a used bag that I bought for 40 Peso (\$1).

At that time, although I thought that I was spending my money frugally, I learned later that I was not careful enough. My spending caused many people to think that I was rich. I did not yet realize that using only coins to buy cigarettes for someone is meaningful on the street. It indicates that I had “a lot of” money, and that I was different from street people. Eventually, I learned to decline, when someone asked me for a coin.

Went along with Pedro

A positive result of losing my camera is that I gained a friend. Pedro and I became close friends after that. Nonetheless, many people at Chess Plaza told me that I should not trust Pedro either. They warned me that Pedro might have known William intended to trick me. However, after observing Pedro's manner, I was quite confident that he was not an accomplice to William's trick.

Pedro liked to act like he was my escort. His personality, which was always noisy and argumentative, along with his tattoos from jail caused many people to perceive him as a gangster. He had been homeless for more than ten years, therefore he knew many street people, particularly through comradeships he developed while in jail. Accordingly, he could protect me at some level. At least, I would not be beaten by other gangsters and street drinkers. He introduced me to other street people, too. Some of his associates were always drunk and really dirty. I might have been unable to approach them, if Pedro did not introduce me to them. Nonetheless, because of Pedro's notoriety many people warned me to change my companion. For example, a homeless person told me that Pedro is *siga* (a trouble maker). If I accompany him, I will get a trouble too. Another one said, "Every time I see you and your friend, your friend is drunk." Another one said that Pedro is always noisy. He said, "He [Pedro] is the last one whom I will ask to join my drinking."

At that time, Pedro was not actually a street person, because he had a wife. His wife's family supported her to live in a makeshift house in a slum community not far from Luneta. However, he did not always go back to his wife's house. He said how he could stay at the house if he had no job or income for his family. Therefore, he had to hang out and find makeshift jobs

on the street. On days that he could earn an income, he would go back to his house, which was about two or three times a week.

One night Pedro wanted to go back home to give money to his family. He asked another homeless person to accompany me. Pedro told this person to make sure that I would not have any problems. I told Pedro that he did not need to worry about me. I could handle things myself. Actually, I wanted to find someone whom I already knew instead of the person Pedro suggested. Then Pedro went to his wife's house. When Pedro's associate wanted to go to sleep, I said I was not sleepy yet, and I assured him I would accompany someone else to go sleeping. Around 10 PM, Santos, Larry, Janice, Alba, and I went to sleep. I did not realize that there was some tension among this particular group when they drank liquor. I then saw Pedro was waiting for me on the way to the sidewalk where we always sleep. He said that he went home and gave money to his wife, but he worried that I might not have a companion. Therefore he came back and waited for me.

Before we went to sleep, Larry urinated on the sidewalk. He could speak English, therefore others thought that I listened to and trusted him. Suddenly Santos said to me "don't trust him." Meanwhile, I did not understand why they quarreled. Larry got angry because he was discredited. Santos argued that when Larry peed, he turned his penis toward Santos's side intentionally. It meant he wanted to show his penis to Santos's girlfriend. Immediately, they began to fight and Santos drew blood.

That night, Pedro, Larry, and I slept close together. We, three persons, slept on two small sheets, which was a tight squeeze. Before sleeping, I thought about a story I had heard that street people will take revenge on their enemy, when their enemy is sleeping. The avenger will throw a big stone at his enemy's head. I began to wonder what would happen if Santos threw a stone at

Larry while I was sleeping next to him. Fortunately, Pedro calmed things down. He told Santos and Larry that they are friends and their fighting was behind them. There was no more fighting between them.

However, I learned that no one could guarantee that I would be safe. I had to take care of myself. On another night that Pedro wanted to go to sleep at his wife's house, he tried to help me again. He suggested that I sleep with his friends, whom I already knew. They always got drunk on liquor and sniffed glue. I told Pedro that I had other friends whom I could accompany and sleep with at Baywalk. However, he insisted that I would be safe with his friends. Although I felt uncomfortable with these drunken guys, I did not want to make them feel bad that I did not trust them. I decided to sleep with this group. They were glad, when they found out that I would sleep in the same place with them. They slept in front of a franchise fast-food store. One guy gave me his sleeping place, so that I would be comfortable. However, I was annoyed by street children, who noticed that I was a new face. Finally a street person punched them in order to stop them from annoying me. I was worried before falling asleep, because I saw all of them were sniffing glue and getting high. Nonetheless, I passed that night well.

A few days later, I asked Pedro about this group. He replied that he drank with them, and then he had a quarrel and fought with them. I realized that I was lucky that nothing had happened to me when I slept with them. I did not know them well, and anything could happen when they drank. When I told others that I slept with this group, because Pedro wanted to go home, many people were critical of Pedro for leaving me with others.

Pedro also had enemies and I had to be careful. I noticed that when I walked with him along Baywalk, he did not want to walk too far. He looked carefully at everything along the way and said that we should not walk too far because it is dangerous. He explained that there were

many thieves, but I thought he was worried about facing his enemies who might hang out there. Moreover, I was with him when he drank and hit others. I feared it might cause others to understand that I was a gangster also. That night, he and his friends drank at a bus stop on a sidewalk. It was raining and many people waited at the bus stop. Then his group saw someone sitting on the other side of the bus stop and asked him if he was not their companion why he was there. The man knew that he was being threatened and tried to flee. Immediately, Pedro was the first one who started hitting him and then his friends did the same. This man had to run across the street.

Over the next few days, I heard that many from the rival group had a knife. It was lucky that Pedro and I were not there. I cannot imagine what would have happened, if I had been with Pedro when he faced this group. Would I help him?

Nevertheless, during my pre-dissertation visit to Manila, I was comfortable accompanying Pedro. We were buddies. Even when I was not with him, he knew my schedule. I slept in the same place he did almost every night. When I wanted to go to a soup kitchen, which is called a feeding program in the Philippines, he accompanied me. In fact, he did not usually go unless he was joining me. When he knew that I needed to interview street people, he helped me by asking his friends to give me an interview.

I encouraged Pedro to find a job. He earned his income by calling passengers to board a jeepney, a public transport vehicle, and receiving a commission from the driver. He could earn 100-200 pesos a day on working days, but he earned nothing on weekends, because school was closed and there were no passengers. I accompanied him and tried to call passengers as he did, but I failed. First, I did not know many places in Manila well, so I could not tell passengers where a jeepney would be going. Second, my Tagalog pronunciation was not good. I cannot

pronounce “r” clearly, but Filipino Language needs a strong “r”. Therefore, when he called passenger, I just sat in the shade, observing him and the passengers, and taking notes.

My relationship with Pedro can be illustrated by an accident that occurred on the same night that he tried to hit the other homeless person in the story I narrated above. On that night, he was drunk and while running across a street, he was hit by a car. I witnessed the car hit him. I thought that it was a serious accident, because his body bounced off the hood of the car more than ten meters, and his head hit the ground. Another person was hit in the same incident. The car driver brought Pedro and the other person to a hospital. I and another bystander went with them, also.

I experienced firsthand how homeless people are discriminated against at a hospital. The car owner looked down on us with disgust, because he perceived us as indigent. He asked Pedro his address, accused him of being drunk, and blamed the accident on him. The police did not detain the driver, and he left the scene without taking any responsibility.

Fortunately, Pedro’s injuries were not serious. He had no broken bones, and his brain was not affected. The problem was that after his check up, the hospital did not allow us to stay inside. We had to leave a building, although it was after 12 PM and raining. Finally, we found a place to sleep, and asked for a cardboard box to lie down on from other street people. The next morning, I had to help him because he could not walk well. I told him that last night he was very intoxicated, not only because of liquor, but also from sniffing. As a result, he got in an accident. He thanked me and said “you have never left me. You are with me when I need you.”

However, sometimes I wanted to walk around to get to know other street people who did not hang out at Chess Plaza. I did not need Pedro to assist me all the time, and, furthermore, his behavior made some people uncomfortable. Sometimes, he was stubborn and I was ashamed. For

example, he smoked in prohibited areas. I was embarrassed when, while we were walking to our sleeping spot, he touched the breast of a sleeping woman.

Many people told me that Pedro took advantage of me. However, I disagreed. I defended him. I explained to others that I did not buy food for Pedro. We shared our food. Although my contribution to our food share was more than his, Pedro contributed to our food also. Only sometimes did Pedro ask me for some coins to pay for cigarettes, drinking water, and toilet fees. Nonetheless, what I thought was trivial, others believed was evidence that Pedro was taking advantage of me. A homeless person wrote on my note book “take care, not to be fooled.” He thought that I was fooled by Pedro. Later I learned that “not to be fooled” is important for street life. [I am not sure to what extent it is important for other Filipinos.] Everyone has to be on guard to protect themselves from being fooled.

What made me perceive Pedro as being different from others is that I saw he had a sense of caring for his family. I asked him how his children were, when he came back from visiting his family. He replied “I am not sure whether I can say my children are fine. They eat only *lugaw* [porridge].” Sometimes, he said he missed his children, but he did not have transportation fees to visit more often. He had to walk about 4 kilometers to visit his family. I said to him that he was different from others, because he had children. He had to work and I encouraged him to stop drinking [the latter I could not do effectively]. As a result of my encouragement, he disciplined himself. When he had money, he went back to his family. I knew later that he appreciated my concern. He told me before I left Manila that he was thankful that I encouraged him to work. His wife also said that Pedro was better after I began accompanying him.

Other street people

Aside from Pedro, I met and came to know other street people during my pre-dissertation fieldwork in 2011. Many street people at Chess Plaza supported me beyond my expectations. For example, Santos, who had been abandoned as a baby, had a better understanding about my study than others. He suggested that “If you want to know about street people, you should go with different persons. Today you go with Pedro. He is a barker. Tomorrow you go with Alba. He is garbage scavenger. Then you go with Andy. He is a masseuse. You will know different ways of life.” His suggestion was quite helpful for me. Therefore, the next day I went with Alba.

I had an unforgettable experience with Santos on a night that Pedro went back to his house. When I searched for a companion at Rizal Park, Santos was looking for a companion also. He said that he would not sleep on the sidewalk alone, because it was dangerous. I went to sleep with him on the sidewalk without any roof. We were asleep for about one hour, but then it began to rain. We had to move to another place. We slept on a sidewalk near a hotel which has a roof. After we were sleeping for a while, we were awoken by a hotel security guard. We had successfully slept there before, but that night we could not. We had to find another place, while it was raining. Other sidewalks suitable for sleeping were already occupied by many others. Finally, we found a small place which was just large enough for two persons. We slept for a while, and were awoken again by a building owner, who wanted to walk past us to get inside. Nevertheless, they allowed us to sleep in front of their building. That night, I experienced how difficult it is for street people in Manila when it is raining.

Jordan was another nice friend. He was not a regular at Chess Plaza, because sometimes he went to work at a pier in a province outside of Manila for a few days or a week. When he came back to Manila, he would drink with people at Chess Plaza. In fact, drinking liquor was

prohibited at Chess Plaza. However people hid their drinking by transferring gin to water bottles. Jordan graduated from college and could speak English well. He helped me by explaining many things that I could not understand in my poor Tagalog in the early days of my research, including translating for Pedro when he wanted to express his feelings.

I also knew many people outside Chess Plaza. In my first two weeks, I accompanied student interns to survey street people. It gave me a chance to introduce myself to the street people there. Among them, I became close to Ate Reyna. When I met her in June 2011, she just was newly homeless. I realized that her character was different from other street people.

My first impression was that Ate Reyna was very generous. Although her life on the street was difficult; she was still concerned about others and shared her meager food with an old woman who had just run away from her house. She had two to three close friends, all were women. Later, I became close to her. I felt like she was my older sister. When I was with Pedro, I had to be careful all the time, because he got into quarrels easily, particularly when he was drunk. By contrast, with Ate Reyna, I felt comfortable and relaxed. Before I left Manila in 2011, Ate Reyna was the only homeless woman who gave me a hug. When I went back to Manila in January 2013, she ran to greet me with gladness on the first day that we met. My relationship with her never changed through my entire fieldwork until I finished in April 2014.

Although I learned a lot from my dissertation research in 2011, there were some limitations. I had not yet gained an authentic depth to street life yet. For example, Santos was cautious with me. We always shared ideas, when I was at Chess Plaza. Nevertheless, I never went anywhere with him. I slept with him at night and treated him to lunch a few times. At first, I understood that since he had a young girlfriend, he may have been uncomfortable to

accompany me. I later learned from Pedro when I went back to Manila in 2013, that Santos and Alba used drugs and did not want me to know about that.

After I spent four to five days outside, I went back to take a bath at my friend's office. I knew where street people went to take a bath, but I was uncomfortable to take a bath in a dirty, small, and hot bathroom. It was quite uncomfortable not taking a bath for several days, because I had not learned to take a bath outside. Instead of bathing, I just changed my clothes, which I brought with me in my bag.

I mostly hung out at Chess Plaza, therefore I did not know many people in other locations. My relationship with people outside Chess plaza was superficial. I interviewed 39 persons, but I am not sure whether they gave me real information.

Immersion in street life in 2013-2014

I returned to Manila in January 2013. I prepared to immerse myself in street life better than I did in 2011. My Tagalog had improved. I had learned not to be fooled. After spending a week looking for an apartment, I went to Luneta. Aside from many others, I met Pedro on the first day at Rizal Park. We were glad to meet each other again. He asked me to go with him to attend a prayer session that night to get free rice. We slept at Baywalk, and went to his wife's house in Baseco to give rice to his family the next day. Before we left his wife's neighborhood, I tripped over some wood and had a small wound on my foot.

Later I met Ate Reyna and accompanied her group. She was glad to meet me again. She introduced me to her friends. All were men and were friendly toward me. They believed that I was a student and were excited to have a new foreign friend. We went to sleep at Baywalk. This group was so nice. They earned their income from selling plastic mats which are called

“panapin” in Tagalog. Normally they were able to buy food from a vendor that sells cheap food for the poor. I spent my allowance buying food with them.

I had been with them only a week, when I had to go back to my room, because the small wound that I got in the slum community became worse. Although I was careful and bought alcohol to clean it, the wound became infected and swollen. My leg was painful and I could not walk well. Ate Reyna suggested I go back to take a rest. I realized the difference in our situation because I could go back to take a rest, but street people could not.

Before I went back to my place, I met Pedro by chance and realized that he was looking for me. He was drunk and asked me for money. He had never done this before when I accompanied him in 2011. I gave him 60 pesos and said it was for his family not for liquor. He insisted loudly that it was not enough. Previously, when I gave him a coin, he knew that he should accept it quietly. He knew he should not let others know that I gave him money, so that nobody else would ask me. My relationship with Pedro was not as good this time as in 2011, but we were still friends.

Adaptating myself at Karabao

After taking a rest for a week my leg recovered, and I went back to Rizal Park. Ate Reyna talked about Pedro’s behavior. She thought that I was scared of him and he threatened me to get money. I explained that I helped him because he was my friend. Nevertheless, I could not understand why he was acting that way; he never did before. After sharing information with her, I realized that his behavior might have been the result of my own mistake. Before I left Manila in 2011, I gave money to Pedro, around 500 pesos, because at that time he had an accident and was unable to walk for at least two weeks. I thought that he was my best friend and so I should

share with him and support him. However, Ate Reyna taught me about the Filipino's attitude toward foreigners that I had not previously realized. She said, "If you are a foreigner, it means you are rich. Filipinos think that if you are not rich, then how you can travel abroad."

Accordingly, when I gave money to Pedro, it confirmed his idea that I was rich. Therefore, he could ask money from me without causing me hardship. I kept her lesson in mind during the rest of my fieldwork, and spent my money carefully.

I spent around one and half months with Ate Reyna's group. I no longer hung-out at Chess Plaza for many reasons. First, there were not many homeless people at Chess Plaza. The park administration had set many new rules to prohibit street people from hanging-out at Chess Plaza. For example, those who carry a plastic bag for collecting recyclable items were no longer allowed to enter the park. Second, my old friends at Chess Plaza might perceive me as a rich person now and try to take advantage of me. For example, on the first day that I went to Chess Plaza upon my return to Manila, an old friend tried to talk with me. Later, I treated him to lunch. The next day, he met me again and asked me for 50 pesos. I did not give it to him, but his action implied how he thought of me. Third, I realized I needed to know many other street people who are not at Chess Plaza.

Ate Reyna's group hung out at Karabao in Rizal Park. The official name of Karabao is Quirino Grandstand. It is a part of Rizal Park and many celebrations take place there. There is a big field for demonstrations, and there are many trees around the field. It is called Karabao, because there are statues of Karabao (water buffalo), which can be seen when people walk from Jose Rizal's statue. Some people call Karabao "*taas*" which means the upper part of the park, because its location is higher than other parts of Rizal Park. Karabao was a great area. It is clean, quiet and has many trees, but there are not many street people. Nevertheless, it was good for me

to spend my first two months there to improve my Tagalog, and get to know many people who slept at Baywalk.

During this time, my life was not hard. As I said above, Ate Reyna' group earned income from selling plastic mats. Their income was not much, but they could afford to buy their lunch and dinner. I bought my food as they did. On some nights when they did not have enough money to buy a meal from the vendors, we went to the soup kitchen at Bumbay. On the first night that I went to Bumbay with the group, I was not yet used to walking so far. I felt tired. We had to walk about five kilometers round trip. The group went to take a bath at a public swimming pool. Actually it was free for swimmers, but we paid ten pesos unofficially to the staff of the pool, because we were not swimmers, but used the facility secretly.

My relationship with Ate Reyna and her friends was quite good. Nevertheless, I decided to change my place after my Tagalog got better, because there were not many people in this area. I was still impressed by their concern for me. Tatay Fernando told me that "it is correct that this area is too small for your study. You need to get acquainted with more people. By the way, if you face any problems, you can come back here anytime. Maybe you should go there during the daytime. If you are not sure whether you will be safe, you should come back to sleep with us." Another one said, "When you go to other areas, you take care of your belongings. Don't let others see that you have money in your wallet. You might let them see that you have only coins in your wallet. Be careful of your bag also."

Experiencing real street life

During mid-March of 2013, I started going to other areas. I got to know new street people, because, starting in February, I was a volunteer at a church every Sunday. I had already known the foundation that provides assistance programs for street people at Paco since 2011. I

thought that by becoming a volunteer I could contribute, even in a small way, to a support system that might make the lives of street people a little easier. I might get a chance to become acquainted with other volunteers as well. Six of the eight volunteers were former street people. Presently they had the ability to either rent or own a room in a squatter area.

The day that I first left Karabao was late morning on a Tuesday. There was a feeding program at Lawton, in a park near a bridge across Pasig River. Lawton is different from Rizal Park, because there is no security guard at Lawton. People can engage in many things that are prohibited at Rizal Park, such as lying down and collecting recyclable items. It was the first time that I went to a feeding program at Lawton. When I arrived there, I was familiar with many faces. I thought that many of them knew my face also, but only a few understood my objectives. While waiting for the arrival of feeding program staff, I sat with Eugene. I knew him from the feeding program where I was a volunteer. Eugene graduated from college; therefore he understood what I was doing. Eugene tried to explain to others what my project was about and why I was conducting research, but I thought many street people did not understand.

After finishing the feeding program at Lawton around noon, Eugene introduced me to another feeding program that I had never heard of before. He convinced me to go there by saying that it was not far and many people went there. I went with him. We walked across the bridge to the other side around 1 PM. It was sunny and really hot in Manila. The bridge was dirty and smelly. We walked around 30 minutes before arriving at the church. Many street people sat on a sidewalk beside the church. I remember feeling miserable, because I was really hot and sweaty. Moreover, I had to sit on a sidewalk that was dirty and smelly. Furthermore, when other people walked passed by, I could sense that they looked down on us. They covered their nose. It implied that we were dirty and smelly. In addition, I found out that the gate would not be opened

until 3 PM. It meant we had to wait for almost two hours. At that time, I told myself, I would not come here again next Tuesday.

Nonetheless, when the church opened, I went inside, and went directly to a toilet. I washed my face and took a rest. I felt refreshed and found that the situation was not so bad after all. I had already forgotten the bad feeling I had outside. The feeding program finished around 5.30 PM. Eugene wanted to go somewhere else and did not want me to go with him. I looked for another companion. I met an old woman and went back to Rizal Park with her. Her name was Nanay Joan. She was generous. On the way back to Rizal Park, I was tired and walked behind her. Nanay Joan was a strong walker despite carrying two bags and another backpack. It was difficult for me to understand how an old woman could adapt and survive on the street. In fact, we did not go back to Rizal Park. She did not like to enter Rizal Park, because she had many bags. Security guards at the park did not like persons who carried many bags to enter the park.

We took a rest at a bus stop on UN Street. We waited there with others for an hour, and then we went to Bumbay around 7 PM. We waited at Bumbay more than an hour before getting food. I was so hungry, but I could not eat much, because I was so tired. Nanay Joan suggested I keep some rice for my breakfast the next morning. We went back to sleep on the sidewalk not far from Bumbay. Around fifteen to twenty people were sleeping on the sidewalk in front of Arollo High School. Nanay was so nice. She asked me whether I had drinking water. If I did not have any, she would share her water with me. She made sure I hid my slippers and prevented my bag from being stolen. Before I slept I told myself, "This is the real street life." It was different from hanging out at Karabao. On the sidewalk here, it was very hot and smelly. There was also more commotion with people walking past the entire night.

The next morning, Nanay woke me up around 5 AM. When a street sweeper came close to us, people knew that they had to wake up. Starting at 5 AM, Nanay Joan, and I, along with another two persons walked across the river to Santa Cruz Church. A community near the church provided food for street people every day at 7 AM. Around 100-200 street people waited in front of the church every morning. However, the food was light, such as porridge, fried noodles and *Sopas* (macaroni cooked in soup). Nanay Joan taught me to put the rice that I had kept from the previous night into the porridge to make me full. Then we walked to a feeding program at another place that gives food on Wednesday late morning.

While I accompanied Nanay Joan, it gave me a chance to get to know street people who regularly went to several feeding programs. I learned the schedule of feeding programs. Each day homeless people walk to different places that provide a feeding program once a week. Only Santa Cruz and Bumbay provides food every morning and evening respectively.

However, after only ten days living a routine similar to street people, I got sick. Since the weather in Manila is so bad, my body could not adjust to the extremes of daytime heat and rain. I accompanied a couple to collect recyclables items, but it rained and I got wet. On that night, I had a headache and felt weak. While waiting in front of a church on Friday night with many street people, I had to sleep. Nanay Joan was so kind. She worried that I would be hungry, because I ate only porridge in a small cup for my dinner. She woke me up and gave me some food. Yet, I replied that I did not need any food. I just wanted to sleep.

That night I slept at an underpass in front of the church, because it rained. While I was sleeping, and suffering from a headache, many people came to look at someone who slept near me. People thought that, from his inaction, he may have already died. However, I was too weak to be scared. I just opened my eyes for a moment, and then continued sleeping until the police

came and woke all the people there, telling them to leave the area. Some said that this man died because he ate so much just before going to sleep. Others said that he had a nightmare or *bangungot* in Tagalog.

I had to look for a new companion the next week. I wondered if people suspected there might be more than a platonic relationship between me and Nanay Joan. There was an incident one night that confirmed it. One guy always asked me for change to buy a cigarette. Normally, only a few persons asked me for money like this, because my appearance was similar to homeless people already. Sometimes I gave it to him. That night, after coming back from Bumbay and before going to sleep, this guy asked me for a coin. I said I did not have any. He then asked me whether I was sure that I did not have any change. Nanay Joan got angry and yelled at him, asking why he always asked for money from me. She said I did not have money. This guy replied that he asked me not her. He asked her back why she became involved in our conversation and then he said “is he your husband?” I replied strongly “No.” I wondered then that some might think that Nanay Joan was my girlfriend. I had never thought about that issue before, because she was so much older. I noticed that some looked at me and seemed to wonder why I liked to accompany her, and why she was so kind to me.

“Is he a foreigner? Why is he here?”

By the beginning of April, I had a new companion. His name is Ben. Ben was nice to me during my entire dissertation fieldwork. Although he did not accompany me all the time, I learned a lot from him. I knew him first at the church where I was a volunteer, and met him later at a feeding program at Lawton. When the feeding program’s staff arrived, he told them that I was a foreigner. It made them interested in me; why was I there? I explained and learned later

that some of them did not believe or understand that I was a PhD student and doing dissertation fieldwork. Since street people rarely encounter a foreigner living on the street as I did, it was difficult for them to understand what I was doing. Therefore, they interpreted my presence based on their experience in different ways.

First, they thought that as a foreigner, I am rich. As I said above, it is a common Filipino's perception of foreigners. For example, when I talked to Ben, he liked to speak English with me. I told him that I understood that he wanted to practice speaking English with me. However, I did not like speaking English in front of many people, because others would notice that I was a foreigner and it would not be safe for me. I asked Ben "what would Filipinos think about me if they know that I am a foreigner?" Ben replied "they would think that you have a lot of money." I replied "yes" and further explained that I could not explain to everyone what I am doing at the same level I was able to explain to him. I was concerned some people might think that I was rich, and I would be a target of thieves. They might think that I have money or a camera in my bag. Ben agreed and avoided speaking English with me. Furthermore, by speaking Tagalog with me, he helped me improved my Tagalog.

In the same way, Bryan, who slept on the sidewalk on UN Street, liked to speak English with me. I talked to him in the morning during our walks to a feeding program. I asked him as I asked Ben, how Filipinos think about foreigners. He replied "they will think you are rich." He also realized that if some people knew I was a foreigner, they might do me harm. Bryan understood that it was better to not speak English with me.

My experience also confirmed my concern. While standing in line at Bumbay to get food, I heard someone ask my friend whether I was a foreigner. My friend replied, "Yes". Then the same person asked him whether I was rich. My friend replied "I don't know." I was upset

why he did not reply clearly that I was not rich. I saw the other person looking at my bag. Later, when I went back to sleep on a sidewalk, the person from the food program line walked past me and looked at my bag again. That night I had to be careful to keep my bag safe.

Second, many people thought that I had a problem in my own country and had fled to the Philippines. I heard this view the first time I hung out at Karabao. A homeless person told me that he understood my objective, but he said many others would think that I committed something wrong and fled to the Philippines. At that time I thought that this idea was ridiculous and too speculative.

Later, someone told me that I had been criticized. I wondered what it was about. He told me what someone said when he saw me at Bumbay and heard me introduce myself as a student. This person did not believe I was a student. He said I had a problem in my country and suspected that I was unable to go back to my country.

A brother, who taught Bible studies and gave food to street people, did not understand what I was doing, either. I had already told him that I was doing my dissertation. However on a day that he taught the Bible, he talked about sin. He used me as an example. He said that I was rich before, but I had sinned and that was why I was there. Another priest also made fun at me when I introduced myself and said that I came from Thailand. He said, “Are you wanted in your country?”

In the same way, my friend told me about an old person who went to Bumbay and saw me there almost every night for almost year. The old man thought that I committed a crime in Thailand. The old man said I should be deported from the Philippines.

Third, some think that I was in the Philippines because I lost money from gambling in a casino in the Philippines. I heard this story first in 2011. Homeless people at Chess Plaza said

that they helped a Korean who lost money gambling. They taught him how to survive while waiting for assistance from his family. Therefore, some suggested I should contact the Thai embassy and my family for assistance to go back to Thailand.

A government official also thought that I lost money gambling. An official of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) met me on the night that he went to survey street families. I was not part of his target group, because I had no children. At that time, I had already lived as street person for many months. He saw me and realized that I was a foreigner. He asked why I was there but immediately answered himself, saying, “You lost in gambling. It is useless. I know... foreigners come to the Philippines to play at the casinos.” He admonished me, feeling me that I should not engage in gambling. Many street people laughed, but he did not understand.

Do you believe that Boon is a student?

The important issue that made it difficult for others to understand my fieldwork was my research method, participant observation. A homeless person told me that he met a foreign researcher before, but he was different from me. He explained that the foreign researcher whom he met stayed in a hotel and came to interview street children. However, I slept on a street, not in a hotel, and I spent a long time conducting my research, not only a week or a month. He further revealed that even his wife, whom I had talked to many times, asked him if he believed that I was a student.

Jordan told me that he had an argument with another homeless person. He told me that he tried to explain to his friend that he had known me since 2011, and I was a student. However

his friend did not believe him. According to Jordan, his friend said about me “I saw him many places. He has been here a long time already. He is in line at many feeding programs.”

Ben helped me to understand why many others found it difficult to understand me. He asked me a key question after we had known each other around two weeks. He said “Boon, please don’t get angry at me. I have a question to ask you.” His question was, “What is anthropology? What does an anthropologist do?” I explained to him that an anthropologist would like to understand the life of others. I wanted to understand why people live on the street and how they can survive. He asked me further why I would like to experience street life. Why did I not do as other researchers do? He meant coming to interview people and going back home.

His question helped me to get to the point. Some homeless people encountered social workers, such as DSWD officials, who came to do interviews and then left. It was weird for them that I came and lived with them. I explained to Ben that the principal of anthropology is that anthropologists have to share their lives with the people whom they study in order to understand the life of those people “from their points of view.” Moreover, I explained that I had experience studying street people in Thailand and in Japan before. I knew that street people will not tell the facts about their lives, if they did not trust me. Therefore, I had to make friends with street people first. I asked him, if a social worker came here to interview him, on the first day that they met, what would Ben do. Ben replied that “I will lie to them.” He explained that many street people lie to social workers, because they expect that social workers are more apt to help them if they do. They make up a story so that social workers will be more sympathetic to them.

Not only did street people suspect my status, but also the administrators of a foundation that provides assistance programs for street people did. Different from other programs that allow anyone to attend their programs, this program allows only homeless people who have been

interviewed and proven to be qualified to attend the program. Accordingly, I had to introduce myself formally by showing my university letter and my student ID to the administrators of the foundation. After compromising, they allowed me to attend. Yet, I just discovered many months later that the administrators checked my status at the Immigration Office to verify whether I came to the Philippines legally. They also suspected that my university letter might be a fake since I applied to attend the program during an election campaign for Manila City Mayor. Due to the timing, the administrators suspected that I might be involved in local politics.

Later I accompanied Ben and his group. Ben told his friend, Jaymar, that I was student, but Jaymar did not believe it. When I introduced myself to Jaymar saying that I was a student, he seemed to believe me. Jaymar said that he heard from Ben already that I was a student, but he did not believe it. He explained that he did not hear it from me directly, so he thought Ben might be fooling him. He read the letter from the University of Wisconsin which I showed him. The letter introduces me and explains my objectives.

The last two stories above indicate that the life experience of many homeless people make it difficult for them to believe that I am a PhD student. In the case of the church administrators, they suspected me because of their worries about local politics. Moreover, in Manila people can obtain fake documents easily. Along Recto Avenue, many stores offer fake document services, such as counterfeit driver licenses and university diplomas. Therefore, it is possible that they thought even my university letter was faked. Jaymar's skepticism is understandable; street people always hear untrue stories. He did not believe anything easily. I had to show a university letter to convince people that I am a bona fide student.

I further learned that my student ID is more substantial than the university letter. My student ID, which has my photo on a card and an official background and materials, make it

appear more trustworthy than paper. For example, a street person wanted to introduce me to her relatives. Even after saying that I was Thai and came to do research, my appearance at that time made me look like I was a street person. She told me, “You show your student ID.” She knew if I did not show my student ID card, her family would not believe my identity.

Immersed in street life

I knew that it was not easy for people to understand my objectives. Therefore, I had to share experiences with them. I experienced many of the same things they experienced as I explained above, such as sleeping on the sidewalk, going to several feeding programs and avoiding spending money. When I was close with them, they gradually began to trust that I was a student. For example, I shared with them stories about my experiences in the US, and my knowledge about street people from my reading.

Usually, I spent six nights a week outside with street people. I slept five nights on a sidewalk on Otis Street, and slept at the church where I was a volunteer on Saturday night. Most of my friends knew that I rented a room for my belongings and I would go back to my place on Sunday night. I explained to them that I needed to use a computer and contact my family once a week. At first, I worried that the street people who know me might think that I rented a room and only pretended to be a street person. Yet I have never gotten a bad reaction from anyone on this issue. On Sunday afternoon, after finishing volunteering at the church, my friends knew that they would meet me again at Bumbay on Monday night.

The more time I spent on the street, the less people thought that I was rich. Many people suggested things that I might do to make my street life easier as if I really was poor. For example, while I was talking with a homeless person about a shower room, he suggested places

where I could take a bath by paying 15 pesos. Another one interrupted, and said “Look at him [me], how does he have money to pay for a bathroom? You should suggest to him how he can take a bath for free.”

When street people perceived that I was not rich, I received a great deal of kindness from them. I am really grateful. For example, one morning when I went to a feeding program in front of the Santa Cruz church, I failed to get any food. While I was in line, I felt faint. I could no longer stand in a line. I had to leave and sit down. A woman, who knew that I was a volunteer at church every Sunday, noticed that I left the line. At first, she understood that it was too hot for me to remain in line. After a while, when a staff person began giving out food to street people, I came back to the line. However, I was too late and the food ran out. I felt dizzy. The woman saw me, and gave me food. She said that she got two servings, and she could not finish all of it. Since the women’s line is shorter than the men’s, it is normal that a woman can get two servings, but a man may get nothing. In fact, many people, including me, knew that this woman is a prostitute. I felt much better after having food. Even though her life may be rough, she had compassion for others.

Likewise, at the Santa Cruz, others pitied me when I could not get food. Since I was almost at the end of the line, the food ran out before I could get any. I was unable to get into in the front of the line, because of the crowd. Many people always quarreled and fought to get food. Jhocas, who was my close friend, saw that I did not get any food, but she did. As I said above, the line for women was short. She and Earl were going to buy rice to supplement the noodles handed out by the food program, because noodles alone could not make them full. When Earl found out from Jhocas that I had no food, he bought rice for three, not only two, and shared their

noodles with me. In fact, he had only a little money from selling recycled items, but he bought rice for me.

Another impressive experience I recall was the day that I had a headache. Many people, who were waiting to sign in on an attendee list for a feeding program, noticed I was unwell. Someone gave me medicine, paracetamol. It was around 10 AM and street people had not normally had breakfast yet. Several people said that I should have food before taking medicine. Tatay Christ looked at me. He evidently guessed that I had not had breakfast yet and had no money. He gave me 20 pesos, so I could have food before taking the medicine.

A security guard at Rizal Park also thought that I was a street person. For instance, my friends quarreled with the security guards about the prohibition against standing on the grass. A guard spoke to them aggressively. My friends pointed to me and said that I was a foreigner and the guard should act appropriately in front of a foreigner. I also supported my friends by speaking in English in the hope that he would act politely. He was arguing with a woman. A security guard said, “Speak English, speak English. I know him [me]. He sells plastic mats at the upper.” He thought that I was pretending to be a foreigner by speaking English. In his view, I was a street person who sold plastic mats at Karabao. He might have seen me when I was hanging out with ate Reyna’s group and thought that I was a street person.

Another incident which indicated that I was successfully immersed in street life is when I was apprehended by Manila City for sleeping on a sidewalk. I always heard people talking about “bagansya” or vagrancy in English. In fact, the Anti-Vagrancy law had been amended already. However, a Manila City Ordinance still prohibited people from sleeping outside. On that night, I slept on a sidewalk on Otis Street as usual. I had slept there for five months already. Around 10 PM, I woke up, because I heard a motorcycle rider say to people that he was a DSWD official

and we had to move. Otherwise, if he came back again and we were still sleeping there, we would be arrested. I saw that some people who slept in front of the building nearby were in a van already. However, the van was already full, therefore they had to take those people first, before coming back to apprehend others. Some moved out to avoid being arrested. Nevertheless, my close friends still did not move. They said that the van did not look like a DSWD van, because the van did not have the letter either “DSWD” or “RAC” on its side. In a while, I fell asleep. Then I heard a voice. They had come back. I saw my friends running away fast. I tried to run too, but I was not fast enough. A police officer was able to grab ahold of my bag, and I stopped running. I did not feel that I was a criminal and needed to run. I saw two police officers and 5-6 officials, who I later discovered were from the Manila Department of Social Welfare (MDSW), not DSWD.

I and my six friends were brought to the RAC – Reception and Action Center. Street people knew that if they were arrested, they would be sent to RAC to be interviewed and evaluated before being released. When we arrived at RAC, it was almost 12 AM. I saw more than one hundred people who were waiting to be interviewed. I found out later that it was a mass sweep operation that night. It was not so serious. I met many friends inside RAC. However, I did not know exactly whether we would be released and when.

My friends were excited to find out how MDSW officials would react when they knew that I was a foreigner. An official interviewed me, and I replied that I was a student from Thailand and doing my dissertation fieldwork for my PhD Degree in Anthropology. They were friendly and interested in my research, particularly my research method, which included sleeping on the sidewalk. However they could not tell me when I would be released. The officer said that after finishing the interviews, she would make recommendations to the RAC staff. Then,

tomorrow morning, an official would review the recommendations and make decisions. I did not get any privileges. That night, I slept inside RAC, but it was still outside the building, and I was released the next morning.

The incident of being apprehended reminded me of the conversation I had with a homeless person in June 2013. I asked him what is inside RAC after I knew that he had been apprehended by RAC. At that time, RAC apprehended homeless people to “clean” the public parks for the celebration of Independence Day on June 12. I asked him many questions about his experience inside RAC. He said “Hey... you want to be a member of street society, don’t you? If you don’t have the experience of being arrested, you are not a member of street people yet.” Therefore, after my release I felt I was finally a complete member of the street peoples’ society.

Moreover, by being arrested with people, I could sympathize with them. At that time, I had interviewed more than 60 persons already. One of the questions that I asked is what is the most difficult aspect of the street life? Many people answered that being arrested is the most challenging. Nevertheless, it was difficult for me to understand how hard it is, because I had not been apprehended yet. I also had a university letter. So I knew that even though I may be apprehended, I would be treated differently. However, after being apprehended, I got the feeling of being scared. An official told me before releasing me that I should not go back to sleep on a street again. It violated a Manila City Ordinance. The next night, my friends moved to sleep in other places. Nevertheless, some, including me, still slept in the same place. They were scared, but they had no other place to go. That night, I had a sense of fear; I was scared of being arrested.

After I had immersed myself in street life for a long time, my feelings became increasingly similar to street people. On one night that I waited for food at Bumbay, I got in line

near the end of the line as I usually did. However, that night, there were many more people than usual, and there was not enough food. The rice had run out just before I arrived at the head of the line. A volunteer at the Sikh temple went inside the church to bring more rice. I knew that at least everyone could get rice. However while he was inside, there was disorder outside, because some who already had gotten rice and bean curry in the first round, walked from the line to compete to get an extra helping of curry. So, when a volunteer came out from inside and saw that many people were not properly in line, he got angry and said he would not give out any more rice. I had waited in line and reacted immediately, saying, "I am not being disorderly. I am waiting only. I have not gotten anything yet." I showed my empty container. After saying that, I wondered at my automatic reaction. My feelings had become the same as those of street people. I was scared that if I could not get food, I would be hungry. I had no idea where I would go to buy food. I had not bought my dinner for a year already. Next, a volunteer pulled on my hand and gave me food. He might have felt pity for me, a pitiful one among homeless people.

The entire duration of my fieldwork was 16 months. During that time I met many nice people, but I also faced a cruel person. His name is Jerry. I met him for the first time when I accompanied volunteers of the church to go to Santa Cruz. After finishing our service at the church on Sunday, we provided an outreach program for street people who did not go to church. While I was preparing the megaphone, this man came to talk to me. It was my first month in Manila, and my Tagalog was not good yet. My appearance was still different from street people. He noticed and asked me whether I was Chinese. I said no politely, adding that I was Thai. Then he said something, but I could not understand. I just smiled and he left.

After finishing our service, the volunteers were taking a rest when this man came over to us again. He tried to talk to me again. I could not understand his question, but I did notice that

his manner was not friendly. He looked at me, but I avoided eye contact. Eye contact on the street can create tension (Gowan 2010:76). Then the stranger changed his attention to another person in my group. He spoke in an aggressive way and then punched one of our group. He acted like he wanted to fight with us. We avoided a fight and he left. I felt really bad during this incident. We had volunteered to serve street people, but now we were being threatened by one of them.

After this incident, I met this man again three weeks later when I went to a feeding program at Santa Cruz. I was reminded that I had to be careful. At that time, my companion was Nanay Joan. I hoped if this man wanted to argue with me, Nanay Joan might help me stop a quarrel, before he hit me. Nonetheless, I confess that sometimes I felt uncomfortable, because I had to be careful all the time to prevent any opportunity for arguments to arise. I stopped going to the feeding program in the morning at Santa Cruz, because he was usually there. When my friends asked me why I did not go there, I said I wished to avoid any problems. Ben said my action was correct and added that learning to avoid having a problem is an important aspect to surviving on the street. He explained that he also lived on the streets to avoid an enemy in his community. Jaymar tried to convince me to go Santa Cruz and said if I had a problem, they would protect me, but I disagreed. I did not want them to face a problem because of me. After all, this man was quite aggressive. When I described his behavior, some recognized the man. They knew his name and confirmed that he was a tough guy and always looking for a fight. One person suggested I avoid confronting him. Later he no longer hung out around street people. I saw him driving a tricycle near Santa Cruz. I found out later that he and Ben are friends. They used drugs together before. My fears about him declined.

I am not a street person.

I cannot claim that I am a street person. I tried to immerse myself in street people's society, but I remained different from them. Aside from having a rented room, there were other aspects that separated us. First, I usually drank clean water. Mostly, street people drink water from the pipeline in a toilet. I found that it was not safe. In the Philippines, people generally buy drinking water from a water station. It is a store that sells drinking water for five pesos a liter. I did the same. Second, I had never washed my clothes outside. Homeless people can wash their clothes for free at the church where I was a volunteer on Sunday morning. I tried to wash my clothes by hand in my preliminary fieldwork in 2011. I found that it took time, was very hard work, and it tired me out. I paid 70 pesos a week (\$2) for my laundry every week. I wrote the following in my notebook after watching street people wash their clothes:

“I saw people washing their clothes for many weeks, but I never thought about it seriously. Today I get it. My life on the street will be more difficult if I have to wash my clothes by hand with them. I have not washed clothes by hand for more than 20 years. People sat close to each in a small area. Water was also weak. They have to carry water from a faucet to a container and throw it to their basin.” (Fieldnotes May 4, 2013)

Another significant difference between me and street people was that I am transiently homeless person only. I still have a home and family. After doing my field research for a year, my fieldwork became routine. On a night in February 2014, I came back from Bumbay and found that I had lost my enthusiasm for learning more about street life. I had experienced much already. Therefore, I planned to complete collecting life history interviews and finish up my fieldwork. Homeless people also asked me when I planned to go back to Thailand, because I had been in Manila for more than a year already. I replied that I planned to go back in April, because

“*sawa na ako*” (I have had enough). It is a Filipino expression for doing something too much, such as eating the same food every day.

Then I seriously considered my answer and found that I can say “I am satiated already,” and plan to leave the street. However, some of my homeless companions might feel similarly satiated with the street life, but they cannot leave. I frequently heard many people say that they do not like street life, but they can do nothing to change their situation. It reminds me of conversations I had with a street person in 2011. In fact, I knew her quite well, because she is Pedro’s friend. She knew that I was a student, and came to Manila to experience street life. At that time, I preferred acting like I was a street person. Many people liked my character and behavior, because it meant that I was their friend, and did not look down on them. When I interviewed her, I told her that I was a street person also. She said “you are not.” I said it again but more jokingly “I am a street person similar to you. I sleep on a street too.” She said that “it is not similar. You can leave the street whenever you want, but we can’t.”

Life histories interview: “Everyone here has a secret.”

“They [homeless people] will not tell you the truth, if they don’t trust you,” a coordinator of an assistance program for street people told me, when I shared my dissertation project and we discussed life history interviewing. She is a professor in sociology. She explained that homeless people have many reasons for hiding the facts, such as being ashamed about their lives. She affirmed that homeless people are good at story creation. Therefore, she and her staff have to interview street people many times to verify the facts of interviewees. Sometimes they fact-checked information given by street people, such as their former employer and their residence.

The explanation above is an example of the difficulties in obtaining factual information from street people, especially their life histories. I have talked with street people many times about their life histories, but I did not check their background, because I did not want to do so without their permission. Therefore, my research findings ultimately rely on the trust between me and street people I interviewed. As I explained above, sharing experiences on the street with them was really important in creating rapport between me and them. After rapport had been built, I hoped they would trust and understand my objectives. As a result, I believe I was able to gain deeper and more factual information about their lives, though it was revealed gradually.

For example, I had been close to Ben since May 2013. It seemed that he understood my study and liked to share his life with me. However, he did not give me complete information about himself all at once. It was only little by little that he revealed details of his life, as our relationship developed. At the beginning, when I first began talking to him, he said that he worked as a helper at a canteen in a Muslim area. He lost his job, he said, because the canteen owner changed his policy and decided to hire only Muslims. Therefore Ben, a Christian, was fired. Later, he said that he quit his job because he had a bad feeling about his employer. He said that he liked and appreciated his employer, but his employer talked to him without concern for his feelings. He decided to quit. It was not about a religious issue. Finally, he told me the details: before he quit, he did something wrong. His employer asked him to change a 1,000 peso bill for coins so as to have change for customers. However, Ben ran away with the 1,000 pesos and did not go back to his employer.

In the same way, information that I gained from Jacob, whom I had known since 2011, was deeper in 2013 than in 2011. In 2011, Jacob told me that after coming to Manila from a province and staying with his sister, he had a conflict with his sister. He became homeless after

that. However, when I talked with him again in 2013, he laughed and confessed that he used drugs and argued with his brother-in-law. Therefore, he had to leave his sister's house. Nevertheless, he did not become homeless at that time, because he stayed with some of his friends. He was able to secure a job driving a tricycle, but later, he had a problem of his own making. He did not pay rent for the tricycle for many days. As a result, he had to flee from that area and it was then that he became homeless.

Likewise, I interviewed Tatay Valdez in July 2013. He told me that he came from a province to Manila with his two daughters. In Manila, he stayed with his brother for a short period of time before going to live on the street. When I asked him why he left the province, he said, "Of course. I have a reason, but it is a secret." At that time, I realized that I had not become close enough to him to ask his secret. Later, I became really close to him and his daughters. I asked him again in February 2014, why he left the province in the first place. He revealed that his daughter was accused of stealing something from the Barangay Hall. He fought with the Barangay Chairwoman to protect his daughter. Therefore, he had to flee from the province to avoid further conflict.

In the same way, Ileto's story reflects the partial truth of a homeless person's narrative. When I was becoming acquainted with him, he said that he came from the Mindanao region and asked me whether I could help him with the transportation fee to go back to his hometown. Later, I became closer to Ileto. He invited me to go to his sister's house in a suburb of Manila City. Before I went to his sister's house, I asked him whether she was his real sister. Ileto answered confusedly, so I could sense that he was hiding something from me. When I met his sister and her relatives, they drank beer together. She was not Ileto's real sister, but her mother adopted Ileto, when Ileto was young. She narrated many stories to her daughter about Ileto's

childhood. I heard many stories and said to Ito, “Actually, you did not come from Mindanao. Your hometown is in Cebu not in Mindanao.” He smiled and said, “Now you know the facts already. I came from Cebu not Mindanao. I am an adopted son only.” This example shows that homeless people are prone to conceal their background and create stories to ask assistance from me.

I sensed also that people thought twice before telling me the truth. Martin gave me an impressive story of his life. He was forthright the truth that he was involved in drugs and went to jail. When I asked him the first time why he left his family’s house, he said that he did not want to be burden to his brother and sister. I asked him again later what happened and why he felt like that. He said that “Oh, I skipped the details [the first time he told me the story], because I don’t know whether you have time to listen to the details.” Then he decided to tell me the truth. He said that he left his house, because he did something wrong. Instead of spending money for extending a car registration, he spent the money for drugs. Therefore, he left the house, before his sister could learn the truth.

Some did not tell me the truth in the first interview, because they were not sure whether I could accept the truth. In my interview guideline, I asked people first about their life experience, such as their childhood, education, and work experiences. Jimmy answered that he had a job his entire life before becoming homeless. However when I raised the question of whether he had any experience in jail, he looked at me and said, “Three times. I was in jail for eight years.” He explained that he had no intention to lie to me, but it was my mistake that I did not ask this question clearly at the beginning. He said, “Everyone here has a secret. If you don’t show me your student ID, I won’t believe that you are a student.” Therefore I had to revise and correct his life experience.

Although I tried to do my best to convince people that I would like to know their life history so that I can better understand why people become homeless, some people still had many reasons to withhold the facts. I could sense that some people still give me partial truths. Among the 100 people interviewed who gave told me their life histories, I think at least 61 persons gave me reliable information. I will narrate and analyze the information of some of them in the next chapter to illuminate the pathways of becoming of homeless.

To summarize, this chapter emphasizes that participant observation is necessary to do research with street people. First, an anthropologist can observe and share mundane experiences of street lives to understand the peoples' worldview. Second, sharing experiences with street people was important to create rapport and trust between me and the homeless people I engaged with, because street people have a strong sense of mis-trust and will not tell the fact about their lives easily. The research would be useless, if street people did not disclose their actual lives. Therefore, I had to create trust to help them clearly understand the purposes of my research. Although I cannot claim that I was able to obtain the whole story of street life, I am able to argue that my participant observation methods with street people allowed me to get reliable information about them.

Chapter 3

The complicated pathways to becoming homeless

“It is hard to say why I become homeless.”

Ben said this to me. Ben became one of my closest friends and remained so during the entire span of my fieldwork. I learned about his life gradually, not only from interviewing him about his life-history, but also by informal discussions and by visiting his family’s house in Pandacan, Manila many times.

When I was curious about how demolition affects slum dwellers who have to move to a relocation site, he took me to visit his older sister’s house in Bulacan Province. His sister lived there because Ben’s house had been partially demolished to expand the railway, and his sister exercised her right to move to a relocation site in Bulacan Province. I also accompanied Ben to the cemetery of his mother on “Day of All Saints” to memorialize his mother.

At first, Ben told me that he became homeless because he had just left his last job in a canteen at Quiapo, and was looking for a new job. Later, he said that he could not live at his family’s house in Pandacan because he and a neighbor were enemies. Next, he told me that he lived on the street because his house was so crowded. Moreover, he admitted that his involvement in vice, such as drugs and prostitution, kept him on the street as well. This abbreviated life history of Ben illustrated a complicated pathway of becoming homeless.

Chapter Three and Four will illuminate the many causes of homelessness in Manila, the Philippines. This dissertation agrees with much of the research that has been conducted on homelessness in developed countries that finds that homelessness is not derived from any one

single factor, but many factors are connected and work together to push people to become homeless (Metraux and Culhane 1999; Fitzpatrick and Christian 2006). To explicate the factors leading to homelessness, this dissertation employs Clapham's pathway approach to analyze the causes of homelessness in the Philippines (Clapham 2003). The pathways approach suggests that in order to analyze both the macro and micro factors of the causes of homelessness, researchers should connect the life histories of homeless people to structural factors (Clapham 2003). Chapter Three will provide life histories of homeless people. Chapter Four will analyze these life histories by connecting them to macro factors, employing Paul Farmer's concept of structural violence to focus on structural factors of homelessness.

This chapter proposes that the pathways to becoming homeless are complicated. In order to show how complicated they are, I will describe the life histories of homeless people, from the time each individual was born until they became homeless. In doing so, I can illustrate that homelessness is not derived from any single factor. Many factors, both macro and micro, are connected. Actually, it is not easy to organize and group these life histories, however I tried to do it to make explicit several factors that are widely found among homeless people, such as family problems, losing a job, drug abuse, and rural-urban migration. I group the pathways to becoming homeless into five categories. Each pathway consists of several factors, but the main factor of each pattern is different. These pathways are ideal types for analysis only (Weber 1949). In real life, homeless people experience each pathway and its various factors differently. Nonetheless, the pathways that I highlight are more useful than simply explaining the causes of homelessness using a single factor.

I interviewed 100 homeless persons and compiled their life histories. Most homeless people I encountered and interviewed were men (77 persons). Only 17 persons were women, and

six persons were transgendered. However these numbers cannot accurately represent the ratio of male, female, and transgender homeless people, because I did not survey randomly. I recruited the participants by considering the level of mutual trust between them and me. As a man, I was able to get closer to men more than women. I was also careful and knew that being familiar with a single woman might make some people doubt the relationship between homeless women and me. For homeless women who had a partner on the street, I was friendly with their partner as well to prevent any misunderstanding that might arise. Nonetheless, I regularly counted the number of homeless people who got food at the soup kitchen at Bumbay and found that the ratio of men and women was 8 to 2. Even though this rough information is not perfect, it can show at some level that there are more men than women on the street

The majority of the 100 participants were single. There were 13 families with children, and eight couples without children. All of them are more than 18 years old, with the majority of them, 71 persons, between 30-49 years old. In terms of their background, 69 persons came from a province, and 31 persons were born in Metro Manila. However it cannot be easily said that rural-urban migration is the cause of homelessness, because the pathway to becoming homeless is more complicated than that. Thirty-nine of the interviewees were ex-convicts³. As far as I know, 34 of these used drugs at one time or another⁴. As I already explained in Chapter Two homeless people do not easily divulge accurate facts about their lives. All of the participants knew me at least two months before I did a formal interview. However, I continued to talk with them casually. I cannot guarantee that all of these life histories are completely factual, but I recorded their stories as they were recounted to me.

³ This percentage is less than the guesses of many others. When I asked my friends to guess percentage of ex-convicts among homeless people, their estimation is between 50-80 %. Nobody estimates less than 50 %.

⁴ This percentage is also less than estimations of my homeless friends.

The first pathway to homelessness: Family problems as a major factor

The first pathway to becoming homeless for many people is the inter-connection of several factors, starting from growing up in a broken home with a hard family life. This kind of situation causes children run away from their family and, subsequently, become involved in drugs and criminal behavior. When caught, they go to jail, and after release, face difficulties finding a job. This first pathway of becoming homeless can be summarized as below:

Broken home and hard family life + drug+ jail+ lack of job $\Rightarrow$ Homelessness

The life histories of four homeless persons, Pedro, Isko, Jhocas, and Jacob, will illustrate this pathway of becoming homeless.

Pedro, 37 years old, “I learned to collect recyclable items when I was a child”

As I explained in Chapter two, Pedro was my companion since we met in 2011, so we are quite close. I found out much about his colorful life history. Pedro was born in 1977 in Manila. He has other two siblings. He is the youngest one. His family was poor and lived in a squatter area of Manila. His father was a taxi driver, but was always drunk. His mother was a vendor selling dried fish at a market. His family’s house was demolished when he was still young. His family moved to a relocation site in Malabon, Metro Manila. Nonetheless, his father sold the land in the relocation site, and his family moved to live in a squatter area in Malabon City.

Since his father had a rough manner. Pedro did not like to live at a house. He left school when he only elementary school student in grade four. He had to work for survival since he was still young. Sometimes, he worked as a helper at a market. He did not get paid; he just worked

for food to survive. He collected recyclable items to earn 20-40 pesos a day. When he was still very young, Pedro learned to smoke cigarettes, and marijuana. He ran away from his house for the first time, when he was twelve years old. Then, he learned how to steal. He started from being a lookout for someone who was stealing. Then he became a thief himself, beginning with theft of fighting cocks, slippers, and clothes.

He got caught the first time by DSWD officials, when he was 13 years old. He was sent to Manila Boy's Town Institution, an institute for street children. After living inside the institute for a week, however, he escaped. He was re-arrested and returned about three- four times, but he continued to manage to escape. Sometimes, he was arrested by Barangay police, but he asked his family to come and get him out. Then he was released. When he was 16 years old, he started being a pickpocket at a Light Railway Train (LRT) station. Then he became a thief, snatching things from people when they passed by when he was 17 years old. He was arrested after his third offense snatching a necklace. I asked him whether he was scared of being arrested. He replied "I was not scared of anything at that time. I was still young and had no family yet." Accordingly, after being released, he continued his criminal activities.

Pedro got caught again in 1999, when he was at 22 years old. His offense was using marijuana. He got a gang tattoo, *BCJ 32*, in jail. It is normal in the Philippines that when people go to jail, they will get a tattoo. Officials organize space inside the prison according to the gang tattoo, which serves as the prisoner's gang affiliation. Different gangs, then, live in assigned areas to avoid inter-gang conflict (Philippine Star, March 18, 2014: 13). Gang members will be protected by their comrades in jail. In contrast, those who do not have tattoo will be bullied and have to serve others in jail.

After being released, Pedro went back to his mother's house in Malabon. However, he only stayed there for a few months, and then returned to Manila in 2001. He did not change his way of life. He still stole sometimes, if he had a chance. He still snatched, if he met a weak victim. During this period, he slept on the street sometimes. However, if he had money, he stayed in a hotel. He never rented a room monthly and had no house of his own, except his mother's house. He was also a *barker*, who calls passengers for a jeepney and gets a commission from the driver.

In 2004, Pedro met a woman, who later became his wife. Her family had a house in Baseco, a slum community in Manila. At that time, she worked as a maid and stayed at her employer's house. At first, she did not know that Pedro committed crimes to survive. She quit her job a few months after they met, and lived with Pedro on the streets. They now have three children together. Pedro's job at the time was a *barker* and, occasionally, a construction worker.

In 2007, Pedro was arrested again, because he stole a wallet from someone at Luneta. He was in jail for a year. Then he avoided stealing, because he had children already. He said that, "If I go to jail again, nobody will take care of my children. They will be pitiful."

In 2010, the mother of Pedro's wife felt sympathy toward her three grandchildren who lived on the streets. She supported Pedro to build a makeshift house in Baseco. This house is in an abandoned area of Baseco. It lacks any infrastructure, such as electricity and clean water. It is just enough for sleeping. Mostly, Pedro hung out at Luneta, because he had no job in Baseco. He visits his family a few times a week and still considers himself *yagit*, slang for a street person.

Pedro is an exemplar of a person who ran away from home when they were young because their parents could not support them. He could not even finish elementary school. Then he went on to commit crimes and went to jail. When he left jail, his gang tattoo made it difficult

for him to find a job. Although Pedro had a better opportunity than many others by being offered the chance to build a makeshift house, he did not get along with his wife's family. I once went to visit his wife's family's house, and found that Pedro was not allowed to go inside the house. His wife's family worries that Pedro might steal something from inside the house.

Isko, 43 years old, "I did not have what I wanted on time"

Isko was born in 1971 in a small town in Naga, Bicol Province. He has four other siblings. He is the youngest one. His family was not poor. His father graduated from high school and worked at the Bureau of Mines. Isko's mother was a housewife. Since his father was a public employee, Isko's family lived in a house provided by his father's office. His family lived with three other families in a single house.

Isko's life would have been fine, if his mother had not died when he was nine years old. Since Isko's father worked at a diamond project and his duties were in the field, he had to work far away from his house. His father could only go back to visit his family once a month. Without his mother, nobody supported Isko when he needed it, such as buying him school supplies in a timely manner. He told me, "I did not have what I wanted on time. It was always late. For example, when I wanted to buy a notebook, my father was not with me. When he bought it for me, it was already late." It caused Isko to hate to go to school. He left school, when he was in elementary school during grade four.

At ten years old, Isko ran away from home. He went to Manila alone by begging a bus conductor to let him get on a bus. I asked him whether he was a street child like those I always saw in Manila. He explained, "At first, I was not a street child yet. I was still scared of them. When they came near me, I hid myself from them. I just slept at a bus station and begged for

survival.” He was there for two months before going back to his home in Naga. He ran away from his home again and returned to Manila, but went back to his hometown many times when he was between 10 and 15 years old.

At 15 years old, Isko ran away to Luneta and told a recruiter that he wanted to go to work. Then he started working as a caretaker at a duck farm in Baliwag, Bulacan Province. He got 800 pesos a year with free food and lodging. The farm was primitive. He lived in a cottage made from Nipa palm. He worked there around ten months and quit, because the job was hard.

Isko returned to Manila and become a street child. Later he met an American, who worked at a religious-based organization. The American brought him to a house for street children in Baguio City. Isko stayed there for five months. Then he ran away and went back to Manila. Later he went back to his hometown, but he did not live in his house, because his father had moved to a job in Surigao, Mindanao region. His brothers and sisters already had their own families. He was homeless for the first time in Bicol province and survived by collecting recyclable items in addition to some illegal activities.

Isko was a pickpocket at a department store. He was arrested for the first time in 1989 and went to jail for one year and eight months. Then he was sent to the National Training School for Boys (NTSB), in Tanay City, Rizal Province. After being released, he did not go back to his hometown. He went to Manila but had no job. He continued stealing and went to jail many times. Isko had a lot of tattoos from jail on his body. During this period, he sometimes lived on the sidewalk at Recto and Blumentritt. Other times he stayed at a daily hotel. His last and biggest illegal case was robbery. He and his two friends robbed passengers on a jeepney at Santa Cruz, Manila, and they were caught and arrested. Since Isko’s case was more serious than his previous offenses he was not sent to the Manila City Jail. He was sent to a prison in Muntinlupa,

Metro Manila, for seven years, from 1997 to 2004. During this period in jail, he met a woman who accompanied her friend to visit Isko's friend in jail. This woman and Isko fell in love and promised to live together after Isko was released.

Then, after his release in 2004, Isko had a relationship with this woman. He started working by driving a pedicab at Santa Cruz. He mostly slept where his pedicab was parked, and sometimes visited his partner, who had her own house, not far from Santa Cruz. He was able to earn 300 pesos a day, but he had make payments on his pedicab, which was 100 pesos a day. After eight months of the payments, Isko became the owner of his pedicab. He had a son with the woman. However, in 2006, he discovered that the woman was having a relationship with another man. Isko was hurt and decided to leave Santa Cruz. He then sold his pedicab and went back to his hometown to stay with his sister. In 2008, his money ran out and he returned to Manila.

He worked as a construction worker to earn money and supported his son, who lived with his ex-partner. When he had a job, he was able to sleep at a barracks for workers. When he had no job, he had to sleep rough. He went back to his hometown for the last time in 2010. He lived with his father who had retired. I asked him why he did not continue living with his father. He said that he was not close with his father. He was still scared of his father. He was beaten by his father when he was young because he frequently ran away from home and spent time in jail. Because of conflicts with his father, he went back to Manila and became homeless again in 2011. This time was when I made his acquaintance.

Jhocas, 44 year old, "I am really homeless. My father and my mother are already dead"

Jhocas became one of my closest friends. I met her for the first time when we were waiting to attend a Bible study in Quezon City. After Bible study, we walked together back to

Manila City. It was quite far, about 7 kilometers. Almost the same week, we became members of an assistance program for street people. We always volunteered to wash dishes after finishing the program every Monday, Wednesday and Friday [hereafter MWF]. Jhocas is different from others on the pathway to becoming homeless, because was never charged with a serious crime. However, she shared a similar background with others.

Jhocas was born in 1969, in Pateros City, Metro Manila. She emphasized that she was alone. Her father and mother had already died, and she had no brother or sister. After Jhocas was born, her parents separated, and she lived with her father. When she was young, her family had just enough to survive. Her father worked in the cockfight field. He had income only on the weekends. I discovered later, when I visited her hometown, that her mother worked at a beer bar. Therefore, her father's family did not accept Jhocas's mother. When Jhocas was young, Jhocas's mother visited and gave her notebooks and school supplies at the beginning of the semester. Jhocas's life became difficult after her father got sick and passed away when Jhocas was only 11 years old. Afterwards, she lived with her aunt on her father's side. Her aunt was a vender selling snacks made from coconut. However, her aunt passed away when Jhocas was 15 years old. Jhocas was forced to leave school when she was in her second year of high school due to lack of financial support.

After leaving her aunt's house, Jhocas was able to stay with a succession of friends for two-three months at a time before rotating to someone else's house. At that time, she started using solvent and marijuana. She became pregnant, at 19 years old. She did not know who the father of her baby was, and she felt too young to rear a baby. She decided to give her baby to a couple who had no children and wanted to adopt a baby. Jhocas stayed at their house while she was pregnant and left after she had given birth.

After giving birth in 1989, Jhocas's insecure life continued. She started working several jobs at different places. At first, she worked for a few months at a hamburger kiosk. She earned around 100 pesos a day. Then she changed her job to work as a waitress at a beer bar in Batangas and Romblon Provinces. In 1994, she had a live-in partner, a woman with whom she had a sexual relationship. She lived at her partner's house for six years. Her partner was a laundress. In 2000, Jhocas separated from her partner, because she had a conflict with her partner's family. Jhocas returned to Pasig City, which is near her hometown. There, she reunited with her mother. Her mother lived on abandoned land. She collected morning glories, and sold them at a market. Jhocas lived with her mother for a few months and then left, because her mother was always drunk.

After leaving her mother's place, Jhocas began working at a recycling store in Pasig City, where she stayed for two years. Then, she worked collecting recyclable items at a dump site in Montalban, Rizal Province. In 2009, while Jhocas was working in Bulacan Province, a friend, who came back to visit Pasig City, told her that her mother had died. Jhocas came back from Bulacan Province to attend her mother's funeral. She had to leave her job at that time. Then, Jhocas went to live with her mother's friend, Nanay Bina, in Taytay, not far from Pasig City. Nanay Bina was poor and had a makeshift house under the bridge. She earned her income from collecting and selling morning glories. Jhocas helped and stayed with nanay Bina for a short period. Eventually, Jhocas went to work as a maid but went back to visit Nanay Bina sometimes. Nanay Bina's house became Jhocas's safety net. When she lost her job, she was able to stay with Nanay Bina while she searched for a new job. Nanay Bina told me that she pities Jhocas, because she lost both her parents already.

Jhocas left her job as a maid and went to live with Nanay Bina the last time in 2010. However, since Jhocas was always drunk, she was unable to help Nanay Bina earn a livelihood for them both. The son of Nanay Bina's sister accused Jhocas of having no shame to rely on an old woman without making any contribution. Jhocas was, in fact, ashamed and so she left Nanay Bina's house. She then became homeless in March 2010. She recounted that she had no place to go and walked to Manila City, where she became a street person. She knew that she could not be a homeless person at Pasig City, because Pasig City strictly prohibited vagrancy. She had already experienced being arrested for vagrancy in Pasig City, and went to jail for a month in 2003.

However, Jhocas did not live continuously on the street after 2010. Sometimes she got a job and stayed with her employer for a few months. When she lost her job, she returned to Luneta for a few months. She sometimes went to stay with Nanay Bina for a few days, but she said living on the street is more convenient than living under the bridge. I met Jhocas in March 2013 and she was on the street from that time until April 2014, when I left Manila.

Jacob, 32 years old, "I fooled others"

Jacob was born in a rural area of Alangapo City, Mindanao Region, in 1982. He has four other siblings. He is the third child. His father was a farm laborer. Jacob's father was a hard drinker. His mother was a housewife. She died of lung disease when Jacob was at eight years old, and a year later his father died. Later he and his siblings lived with a grandmother on his father's side. In addition, Jacob's aunt worked in the US, and sometimes sent money to support Jacob's family.

In 1997, when Jacob was fifteen years old, he went to work at Zamboanga del Norte Province. He was a laborer on a lemon farm. His responsibilities were planting lemon trees,

collecting fruits, and taking care of a warehouse. He got this job via a recruiter in his hometown. He earned 1,800 pesos a month. Jacob worked there around one and half years. He quit, because he wanted to work with another laborer who came from his hometown. In fact, this person did not have a regular job on the farm. Jacob stayed with his friend and helped him take care of cocks for cockfights. Then, he went back to his hometown in 1998.

Jacob was not in his hometown for long before he got into trouble. He said that when he returned to Mindanao, he was a trouble maker. He drank and learned to use marijuana. Then he got into a fight and stabbed someone. However, relatives of a victim told the police that they forgave Jacob. Therefore Jacob was not prosecuted. Nonetheless, the police revealed a different story and gave him some advice. It seems that the relatives of his antagonist wanted take revenge on him rather than let him be punished by the law. The police suggested he leave his hometown to avoid a serious problem.

Accordingly, Jacob went to live with his sister in Laguna Province in 1998. He worked in construction, but he did not have a regular job. When I interviewed him in 2011, Jacob said only that he had a conflict with his sister because he was too lazy to seek regular work. However, in 2013 he admitted to his sister that he was involved in drugs and they argued. Then he left his sister's house to live with his aunt in Manila. He still did not have a regular job. His last job before becoming homeless was driving a pedicab. His friend helped him to rent a pedicab for 60 pesos for 12 hours. However, he did not pay his rent for many days, because he had become addicted to gambling. His debt was high as 1,000 Peso, and he was scared that the owner of the pedicab would beat him. He had reason to be fearful since the pedicab owner was a policeman. Therefore, he fled to Luneta and became homeless in 2002. At this point in the story, Jacob smiled a little with a sense of embarrassment and said, "I fooled them."

Other street people followed this pathway. For example, Adrian was born into a broken family. His parents separated when he was still a toddler. He grew up with his stepfather. Then his mother separated from her second partner and became involved with a new one when Adrian was fifteen years old. Adrian could not get along with his mother and her new partner. He left his house in the province and went to Manila when he was eighteen years old. It was the first time that he became a street person. He learned vice on the streets, including drug use. His drug habit prevented him from working effectively. At 26 years old, he was charged with armed robbery when he robbed a jeepney. He was in jail for five years and was released when he was 31 years old in 2011.

The second pathway: Losing a job as a major factor

Some people become homeless after losing their job and their residence simultaneously. However, they share the same background of weak family structures. People who become homeless through this pathway are different from the first group, because they do not have drug use history and have never been in jail. The life histories of five homeless persons, Tony, Anthony, Jordan, Luis and Jaymar exemplify this. Only Jaymar differed from the others in the cause of his job loss. He got sick, and had to leave his job. The factors of this pattern can be summarized as below:

Weak family support + losing job $\Rightarrow$ Homelessness

Tony, 46 years old, “It is so much pressure, when you have no job, and have to stay with others.”

Tony was born in 1968 in Manila City, but grew up in Pasig City, Metro Manila. His family was not poor. His father graduated from a vocational school and worked at a state enterprise. His mother graduated from high school. She was a housewife. His family had their own house. Presently, his sister lives in this house. Tony has other six siblings. He is the eldest. He had the opportunity to continue his studies and successfully graduated from college in business management.

After graduation, Tony started working as a waiter at a franchise restaurant on a 6 months contract. He earned a minimal wage at that time, around 200 pesos a day. When that ended, he looked for other jobs. In 1990, his uncle introduced him to a job in utility management at a shipping company in Manila. He worked there for a year and gained experience by working in many roles, such as a waiter and a house keeper. Then he was offered a chance to work on a ship. His duty was to serve passengers travelling on an international ship. He said when the ship docked at a port in Los Angeles, California, he almost escaped from the ship and entered the US illegally. However, when he called his aunt, who worked in the US, she did not support his wish. Therefore, he returned to the Philippines. He resigned from this job because he felt discriminated against by European passengers. When he worked on the ship, his salary was 325 USD a month. It was better than his income working in the Philippines.

Following his job on the cruise ship, he had a job in a restaurant in Manila. However, most of his jobs were on short term contracts, namely, six months per contract. He had a secure job again in 2003. He worked at a bank in San Juan City, Metro Manila. In the Philippines, there are many small banks, and his bank was small also. Customers of banks like this are venders and

farmers. At first, his job consisted of collecting money from vendors in a market. However, later this practice was prohibited by the Central Bank of the Philippines (BSP). In 2008, he moved to work at the headquarters of his bank until the bank was taken over by a bigger one in 2012. His final salary before he was laid off was 9,600 pesos a month. He got 54,000 pesos for his severance compensation.

Tony married in 1999 and had one daughter. His wife went to work in Bahrain as a domestic helper in 2002. When she came back to the Philippines in 2006, she wanted to separate from Tony. Afterwards, Tony and his sisters took care of his daughter. His sisters moved to live in Sta. Maria, Bulacan Province in the early 2000s. When Tony worked at the bank, he went to Bulacan on the weekends only. Later, by 2009, he stopped visiting his family's house in Bulacan, even on the weekends. He said that as the oldest brother, he should take care of the family, but he was not able to contribute to payments for a new house. He was ashamed. He just sent money to his daughter and only occasionally visited her. His explanation implied that he had some problems with his sisters, but he avoided explaining the details.

After being laid off, Tony gave his daughter money and paid for his debt. Then he tried to find a job, but it was difficult, because he was over 40 years old. He could only get a temporary job, such as packing Christmas gifts in December 2012. During periods when he worked, he was able to share rent and could live with friends. However, when his money ran out, he could no longer stay with friends. He said, "It is so much pressure, when you have no job, and have to stay with others." Eventually, he decided to leave his friend's house.

Nevertheless, he did not become homeless at that point. He could pay for the rent at the Gwapo Hotel for two weeks. When someone at Luneta suggested to him that he could save his money by sleeping at Baywalk, as many people did, he decided to do so. I met him for the first time in

May 2010. He had been on the street for a month only, but when I left Manila in April 2014, he was still homeless.

Jordan, 46 years old, "I've already had a chance to work on a ship. It was my first time and my last time also"

Jordan was born in 1968 in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental province, Mindanao Region. His family background was not one of poverty. His family had their own house, land, car, and a coconut farm. Both Jordan's parents had a good income from working abroad, but that in itself was a drawback for him. His father was a seaman. He worked on a ship for ten months out of the year. His mother graduated from college. She went abroad to work as an entertainer in Japan from the time Jordan was young. His mother bought a house in a subdivision in Las Pinas City, Metro Manila. Jordan has a sister who has the same father and mother as he does.

When Jordan was 14 years old, he came to Metro Manila to study at high school. He and his sister lived in a house in Las Pinas City, which was bought by his mother. However, at that time, his mother worked in Japan. She supported Jordan in terms of financial support only. She did not live with or stay with Jordan. In his house, Jordan and his sister lived alone. There was no other adult. Only his grandmother, who lived near Jordan's house, visited him and his sister occasionally. When he was 18 years old, his mother separated from his father. When I interviewed him, recalling his past reminded him of the painful experience he suffered when his parents separated. He said many times that, "My life is a mess." He also commented that, "It is so hard, when you are still young, and your parents are not with you. You don't know how hard it is."

Later, both his parents separated and each had a new family. After their separation, Jordan's father bought a house in Cavite Province. His father encouraged him to study nautical

science and became a seaman. Jordan graduated with a nautical science diploma when he was 23 years old. Then, his father helped him to get a job as a seaman. An agency Jordan had registered with informed him that a Singaporean company wanted to hire Filipino seamen on a ship which traveled to South Korea. He went to Singapore and took a job on a ship bound for South Korea. However, the ship got into an accident, and he was sent back to Manila. Then the company changed their practice and began to hire Indian seamen. He never worked on a ship again. He felt sorry for his bad luck. After that he had to find a new job, but he failed. He was forced to settle for working at part –time jobs, such as painting.

Then he went back to his father's house in Cavite. He got a regular job again as a driver. By that time he was 29 years old. He worked at a company that got contracts to install ATM machines. The contractor was his neighbor. He earned 300 pesos a day. He worked there for three years before losing his job, because the contractor died. The bank then hired a new contractor.

Next, Jordan went back to his hometown in Ozamiz. His grandfather on his father's side had a coconut farm, where he was able to work. However, he returned to Manila again in 2008. He went to meet his grandfather on his mother's side, who owned an optical shop, and helped Jordan to get a job in a branch of his shop in Malate, Manila. However, this branch was closed later, because a building renovation was planned. Jordan had to move to another branch, but work was available only two days a week. He earned 285 pesos a day at the optical shop. At that time he shared a room with three friends, who worked in the same shop. He got in trouble, because supplies were stolen from the shop. The shop owner suspected that Jordan and his friends might be responsible for the theft. Under suspicion, he lost his job, and could not afford to pay his rent. Then he became homeless in 2009. He said that he did not want to go back to

Ozamiz, because he was ashamed that he spent a lot of his family's money to study at college, yet could not find success in his life.

Anthony, 42 years old, "Our lives are disorder." (Magulo kami)

Anthony was born in 1972. He grew up in a poor family in an urban area of Butuan, Agusan del Norte Province. He has nine siblings, himself included. He is the fifth child. His father was a carpenter, but he did not have a regular job. Sometimes he was unemployed. Since there were a lot of children in the family, his father was unable to earn enough to feed every one. Some days Anthony was able to eat only two times. His house was old and damaged. His mother was a housewife. She died in 1985 when Anthony was only thirteen years old. He said that his life was a mess (*magulo*). His father was often drunk and died in 1990. Next, his siblings had quarrels and separated in 1990. Anthony remained in contact only with his younger sister in Mindanao.

Anthony left his house in 1984, when he was 12 years old. He had to work as a houseboy to support himself through school. He was able to stay with his employer. He did not have a regular salary. He just worked for a small allowance to go to school. He worked as a houseboy until he was seventeen years old, and left school during his third year of high school.

After leaving school and employment as a houseboy, he started work helping a carpenter in South Cotabato Province. Nevertheless, this job was also not regular. Sometimes he continued working as a houseboy. In 1992, he worked in a bakery and learned to be a baker. He worked with the same employer for seven years, and lived with his employer. His salary was 300 pesos a week. In 1998, Anthony accompanied his cousin to Cebu City. He got a job as a baker. He worked there around one and half years, and earned 120 pesos a week. Then he returned to

his hometown in Butuan and searched for a new job through a recruiter. The recruiter offered him a job in Manila.

Anthony came to Manila in 2000 when he was 28 years old. From 2000 to 2012 he worked several jobs via a recruiter. He worked as a caretaker on a chicken farm for 4 years from 2000 to 2004 in Bulacan Province. His salary was 1,500 peso a month with free food and lodging. Anthony was happy with this job, even though each caretaker had to take care of everything in each poultry house. Nevertheless, he had to leave this job, because he had worked for four years already. Four years was the maximum any of the poultry workers could work for the same employer. The recruiting agency needed to put a new employee into his position to get a commission.

Then he worked at a succession of jobs, including as a merchandizer, a caretaker, and a mason's helper. When he worked as a construction worker, he was laid off illegally in 2010. (The detail of his case will be elaborated later.) Then he worked as a construction worker in Caloocan City and a baker in Manila. However, he was not a regular employee at either workplace. He had a job for only a short time, and then was unemployed. Anthony first became a street person in April 2013, because he was ashamed to stay with his friends. He and his friends shared a rented room, but Anthony could not contribute to the rent. Previously, he experienced homelessness for a short time, when he left one job and looked for a new job. What made the difference in 2013 was that he was already over 40 years old. His age made it difficult for him to find a job. He was forced to learn to become accustomed to street life.

The life experiences of these three persons reflect the connected factors of becoming homeless. Both Jordan and Anthony shared the same background in that they came from broken families. However Jordan's family background was better than Anthony's family. Jordan's

family was able to support him until he finished college, like Tony, while Anthony was unable to finish high school. Tony also had family problems later in life. He separated from his wife, and could not get along with his sister. Each in his own way lacked a social safety net when they lost their jobs. These three persons were not involved in illegal drugs. Among them, only Jordan was a hard drinker. All of them similarly faced difficulties in finding jobs after they became over forty years old. This issue will be analyzed later.

Jaymar, 48 years old, "I want to cure myself on the street."

Jaymar was born in 1966. He has six other siblings. He is the third child. He grew up in a semi-urban area in Uson, Masbate Province. His father graduated from college and worked as a clerk at a municipality. His mother was a housewife. His family was not poor. His grandfather owned land that his father inherited. Unfortunately, his father was always drunk and sold the land. Finally, his family fell into poverty and his parents separated when he was 14 years old.

The separation of Jaymar's parents was hard for him. Jaymar ran away from home with his two friends and they fled to Manila. He was a street child in Manila for eight months before going back to his hometown. During this period, he survived by being a helper at a market in Divisoria. He and his friends hung out at a market and helped store owners to carry vegetables. He earned around 20 pesos a day. He did not have one specific employer. He and his friends managed to rent a room in a squatter area nearby. They paid 150 pesos a month. But actually, his room was too small to call a room. It was hot and did not have a toilet. They rented the room for storing their belongings only. They often slept outside. Jaymar went back to his hometown, because he got sick. His friends helped him travel to meet his relatives in Quezon City, and they helped Jaymar go back to his hometown.

When Jaymar returned to his hometown, his grandfather encouraged him to continue his studies. As a result, he graduated from high school in 1984. After that, he came to Manila again. He started working as a waiter at a restaurant in Las Pinas City, Metro Manila. He earned 100 pesos a day. Later he moved to a job as a waiter at a disco club. He was proud that during this time he went back to his hometown with his savings and bought a water buffalo for his grandfather. He stayed there for a month before returning to Manila again in 1988.

In Manila, Jaymar was trained and got a license to be a security guard. He had authority to use a gun. He worked as a security guard for 25 years, from 1988 to 2013. He guarded many buildings in Metro Manila. During the years he worked as a security guard, he sometimes lived with his employer because he guarded his company office for many years. Sometimes he just slept in the building that he guarded, such as a bank. According to him, his salary was lower than minimum wage. For example, when the minimum wage was about 300 pesos, he earned only 250 pesos a day. He earned 650 pesos a day only in the last year of his career, because he was the head of the security guards at the place he guarded, and rented a room in a squatter area for 2,000 pesos a month to save money. That was in 2012.

Jaymar found that he had a problem with his stomach in 2012. When he spoke, others were able to smell a bad odor. He was embarrassed that his co-workers could smell this bad odor. He had no money to go to a hospital. He asked permission from his employer for time off so he could take care of himself. Then he went to stay with his cousin for a week. Later, he was ashamed to be a burden on his cousin. He left that house and went to the farm of his former employer in Laguna Province with the expectation of getting a job there, but there was no job for him there. Finally, he came to Manila and became a homeless person. He said that he wanted to cure himself of his illness on the street.

Luis, a 30 year old, man, "My mother is a prostitute."

Luis was born in 1983. He grew up in Pasay City, Metro Manila until he was two years old. Then his adoptive parents brought him to Samar Province. Luis said that he never knew the story of his real parents until his adoptive mother told him before she died. His real mother was a cleaner in a luxurious hotel in Manila. Her position was the floor manager. Nonetheless, she worked on the side as a prostitute for foreign customers. She had eleven children from five husbands. Luis's father was Saudian. Luis has no other siblings who had the same father and mother as him. When Luis was one and half years old, his real mother planned to go abroad. She did not want to have the children go with her. Therefore a couple, who were neighbors of Luis's mother, adopted Luis. They lived in a subdivision and had no children.

Luis's adoptive parents were not poor. His adoptive father was a driver. His employer was an executive in an airline company. His adoptive mother was a house keeper. When Luis was two years old, his adoptive parents retired. They moved with Luis to his adoptive mother's hometown, Samar Province. Luis discovered that his adoptive mother had Spanish blood and had her own land. It was big enough to be rented. The furnishings in his house were luxurious. At that time, Luis thought that his life was happy. Even when his adoptive father died, when Luis was six years old, it did not affect his life. His mother's financial position was still secure.

The only problem for Luis was that his aunts and uncles knew that he was an adoptive son. They disliked Luis, because they worried that Luis would inherit a share of his adoptive mother's land. Luis did not concentrate on his studies, because he thought that his family had assets to support him even without having to work. He studied but changed his major, because he did not know what he liked. A crisis happened when his mother died in 2005. His aunts and uncles drove him out of the house. One of them even threatened his life. Luis said, "I am like a

poison in the family. I have nothing similar to them. They have light skin, but I am tan. And my eyes look like I am an Indian.”

Luis was forced out of his house by his mother’s family. A friend of his friends suggested he try becoming a working student. He worked for a Catholic college to be able to finish his study. His duties were helping in a library, and assisting a department secretary about administrative work. Finally he was able to graduate from college as a computer secretary in 2009, when he was 26 years old.

He started working at a store and earned only 2,000 pesos a month in Samar. Then he moved to a job as a casual employee at a government office. He earned only 2,000 pesos a month there, too. Furthermore, he had to pay rent by himself, which cost him 500 pesos a month. Later he worked as a house keeper and his salary was 1,000 pesos a month. In 2011, he tried to contact his sister from the same mother, but a different father. He knew her existence from his adoptive mother, who gave him her address in Cavite Province. He went to meet his sister, and found that she did not have a regular job. Moreover, her husband was a drug dealer. Luis was scared, when he was pressured by his brother –in-law to begin selling drugs. He eventually left his sister’s house.

Luis went to Pasig City to meet someone whom he met through Facebook, who promised him employment. However, Luis found that he had been tricked into going there. This person did not help him to get a job as he promised. Furthermore, he asked Luis to take care of his brother who had polio. Luis was treated as a housekeeper rather than a friend. He lived in a small room behind the main house, and had to ask permission before having food. Finally, Luis left this house when he argued with this man. The argument was about Luis taking food without permission because he was so hungry.

As a result of leaving the home of his Facebook acquaintance, Luis found himself with no place to go. He walked from Pasig City, passed Mandaluyong City, San Juan City, and ended up in Manila City. When I met him for the first time in June 2013 at a church where I volunteered, he had been homeless for two weeks only.

Luis is an example of a victim of irresponsible parents. However, he was different from Pedro and Jhocas who grew up in poor families. Luis was lucky to be adopted by a stable family that cared about him. However his life changed dramatically after his adoptive parents died. Not only poor families push children away, the middle class can be potentially ruthless also, as Luis, an adoptive child, experienced.

The third pathway: Drug abuse as a major factor

Much research on homelessness in the US investigates the relation between homelessness and drug abuse (MaCarty et al 1991; Torchalla 2011). In the Philippines, drugs also affect the lives of many people who become homeless. The life histories of the people on this pathway are different from people on the first pathway in the sense that people on this pathway are not necessarily coming from a hard family environment or economic hardship, but rather, drug abuse influences their homelessness. The factors of becoming homeless on this pathway can be summarized as below:

drug abuse + conflict with family $\Rightarrow$ homelessness

Martin, 55 years old, "I deserve to be sent out"

Martin was born in 1959. My first impression when I saw him selling a silver mat was that he looked better than other street people. Later I learned that he was born and grew up in a

middle class family in Quezon City, Metro Manila. His family has Spanish blood, which means he has a good background. He has three other siblings. He is the third child. His father graduated from college and worked as a chief executive official at a private university in Manila. Because of his father's position, Martin had the privilege of studying at a prestigious high school under the university. However, this privilege caused him problems.

Since his high school is an expensive school, his friends' families tended to be rich. However, Martin's family was just middle class. His friends knew that Martin was only able to study in the school because of his father's position. The difference in the backgrounds between his family and his friends' families made him feel alienated at school. He was bullied and gradually lost motivation to continue going to school. He left school, when he was in his second year. Then he turned to friends in his neighborhood. In fact, his house was not in a squatter area, but it was close to a squatter area. His friends in the squatter area led him to use marijuana.

Martin lost his mother to cancer when he was 13 years old. His father died when Martin was 21 years old. However, his oldest sister gradually became successful. Her husband was a business man in real estate. When his parents passed away, his sister supported him by giving him money for personal expenses and paying Martin's rent, while she lived with her husband in another house. His sister did not know that Martin used and sold marijuana for six years.

In 1986, his sister asked Martin to stay with her family and take care of her children in Pasig City. He started using *shabu*, a slang term for methamphetamine, there and started selling it. In 1989, his sister found out that Martin used drugs, so she sent him to a private rehabilitation program. The program requires 18 months to successfully complete, but Martin attended only six months and left. He said that his sister paid a lot for him to attend the rehabilitation program, but he could not complete the program. Therefore, he was too ashamed to go back to his sister's

house. He went to stay at his friend's house and found a job as a company driver. He still used drugs every Saturday, when he got paid.

In 1991, his sister tracked down Martin and forgave him. She asked Martin to go back to her house, and her husband supported him to find a job. However, Martin still had trouble with drugs. In 1997, he and an off-duty police officer were arrested while using drugs. His brother-in-law helped him by bribing the police to send Martin to rehabilitation instead of jail. The program required six months to complete, but Martin stayed in the program for eight months, because his family did not want him back yet. Finally, the police had to send him to his family.

Nevertheless, Martin still sold drugs and was arrested again in 1999. His brothers and sisters had to help him again, but the police suggested that Martin should be sent to jail, so that he could experience it. His sister agreed. Nevertheless, she paid a bribe to the police, so that Martin was given a lighter punishment for using drugs instead of selling them. He was in jail for six months, but it was not so bad. Since his sister paid a jail official, Martin was given "VIP" treatment.

Martin was released from jail and went back to his sister's house in 2001. He stayed at this house for ten years. His duty was to take care of his sister's children, such as driving them to and from school. Nonetheless, he still used drugs. When I asked him the first time why he left his house, he replied that because he felt that he was useless. His nephews and nieces were already grown up. His sister no longer wanted him. However, after I had gotten to know him better and asked him again, he admitted that he left his sister's home because of his drug use. He told me that his sister gave him money to extend a car registration every year. He took this money from his sister, but he did not renew the registration. He spent the money for drugs instead. His sister never asked to see the car registration and Martin just told her he had

completed the transaction. It happened like that for three years, until his sister wanted to see the document. He realized that his sister would get mad on him when she learned the truth.

Therefore, he decided to leave the house instead of face his sister. Martin said, “It is my character. I cannot confront a problem. I cannot confront my sister and accept how she will react. I escaped. I will wait until she calms down and forgives me. I don’t know how long that will take. It might take two or three years. Then I will go back home.”

Ken, 52 years, “When I was young, I did not care about tomorrow.”

Ken was born in 1961 in Makati, Metro Manila, but he grew up in Manila City. He is the sixth of seven siblings. His family was not poor. His father was a taxi driver, and his mother was a housewife. Later, his father worked abroad and came back to visit him only occasionally. Therefore, he grew up with his mother and grandmother. His mother’s house had Foosball tables and earned income from people playing Foosball. He attended a private elementary school for the middle class. He left school during grade six, because his friends were a bad influence, not because of financial problems. He learned to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, smoke marijuana and use *shabu*.

He ran away from home when he was 16 years old. He was arrested the first time, because he committed theft. He said that he was just the lookout for his friends who entered a house to rob it. Because he was not 18 years old yet, he should have been sent to a juvenile prison. Since he had no document to verify his age, however, he was sent to an adult prison for one and half years. Later, he was on the street and in jail, going back and forth many times until he was 24 years old. He had an original tattoo of the Sputnik jail gang. He said, because of the tattoo, when he entered jail, others knew that he was a senior. He used drugs and had many scars

on his stomach. He said that when he got high, instead of hurting others, he hurt himself by using a blade or broken bottle to slit his skin.

Ken had a wife in 1985. He and his wife went to his wife's province in the Visaya region. His job was driving a pedicab. His first wife died in 1991. Then he married a second wife, and still lived in the same province. However, when he found that his second wife had committed adultery, he went back to Manila in 2000. He said that it was better to go back to Manila otherwise he might kill his wife and her adulterer.

In Manila, Ken was homeless and did not have a regular job. After his last arrest, he was released from jail in 2006. At that time he was 45 years old. He realized that he was too old to be sent to jail again. He started working by collecting recyclable items and calling passengers for a jeepney. He was a homeless person for many years until he met a woman. She had a house near the place he called passengers. When her house was demolished, she did not go to live at a relocation site with her family. Instead, she lived with Ken on the sidewalk. They have two children now and all of them live on the streets. Ken explained that he used to rent a room when his first daughter was still was a baby, but his income was too low to afford the rent. In addition, it was too hard for children to live in a small room. Therefore, he decided it was better that his family lived on the sidewalk. Since they had a pushcart, the children could sleep in it.

Tatay Feliz, 62 years old, "I was a hard drinker before"

Tatay Feliz was born in 1952 in Malolos, Bulacan Province. Later, his family moved to Navotas City, Metro Manila, where he grew up. He had no other siblings. It was only later that he discovered that he was an adopted son, since his adoptive parents had no child of their own. His adoptive parents had a good background. His father worked at the Philippine National

Railways, and later moved to a job at the Philippine Postal Corporation. His office was at a domestic airport in Manila. Feliz studied at college, but only one year. He left because he enjoyed hanging out with his friends. Nonetheless, his father helped him to get a job at a post office. He worked there for six years. His position was a driver. He quit, because his cousin helped him get a job working abroad. He went to work in Saudi Arabia in 1990 as a seaman for six months. When he came back he did not have a regular job.

Feliz had a wife. They met in 1975. She worked abroad as a domestic helper in Saudi Arabia, too. They had five children together. Feliz accepted that he was not a responsible father when he came back from Saudi Arabia. He always drank. He made the excuse that he started drinking hard when he was disappointed with his father. After his mother died in 1986, his father had a new partner a year later. She was only eighteen years old. He told his father that his new partner only wanted money from his father, but his father did not listen to him. However Feliz was lucky that his aunt and uncle worked in the US and sent remittances to support him. Feliz and his wife lived in a house left to him by his uncle. In 2003, Feliz had a serious quarrel with his wife. His wife reproached him for having no job, and being a hard drinker. He was remorseful and left his family in 2003.

The fourth pathway: Coming from a province as a major factor

Some might think that a major reason for becoming homeless is rural-urban migration. When I interviewed the Manila Department of Social Welfare official, the representative explained to me that the cause of homelessness is domestic migration. She further argued that if the government could control rural-urban migration by installing a domestic passport system, the government would be able to reduce the number of homeless people (Interview, December 9, 2013).

However, not many of the life histories of homeless people I analyzed show that domestic migration plays an important role in the pathways to becoming homeless. It is correct that many people come from a province to Manila, such as Isko, Anthony, Luis, but there are other critical factors that combine to influence their pathway to homelessness. Rural –urban movement explicitly influences the pathway to becoming homeless of some persons only, such as Mikel, and Ate Reyna. However, another factor leading to their homelessness is lack of jobs at an older age. So the factors of this pathway to becoming homeless can be summarized as below:

Losing job + migration to Manila $\Rightarrow$ Homelessness

Kuya Mikel, 49 years old, “I knew before I came to Manila, it would be difficult for me to find a job”

Kuya⁵ Mikel was born in 1964. He was 49 years old when I met him in 2013. He grew up in a small barrio in Legazpi, Bicol Province. He has other seven siblings. He is the second to last. His father was a farmer and his mother was a laundress. Even though his family had their own land, they were poor for many reasons. For example, his hometown was hit by typhoon every year and this greatly affected agricultural production. The costs of agricultural inputs, such as fertilizer and pesticide, were expensive. As a result, his parents were unable to support their all children to go to school in the same year. Some had to leave school and help their parents on a farm. Therefore, he had to study one year and leave school the next, before coming back to study the year after. Due to this extended schedule, when Mikel graduated from high school, he was already twenty years old. Among his siblings, he is only one who successfully graduated from high school.

⁵ Kuya means older brother in Tagalog.

After his graduation, he helped his parents on the farm for four years. Then, when he was 24 years old, he decided to go to Manila to find a better job. He came to Manila and stayed with his aunt. She was a vendor, who sold vegetables and fruits. Mikel's first job was as a helper in the food court of a department store. He earned a minimum wage of around 190 pesos a day. He worked on three short-term contracts that each lasted 6 months in the same department, but at different branches. According to him, to renew a contract three times was the maximum for anyone. He was unable to renew for a fourth contract. Then he went back to his hometown to work on a farm for two years. During the time he worked at the department store, he rented a room in a squatter area for 1,500 pesos a month.

He returned to Manila again in 1994. At first, he stayed with his aunt. Then he got a job at a honey bee farm in Batangas Province. He lived with his employer, which included free food and got 2,000 pesos a month for his salary. He worked there for two years. After finishing his contract, he stayed with his friend in Manila, and found a new job in a garment factory in Manila as a clerk in the stock department. He worked at the garment factory for ten years, from 1997 to 2007. During this period, his salary was increased from 6,000 pesos to 15,000 pesos a month. He married a woman who worked in the same factory, and they had a child. While working at the garment factory, he rented a room for 2,500 pesos a month.

However, his happy life ended when the factory closed in 2007. Both Mikel and his wife found themselves unemployed. He explained that the factory could not compete with the many second-hand clothing stores which were cheap and widespread in Manila. He got 12,000 pesos for his compensation. After losing his job, he tried to find another job, but failed, because he was 43 years old. He said that in the Philippines, those who are over 40 years old encounter

difficulties finding work. At this time, he and his wife separated. His child lived with his ex-wife in her hometown.

Mikel went back to his hometown and lived there for two years. According to him, his life in the province was boring. There was no electricity in his hometown. People went to bed early, and he was not familiar with that life style. His friends from high school were in Manila, not in his hometown. Therefore, he decided to return to Manila in 2009, despite knowing that at his age, it would be difficult to find a job. Given his lack of resources, he became a street person. He confirmed that he did not have any quarrel with any of his siblings. He just wanted to live in Manila.

Ate Reyna, 56 years old, "I found that my life was boring, so I wanted to experience a new life"

As I already said, I met Ate Reyna for the first time in 2011 and she kindly supported me during my entire fieldwork. Ate Reyna was born in 1958 in the mountainous area in Benguet Province. She was a member of the ethnic group called Ibaloi. Her tribe is close with the Igorot, which is well-known for its head-hunting practices, but her tribe avoided fighting. Her father had Chinese blood. Reyna was born into a farmer family, however, her father was progressive and supported her attending school. Her family had a small plot of land and planted rice for their own livelihood, but it was not enough for the entire year. When she was a child, sometimes she had to eat yams and bananas when there was not enough rice. Her house was made only from Nipa palm.

Ate Reyna studied at an elementary school on the mountain. She had to walk a long distance to go to school. Then, she went to high school in a nearby town and stayed at her aunt's

house. She graduated from high school when she was 16 years old and started working. He worked as a house keeper for a teacher for seven months.

Next, she got a chance to attend a summer training program provided by a church. The program was offered for 45 days during the summer. Ate Reyna was then sent to practice teaching in a school in the mountains. After taking the program for four years, she got a teaching certificate for Catholic elementary school. Then she became a catechist. Her salary was 2,000 pesos a month. She taught and worked for a Catholic church for eleven years. During this period she moved from her aunt's house and rented a room by herself. Later, her nieces and nephews, who came to attend high school, stayed with her.

After teaching for eleven years, she got a scholarship to study at the college level in her hometown. She was 32 years old at that time. However, she studied only one year and found that it was too hard for her. She decided to stop studying and came back to work part-time for a church again, when she was around 34 years old. She helped the church deliver supplies, such as milk, which was sponsored by an American church, to people in the mountains. The program ran for five years before the sponsor stopped support. A church tried to run a co-op, but it could not continue without a sponsor. Then, she became unemployed when she was around 48 years old. Nonetheless, she still volunteered and got a small stipend which helped her survive.

When she was 53 years old, she found that she was useless. Her nieces and nephews had already graduated and had their own families. Meanwhile she had no family; her parents had died already, and she did not have a boyfriend to supplement her livelihood. Finally, she decided to leave her nieces and traveled to Manila. She said her life was boring. She wanted to experience a new life in Manila. She wanted to write about her experience on the street.

However, she eventually accepted that she could not do it. It is possible she was not was trained enough to write.

The various pathways: Different factors

Homeless people vary greatly from one another. There are many factors that push people into becoming homeless. I will recount the life histories of two homeless persons, Tatay Leo and Kristine to illustrate how various, and sometimes unpredictable, factors lead to homelessness. However, the backgrounds of these two people are different from other homeless people. They do not have family problems, and they have had a good education. Indeed, fewer homeless people have this kind of stable personal history. To acknowledge this pathway of becoming homeless it is helpful to compare their ideas about street life to those of other homeless people.

Tatay Leo, 61 years old, "God calls me"

I recognized Tatay Leo for the first time when I walked back with him from a feeding program in Quezon City. It was quite far, so we had the opportunity to get to know each other. I regularly met him at other feeding programs, but then I did not meet him for two to three months (during the rainy season). When we met again, he said that he went back home. When I asked his permission to interview him about his life history, he responded by asking how many persons I need for my study. I replied, "one hundred persons." He said, "When you finish interviewing 99 persons, I will be the last one." He was quite sure that he had something that would surprise me.

When finally Tatay Leo narrated his story, he did so while he was searching for recyclable items in garbage bags. He was born in 1953 into a good family in Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila. He is the last of five siblings. His father was a businessman selling trucks. His

mother was a housewife. He recounted no problems in his family background. His family had a house and a land lot. He graduated from college with an engineering degree.

After graduation, Leo had a good job. He started working as an engineer at the Petron Company in Bataan Province and continued for fifteen years. When he was at thirty two years old, he moved to a job in Baguio City. He worked there for seventeen years. He was promoted gradually from an engineer to a chief engineer of a gold mine. His last salary was 48,000 pesos a month and he had a secretary. He said, "If you had asked to interview me in the past, you would have been unable because I was arrogant. I did not talk with anyone easily." When he was at 56 years old, he resigned because the company wanted to move him to another province. He did not want to do so, and he did not have any financial problems, so he felt no particular risk in retiring.

Leo married a woman who graduated from college in engineering too. Before retiring, she was a senior supervisor in the maintenance department of an airline company. They bought their own house in a subdivision in Paranaque City, Metro Manila. He did not have any problems in his married life. The couple had three children, and all of them graduated from college in different majors, namely medicine, law, and accounting. His youngest daughter works at a bank in Singapore. She married and now lives there.

After retiring, Leo was not concerned about his children. All of them graduated and had secure jobs. He had no financial problems either, because he received a pension. Therefore, Leo was able to "waste" his time with many vices. He spent his time with his neighbor playing cards and drinking. He admitted that he was a playboy also.

In 2010, he went to Luneta, and lost his wallet and cellphone. It was on a Thursday. There was Bible study for street people. At first, he wondered what they were doing. Many street people attend Bible study and then get free food. When Leo heard someone teaching about

God, he found that he liked it. So, he came back again the next Thursday and was really impressed. Later, he told his family that he had something to do at Luneta. He left his house wearing shorts and carrying a small bag. His wife wanted to give him money, but he declined. He said it was not necessary.

After a month away, he returned to his house with different appearance, because he was dirty. His family was concerned about him, but he said he was fine. He told his family that, “it is God who tells me.” It is better for him to live on the street, and far away from the vices in his neighborhood. Therefore, he searched for the Lord.

Kristine, 37 years old, “It is hard to explain to them”

When I first met Kristine, I thought that she just visited Rizal Park. She did not look like a street person. She told me later that she always paid for taking a bath in order to not look like a street person. When I interviewed her, she was the most emotional among the others whom I interviewed, and cried about her bad luck.

Kristine was born in 1976 in an urban area in Cotabato, Magindanao Province. She is Muslim. She has other four siblings. She is the youngest one. Her family was not poor. Her father was a middleman who bought and sold vegetables. Her family had their own house and lot of land. She has always been single. Kristine graduated from college in banking and finance.

After graduation, Kristine worked in a car insurance company for three years and lived at her family’s house. Even though her salary was not high, 3,000 pesos a month, she was financially secure. After that, she worked in the Department of Transportation and Communication for six years. Her salary in the last month there was 7,000 pesos. Next, she got a contract to work as a care giver in Kuwait. She said that it was her dream to work abroad. Her

salary was 13,000 pesos. He could save almost all of her salary, because she lived with her employer and did not need to pay for anything. In fact, her contract was for two years. However, because of miscommunication, her employer terminated the contract after only 11 months. She told me that she said she wanted to go outside, but her employer misunderstood that she wanted to resign. Therefore, her employer bought a ticket and sent her back to the Philippines

Kristine faced a problem during her flight back to Manila. She had about 90,000 pesos in cash that she had saved. She did not realize that her money had been stolen on the airplane, until her flight transferred in Hong Kong. She informed the Hong Kong police, but they could not catch the thief. Policed compensated her 13,000 pesos. She cried during the entire flight from Hong Kong to Manila.

When she arrived in Manila, she was too ashamed to go back to her home town without a substantial savings to show for her 11 months abroad. She said, “I felt ashamed and it is hard to explain to them.” She was not sure whether her family and friends would believe her fate. She feared some might laugh at her. For that reason, she asked others at the airport where she could find a cheap hotel. Someone suggested the Gwapo Hotel near Luneta. She stayed at the Gwapo Hotel for three months and paid 30-50 pesos every 12 hours, until her money almost ran out in March 2012. Then someone suggested she could find work at a canteen. She worked there and slept at the Gwapo Hotel, and Baywalk, sometimes.

To summarize, this chapter provides narrative life histories of homeless people to show that the pathways to becoming homeless are long and complex. The causes of homelessness cannot be explained by any single factor. For example, it is superficial to argue only that people become homeless because they lost their job. I cannot find one person among my narrators who became homeless only because of losing a job. In fact, they became homeless because they both

lost their job and experienced a lack of family support. For instance, Tony's life history showed that he had some tension with his sister before becoming homeless. Likewise, Jordan and Jaymar came from broken families, resulting in a weak social safety net.

However deeper exploration is needed to fully understand several factors that are found in homeless people's life histories. For example, why do people complain that they cannot get a job when they are over 40 years old or when they have a tattoo from jail? Likewise further investigation might reveal why so many homeless people share a background of family problems. The next chapter will shed light on these factors by connecting them with the long histories of the Philippines, the Philippine economic and social welfare system, and urban development.

Chapter 4

Structural Violence as the Cause of Homelessness

“Homelessness is a way of life and a choice...They became homeless, because of their choice. If they don’t want to change their life, how can I help them?”

(Laurence Dy, Head of Jose Fabella Center, February 10, 2014)

Head of a temporary shelter of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) answered my question confidently about the causes of homelessness. Street people who are rescued from the street and have no residence in any city in Metro Manila will be brought to this shelter. In fact, I realize that he improved several services and the environment inside the center. It is much better than street people describe. I also understand the limitation of his office to deal with homelessness. Nonetheless, I have reservations about his explanation of the causes of homelessness.

The explanation of the DSWD official is similar to the widely quoted words of President Ronald Reagan that the homeless are “homeless by choice” (Wright 1989; Parsell and Parsell 2012). The quote and the attitude behind it, reflects the view that focuses on personal factors as the cause of homelessness. A review of the life histories in Chapter Three might lead some to think that the cause of homelessness in Manila is rooted in personal factors, such as having a family problem, being an ex-convict, being involved in drugs, etc. In fact, this dissertation will go beyond “blaming the victims” (Farmer 2004) by demonstrating that people do not make themselves homeless.

This chapter employ Paul Farmer's concept of "structural violence" to analyze structural causes of homelessness (Farmer 2004). What stands out in Farmer work is that his suggestion that anthropologists should study *deep history* in order to clarify how the poverty in the present is produced by the exploitation of the past. Therefore, this chapter will show first how colonization in the past left a legacy of social inequality in the Philippines and resulted in chronic poverty and homelessness in the present. Next, I will discuss how family problems in the life histories of homeless people are connected to economic hardship and, in turn, create "social violence" and "domestic violence," which pushes many people to the street. Later, I will show the gendered pathways to homelessness: how Filipino ideas of masculinity pressure and push men to become homeless more than women. Lastly, the chapter examines the trend of urban development that make it difficult for the urban poor to gain access to substandard housing in squatter areas as urban poor in the previous generation could.

Chronic poverty: Legacies of the past

Poverty and high unemployment is the one of the most concerning problems in the Philippines. Several governments created programs to solve poverty (Balisacan 2003; Bayudan-Dacuycuy and Lim 2014; Lim 2009). Actually, the Philippines does not lack resources, but it became a poor country because of a malfunctioning political system, which is the legacy of colonization (Bello et al 2005). The Philippines was colonized by Spain, quite early compared to its neighbors, starting in 1571 (Lieberman 2003). Spain conquered the Philippines and held it until 1898, and left two important legacies: Christianization of the Philippines and social polarization between the rich and the poor, particularly land polarization between Chinese

mestizos and landless people in the rural areas (Cushner 1976; McLennen 1982; Roth 1982; Wickberg 1964).

After Spain left the Philippines, the US took the Philippines, and remained until the end of World War II. Although the US Empire brought about many modernization projects in the Philippines, it did not alleviate social polarization, and left the country's political economy in the hands of a wealthy and educated elite. Elections quickly (1901-02) became a main channel for wealthy and educated elites to take power over the state and, thus, to use the state to protect their social, economic and political interests and to accumulate additional wealth (McCoy 1993; Cullinane 2003). Accordingly, although land polarization in the rural areas was one of the primary causes of poverty and social conflict in the Philippines, the Philippines has never had an effective land reform program, as in Taiwan, since the landed elite have controlled political power and inhibited the success of these programs (Balisacan and Hill 2003; De Dios and Hutchcroft 2003; Abinales and Amoroso 2005; David 2001). As a result, the rural landless have been migrating to Manila and working in the informal sector since the beginning of the twentieth century (Doeppers 1984: 35). These landless immigrants live in slum communities, because informal laborers could not afford standard housing (Caoili 1988: 52).

However, the most important period in Philippine modern history was during the Ferdinand Marcos era (1965-1986). The US supported President Marcos to fight against a communist movement in the Philippines, including his declaration of Martial Law in 1972 (Pinches 1994). The mismanagement of the Marcos dictatorship caused the Philippine economy, which had been doing better than other countries in Southeast Asia in the 1970s, to decline in the late twentieth century (see Balisacan and Fujisaki 1999; Balisacan and Hill 2003). Instead of spending international loans to develop infrastructure, the Marcos regime distributed the money

among cronies and caused a debt crisis (Bello et al 2005). Therefore, since 1983 the average growth rate has declined to 1.0 and 3.2 percent in 1980-1990 and 1990-2000, respectively (Balisacan and Hall 2003: 7).

The period of the Marcos era is a critical moment in the history of the Philippine. During that time, Japanese corporations considered moving their industrial productions abroad in order to find cheap labor resources and to avoid tariff barriers. Because of mismanagement in the Philippines, Japanese investors turned to Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand instead (Fabela 1999). Meanwhile, the Philippines was left behind. The 1980s, therefore, was considered the “lost decade” for the Philippines (Hill and Piza 2007: 271).

As a result, the Philippines lost its opportunity to develop the industrial sector in the 1980s. The impact of this loss on Philippine economic structure continues into the present. With the agricultural sector declining and, the industrial sector growing slowly, the service sector became “last resort” for employment (Balisacan and Hill 2003: 12, Hill and Piza 2007). However, there were also problems related to employment in the service sector. Wholesale and retail trade, plus social and personal service work were limited to “short hours of work, instability and low productivity and earnings” (Herrin and Pernia 2003: 297).

After the People’s Power Revolution in 1986, Philippines government tried to attract foreign investment, but the situation did not improve significantly due to various factors. The history of political insecurity had made foreign investors reluctant to invest in the Philippines (Hill and Piza 2007). In addition, the high level of corruption also discouraged foreign investors (Wallace 2007). There are two additional factors that caused Philippines to get left behind other major countries in Southeast Asia; these are 1) comparatively less development in infrastructure,

such as transportation and electricity, and 2) a smaller domestic market (Bello et al 2005; Kelly 2003; Hill and Piza 2007).

After 1986 the budget for investment in infrastructure for the Philippines was limited, because the Philippines had to pay interest for their international debt. The interest was quite high due to mismanagement during the Marcos era (Abinales and Amoroso 2005; David 2001: 198). From 1987-1991, the payment for the foreign and domestic debt “consumed between 40 and 50 percent of the national budget” (Abinales and Amoroso 2005: 242). Randolph S. David estimates that in 1988, the Philippine government paid about 80 billion pesos, almost half of the national budget, in debt service (1989: 16).

Rapid population growth in the Philippines

The other major factor influencing Philippine poverty is the rapid increase in population that intensified competition for jobs in the labor market. The population of the Philippines increased from 43 million in 1970 to 100 million in 2014 (Philippine Star, July 27, 2014). This happened in conjunction with the deterioration of natural resources such as forests and arable land, which resulted in increasing food prices (David 2003). Following global trends, advances in medical care have contributed to an increase in life expectancy from 63.2 years in 1980 to 68.7 years in 2013 (UNDP 2014:161). Unlike many other countries, however, the Philippine government has not effectively launched a campaign for birth control and family planning. Consequently, the Philippines has been largely unsuccessful in instituting a campaign to lower fertility.

Compared to Thailand, the birth rate in the Philippines has not decreased significantly. In 1970, the populations of the Philippines and Thailand were almost equal at 43 million and 41

million respectively, with the birth rates being 2.6 percent and 2.7 per cent. Between 1970 and 2000, however, Thailand succeeded in reducing its birth rate to 1.6 per cent annually and in the year 2000 Thailand's population stood at 61 million. In contrast, the birth rate in the Philippines in the same period remained high at 2.4 per cent annually and its population increased to 71 million by 2000 (Balisacan 2007: 214-216). The slow economic growth rate in the Philippines further complicated by the rapid increase in population resulted in the GDP per capita increasing only slightly from \$684.6 in 1980 to \$2,843.1 in 2014. During the same period, the GDP per capita of Thailand increased from \$683 to \$ 5,560.7 (www.dataworldbank.org). The annual average growth rates of GDP per labor of the Philippines and Thailand between 1981 and 2007 are 0.70 and 3.59 per cent respectively (Lee and Hong 2012:104-105).

The most significant factor in the failure of family planning policies in the Philippines has been the influence of the Catholic Church (David 1989; Balisacan and Hill 2003; Austria 2004). The Church has protested against the use of birth control by arguing that conception is the will of God (Herrin and Pernia 2003). Because of the limited knowledge of safe birth control, the frequency of modern methods of contraception in the Philippines is low: 33% in the Philippines as compared to 74 % in Thailand and 55 % in Indonesia (Herrin and Pernia 2003: 284-286). In reality, different classes have different attitudes towards birth control in the Philippines. Upper class and highly-educated Filipinos are prone to have fewer children than their poorer and less-educated countrymen (Medina 2001, 52-53). As such, the problems associated with high levels of population are more critical among the lower and less-educated classes.

Several Philippine governments have tried to create family planning programs since the era of President Ferdinand Marcos era in 1970. The Reproductive Health Bill (RH Bill) has been

presented in Congress since 1998 (Brillon 2013; Genilo 2014). However, the effort to enact family planning programs has been obstructed by the protest of the Catholic Church (Genilo 2014). The Church has resisted this bill by raising a “discourse of fear” that the promotion of contraception will have negative social and health repercussions. Advocates of the Catholic position argue that the bill will encourage people to engage in high-risk sex and abortions (Bautista 2010). The Church further argues that poverty has resulted from corruption and not from having too many children. Supporters of the bill argue that if the Philippine government cannot launch programs for family planning effectively, the poverty trends will worsen.

Amid the strong resistance of the Catholic Church, President Benigno S. Aquino III has succeeded in passing the RH Bill in December 2012. The Law mandated the government to provide universal access to reproductive health care service and medical knowledge about birth control. Nonetheless, the law was delayed for 16 months because Catholics filed suit with the Supreme Court before the Supreme Court finally ruled that the law overall is not unconstitutional. However, eight particular issues in the law are unconstitutional, such as the mandate to private and religious hospitals to refer patients who are not in an emergency to other facilities that offer reproductive health services (Muruenas 2014; Bernal 2014). Nevertheless, further study should be done on the effectiveness of this law in reducing the population growth of the Philippines.

In sum, it is clear that the industrial sector has not enjoyed much growth in the Philippines. The economic system, therefore, has failed to absorb people who migrate from rural areas to the city. As a result, unemployment and underemployment rates are still high in the Philippines. The unemployment rate of the Philippines in 2013 was the highest among ASEAN countries at 7.2 percent (Bersales 2014, Santos 2014). Underemployment was even higher, at

19.0 Percent (Bersales 2014). The unemployment rate in Metro Manila was 12.5 percent in 2008. Presently, even though the Philippine economy has improved, the unemployment rate in the Capital National Region, including Manila, is still high at 11.2 percent in January 2014 (Desiderio 2014; Ramirez 2014).

Unemployment and malfunctioning system

More important than presenting the unemployment rate in statistical terms, is the need to explore how the high unemployment rate in the Philippines affects the real life of many people and creates homelessness. I will analyze this focusing on three aspects: laborers paid lower than minimum wage, excluded laborers, and workers with short-term employment.

First, employers exploit employees by paying them lower than minimum wage. At the beginning, when I started doing my fieldwork, I was confused by the different views that I heard from street people. Many homeless people said that they became homeless because they had no job, or they could not find a job. However, when I talked with other homeless people, such as Jordan, he told me that it was not true that people could not find a job. There were jobs available, but some homeless people did not want to work. If they really wanted to work, they would be able to find a job.

Later, in mid-April 2013, I was surprised that some street people could easily get a job as a construction worker. It was not difficult, as I was told. Following up, I talked with a homeless person who worked as a construction worker, while we were falling into line to get a free breakfast in front of Santa Cruz Church. He pointed to a building near the church and said he worked there. He told me that it was not difficult to get a job. Then I asked him how much he

was paid. He replied 250 pesos a day. At that time I did not yet get the point, until I talked with Isko and he explained the specifics to me.

Isko, who has a criminal record, experienced working at a construction site in 2009. He told me that he worked at a big project, a 37-storey building in Makati City, but he got only 250 pesos a day. He explained that since the company did not ask him to show his NBI clearance, the company paid him less than minimum wage, which was 382 pesos a day at that time. If the company asked him to show his NBI clearance, he would be unable to get a job, because his NBI document would show that he had been in jail. Generally, Philippine employers rarely hire ex-convicts.

Similarly, a laborer who worked at the construction site near Santa Cruz got low wages because the foreman did not ask them to show their NBI clearance. His wage, 250 pesos a day, was much lower than the minimum wage of Metro Manila in 2013, which was 466 pesos a day. It is understandable, then, why he still had to fall in line to get free food from a soup kitchen in the morning. The day labor in construction is particularly precarious in Manila's informal sector because there is no enforcement of minimum wage.

Aside from a construction site, working on a farm is another available job that homeless people can get. Similar to working at a construction site, however, farm workers get paid much lower than minimum wage. For instance, Mike, who slept in the same place as me, met a recruiter who came to find laborers at Luneta. Then he went to work at a poultry farm for three weeks. When he came back to Luneta, I asked him about this job. He said he did not like it. A farm was smelly because of the poultry. His salary was low at 2,000 pesos a month, because the employers provided free food and lodging for him. In addition, working on a farm does not

provide regular working hours. He had to work from the early morning until night. Therefore, he disliked this job, and returned to the city to collect and sell recyclable items.

Drawing from Marxist theory, Philippine employers, particularly in the informal sector, can exploit laborers by paying them a much lower wage than minimum wage, because of a huge “reserve army of labor” (Braverman 1975). Employers know that plenty of unemployed are ready to replace someone who has left their job. According to market mechanisms, when the labor supply is higher than the demand, the price of labor is cheap. Therefore, employers can buy the labor at a low price.

I also had my own experience with this. I volunteered at a canteen to experience how homeless people who do not go to feeding programs buy their own food. This canteen in particular caters to street people because the price is so cheap, such as five pesos for each portion of a rice and vegetable meal. The price at other canteens is 25-30 pesos for a meal and 7-10 pesos for rice alone. I found that the owner paid her two laborers very low wages, namely 200 pesos for a cook, and 100 pesos for a helper. Only the cook is her regular employee, with other helpers not working for long, usually averaging from a few days to weeks, and then they resign. However, the owner does not have a problem hiring new helpers, because many unemployed walk past her kiosk all day. She can easily find someone who wants to work despite the low wage.

Second, employers can benefit by excluding some laborers from the labor market, namely overaged persons, and ex-convicts. Based on the life histories provided in Chapter Three, many people said that they cannot get a job because of their older age. In fact, I recognize that “being over-age” is a socially constructed category to impede some from access to the labor market. It benefits some, but deprives many people from attaining a job. Homeless people themselves

mention that it became harder to find a job when they are aged 40 and over, such as Anthony (42) Tony (46) and Jordan (46). These three persons are in their early 40s, and face difficulties in getting jobs. Others, who are over fifty, have even less chance of finding a job, such as Ate Reyna (55), and Tatay Feliz (61).

Jhocas described her experience with ageism in the following manner. She is a member of a program that helps homeless people find employment. Staff of the program contacted a recruitment agency in Makati City, and accompanied Jhocas and another older man, Tatay Jamil, to apply for jobs. Jhocas came back and recounted that she applied for a position as a janitor, but she was not qualified, because the requirement is that the applicant must be below 35 years old. She said, “Even though I can’t get a job, don’t need to talk about Tatay Jamil. He is 63 years old; how he can get a job?” Due to the high number of unemployed, employers can select only young laborers to work. Many of the younger workers have finished high school but they cannot find a job in the industrial sector, and so they have to work in the service sector, such as in janitorial positions.

Those who have a bachelor’s degree face difficulty in finding a job as well. For instance, Tony is 45 years old and has a bachelor’s degree in business management. He does not have a criminal record and does not use drugs. After being laid off from his job at a bank, he tried to apply for a job, but failed. The only factor that impedes him from getting a job is his age.

Those who have a criminal record also face significant hardships getting a good job. I learned about this issue for the first time in 2011. I asked an old man at Luneta why young street people could not find work. He told me that it is because they have tattoos. He was referring to gang tattoos, which implied that they served time in jail. A simple way to find out whether someone has served time in jail is by examining their tattoos. I learned to ask in an indirect way

about serving time in jail. Instead of asking, “Do you have any experience in jail?” I asked, “Do you have a tattoo?”

I have my own personal experience with this kind of inquiry also. When I walked to an assistance program for street people one morning, I met a man. He is on the Barangay committee of the Barangay that the assistance program belongs to. I walked passed him, while he was talking with two street persons. He called me over and asked whether I wanted a job. I smiled. He had seen me many times at the program, and thought that I was a Filipino street person. I had not explained my situation to him yet. He told me that he wanted to recommend someone to work at a gasoline station, and wanted to make sure that he recommended the right person. He asked me and others whether we have had served time in jail, and said, “Take off your shirt; let me see whether you have a tattoo.”

I further realized how difficult it was for ex-convicts to find work from Pedro’s experience. One day, I met him at Chess Plaza and found that he was joyless. Usually, he is funny. Jordan told me that Pedro was sad, because he could not secure a job. He had gone to apply for a job as a construction worker at a construction site near Luneta. However he failed to get the job because he did not have NBI clearance. Pedro was so disappointed, because he expected to get the job, since the Barangay Chairman had signed the confirmation for his application. Pedro felt that as long as he still slept on the street, he could not feel like a human being. He wanted to get a job to feed his family, but he failed. Pedro asked how he could stay at his family’s house in Baseco [a slum community], if he and his family had nothing to eat.

It is “normal” in the Philippines that Filipinos have to show their NBI and police clearance to show that they are not ex-convicts. Even canteens looking for helpers and paying lower than minimum wage, needed NBI clearance from their applicants (*see picture below*).

During my fieldwork, when I walked past the NBI office on UN Street, I saw many people in the long line in front of the office waiting to get NBI clearance. They needed it for their job applications.



- A poster at a canteen “Wanted boy or helper. NBI clearance, Manila Health Certificate,” Manila, January 22, 2013.

In January 2013, while walking with Pedro to go to sleep at Baywalk, we passed the US embassy. At that time, the Embassy had a project to build a parking structure. Pedro said that he wanted to work at this project, because the pay was good. He had already asked a foreman, but, he said, “It is necessary to have NBI clearance. I can’t apply.” Since this building was part of the US Embassy, the contractor was particularly concerned about security. Therefore, he needed laborers who did not have a police or jail record, and he paid them better than other places that did not require NBI clearance. In situations such as this, laborers who have a criminal record

cannot get a job. By contrast, if a contractor does not require NBI clearance, it is likely he will pay less than minimum wage.

I observed that many people whose age was younger than 40 years, and who could not get a job had tattoos, such as Jacob (32), Torres (35), Kevil (23) and Pepe (34). Ben, 37 years old, told me that he is lucky because he was in jail for seven months during the hearing of his case, but he did not get a tattoo. He explained that he knew someone in jail who advised him not to get a tattoo. He told Ben that his case was not serious, and he should be patient in jail by serving others. If Ben had gotten a tattoo while in jail, he would have faced difficulty in finding jobs after he was released.

Third, employers take advantage of having a huge “reserve army of laborers” by hiring employees for short-term contracts. Employers can then avoid paying benefits to their employees, such as Social Security and Philippine Health Insurance. According to the law, employers do not need to pay for such benefits during their employees’ probationary period which lasts from one to six months (Cruz 2015). Therefore, companies hire them on a short-term contract to evade the law. Short-term contracts happen not only in the informal sector, but also in the formal sector. Some people who have graduated either from high school or college, such as Tony and Mikel, received short-time contracts. Tony explained to me that generally people will get a contract for five months and two weeks. Then the company will ask their employee to “take a rest” for two weeks, before offering a new contract. However, because of the scarcity of available jobs, the unemployed cannot negotiate to secure a more permanent or longer contract. Therefore, they have to accept a short-term contract, although it makes their employment insecure. Rene E. Ofreneo clearly illustrates that “flexibilizing” in the labor market of the Philippines, which means short-term temporary employment, is the result of the weak capacity of

the Philippine economic system to create stable jobs for a growing population (2013). Therefore many workers are working in the precarious and unprotected condition.

Hiring employees on short-term contracts became an issue in the newspaper, while I was doing my field work, because it is a form of evading the law. However, the controversial debate over this issue was whether it is acceptable to hire one person for six months, and then hire another one for another six months. Since unemployment is a critical issue in the Philippines, hiring someone for six months, and then giving a chance to another person for another six months, can alleviate a number of unemployed people (Cruz 2015). Due to this strategy, the unemployment rate does not look very high statistically in the Philippines, but the underemployment figures in 2014 were high at 18.4 %, because many people did not have job for the entire year (Barsales 2014).

Because law enforcement in the Philippine is another problem, three forms of exploitation can happen. I have stated it is “normal” that employers pay their employees lower than minimum wage. Those who are regular employees also earn lower than minimum wage. For example, Jaymar, who worked as a security guard for more than ten years, got minimum wage in his last year only during his last year on the job. As a result, when I heard Ben say that he got 200 pesos a day with three meals on his new job at a canteen, I thought that it was good. I almost forgot that the minimum wage in Manila is 466 peso a day, and he works 12 hours, not 8 hours a day.

I asked people if they could complain to the government office, but many people replied that it was useless to complain. They believed that government officials would ally with the rich who paid them under the table. I could not verify such complaints. However, I had a direct experience with law enforcement by witnessing Anthony’s case.

Among street people whom I knew, Anthony was the most diligent, but he could not find a regular job. He volunteered at the same place as me from Saturday night until Sunday afternoon. He was assigned to do hard and dirty work, such as cleaning the place. As I already said that he was laid off illegally, so he brought his case to the National Labor Relations Commission. The committee judged on June 30, 2011 that Anthony won the case and the company was ordered to pay him a compensation of 302,758 pesos (\$6880). However, the enforcing the court order was a problem. By November 2013, he had received only about 20,000 pesos (\$455).

I went with him to the office of the National Labor Relations Commission in Quezon City. We traveled on foot. There, a sheriff got angry at him saying that Anthony regularly asked about the progress of his case. The sheriff said if Anthony thought that he was not good enough, he would resign from his responsibility of overseeing Anthony's case. Anthony then asked the chief of sheriff if this were possible. The chief said that the sheriff could not resign. He still was responsible for the case. By this point, the sheriff acted like he did not want to talk with Anthony anymore. Finally, Anthony became too tired to go back to the office to pursue his case. He gave up.

Because of malfunctions in the law enforcement system in the Philippines, employers can exploit laborers in many ways. Therefore, I emphasize that high unemployment in the Philippines is the root cause of homeless related problems. This issue will be made clearer by comparing the Philippines to Thailand, another country in the same region. The unemployment rate in Thailand is lower than in the Philippines. According to the government statistical authority of each country, the unemployment rate in Thailand was 0.7 % in 2013, while that of the Philippines was 7.2 % in the same year (Barsales 2014). In contrast to the Philippines, the

Thai economic system is facing a labor shortage, particularly of low-wage laborers, and has had to hire immigrant workers from Myanmar and Cambodia. As a result, Thai employers have to pay relatively well to keep their laborers. Accordingly, the minimum wage of Thailand, 300 Baht a day (\$9.3; 407 pesos) is the lowest paid for unskilled laborers. Generally, skilled laborers in the construction sector get paid about 500 Bath a day (\$15; 678 pesos). Therefore, a minimum wage is relatively strictly implemented in Thailand, not only because of law enforcement, but also for solving the labor shortage problem.

Compared to the Philippines, Thai employers rarely check the criminal record of job applicants. They check this only for applicants applying to particular departments, such as warehouse work. Some Thai laborers might have the same characteristics as the Philippine homeless people, such as being over-age and having a criminal record, but they are still relatively able to get an appropriate job. As a result, the number of homeless people in Bangkok is much less than the number of homeless people in Manila. It was estimated that there are about 3,000 street people in Bangkok, Thailand, compared to an estimation of 70,000-100,000 homeless people in Metro Manila (Aoki 2008: 70; Manila Times, December 11, 2010). The difference between the Thai and the Philippine unemployment rates is a major factor in explaining the different numbers of homeless people of both cities.

Family problems and social violence

The life histories of homeless people in Chapter Three show that many homeless people share similarities in their backgrounds, sharing a history of family problems, such as growing up in a broken family, and having weak family support. This discussion will illustrate two aspects of how having family problems contributes to homelessness. Although it seems obvious that

some homeless people are victims of irresponsible parents, the family cannot solely be blamed in a moral sense for homelessness. Family histories must be examined in the context of social change and class position. As I will show, economic hardship creates tension in the family, and contributes both directly and indirectly to push people into homeless.

Family is important in Philippine society, not only in terms of its psychological aspects, but also in providing a social safety net for their members and relatives, because formal social welfare in the Philippines is weak (David 2001: 119). Two formal social security systems, namely the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), and Social Security System (SSS) for public and private employees respectively, cover only 28 percent of the total population (Manasan 2009:59). Therefore, almost three-fourths of laborers who work in the informal sector and have irregular incomes yet do not benefit from either of the two systems. Moreover, SSS does not cover unemployment insurance. Unemployment insurance contributes to preventing people from becoming homeless in other countries in Asia, such as Japan, Taiwan and Thailand (Park and Jung 2007).

The history of homeless people before a social welfare system was introduced in the US reflects the present experience of the Philippines' homelessness. Kim Hopper argues that the majority of unemployed in the Great Depression did not live in public shelters, because they were partly absorbed by their relatives (Hopper 2003: 39-40). In the same way, not all unemployed in the Philippines become homeless. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, about 1.6 million people were unemployed and underemployed in Metro Manila in October 2013 (Philippine Statistic Office 2013). However, the number of homeless people in Metro Manila is under 100,000 persons. It means the majority of them are protected by their relatives and do not end up on the street.

In contrast, a significant drawback for those who have family problems is that they lack social support when they face difficulties, such as losing their job, or experiencing health problems (Jocano 1998). As I already explained, employment in the Philippines is insecure and people are prone to experience unemployment, either seasonally or chronically. Without family support, the unemployed are susceptible to becoming homeless. The life experiences of Anthony, Jordan, and Tony reflect this issue. They became homeless, because they lacked family resources when they lost their job.

One of my informants, Torres, is a good comparative case. He came from a broken home. His father died when he was young and his mother had a new partner. He could not get along with his mother and dropped out of the first year of high school. He was arrested and spent six years in jail. However, he was homeless part-time only, because his aunt supported him. He came to Manila to find a job, and worked mostly in construction. When he could not find a job, he hung out at Baywalk, until his money ran out. Then he went back to his aunt's house in Bulacan Province, not far from Manila. He would later return to the city to find a job. He experienced homelessness many times, but each experience was a few days to weeks only.

The life histories recounted in Chapter Three show that many people came from families that could not take care of them. For example, Pedro grew up in a poor family living in a squatter area. His father drank alcohol to cope with poverty, but it worsened the situation rather than solving the problem (Cohen and Sokolovsky 1989:195; Wiseman 1970). Therefore, Pedro ran away, and subsequently became involved in drugs and crime. His older brother also had the same experience; he also went to jail and later became homeless. Isko's father worked far away from home which caused him to lose interest in his studies and run away. Jhocas's life is tragic

as well. Her mother was a bargirl and could not take care of her.⁶ When her father died, her life became a mess. Luis grew up with his adoptive parents, because his mother was a prostitute and did not want to take care of him. After his adoptive parents died, Luis was driven out of the house.

Many homeless people shared similar sad life histories. Some people told stories about how their relatives emotionally mistreated them. Two such stories are of Lena and Billy. Lena, 35 years old, grew up in a broken family. Her mother worked at a karaoke bar, and got pregnant with a foreign tourist. Lena grew up with her mother and her Filipino stepfather. Later, her mother and stepfather separated. Next, Lena moved in with her aunt. Lena managed to graduate from college and work at a call center. However, when she could not renew her contract and lost her job, she quarreled with her aunt. Lena said that she felt like her aunt cared only about the money that she earned. So, she decided to leave her aunt's house. She worked at an Internet café, and got pregnant with a relative of her employer. Her boyfriend had a family already. Lena quit her job, and began hanging out at Luneta. Not long after, she met a woman, who became Lena's new partner. When Lena was about six months pregnant, her partner took Lena to her mother's house. After Lena gave birth, she and her partner left the house, because her partner's family did not like Lena.

Billy, 42 years old, was born into a broken family. After he was born, his father became involved with another woman and left Billy's mother. His father took him to Bicol province, his new partner's hometown. However, his father did not take care of Billy and left him with another couple. His adoptive parents worked at a farm, but his adoptive father died in an

⁶ When Jhocas got drunk, she once told me that her mother was not only a bargirl. Her mother was a street corner girl. It is slang for a prostitute. Nanay Bina, whom Jhocas stayed with, and her sister are both street corner women, too.

accident. Billy had to work to support himself to go to school beginning in grade 3 until he finished elementary school. He started working on a rice farm when he was 14 years old. After his adoptive mother died of tuberculosis, Billy went to Manila. He worked at a store owned by his former employer's sister. He worked there for three months to save money to look for his real mother. Eventually, he found his mother, and was happy that he could re-unite with his birth family. At that time, he was under 30 years old. He was able to find jobs and worked in many positions, such as a gasoline boy, a house helper, and a helper in a restaurant. However, when he lost his job at the restaurant in 1999 and could not find another job in the next few months, tension arose between him and his family. Billy recounted the experience like this, "When I had a job, I stayed with my boss. Every time I came back home, I brought rice and food to them. They welcomed me. But when I had no job, they argued with me even over small issues. I felt like I was not a part of a family." As a result, he left his family's house and became a street person at Luneta.

These two persons both grew up in broken families. Lena lived with her relative. Billy lived with his adoptive parents, before reuniting with his real mother. The problems began when they lost their jobs and tensions arose. Both Lena and Billy feel they were treated unkindly at home. When they lost their jobs, they decided to leave. However, I would like to broaden these life experiences to go beyond a moral blame. The tension in each of their families is closely related to unemployment and the consequent burden on the family. Therefore, these two stories can be combined to suggest that lower-class families have limited resources to support family members.

The connection between economic hardship and family problems clearly shows in Donald's experience. Donald could not fulfill his role as a bread winner. He quarreled with his

wife and left his family. Donald is not only the victim of extreme poverty, but also social violence in the sense that people suffer, because they cannot fulfill an expected role (Kleinman 2000). I met Donald, 42 years old, in February 2013, when he had just left his wife's house and returned to the street. Donald grew up in a broken family. He was a street child before. He had worked at several kinds of irregular jobs, such as a construction worker and a helper in a store. He met his wife when he worked as a construction worker, and his wife was a helper at a canteen near his work site. His wife's family has a house in Malabon City, Metro Manila. They had two children together. However since Donald did not have a regular job, he had to leave his wife's house. He was ashamed that he could not feed his family, and was pressured by his wife and his wife's family. He said when he has no money, his wife reproaches him. Donald did not visit his family for almost the entire year in 2013. He tried hard to get a job before Christmas 2013, so that he could reunite with his family. Finally, he did. He, his wife, and his two children visited Rizal Park in March 2014, and I met them there.

Others face the same problem as Donald does. Peter, 50 years old, said that he separated from his wife because he could not find a regular job and take care of his children. Since he does not have a job and his old age makes it difficult to find a job, he is ashamed to live at his family's house. Actually his family's house is in Pasay City, Metro Manila, 6 kilometers from Luneta, but Peter does not go back home. Likewise, Dani, 39 years old, shared that when he had no job and stayed at his family's house, he was reproached by his sister. Although he is not really old, his body is weak. He is thin and looks older than his real age. As a result, he left his house and lives on the streets.

I emphasize the connection between economic hardship and family problems, because I do not want the issue of homelessness to be located in the private realm only, thereby excluding

government from responsibility. Some scholars argue that in spite of the effects of modernization and globalization, Filipino families remain functional in providing a social safety net for their family members (Medina 2001: 258). However, among all my 100 informants, 82 persons have at least one form of family problems. It can be said that family problems are the basis of homelessness in the Philippines. Those who do not have a family, such as Ate Reyna, Mikel, and Tatay Leo are in the minority. In the same way, much research on street children indicates that these children leave their home because they are abused in their families (Martines 2010; Merrill, et al 2010).

These stories indicate that in some parts of Filipino society, families cannot function well. Therefore, the state should take responsibility for its role in causing or preventing homelessness. As Kim Hopper explains, before the welfare state, families took care of their family members. However, when society changed and families no longer functioned as in the past, the state was expected to play the role of family, such as providing a temporary shelter and unemployment insurance to prevent the poor from becoming homeless (Hopper 2003).

Drug abuse, economic pressure, and family problems

Drug abuse contributes to homelessness, too. Life histories of homeless people show that some of them, such as Pedro, Jhocas, Jacob, and Martin, have been, at some time, involved in drugs. An illegal drug widely used in the Philippines is methamphetamine or *shabu*. Why people use drugs and how it is related to homelessness needs consideration. I do not stigmatize street people here, but it would be wrong if I do not explore this issue. Drug abuse affects people in three important ways. First, it causes people to work poorly which may cause them to lose their job (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). Second, it causes family problems (Wasserman and

Clair 2010). Third, drug users spend money for drug instead of accommodation (Parsell and Parsell 2012). Similar to the pathways to homelessness, the pathways to drug use are too complicated to blame on the individual only.

For example, Pedro ran away from home and became a member of a street gang because he disliked his irresponsible father. Later he committed crimes and used drugs. Another example is Jhocas. Although she does not regularly use drugs, she is a hard drinker. I went with her to her relative's house, a place Jhocas had not visited in more than five years. Her uncle's wife said to me that when Jhocas was a child, she was nice. After her father died, she turned to drink and ran away from home. Both Pedro and Jhocas' experiences support the conclusion of previous research which points to the strong relationship between adverse childhood experience and health risk behaviors, such as smoking, alcohol and risky sexual behavior (Ramiro et al 2010).

Existing research also points out that the protective environment of a family is more important than poverty (Sta. Maria et al 2014). Accordingly, those who grow up in families which cannot provide protection run away, such as Pedro, Isko and Jhocas. They are prone to socialize with their peer group which can lead to vice. In addition, Pedro also mentioned his cruel father. Previous research also indicates that experiencing interpersonal violence in a family has a direct impact on children's delinquent activities (Maxwell 2001).

Furthermore, ethnographies of drug users in the Philippines also show informal sector workers use drugs in order to enhance their work, such as to work more hours, and to work at night time in informal sector activities (Lasco 2014; Sherman et al 2009; Urada et al 2013). This explanation is in accordance with Tata's story: how he got involved in drugs. Some street people avoided talking with me openly about their drug use. However, Tata is exceptional. His wife told me that Tata wants to be "an open book" for me. She meant Tata wants me to learn from his

life. Tata was 33 years old when I met him in April 2013. He was born and grew up in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental Province. His family was poor. His parents were fisher folk, and their income was uncertain. His family had a hard existence because his father was diagnosed with cancer, and subsequently, his leg was amputated. Tata stopped attending school when he was in grade three at high school. After dropping out of school, he worked at a grilled chicken stall, and then he worked at a factory in Bulacan Province. He worked there for a year and started using marijuana.

Tata returned to his hometown the next year, and worked as a tricycle driver. It was at this point that he began using the drug, *methamphetamine*. He explained that at that time he had many problems. His father suffered an amputation, so he wanted to work hard to earn a lot of money. When someone introduced him to drug use in order to work a longer day, he took it.

He separated from his wife after having been married for four years and having one child. He returned to Manila in 2004. He worked as a painter, and continued using drugs. When he lost his job, he hung out at Luneta and became a “call boy,” slang for a male prostitute (Johnson 1998). In 2007, someone supported him to get a job as a driver, but he lost his job the next year, because of his vice. Then he became a street person.

Martin, whom I introduced in Chapter Three, used drug for different reasons. His family was not really poor, but he got into trouble when his mother was diagnosed with cancer. He studied at a luxurious private high school, but could not get along with his rich friends. He turned to his friends in a squatter area and began using drugs. He used drugs for emotional release to forget his problems and reduce his anxiety (Lasco 2014).

Vincente’s life is similar to Martin’s. Vincente, 46 years old, was born in a poor family in Bulacan Province. He could not continue school after finishing elementary school for financial

reason. He worked as a construction worker and agricultural laborer, but he did not have a regular job. He started using drugs when he worked as a laborer at a rice farm. His drug use caused him to be separated from his wife. He moved to live with his older sister, who had a husband in Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila. They lived in a squatter area. Then one of his younger sisters went to work in Japan, and left her two children with Vincente to take care of. His sister sent monthly remittances to support her family. Vincente took responsibility for his nephew and niece for almost ten years, from 2000-2009. He spent the money from his sister on drugs, too.

In 2009, his sister in Japan supported him to enroll in a rehabilitation center. Vincente spent 22 months in rehabilitation before finishing the program. However, he narrated, “I had not used drugs for a year and ten months. But when I came back home, it was not 24 hours before I began using again.” He justified it by saying he was upset that his mother had died, while he was in the rehabilitation center, but no one had told him. He only found out when he returned home that his mother had died. His sister did not tell him, because she and her family did not want to interrupt his program. One year later, when his sister found that Vincente had returned to using drugs again, she reproached him. As a result, Vincente left the house and became a street person.

Methamphetamine, or *shabu* in Tagalog, has become a serious problem in the Philippines. However, the estimations of the number of drug users in the country vary widely. In 2004, it was estimated that there were 6.7 million drug users in the Philippines, but the estimated number of drug users declined in 2008 to 1.7 million (Global SMART Programme 2010: 107). The United Nations’ World Drug Report in 2008 estimates that 6 % of the general population uses *shabu* annually, the highest in the world (Urada 2013: 2). Nonetheless, the estimated number of drug users is much higher than the number of estimated homeless people. Therefore,

using drugs is not a primary factor in the cause of homelessness. Among 100 informants, 35 persons are either using or have used drugs.

Drugs might be a part of the cause of homelessness. However, when people became homeless, they might be unable to use drugs, as they had before, because of lack of money. Martin described this contradiction. When he lived at his sister's house, money was not a problem. He had money and used drugs. However, when he was homeless, money was a problem. It is hard to earn 100 pesos. When he earns a small amount, he has to spend the money on food first, not drugs. The economic condition of homeless people in Manila is different from homeless people in Australia who can earn enough money to use drugs (Parsell and Parsell 2012).

To summarize, to understand why people become involved in drugs, we need to consider their broader circumstances, such as poverty and life chances (Singer 2008). Some of my informants shared that their drug use was related to being a victim of family violence, coping with their economic hardship, or releasing their emotional stress. I consider people involved in drugs as victims of the system rather than agents of their personal faults.

Urban Development, slum demolition and homelessness

Although the issue might not explicitly show up in the life histories of homeless people, an examination of the housing situation in the Philippines is necessary to understand a primary cause of homelessness. The research on homeless people in developed countries indicates that the decline of affordable housing, such as single room occupancy (SRO) and cheap apartments, is one of major factors in causing homelessness (Blau 1992; Dolbeare 1996). However, in developing countries, affordable housing for the poor is often limited to slum communities

(Davis 2006). Likewise, in the Philippines, many urban poor who migrated from a province to Manila hoping to find better opportunities in the city have settled on vacant land, such as in the port areas, along railways, along canals, and on abandoned private land (Laquian 1969; Stone and Marsella 1968; Adem 1992; Hollnsteiner 1975; Naerssan 1990). Therefore, one question worthy of investigation is why slum communities are no longer able to absorb people who migrate from the provinces as they did in the past.

In the past, when slum dwellers were evicted from their old communities, they could look for new vacant land and re-establish new houses (Adem 1992: 107-110). However, the present high value of urban land makes landowners seriously protect their property from “squatters.” Therefore, it is difficult for slum dwellers to rebuild their houses in the city. Recent trends suggest that slum communities are burgeoning in fringe areas of Metro Manila such as Quezon City, but not in Makati or in Manila itself (Shatkin 2004: 2474; Antolihao 2004).

From the macro perspective, it is clear that the accessibility of the urban poor to slum communities has decreased, both because of urban intensification and the high price of urban land. Metro Manila has moved toward becoming a global city to attract foreign investors (Sassen 1991; Tyner 2000). Governments have launched several urban development projects, such as expanding railways, constructing new roads and developing new business districts. These projects have caused the demolition of 556,000 households. The private sector has also created many mega projects, such as Fort Bonifacio, a global city inside a former military base (Michel 2010: 389). Starting in early 2000, the real estate sector has begun developing gated communities in the south of Metro Manila. The main targets of these projects are Overseas Filipinos who send home remittances to buy a house (Ortega 2011).

Hideo Aoki proposes the causes of homelessness in Manila as follows, “The biggest part of the street homeless is made up of former squatter residents” (Aoki 2008: 74). His argument is based on existing research that many displaced people cannot survive in a relocation site out of the city, due to lack of a source of income (Porio 2002). As a result, they came back to the Metro Manila again, but because of the high value of urban land, land owners seriously protect their property from “squatters” (Shatkin 2004; Antolihao 2004). Therefore, according to Aoki’s hypothesis, these previous slum dwellers have returned to the city, not as slum dwellers but as homeless people who live in public spaces (Aoki 2006).

His explanation sounds possible. However my ethnographic information and life history interviews do not support Aoki’s argument. Among my 100 informants, only three persons had family homes located in slum communities that were demolished. Even in these cases, the reasons for becoming homeless are more complicated than the home demolition. For example, Ben was involved with drugs and had an enemy in his community. Therefore, he could not live in his family’s house. Ben’s house was demolished in 1999, and the relocation site for his family was in Bulacan province. Presently, his older sister lives at the relocation site project. I visited Ben’s sister’s community and asked her whether she knew anyone who returned to Manila and became homeless. She said that she rarely heard stories like this. The only case she knows is an old woman who went back to sell cigarettes at the place that she used to sell cigarettes before. She sleeps there and comes back to visit her family at the relocation site sometimes.

Fifty five persons of my 100 participants experienced living in a slum community. Of them, 19 were renters who said they had to leave because they could not afford the rent. One of these is Anthony. Others who experienced living in a slum community left their family’s house for different reasons. For example, some ran away when they were children. Others separated

from their partners. In addition, several persons were ashamed to live with their relatives when they have no job. These facts indicate that the majority of homeless people I know are not the victims of slum demolition, as Aoki speculates.

Moreover, Bob Mo Jung's dissertation on the impact of demolition on slum dwellers does not report that a certain number of these displaced persons become homeless in Manila (Jung 2014). Jung explores the effects of being relocated from slum communities because of the expanding railway project. The relocation site was quite far in Cubuyao, Laguna Province, about 50 kilometers from Manila. People who had a job in Manila could not afford transportation to go to work every day, which costs 150 pesos a day (Jung 2014: 10). Therefore some had to rent rooms in the city; they stayed there during the weekdays and went back to meet their family in the weekends (Jung 2014: 123). Some construction workers slept at a barrack during the weekdays (Jung 2014:123). Nonetheless, Jung also describes a couple who survived by collecting recyclable items. They slept on a sidewalk where they were familiar with the building owners and the area. This couple has searched for recyclable items for fifteen years (Jung 2014: 65-67). They became street homeless, but this situation does not happen widely.

Slum demolition may have forced some to homelessness. Such persons likely lived near the places that they used to live before the demolition, because they were familiar with that place and able to pursue survival strategies, such as working as scavengers, vendors, and pedicab drivers. Nonetheless, the assumption that the victims of the demolition become homeless lacks empirical evidence.

Moreover, the displaced persons who sleep on the street, as far as they are still connected to their family and have a relatively stable job, are quite different from the street people I met. The latter rarely contact their family and they work in odd jobs only. Drawing from the literature

on street children, there is a separation between children *on* the street and children *of* the street (Behura and Mohanty 2005). Children *on* the street might spend all days on the street, but still have contact with their family, more or less, and have sense of belonging to a community. In contrast, children *of* the street rarely maintain contact with their family, and consider the street their home (Behura and Mohanty 2005:5). In the same way, some ex-slum dwellers might sleep in a public place, but they are “people *on* the street” rather than “people *of* the street,” because they still have the connection with their family.

This idea is reflected in Tagalog language phrases. At first, when I heard people say “*taong kalye*”, which means “street people”, I misunderstood and said “*tao sa kalye*.” Ate Reyna corrected me because “*tao sa kalye*” means “people on the street.” It is different from “*taong kalye*” (street people). She further explained that people on the street are different from street people, because the former just have some business on the street, but they are not street people.

Nevertheless, urban development affects the chance of the urban poor to gain access to substandard housing indirectly. Urban development makes urban land so valuable that land owners have to protect the urban land. There is no vacant land for new comers to occupy and create informal settlement communities. It is different from the past when many Filipinos who migrated from the provinces to Manila could occupy vacant land and settle into a new life in a slum community. Although slum dwellers might not have a job, they still had their own home; they were not homeless. Presently, those who come to Manila without a social network cannot settle in a slum community, except by renting. However, being a renter is quite insecure. If they lose their job, they cannot afford to pay rent. Renters are more at risk of becoming homeless than slum dwellers are.

Gendered pathway to homelessness

The discussions about the causes of homelessness above are based on the political and economic analysis. However, an alternative view from feminist theory contends that gender bias is the underlying cause of homelessness. Drawing from her fieldwork with homeless people in shelters for homeless women in New York, Joanne Passaro illustrates how gender bias pushes many people, both men and women, to become homeless (Passaro 1996). For example, the masculine perspective that values men as breadwinners places much burden on men. When men fail to fulfill their roles, they lose their self-value, family, and become homeless (Passaro 1996:45). On the other hand, domestic violence thrusts women and children onto the street (Passaro 1996: 63-73). Similarly, Don Kulick's study of *travesti*, transgendered prostitutes in Brazil, indicates the problem of gender that pushes people from their home (Kulick 1998). Kulick explains that many travestis leave their home because their family cannot tolerate their transgendered appearance. For example, one of Kulick's informants stated that she was beaten by her brother (Kulick 1998: 58-60).

In the Philippines, several studies point to the same idea of Filipino masculinity in that men should be the provider for their families (Rubio 2007; Rubio and Green 2009; Yea 2013). For example, 50 men in Alicia Tadeo Pingol's study expressed that "the ability to provide for the family stood out as a prominent masculine attribute" (2001:3-4). Yea's study of organ trafficking in an informal settlement in Manila shows that only men sold their kidneys because they wanted to fulfill their masculine role as a provider for their family (Yea 2013).

Experiences of many homeless people in Manila affirm Passaro's argument that gender bias pushes more Filipino men than women to become homeless. Men faced more pressure when they are unemployed, because they cannot fulfill their role as a provider. For example, as

described above, Donald experienced being reproached by his wife's family when he was unemployed and stayed at home. He was judged as not being diligent enough to find a job to feed his family. Donald showed that he was trying hard by leaving the house of his wife's family and he became homeless. When he earned enough and saved about 200-500 pesos, he went back to visit his family.

Peter, 50 years old, also faced the same experience as Donald. When Peter was unemployed, his wife's family no longer accepted him. Therefore, he separated from his wife and came back to live at his family's house. However, Peter was still under pressure because he, as a man, could not find a job and had to rely on his sister. Therefore, he left his family's house and became homeless.

According to Peter's experience, masculine ideologies not only pressure men as fathers, but also as brothers, particularly older brothers, to take care of their siblings. Men who cannot fulfill this role will be ashamed to rely on their sisters. Because of this reason, Tony was under much stress. After separating from his wife, Tony's daughter has lived with his family and his younger sister has taken care of his daughter. Tony said that he did not go to this house because he, the oldest brother, was unemployed and could not share in the mortgage payment. Likewise, since Jaymar did not support his younger sister in the past, he also felt too ashamed to ask her for help when he got sick and lost his job.

Unemployed women were not pressured as much as unemployed men were. Although Filipino women are involved in economic activity, their primary role is taking care of their children (Medina 2001). As such, Pedro's wife, who was unemployed, could live with her family. In contrast, Pedro was unwelcome by his wife's family. I went to the house of Pedro's wife and experienced how Pedro was treated unkindly. A niece of Pedro's wife told me that she

always told Pedro to try to get a job to feed his family. She said that she had to work hard to support her children because she was separated from her partner. A sister of Pedro's wife worked as a housekeeper. She sent money to support her family, including her nieces and nephews, Pedro's children.

Accordingly, although women were unemployed, they could still live with their family and relatives. This is one reason that the majority of homeless people are men. I scrutinized 17 homeless women's life histories and found that most of them really lacked relatives to rely on. Aside from Jhocas, whom I already described, others shared the same background of weak family support. For example, Grace grew up on the street as a street child, so she has no relatives on her side. Ruby's parents separated when she was still young and she had no relatives. She had to stay at her friends' house since she started high school. Nanay Joan left her house in the province when she was a child, went to Manila to live with her relatives, and later separated from them. Mary and Avril similarly left their families when they were teenagers. Although they still contacted their relatives in the province, they were not close with them. Mai also left her family since she was a teenager and did not have relatives except her husband. When her husband went to jail, Mai could not afford rent and became homeless.

For other women, the conflict with their family and relatives is the direct cause of their homelessness, so they left their family and relatives. Lena, described above, is an example. She left her aunt's house after she was unemployed and had an argument with her aunt. Similarly, Rea left her family house because she used drugs and had a conflict with her family.

Moreover, masculine ideology also affects some women because their relatives do not accept their unemployed partners. Kim, 22 years old, had a boyfriend, but he did not have regular income at that time. Therefore, Kim's relatives did not accept her boyfriend. Finally, Kim

decided to leave her relative's house and live on the street with her boyfriend, and now also has a son growing up on the street. Actually, Kim's boyfriend is diligent. He first earned his income from collecting recyclable items. Later, he worked as an informal helper at a police station.

Another gendered aspect that needs to be examined is the transgendered. Among my 100 informants, six were transgendered. I asked them how their transgendered status related to their pathways to homelessness. Five out of six answered that being transgendered was not the reason for their homelessness. For example, Earl said that he left his family's house because he could not get along with his stepfather, but it was not related to his being transgendered. Ronnie, Liam, and Roberto similarly replied that they did not have problems with their family about being transgendered. Their main cause of homelessness was lack of regular jobs. Jhocas, the only one transman, became transgendered after giving birth. She was pregnant, but she did not know who the father of her baby was. After that, she disliked having relationships with men. Only Jun said that his gay identity, *bakla*, is partly related to his homelessness. He described that sometimes he had a boyfriend and brought his boyfriend to his family's house, but his family did not accept his boyfriend. Therefore he could not live at his family's house for long and decided to live on the street with his boyfriend. However, during my fieldwork, Jun did not have a boyfriend. He went back and forth between his house and the street.

The possible explanation for the weak connection between being transgendered and a pathway to homelessness in Manila is that although the Philippines is a Catholic country, Filipinos tolerate transgendered individuals, and the notion of anti-homosexual behavior has never been established in this country (Foe 2013; Joaquin 2014: 18; Dynes and Donaldson 1992). Transgendered people can be famous movie stars and act on TV shows. Gay beauty contests have become a popular activity during a fiesta (Cannell 1995). Lesbian, gay, bisexual,

and transgender (LGTB)'s communities, organizations, and networks have expanded since the 1980s and homosexual tourist areas in Manila are also well-known (Tan 2001; Collins 2005; Thoreson 2012).

Working abroad and homelessness

Working abroad indirectly affects the pathways of becoming homelessness of some people. Since the Philippine economic system has been unstable since the 1970s, several Philippine governments have been substantially supported Filipino laborers to work abroad since 1974 (Rodriguez 2005; McKenzie et al 2014:3). Overseas Filipinos Workers (OFW) are called the new heroes (*bagong bayani*) whose remittance since 2005 have contributed to about 10 percent of GDP with a value of more than \$20 billion (Rafael 1997; Bayangos and Jansen 2011: 1838). The number of overseas Filipino contract workers increased from 1.5 million in 2009 to 2.2 million in 2013 (POEA 2013). However, many studies have pointed to the social cost born by families when family members working abroad, such as the children being left behind (Parrenas 2001; David 2001: 72; Pingol 2001). I found that overseas employment is related to pathways to homelessness in three different ways.

First, having parents working abroad deeply affected the children left behind. Jordan is an example. His parents both worked abroad. His father worked as a seaman and his mother worked as an entertainer in Japan. Jordan suffered from this experience. He said to me that I could not understand how hard his life was when he was still young and his parents were abroad. The expectation of his parents of working abroad to earn more to take care of their children was not successful. In contrast, it led to family disruption. Jordan's parents were separated and both have a new family. Jordan became a hard drinker. When he lost his job in 2009, he became homeless.

Second, some homeless people succeeded in their dream of working abroad, but they could not adjust well back in the Philippines. For example, Tony experienced working on an international ship, but he disliked being discriminated against and resigned to work at a bank. Later, his wife went to work abroad as a domestic worker for four years. When she came back, she wanted to separate from Tony.

Two homeless women experienced working abroad, but ended up on the street. Rasa went to work as an entertainer in Japan several times. Overall, she worked for four years. However, like many other entertainers, she used drugs while working to suppress her emotions. She said that she was not “lucky” enough to find and marry a Japanese man. Therefore, she came back to the Philippines and worked in a bar. Later, she became homeless when she turned 37 years old. She has been on the street for six years already. Julie worked as a domestic worker in Hong Kong and became a mistress of her employer. When she came back to the Philippines, her employer still came to visit her and supported her small business, a canteen. However, her employer stopped supporting her the next three years and she could not run her business by herself. Later, she decided to come to Manila with her two children and became homeless when she ran out of money.

Third, working abroad is taking a risk. Most of OFWs go to work with a temporary contract of only six months to one year. There is no guarantee that they can renew their contract and earn much to save enough for when they come back to the Philippines. Therefore, going to work abroad is high risk. Tatay Feliz recounted that it was his fault that he decided to quit his job at the post office and went to work abroad. If he had continued working at the post office, he would have been able to get a pension when he gets old. Tatay John also worked as a driver several years in Jordan, but he did not get a good income as promised in his contract. When he

came back to the Philippines, he did not have any savings. Later he worked as a driver, but when he got old, he could not find a job. The last example is Kristine who lost her money during her flight back to the Philippines. Although I cannot confidently argue that working abroad is a major factor causing homelessness in Manila, the experiences of these people indicate that working abroad does not always bring a good outcome and can result in unemployed at home and in some cases homelessness.

To summarize, this chapter points to three structural factors causing homelessness in Manila, namely high unemployment rate, having weak family support and urban development. I argue that instead of thinking that personal characteristics, such as having a criminal record, abusing drugs, or being of an older age, causes someone to become homeless; rather, it is more accurate to argue that the Philippine economic structure provides the necessary conditions leading to the causes of homelessness. Those who have some personal vulnerabilities, such as being older, having a criminal record, or drug abuse, are exploited or excluded from the labor market, and become homeless. Family is important because social welfare in the Philippines is weak. Therefore, it is the family that functions as an informal social welfare provider to support its members in situations of crisis. Accordingly, those who lack family support are at risk of becoming homeless when they face a crisis in life. Urban development also limits the ability of the poor to gain access to cheap housing in slum communities. In addition, masculine ideology pressures men into becoming homeless more than women because men who failed to fulfill their role as a provider for their family are ashamed to stay at home while they are unemployed.

At the beginning of this chapter, I quoted the argument made by a DSWD official that people become homeless by choice. I do not argue that his assertion is totally wrong. Some homeless people make a decision to live on the street, but they choose this option because it is

the best among bad choices. For example, as discussed above, some prefer living on the street to being exploited by having to work hard with low wages. This complex issue will be elaborated in the rest of this ethnography in relation to how homeless people adapt to street life. However, if we consider those who become homeless for the first time, we will find that they were pushed into becoming homeless rather than “choosing” to live on the street.

I will close this chapter by quoting Luis’s words when I asked him what why he became homeless. He said in English that that he did not choose to be on the street, but he was pushed to the street. If a government official gave him a chance to have a job and a decent house, he would not be on the street. He said, “I don’t like to be a street person. It is not because of choice, but because of chance.”

Chapter 5

Adjusting to street life and feeding programs

“I will go back to my hometown. It is hard here, particularly during the rainy season,”

Ate Reyna told me, before I left my pre-dissertation fieldwork in July 2011. At that time, she had only been on the street for three months and it had been raining since May. However, when I went back to Manila again in January 2013, she was still there. After greeting me, she remembered what she had told me two years ago. She said, “You see. I can cope with the rainy season already.” Ate Reyna’s experience is an example that people need time before they can fully adjust to street lives. At first, many newcomers thought that they could not survive on the streets. However, when they had no place to go and had to live on the streets, they gradually got used to street life.

This chapter will illuminate how people learn to adjust to street life on a daily life. It will begin by describing a transitional period of learning to live on a street, such as finding a place for sleeping, taking a bath, and washing clothes and the like. Next, it will illustrate the simplest way for homeless people to find food, namely going to several soup kitchens. Filipinos generally call these soup kitchens “feeding programs.” This chapter will show that when structural violence pushes people to become homeless, they try to cope with their difficulties. These coping strategies indicate both their hard life and their ability to deal with impoverishment. Elliot Liebow argues that “homelessness is hard living” (1995: 25). Homeless people have to deal with many issues that housed people do not, such as finding a toilet, a safe place to sleep,

and storage (Koegel et al 1990; Liebow 1995; Borchard 2005). However, many cities in the US have provided shelters and soup kitchens for homeless people since the 1990s. In addition, many public and semi-public institutes, such as public libraries and campuses, are more open to the public, and homeless people can use facilities at these institutes (Stolley et al 2008; Anderson et al 2012). In contrast, the conditions of Manila City are different. There are no public and private shelters available for homeless people. Furthermore, government offices and public institutes in Manila, such as colleges, are generally closed systems. People without a business purpose cannot enter such institutes. Therefore, the living conditions of people in public places in Manila are harder than in many cities in developed countries.

Adjusting to street life

First experience on the street

Generally on the first night that people sleep on a street, people find that street life is hard until they learn to adapt. Many, but not all, homeless people already knew that Luneta or Rizal Park is an open area where they can congregate, so they go to Luneta when they leave their last residence. However when they have to sleep in a public space, they are usually scared. For example, Ben recounted his first night on a street in 2010. He did not really worry, because he had known before quitting his job that he could settle at Luneta. On his first night, someone suggested to him to get free food at Bumbay. After that, another one proposed that he sleep on Otis Street, which is not far from Bumbay. However he felt, “It was difficult to sleep, because I felt afraid of something. I had not gotten used to sleeping on a sidewalk yet.” Vincente shared with me his first night when he slept inside the Rizal park, “My mind was a mess. I am scared. I

did not know anyone. I cannot sleep. I think about how I can have food to eat tomorrow.” Tony agreed that he was scared as well; he did not know anyone who slept at Baywalk. He was also scared of being a victim of a theft, quarreling, and fighting. He said, “You don’t know anybody. It is hard.”

Several people mentioned that they had a similar fear that someone, particular a crazy person, might hurt them while they were sleeping. Tatay Feliz said that he had 700 pesos when he left his family’s house in 2003 and he came to sleep in Luneta. At that time, people could sleep inside the park because there was no prohibition. Since he did not know anybody, he was scared that someone might stab him. Likewise, Jun, who stole money from his older sister, recounted how he slept on a sidewalk near Paco church. He was scared that someone might stab him and take his money.

Generally, women were concerned about safety and privacy the most (Hopper 2003:138). Homeless women who have children are concerned for the safety of their children. Julie related how she worried that when she woke up in the morning, her children would be gone. She slept on a sidewalk of Broadway Street, because many housed people sleep there to compete to attend a TV show. She found them after she checked out from a hotel nearby because her money had run out. Likewise, Mary described sleeping on a sidewalk in front of a department store near Luneta. Her feeling was that, “I was scared that someone might kill me. I worry that I might lose my children. I had to sleep sitting up. It was not real sleeping.” Rea who had three children narrated that she was scared of street children who inhaled solvents at a plaza where she slept. However her husband knew them. She hoped that the street children would not bully her children. Nevertheless, she pitied her children that slept in a plaza.

Although they found street life difficult, they had various explanations for their perseverance (Wolch and Dear 1993:239). Mikel said that his first night, he sat on a bench in Rizal Park. He was scared that someone might stab or hurt him. He told himself that he had “no other choice.” Mikel’s word reflects the same experience of many others.

Ben slept on a sidewalk and believed that he could not go back home because he had an enemy in his community. Similarly, Mary said that she could not return to her husband’s house because his family did not accept her. The family allowed Mary to stay there to give birth only. After that, she and her family had to leave. Her husband had no job and could not afford rent. Like her husband, she did not want to go back to her hometown because she did not want to be a burden on her relatives. Therefore, her only choice was to face street life. In the same way, Rea, who had a baby, said that at the beginning her family faced difficulty on a street: obtaining food, lack of employment, and no money. However, she did not want to go back to her hometown because her family was in a mess. They were not kind to her and she thought that she had to take responsibility for her own life.

Martin fled from his family and went to Luneta. He said, “Tata is the first one whom I met here. He sold a *panapin* [a plastic mat] for me, and then I asked him where I could sleep. He suggested sleeping at Baywalk.” Martin recounted that he felt blessed to be safe and told himself, “I deserved it. I am no longer at home. I was not sent out, but I left my house for self-punishment [because he involved in drugs]. [Therefore] it doesn’t matter what happens, I have to face it here.”

Some people stayed at the Gwapo Hotel as a transitional residence. The Gwapo Hotel is a daily dormitory operated by Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) located near Rizal Park. In fact, it was originally built as a cheap hotel for Filipino overseas workers who

were either coming from the provinces before taking a flight to work abroad or returning from abroad before going back to their province. It charged 50 pesos for twelve hours. The name was later changed to MMDA Workers' Inn, but many people still called it the Gwapo Hotel or Gwapotel.

Those who stayed at the Gwapo Hotel had some money when they left their last place, such as Kristine, Tony, and Tatay Fernando. They stayed at the Gwapo Hotel until their money ran out. During their transitional period, they went to Luneta and observed street people. Tony recounted how he came to frequent the *Kakahuyan* [a specific area which has many trees] inside Rizal Park where someone suggested him that he save his 50 pesos a night to buy food by sleeping at Baywalk. Tatay Fernando related the same experience that, "When my money ran out, I slept by sitting on a bench in Luneta Park for two weeks. I got thin and stressed out, because I did not have any friends yet, until someone suggested that I sleep at Baywalk and go to a feeding [program] at Bumbay. I am still grateful for him. Otherwise, I might not know how to survive."

Surviving on feeding programs

Commonly, people found that they could survive on the street once they learned about feeding programs. Luis described this striking experience. When he left his friend's house in Pasig City, he walked along the road without direction and slept on a sidewalk in Mandaluyong City. Unfortunately, street children approached him at dawn. Luis did not realize that they were children sniffing solvent. One threatened him by using a knife hidden in his shirt and demanded Luis gave him his money. He had 400 pesos in his pocket and he gave them all money he had. He said, "I was so depressed. All my money was already gone, and I had nothing to eat."

Later a nun approached him, while Luis was sitting on a sidewalk and looking very weak. At first, the nun wondered if Luis was a drug addict, because he was so thin and his clothes were dirty. When the nun knew Luis had no place to go, she suggested Luis go to Manila City, because there were many feeding programs there.⁷ Luis walked to Manila City, but he did not know exactly where to find a feeding program.

He said, “I sat on a sidewalk on Otis [street]. Actually it was close to Bumbay already, but I did not know about Bumbay yet. I was so tired and depressed. I felt like I had almost become crazy. I had already heard voices.” Fortunately a street person saw him. He asked Luis whether he was hungry. When Luis said yes, this fellow suggested he go to Bumbay. Luis said, “I still remember the feeling when I got food. Oh! I can be alive. When someone told me that Bumbay gives food like this every day, I asked, ‘Really?’ It was hard for me to believe. I was really glad that I will not be hungry anymore.”

Jhocas described her experience after quarreling with the family of her mother’s friend. She had no place to go. She just walked following a jeepney route from Taytay, Rizal province to Manila City. It took almost six hours to walk the 25 kilometers. On the first night, she slept in a park near Manila City Hall. She said that she was so scared because she had no friends yet and some guys tried to approach her. She had to move to another place. When she walked past Quiapo Church on Friday afternoon, someone asked her if she wanted to eat porridge. She was still ignorant about feeding programs and believed she had to pay for the porridge. Therefore, she replied that she had no money. As a result, this man told her that it was free for *yagit*. At that time, Jhocas did not know what a *yagit* was. When she asked the man about *yagit*, he said, “Yagit means those who sleep on the street.” Therefore, she could eat the free porridge. She said

⁷ Jhocas, who grew up in Pasig City, confirmed that there was no any feeding program in Pasig City, and I have never heard about a feeding program in Mandaluyong City.

at that time she was really hungry. It had been four days since she had real food. She had been drinking water and looking for leftover food from garbage cans. She said, “I watched the garbage cans. When I saw someone had left food in a garbage can, I kept it. But I was too ashamed to eat it in front of others. I had to hide while I was eating left over food.” When she learned that many feeding programs gave free food for street people, she knew she could survive and could get used to street life gradually.

Jaymar described his first day, a Sunday afternoon, on a street that he frequented in a park near Manila City Hall. Later, he saw many singing Christian hymns and praying and he joined them. At that time, he did not know that it was a part of a feeding program. After finishing a prayer session, he received a free hamburger. He said, “I met Mike the first time there and he introduced me to Bumbay at night.” Jaymar referred to Mike, whom I already knew.

Martin described his first experience attending a feeding program, “I went to Bumbay, but it was a different place from Bumbay today. There was another Bumbay; it was the Hindu Bumbay, not the Sikh Bumbay.”⁸ While I was sitting and waiting for food, someone asked me ‘brother, have you come to the right place?’ because I was still white and fat. I didn’t look like *yagit yet*.” He further explained that he could adapt to street people because when he used drugs before, he met different kinds of people. Therefore, he knew how to go along with them.

Experiences of Luis, Jhocas, Jaymar, and Martin that I described above are similar to the experience of homeless people in the United States. Research shows that when people become homeless the first time, the first place that almost half of the people (45.7%) go is soup kitchens (O’Toole et al 2007:449). Next to soup kitchens, homeless people seek help from social welfare

⁸ Both the Hindu and the Sikh Bumbay are Indian-Filipinos, but they practice different religions. When I did my pre-dissertation fieldwork in 2011, the Hindu Temple still delivered food to the poor. But when I went back to Manila 2013, it had stopped giving out food already. Only the Sikh Temple has continued giving out food.

offices and family members. However, the social welfare system is weak in the Philippines and many people became homeless because of family issues. Therefore, soup kitchens are particularly important to serve people in crisis. I will describe soup kitchens in detail later. The next section will explain other issues that new comers have to learn to adjust to street life, such as finding safe places to sleep and free shower rooms. In general, street people are willing to share and offer suggestions to new comers about these issues.

Learning to protect themselves

Sleeping on the street means a lack of privacy and safety (Hopper 2003: 102-103). In the US, homeless people do not only sleep in open areas. They also stay in many places covertly, such as abandoned buildings, abandoned trains, the stream tunnels like the Grand Central Station in New York City, and under bridges (Borchard 2005: 103-105; Anderson 1923: 16-26; Hopper 2003: 103-104; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). However, most homeless people whom I met slept in open areas. They felt safer in the open spaces. Those who sleep in less visible areas such as under a bridge have a different way of life than homeless people who go to feeding programs.

Generally, newcomers do not know how to sleep safely to protect their belongings. Many became a victim of theft. Tatay Fernando narrated that he lost his bags three times. He said that previously, he and Martin slept in front of a building near Baywalk. It was dark and he thought that it was safe because nobody could see them. However, when a thief was stealing his belongings, nobody saw it and helped him. He learned later that it would be safer to sleep in a bright area. He further commented that at that time, he did not know that he should tie several bags together to make it more difficult for someone to steal his bags.

Light is important for sleeping outside. Light is useful not only in terms of preventing crime, but also preventing mosquitos: the more light, the fewer mosquitos. When I slept on the sidewalk on UN Street, the streetlight was not bright. Those who came earlier chose to sleep near the light pole first. Wind was also important to prevent mosquito.

Accordingly, Baywalk is an ideal place for sleeping. It is bright and windy. There are lights along Baywalk. Moreover, many vendors sell their goods throughout the night which means they are informal guards. Nonetheless, it is possible that they might be the first ones to pick up any valuable items that might fall from a pocket of sleepers. I was taught “don’t trust anybody.” Therefore, I did not expect that anyone would look after me. Nonetheless, the drawbacks of sleeping at Baywalk were its many thieves and difficulties when it rained.

One always needs to be careful when sleeping in public spaces, particularly at Baywalk. Petty crimes, such as stealing, were a continuous threat. People who are not careful will become a victim. For example, Adrian, who sometimes socialized with Ate Reyna’s group, lost his cellphone at Baywalk. Generally, not many homeless people have cellphones and Adrian is not quite a street person. He had a cellphone and always sent messages to his girlfriend. One night when he was tired, he fell asleep and he forgot to put his cell phone in his jeans. He had simply left it in his jacket. He said that he slept less than an hour and when he woke up, his cellphone was gone. It was possible that his cell phone fell out of his jacket and someone saw and took it. Another example is a woman who showed me her torn jeans. Her husband said that they slept at Baywalk and his wife put her cell phone in her jeans pocket. It seems that a thief using a blade, slit her pocket, and stole her cell phone.

At Baywalk, there are many people passing by the entire night. Some search for recyclable items; others might look for victims. My plastic bottle for my drinking water, which

cost less than one peso, was stolen when I left it outside my bag. Slippers are another item that should be guarded closely. As I said before, Pedro taught me to hide them under a plastic mat. However, many people still warned me that I was not safe enough and that someone might be able to steal it. They said that it is better to use one's slippers as a pillow.

Nonetheless, some people prefer to sleep in a dark area such as under a tree in a park which had no lights, such as at Lawton and a park near Manila City Hall. To do so safely, they slept as a group to look after each other. These people needed a blanket to protect themselves from mosquitos. The advantage of sleeping in dark and closed areas was that they could hide themselves from being apprehended by DSWD. In Lawton for instance, some people—like me—preferred to sleep at an open and bright space near the statue of Bonifacio. However, many people warned me that sleeping there is risky. If DSWD or RAC came, I would be the first target apprehended. By contrast, sleeping in dark areas allowed people to run away from a DSWD van before DSWD officials approached them.

Doing mundane life outside

Learning to sleep outside is just one of many things that people have to learn to live on the streets. Finding a toilet, a shower room, and a place for washing clothes were all important as well. During my pre-dissertation fieldwork, I did not really think about this issue because I was mostly in Rizal Park and paid five pesos for a toilet inside the park. However, when I was really immersed in street life, I realized that finding a toilet is an issue. It is not normal for street people to pay five pesos for a toilet. Many people use a free toilet in a fast-food restaurant. Two companies that were sympathetic to street people are Jollibee and McDonald's. For example, those in Luneta generally used the toilet at Jollibee and McDonald's at the corner of Taft Avenue

at UN Street. I always used a toilet at Jollibee in the morning and saw many street people did the same. Those who went to a feeding program at Santa Cruz in the morning knew that many fast-food restaurants were available around there. However the problem with a toilet in a fast-food restaurant is it might be closed unexpectedly. Moreover, some street people not only used the toilet for free, but also took toilet paper.

Another free toilet that street people used was in a department store. However, not all street people were comfortable entering department stores. In the Philippines, a security guard checks customers' bag for security reasons. Some street people were uncomfortable opening their old bags and showing their old clothes indicating that they are homeless. Particularly, those who survived by collecting recyclable items were prohibited from entering department stores. They also wanted to avoid being treated rudely by the security guards.

It was not unusual for people to defecate in a public area. At Baywalk, both men and women defecated behind the seawall. Along the Baywalk, there was a seawall about three feet high and about three feet wide. Many people, including me, slept on the seawall. Those who needed to defecate would cross and sit behind the seawall. They turned their back to the wall and did what they wanted. Women who needed to urinate would do the same. Men had it much easier. They crossed the seawall, turned their back to people, stood, and urinated. This made Baywalk smelly and it took some time to get used to the odor.

Homeless women were concerned with privacy more than homeless men. Ate Ruby told me that one of the difficulties of street life was a lack of privacy. Women were uncomfortable urinating in a public place. Ate Reyna also told me that when another woman asked her to accompany her to sleep on the corner of a building, she was uncomfortable doing so. She

explained that it is difficult to find a toilet in that area because it is quite exposed to the public. It is different from sleeping at Baywalk where she could urinate behind the seawall.

At Bumbay, while people were waiting for food opposite the Sikh temple, people could walk to a nearby canal to defecate. Robin told me after he went to defecate, “It is ok to do it there.” He further explained that if I wanted to, I had to be careful because some did not make it all the way to the canal. They just defecated on a walkway along the canal. He said that it was better to defecate into the canal.

The first night I went to sleep on Otis Street, Mike noticed me. He said that such an area was safe, clean, and peaceful, but there was no CR—Filipinos usually say “CR” for a comfort room. He said, “Be careful, do not eat so much before going to sleep, because it is difficult to go to CR. There is no CR around here.” In fact, those who sleep at Otis Street used the restroom at an abandoned area near a bridge and canal. For example, on a night before going to sleep, Ben asked for paper from me, because he wanted to go CR. I offered him toilet paper, which I usually had in my bag. If he did not get toilet paper from me, he would use newspaper. Many homeless people used newspaper instead of toilet paper.

Bathing areas is another difficult find. Manila is in a tropical country. Housed people commonly bathe twice a day. However street people cannot do the same. Usually, homeless people bathed two or three times a week. During my pre-dissertation fieldwork, I did not learn to take a bath as street people did. I waited too long and eventually had skin problems. Therefore, I learned to take a bath outside during my fieldwork.

The first place that I went to take a bath was with Ate Reyna’s group at a swimming pool. There was a swimming pool that was under renovation and close to Grandstand. Not many people knew about this swimming pool. It belonged to City of Manila, but the maintenance

system was poor. Some vendors paid the staff unofficially for bathing and washing clothes. My group, including me, Ate Reyna, and Tatay Fernando, also paid ten pesos under the table to take a bath there in the shower area for swimmers. However from January to April, the swimming pool was not open officially and there were no swimmers. Generally, street people could not afford to pay ten pesos every day. Therefore, taking a bath two times during the weekdays was already good enough. However, after the Barangay nearby took over the maintenance system, the rules were changed and strictly enforced. Many children went swimming in the summer when the schools were closed. Therefore, Barangay instituted the rule that only those who have a letter from Barangay could enter the swimming pool. As a result, we no longer could take a bath at the swimming pool.

Then others suggested I go to a paid bathroom in Intramuros, a Manila old town not far from Luneta. Many street people knew that place. It was a bathroom of a Barangay Hall, and their staff allowed people to take a bath by paying 20 pesos. I observed that those who paid for a bathroom had a source of income, such as selling plastic mats and being a vendor. In contrast, street people who regularly went to feeding programs would save their money by taking a bath at some of the feeding programs.

Two feeding programs are well known among street people, namely Paco and Ermita churches. [I will describe details of several feeding programs later]. Paco was well known among street people because it had served street people for almost twenty years and it was the only feeding program that allows street people to wash their clothes. Therefore, every Sunday morning, street people went to Paco School to take a bath and wash their clothes. Ermita Church also allowed street people to bathe before attending a Mass and feeding program on Thursday late afternoon, but people cannot wash their clothes there.

Two other feeding programs where street people can bathe are Hospicio de San Jose and Calvary. Hospicio de San Jose is available three times a week, namely Monday, Wednesday and Friday (hereafter MWF). However, members had priority for bathing. Those who were not members could bathe only after all members had finished. Calvary allows street people to bathe and wash their clothes too, but its location is quite far. Located on Broadway Street in Quezon City, it was about eight kilometers from Luneta. Street people went there also, but not as many as Paco and Ermita.

Another issue in everyday life that street people have to deal with is their belongings. Newcomers are prone to having too many bags and their bags look new. Eventually, they find that they cannot carry all their belongings and eventually have to leave some. For instance, I met Ruby when I had been on the street for more than a year. She and her husband just left their rented room after her husband lost his job. They tried to carry several bags. The following week, I found that they had only one bag each. I asked Ruby about their belongings. She replied, “They were so heavy, so we sold them. You see. I had nice jeans before. I sold them too. I sold my clothes and bags for 50 pesos.” She further related how she had already sold her earrings for fifty pesos as well because her money had already run out; they believed that her husband would be unable to get a job soon. During the next week, she pawned her cellphone for 500 pesos. Ate Reyna also shared with me a similar experience. She became homeless for the first time in 2011. She explained, “The first thing that I have to adapt to is my bags. At first I had many bags, but I could not carry them to many places. I decided to give most of my belongings to others.”

In the same way, Jerome taught me how to observe newcomers. I always observed people who came to attend a feeding program, particularly at Paco where I volunteered. I saw a woman with her children, whom I did not know. Therefore, I asked Jerome whether he knew them.

Jerome replied that he did not know them either and said, “They are just new ones. They still have many bags. They might have just come from a province.”

Different people need varying periods of time to adapt. Those who had difficult experiences before living on the street are prone to accept street lives faster than those who came from good backgrounds.⁹ For example, Kristine with her good family background still has difficulty accepting that she was a street person. Although she was on a street for two years already, she has not adjusted to the street life yet. She said, “I still worry that my friends might see me sleeping on the street. It would be shameful for me. Therefore, I choose to sleep at Baywalk because some housed people sleep there also since it is windy. Others, who see me sleeping at Baywalk, might think that I am a housed person. I need to keep myself clean all the time.” Rasa recounted how she worried about things like Kristine. She worried that her friends might see her sleeping in a public place because she used to work in a bar near Luneta before. Therefore, it was possible that her friends might pass by Luneta.

Ate Reyna explained that since she grew up and worked in a remote area with a church, she was not familiar with urban culture. At first, when she had to sleep alone on a street, she went to Baclaran church where a lot of vendors sell many things the entire night at the market nearby. She slept inside the church by sitting on a bench for her safety. A security guard allowed street people to sleep inside, but people had to sign their name first. Later she moved to Luneta, but still went back to sleep at Baclaran church. Later she moved to Luneta because there are many feeding programs there. She said that the first time that she saw people fighting at the

⁹ David A Snow and Leon Anderson (1993) create model to classify how long people spend to change their self-identification from transitional homeless to become homeless. However I do not do it. I think to say broadly is should be enough.

feeding program, she screamed and cried. She was shocked because in her province, people are quite peaceful. She was very afraid and did not dare look at anyone who had a tattoo.

By contrast, Pepe, who came from a broken family, said that his first night on a street was “joyful and happy” (*masarap*¹⁰ and *masaya*). He felt free and did not quarrel with his aunt. He was not afraid of street life. He said that there were many street people who ran away from home like him. Likewise, Adrian, who ran away from home after quarrelling with his mother, said that he was not afraid of sleeping outside. He was able to handle it. Many people had similar backgrounds, so he did not need to worry. He told himself that he would be there for his entire life.

Adjusting to feeding programs

“What is today?” a shabby street person asked me at dawn. It was before 5 AM and she had not completely woken up yet. I slept close to her on the sidewalk of UN Street. By that time, I had learned to survive by attending several feeding programs. I replied, “Wednesday.” She asked further “Wednesday is Ermita, isn’t?” She was trying to figure out whether there was a feeding program at Ermita church on that day. I corrected her, “Today is Lacson, not Ermita,” meaning that there is a feeding program at Lacson on Wednesday. These conversations illuminate the simple way to survive on the street by attending feeding programs. Homeless people have to know the schedule of several feeding programs for each day, and have “mental map” where are the feeding programs (Lancione 2014: 3073).

¹⁰ *Masarap* in Tagalog literally means joyful. It can be used to describe many things, such as delicious food, and joyful trip.

Generally, street people are willing to tell their comrades about feeding programs. Those who have lived on the street for long time are proud of their “feeding expertise.” On some days, street people have to make a decision where they should go because several feeding programs take place at the same time. I learned gradually throughout my fieldwork that there were 23 feeding programs ranging from a small program that served 20-30 people to a large program that served more than 300 people. They are different in terms of activities, requirements, management, and objectives. The description of feeding programs below will be organized day by day to provide a sense of the routine life of street people during a given week.

Monday: The most boring day

Compared to other days, Monday is the most boring and hardest day because there are only two feeding programs: Santa Cruz and Bumbay. These two feeding programs serve street people every day. Santa Cruz serves in the morning and Bumbay gives food in the evening.

“Santa Cruz” is a new feeding program. When I was in Manila in 2011, this program did not exist. It just began giving out food in 2012. This feeding program does not seem to be interested in conveying any interest in any religious message. Before the Santa Cruz program, some people might not have had food until the evening on Mondays. When I slept on the sidewalk of UN and Otis Street, I went to Santa Cruz almost every morning for two months. Every morning homeless people from all around came and waited by the fountain in front of Santa Cruz Church. Some people sat inside the church gate. Most people arrived before 6 AM while it was still dark. Those who walked from far away, such as Otis Street, arrived about 6.30 AM. When I walked with my friends, Ben, Jaymar, and Robin, Ben always complained, “It is far.” We spent almost an hour walking from Otis to Santa Cruz.

About 6.30 AM, some start falling in line to wait for food. There are two lines, one for males and the other for females. The lines are in front of the gate on the left side. Street people waited outside while those who distributed food were inside the gate. The lines were generally twenty to thirty people long. When people see that “Ate” (older sister) has arrived, more people will fall in line. Ate was responsible for the food distribution. From her appearance, she looks Chinese-Filipina. This is not surprising because Santa Cruz Church is located next to Binondo, a Chinatown of Manila. She and her companions carry food that is already prepared. Next, some volunteers—who are street people—help her by putting food onto Styrofoam plates and placing them on a table. When it is almost 7 AM, the lines are long and packed with more than 100 people.

The food varies on different days, but is typically porridge, *sopas* (macaroni soup), *lomi* (noodle soup), or *pansit* (fried noodle). Usually, one plate or bowl was not enough; one needed two or three servings. However, there was not enough for everyone to take two servings. Sometimes, there was not even enough for everyone to get a single serving. Therefore, street people competed to get food before others in the first round and tried to take more in the second round causing a commotion. Among other feeding programs, it was said that Santa Cruz is the most disorderly. Without security guards and strict volunteers, all female volunteers could do was say “fall in line, fall in line” but no one paid attention. Once they began serving, the line in front of the gate disintegrated. Tough guys tried get food first and then go back to take more. Those who avoid getting trouble, including me, fall in line. All we could do was watch as tough guys got two or three bowls even though we had not gotten anything yet. On the day that volunteers served fried noodles, the food was not enough to satisfy their hunger. People had to struggle to get food.

Verbal quarrels always happened here and physical fighting also took place. For example, I saw a man get angry and hit a teenager. The teenager was smaller and he tried to escape, but the man still caught and hit him. Nobody helped him. In front of the gate where people strove to get food, it was easy to run into trouble. Although I fell in line and others did not, I was afraid of getting into trouble. I expressed my concern once, saying to Ben, “It is a mess and crowded. I think if I made someone drop their food, they will get angry and hit me.” Ben insisted, “Of course and be careful.” Tatay Fernando also confirmed my worries. He had seen people fight before because one caused another to drop their plate.

After getting food from Santa Cruz, Monday was so boring. People finished eating by 7.30 AM. Most people socialized while walking back to Lawton. Some walked to rest at a plaza in front of San Sebastian Church. Others rested while waiting for the opening of a department store and went to hang out inside. Inside a department store, homeless people liked to take free cold water from a food court. Then, they went to the karaoke area to listen to people sing. I found hanging around department stores was boring. I liked to accompany Ben as he walked around and collected recyclables items in Intramuros. This was particularly necessary on Monday because there was no feeding program until the evening at Bumbay. Homeless people needed to make money to buy food for their own lunch.

About 5 PM when the day was cooler, street people came to Rizal Park. My group (Ben, Vincente, Jaymar, Tony, Pepe and I), met behind the Lapu Lapu Statue. When people met up, they talked and told jokes; it is a time they truly enjoyed. Once I naively asked them, “I am hungry. Are you not hungry?” Jaymar said, “We are always hungry. Don’t need to talk about it.”

From 6.30 to 7 PM, we walked to Bumbay—a Manila Sikh temple. I ate here almost every night for a year, more than anywhere else. According to many longtime street people,

Bumbay is one of a few original feeding programs that remains open to this day. For example, Kuya Billy recounted that he started attending the feeding program at Bumbay in 1999. At that time, only twenty to thirty people attended. Everyone could enter the building. They waited, and sat on the floor. Then, Bumbay volunteers served a plate of food to everyone. However, when the volunteers at Bumbay discovered that items, such as shoes, spoons, and plates were being stolen, the temple prohibited street people from going inside.

Bumbay moved the food distribution outside the building, but it was still inside the temple grounds. Billy said that back then not many people attended. Bumbay volunteers simply carried a pot and served people who sat on the ground where a parking lot is today. Presently, so many people attend it is always unruly. People have to wait outside on a sidewalk opposite the temple and bring their own plastic bags.

Street people walked to Bumbay and waited opposite the temple, beginning about 6.30 PM. Generally, there are more people on Monday than other days because there are no other feeding programs on Monday. Some might not have eaten all day. While they were waiting, they talked with others. Some sold their plastic bottles to other homeless people by the piece and got a few pesos. They sold them piece-by-piece to other homeless persons so they did not have to sell them to a junk shop. The price is three or four bottles for one peso. Those who bought them profited about 10-15 pesos per kilogram depending on the sizes of bottles they bought.

I counted and found that an average of 120-150 people went to Bumbay every night. Around 8 PM people became anxious looking for a sign from a security guard. The longer street people wait, the hungrier they are. They had to stand on the street instead of on the sidewalk. Usually, Bumbay distributed food between 8-9 PM. However, sometimes I had to wait until 10 PM. I was very hungry, so I did as some street people did and tried to sleep while waiting.

When either a security guard or a Bumbay volunteer waved their hand, street people ran across the street as fast as they could. The first time that I experienced it, I was shocked to see how people ran across the street without fear of being hit by a car. Motorcycles and car drivers had to slam on their breaks, and screeching the tires. Some drivers yelled at people for nearly causing an accident. Bumbay volunteers warned street people to be careful too, but people still ran fast. Gorny asked me whether I had ever seen something like this in other countries. He laughed and said in English that people “run for life.” However, I learned later that his comment was a translation of the Tagalog expression “*patay gutom*.” Literally it means, “dying of hunger.” It is an expression to describe people who will do anything because of hunger.

After crossing the street, people fell into two lines: one for women and children and the other for men. Particularly for men, it was very crowded at the beginning of the line. I used to compete to stand in front of the line, but found that it was extremely difficult to maintain my position. Many people still crowded into the line even though there was no space already. Standing close to others, most of whom had not taken a bath, was awful.

Compared to Santa Cruz, people quarreled less at Bumbay. The security guard was strict. He carried a gun and insisted people fall in line. If the security guard saw someone cutting into the line, he asked that person to move to the end of the line. Bumbay volunteers were strict also. They were experienced in dealing with street people and did their best to give food to everyone. If they noticed anyone trying to get a second round before others had been served, they would refuse to give food.

Generally, Bumbay staff manages to give food for everyone in the first round. After that, they will give it in the second round if the food is still available. Usually, not all people got food the second round. Accordingly, people tried to be first in the first round to make sure that they

got food in the second round. Some nights, if many people went to Bumbay and there was not enough food for the first round, staff will bring extra food from inside to make sure that everyone can get food.

In general, Bumbay gave three kinds of food: rice, *munggol* (bean curry), and *chapati* (Indian flat bread). Street people are usually satisfied with plenty of rice because it makes them full. *Chapati* was popular because they will not spoil and can save them for tomorrow. However, some complained that bean curry was too spicy for them and spoiled easily the next morning. Bumbay gave extra food such as milk, desserts, and fried cauliflower on some nights. Street people were really happy to get extra food.

After getting food during the first round, those who were satisfied with their food crossed the street to eat on the opposite side of the temple. Those who needed more food turned to fall in line to get food in the second round. While they are falling in line, they will eat their food. They might get multiple servings of food until the food runs out. Generally, rice runs out first, followed by the bean curry and chapatti. Moreover, Bumbay allows people to get drinking water. After finishing their food, people fall in line to get water. Actually, it is tap water, but street people drink it. Afterward, the place is full of trash, full of plastic bags and cups left on the sidewalk. This the scenario of street people at Bumbay every night.

In addition, Bumbay had special events on Sunday and full-moon nights. Many Sikhs go to the temple on these nights. The parking lot inside the temple is full, and a lot of cars are parked on the street. Accordingly, Bumbay served food to street people later than normal, about 9.30-10 PM. When street people arrive at the Sikh temple and find many cars in front of the temple, they realize that they will have to wait for many hours before getting food. Nonetheless, people may get plenty of extra food, such as milk, desserts, apples, and banana, on special nights.

TABLE 1: WEEKLY SCHEDULE FOR FEEDING PROGRAMS

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6 AM					Quiapo		
7 AM	← Santa Cruz →						
8 AM							
9 AM						Binondo, Manolo,	
11 AM	Food for Life		Food for Life		Food for Life	Manila Baptism*	
12 PM		Lawton			Quiapo		
1 PM		Loreto					Paco
2 PM				Lawton		St. Paul	
3 PM				CCT			
4 PM		Knox					
5 PM							KKK
6 PM					Quiapo		
7 PM							
8 PM			Calvary	Ermita	San Sebastian		
9 PM	← Bumbay →						
							Intramuros
10 PM							Seven Floor

- Times in this table show the estimated times of food delivery, but at some places homeless people have to attend the activities before getting food.
- First Saturday of the month only

Tuesday: Many activities

I avoided making appointments to interview street people on Tuesday. People were busy because they had many places to go. There are two feeding programs, Lawton and Loreto, at almost the same time at noon on Tuesday. After finishing food at Santa Cruz in the morning, street people walked back across Pasig River to Lawton. During the late morning, some slept in a small garden along the road. About 10 to 11 AM, people went to an area behind a police station. Some slept while they were waiting. Those who sell used clothes laid out their goods. They piled their clothes on a mat for street people to search these through. Usually, the price was ten pesos for a pairs of shorts or a T-shirt.

While we waited, Richard always came to sell his cheap *hopia*. *Hopia* is Chinese sweet bakery made from beans. However, this *hopia* is leftovers from a bakery. Street people, such as Richard, picked it from the bakery's sacks, and sold it to street people. [I will describe about it in detail later]. It cost five pesos for a small bag containing about five pieces of *hopia*. Some like to buy it because it is cheap and made them full. Whoever bought a bag usually shared with their friends. At least two or three people could eat together.

About 11.00 AM-12.00 PM, the feeding program staff arrived. There are two groups. Sometimes they came together, but they work separately. The first staff member usually came first, around 11 AM. He came alone to teach the Bible for about 15 to 20 minutes. He asked people about Bible and preached. Anyone who could answer his questions got an award of five to ten pesos. Sometimes he asked people to memorize verses. Those who memorized the scriptures correctly got a reward too. After finishing his Bible lesson, he gave a biscuit to everyone. Homeless people competed to get it as many biscuits as they could. It grew chaotic sometimes.

Before noon, another group of about four to five people arrived. Homeless people said that they were born-again Christians, not Catholic. They began by asking people to sit in rows of ten people per row. This made counting easier and kept order among the people. Usually, about 100 people attended the feeding program here. First, they asked people to sing a song to pray to God. It lasted about ten minutes. Then a group leader would preach the Bible for about ten to fifteen minutes. Finally, they prayed again and gave food.

The food of every week was similar—rice and steamed *longganisa*. Therefore, some street people called feeding program here “*longganisa*”. Compared to other feeding programs, a “*longganisa*” feeding program is easy, because it does not take long. After getting food, people eat it immediately. Activities finish by 12 -12.30 PM. Then, they walk to the next feeding program at Knox.

Another feeding program began at noon on Tuesday at Loreto Catholic Church in Sampaloc where about 40-50 people were served. Some street people arrived at 9 AM long before the church opened. They would congregate in front of the church until about 12 PM. They attended Mass at the church like the people with homes. Mostly, street people sat on a bench in the back rows of the church, while housed people sit on a bench in the front and middle rows of the church. Some street people sit on the floor because they did not want to leave their big bag. During Mass, street people kept looking at an old lady. She would give bread to street people after the Mass. So when this woman left church, street people followed her. She would walk to her van where some street people had already fallen in a line to her van. Then she gave bread to street people. She gave hotdogs with bread some weeks. Nonetheless, it was a snack only.

Next, homeless people walked back to the church where there was real food. The process was short. Church staff would ask people to pray together, and then he read the names of people on the list. Those whose name was on the list can have food. Those who were not in the list, including me, can get food only if food is still available. Usually, even those who did not have their names on the list could eat. Moreover, food is plentiful. Some Tuesdays when someone sponsors the church to make merit on his or her birthday, there would be enough food for everyone. Food varied from week to week, with meals comprised of fried noodles, noodle soup, or rice. After finishing their food, many street people walked to the feeding program at Knox, just like those who finished their food at Lawton.

“Knox” is a new feeding program at Knox United Methodist Church located on Rizal Avenue. It began in February of 2013. The church gate opened for people at 3.15 PM, but many street people waited around the church before 1 PM. Some slept beside the church while others were chatting. When the gate is opened, street people go inside. The activities start at 3.45 PM. People have 30 minutes to rest and use the restroom. Knox is well-run. Activities begin by singing hymns for about twenty minutes. Street people actively participated in praying. Musicians accompanied the singing with drums and guitars. Next, a pastor preached for twenty to thirty minutes. After that, staff gave food to the street people. There are two kinds of food for alternate weeks: porridge with a half a boiled egg and *chamorado* (porridge cooked with chocolate, sugar, and milk).

Initially, activities finished by 5 PM, but staff later improved their services in many ways. The church asked a fire truck to provide water so homeless people could take a bath at a basketball court behind the church. Another improved service was the Bible quiz. In the beginning, the Bible quiz was not every Tuesday. From the street people’s point of view, the

importance of the Bible quiz is the reward. Those who can answer the quiz correctly received food: a meal with rice. It motivated street people to memorize the Bible in order to get food. After finishing at Knox about 6 PM, many people walked back across Pasig River again. I usually rested at Lawton first because it was a long walk back directly to Bumbay.

Wednesday: The most delicious food

The prominent feeding program on Wednesday is Lacson. This program was called Lacson because it was located at the corner of Lacson Street. Nuns of the Dominican School operated the Lacson feeding program. After having finished their breakfast at Santa Cruz, street people walked to Lacson. They usually arrive there by 8 AM. Some homeless people fell in line early because they want to get food first, even if sunlight was hot.

About 9 AM, nuns and homeless volunteers opened a gate. Only women who had Lacson ID cards can enter and join the prayer session inside the school. Lacson issued the ID cards for homeless women who regularly attended to allow them to get inside to participate in prayer session. However, it rarely issued a new ID cards to new members. Others just waited outside. Those without an ID entered the school to get a ticket. Two staff members sat on a table just behind the gate to list the name of attendants and give them a ticket. Another worker stamped a logo on the inside arm of street people to mark that they had a ticket already. This prevented someone who might cheat to get a second ticket. After getting a ticket, street people went back to wait at the opposite side of the school. Later, nuns and staff called people to fall in line again to get food. This system worked more efficiently because people fell in line orderly in accordance with their ticket number. Then, they eat on the sidewalk opposite the school.

Lacson had a reputation for good food. Street people agreed that Lacson had the most delicious food compared to other programs, particularly when Lacson gave a big piece of chicken. During the first half of 2013, Lacson gave the same food every Wednesday—rice and *Tinola*. *Tinola* is a soup cooked from *sayote* and chicken that costs 35-40 pesos if bought from a restaurant or cafeteria. Therefore, many street people—about 150-200—came here. I also enjoyed going to Lacson, although it is a little bit far.

After finishing their food, street people went different ways. Some rested first before going to “Calvary,” a chapel on Broadway Street, Quezon City. It was quite far at about 4.5 miles. People gave various reasons for liking to go such as great Bible study, good food, and access to showers. This feeding program was well managed and was very strict. I walked with my two companions from Manila along Aurora Boulevard. We spent almost two hours walking to our destination.

At 5 PM, the gate of Calvary Chapel opened and people went inside. The staff emphasized the rules, namely, pay attention to Bible study, do not sleep, and do not talk. They also had different rules from the Catholic Church; please do not dance while praying to God. Just sing hymns. This program’s attendance was around 100 people. People could take a bath and have coffee before attending Bible study. Homeless women got in a queue to take a bath in a restroom. Homeless men just bathed outside by wearing shorts. Some washed their clothes as best they could.

The Bible study began at 6.30 PM. The study room of Calvary was better than other places. It has an air-conditioned room and was wide enough for all people. There is a stage with musical instruments and a podium for a speaker in the front of the room. Homeless attendees sat on chairs that were set in an orderly fashion. People had to fill in the front row first. The

activities began with prayer. Later, they would teach about the Bible. About half of attendees had a Bible and paid attention to the study.

Bible study class is finished around 8 PM. People left the study room and formed an orderly line as they took their seat at tables. The food was already prepared and on the tables already. Food here was tasty as well. There was plenty of rice and the meal came with meat. Mostly, people ate fast. Some did not finish all of their food. They put the rest of their food in a plastic bag and asked for more food so they can save it for tomorrow. People left around 8.30 PM. I then walked back with my friends to Otis Street, which took about one and half hours. When I arrived at Otis at 10 PM, my friends were already asleep. I went to Calvary only once because it was so far and it made me tired. I preferred eating at Bumbay.

Another place that street people ate on Wednesday afternoon was at Santa Cruz. A businesswoman provided food on the third floor of her old building near the Santa Cruz church. Compared to Calvary, this place was small, crowded, and old. Nevertheless, it was not far, so about 30-40 street people went there. Activities began with prayer and Bible study taught by a pastor. This was followed by a light meal such as porridge, fried noodle, and *chamorado*. This program took about one and half hour.

Thursday: A lot of feeding programs

Compared to other days, Thursday has many feeding programs. After breakfast at Santa Cruz, street people walked back to Lawton where there is a feeding program between 11 AM and 2 PM. This feeding program, run by born-again Christians, had been relocated from Luneta to Lawton because Rizal Park authorities no longer allowed them to feed homeless people inside

the park. Compared to other feeding programs, the Lawton feeding program took a long time but only provided a light meal. Therefore, only 60-80 people attended.

Another feeding program on Thursday afternoon is at a church on Kalaw Street. The feeding program was run by Center for Community Transformation (CCT). CCT is a big faith-based organization and supports poor people in several areas. They are born-again Christians. The feeding program here did not take long and the quality of food was good too. Some street people who do not go to feeding program at Lawton socialize at the corner of Kalaw Street and Taft Avenue in the morning around 10 AM. CCT staff arrived around noon or later. After arriving, they gave papers to homeless people who volunteer to list the name of attendees. The lists were three groups: one for those who have a savings account with CCT and the second and the third for men and women who did not have an account respectively.

After adding their name to one of the lists, street people rested and lingered before getting inside the school at 3 PM. When people get inside, many people get water from a faucet first. Some wash their face and legs, because it is always hot in the afternoon. Inside it is cooler because the shade from many trees. At this location people do not enter the building as the activities take place outdoors. Some find chairs to sit down but many people prefer to sit on the cement under a tree. Kuya Paulo—a former street person who is now a staff member of CTT—greeted people. He reminds visitors of the rules such as the prohibition against getting water or sleeping while a staff member was teaching the Bible. About 3.30 PM, the program began with prayer. This was followed by Bible study, which was led by either CCT staff or a pastor from the Methodist Church. The program was short, about thirty minutes. Next, staff distributed food. About 200 people participated. After getting food, street people eat it immediately and then walk to Ermita Church for the next feeding program.

Ermita Catholic Church is not far from Kalaw, about a ten-minute walk only. When homeless people arrive at Ermita, they linger around the resting area on the right side of the gate. A comfort room is behind the church. Previously, people bathed inside the comfort room. But now, they bathe outside by using a blackboard to cover the bathing area. However, the area was small and only around 4-5 people can bathe at the same time.

Church volunteers start reciting the Rosary at 5 PM, but only a few street people attended. Most homeless people do not enter the church until 6 PM when Mass begins. The sound of a bell is a sign that everyone should get inside the church. Inside the church, rows of benches were divided into two sides. Generally, men sit on the left side and women sit on the right side.

The Mass is not for street people only. Many housed people attend Mass. After taking a bath, street people are clean. Some have prepared clean clothes and wear them after taking a bath. However, it is not difficult to observe the difference between housed people and street people. An old bag is the most obvious distinguishing sign for street people. The Mass takes one hour and is finished at 7 PM. Most of those who do not attend the feeding program will leave the church. Those who want to attend the feeding program will continue joining activities. Many women who attend the next session are housed people.

There is about an hour for activities from 7 to 8.15 PM. Activities are different each week, but usually consist of praying and listening to a speaker who talks about God, ethics, and life. The program begins by singing hymns, but it is not really Bible study. It is a joyful moment for street people. They can dance and release their emotions because the singer and musician are great. If there is no speaker, the entire hour is used for singing hymns. After 8 PM, if activities are not finished yet, some street people will be hungry and tired. Nonetheless, a volunteer insists

that she can continue until 8.30 PM. After finishing activities, people can get food by walking in line going out from the church. Ermita's food was good also. It is rice and a meal such as chicken cooked with soy sauce, boiled hotdog, and fried liver. Each person gets one plate of food. Only a row leader gets two. After having food, many people eat in front of the church. Ermita Church gives used clothes for street people some Thursdays.

There is no activity on the first week of each month because volunteers of the church attend a meeting. Therefore, people can have food after the Mass at 7 PM. As a result, the attendance is higher during the first week rather than other weeks because street people can have food from Ermita first and then can get more food from Bumbay. Generally, attendees at Ermita is about 200-250 people. However, attendees increase to almost 300 people on the first Thursday of each month.

Friday: Quiapo Day

The feeding program in front of Quiapo is unique because it serves street people three times every Friday: 6 AM, 12 PM, and 6 PM. The feeding program takes place at the plaza in front of the well-known church, but it is run by a group of Catholic Christians that is not related to the administration of Quiapo Church. The process is simple. The staff prepares porridge and arranges it on a table. When it is close to serving time, people fall in line. There is no singing or praying. The staff gives porridge in small plastic cups and might give bread sometimes. However, it is chaotic sometimes because many people and street children are at the plaza. Street children are good at jumping in the line and getting food. Nonetheless, since there is a police box nearby, people do not fight there.

In street people's view, the food here is not enough. Porridge does not make them full. Therefore, they come to get food at Quiapo before going to other places. For example, in the morning, street people go to Quiapo to have porridge and then go to Santa Cruz to have breakfast. In the evening, street people have porridge at Quiapo first and then go to San Sebastian or Bumbay.

San Sebastian Catholic Church provides a feeding program for street people every Friday evening. People get inside the church at 7 PM after the Mass for housed people. Next, they recite the Rosary together for about 30-40 minutes. After that, a speaker preaches for 30 minutes and finishes with more prayers. Later, people leave church and get food. Food is rice and a meal. Attendees at the feeding program at San Sebastian are around 150 People.

After finishing the program at San Sebastian, many street people walk back to Quiapo Church again to wait for money. They either sit or sleep on the ground in front of the church. They are waiting for a benevolent family who comes to give people 20 pesos at 11-12 PM. For people who do not have any source of income, 20 pesos is meaningful. When this family arrives, they walk past people who sit in a row and give out the money. Many people who wait there, sleep either at the underpass in front of Quiapo Church or at Lawton.

Saturday: Several places

Many feeding programs are available Saturday morning. Aside from Santa Cruz, which gives food every morning, street people can go to Binondo, Manolo, Malate and Taft Avenue. The first feeding is in Binondo in a Chinatown of Manila. Some people call it *Amitufo* (Amitabha Buddha) because the program is run by a Mahayana Buddhist association. Binondo gives food around 9-10 AM. Not only do street people attend, but also people living in the

community nearby do. The food here is just noodle soup, but some weeks they give out rice. Homeless people do not need rice for cooking because they have no kitchen. They need rice, because they can sell it for money. For instance, Ben got three kilograms of rice and sold it for 60 pesos. Binondo gives food every Saturday and Sunday morning. The process is easy. People just fall in line and get food. Only on the day that Binondo gives rice will people need to get a ticket for rice first.

Manolo is another feeding program. It is a Catholic chapel located near San Sebastian Church. There are no organized activities here. People just come to a house, sign their name, and get a ticket. The chapel prepares a donation box. Some might donate coins to a box. Around 9 AM, a staff member calls people to get food in accordance with their number. It is usually a small group of around 40-50 people. It was said that this small feeding program has served the poor for more than ten years.

I remember one Saturday morning after having food at Santa Cruz, Ben asked me where I wanted to go. Nanay Joan who was my companion at that time wanted to go to Binondo because Binondo gave rice to the poor some weeks. Kuya Boy convinced me to go to Manolo because I would have “rice and a meal”. It is better than Binondo that gives only noodle soup. Therefore, people make the decision about where they want to go based on their expectations of the meal. For the hungry, having rice and a meal is meaningful already because it is real food that makes them full.

The next feeding program on Saturday morning is “Daughter of Remedy” located behind Malate Catholic Church. Some street people called this feeding program *Koreano* because Koreans are sponsors of the program. The process is easy, like at Manolo. People wait in front of the office, sign their name, and get a ticket. Later, the staff calls people to get food.

A new feeding program that started giving food in 2013 on Saturday morning is Manila Baptist Church. I learned about it from Ben. He said he would take me to a new feeding program. This feeding program was good and not chaotic. However, it only serves the poor on the first Saturday of every month. Since it is a new feeding program, attendance is low with around 80-100 people. The church opens the gate for street people to get inside around 9 AM and get a ticket. Then, people rest and use the restroom. The program starts around 10 AM. Activities are singing hymns and studying Bible. The volunteers here are very polite. The activities inside the church finish around 11-11.30 AM. Next, attendees leave the church and walk to a gym behind the church, but it was still indoors. Street people fall in line to get food and eat sitting on a chair. The food is good. It is rice and a meal with meat. The program gives juice to attendees as well. The program finished by 12 PM.

After having food at the morning, some homeless people walked to St. Paul University. There is a feeding program there which is provided by students. However this feeding program was limited to only 60 people. Homeless people fall in line and compete to be among the first 60 people, otherwise they cannot get food. A group of students start listing the name of attendees and give people a ticket. Next, homeless people wait a while before students call them to get food in accordance with their number. This entire process happens on the sidewalk outside the university. Homeless people cannot enter the university.

Moreover, on Saturday morning some street people went to Dimasalang. It is not a feeding program, but a generous woman gives money to the poor. Not only do street people wait in front of her house, but also people who live in the community nearby. After street people have breakfast at Santa Cruz some walk to Dimasalang. I usually went there with Kuya Mikel after we sold recyclables at a junk shop in the morning. The process is simple. People just hang

out around her house located in a nice neighborhood. When people saw the woman leave her house, they fall in line: one line for men and another line for women. Then she estimates the number of people and divides up her money. She gives money of various amounts for different weeks, usually between 10 to 20 pesos. I got 20 pesos the first week that I went there. Later, I got only 15 pesos and one time I only got ten pesos. Many street people complained that they lost out because they walked far and only got ten pesos. She never had any conversation with street people, whether about religious or political issues.

Sunday: Washing day

Sunday is meaningful for my friends at Otis because they can wash their clothes at Paco Church only on Sunday. The feeding program that takes place in Paco Catholic School is run by another Foundation and not the Paco Church administration. Street people who live on the streets for more than ten years said that this feeding program has serviced them for a long time. The location of the service has changed many times, from Asilo de San Vicente de Paul to Adamson University and Paco. However, the main sponsor of the program was the same, a businessman who died in 2012. I never met him personally.

On Sunday morning, street people come and wait in front of Paco High School before 6 AM. Some come Saturday night and sleep there. The gate is opened at 6 AM. Street people run to fall in line for washing clothes. The program prepares about twenty to thirty basins for people. When these basins run out, others have to wait until someone finished washing their clothes. The washing place is an open area beside a school building. There are only a few faucets, and the water is not strong. People have to be patient to get water. They pay three pesos for using a basin and water.

While people are falling in line to get basin, volunteers serve a breakfast for street people. There are two kinds of food on alternate weeks, porridge and *chamorado*. Some people get a basin first and then fall in line to get food, but they do not eat breakfast immediately. Since it is too early to have breakfast, they will be hungry before noon if they have porridge at 6 AM. Accordingly, they just keep their food and eat it later. Those who do not mind washing their clothes late will take a rest first. People can sleep on a ground at the school. There is a roof, but when the rain is heavy, the ground is swampy.

People take a bath in the same place as the washing area. In 2011 and the early months of 2013, street people bathed inside a restroom of the school. However, there were drainage problems with the restroom and volunteers had to close the restroom. Therefore, people had to take a bath outside. Since the water was not strong, volunteers prohibited people from bathing in the early morning. People can bathe after everyone finishes washing clothes.

Volunteers start listing the name of attendees and giving them a ticket around 8 AM. Overall, around 150 people come to the school. When I attended in 2011, there were more than 200 people. Some explained to me that the number had dropped because people liked to go to Binondo because they might get rice.

The Mass begins around noon. Volunteers always quarrel with street people because some street people do not pay attention to the ritual. They do not stand when they should stand. Some sleep during the Mass, but the priest is patient. He said that people might need to rest. However, volunteers and staff complained that homeless people did not respect the sacred ritual.

After the mass, street people fall in line to get food. People said that the food quality here is not good. It is a meal with rice, but the meal rarely had meat. Since the quality of food is not good, some people just come to wash their clothes and leave without taking food. People had

different views toward bathing outside. Some like it because tough guys always quarrel with others when taking a bath inside a rest room. By contrast, when taking a bath outside and close to many volunteers, tough guys avoid quarreling with volunteers. Volunteers at Paco are well known for being tough and rude; they were previously homeless themselves.

However, others do not like bathing in a public area. For example, Manny wanted to hide his tattoo. He does not like to take a bath outside and take off his shirt in public. He said “people go to Paco not because of food. The important thing is to take a bath and wash their clothes. You volunteer there. You should tell them. If Paco closes CR and people cannot take a bath, they should close the feeding program too. Paco is nothing if people cannot take a bath there.” Likewise, when I asked why I did not see Kuya Boy at Paco, he replied “because Paco closed the CR and people had to take a bath outside and I have no shorts [to wear while taking a bath]”. Some homeless women are uncomfortable bathing at Paco because they had to take a bath in the same place with men. They had to change clothes behind a blackboard because there is no an actual room to do. For example, Nanay Joan told me that she does not go to Paco as often as she did before because she does not like to bathe outside.

Aside from Paco, people can go to other feeding programs on Sunday morning such as Binondo. Another place is Morayta. Ito who had quarreled with a volunteer at Paco suggested that I go there. I went there only once because it conflicted with the time when I volunteered at Paco. I found that its management is better than Paco’s. This place opens for homeless people to enter the building and walk to the fourth floor at 9 AM. The room is fitted for about thirty or forty people. At first, volunteers give bread and coffee to attendees. People can use the restroom, but cannot take a bath. Next, people start praying and then have Bible study at 10 AM. Unlike other Bible studies, the pastor asks people to discuss and share their experiences in a small

group. After that the program served food, a meal with rice on a plate. Since attendance is small, volunteers could manage orderly food distribution.

After finishing the program on Sunday morning, many street people went to KKK, so - called because the feeding program takes place behind the ceremonial wall of KKK (the name of Filipino Nationalist Association) near Manila City Hall. Some call this feeding *Koreano* because the pastor who leads the program is Korean. Homeless people said that they were born-again Christians. When street people arrive there, they look for a volunteer who stamps a logo of a church on the left arm of attendees. Those who do not have a stamp might be unable to get the food, a hamburger. The program runs from 1.30 PM until 5.30 PM. It takes place outdoor and is really hot. A pastor leads street people to sing gospel hymns. Everyone sweats in the strong sunlight. Only the musicians and staff who prepare hamburgers are in tents. After being stamped, street people get a short chair because they cannot sit on a ground. Some people rest under the tree, but join the singing just before the time of the food were be distributed. Accordingly, sometimes the pastor asks his staff to stamp people who actively join singing songs sometimes; those who have two stamps can get two hamburgers.

The prayer session finished around 5 PM. Next, a Korean staff person gives the sign to street people to fall in line. He asks street people to raise their hand to show their stamp and touches them one by one to join the line. Those who had two stamps can get two hamburgers first. The next ones are those who have one stamp. Those who did not really join in the praying session jostle to show their stamp among people who are before them. After giving food to all the people who have stamps, the last group is those who do not have stamps. It is chaotic sometimes when the staff member asks all of them to fall in line. Many run fast and try to be in

the front of the line. I only tried to run fast one time because it is easy to get a trouble. The program finished around 5.30 PM.

After KKK, some street people went to *Intramuros* before going to Bumbay because Bumbay gave food out late on Sunday night at around 9.30 -10 PM. Ben suggested that Jaymar and I go to *Intramuros*. This feeding program has a reputation for being slow, but gives good food. An owner of a boarding house supports this feeding program with the purpose of improving the Biblical knowledge of the poor. The program limits attendance to only to 30 people. It takes place on a small street in front of the boarding house. It starts around 6-6.30 PM with prayer and then Bible study. Since it was a small group, some street people actively participate in discussing with a teacher. The second hour is the same as the first hour, beginning with prayer and then Bible study until they finish. People get food around 9 PM. The food is a meal with rice, such as fried fish and vegetables.

Another feeding program that I went to many times was *Seventh Floor*. People called it Seventh Floor because it is in the room on the seventh floor of an old building near Ermita Church. The program is run by Orthodox Christians. Similar to *Intramuros*, it has a reputation for Bible study that last a long time, but gives out good food. The program starts with Mass at 4 PM, but only a few people attend. Generally, people arrive just before 6 PM to have coffee and bread. The formal program starts around 7 PM with prayer and Bible study. This feeding program encourages attendants to share their ideas. Some share their experience each week colorfully. For example, a homeless woman shared that she went to the office of DSWD to ask for transportation assistance to go back to her hometown in the province. The DSWD official accepted her request because she had faith in God. Many people congratulated her.¹¹ Moreover

¹¹ However I still met her many months later. It seems she did not go back to her hometown.

the pastor's daughter, who studied in the US, shares her views via Skype to street people every week as well. Prayer session and Bible study take three hours and finishes at almost 10 PM.

The food was great, being fast food from a franchise restaurant. I was surprised the first time. The food was fried chicken with rice and soft drink from *Jollibee*. I had not had fried chicken since I started doing my fieldwork, and I thought that it was delicious. The program served fried chicken from a different brand the next few times; its meals were smaller and cheaper than Jollibee's. I heard that because attendance increased, the program had to decrease the cost.

Another more specialized feeding program is the Food for Life Program, Hospicio de San Jose. It is a foundation under the patronage of the Catholic Church. The program coordinator explained clearly that the program aims to help street people get off the street. Food is just a tool, not an aim. Unlike other programs, street people cannot walk-in to attend the program. Everyone has to be interviewed and pass an evaluation by staff in order to becoming a member. The program has services three times a week: Monday, Wednesday and Friday (MWF). Members are expected to attend the program every MWF to show that they are actively seeking to overcome homelessness. They can take a bath in the morning before the program starts at 9.30 AM. A staff member spends around one hour to talk with street people. Topics were broad, such as faith in God, work ethics, social skills, and social issues. A staff member explained to me that during the discussion sessions, she noticed who was actively trying to change their life. Then, the program tries to help them in accordance with their qualifications such as skills, education, age, and family background. For example, the program contacts a company and supports its member to apply for jobs such as parking attendants and gasoline boys.

The discussion finishes around 11 AM and then people get food. It is a wholesome meal with rice. Some keep their food for dinner. However, street people complained that Hospicio always gave them a meal cooked from a canned food such as canned fish. Those who are not members yet cannot attend the discussion session. However, they can have food after all members have finished their food. Generally, there is enough food for everyone who waited outside. Since members eat food on a plate, some volunteer to wash plates.

To summarize, this chapter shows that street life is hard for new comers. Therefore they have to learn to adjust to street life, such as how to find a safe place to sleep, a bathroom, and the like. Moreover, their priority in daily life is how to find food for survival, particularly when they have run out of money. In this context, feeding programs become important resources to serve those who become homeless for the first time. However getting food from these places is not easy. They have to walk long distance every day. One cannot say that these people are lazy. Moreover, as I described the details of these feeding programs that they are provided by faith-based organizations and imbued with religious devotion. At many places, homeless people have to attend religious activities, while they are hungry, before getting food. I will come back to analyze these feeding programs in Chapter Eight. Next, I will continue the discussion of how homeless people cope with their hardship on the street materially. Just having food is not enough because they cannot get everything for free. They still need money to buy other essentials. Therefore, street people have to learn ways to earn money.

Chapter 6

Earning money

“I need to earn money. I’ve never lived like this before. I used to have regular income. But today, I don’t have even five pesos to buy coffee,”

Tony said to me one afternoon in October 2013. He became homeless for the first time in May of the same year. Mostly, he survived by attending feeding programs, but he disliked his situation where he could not stand on his own. Tony attended the Food for Life Program, but it seems he will not get a job through the program soon. Therefore, he had to learn to find a source of income. Once, he met a dentistry student who extracted a tooth and gave him 100 pesos.

Tony became homeless after I started doing my fieldwork, so I was able to observe how he adjusted to street life from the beginning until I left my fieldwork in April 2014. Tony’s experience indicates that attending feeding programs is not enough. Homeless people need to earn money (Cohen and Sokolovsky 1989; Snow and Anderson 1993). They have to learn continuously, develop requisite skills, and “street wisdom” to survive on the street (Baxter and Hopper 1981:74; Cohen and Sokolovsky 1989:75).

This chapter will show how street people in Manila improvise different ways to earn income to buy soap, coffee, cigarettes, and even liquor. On the issue of subsistence on a street, many scholars explain that to survive on the street, homeless people do many kinds of jobs such as working as day laborers, begging, and selling used books (Hopper et al 1985; Snow and Anderson 1993; Wagner 1994; Duneier 1999). Much research also points to homeless people’s

excellent improvisational skills (Hopper et al 1985; Lee et al 2010: 507; Borchard 2005). Kim Hopper and his colleagues argue that in order to survive with limited resources, homeless people improvise jobs in “economies of makeshift” such as receiving public relief, charity, begging, and “participation in the underground economy” (Hopper et al 1985: 214). However, they do not explain much about what they call the “underground economy” of homeless people.

Snow and Anderson (1993) also illuminate survival strategies of homeless people. They classify the material survival strategies of homeless people into three main groups: institutionalized assistance, wage labor, and “shadow work” (Snow and Anderson 1993; Snow et al 1996:88). Their classifications are widely applied by many scholars (Wagner 1994; Molina 2000; Lei 2013). They can be applied to analyze the different means of survival of homeless people in Manila as well.

However the apparent difference between the sources of income of homeless people in the US and Manila is that homeless people in Manila do not get income assistance from the government. For example, homeless people in the US may be eligible get assistance from federal programs such as Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI), and Unemployment Compensation (UC) (Anderson et al 1996:89). Moreover, different states provide General Assistance (GA) to homeless people. Although not all homeless people can get this assistance, more than quarter of his informants get such assistance according to Anderson and his colleague’s study (1996:89). This closely resembled the survey conducted in Chicago in that one in five get assistance from GA (Rossi 1989:108). By contrast, social insurance in the Philippines is quite limited (Manasan 2009).

The most comparable source of income between homeless people in the US and the Philippines is day labor and “shadow work.” Snow and Anderson define shadow work as “a set

of compensatory assistance tactics, such as panhandling and scavenging, fashioned or pursued in the shadow of regular work” (Snow et al 1996: 91-92). They emphasize that shadow work is different from wage labor in the sense that it lacks a “routine exchange of labor for money” and it is outside of formal control (Snow et al 1996: 92). Examples of shadow work are selling things, scavenging, and theft.

The separation between wage labor and shadow work parallels Filipino views that separate traditional work and improvised jobs. Filipinos use the term *trabaho* for a regular job, such as being employed. Although the wage in the informal sector is low, Filipinos still think of such job as *trabaho*. Another term is *diskarte*, which is used to describe odd jobs. *Diskarte* is different from *trabaho* in the sense that *diskarte* is informal jobs which is created and improvised by people for survival. *Diskarte* can be compared to “shadow work” in Snow and Anderson’s ethnography. However I prefer to call *diskarte* “improvised jobs”, rather than shadow work because the latter implies the sense of hiding. Not all *diskarte* are hidden.

Nonetheless, both *trabaho* (job) and *diskarte* (improvised job or shadow work) are *hanapbuhay* or a “means of living.” In everyday life, homeless people might ask their friends broadly, ‘What is your *hanapbuhay*?’ The answer can be their mean of living either through their job or improvised work. By contrast, if homeless people ask their comrades, ‘What is your *trabaho*?’ people who are unemployed and survive by scavenging will reply that they have no job. They just collect and sell recyclable items because scavenging is not perceived as a job.

Accordingly, this chapter will describe two main sources of income of homeless people in Manila: wage labor and improvised work. Wage labor covers both regular and irregular workers who still sleep on the street. Improvised work covers several odd jobs, such as vendors, servicers, and scavengers. Lastly, this chapter describes jobs located between wage labor and

improvised work. I call it volunteer work for those who work and get reward either in kind or a little cash. However, it becomes a mean of survival of some homeless people. It reflects the ability of homeless people to actively cope with the difficulties of survival.

Waged labors

Some street people are employed. There are two kinds of employees: regular and irregular employees. Examples of regular employment are construction workers and helpers at a canteen. Some, but not all, employers provide free lodging for their employees. For example, construction workers can sleep at a work site or in a barracks. Some helpers can stay at their canteen as Ben had previously experienced. Sometimes, their employers do not provide free lodging. These employees then have to sleep in public places for many reasons such as unaffordable lodging, the convenience of sleeping near the working place, or the need to save money. As I already mentioned, construction work only pays 250-350 pesos a day and they have to buy their own food which costs about 150 pesos a day. They have the day off on Sunday, meaning they have to save their money for the weekends and other expenses. For these reasons, many construction workers slept on the sidewalk on Otis Street and walked to work nearby.

Ashley is an example of an employed homeless person. He works as a cook for a vendor who sells cheap food to street people. He has worked at this canteen for more than three years. He was responsible for buying ingredients at the market at 3.30 AM and coming back to cook food for the entire day until 7 PM. His wage is 200 pesos a day. He can eat three meals at the canteen. After finishing his duty, Ashley sleeps on a cot near the canteen. He wakes up at 3 AM and takes a bath on the sidewalk before going to the market. Since this kiosk is on the sidewalk,

there is no water pipeline. Another helper is responsible for carrying water, which a vendor buys from a house nearby.

Bona and her partner, who slept on Otis Street like me, are regularly employed too. They work at a canteen in Intramuros. They wake up at 4.30 AM and walk about 50 minutes to go to work. Their job finishes at 5-6 PM. Their wage is 100 pesos each. They can have two meals free and sometimes they carry food from the canteen for their dinner. This couple was well-disciplined, waking up in the early morning, about 5 AM, and walking to work everyday. Generally, helpers at canteens get paid lower than construction workers because they work indoors and they have free food. Most employers paid their helpers around 60 to 200 pesos a day depending on the type of work and their skills. However, they worked 12 hours a day, not 8 hours.

Re-bagging

Similar to homeless people in many cities in the US, homeless people in Manila can earn income as day laborers (Lei 2013). The problem with day labor is that their income is low and not regular, and, therefore, they cannot afford rent. One form of irregular employment of many homeless people is re-bagging. Re-bagging is when people go to a pier and transfer products such as fertilizer and rice, from a big sack to small ones. Many street people did this job such as Jordan and Eugene. Someone explained to me that this job is illegal because the employer paid their employee illegally low wages. Furthermore, fertilizer is toxic and street people do this work without any protective equipment. Nonetheless, many street people accept this job because it does not require any documentation. As I already explained, most decent jobs require

documents such as an NBI clearance, but re-baggers do not need to show these documents. As a result, anyone who wants to work can do this job.

Re-baggers have an organization. Their group is composed of ten re-baggers. They work together as a team to finish their assignment. The head of a group is *cabo*, which is similar to the *Cabo*'s system in Randolph S. David's study of stevedores at Manila South Harbor (David 1975). Employers pay wages to a *cabo* and the *cabo* pays it to his group members. *Cabo* gets paid more than members. The work process begins with an agency contracted by a shipping company. After scheduling the arrival of a ship, an agency contacts the *cabo* to prepare their members. On a working day, the *cabo* and many laborers gather at a meeting place such as Lawton. I once observed about one to two hundred re-baggers waiting for a bus. Not all of them are street people. They get on a bus arranged by the agency to go to a pier in a province such as Batangas or Bataan Province. While working, re-baggers can eat using credit at a canteen of the pier. They will pay their debt after finishing their work and getting paid.

Re-bagging is an irregular job. Homeless people go to work around one to two weeks and then have wait for one or two weeks before working again. For one week, one might come back to Manila with 200-300 pesos. Some earn up to 700 pesos a week while others might only earn enough to pay their transportation fee. An agency prepares a bus going to work for free, but re-baggers had to pay for transportation back to Manila themselves. I also heard that some people did not have any money left and had to walk back to Manila. They explained that the food at the pier is expensive and they had to buy energy drinks as well.

Working conditions are hard. Since their wage depends on the number of sacks they pack, re-baggers work many sleepless hours to get enough pay. Moreover, they work for many days and employers did not prepare lodging for them. They must sleep at the pier. Water is

limited also. People have to shower carefully so as to conserve water. Furthermore, it is hard during the rainy season because they cannot work during the rain. It means they get low pay, but still have to pay for their food. Some re-baggers told me that they left Manila for two weeks, but they only worked half that time. Therefore, they got paid only a half of their normal pay if they had enough sunny days.

Ben had re-bagging experience. He narrated that he went to re-bag in Batangas Province for ten days and got 1,220 pesos for his wage. Yet, he had to pay over 840 pesos for his food at a canteen. In addition, he had to pay 168 pesos for his transportation. Finally, he had 212 pesos left when he came back to Manila. He went re-bagging three times, but he prefers working at a canteen to re-bagging.

***Diskarte* (improvised jobs)**

Diskarte, improvised jobs or shadow work, is a broad category. As Dordick argues, homeless people are good at improvisation (1997:192); homeless people in Manila improvise different ways to earn income. I classify *diskarte* into four groups: scavenging, selling things, servicing, and irregular odd jobs.

***Magkalakal* (scavenging)**

Collecting recyclable items is the most popular image of homeless people as it is common within the media. In Tagalog, people say “magkalakal” as a verb to describe collecting reusable items. In fact, *kalakal* means ‘goods to sell’. It does not particularly mean reusable items. ‘Goods to sell’ to make sounds better than calling their job collecting garbage. Many street people learn to do it, more or less. Some homeless people suggested I do it as well. They

said that at least I can have money to buy coffee in the morning. It is normal for the poor in the Philippines who cannot afford three meals a day to drink coffee in the morning instead. Someone explained to me that people feel active from the caffeine. I observed that many people put much sugar in their coffee, so they could get energy from the sugar too. Actually, I collected recyclable items both with Ben and while alone.

Tony, whom I described at the beginning of this chapter, had a bachelor's degree in business management and also collects recyclable items. However, he is not a full-time scavenger. He has his own way to collect plastic bottles that he shared with me. He woke up in the early morning around 5 AM and went to Grandstand in Luneta. Some housed people go to exercise in the morning and leave their water bottles. He emphasized that he had to go there early morning, because there is no security guard there yet. When the security guard arrives, he stops because collecting recyclables items is prohibited inside Rizal Park.

Among my friends, Ben, Tatay Leo, and Mikel shared with me their experiences collecting recyclables. At first, when I told Ben that I would like to walk with him to collect recyclable items, he refused. He said that I should do it myself. I did not need to go with him. When I asked him again later, he explained, "I will be ashamed, if you go with me. You will see I do a dirty job. I will search for plastics [bottle] from a garbage can." His comment reflects the view scavenging is a dirty and low-class job. Therefore, some homeless people, such as Ate Reyna, and Martin refused to do it. When I explained to him that he did not need to be shy I would do the same, he introduced me to "his route."

It would be wrong to think that street people just walk randomly to find reusable items. Generally, they walk through their regular route in a familiar area (Wolch and Rowe 1992; Schor et al 2003). For example, Ben walked from Lawton, where he usually spent his time, to

Intramuros first. He walked past a fast-food restaurant and turned left onto a street where there are several canteens. He would collect plastic bottles and cups left by students. Next, he turned right past a community and searched items near canteens and in front of the convenience store. Then, Ben and I turned right again. He walked in a circle and left from Intramuros to Lawton. It took about 30-40 minutes. Ben might find an aluminum can, which is worth more than plastic because some rich students drink canned soda. Generally, Filipinos do not buy canned soda because it is more expensive than soda in a bottle.

Next, Ben walked to the LRT (Light Railway Train) Central station. He dropped in front of a convenient store and I looked at two bottles which were left over on a table inside a store. Ben shook his head to tell me to not go inside to take them. A security guard looked at us, but Ben just searched a garbage can. While we were walking, he told me, “You cannot get inside a store. The security guard will get angry and drive you out. We are dirty. He does not like us to get inside.” He further suggested that when I search a garbage can, I have to keep it clean. Otherwise, a security guard will not allow me to open the garbage can in the future.

Later, Ben walked passed many canteens near LRT station, then turned right and walked by many vendors near a department store. He searched for bottles and plastic cups in the garbage cans of these vendors. He told me that if a garbage can is located in front of a pushcart, I can search it. However if a garbage can is located behind a pushcart and near a vendor, I cannot search it, because it means vendors want to keep the bottles for themselves. Then he walked past a department store to the office of SSS (Social Security System) office. A vendor saw Ben, and called him over. She gave Ben the bottles that she kept. Ben thanked her. Ben told me that this vendor was kind to him. She kept plastic bottles, and gave them to Ben. This is an advantage of

walking the same route; street people can learn sources for their items and make relationships with vendors.

Tatay Leo also highlighted this issue. He recounted that on the first day that he collected recyclable items, he walked very far, from Luneta across Pasig River to Tayuman and back. He earned very little. Later, he found that this approach was mistaken. It is better to walk in a circular pattern, repeating the same route every hour. Now he starts from a corner of Kalaw Street and Taft Avenue and walks along Kalaw Street. Next, he turns left to Alhambra Street and walks to meet UN Street. He turns left on UN Street and walks along UN Street to Taft Avenue. Finally, he finishes his route at the plaza at the corner of Taft Avenue and Kalaw Street. He said that by doing so he became familiar with a vendor who was sympathetic to him. He shared that, “He [a vendor] asked me whether I already have food. I said not yet, because I had a few bottles only. Then the vendor gave me plastic bottles that his customers had left in his garbage can. He gave them to me only.” Tatay Leo further explained that it might be because he was old and people feel sympathy for him.

Since people were prone to walk in a circular pattern and repeat their route, scavengers like to call what they are doing “*ikot ikot*.” It means ‘circle’ in Tagalog. For example, after talking with me for a while, Tatay Feliz wanted to go searching for recyclable items. He said that it was a time for him to leave. He had to *ikot ikot* first. Likewise, when I remarked to Ben one evening that I did not see him at Lawton that afternoon, he said that he still *ikot ikot* at that time.

Aside from *ikot ikot* to collect recyclable items, some get specific items from set locations. For example, Mikel gets items from a warehouse. He does not walk around to search for recyclable items. He spends almost all his daytime socializing only. About 4.30 PM, he goes to wait in front of a warehouse where he is familiar with a security guard and a caretaker. A

caretaker brings garbage bags from inside and leaves them outside. Only Mikel is allowed to search garbage cans and look for what he wants, such as aluminum cans, plastic bottles, cardboard boxes, white paper, and left over food. Since the warehouse imports many products from abroad, there are many cardboard boxes and paper that Mikel can collect. Nonetheless, the informal “code of conduct” is that Mikel has to clean the area after he finishes collecting the items. Next, he goes to Bumbay and has food. Later, he sorts out his items before sleeping and selling them the next day during the early morning. In doing so, he can earn 40-100 pesos a day from Monday to Saturday (the warehouse is closed on Sunday).

Likewise, Roberto searches for recyclable items from garbage bags in front of a building on Otis Street. He does not have a regular job and earns his income from being a helper and washing clothes sometimes. He is ashamed to walk around and collect recyclable items from garbage cans. However, many offices on Otis Street leave garbage bags in front of the building every evening. When the person who “monopolized” the garbage bags left Otis Street to take a job, Roberto took over those garbage bags. He can earn about 30 pesos a day.

Next, scavengers have to learn the price of their items. When I talked with Brother Jonas of CCT, I told him that I had experienced collecting items from a garbage can also. He asked me whether I knew about “*linis* (clean), *sibak* (mixed-plastic), and *puti* (white),” the slang for different kinds of recyclable items. Ben told me that when he finished collecting items, he had to classify them. The most common items are plastic bottles. However, before people sell them, they should remove the labels and bottle caps in order to sell only transparent bottles. These clean bottles are ‘clean’ or *linis* in Tagalog. The price is about 32-36 pesos per kilogram depending on the stores and seasons. During the rainy season it is difficult to collect them and the price can increase to 40-45 pesos a kilogram.

The bottles not cleaned will be classified as *sibak*, while different kinds of plastic are *sibak* as well. The price is about 16-18 pesos a kilogram. Other common items are *puti*—white paper (nine pesos), newspapers (five pesos), cardboard boxes (five pesos), and aluminum cans (50 pesos). The most expensive item is copper at 250 pesos per kilogram, but it is not easy to find. Some are lucky to get it from a motor inside an electric appliance. Others might search for copper wires from a ruined building.

Since the prices of these items are different, a scavenger has to consider which items are valuable enough to carry. Accordingly, some who are not “professional” scavengers might collect only plastic bottles because they are not heavy and are easy to sell (three to four bottles sell for one peso). Some street people, such as Luis, liked to buy and clean bottles before selling them to a junk shop. A buyer could earn 10 -15 pesos for one kilogram. Those who bought reusable items, such as Luis and Mikel, have to have money to buy items whenever someone wants to sell items. Generally, the “market” for buying and selling is at feeding programs such as Bumbay, Paco and Hospicio. In the second half of my fieldwork, I did not see Luis searching for recyclable items. He only bought from others and had enough income for survival.

By contrast, professional scavengers who do not often go to feeding programs had to collect a range of items such as plastic, *sibak*, and paper. If they only collect plastic, they will get only a few items and earn a small amount of money. For example, when I collected plastic bottles for two hours, I earned about twenty pesos. Ben collected all kinds of plastic, so he could earned twice as much in the same amount of time. However, those who carry a sack cannot carry iron, because it is very heavy and the price is low. They have to carry many kilograms to earn enough money. Only those who have a pushcart can carry iron.

Selling different things

Homeless people liked selling goods because this job does not have any requirements like education or NBI clearance. However, to be able to sell something, people need capital. It is not easy for street people to save 100 pesos for capital. Therefore, only those who can manage to save will be able to be a merchandizer. Nevertheless, it is also difficult sell for long periods because they might earn not enough and they have to spend money for their food leaving no capital to buy things to sell.

Among sellers, those who sell cigarettes are the highest high rank. Not only do street people sell cigarettes, but also housed people do. Therefore, it is not a marginal job. It might be considered as a job rather than an improvised job, a *diskarte*. Tatay Feliz, who earns his income from collecting recyclable items, said that if he had enough capital, he would sell cigarettes because then he would not need to walk. He would just sit down and wait for customers to pass by.

Selling cigarettes can earn a big profit but it needs high capital in the beginning. The cost of American cigarettes is about 50 pesos per pack, which will be sold individually for five pesos each. It means a seller can earn 100 pesos per pack (20 pieces) and profit 50 pesos. Philippine cigarettes cost about 25 pesos per pack, which are sold individually for two pesos each. A seller can earn only 40 pesos per pack (20 pieces), making the profit only 15 pesos a pack. Accordingly, selling American cigarettes brings a higher profit than selling local cigarettes. As a result, cigarette sellers liked to sell American cigarettes if they have enough capital. Generally, homeless vendors start selling cigarettes by buying four packs of American cigarettes, four packs of a local brand, and some candy. Overall, the initial cost is around 350 pesos. Moreover, it was said that vendors who have many brands and many packs of cigarettes are able to attract more

customers than a vendor who has only a few packs of cigarettes. As a result, a vendor will keep cigarette packs that are empty to make the tray look colorful and full of cigarette packs.

Tatay Mervin is an example of a cigarette vendor. He has sold cigarettes at Luneta for more than ten years. He sells cigarettes both day and night. He told me that in the evenings when many prostitutes are looking for their customers, they buy cigarettes from him. His income is higher than many others. He can save with CCT, which provided a feeding program to street people, approximately 500-1,000 pesos every Thursday. He showed me his passbook, which indicated that he had saved almost 10,000 pesos. He told me in March 2014 that he would go back to his province when he had 10,000 pesos, and I did not see him in April when I left Manila. It is possible that he went back to his hometown.

Those with little capital sell local cigarette brands to the poor which includes street people. This kind of a cigarette vendor follows street people, attending feeding programs and selling cigarettes at the same time. However, vendors selling local cigarettes cannot make much profit. Sometimes their friends get them to loan them cigarettes, bankrupting them. For instance, Jimmy sold cigarettes and attended feeding programs at the same time. His business was bankrupt the following month because he could not earn enough to feed his family.

Jaymar told me that he disliked selling cigarettes to street people because they only bought local brands and he could only earn a small profit. Therefore, Jaymar sold cigarettes mostly to truck drivers. He sat on a sidewalk on Ayala Boulevard where many trucks pass en route to and from the piers. During the red lights, he walks on the street and shows his cigarettes to truck drivers. When someone calls him, Jaymar sells his cigarette to them. Moreover, since his customers are drivers, they have higher incomes. Although they buy local cigarettes, Jaymar sells two pieces for five pesos, instead of four pesos. Generally, Jaymar could earn about 200-300

pesos a day on weekdays. He could earn a little on Saturday and rest on Sunday. He only went to Paco to wash his clothes. Likewise, Ramirez and his family sell cigarettes at a bus stop in front of Rizal Park. His customers are both people who pass by and passengers who are waiting for a bus to go to nearby provinces. Both Jaymar and Ramirez's family rarely went to feeding programs. Their income is high enough to buy their own food.

Nonetheless, the problem with cigarette vendors is theft. Since cigarettes are expensive, they are a target of thieves. Bona and her partner sold cigarettes, when I met them first time in April 2013. However, Bona told me the next month that her cigarettes had been stolen while they were sleeping at a park near Manila City Hall. She suspected someone, but she could do nothing. Later, she changed work to become a canteen helper. Similarly, Tatay Valdez got several cartons of American cigarettes for free from foreigners who saw that his leg was injured and felt sorry for him. At first, he did not know that such cigarettes were so expensive because he smoked only local cigarettes. He showed me a receipt from the cigarettes that indicated a price of about 2,000 pesos. I told him to be careful because these expensive cigarettes could get stolen. A next few days later, he told me that his cigarettes were stolen when he was sleeping on a sidewalk of street near Luneta. Tatay Valdez was old and his leg was injured at that time.

Selling plastic mats¹², *panapin*, is another common way for homeless people to earn money.¹³ When I met Ate Reyna for the first time in 2011, she had just become homeless and earned income from selling plastic mats inside Rizal Park. She explained that at least she did not need to go to every feeding program. She can buy her own food on some days. Later, selling

¹² It is made from plastic, but homeless people call this kind of mat 'silver,' because it is glossy.

¹³ In Thailand, street people sell plastic sheets too. However, there are some different aspects between both countries. In Thailand, street people mostly sell their plastic sheets for those who join a concert or watch an outdoor movie. In the Philippines, homeless people mostly sell plastic sheets for those who come to a picnic at a park. A plastic sheet in Thailand is derived from an error printed plastic sign from a factory. However, in the Philippines mats came from a sack.

panapin became a good source of income and she rarely went to feeding programs when I was back to Manila in 2013.

Panapin literally means a mat. Those who slept at Luneta for a long time said that there are many forms of *panapin*. For example, Tatay Valdez recounted that street people previously used newspapers for sleeping. However, newspapers tore easily. People left their newspapers the next morning and made Rizal Park dirty. The next kind of *panapin* is made from a sack. A vendor cuts at the two sides of a sack making it long. Another kind of *panapin* is made from a sack also, but its material is glossy like silver. Therefore, people call it ‘silver’. It is stronger than newspaper and can be used for many days.

Those with less capital can buy *panapin* that is already cut and cleaned for eight pesos each, beside Rizal Park. Then, they can resell them for 20 pesos each. In 2011, people could sell *panapin* inside Luneta. But when I went back to Manila in 2013, selling *panapin* was prohibited inside Rizal Park. Therefore, people had to sell it on the sidewalk outside a gate of Rizal Park. Some still sell mats inside the park, but they have to do it secretly. If a security guard catches them, all their mats will be confiscated. Pedro is an example. He does not sell mats on weekdays. He sells only on weekends when many people come to the park. He was caught selling inside the park and lost all his *panapin*.

Ate Reyna’s group sells mats inside Luneta. They sell at Grandstand, but not around the fountain. A security guard is really strict about searching for those who sell mats around the fountain and the Lapu Lapu Statue. However, fewer people went to Grandstand, and security guards are less frequent there as well. Therefore, Ate Reyna’s group can sell mats in small quantities. Nonetheless, they have to be careful about confiscation. She shared that it was hard when a security guard prohibited them from selling mats at the fountain two years ago, because it

was her only source of income. However, she found later that she could sell mats at Grandstand, particularly after 5 PM because security guards are less frequent. Such areas are dark because there were no lights. Although fewer people came, there were couples appreciated privacy in a dark area like Grandstand.

Tatay Fernando said that he disliked selling mats at the fountain because he was afraid that he might get caught. He told me that if he sold mats there, he had to hide mats in his clothes. He would then approach customers carefully, and finally ask them whether they wanted a panapin. I told him I thought that it looked criminal. He laughed and said that it was not a crime. However, we had to act like we were criminals selling drugs.

I tried to sell *panapin* also, and found that it was difficult. Ate Reyna's group of about four to five people can sell anywhere from one to four pieces—sometimes none—on weekdays. Therefore, I did not want to take their few customers. Nonetheless, I experienced being approached by a security guard. It was about 6-7 PM at Grandstand field and I was looking for customers. I had managed to sell only one piece. Finished selling, I went to put the mats in my bag. I did not realize that a security guard had followed me. He looked at the mats in my hand. Someone had already told me that I should not have many mats with me, at one time, so I only had two on me. I told the guard that I did not sell *panapin*. I had just bought them. He looked at me. He might not have believed me, but he did not confiscate my mats. I was quite sure that the security guard did not know that I was a PhD student doing dissertation fieldwork.

Another place that street people can sell panapin is at Baywalk. They sell to those who rest there. For example, Mark likes to sell at Baywalk rather than Luneta because there are no security guards and it seems more crowded than at Luneta. However, he has to walk back and forth along Baywalk to find customers.

Income from selling mats varies from day to day. Generally sellers could earn about 60 to 200 pesos on the weekends. However, they might earn nothing on weekdays. I found that it is difficult to sell even one mat in the evening during weekdays. By contrast, on Saturday Ate Reyna could sell from the early morning to late morning and again from the afternoon to evening. Sunday is similar to Saturday except there are fewer people on Sunday night than on Saturday night. Therefore, those who sell mats have to budget their money carefully through the week to make sure that they have enough money to buy new mats for the weekends.

People can earn higher incomes from selling *panapin* on special days. For example, February is a good month because people can earn both on Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day. Ate Reyna, Tatay Fernando, and Kuya Martin could earn 300-500 pesos on Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day. I also sold 10 mats on Valentine's Day the most I sold during the entirety of my fieldwork. Ramadan is another day that homeless people sold many mats. Ramadan is a holiday in the Philippines, celebrated by thousands of Muslims. However, the biggest event of the year is Christmas and New Year. Luneta is full with people. Those who do not regularly sell *panapin* will sell *panapin* on these days too. For instance, Ashley is a cook at a canteen. He left his job during these holidays and sold *panapin*. In doing so, he could earn more than 2,000 pesos for this season.

Ashley can earn large profits because he has capital. Those who have capital will buy sacks from Divisoria for four pesos each. Then, they cut sacks and clean them themselves. By doing so they can reduce their costs. However only those who have capital can do this because they have to pay for transportation and the suppliers prefer to sell 100 sacks at a time. However, to buy so many mats, people have to make sure that they can sell them all. Having so many mats is a burden, not only because they are heavy, but also because of the risk of being stolen.

While holidays are good days for selling mats, the rainy season is a bad time. Since only a few people come to Luneta on rainy days, there are no customers to buy mats. Moreover, many typhoons hit Manila every year. When a typhoon hits Manila, it will rain for two to three days. For example, when I met Tatay Fernando at Bumbay during the rainy season, he told me that he could not earn any money for three days. In fact, the rainy season was hard for street people in general with the exception of those who sell umbrellas.

Flying lights are another item that homeless people sell in parks. A flying light is a toy shaped like a helicopter and has a stick. Children play with it by pulling a trigger on the stick to send the flying light in the sky. When flying lights are in the sky, the stick functions like a battery and make the toy shine. Many children go to Rizal Park and enjoy playing with flying lights.

Similar to selling mats, however, a park administration prohibits selling flying lights in a park. Therefore, street people have to sell flying lights at a gate. However, some sell flying lights inside a park secretly. For instance, Tata sold flying lights for a month, but stopped because he disliked arguing with security guards. Similar to mats, street people bought flying lights wholesale at Divisoria. Each costs five pesos each and sold for 20 pesos. They sell well during holidays, particularly during the New Year season.

Selling boiled eggs can also earn high incomes. Ken lives on the streets with his wife and two daughters. He rarely goes to any feeding program. His income comes from selling boiled eggs. Every morning, his wife goes to a market to buy 200 eggs, and then she boils them carefully so as not to break them (the technique is to cover the boiling water and eggs with cloth). Next, she packs three eggs in a small plastic bag with salt and soy sauce. Three boiled eggs will be sold for 20 pesos. After finishing his breakfast about 10 AM, Ken starts selling

eggs. He lives on a sidewalk on the street where many trucks pass by. This road also has traffic jams. Therefore, he serves eggs to truck drivers who are hungry while driving. When he can sell them all, he earns about 400-500 pesos a day, which is a good income for a street family. Ken is proud of himself. He told me that although they live on the streets, he takes care of them well. He never lets his children go hungry.

Selling used clothes, or *ukay ukay*, is another source of income for some street persons, such as Manny. There are many used clothing shops in Manila. Some stores advertise that their clothes are imported. However, homeless people do not have enough capital to buy expensive used clothes. They buy used clothing from a church-based organization that gets donations from people and resell these donated clothes at a cheap price.

I accompanied Manny to search for used clothes at a church-based organization close to our sleeping place on Otis Street. Used clothes were piled in a big room. However, most of clothes were low quality. Some were damaged and torn or their sizes were too big for Filipinos. In addition, most clothes were white, but street people like dark colors such as black and dark blue because white clothes get dirty easily and street people cannot change their clothes every day. A t-shirt cost five pesos and can be resold for ten pesos. The cost for shorts is ten pesos and generally can be resold for 15 pesos. There are better clothes in another pile that cost ten pesos for a t-shirt and 20-30 pesos for pants and jeans. Yet, Manny advised against buying expensive clothes because they will be more difficult to resell to street people. We spent about two hours looking through clothes. Manny only found six shirts and two shorts that were good enough to be resold. Although he sold all his items, he could not survive on his 40-peso profit. It is not enough to survive. Finally, he had to attend feeding programs for survival.

In addition, street people might sell clothes that someone gave them such as from housed people and churches. When homeless people get donated clothes, some used it for themselves, but many people sell them at a cheaper price for about five pesos. Similarly, when street people get donated slippers, some sell it for ten to 20 pesos.

Another thing that is sold by street people is *hopia*. It is a Chinese bean cake. Although only a few street people sold it, *hopia* reflects the way of life of street people. The price was five pesos for four or five pieces. Actually, each piece was not complete as it is already crushed. This *hopia* is leftover from a bakery. It might be expired and a bakery had thrown it away. I knew one person who sold *hopia* since 2011. He was careful to tell me how he got *hopia* and he would not tell me exactly where he got *hopia*. In 2013, I was close with Richard, who sold *hopia*. He told me that he bought a sack for 200 pesos from a garbage collector. However, I am not sure that he told me the fact. He emphasized to me to not tell anyone about the source of his *hopia*, because he might get caught.

Nonetheless, it is sure that *hopia* comes from a garbage sack. The first time I bought and ate *hopia*, it was already packed in a clean plastic bag. However, when I found *hopia* in a garbage sack, I realize that this *hopia* was thrown out. The crushed *hopia* was mixed with other garbage. The reseller selected *hopia* from a garbage bag, and then re-pack in a new plastic. I could not eat *hopia* on that day. Nonetheless, I could eat it in the future as other street people enjoy eating it.

I accompanied Richard when he sold *hopia* sometimes. I helped Richard carry the heavy *hopia* in a sack and walked with him to many places where homeless people congregated. For example, we walked from Kalaw Street to Lawton and under the LRT Station near Manila City Hall. Then, we walked backed and passed a crowd of sailors on Kalaw Street. Someone asked

me to look at our goods. I showed him the *hopia* and other kinds of bread. While I was opening a sack to show *hopia*, Richard prohibited me from doing so. He told me “this is for *young ones*¹⁴ only. You cannot sell it to others.” He was quite careful when selling something of low quality. He might have problems, if housed people found that he sold “garbage” to people. When I took a picture of Richard and his *hopia*, his wife insisted that I must not show the pictures to anyone, particularly government officials. It was said that a TV program took videos of Richard while he was packing crushed *hopia* from a garbage sack to sell to homeless people. Then, the TV program asked Manila City Hall official about this. Therefore, Richard was prohibited from selling crushed *hopia*, but he was stubborn and continued to do so. Nonetheless, when I asked Richard about this rumor, he denied it. He said that he stopped selling *hopia* for a month, because the supplier could not serve him *hopia*.

Nonetheless, street people cannot say bad thing about *hopia* in front of Richard. Some might gossip that *hopia* was not clean, but would not say it in front of him. I saw a street person went to look at the *hopia*, but he did not buy any and he made a comment before leaving. After that, Richard chased him down and hit him. However, this guy could not fight back because Richard was tough and strong. Sometimes street people themselves got angry when someone spoke negatively about *hopia*. For example, an old street woman said that *hopia* was not clean enough to be eaten. Another homeless woman yelled at her that if she needs hygienic food, she should go eat somewhere else. *Hopia* is the food of street people.

Offering services

Two services offered by, but not limited to, homeless people are “*barking*” and parking. Anyone can see *barkers* at a bus stop in Manila, particular in a crowded area such as main street

¹⁴ Young ones is another term to call street people. I will explain in the next chapter.

corners and in front of churches. A barker is one who herds passengers to get on a jeepney and gets commission from a jeepney driver. The term *barker* is derived from “bark” in English. Some barkers might call what they do, *tawag* in Tagalog meaning call [passenger]. Others call this job much better. He said, “I am working at a call center.” It sounds like many Filipinos who work at a call center for international company, but his call center is located on a street, not in the air conditioning.

Pedro is my closed *barker*. As I already described that I knew him since 2011 and experienced barking with him. His place is beside Rizal Park. From Chess Plaza where I always met him, we got out from Rizal Park on Maria Orosa Street and turned left, walked past a corner of the park and turned left again. There is a bus stop with a shelter. People who come to work and study inside Intramuros wait and take a jeepney at the bus stop. In fact, not as many passengers get on a jeepney there as other places such as Quiapo Church, Taft, and UN Avenue. Nonetheless, it is good so there is not as much disorder as other crowded areas. Pedro usually works twice a day on weekdays, around noon and from late afternoon to evening. He can earn 150-200 pesos a day. However, he earns nothing on weekends because offices and schools are closed.

Barkers get different rates from drivers. There is no fix rate; it depends on the number of passengers that a driver gets. Generally, a driver would give five pesos if he get at least five passengers. Some drivers might wait until a jeepney is full with passengers because he does not want to make many stops to get passengers and he can avoid traffic jam. In such case, a driver might get more than ten passengers and give ten pesos to a barker. However, if a driver gets only one or two-three passengers, he might not pay a barker.

Pedro has a lot of experience barking. His wife told me that Pedro worked many jobs such as a construction worker and a scavenger, but he liked barking the most. He knows the different routes of each jeepney well, so he can tell passengers many places that are not posted on a jeepney. He asked passengers to sit side by side, so a jeepney can get more passengers. When it is raining and a jeepney has to be covered by a tarp, Pedro opens the tarp carefully to let passengers outside see that there is a room available for them to get on.

The most important issue of barkers is how they can have access to the place to call passengers. Street corners seem free to all, but it is not. Pedro told me that he is the first one who calls passengers at such area. Therefore, anyone who wants to call at that place has to ask his “permission.” When I saw a guy call passengers at that place, Pedro told me that he was his comrade. He has the same tattoo as Pedro. This guy called passengers for a while and got 20-30 pesos before leaving. Pedro said that it was all right, because he worked to get food.

Another example is Pedro’s friends. They drank together and Pedro asked them to call passengers so they could buy more liquor. Pedro told them that every time they got money, they were to give all the money to me to collect. They would share it later. [They trusted that I will not cheat them]. When they were satisfied with the money, they shared. Instead of sharing for four persons equally for each one, Pedro got half of this money, because he had the “right” over such area. His three friends got the second half.

Likewise, Jaymar had to accept the right of a previous one. At that time, Jaymar was on the street for a few months. Ben, Jaymar, Robin, and I always walked from Otis Street to Santa Cruz Church to have free breakfast. Jaymar saw an old man calling passengers near the bridge that crosses to Quiapo Church. Therefore, he asked the old man whether he could do the same to get small money. Actually, only a few passengers get on a jeepney at that place. The old man

said that he had no problem, but Jaymar had to ask another person because this person called passenger before him. Jaymar described that when this person saw him the first time, he looked at him crossly. Jaymar approached and asked permission to call passengers. This person replied that Jaymar could, but had to pay him 20 pesos every day. Jaymar said that he could earn 40-60 pesos and gave 20 pesos to such person. His income was not much because he could work at that place for one hour only from 7-8 AM. After that, there are fewer passengers.

Nonetheless, nobody can totally monopolize the place. When Pedro was injured from a car accident, he could not work at “his” bus stop for two weeks. When he recovered and went back to call passengers again, someone was already there. Pedro told him that he called passengers there before, but this guy claimed that he did not see Pedro. They had to work in the same place. After a few days, the guy left. He might not like to work there because there was tension between him and Pedro. I saw Pedro prepared for fighting. He hid his ice picker under the tree beside the bus stop. He said, “I call here for a long time already. It is my job. I will not allow anyone to steal my job.”

On street corners, where many jeepneys pass, several *barkers* had to share also. It is not free for all, but it is not completely owned either. Those who go to call passengers have to know some barkers at that place before calling passengers. They had to share in different ways. For example, some can call passengers for a while and leave, so others can earn money also.

Another problem of *barkers* is police. Police, including traffic enforcers, do not like barkers because they think that barkers cause traffic jams. Since jeepney drivers stop for a long time to wait for passengers, it blocks other vehicles. Therefore, police might threaten to catch drivers and barkers.

Parking is another service offered by some street people. They earn their income from helping drivers park on the street and look after the car. Nonetheless, I am not sure whether service is a right term because it can be perceived as soft threat of extortion as well. Actually, “parking servicers” do not have authority over the place, but they linger there and offer to look after a car from being stolen or damaged. Drivers pay to parking servicers to avoid the problem, because if they do not pay, their car might be damaged.

Adrian and Jhocas’s partner are examples of those who earned income from parking. Adrian worked on the street that connects UN Street and Pedro Gill Street. It is not a main road, but it closes to the main road, Taft Avenue. Therefore drivers can park their car at this street and walk to Taft Avenue. Adrian told me that he could earn around 200 pesos a day on weekdays. Jhocas’s partner does her job on UN Street near Taft Avenue. Three other persons do the same nearby. They had informal agreement about which area belongs to whom.

In my view, parking servicers earn income easier than *barkers*. They wait at “their” place. When they see a driver who wants to park a car, they help a driver to park by asking other drivers to stop for a while. Later, they get paid ten to 20 pesos. They do not need to stand and shout as barkers do. However, similar to *barkers*, an important issue of doing parking service is access to the area. Many places are already occupied by someone. I observe that those who do *barking* and parking are tough guys. They effectively protect themselves and are ready to fight, such as Pedro and Adrian. Both of them have experience in jail.

Irregular odd jobs

The odd jobs in this group are different from the other two groups of improvised work because they lack regularity. Their income depends much on resources. Examples of irregular odd jobs are searching juice, joining rallies, and being a practice patient for dental students.

“Is there juice at LRT?” Robin asked someone at a feeding program at Lawton. Juice in his question means instant powder for mixing with water to make juice. However, juice powder for street people particularly means juice given for free to promote a new brand. There are several flavors such as orange, mango, and pineapple. Robin does not have regular source of income. He mostly attends a feeding program for survival. However, from September to November 2013, he and many homeless people could earn extra income from collecting free juice mixes and selling it. Many workers from the company promoting the new product delivered juice mixes at several places such as LRT stations, in front of department stores, universities, schools, markets, and churches from the morning to the evening.

Many homeless people actively search for juice powders. It is quite good income for them. They sell it to a grocery store for two to five pesos a pack. The price depended on where they sell. Those who want to sell it easily will sell juice to other street people for two pesos each or five pesos for two packs. Those who have capital will buy it and resell it to a grocery store. However grocery stores and vendors located near Luneta know that street people get juice mixes for free. Therefore, they do not buy the powders at a high price, only three pesos each. Accordingly, some street people go far further to sell their juice. Some walk to other cities nearby, such as San Juan City, to sell juice for five pesos each. Grocery stores get juice at a cheap price and sell it at ten pesos each, the same as other brands. When I could collect 40

pieces of juice packets, Robin suggested I sell the mixes to a security guard who guards a building near Luneta. He bought them from me four pesos each. It was quite good because I did not need to walk far away to sell it. Robin insisted that I not tell others to sell juice to the security guard. He worried that many supplies might lower the price.

The staff gave three to five packs of juice packets for each person. Although, they tried to avoid giving to the same person several times, homeless people could manage to get juice packets several times at the same place. Street people called what they do *ikot ikot*, which means circle. They come back many rounds to get juice mixes. Accordingly, homeless people had to apply several different techniques such as changing their clothes and wearing or not wearing a cap. Sometimes, it was chaotic because many people, both homeless and housed people, competed to get free powders. It was a chance for homeless people to get juice packets because the staff had difficulty noticing who had gotten juice packets many times already. Therefore, it was not difficult for street people to get 30-50 pieces a day. They could earn 100-200 pesos a day or more.

Overall, homeless people quite enjoy getting free juice packets. Some can earn high income. I knew one who collected 200 packets during a week and sold it for five pesos each. He can earn 1,000 pesos, which is quite high for street people. Others who do not enjoy selling juice packets still benefit by having free juice. They bought cold water and mix with juice. Accordingly, street people could drink cold juice, which did not happen regularly. However, the happy period was short as the company stopped giving free juice samples in Manila City in November 2013. This led some street people to search for free juice packets in others cities. They went to Cubao, Quezon City to search for juice samples. They could find it for a few days.

Eventually, the company stopped giving samples entirely when the promotion period was finished.

The next irregular odd job is being hired to join a rally. “Do you want to join a rally?” Herbert asked me one late afternoon at Rizal Park. I asked him where and when. He told me the following morning at a Salamanga Plaza on Taft Avenue and Kalaw Street at 7 AM. I asked him further what rally is about. He said that I would know tomorrow, but it will not take too long and I will get 50 pesos.

Herbert is a homeless person who has a cell phone. Therefore, rally organizers can contact him when they need supporters. The rally that I joined protested a bill that may affect natural resources of people in the province. Rally organizers could not mobilize people in a remote area to join the protest, therefore they asked homeless people as a “reserve army of labor,” to support the protest. About 60 homeless people, including me, joined the protest. It started at Taft Avenue and we walked to the Supreme Court not far from Luneta to argue that the bill violated the Constitution. Then, protesters walked back to Malaganngan Palace, a government house, to send a protest letter to the government. When protestors demonstrated in front of Malanganngan Palace, Herbert gave bread to protestors. After finishing the rally about 1 PM, employed protestors got 50 pesos. Some told me that other rallies paid homeless people 100 pesos to join a rally for the entire a day.

Rally organizers did not want the media to know that they hired people to join a rally. Therefore, Herbert had to pay street people secretly. He could not pay them in front of a government office. As a result, after finishing the rally, homeless people followed him to make sure that they will not miss the payment. It looked like a small rally.

I do not know exactly when a rally organizer started hiring homeless people to join a rally. However it happens occasionally. Generally, protest organizers have supporters, but they need more people to make their rally attractive for media to report their movement. However, rallies in the Philippines are not always peaceful. Sometimes, police block and hit protesters. Accordingly, not all homeless people, such as Manny, like to join protests. He warned me that I am a foreigner and that I should not join the rally.

Another irregular odd job is vote selling. It is actual “selling”; it is not about patron-client relationship as discussed widely in many areas (Scott 1972; Sidel 2004). The process of selling votes starts from the election registration. Pepe, a homeless person and vote collector, asked me whether I want to have ID. He explained that he could help me get a Barangay ID, so that I will not be arrested by DSWD because I can show my ID card showing my residence. Actually homeless people do not have a house, but they can register for voting because an incumbent Barangay Chairman cheated. He asked Pepe to herd homeless people to register at the Commission of Election, and he issued Barangay ID and Barangay confirmation letters to confirm that they are residents in his Barangay. However, the process of registering is not easy. The registration period was between July 22-31, 2013 only. Therefore, many people went to fall in line at the office of the Commission of Elections. Some could not pass through in a day and had to come back again the next day. Therefore, the Barangay chairman had to pay for homeless people for going to registration. Generally, people got 200 pesos for registering. After that, homeless people got voting ID. They could vote in October 28 and got 200-300 pesos for their voting.

I argue that it is actually selling because it relies on the economic price of voting only. It does not have social relations embedded in the decision of voting. Voters do not know the

candidate personally. They just vote according to a voting collector's order. The story is more complicated when a voting collector changes his position. For example, Pepe got money from incumbent Baranggay Chairman to herd homeless people to register for voting. However, before the election date, he was "bought" by another candidate who offered to pay him higher than the incumbent Baranggay Chairman. Pepe accepted it. He told his group to vote for the new candidate and people followed his order. The new candidate won the election. The incumbent Baranggay Chairman got angry at Pepe because he had betrayed him. Pepe had to hide and he volunteered to go to work in Mindanao region for three weeks before coming back. Tony who got money from voting told me that he got 500 pesos for his vote. It is quite high. However, vote selling happened on rare occasions. Many homeless people accepted this job, not only because of money, but also for the ID card. Many homeless do not have any ID cards, therefore, having a voter ID card is meaningful for them in that it indicates their residence.

The next irregular odd job is finding practice patients for dental students. "Open your mouth. Do you have a decayed tooth?" Lena who slept at the same place as me asked. I replied I did not because I always take care of my teeth. She asked me further if I had tartar, so she requested that I open my mouth again. I opened my mouth and she said that I have decayed teeth, but they were filled already. However, she further suggested I remove the tartar and that she can refer me to a dentist for free. These conversations are example of searching for patients for dental students. Both a broker who finds a patient and the patient get paid by dental students who need patients for practice.

In the past, some homeless people in Manila sold their plasma to earn income similar to homeless people in the US (Snow and Anderson 1993; Anderson et al 1996; Wasserman and Clair 2010:84). Presently, the blood bank that used to buy blood from the poor is already closed.

Therefore, being a patient for dentistry students becomes a choice of earning income from the body of some homeless people. Dental students need to practice many things, such as extracting a tooth, filling a tooth, cleaning tartar, and making dentures. However, the university does not have a dental clinic or patients to serve them. Therefore, dental students have to find patients to practice themselves, and some brokers, including street people, can serve their demand. At first, street people were only patients, and then they learned that they can get a commission if they find other patients for dental students.

Those who earn income from finding dental patients will ask many homeless people to open their mouth and asked them whether they want to fix their teeth as Lena did to me. If someone decides to do so, they will make an appointment to meet a broker and a dental student in the early morning in front of the university at University Belt. When a dental student accepts the case, he/she will take care of the case. After finishing their procedure, he/she will pay the broker and patient. One problem that can happen when a broker takes all the commission and a patient get nothing. I saw one guy punch another guy in front of a church at Santa Cruz. Someone explained to me that the first guy got angry because he met the dental student and the dental student had given all the money to the broker. However, the broker did not share compensation with the patient. Lena told me that there is not a fixed rate for her to find patients for students. She does not have a direct contact to dental students and she cannot enter the university's dental laboratory. Only legitimate brokers can do so. Therefore, a dental student pays a higher-level broker that broker paid her. Lena said that she got about 50-100 pesos for a patient. Lena's husband's teeth had over fifteen teeth extracted.

In general, those who have a tooth extracted will get paid 50-100 pesos with or without free food. However, those who go to be cleared tartar get only free food. Students make denture

for free for those who need dentures too. Since these students lack experience, their quality is an issue. Tony told me that he could not stop bleeding when a student extracted his tooth at his second time. Likewise, many people get denture, but I do not see them use it regularly. It seems that their denture do not fit their mouth. The issue of dentures points to the significant difference between selling plasma and being extracted the tooth. Plasma can replenish naturally, but a tooth cannot regrow. I saw many people who lost their teeth and yet their dentures were not good enough. Therefore, they have no teeth for eating.

Illegal improvised work

The last group of shadow work is a kind of fraud such as lying to get money. The first job of this group is *sobre*, an envelope. However *sobre* is slang, which means the way to earn money from giving envelopes to passengers on a jeepney. Generally, street children do it, and some passengers put coins in an envelope. It is a form of begging. However, these children are really dirty and make some passengers sympathetic to them. Kevil told me that his means of living is *sobre*. He was 23 years old, the second youngest among my 100 informants. His appearance was quite dirty. He said that he could earn about for 400-500 pesos a day and he spent his money buying solvents to inhale. Among my participants, Kevil is the only one who earns his income from an envelope. It reflected that this *diskarte* is only for street children. It is much harder for adult street people to get the sympathy that a child gets.

Lakad gamot is also slang. Literally, *lakad gamot* means walk for medicine. However, the real meaning of this slang is approaching someone and asking for help to get medicine. Later, they will get assistance either by getting medicine or money to buy medicine. If they get medicine, they will sell it to a drug store. However, those who do must have a medicine

prescription. In the Philippines, after checking patient's symptoms, a doctor will give a prescription to patients. Then, patients have to buy medicine themselves. Therefore, the poor who cannot afford medicine will approach anyone who can help them. Mostly, the poor approach politicians and priests. Accordingly, other related slang of *lakad gamot* is *lakad politician* (walk to politicians) and *lakad padre* (walk to priests). However *lakad politician* and *lakad padre* has a wider meaning than *lakad gamot*. People can ask politicians and priests for help in many issues—not only medicine—such as fare money to go back to a province, or capital for having a livelihood program.

Jose would earn money from politicians. He is thin and can act as if he is weak and sick. He told me that he was in jail for many years because of a homicide. Then, he got a chance to go back to his hometown many years ago. While visiting his hometown, he traveled around the province and he took note of the names of Barangays and Barangay Chairman, and other local information. Next, he went back to Manila because he had no way of survival in the province. Later, he started “walk to politicians.” He went to meet a congressman from his province and proved that he was a citizen of congressman's area by referring to the name of the Barangay Chairman. Such information can convince politicians that he is a citizen in their province. He lied to one congressman that he had worked at a construction site, but got sick and wanted return to his province. Therefore, he asked for transportation fare. He did this with many politicians and senators. Since his hometown was in the Mindanao region, his “fare money” was about 3,000 pesos which he could live on for an entire month.

Some homeless people committed petty crimes such as stealing. Slang for a thief, particularly when the target is sleeping, is *eskobardo*. I knew this term since 2011. Pedro taught me about *eskobardo* because he had done it before. Someone told me that Pedro is still an

eskobardo if he has a chance. I experienced theft when I slept at Mabini Street in 2011, but Pedro woke up and yelled at a thief who ran away.

Another petty crime of street people is *estafa*. *Estafa* is Spanish word means a swindle. For example, a person gets money to do something, but this person takes the money and leaves. When Ben worked at a canteen, his employer gave him money to change into small bills and coins, but Ben took money and did not go back. This is an example of *estafa*. Ben justified his crimes by explaining that his feelings were hurt by his employer's words. Therefore, he wanted to leave his job. Bien, who slept at Otis, did *estafa* too. Near our sleeping place, there is a construction company. Every Saturday evening, an employer paid for their labors, but he did not have enough small bills to pay for their labor, so he asked Bien to exchange the bill for change. The first two times he gave a 1,000 peso bill to Bien and Bien walked to change his money to him. The third time, he gave Bien a 3,000 peso bill to Bien to break into smaller denominations. Bien took this money and did not go back. It reflected what I heard since 2011 to "don't trust anybody." On the street, people have loose relationships with others, so some can wrong others and leave.

As far as I know, not many homeless people are prostitutes or drug dealers. I talked with some prostitutes in Luneta during my pre-dissertation fieldwork in 2011. They were around *Flower Clock*¹⁵ inside Luneta during the daytime and moved to stand on the sidewalk looking for their customers in front of the Rizal Park during the nighttime. I have concluded that they are different from other homeless people whom I studied. For example, a woman, whom I regularly talked with, slept at a hotel with her customers. If she did not have a customer, she would sleep at the Gwapo Hotel, a daily dormitory, near the Rizal Park. She also had a house and children in

¹⁵ Flower clock is a small garden that was decorated in a clock-shape. It functions as a clock as well.

a suburb of Metro Manila. Although she did not go back to her house everyday, she still had a place to go back to once a week. When I did my fieldwork in 2013, I did not spend time with prostitutes.

I further assume that it is hard for homeless people to work as prostitutes because they have to take care of themselves to attract their customers. Most prostitutes are clean and their clothes are presentable. They also have make up. Those who can do so need to have a regular income. Those who have a regular income and need to take care of themselves rarely live on the street. They stay in a daily hotel or rent a room. I spoke with homeless people who were previously prostitutes, but when they get old they are not attractive enough for customers. Two of my male informants shared that they had been *call boys*, slang for male prostitutes, when they were teenagers and in their early 20s years old. At that time, they slept in a daily hotel. However when they turned 30 years old, they could not do this job. Likewise, Ashley told me about another homeless woman who had been a prostitute when she was young. Today she is around 50 years old. She cannot find customers and has a partner instead. In Manila, it is not difficult to notice that some women who stand on the street corner along Avenida Avenue from Santa Cruz to Recto Avenue are prostitutes. However, I do not think that they are homeless people. They are young and look better than many street people whom I associate with.

Based on my knowledge, none of my 100 informants are drug dealers. I know some homeless people such as Richard, and Pepe, who regularly used drugs. When they want to buy and use drugs, they went to buy them in the Quiapo area. Ben used to ask me to join him when he and Robin went to buy and used drugs in a squatter area near his neighbor. People can buy drugs in a squatter area, but not on the street. I assume that those who can sell drugs need a lot

of capital, but homeless people cannot afford it. It is hard for homeless people to get drugs on credit to sell and pay back later too because homeless people have no fixed place. They might *estafa*—take drugs and run away. Therefore, nobody trusts them. Accordingly, it is hard for homeless people to work as street dealers. Homeless people are drug users rather than drug dealers. Nonetheless, I cannot definitely say that no homeless people sell drugs, because it is beyond my knowledge.

Volunteering labor

There are other means of living located between employed labor and improvised works. It can be called volunteer worker. These homeless people are neither employed as wage laborers nor create improvised jobs. They worked for either someone or an institute got rewarded materially both in cash and in kind, but their work was imbued with social relations rather than wage exchange. Nonetheless, it does not mean that these people do not expect material rewards. They do not complain that institutions and someone paid them lower than a minimum wage. They accepted something minimal rather than getting nothing. It reflects that because people have limited opportunities, they have to accept it although it is small reward.

My experience of volunteering at a feeding program on Sunday noon illuminates this issue. Actually, at first I did not feel good knowing that some homeless people took personal advantage from the program. Previously, a businessman sponsored this program by renting a house and supported homeless volunteers with food. He gave them an allowance sometimes. However, the businessman had already died, and a priest took the responsibility of finding funding. The foundation hired one full time staff member and another part-time. However, in practice volunteers—including both previously and presently homeless persons—ran the

program. They worked hard and some did not sleep almost the entire Saturday night. They cooked rice in two big pots and cooked the meal. They can finish everything around 5 AM. Their partners wake up at 4 AM to pack rice in plastic bags. After finishing activities, they had to clean the place. When the restroom was still open, a volunteer had to clean the restroom too. Among these volunteers, some rented a room in a slum community, but their sources of income are still similar to homeless people: scavenging, parking service, or re-bagging. Therefore, these volunteers took two to three kilograms of rice for their volunteering. A part-time staff member explained to me that these volunteers are poor also. Rice is small thing that the program can reward them. Moreover, they took canned meat and fish from the program sometimes. This caused many homeless people to complain that food at Paco was low quality.

Later, I realized that these volunteers are not volunteers in the Western sense that they devoted themselves to serve their comrade without expectation to take advantage materially (Bintrim 2014: 23-24). They are poor and material well-being is still important to them. For instance, during the week that the sponsor of the program provided food for homeless people; volunteers did not cook. Therefore, there was no rice that week. As a result, a volunteer had to go to feeding programs because he had no rice to eat as income was not enough.

Many homeless people who are members of Food for Life Program also volunteer and get some reward not comparable to a real wage. For instance, when such institutes had a small construction project, it asked homeless people to “volunteer” to help the institute. Tatay Nicolas, 62 years old, volunteered to do this work. He has construction skills, but he was too old to get a job. He got 100 pesos a day and free food for his devotion. He also expected that the program would support him in the future because he was waiting for a livelihood program. It was said that the program would lend money to its members to launch a business such as a street vender,

but it did not happen. Moreover, Food for Life Program asked its members when the program needed some labor to clear a messy garden and re-arrange items in storage. For one or two hours of working, the programs would thank volunteers by giving them groceries such as instant noodles and canned fish. Some ate it, but others sold it for money.

When the institute had a project to houses for victims of a typhoon in Mindanao, it asked homeless people to volunteer to go there. Ten homeless persons, such as Tony, Anthony, Tatay Nicolas, and Pepe, volunteered to go there. They got 100 pesos a day for working days, six days a week. The program provided an allowance for them to cook and eat together. It was cheaper than eating at a canteen. By doing so, Tony and Anthony who budgeted carefully could save 1,000 pesos, when they came back from working 20 days.

Homeless people who volunteer at other feeding programs also get some reward. For instance, Lena told me that she went to a feeding program at Calvary—which is quite far—for more than food and bathing. She also “volunteered” to wash dishes and get 50 pesos. Therefore, she could take a jeepney when she came back costing ten pesos. Willy also volunteered to play a guitar for a feeding program on Thursday afternoon. He got a small amount for his volunteering.

Some homeless people create relationship with vendors, so they can hang out at a kiosk and get some free food. This is a kind of volunteering as well. For example, Jhocas slept on the sidewalk on UN Street. At the same sidewalk, three vendors had a simple cart to sell soft drink, snack, boiled bananas, and hamburgers. Jhocas helped the vendor with trivial things such as carrying water or frying eggs. She also looked after the kiosk when a vender wants to go somewhere such as a restroom. In this context, Jhocas did not get cash for her work. She just had free food and could ask for cigarettes from a vendor.

Likewise, Ate Reyna was asked by a vendor inside Rizal Park to look after the kiosk. The owner of a kiosk is a couple that rent a room in a squatter area. Sometimes, they locked their kiosk when they went back home for two or three hours. However, when they thought that they could trust Ate Reyna, they left the kiosk open and asked Ate Reyna to sell things when they were not at a kiosk. In this context, the couple knew that Ate Reyna had no job. In their view, they did not need to pay wage for Ate Reyna formally because she just lingered around their kiosk and sold things which were not hard to do. They just asked Ate Reyna to eat with them and gave her 50-100 pesos sometimes depending on how much they could earn.

Finally, different from homeless people in many cities in the US who beg for survival, none of my informants were beggars. Some homeless people beg to survive, but generally professional beggars have regular income and can pay for the rent. For example, Rigel and I received rice and canned food for free during the Christmas season. However, we had no kitchen to cook, so we needed to sell it to earn money. Rigel suggested that I sell it to a beggar who sat on an overpass near Quiapo Church. The beggar could pay 200 pesos to buy groceries from me without asking for a discount. It indicates that she had good income. In contrast, only a few homeless people have cash 200 pesos in cash in their pocket. Generally, beggars, who are called *pulubi*, have regular income and do not need to sleep on the street. In addition, all homeless people whom I know differentiate themselves from beggars. They would say with pride that they were doing something to survive, but they did not beg.

To summarize, this chapter illuminates three different ways homeless people in Manila earn money to survive on the street, namely employed work, improvised jobs, and volunteer work. Based on descriptions in this chapter, improvised jobs of homeless people in Manila are broad and flexible because economic and social system of Manila is not formalized and well

ordered. Homeless people can find resources and offer services in the city, such as selling silver mats, boiled eggs, and cigarettes. They can offer services that could not happen in the well-developed cities such as barking and parking.

To connect this chapter to the several concepts of violence, Chapter Five and Six demonstrate that homeless people are actively coping with structural violence. They search for and create resources for survival. Although their income is small compared to the income of regular workers, they can survive in their own way.

Nonetheless, I would like to emphasize some issues here. First, as Snow and Anderson point out, homeless people are *bricoleurs* (Snow and Anderson 1993, Snow et al 1996). They “do this and that,” which means they do not survive by any one mean of survival (Snow et al 1996: 96). Homeless people employ and mix several methods to survive. I describe different means of survival, but in the real life, homeless people do several things simultaneously. For instance, Pedro is a barker, but he sells mats also. Ate Reyna sells mats and looks after a kiosk at the same time.

Second, homeless people are not static. They learned and develop their skills for survival. For example, Luis was ignorant when he became homeless the first time such as when street children took his money. He was excited to know that he could survive by attending feeding programs and he later started collecting recyclable items. Next, he became a one who bought reusable items from recyclers instead of searching himself. Ben also does several things. He went to a feeding program to enjoy food and Bible study. He collected recyclable items, and when he got a chance, he worked at a canteen.

Third, in the street society, different ways of survival have a sense of hierarchy. Although hierarchy in homeless world is not static and contested, it can reflect values of different homeless

people. This issue will be explored further as a part of cognitive survival strategies of homeless people in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

Telling themselves

After selling recyclable items in the early morning, Mikel and I had coffee in front of a bakery. The first time that I had met the bakery owner, she was surprised when she found out that I was Thai and accompanied street people. That day, she brought forth a new issue. It was about another homeless person who came to have coffee at her bakery too. I had met him before, because he went to sell used items at the same junk shop that Mikel and I went to. The bakery owner said that this guy seemed to have mental problems. He had been a street person for only three weeks, and could not accept that he was a street person, which caused him a lot of stress.

This story is an example of a topic that I always heard from street people. They had to adjust to street life and “accept” their situation; otherwise, they might become crazy. For instance, Steve said that he tried to think positively in order to not get depressed. Otherwise, he would become crazy. Pedro said that he had to be patient to cope with difficulty; otherwise, he would either die or become crazy. Many people warned me further that I should not think about anything seriously, because my brain might get damaged, like the many people who talked with themselves. It was said that they had their own world (*may sariling mundo*) and were perceived as having a mental illness. Nonetheless, it does not mean that street people do not think about their life. In contrast, those who can survive on the street are not only able to adapt to the street materially, but also they can also provide self-explanations to make sense of their situation (Snow and Anderson 1993; Gowan 2010).

To explore how homeless people think about their life is significant in understanding how victims of structural violence perceive their own life because I do not take for granted that people experiencing oppression are suffering. Since street people realized that living on the street is not a norm of society, living under such conditions might affect their self-esteem. Therefore, this chapter will illuminate how homeless people deal with their self-esteem: how they rationalize the reasons for living on the street and how their street life is acceptable. First, the chapter will describe how street people think about the cause of homelessness. Second, it will examine how different homeless people deal with several negative images of street people. Third, this chapter will analyze how street people negotiate with the different terms used to call themselves to maintain their self-esteem. Fourth, the chapter will clarify how homeless people re-interpret meanings of street life in a positive way and make fun of their homeless life. Finally, the chapter will propose the limitations of these individual coping strategies. They can make street life acceptable, but they cannot help street people overcome homelessness.

Causal explanations

Different pathways to becoming homeless result in different ways of making sense of their life to maintain their self-esteem. Teresa Gowan (2010) analyzes discourses about homeless people and distills them in to three discourses: sin talk, system talk, and sick talk. Her ethnography analyzes how homeless people talk about these discourses in their life. Although she does not directly discuss that how these talks affect the self-esteem of homeless people in California—where she studies, I found that these three discourses can be used to analyze the strategy of homeless people in Manila.

First, many homeless people tell themselves that the reason they have become homeless is the ineffective system. It is quite identical with Gowan's system-talk that counters sin-talk. According to Gowan, sin-talk is about a moral aspect, such as "the lawless tramp, the inevitably criminal drifter, the fraudulent panhandler" (2010: 29). System-talk is a counter discourse to sin-talk that emphasizes structural causes of homelessness, such as de-industrialization, the decline of affordable housing, and neo-liberalism (Gowan 2010:40-47). Many street people are blamed for their laziness, and lack of work ethic (Wagner 1994). Street people in Manila also blame others whom do not work as lazy. For example, when I talked with Jordan in 2011, he told me that I do not need to worry about homeless people. If they liked to work, they would be able to find a job and work. In the same way, Bona asked Robin to work at the same canteen with her because her employer needed another helper. Robin promised to work, but he did not show up at the canteen. Hence, Bona told me that Robin was lazy.

To maintain their self-esteem, homeless people need the counter explanations. Those who become homeless because of unemployment and have no "sin," can counter this discourse easily by blaming the government. For example, Anthony blamed his homelessness on the government because he had been laid-off illegally. He went to several government offices to ask for help such as giving him a job. Regarding his pathway to homelessness, he said "I became homeless, because I had no job. I couldn't find a job. I went to the DSWD office, but I could not get it [a job]. I followed up many times, until I was through with it. It was the DSWD that pushed me into becoming a street person (*yagit*)."

Many homeless people similarly blame the Philippine government for their unemployment. For example, I interviewed Pedro about his life history. As already mentioned, he had been a run-away child, had a criminal record, and it was difficult for him to find jobs.

However, he was close to me and knew that the objective of my research was to search for why people become homeless. Therefore, he wanted to make his views known during the interview. He said, “I became homeless because the Philippine government is corrupt. It does not help the poor. If the government helped the poor by giving me a job, I would not need to become homeless.”

In addition, since the unemployment rate in the Philippines is high, homeless people can blame their unemployment on many factors. As described above, some homeless people are unemployed because of age discrimination. Therefore, they can tell themselves that it is not their personal fault, but it is the economic system that provides only a small chance for them to get a job. Jae (40 years old) proposed wisely that his dream was to go abroad because “I heard that there is no age-limit in other countries.” Therefore he would be able to get a job, if he could go abroad. It does not matter whether his understanding is correct. The issue is that he can blame the Philippine economic system as the cause of his unemployment and homelessness.

Second, many homeless people pointed out that the problems with their family were the cause of their homelessness. Gowan points to family dysfunction as an example of sick-talk developed by health-care professionals and nonprofit workers (2010: 49). Homeless people in Manila blame their unkind families to indicate that they are victims and that they have not created the problem themselves. For example, in describing his background, Stone said that had been born into a broken family. His parents had separated when he was only one year old. When he was at fifteen years old, he went to live with his aunt in Quezon City, Metro Manila. His uncle worked in a slaughterhouse. Stone worked with him also, but he said he did not get his salary because his uncle took it all. When Stone was twenty years old, he was beaten by his uncle, causing him to leave his auntie’s house. He said, “You know. I am not her real son, and she has

her real children. So, she loves her real children more than me. She does not need to care about me. What she cares about is only how much I earn. When her husband hit me, my eye got black and blue. My feelings were hurt. Therefore I ran away.” Stone left his house and became a street person in Quezon City first. He moved to Manila after he was released from Quezon City Jail. His case was fighting.

Likewise, Rigel said that he had relatives in Quezon City, but he did not want to go to his relative’s house. He recounted that his aunt’s husband used to ask him for money, but he did not have any. Therefore his uncle hit him in the head. Similarly, Donald said forwardly that he came from a broken family. He was angry at me when I doubted his description. He insisted that he grew up on the street. For him, to say that he came from a broken family meant his impoverished circumstances limited his chances. He has a low level of education and he has no other siblings.

Third, for some people, although “sin-talk” might not really help them maintain their self-worth, it can help them accept their situation. They share their stories with a sense of repentance. The importance of repentance is that it helps homeless people accept what they did wrong before, but they can tell themselves that they have changed already and that their life can move on. For example, Jun said that he used to use drugs and stole money from his older sister. Then, he ran away from home and was in jail. He said, “I am the black sheep in my family, but now I have stopped. My friend asked me to accompany him to do bad things again. But I don’t want to do it again.”

Jaymar also talked about sin-talk. He shared that he actually had a younger sister who was a teacher in Manila, but he did not want to meet her. Jaymar recounted that when he had had a job and his sister was still studying, his younger sister asked him to support her, but he did

not. Jaymar said to me, “I don’t know why I did not help her. I don’t know why I had a devil mind.” Now his younger sister has a job. Therefore, Jaymar was ashamed to ask her for help. Nonetheless, Jaymar said that he was trying to solve his problem by himself. It was good for him that after becoming homeless, he attended a feeding program and listened to the words of God. He knew God and felt sorry of what he had done to his younger sister.

Fourth, some homeless people maintain their self-esteem by saying that at least they had made their own decision to live on the street. Many of them faced difficulties such as losing jobs or having family problems. However, they finally explained that they decided to leave their last residence. Instead of thinking that making themselves homeless was negative, they thought about it in an opposite way. At least they could make their own decision; they had been neither abandoned nor driven out. They were trying to restore their “sense of agency, of having a say in the shape of their own” (Gowan 2010:95).

For instance, Mikel said that it had been his choice to come back to Manila to become homeless. He had been laid off two years before and had gone back to his hometown. Finally, he decided to come back to Manila. He knew that his old age made it difficult to find a job. Instead of thinking that he had failed to get a job or that the system was not good, he preferred to say that he had made his own decision to live on the street. Therefore, he should accept the result of his own decision. In the same way, Jordan became homeless after he lost his job and could not afford rent. Nonetheless, he said, “This is my choice. I want to know more about the life.”

Lena’s life is another example. She came from a broken family. Her last residence was her aunt’s house. Lena left this house after she had been unemployed and quarreled with her aunt. She explained that she saw everyone was only concerned about their family. Her real mother denied her reunion with her partner, Lena’s adopted father. Lena’s aunt wanted money

from Lena to take care of her family. When Lena had no job, she quarreled with Lena. Lena said that everyone cared only for his or her family. Therefore she said, “I decided to leave my aunt’s house. I wanted to have my own family. I don’t want to be related to them anymore. Now, I have my own family here. You see. I have a handsome husband.” [She laughed while saying this last sentence]. Likewise, Ben does not blame his siblings who ignore him. He explains that it was his choice to leave his family’s house. He justified this by saying that his house was so small. Thus, he should sacrifice by leaving his house because he was single. He is proud of what he did.

Negotiating with street people’s image

This section employs Snow and Anderson’s framework (1987, 1993) of analyzing “identity talk” of homeless people. They argue that homeless people both make distance from and embrace some stereotypes of homelessness to salvage themselves. For example, some homeless people accept their identity as bums, while others do not. This framework is helpful to analyze homeless people in Manila as well. However, I do not strictly employ Snow and Anderson’s models, which formulates the relation between self-identities and the periods of living on the street. For instance, they explain that in the beginning, people identify themselves as newcomers and have hope to go back to living in a house. When they live on the street longer, they become “outsider” types, such as tramps and bums (Snow and Anderson 1993: 38-70). I found that the life of homeless people is dynamic. They change their ways of survival at different times. Sometimes, people let themselves become dirty, but later they change their mind. Therefore, their self-identities are changed also.

Similar to many other countries, homeless people in Manila are stereotyped, such as being lazy, dirty, and “having sin.” Homeless people recognize that the images of homelessness

are not good. For example, Kevin said that he could feel that housed people looked at him with a negative view. He said, “You see? When people looked at you, they don’t think that you are good. If you want to talk to them, they will not want to talk to you.” In the same way, Anthony left the room that he shared with his friends before and became homeless. He went back to meet his friends sometimes, but he did not tell them that he slept on the street. He said that housed people looked at street people negatively. Therefore homeless people have to deal with these images in different ways. While some try to create distance from these stereotypes, others accept such images, but interpret them in positive ways.

Street people in Manila employ “distancing mechanisms” (Seltser and Miller 1993:63) to make themselves different from unpleasant images of homeless people. First of all, those who do not attend feeding programs would say with pride that they do not rely on feeding programs. They stand on their own; they are not lazy. They are patient and do their best to survive. For instance, Mark, who earned his income from selling mats and sometimes being a construction worker, said that he had a strong body and he did not go to feeding programs. He said, “If I go to feeding programs, it means I am lazy. You see...when you are waiting at feeding programs, and people walk past you. They act like you are disgusting. It is not good. I accept being hungry rather than going to feeding programs.” Similarly, Martin, who earned his income from selling mats, also disliked going to a feeding program. He said, “Going to feeding programs means you cannot stand on your own.”

Another example is Ken. He earned his income from selling boiled eggs to truck drivers. He and his family lived on the sidewalk for several years. However, he emphasizes that he is different from other street people because he is not lazy. He worked hard to feed his family. Although his sleeping place was close to Bumbay—less than one hundred yards, he rarely went

to Bumbay. Throughout my fieldwork, I saw him go to Bumbay only one time, not because he did not have food to eat, but because he wanted to try spicy Indian food that he could not buy at other canteens.

Those who had odd jobs have different reasons for not going to feeding programs. For instance, Jacob, who earned his income from being a masseur, said that he did not want to be pitied. It was better to buy his food himself. Likewise, Pedro looked for me at Bumbay, because he knew that I always went there. He said that he saw many “*kawawa*” (pitiful) homeless people were waiting at Bumbay. He said in that sense that he was different from those people because he could earn his income from *barking*.

Even those who went to feeding programs tried to distance themselves from others. I always met Boy at Paco Church where I volunteered. He told me that he only went to Paco and Ermita, but not because he wanted food. He went to these two feeding programs just to bathe. Food was not important for him. He said, “I don’t rely on feeding programs.” He earned his income from collecting recyclable items. Similarly, Manny wanted to create the image that he did not always go to feeding programs. When I met him for the first time in February 2013 at Paco, he had capital to buy and resell used clothes, *ukay ukay*. He acted like he always bought his own food. He was astonished when he met me at the feeding program at Lawton in March 2013. He explained to me that he had just gotten food and would give it to someone else. It meant that he wanted to keep his image good by making me believe that he had not gotten the food for himself.

The second way to create distance from other homeless people is by showing that they can go home. Being able to go home implies that they had never done anything wrong with their family as some homeless people had. Among homeless people, those who had wronged their

family are described as “having sin,” *may kasalanan* in Tagalog. I recognized this issue from talking with Jerome, my co-volunteer at Paco. I talked with him about another person who had not returned home for many years. Jerome told me that he could go back home because “he has sin.” Jerome further explained that when people did the wrong things, they could not go back home. Martin, who used drugs and had to leave his family’s house, is an example of a person who “has sin.” Later, I learned to ask others about this issue. For example, I interviewed Kevil, who earned his income from “envelope.” I asked him quietly, “Do you have sin?” He smiled and was surprised that I asked this question. He replied, “Yes, but not at my house.” He had stolen a DVD player from a house in his neighborhood. Therefore, he could not go back to his community.

Accordingly, those who can go back to visit either their family or a former employer will say with pride that they can do it because they have no sin. Ben is the first one who made me realize this issue. After interviewing him and knowing that his family’s house was in Manila, I asked him whether I could visit his family with him. Later, I accompanied him to visit his family’s house. I met his older brothers and sister. His sister greeted him gladly and was surprised that he had a foreign friend. Ben hugged his nephews and nieces to show their close relationship. While we were walking back to our sleeping place on Otis Street, Ben said, “You see... I am welcome here. I can come here whenever I want.” At that time, I realized that some street people were uncomfortable about allowing me to meet their family—not because of physical distance, but because of social distance.

In the same way, Vincente showed me his family as Ben did. Vincente’s life is similar to Martin’s, but he can go back home. He left his house after his sister found that he was using drug again, and reproached him. During the New Year season of 2014, Vincente unexpectedly

asked me to go to his house. He had kept a new shirt that he had gotten from a church as a New Year's gift for his sister. When we arrived at his family house, his sister was a little surprised but she provided a meal for us. Vincente talked with his nephew and nieces comfortably. On the way back to Luneta, Vincente said proudly in a similar manner as Ben, "Because I have no sin here, I can come back here, if I want." While he admitted that he abused drugs, he said he had never stolen anything from his house and he could go back to his house anytime.

Ileto is another person who let me visit his relative's house in Navotas City, Metro Manila. Generally, Filipinos will go back to their hometown on Fiesta Day. Fiesta is a local celebration for the saint who protects a community. Ileto had left his relative's house after the house was partly burned. When his niece met him, I could see that she was glad to see him. She asked Ileto about his job. She also showed her concern that someone in the community had seen Ileto was collecting recyclable items in Manila. She asked Ileto to come back to live in the house and help her take care of her kid. She said that she could find a job, but she could not go to work because no one took care of her kid. Her husband worked on a fishing vessel and only came back once a month. When Ileto went back to Luneta, he told others that he went to his sister's house with me and said proudly that his niece asked him to go back to the house. He asked me to confirm his words and show the pictures that I took at his relative's house.

Ileto also accompanied me to visit a fishpond where he worked in the summer season. While we were waiting at a pier to get on a boat at the fish pond, someone greeted him. After having a conversation, Ileto turned to talk to me, "You see... I worked here for many years. They know me. I never did wrong. I never stole anything from my boss. Therefore, I could come back here."

Francis is another one who tries to distance himself from other street people by saying that he still contacts his daughters. He visited his daughters around every two weeks. When he came back from visiting, he was always drunk and others knew that he got money from his daughters. At first, when I asked Francis to accompany him to visit his daughters, he hesitated. Later, he saw the pictures that I took after visiting the house of Ileto's relative and he asked me to go with him. He reminded me to not forget to bring my camera. Francis enjoyed taking pictures with his daughters, nieces, and nephews. He drank liquor while we were at his daughter's house and he got drunk.

Around 5-6 PM, his youngest daughter said that her husband would arrive home soon. It was the time for us to leave. Francis always told others that he could stay with his daughters whenever he wanted. However, I saw his real situation. His daughters lived in a small room with family. I did not see that Francis could stay with his daughters as he usually claimed. His daughter did not ask him to stay with her even though Francis was already drunk. She let us go back to our place, Luneta. Nonetheless, in Francis' mind, it is not a matter of whether he can really stay with his daughters. The issue is that he can tell himself that he can visit his daughters anytime.

Just as others, Mike looked down on people who had tattoos. He warned me not to go to a feeding program at Santa Cruz because there were many "bad" people there. He said, "Many people there have no God. They are not afraid to do the bad things. They have many tattoos. You have to be careful." Mike uses drugs, but had never been in jail.

The next image of street people is being dirty. Generally, street people cannot take a bath and change their cloths every day. Those who can keep themselves clean would be proud that they are not dirty as other homeless people. It is not unusual that being clean is important for

some homeless people, because Filipinos are concerned with their personal appearance, including their clothes (Guthrie and Azores 1968:10). Kristine is an example. She tried to keep herself clean and did not go to any feeding programs. As mentioned above, when I met her the first time, I did not realize that she was a street person. Kristine always paid for a shower. She did not go to wash her clothes at Paco as some homeless people did. She sent her clothes to a launderette. Kristine explained that she would be ashamed, if housed people looked at her and thought that she was a street person. Therefore, she tried to do her best to make her appearance clean. Kristine could afford to pay for a shower and laundry, because she had a regular job. She was a helper at a canteen, but her wage was too low to rent a room.

Lena and her family also tried to keep clean. They regularly went to several feeding programs, not just for food, but also for the showers. They could not pay for a shower everyday as Kristine did, so they bathed as often as they could at several feeding programs, such as Paco, Ermita, Knox, and Calvary. Lena was a paid volunteer at Calvary. She went there to do her duties, washing dishes and cleaning the place. She could get paid, had food, and took a bath. Moreover, Lena's family could change their clothes every day. Lena washed plenty of clothes for her family every Sunday at Paco. Others street people did not want to carry so many clothes because they were heavy. However, Lena's family could keep many clothes because they slept in front of a building on Otis Street for two years already. They knew a security guard at a building and could leave their belonging in front of the building. Therefore, they did not need to carry heavy clothes all the time as other street people did. Keeping their appearance clean was important to Lena's family. In fact, they did not have a regular job. Therefore, only cleanliness made them different from other street people.

Vincente is another person who always kept clean. Similar to Lena's family, he did not have a regular source of income. Nonetheless, Vincente could manage to take a bath almost every day. Even though he was not a member of the Food for Life Program, he went there to take a bath every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The Food for Life Program allows non-member street people to take a bath, but only after all members have finished showering. Moreover, Vincente took a bath at Knox on Tuesday and Ermita on Thursday. Similar to other street people, he took a bath and washed clothes at Paco on Sunday. He told me that he was different from other homeless people. He wanted to keep himself clean and could go along with housed people. While other homeless people were uncomfortable going inside a department store, Vincente always went to a department store in the afternoon. Jordan was similar to Vincente in this sense, although he was not clean as Vincente was. Jordan said that he could enter and stayed in a department store comfortably. He said that many homeless people did not know how to act appropriately in a department store. Jordan emphasized this to show that he had a good background. Therefore, he was comfortable walking around in the department store and watched free movie in front of a television store.

However, not all street people dislike street people's images. Some accepted them, but re-interpreted them in positive ways. For instance, Ben liked to be dirty when he collected recyclable items. He said when he is dirty, housed people might pity him and give him *blessings* such as leftover food or snacks.

Those who go to feeding programs also justify their way of life. For example, Vincente said that he went to a feeding program, but did not beg for food. He rationalized that attending a feeding program was different from begging because feeding programs had sponsors who were willing to make merit by helping the poor. It is the way that the rich should share with the poor

(Bowie 1998). Feeding program volunteers could earn extra income as well. Therefore, there was nothing wrong with attending feeding programs.

In other societies, including the Philippines, people should give, receive, and return. That is how social relations are created (Mauss 1967). It is inappropriate to take only without giving back. Therefore, homeless people, who mostly only take, might lose their self-esteem (Goetz 1997). However, this is not the case for some street people in Manila. Homeless people can make sense of their receiving from people who give to them because they want to make merit. It is fine for them because they already return to the feeding program. They do not rely on feeding programs only; feeding programs rely on them too.

Those who beg for food have explanations for themselves. For example, Mike always begs for food from housed people and canteens. The Tagalog word *batchoy* is slang for “begging for food.” Literally, *batchoy* is a kind of noodle soup. Mike left his house when he was a teenager and begged to survive. Therefore, he is comfortable with this kind of survival. He said “batchoy” is not bad, because he does not steal. He just asks. In the same way, Jhocas said if she is hungry, she will beg for food. She joked that her face was thick already, so she was not ashamed to beg. When someone helped her, she would have an internal debt to that person. Internal debt, *utang na loob* in Tagalog, represents the value of gratefulness for Filipinos (Hollnsteiner 1964; Kaut 1961). Jhocas insists that she will not steal. She said those who steal have external debt, *utang na labas* in Tagalog, which means they will be punished.

Contestation over several self-identifications

In the US there are many terms used to refer to rough sleepers, such as hobo, tramp, and homeless person. Olufemi described several terms used in South African society to refer to

homeless people, and these words imply negative meanings such as “*Mallapipe*, *Malunda*, *Lekatsu*” (2002: 462). However, she does not describe how South African homeless people think about these terms. In contrast, homeless people in Manila actively deal with several terms to identify themselves. In the Philippines, there are many terms to call those who live on the street such as *yagit*, *istambay*, *istokwa*, and *palaboy*. These terms have different connotations. Various street people interpret and negotiate the meanings of these terms. The ways they prefer to call themselves reflect how they make sense of their life to maintain their self-esteem.

A common term that I always heard from street people was “*yagit*”. For example, when I used to socialize in Chess Plaza in 2011, I asked Pedro to explain whether someone was homeless because some housed people had come to play chess. In this case, Pedro replied, “He is not *yagit*; he has a house”. When someone is homeless, Pedro would reply, “He is *yagit* too.” Another example is when I interviewed and asked people at a particular time whether or not they were homeless. People would say “*yagit* already,” if they were already homeless at that time.

Many street people learned from their experience that *yagit* is the slang term used to refer to those who sleep on the street. However, the real meaning of *yagit* is deep, and even some Filipinos do not know its meaning. For example, Tatay Fernando shared a story about how he heard someone call him *yagit* for the first time. He asked this person, “What is *yagit*?” Similarly, as described in Chapter Five, Jhocas did not know the meaning of *yagit*, until someone called her that. I asked Tatay Christ whether he accepted that he was *yagit*. At first, he accepted that he was *yagit* because he slept on the street. However when I explained to him that *yagit* literally means garbage (*basura*), he said, “I hate that already. I am not garbage. I don’t like to be called garbage”.

Only some old people and people with a high level of education knew the literal meaning of *yagit*. For example, I asked Francis what the meaning of *yagit* was. He smiled bitterly and said, “*Yagit* is deep Tagalog. Today, people do not say *yagit*, but say *basura*.” *Basura* is garbage in Tagalog. Likewise, when I discussed this with Ate Reyna, Kristine and Martin, they knew that the meaning of *yagit* was garbage. Martin was the first one who explained this term to me and he asked Ate Reyna to confirm. When I asked Kristine whether she accepted being called *yagit*, she replied, “Of course not. *Yagit* means garbage. How can I accept it?” Hopper said that one of the cultural images of homeless people is “waste product” (2003:62-63). This is well reflected in the slang term used to call homeless people in Manila.

According to Vicassan’s Pilipino-English Dictionary, *yagit* means rubbish and also means “a tramp; vagrant; beggar; and useless individual” (Santos 2006:654). Two old men, Tatay Valdez and Tatay Mervin, explained to me why homeless people are called *yagit*. Tatay Valdez explained that *yagit* means garbage, particularly garbage that goes with water during flooding. This garbage has drifted. It is similar to street people whose lives are drifting. Tatay Mervin further explained, “homeless people drifted as garbage. Garbage can drift anywhere and finally it gets blocked and stuck somewhere.” In this way, homeless people are similar to garbage. They are stuck at Luneta because they have no place to go. Therefore they are called *yagit*.

Ben gave me another idea about the origin of the slang term *yagit*. He said that there was a drama on television whose title was “*Batang Yagit*.” It was a classic Filipino drama about poor children collecting recyclable items for survival. Therefore, he assumed that image of *yagit* was of scavengers. Ben said that when he was called *yagit*, he felt bad. He felt that his status was very low. It made him feel that he only begged and did not work.

Nonetheless, not all street people are disgusted with this term. Some accepted being called *yagit* and re-interpreted it in a positive way. For example, Rigel, who survived by attending feeding programs partially and collecting recyclables, said that he was *yagit*. He did not find anything wrong with *yagit*. He explained that *yagit* were not bad. At least *yagit* were diligent enough to walk to feeding programs. *Yagit* got some gifts occasionally, depending on the generosity of housed people.

In contrast, the term “*istambay*” was unpleasant for Rigel. *Istambay* is another term used to refer to street people. Rigel explained that *istambay* are people who hang out on a street corner to look for a chance to either steal or snatch valuable items from other people. As such, *istambay* commits crimes, but *yagit* does not.

Tatay Leo explained a similar story to Rigel’s. He said that he preferred to be called *yagit* saying it connotes experiencing and adventuring. Sometimes, he could get sympathy from housed people. In contrast, *istambay* do not do any work. He said, “*Istambay* only sometimes go to a feeding [program], and when they have a chance they will steal and snatch.”

Magmag also accepted that he was *yagit* and accompanied other *yagit*. He had lived on the streets for almost twenty years. He explained that *yagit* sought for food and collected recyclable items to survive. *Yagit* sounds better than *istambay*, because *yagit* moves for survival while *istambay* do not. They just wait. Magmag said, “I am proud to be *yagit*, because I have many friends.” Jonathan accepted that *yagit* was the most appropriate term for him, because *yagit* meant the poorest of the poor. He had no job, no family, and no house; so, he was *yagit*.

Istambay in Tagalog is derived from “standby” in English. Generally, *istambay* is the term used for those who are jobless (Ishioka 2013). I heard it for the first time in 2011. Many homeless people who were unemployed at Chess Plaza said that they were *istambay*. At that

time, I did not realize that *istambay* had a different connotation from *yagit*. Ashley, who worked regularly at a canteen on the sidewalk, taught me the significance of the term *istambay*. He told me about two brothers who were arrested, because they had quarreled with a security guard. However, their sibling paid a fine for them and they were not jailed. Ashley said, “They are not *yagit*, because they still have a house, but they have no job. They are only *istambay*.” Ashley differentiated between those who still had a house but had no job, and those who had neither a house nor a job. The former were *istambay*, and the latter were *yagit*.

Accordingly, Torres is an ideal type for *istambay*. As already explained in the Chapter Four, Torres was only homeless for a short time, because he was still able to go back to his aunt’s house. He said, “It is better to call me *istambay*, not *yagit*.” Because *istambay* should still have a house, Adrian accepted that he was *yagit*, although he disliked this term. He explained that *yagit* had no house to go back to, but *istambay* could still go back home. Nonetheless, he further justified that *yagit* worked all kinds of odd jobs to earn money, but *istambay* did not do any work. The latter just lingered around and went home.

Nonetheless, some street people who did not go back to their house preferred to call themselves *istambay* rather than *yagit*. For instance, Jerome was a seasonal worker. He went to work at a salt farm in the summer and came back to Luneta in the rainy season. Although he had no house and rarely contacted his relatives, he preferred to call himself *istambay* rather than *yagit*. He emphasized being unemployed to make himself different from other unemployed Filipinos and ignored his homeless aspect.

I observed that those who prefer to call themselves *istambay* rarely attended feeding programs. For instance, Mark who never attended any feeding program said that he was *istambay* because he had no job. However, he was not *yagit*. In his view, *yagit* should mean those who

attend feeding programs. Although both *istambay* and *yagit* sleep in a public places, Mark made a distinction between them by holding that *istambay* wanted to work, but *yagit* did not; *yagit* relied on feeding programs only. He liked to identify himself as an unemployed person rather than *yagit* so as to maintain his self-esteem. Likewise, Mary said that it hurt her feelings when she was called *yagit*. She said it was better to call her *istambay*, because she had no job.

Nonetheless, she earned income by selling cigarettes.

Although *istambay* should have a higher social status because it seems that they still have a house, *istambay* can be interpreted in a negative way in that they are considered lazy. For instance, Tata said that he was *yagit*, because *yagit* meant people who still thought about ways to earn money such as collecting used items and selling things. *Yagit* also moved for survival. In contrast, *istambay* just walked around on street corners.

Some street people prefer to identify themselves with *istambay* because the image of *yagit* is dirty. For instance, Vincente said that he was *istambay* because he was jobless, but his clothes were still clean. Tatay Valdez also said that the word *yagit* was ugly because it meant dirty. *Istambay* sounded better than *yagit*. *Yagit* also meant having no direction as garbage in flooding. Rasa, who always sat on a bench in the park, preferred the term *istambay* too. She liked to talk with housed people who visited the park and she got food from them sometimes.

Another term that street people used to call themselves is *palaboy*, or wanderer. For example, Tatay Feliz, who ran away from home, said that he was *palaboy*. He described his life as *laboy laboy* (roaming) because he roamed the streets to collect recyclable items. In his view, *palaboy* was better than *yagit* because it did not imply being dirty. Likewise, Isko liked to be called *palaboy* and he earned his income from collecting recyclable items in the same way as Tatay Feliz. Junko and Mail said that they were *palaboy* for the same reason, because they went

anywhere. In this regard, *palaboy* implied a sense of traveling and experiencing. For the same reason, Martin identified himself with *palaboy* because he experienced street life. However, he did not have the dirty image of *yagit* nor the lazy image implied by the term *istambay*.

Another positive connotation of *palaboy* is independence. Rea, who lived on the street with her partner and two children, used the terms *palaboy* to identify herself and her friends. She said *palaboy* sounded better than *yagit*. It meant roaming around and had a sense of independence because she could go anywhere. Nonetheless some people disliked being called *palaboy*. For instance, Ate Reyna explained that *palaboy* implied that their life had no direction. *Palaboy* just drifted along the streets.

Close in meaning to *palaboy* is *istokwa*. It means to stow away or run away. Some street people prefer to call themselves *istokwa* because it implies their sense of agency insofar as they have decided to run away and to be free. For instance, Tatay Fernando said that he liked to be called *istokwa*, because it implied that he had freedom and he made his own decision to leave his house. It implied his sense of agency, not being a passive victim. Likewise, Jaymar preferred to call himself *istokwa*. He became homeless after losing his job as a security guard. Calling himself *istokwa* was a way to tell himself that he had chosen to leave his job. His ex-employer had not rejected him. He said that he was not *yagit*, because he still took care of himself, and always took a bath. He disliked being called *istambay* also because it implied laziness.

Nonetheless, I rarely heard street people use the term “*istokwa*” in everyday conversation. People said either “*maglayas*” (verb) or *palayas* (noun), which mean “to free” and “independence,” respectively. For instance, when people narrated that they had run away from their home, they said “*maglayas*” (to free). Both *istokwa* and *layas* imply the same meaning, namely to be independent. For instance, Justine said that it was possible to call him *layas*

because he had run away from home. Nevertheless, not all street people identify themselves as *istokwa*. For example, Jhocas told me she was not *istokwa* because *istokwa* had a house to run from. Similarly, she could not “maglayas” (run away) because she had no house to run away from. Therefore, she was “really *yagit*”: no house and no family.

Another simple way that homeless people self-identified was with the phrase “we are poor.” For instance, Roberto accompanied me to a feeding program in Quezon City. When he met his friend, whom I did not know, Roberto introduced me by telling his friend that I was studying “the life of the poor.” He just identified himself as poor. He did not differentiate himself from other kinds of the poor. To identify himself as poor in a country where the majority are poor meant Roberto was not abnormal. He should not be discriminated against. Likewise, Ken earned his income by selling boiled eggs. He identified himself as *mahirap* (poor).

Another term related to street people is *pulubi* (beggars). However, only housed people used this term, while homeless people did not identify themselves with this term. They made it clear that *pulubi* just meant “beggar.” Homeless people who did not beg for money did not call themselves *pulubi*. As I explained in Chapter Six that professional beggars have enough income to rent lodging. I knew only a few homeless people who earned their living by begging.

Some street people described their unemployed life as resting, or “*mapahinga*” in Tagalog. I talked with Steve. Although, he had a bachelor’s degree, he was unemployed. Nonetheless, I sensed that he did not worry much about his joblessness. He explained to me, “It is okay for me, because I worked for five years and did not take a break. It is good for me that I can rest now.” Similarly, Ileta worked at a fishpond for a few months per year and then spent time at Luneta. He described his status as resting, which sounds better than not having a job. He

said, “Now I want to take a rest first (*mapahinga muna*). I will go back to work again in the summer.”

Both Steve and Ito pointed to an important issue that they did not worry about their joblessness. Unlike homeless people in other countries, where unemployment can diminish their self-worth (Wagner 1994), street people in Manila are not stressed by this problem. Since the Philippines has a high unemployment rate, those who do not have a job can tell themselves that it is common to be unemployed. Moreover, as I already explained in Chapter Four, many Filipino employers hire employees on a short-term contract to avoid paying employees other benefits. After being employed for five months and two weeks, employers asked employees to “take a rest” before re-hiring them again. Accordingly, homeless people manipulated the phrase “taking a rest” to tell themselves that they were resting as well, although their employment was longer than housed people. “Taking a rest,” is a coping strategy to minimize their hardship (Seltser and Miller 1993: 67).

An alternative term for homeless people that some churches use is *young ones*. Nico, who has been a street person more than twenty years, told me the origin of the term. A nun at a feeding program, Children of Life, created this term more than ten years ago. She realized that any term for homeless people such as *yagit* and *pulubi* were unpleasant. Therefore, the nun called homeless people *young ones*. Later, priests and the staff from other churches, such as Ermita Church, called homeless people who attended feeding programs young ones too. Manny explained to me that “young ones” meant people who had lost their way, but they could still change themselves by following God. I observed that several people who called themselves “young ones” were volunteers at feeding programs, such as Earl, Eugene and Ronnie. Only a few homeless people use the term “young ones” in everyday life. For example, when I sold *hopia*

with Richard and I showed the leftover *hopia* to sell to housed people, Richard stopped me. He said this *hopia* was for “young ones” only. He used the term young ones to identify homeless people.

CCT also created another term to call street people, namely “*kaibigan*” (friend). The CCT division that provides assistance programs for street people is the *Kaibigan* Division. However, I rarely heard street people identify themselves as “*young ones*” or “*kaibigan*” in everyday conversation. Homeless people might use the term *kaibigan* to mean friends in general, but they do not use it to as a substitute for “homeless people.”

In everyday life, many street people used the term *yagit* to refer to street people. However, it might be improper for some. I too found it is difficult to choose an appropriate term to refer to street people. For example, when I asked people, “How long have you been *yagit*?”, someone told me that it was not appropriate to say this. He suggested that it was better to ask, “How long have you lived on the streets?” His suggestion pointed to an important issue. I learned later that many homeless people identified themselves simply as street people. For example, when Nico told me that if I had not yet experienced being apprehended by DSWD, I was not yet a member of “street people,” he used the term “*taong langsangan*” which means street people. Other homeless might use two other words to identify themselves, namely “*taong kalye*” and “*taong kalsada*.” The meaning of the three terms is the same: street people. For instance, Ruby, who became homeless for three months only, preferred to be called *taong kalsada*. Pepe, who had been on the street for more than ten years, preferred the term *taong langsangan* rather than *yagit*. To identify themselves as “street people” enable them to escape from the negative stereotypes held toward *yagit*.

Among all terms used to refer to rough sleepers, “*taong grasa*” or human grease, is the lowest. Everyone wants to distance themselves from *taong grasa* who are the lowest among the low. Tatay Valdez explained to me that *taong grasa*, or human grease, should be used to describe those who work at a garage repairing cars. Since they work with oil, their clothes and bodies are dirty. However *taong grasa* on the street means those who are really dirty. They do not take a bath or change their clothes. Furthermore, the term *taong grasa* implies that they have mental illnesses. The first time that I heard the term *taong grasa* was on the day that a homeless woman fell down on the sidewalk and someone helped her to go to a hospital. She was really dirty. It seemed that she had not taken a bath for many days. My companion told me that this kind of person was called *taong grasa*. Another incident where I heard the term *taong grasa* was a conversation between Tatay Valdez and his nine-year-old daughter. Her face and clothes were dirty after playing with other kids. He asked her to change her clothes, but she did not want to. Therefore, he asked his daughter, “Do you like being *taong grasa*? You are already close [with *taong grasa*].” His daughter said that she did not want to be *taong grasa*, and changed her clothes.

Moreover, some homeless people might be uncomfortable being called “homeless people” and pointed out that “homeless people” should mean “*taong grasa*.” For example, Jun suggested to me that it was not appropriate for me to say “I am studying homeless people.” He argued that everyone has a home. If I wanted to study homeless people, it meant I wanted to study *taong grasa*, who did not care about anything. In the same way, Santos pointed out that *yagit* should mean *taong grasa* because the meaning of *yagit* is rubbish. Therefore, he was a street person; he was neither *yagit* nor *taong grasa*.

Positive thinking

Positive thinking about homeless life is another way to make street life acceptable. For example, in thinking about walking long distances, which might be difficult for housed people, street people conceived of their actions as strolling. Walking a long distance can be thought of as good exercise. I reflected upon this in my fieldnotes, when I started experiencing “*yagit*” by walking a long way to get free food in March 2013:

One thing that I learn from hanging out with people who go to feeding programs is that they can walk like superhumans. On the first day, I walked to Lawton, then Knox, and came back to Luneta. I walked following Nanay Joan. She is 64 years old and small, but she held two plastic bags and had a backpack on her back. She walked faster than me, and had to stop and check whether I was still okay. When we arrived at UN Street, my legs were in pain. She looked at me and seemed to question whether I was already tired. After resting a while, we walked to Bumbay. The next morning, we woke up in the early morning before 5 AM. She packed her bags and prepared to walk to Santa Cruz. I said, “Walking again.” She replied in English, “Exercise.” Actually she cannot speak English. She said in Tagalog, “Walking is good for health.” (Fieldnotes, March 12, 2013).

When homeless people get used to walking, they can feel that walking is enjoyable. For example, Robin asked me how much I got from my work at a canteen. I replied that I did not get paid. I only got a free meal and coffee. He was disappointed and said, “It is useless. You should not do it [work without pay]. It is better to go to feeding programs. You can have free food and still stroll.” In his view, walking to get free food is a kind of strolling, which implies pleasure.

In the same way, Eddy asked me to go to his friend’s house in Caloocan City, which would take more than one hour to walk. I offered to pay for the transportation fare, but he refused. He said that he enjoyed walking. Walking was not only a good exercise for him, but he also enjoyed sightseeing while walking. He further suggested, “Especially for you, you are a

student. You should walk. You can see many buildings and the life of the people, while you are walking.”

Waiting at feeding programs means socializing with people. I asked Ernesto why many people liked to go to the feeding program at KKK to get a hamburger because I thought it was uncomfortably hot there. He explained that going to the feeding program at KKK was a good place to chat with friends. He said, “You just hang out there and get a hamburger.” He suggested that I not be serious about praying, and instead loiter under the tree, and then go out just before a giving time.

Many homeless people similarly interpret the meaning of street life as being a challenge. They admire that they have the ability to survive and can live themselves (Gowan 2010: 108). For instance, Jerome said that street life was fine for him. He could learn how to survive on the streets and had peace of mind. He said, “You have to think everyday how to survive. It is challenging.” Similarly, Eugene described a lot of the difficulties of street life. Finally he said, “But it is fine. I think about it as challenging. It challenges me how to go along with other people.” In the same way, Francis narrates street life as “adventure,” because he likes travelling and street life can serve his demand.

Several people argued that living on the street meant they stood on their own. This aspect is important for maintaining self-worth (Parish 2008). For instance, Richard argued that he would not want to go back to his family house, even though it was close to his sleeping place on the sidewalk. He would like to prove to his parents that he could stand on his own. Similarly, Kim lived with her partner and her kid on the sidewalk. She said that her family did not accept her partner. Therefore, she wanted to live with her partner and proved that she could survive without assistance from her parents.

Mary ran away from home when she was a teenager. She went back to her hometown for a short time and came back to Manila to live on the streets while her kid was still a baby. She explained if she stayed at her family house, she would add a burden to her family. Therefore, it was better to be on the streets. Similarly, Ate Reyna was uncomfortable that she had become a burden on her nieces. Therefore, she left her niece's house and found later that she could stand on her own by living on the streets.

Several people said that street life was calm. For instance, Jhocas said that living on the street was good for her. It was better than living with her mother's friend because she had quarreled with her children. Likewise, Justine said that he preferred living on the street to living at his family's house because he always argued with his siblings.

Tatay Christ made sense of his life on the street by saying that street life was only temporary. He said, "Sometimes I asked myself why I am here. Then I tell myself 'I am not here forever.' I am afraid that someone whom I know might meet me." Tatay Christ was not on the streets for a long time. Sometimes he had an extra job and could sleep in the Gwapo Hotel. Many people who thought that they lived on the street to take a rest also had the same idea that they lived on the streets temporarily. For instance, Ileto did not worry about his life on the street. He thought that he could get a job and stayed with his employer whenever he wanted to work.

Making fun of street life

Related to positive thinking is the joking tactic. Laura Bohannon (1964) argues that human beings employ humor to cope with their difficulties. Richard L. Stone studies jeepney drivers in Manila and contends these drivers make jokes and laugh to relieve the tension of their economic hardship" (Stone 1968:58). Homeless people in Manila do the same. They make fun

of their difficulties to tell themselves that their life is not really hard. A common joke that I always heard from street people was “Our house is so big!” When I introduced myself in 2011 and explained that I was studying homeless people, some replied that I was wrong. For example, Jordan said, “We have a house. Why do you say we are homeless?” He further explained, “You see, our house is very big. You know how big it is? Luneta is just our living room, and our bedroom is Baywalk. Where is our dining room? Bumbay is our dining room. Moreover, there are many security guards. It means we are rich. If we were not rich, how could we have security guards?”

Ate Reyna made the same joke while we were walking from Luneta to Baywalk to go to bed. We were so tired that night because we walked to get food from Bumbay and came back to eat at Luneta before going to sleep at Baywalk. She said, “Our house is so big. Our living room and bedroom are so far from each other. Our dining room is far as well.” We all laughed. She even confirmed me that I should write her words down and describe them in my dissertation. Ben also made a “big house” joke. While we were going to many feeding programs, he said, “Our house is so big. We have many dining rooms. We have breakfast at Santa Cruz. We have lunch at Lawton, and our dinner is at Bumbay.”

Homeless people in Manila also joked about their luxurious residence. I heard homeless people in 2011 who said, “Luneta is a mansion for the poor.” Then, I learned to say that I slept at Baywalk Hotel. As I said, many Filipinos think that foreigners are rich and suspected I was staying in a hotel. Therefore, when someone asked me where I slept, I replied, “I sleep at Baywalk Hotel.” Others would know that I had been on the street for a while because Baywalk Hotel is a joke only among street people as there is no a hotel named “Baywalk Hotel.”

Likewise, I asked Santos who always slept at Baywalk whether it was difficult during the rainy season. He replied, "It is okay. It is not difficult. There are many hotels at Baywalk where I can sleep." Then, he said with a laugh "but I sleep just in front of a hotel, not inside." Mail mentioned about his Baywalk Hotel also. After finishing a feeding program in the late afternoon, he slept under the tree in front of a foundation. However, sleeping was prohibited there. Therefore, a Barangay committee member waked up to him and asked him to leave. Before leaving, Mail said to me, "It is okay. I will go sleep at my place." I asked him where, and he replied "Baywalk Hotel."

"Otis Condominium" is another joke among homeless people who sleep in front of a building on Otis Street. On the first night that I went to sleep at this place, I went with Mikel after finishing food at Bumbay. He said, "Here is an Otis Condominium." I said it was windy and better than the sidewalk on UN Street where I had slept before. He replied, "There is free air-conditioning here." Many people on Otis Street realized that Lena was the one who kept telling others to keep the place clean. She had been sleeping there longer than the others and knew the security guards of the building. Therefore, they called Lena the janitor of the building. However, Lena joked that she was the condominium manager. She said to me, "Hi Boon, did you ask me before you slept here? I am the manager."

However it was hot at Otis on some nights and people made jokes about it. Ben said, "Today is hot. What happened to the air conditioner?" Jaymar replied, "Maybe someone turned it off, that's why it is so hot." Robin said, "It has been hot many days already." Therefore, Ben retorted, "Maybe the air conditioner is damaged. Hey Boon, you should call a technician and ask him to fix the air-conditioner so we will not be hot." I replied, "Okay, I will call a technician." Ben made another joke about Otis Condominium after finishing his food at Bumbay. He said to

others that we would go back to “our house” and asked, “Jaymar, who has the key [to the house]? Is the key with you?” Jaymar said that he did not have it and “maybe the key is at Robin’s.”

Not only do homeless people at Otis call their sleeping place condominiums, but Lawton homeless people also call their place a condominium. Throughout my fieldwork I rarely slept at Lawton because I was not comfortable with dark areas. However, I tried a few times. On one night that I slept there, I slept close to Rigel. The next morning, Tatay Jamil saw and greeted me. He was surprised that I had slept there and asked me where I had slept. I replied that I had slept near the statue of Bonifacio because it was bright. Tatay Jamil pointed to “his” place and said, “I sleep there. That is my condominium.” He smiled.

NPA is another joke about homelessness. Generally, NPA in the Philippines means New People’s Army. It is the army of the Communist Party of the Philippines that launched guerrilla warfare to oppose the Philippine government. I heard this joke the first time I went to Chess Plaza in 2011. Someone at Chess Plaza told me that they were NPA. I was surprised and asked him back quietly whether he meant they were involved in an underground movement. Then, he laughed and said that they were NPA, but it was not about an army. NPA among street people meant “no permanent address.” Later, I often heard homeless people make the same joke that they were NPA.

Another funny joke is about feeding programs. Since the quality of food varies across different feeding programs, homeless people change the names of these feeding programs in accordance with their food and characteristics. It begins with Hospicio de San Jose’s Food for Life Program, which always gives food cooked from canned fish. The program has no choice with such issues because its main sponsor is a canning company that sells food, such as canned

fish and corned beef. Therefore, street people called the program “Hospicio de *lata*.” *Lata* means can in Tagalog. In contrast, street people like Lacson the most, because it gives them food with a big portion of chicken. Therefore, they called Lacson “Lacson de *manok*.” *Manok* is chicken in Tagalog. Others feeding programs also had nicknames. For example, a feeding program on Sunday afternoon that gave out hamburgers was called “hamburger de *batok*,” because the leader of the program always knocked the head of ignorant attendants with his microphone. *Batok* is the sound of knocking.

Small scale coping strategies

I discussed the several terms used to call street people with Ate Reyna. She said *istambay* sounds better than *yagit*. She knows that *yagit* means garbage. However, after thinking for a while, she said “*istambay* sleep on the streets too. Therefore, as long as I still sleep on the streets, I am still *yagit*.” Changing the term to self-identify does not affect her real life. Likewise, Pepe thought about several terms used to refer to street people and said, “Both *yagit* and *istambay* are the same. They have no job and are perceived as bad.”

Although this chapter illuminates the cognitive coping strategies of street people, I realize the limitations of small-scale coping strategies. Although many street people can maintain their self-esteem to make their street life acceptable, these cognitive coping strategies are not sufficient to change their living conditions. Some scholars have called for structural change to cope with suffering, because small-scale coping strategies have limitations. The next two chapters will explore the possibilities for homeless people to overcome homelessness.

Chapter 8

Help but not helpful

One night in September 2013, I woke up and saw someone moving in the dark. Everyone should have already been asleep at that time. My first thought was that it might be a thief. Therefore, I tried getting a better look at the person who was about 40 meters away from me. When I stared at the person, it became clear that it was Jun. He was making a doormat while others slept. He sat on the sidewalk near a bank. The bank prohibits people from sleeping in front of the bank. Jun sat next to the bank because he wanted the light of the bank, which was open all night. I thought he was so diligent to work at night like that.

I asked him the next day how much he got paid for his job. I knew about this job from a feeding program at Paco, where I volunteered. The foundation had a livelihood program for street people to make doormats to earn income, but not many people joined. Jun replied that he got paid five pesos for each large doormat, 40 by 50 centimeters. He would get four pesos for a small one that was 30 by 40 centimeters. I asked him further how many doormats he could make a day. Jun replied that he could make six. It meant he could earn 30 pesos from making six large doormats. This amount, 30 pesos a day, was not only lower than the official minimum wage of 466 pesos a day, but also even lower than the wage of a paid helper at a canteen, 100 pesos a day with free food. I was surprised at how this “livelihood” program could not enable people to really live. Jun made doormats no longer than two weeks and then changed to selling cigarettes and being a housekeeper.

The story above is an example illustrating that programs that aim to help homeless people are sometimes misguided. They cannot substantially help homeless people. This chapter will explore how the government programs and faith-based organization programs affect the lives of homeless people. The first part will analyze to what extent government programs can support homeless people to leave the street. The second part will examine why the programs of faith-based organizations have a lesser impact on supporting homeless people to overcome homelessness. Third, it will analyze the faith-based organizations' programs as a form of everyday violence (Scheper-Hughes 1992), because their activities, both intentionally and unintentionally, reinforce homelessness rather than solving it.

Limitations of the government's programs

The first government program that affects street people is the "Rescue Operation." Some homeless people said that the most difficult part of street life was being arrested. When I did my pre-dissertation fieldwork in 2011, I always heard homeless people talking about *bagansya*, the Tagalog word for vagrancy. At that time the Anti-vagrancy Law was still in effect and vagrancy was considered as a crime. Police could arrest street people with a penalty of one to 30 days incarceration or a 200-pesos fine (Manila Times, December 11, 2010). However the law was revised by Republic Act No. 10158 on March 27, 2012 to decriminalize of all forms of vagrancy, except prostitution. Police were no longer involved with homelessness, except if homeless people violated other criminal laws.

Nonetheless, homeless people are still victims of apprehension by the Department of Social Welfare. This apprehension is supposed to have a positive connotation, namely "rescue operation." It sounds good when it is said in English. It seems that the government agency

rescues street people from hard situations and helps them. However, it is usually said in Tagalog as *huli*, which means arrest. It implies a forced operation rather than voluntarism. When I experienced being “rescued” in December 2013, an official told my friends and me to leave the street. If his team came back and we were still there, they would “*huli*” us. He used the term “*huli*” (arrest, catch).

Two levels of governmental units employ “rescue operations,” targeting homeless people in Metro Manila. The first level is the Metro Manila level, where MMDA (Metro Metropolitan Development Authority) is involved. Actually, MMDA’s main mission is managing the traffic in Metro Manila. However, some activities of street people affect the traffic, such as their pushcarts blocking the road. Nonetheless, being regarded as an eyesore is the actual reason for “rescuing” homeless people because some housed people complain to MMDA about street families on the street. As a result, MMDA created the Street Dweller Care Unit (SDCU) to rescue street people in Metro Manila. Usually, SDCU implements “rescue” measures along EDSA (Epifanio de los Santos Avenue), the main road of Metro Manila, on a daily basis. However, since MMDA’s officials are not social workers by profession, they do not know how to manage homeless people. Therefore, they bring these people to the appropriate office. In MMDA’s view, it should be the DSWD’s responsibility, such as at Jose Fabella Center.

The second level is at the city level. Each city in Metro Manila has a Department of Social Welfare and some of them employ rescued operations as well. For example, the Manila Department of Social Welfare (MDSW) of the City of Manila has a Reception and Action Center (RAC) unit to take care of “vagrants and street children.” RAC rescues street people when housed people call the Manila office to complain about homeless people that annoy them.

Additionally, the operations happen occasionally when the government wants to clean and clear public spaces for special events such as the of Independence Day celebration on June 12.

Street people complain that they do not get any assistance after being “rescued.” For instance, Nico described how Earl and him were rescued and brought to RAC of the City of Manila in May 2013. Officials interviewed them and cut their hair. Before they were released the next day, an official told them which areas they could not occupy until after the Independence Day celebration; otherwise, they would be rescued again and would be in the institute longer than before.

Likewise, Gorny shared that he was rescued by MMDA while walking along Roxas Boulevard. MMDA brought him to a temporary office at the Gwapo Hotel and asked him his address. Gorny answered that he lived in Pasay City. Therefore, MMDA brought him to Pasay City. When Gorny arrived at the City of Pasay, a Pasay City official interviewed him again. Gorny said that actually he did not have a residence in Pasay City, but he used to work in Pasay City. As a result, Pasay City officials thought that Gorny was not a Pasay resident and that he was not their responsibility. Therefore, they returned Gorny to Manila City and dropped him near Baywalk where he had been rescued a few hours before.

Gorny’s experience reflects the lack of coordination between government offices. MMDA wanted to remove people from the street, but the Pasay City officials did not want to take responsibility for Gorny and decided to release him on the street. The lack of coordination is reflected in the comments of MMDA and DSWD officials towards each other. On the one hand, the head of MMDA’s Street Dweller Care Unit complained that DSWD, such as JFC, did not function well. The officer said that DSWD just accepted homeless people and released them back onto the street again within the next few hours to days (Interview, January 20, 2014). On

the other hand, the head of DSWD's Jose Fabella Center commented that MMDA should not rescue people if it did not have any solutions. Rescue operations were not the right solution for street people (Interview, February 10, 2014). It was believed that MMDA rescued street people just to have on record that their unit was dealing with many clients, but it did not create any concrete solutions. They just brought street people to DSWD offices.

Furthermore, the head of the Jose Fabella Center explained to me that the center functioned as a temporary shelter for people in need such as those who wanted to go back to the province and were waiting for some transportation assistance from the government (Interview, February 10, 2014). They could stay at the center for a few days or weeks. In addition, those who had mental illnesses were brought to the center as well. These people stayed at the center quite long, from months to years. The mentally ill comprised about 45% of its clients. He clearly argued that chronically homeless people brought from the MMDA were not welcome. He justified this by saying that since these people did not want to change their lives, it was difficult for him to help them. The JFC welcomed clients who applied on their own to the center to ask for assistance rather than those who were brought by MMDA.

It is quite clear that rescue operations can only remove homeless people for a short time. DSWD also realizes that after releasing people, they will go back to the streets because people can find resources to survive on the streets (Colico et al 2011). Nonetheless, government offices still employ rescued operations, particularly when the government wants to "clean" the street for state ceremonies, as previously mentioned. However, the government tried to make it less painful by hosting them at a resort instead of government institute, such as when the Pope visited the Philippines (Samson-Esporitu and Hume 2015). Nevertheless, two important issues are whether

people have a choice when going with DSWD, and that rescue operations do not offer long-term support (Guardian, January 23, 2015).

Aside from the unfriendly rescue operations, Philippine government offices—both national and local levels—provide different programs to support street people. These assistance programs have been developed systematically since 2011. There were some occasional assistance programs before then, but they did not affect homeless people much. When I conducted my pre-dissertation research in 2011, no homeless people talked about government assistance program. Roque's MA thesis does not discuss any government support program for street people either (Roque 2011).

The program that affects street families the most is the DSWD program called DSWD-MCCT-HSF Program (Modified Conditional Cash Transfer-Homeless Street Families Program). Originally, DSWD launched a program called Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programs (4Ps), to support poor families. Later, DSWD realized that street families could not utilize the program because they were not registered with any Barangay (a local governmental unit). Therefore, DSWD created a new program for street families. In order to reach street families, DSWD assigned officials to survey and register street families in each city in November 2010 (Interview, February 12, 2014).

According to the MCCT-HSF Program, street families who had already registered in 2010 could receive an assistance package. First, DSWD paid their rent up to 4,500 pesos a month for six months.¹⁶ Second, DSWD supported a family leader by hiring him/her for 320 pesos a day to work in a community four days a week, for 90 days. Third, families could get 300 pesos a month for each child who attended daycare or school, and 500 pesos a month for a

¹⁶ However, according to a street family whom I interviewed, he was informed that the maximum rent rate is 3,000 pesos a month.

mother who attended a health program. In addition, the program beneficiaries had to comply with the program's conditions. For instance, children could not be absent from school more than 15% of the time.

According to the DSWD - National Capital Region (NCR), through February 2014, 1,351 street families had received assistance from the program. Among them, 844 families had finished their 6-month assistance package already and 251 out of these 844 families (30%) had returned to the street (Interview, February 12, 2014). In Manila City, only 155 street homeless families could benefit from the MCCT-HSF Program (Interview, January 17, 2014). However, there is no record yet indicating how many can continue renting. Among my 100 informants, only two received assistance from this program. One could continue renting, but another had already returned to the street.

The first one was Jimmy, who was together with his wife and son. Jimmy took his chances and tried hard to keep up his rent payments. Nonetheless, he complained about the implementation of the program. For instance, after being interviewed by DSWD's staff in November 2010, it took almost three more years before he could get any assistance, which he finally received in July 2013. Next, after renting a room and working, his payment was delayed. He worked, but would not get paid until two months later. It was so difficult for them because when he and his family rented the room, their way of life had changed. They no longer attended feeding programs. It was also a part of the program conditions that they could not linger in the park. Accordingly, they had to have money to buy food. When Jimmy did not get paid, his wife had to take responsibility. She got assistance from a foundation that provided a training program to practice sewing. She made cloth bags for the foundation and got a portion of the proceeds. Her income was only 100 pesos a day. As a result, Jimmy's family had to spend carefully.

When I went to visit the room Jimmy was renting in February 2014, he had paid the rent himself already. The job that he had from DSWD was already finished as well. He earned his income from fixing electric fans and other machines with motors. However, he did not have many customers yet. Another problem that I noticed was the short length of the program. Street families got jobs for only three months. They were not yet ready to have their own regular job, but the program was finished anyways. I raised this issue when I talked with a DSWD official. She explained that DSWD told street families clearly at the beginning that they would get a job for only 90 days. Therefore, they had to prepare to find a source of income. She further explained that because of budget limitations, the program could not support them longer than 90 days (Interview, February 12, 2014).

Another street family that got benefits from MCCT-HSF was Ian's family. Ian lived on the street with his son. I saw him at the beginning of my fieldwork and saw him again many months later. I just knew after he came back to Luneta that he had received assistance from DSWD. However, when the program finished, he could not continue renting himself. He explained straightforwardly that he could not save his income because he still used drugs. Nonetheless, his ten-year-old son was strong. He begged and did odd jobs to survive. Ian's experience indicates that drugs are one of several reasons that cause some people to be trapped in homelessness. He had no complaints about the DSWD.

Aside from problems of implementation, the problem also has many other limitations. First, the program benefits only street families who have children. A homeless person and a couple without children cannot get assistance from the program. Therefore, only 155 street families in Manila City could benefit from the program. It reflects the same issues of other countries, such as the US and the UK, where homeless women with a child have better

opportunities to get assistance than individually homeless people do (Passaro 1996; Hinton and Cassel 2013). Second, the gap between the survey and the implementation date of the program meant some street families missed the program. DSWD officials surveyed families in 2010, but street families did not start received assistance until 2013. As a result, some who were interviewed had already changed where they were living and government officials could not find them. Additionally, some homeless families were not interviewed or registered. They could not get assistance during the first phase of the program.

Later, DSWD officials interviewed and registered street families again in October 2013. It was at that time that I met some DSWD officials when they interviewed Lena's family on Otis Street.¹⁷ However, I found that the surveying and registering period was short at only a week. I know at least four street families that were not interviewed and registered.

The next program for street people is a joint program between DSWD and the City of Manila, called Cash for Work Program. The program provides jobs for street people. DSWD allocated some of its budget to the City of Manila to operate programs by coordinating with the National Parks Development Committee (NPDC). The NPDC was involved in this program because homeless people were staying in Rizal Park. However, the project was not limited to Rizal Park only. This program lasted one year from March 2012 to February 2013. A document from the Manila Department of Social Welfare (MDSW) reported that 136 homeless people were eligible to participate in the program. This is not a large number when compared to the total

¹⁷ As mentioned Chapter Two, Val told me in Chapter Two that homeless people lie to DSWD, because they expect to get assistance from the agency. I experienced it, when a DSWD staff member interviewed Bona. Bona and her partner had just met on the street in December 2012, but Bona had a daughter with her ex-husband. Currently, her daughter was living with Bona's sister. However Bona lied, claiming that she and her partner had a daughter, so they qualified for assistance from the program. The DSWD staff member believed her. Actually her daughter has never been presented on the street. When Bona made this claim, everyone knew that the DSWD staff member was being deceived.

number of homeless people in Manila. A MDSW official explained to me that the mission of the program was to help street people get a job and pay rent on their own (Interview, January 17, 2014). MDSW hired homeless people to work as street sweepers and paid them at 75% of the minimum wage. Therefore, street people got 342 pesos a day working six days a week. On average, street people got about 10,000 pesos a month. However, MDSW set the conditions according to which homeless people who got a job from MDSW had to rent lodging. They could not sleep in public spaces such as Baywalk or on the sidewalk. If an official saw them sleeping in a public space, they would be fired.

Actually, this program was quite helpful for many homeless people. Those who got a job from this program quite appreciated it. However, among my 100 participants, only three could use the program. It might be possible that some who got benefits in 2012 were able to leave the street. Nevertheless, I know some who had gotten benefits and came back to the street after finishing the program. It might also be possible that some who were not street people got benefits because Mary got this job in 2012 even though at that time she was not a street person. Manny shared with me his experience in that delayed payments were a major problem. He had to eat using credit and when he got paid, he had to pay his debts. Therefore, he could not manage to save any money. Another limitation was that the program lasted only 12 months. When it finished, Manny came back to the street. Justine's experience was nearly the same as Manny's, but it was harder for him than Manny because Justine had a family. He just earned enough to survive, but could not save.

I asked an MDSW official about the length of the project. She replied that an official had said clearly at the beginning of the program that the program lasted a maximum of twelve months only. After that, homeless people had to stand on their own using savings or launching

their own businesses (Interview, January 17, 2014). However, only few homeless people met these expectations because their income was insufficient to have savings. While they had a job, their expenses increased dramatically. They had to buy their own food, pay the rent, electricity, and water bills. In addition, for those who lacked experience as a vendor, it was not easy to launch a small business. As a result, when the program finished, many beneficiaries returned to the street.¹⁸

Another form of help from the DSWD is transportation fare assistance. It is called *Balik Probinsya* in Tagalog, which means “go back to the province.” Actually, the government provided this assistance quite a long time ago because it perceived that homeless people had come from the provinces. Therefore, they should go back to their hometown, if they could not find a good opportunity in Manila. Tatay Valdez said that he got assistance to go back to his hometown in 2001. The “Go Back to the Province Program” was also on the news. The secretary of DSWD said two weeks before Independence Day 2013 that DSWD had a plan to help street people by giving them a job and transportation assistance for those who wanted to go back home (Frialde 2013). However, I rarely heard of my homeless friends getting transportation assistance from the DSWD. Many of them told me that the budget had already been used up. Another limitation of the Going Back to the Province Program was that some homeless people were too ashamed to go back to their province. I will discuss this issue in the next chapter.

¹⁸ The contradiction is that some homeless people who get this job allocated their small income to supporting their family, such as Nanay Luisa and Willy. When they do not get benefit, their family does not support them, but when homeless people get benefit, they support their family who live in a house. Nanay Luisa violated the rule by not renting in order to save money to support her daughter. Willy sent money to his son, when he got a job.

De-politicization of homelessness by faith-based organizations

Ignorance of the homeless life

Faith-based organizations in Manila help homeless people survive on the street, but play a limited role in supporting street people to overcome homelessness. Their role is identical to several assistance programs in the US that are a “shelter industry” for homeless people that accommodate homeless people rather than supporting them to overcome homelessness (Lyon-Callo 2004; Borchard 2005; Gowan 2010). A majority of feeding programs play an important role in reproducing and naturalizing homelessness, as a form of social injustice, rather than eradicating it. They function as everyday violence (Scheper-Hughes 1992).

Although feeding programs are different in the details, they generally focus on religious devotion rather than the life of street people. The staff of these programs knows very little about street life because they rarely have conversations with street people. Only two programs that I encountered aimed to help street people to leave the street, namely CCT and the Food for Life Program. These two organizations will be analyzed separately below.

Among the 24 feeding programs that I experienced and described in Chapter Five, nine do not have any interactions with homeless people. At these programs, homeless people just wait in front of their place and then fall in line to get food. These feeding programs are operated either by staff or volunteers, except at St. Paul University, which is a student activity. When new homeless people ask others how to get food from these feeding programs, their comrades will answer “*pila pila lang.*” It means just waiting in line. The implication is that it is easy to get food from these places.

Next, although other feeding programs have interactions with homeless people, such as teaching the Bible, singing hymns, and arranging Mass, they emphasized only God and religious matters. However, the link to both God and supporting homeless people to overcome homelessness is vague. For example, some homeless people share their experiences during Bible study, but they might act differently. For instance, Ben shared his experiences at Morayta nicely, stating that previously, when he had a job, he did not know God. He spent his money unwisely on drugs and then, he got in trouble. Ben said that when he learned about God, he changed his habits. Nonetheless, since I was close to Ben, I knew that he still used drugs and bought sex.

Similarly, Dong always told me that he liked attending Bible study. He went to Bible study at Calvary—which was quite far—because he liked the intensive Bible teaching there. When Knox asked street people to volunteer to give testimony, Dong volunteered. He talked impressively about his faith in God. After that, Knox's staff distributed food to the street people as I sat next to him. I saw that he had gotten food. Later, when the staff walked back to distribute more food, Dong said, "I did not get any yet." He pretended that he had not gotten food yet, which I could not understand considering he had just testified about his faith in front of many people. However, just a few minutes later, he could lie.

These feeding program staff members do not know how their programs help homeless people overcome homelessness, because it is not their main objective. For example, a staff member at Paco explained to me that arranging Mass for homeless people was to support homeless people spiritually. At least once a week, homeless people could feel that they were close to God. However, when I asked her how the program helped street people overcome homelessness, she could only reply that when she walked with the priest, some people thanked him and said that they used to get food from the program. Later, they could stand on their own.

However, it was not clear how Paco's feeding program helped homeless people overcome homelessness. In fact, Paco's livelihood program, which includes activities such as making doormats, is not effective at all. I asked the same questions to a pastor who was responsible for the service at Knox. He was nice and had good intentions. However, he replied uncomfortably, "It is hard to answer your question."

KKK is an example of a feeding program that focuses solely on praying to God. The pastor said clearly that the main objective of the program was praying to God. He explained several times that the program was different from NGOs, which might give support without making the connection to God. In contrast, the program might give powdered milk to a single mother with a baby. However, if they did not attend a prayer session, the programs would stop giving them the powdered milk. The program considered the attendees who actively prayed to God first. This explanation clearly indicated that the program paid attention to street people's faith rather than their life. Nonetheless, the number of street people who attended the feeding program at KKK was very large at around 300 people.

Furthermore, organizers of feeding programs do not care much about the life of homeless people. For example, the week before Independence Day 2013, staff of many feeding programs knew from the news that MMDA and DSWD had a plan to "rescue" homeless people, but they did nothing. In the US, Australia, Japan, and Thailand, there are social movements of/for homeless people that criticize government's plans when they violate the rights of homeless people (Wagner 1993, Wright 1997; Fisher 2012; Hasegawa 2006; Bangkok Post, August 2, 2001). However, there was no reaction from any of the faith-based organizations in the Philippines to criticize unfriendly governmental plans. During that week, the staff of a feeding program on Thursday evening said that not many people had attended the program on that day

because many people had probably been arrested by MMDA. She further said that people did not need to worry about them because MMDA would help them by giving them a job. Her words are not true. As described above, the people who were apprehended that week, such as Earl, Nico, and Gorny, did not get any assistance from MMDA. The objective of the “rescue” was clear: to clean an area for Independence Day celebrations. Another feeding program staff member on Thursday afternoon asked the same questions about whether anyone knew if friends had been apprehended. He suggested that homeless people should be careful because MMDA was “rescuing” people from the streets. A volunteer at Paco also warned me to be careful because of MMDA’s plan. However, none of these organizations undertook any action to criticize MMDA and DSWD’s plan. It seems that they thought it was “normal” for homeless people to be apprehended.

In contrast, homeless people criticized MMDA’s plan strongly. For instance, Mikel worried that he might be arrested before the week of Independence Day. He said that he had heard before that DSWD arrested people and took them to Rizal Province. They were dumped like garbage.¹⁹ He said, “We are not garbage; we are human beings.” During my pre-dissertation research, my homeless friends were detained on the evening of June 11, 2011, because June 12 is the Philippines’ Independence Day. I visited them on that day. Meanwhile, a social welfare official said that it was shameful to have so many street people on the celebration of Independence Day. In response, a homeless person said quietly, “Today is Independence Day, but I am not independent.” Jimmy also said that MMDA’s plan to clean and clear Lawton on June 12, 2013 made it an “ugly Independence Day.” He and his family always lingered at

¹⁹ To be fair, I heard the same story too. However it seems this incident happened a long time ago, not recently.

Lawton. However, he had to go somewhere else because he had a pushcart and was prohibited from joining the Independence Day ceremony.

“Change yourself first”

It would be wrong to believe that all religious-based organizations in Manila have no idea about supporting homeless people so they can leave the street. At least two assistance programs aim to support homeless people to overcome homelessness. In addition, some other feeding programs motivate homeless people to leave the street as well. However, they limit themselves by focusing only on the personal factors of homelessness and overlook the structural factors that impede people from overcoming homelessness. Some scholars criticize nonstructural explanations of homelessness insofar as they legitimate existing class relations (Navarro 1986; Lyon-Callo 2004). Faith-based organizations in Manila do the same. They focus only on *sin-talk*, and *sick talk*. They have no *system-talk* in their views (Gowan 2010).

Basically, pastors, staff, and volunteers believe the grace of God motivates homeless people. The most important principle I heard while attending these programs was homeless people must have a hope (*pag-asa*). For instance, a staff member of Food for Life told a story about a bird that fell into a well. The bird was too small to fly. People did not have any idea about how to help the bird from the bottom of the well. Finally, they decided to bury the bird. They put soil in to the well little by little. However, the bird was not buried. Unintentionally, the bird stood on the gradually increasing amount of soil. Finally, the soil was high enough and the bird could get out of the well. The staff member concluded that the situation does not matter; human beings should not give up. Several homeless people expressed that although their life was

hard, they still had hope. Only a few people admitted that they had lost hope and in these cases, they had also turned to God. They said God would take care of their future.

Related to hope is movement. Staff of feeding programs tried to motivate homeless people further by saying that only having hope was not enough. They needed to change from just hoping to actively trying to change their life. For example, a feeding program on Tuesday at Lawton invited a young woman to talk with street people energetically. She was a good speaker and shared her story about her family being poor. However, she has been a student who worked to support herself to go to school. Therefore, she graduated from college and now had a decent job. She encouraged homeless people to do the same—to change themselves to get off the street.

However, when staff and pastors of feeding programs talked about the factors leading to being homeless, they emphasized the sin of homeless people. For example, a born-again Christian pastor at Lawton one Tuesday said that homeless people were on the streets because they had sinned. He used me as an example. He said that I was a foreigner and I had had a good life before, but I had fallen down and become homeless because I had sinned. His view that focused on personal faults was also reflected in CCT's program.

CCT, a born-again Christian organization, provides broad and flexible assistance for street people. For instance, a woman with children would be welcome to live at the CCT center in Pasay City. In the last two months of my fieldwork, Mike's partner moved to live in this center because she was pregnant and it was difficult living on the streets. Mike also worked as a construction worker in a CCT project. CCT also encourages homeless people to save money so that they can launch their own business. I knew some homeless people who had savings and spent it to launch a business such as selling cigarettes.

Nonetheless some limitations prevented CCT's good intention from leading to success. Since the CCT center was located in Pasay City, it was far from Luneta. If homeless people decided to live at the CCT center, they had to change their way of life because they could not travel back and forth between CCT and Luneta. It costs about 50 pesos a day. Mostly men who decided to "change" their life would be offered work as a construction worker. I was approached by CCT staff to work in construction as well. The staff member was new and did not know that I was doing my research.

The CCT's principles are based on Christian principles. Brother Jonas told me that "CCT believes in God and wants to let people follow God." Accordingly, CCT emphasizes changing sinful people into good ones. Brother Jonas shared with me his background. He had used drugs and committed many kinds of sin before turning to God. Without his faith in God, it would have been hard to leave vice. He explained to me that when street people tell him that they want to work, he does take it seriously the first time, because based on his experience, some did not really want to work. Brother Jonas will recognize that someone really wants to work, if they ask him for help in getting a job a second time. However, before recommending them for a job, Brother Jonas will ask homeless people first, "Do you have a vice?" He explained that many street people had a vice such as hard drinking, using drugs, sniffing glue or solvents, smoking, and gambling. He had to ask them to change their habits first. Otherwise, when people worked and had an income, they would spend their money on vice. It would be useless to introduce them to get a job. Therefore, they needed to correct their habits first.

I had a chance to join a camping program with the CCT. The formal name of the program was *Ang pagbabalik tanaw* ("looking back" or "revision"). This program clearly showed that CCT emphasizes leaving vice as the way to overcome homelessness. The camping or retreat

program supported street people, enabling them to stay at a resort for three nights so that they were free from the struggle of day-to-day living. CCT believes that when homeless people are not hungry and can sleep well, their minds will be clear. They will be able to reflect on their life thoughtfully.

The content of the retreat program focused on two issues: Bible study and self-reflection. Bible study started from the morning and lasted to the evening. The lessons were about the history of Jesus's life, the grace of God, and motivating people to change their life. Before the end of the session, staff assigned attendees to write down the sins that they committed on a piece of paper and write down their plan to change their life on another piece of paper. I had a chance to learn the deep feelings of many street people because some of them were illiterate and asked me to write what they thought. For instance, James told me that he used drugs and had gone to jail before. He wanted to have a regular job, so that he could take care of his son. Another person hoped that his diabetic father could get medicine.

On the last night of camping, everyone gathered outside around a fire. A pastor asked them to confess what they had done wrong before. Many people cried and confessed things they had done wrong with their family. They missed either their parents or children. Then, they were asked to throw the paper on which they had written down their previous sins into the fire. It was a symbol of release from their previous vice. The pastor and staff yelled at them to remember the moment when they had high expectations of changing their life. They would leave all their previous vices at that place. The moment was quite sacred in the sense of Emile Durkheim (1965). All around it was dark. The only light was from the fire in front of the people. I heard some people weeping while a pastor encouraged them to follow the God. The key words that I remember are "you will change" (*magbabago ka*).

After that, everyone felt good that they would have a new life. Staff emphasized again on the next day that everyone would leave their vices there. They would not bring them back to Manila. Nonetheless, I did not see them change substantially later on. James ended up getting a young girlfriend on the street, seemingly forgetting his son, about whom he had already talked to me. Others, such as Nico and Rigel, still lived on the street. Janno who was aggressive and bullied others continued doing so. Jack and his wife were drug users. Robin told me that he had begged for money with them during the Christmas season and used drugs. Later, Jack's wife died in a car accident during the first week of 2014.

Sin and vice might be a reason for becoming homeless for some people, but it does not apply to all. Many homeless people I knew, such as Anthony, and Tony, were not involved in any vice: no drinking, no drugs, and no gambling, but they could not get a job and leave the street. As described above, Anthony was quite diligent, but he had been laid off illegally. Law enforcement was weak, so he could not get the compensation that was owed him. Tony had a bachelor's degree, but he still had to accept doing manual labor. In November 2013, when the Food for Life Program was looking for volunteers to go to build a house for typhoon victims, Tony joined the trip also. Volunteers got 100 pesos a day. I wondered why Tony decided to go there, so I asked him. Tony explained to me that he did not have any opportunities, so he had to grasp any chance that he had. At least he could come back to Manila with cash that he could send to his daughter, who lived with his ex-wife, in the Christmas season. Tony also had his teeth pulled at 50 pesos for each tooth. His tooth might have been decayed, but it would have been better to fill them rather than having them extracted. However, he had no money to pay for the fillings. For Anthony and Tony, it is hard to say that they had become and continued to be homeless because of any personal vice.

Routinizing social injustice

Aside from stimulating homeless people to change themselves, I rarely heard staff or volunteers of feeding programs talk about how the system should be changed. They might criticize the system broadly on topics like corruption. However, they did not comment on issues that contribute to homelessness such as hiring people and paying them much lower than minimum wage. In contrast, they reproduced this exploitative system too.

For instance, CCT has its own construction unit. Brother Jonas told me that this unit originated when it first built a CCT building by hiring street people. Therefore, street people could get jobs as well. Later, CCT subcontracted to construct other buildings. However, the problem of working at a construction site with CCT is similar to working at other construction sites; people get paid lower than minimum wage. This was particularly true at the CCT construction site in Tagaytay, Cavite Province. The official minimum wage is lower than Metro Manila, 335 pesos a day. Here, the CCT paid their workers only 250 pesos a day. Mike experienced working with CCT before and quit because he did not like working hard and getting low pay. Therefore, it is not surprising that some people go to work for a few weeks or months and then come back to Luneta again.

The Food for Life Program is another program that aims to help homeless people to leave the streets. Although Food for Life does not emphasize sin as CCT does, Food for Life does overlooked structural factors, just as CCT does. For example, a program staff member tried to put Roberto to work at a low-paying job. On that day, I heard that the staff member was looking for him because a canteen nearby wanted to hire a helper. I told Roberto about it and he was not surprised with the news. He knew about it already, but he did not want to work. He said, “How much is the salary? 2,500 [pesos a month]. It is less than one hundred a day. If I work at a

restaurant, I can get 4,500 [pesos]. Two thousand five hundred [pesos] is too low.” Actually, Roberto did not expect the official minimum wage of 466 pesos a day. He was just asking for an “appropriate” salary, but it was still hard to get.

The next time the program staff member asked about Roberto again, someone told her that Roberto knew about the canteen helper job already, but he did not want to work because of the low salary. The program staff member was disappointed and said that Roberto should realize his situation. He did not have any certifications, so he could not expect a high salary. If he had culinary certifications, he would be able to expect a high salary. In her view, Roberto should take his chances first and should not be picky. However, Roberto thought differently. In his view, working many hours and getting low salary was not better than being a street person.

The Food for Life Program tries to support homeless people in getting a job. However, it does not guarantee that people will get paid fairly. For example, the program contacted a company that had won a contract from the City of Manila to collect parking fees and then arranged for many street people to work in different places. Many street people, such as Jhocas, Jerry, and Tata, got this job as a parking attendant. The payment was based on commission; therefore, their income depended on the amount of parking fees that they could collect. I asked Jhocas many times how much she got from working six days a week. I found that the maximum she earned was 190 pesos a day on a Saturday night because many people went out gambling. On working days, she averaged 100 pesos a day. Consequently, even though Jhocas got a job as a parking attendant, she still lived on the streets. The only difference was that she had a working ID. When government officials approached her, she could show her ID to indicate that she was not a vagrant. However, her quality of life had not changed substantially.

Enjoyment of worship

While it is not clear to what extent feeding programs can support homeless people to leave the street, it is quite sure that homeless people enjoy singing and praying to God. It makes street life acceptable for many street people. Street life is not too hard to endure, but it can also be enjoyable. Since I am not a Christian, it took time before I could understand how Christian homeless people enjoy praying. I always attended prayer sessions at many places because it was a part of attending soup kitchens. On one Sunday evening in May, I was so tired because I had volunteered at the feeding program at Paco from Saturday night to Sunday afternoon. Later, I went to KKK in the afternoon and joined another feeding program called *Intramuros*, which started at 6 PM and finished at 8.30 PM. The activities for two and half hours were Bible study and prayer. After 7 PM, I was really tired but I had to sing hymns. Normally, I did not sing and rarely danced. I just stood up. However on that day, I sang and danced with others. I found that I felt good. It felt like a release.

Therefore, I discovered that dancing and praying to God was another way that homeless people could enjoy their lives. They were happy not only because they were close to God, but also because dancing itself was fun. It was one little bit of recreation in which they could partake. Therefore, feeding programs provide homeless people not only with food, but also fun. Moreover, many of the songs are about how their lives are happy.

For example, the first song that homeless people enjoy is *Ang buhay ng Kristyano*, The Life of Christian.

Ang buhay ng Kristyano ay masayang tunay, masayang tunay, masayang tunay

Ang buhay ng Kristyano ay masayang tunay, masayang tunay (chorus)

I've got spirit in my hands that is keeping me alive,

Keeping me alive, keeping me alive

I've got spirit in my hands that is keeping me alive

Jesus keeping me alive

- Repeat and substitute hands by head, shoulder, hip, body, etc.

The meaning of “*Ang buhay ng Kristyano ay masayang tunay*” is that Christian life is really happy. This sentence was repeated many times throughout the entire the song. I always heard homeless people enjoy singing it because its melody is joyful. In everyday life, people sometimes hum this sentence. For instance, Mike liked to make fun of me by singing “*Ang buhay ng Kristyano ay masayang tunay.*” I replied “*masayang tunay,*” and then we laugh. When I talked with Ileta about street life, he said that he was taking a rest and was still happy. I asked him further, what he meant by happiness. He could not explain clearly, so he turned to this song by humming “*Ang Buhay ng Kristyano ay masayang tunay.*”

The second song that homeless people enjoy the most is “*Si Jesus ang lahat sa buhay.*”

Si Jesus ang lahat sa buhay

Kung kaya may saya

Si Jesus ang lahat sa buhay

Kung kaya may saya

Problema ay dumarating

Ito'y kanyang lulutasin,

Si Jesus ang lahat sa buhay

Ito's kaya may saya

Come fill my world

Come fill my life

Come take my hands

And walk with me (repeat 2 times)

Translation by author:

Jesus is every thing.

So [we are] happy.

Jesus is all of my life.

So [we are] happy.

The problem is upon us.

He solves [the problem].

Jesus is all of my life.

So [we are] happy.

- Repeat and substitute saya by *sayaw* (dance), *lakas* (strength), *ngiti* (smile), *tuwa* (laugh) etc.

Singing this song is so joyful, not only because of its lively melody, but also the dancing. Volunteers both sang and danced, acting in harmony with the lyrics. For instance, when the lyric said they were happy, the dancers would wave their hands and smile. When they sang, “God solves the problem,” they acted like they were throwing the problem away. When they sang “the God come to take their hand and walk together,” people held the hands of people next to them and walked together.

This song was sung at many churches, such as Ermita, Manila Baptism, Paco, and at a feeding program at Lawton. However, Ermita Church was the most energetic because it had several volunteers and a band with musical instruments animatedly leading the singing. I observed that when people listened to the pastor preaching, some fell asleep. In contrast, when

volunteers sang this song, people felt energetic. It was the time for them to dance and enjoy. When they saw volunteers preparing the musical instruments, they stood up and prepared to dance. Many people smiled and released their stress. They could be happy while praying to God and had more energy to cope with their hard life. Praying to God made their life bearable.

The third song that is widely sung and enjoyed by homeless people is “*Ang mga ibon*.” The lyrics are about birds, fish, dogs, and human beings that love God. The song repeats the sentence “should not be sad” many times.

Ang mga ibon na lumilipad

Ay mahal ng Diyos ‘di kumukupas

Ang mga ibon na lumilipad

Ay mahal ng Diyos ‘di kumukupas

‘Wag ka nang malungkot

Oh! Praise the Lord!

Ang mga aso Na tumatahol

Ay mahal ng Diyos ‘di kumukupas

Ang mga aso na tumatahol

Ay mahal ng Diyos ‘di kumukupas

‘Wag ka nang malungkot

Oh! Praise the Lord!

Ang mga tao walang pera

Ay mahal ng Diyos ‘Di kumukupas

Ang mga tao walang pera

Binigyan ng Diyos, sobra sobra

‘Wag ka ng malungkot

Oh! Praise the Lord!

Translation by author:

Many birds are flying

Love God, not fade

Many birds are flying

Love God, not fade

Don't be sad

Oh! Praise the Lord!

Many dog are barking

Love God, not fade

Many bird are barking

Love God, not fade

Don't be sad

Oh! Praise the Lord!

Many people do not have money

Love God, not fade

Many people do not have money

God gives them a lot

Don't be sad

Oh! Praise the Lord!

As with the second song, people enjoyed singing and dancing to this song because of its fun melody and accompanying motions. They acted in accordance with the lyrics of the song, such as being a bird, a dog, and a human being.

Another popular song at Paco is *This Is the Day*.

This is the day, this is the day

That the Lord has made, that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice, we will rejoice,

And be glad in it, and be glad in it.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day

That the Lord has made.

We are the sons, we are the sons,

Of the living God, of the living God.

We will rejoice, we will rejoice,

And be glad in Him, and be glad in Him.

We are the sons of the living God.

We will rejoice and be glad in Him.

We are the sons, we are the sons

Of the living God

The meaning of the song is rejoicings and being glad to have God. The melody of the song is energetic too. Similar to at Ermita, during the Mass at Paco, some homeless people sat

and waited dispassionately, maybe because they were hungry. In contrast, when volunteers sang during the last part of Mass, the people danced cheerfully.

Knox also had a famous song among homeless people, namely “*halina’t sama-sama*” (Come and Together). At Knox, volunteers sang many songs. The melodies of the songs were not really joyful, but the songs were impressive and emotionally trying to connect with God. Therefore “*halina’t sama-sama*” was the most joyful among others. The meaning of the song emphasizes the high status of God, and that all people should be proud of and pray to Him.

halina’t sama-sama

purihin natin Sya

halina’t sama-sama

awitan natin Sya

ipalakpak ang inyong kamay

itaas at ikaway

lahat ay magsabing Dyos ay buhay!

Translation by author:

Come and together

We have pride in Him

Come and together

We sing for Him

Clap your hands

Raise and wave [your hands]

All say God is the life

Dancing at the Sunday afternoon feeding program provided by *A Joyful Church*, or “KKK” is an example where homeless people enjoy singing. This program starts at 1.30 PM and finishes at 5.30 PM and is held on grounds that lack a roof. It is really hot and sometimes it rains. However, around 300 to 400 homeless people attended this program. It was hard for me to understand how people could enjoy dancing in the afternoon under the sunlight. They had just gone to Paco in the morning to take a bath. However, in only a few hours, they were sweaty from dancing. On average, homeless people could only bathe two or three times a week. Nevertheless, not all actively prayed to God or enjoyed dancing. Some rested under the shade of a tree.

Moreover, since feeding programs focus on praising God, it means homeless people who regularly attend prayer sessions are children of God. It does not matter how poor they are because in spiritual terms, they are good and fine. For example, a volunteer at Knox teaches attendees to be proud of being good Christians. She said that some people had told her that homeless people came to church just for food, but she disagreed. She asked, “Why do you come here?” Homeless people answered her in different ways. She continued, saying that people were not there because of *champorado* (porridge cooked with chocolate). They were still hungry after eating it. People were not there because they could use the toilet or get water. Next, she emphasized her with voice, “I know why you are here. You are here because you love God.” After that, homeless people firmly replied “yes,” and all sang a song lively.

I observed that those who lived on the streets for a long time and still attended feeding programs participated in prayer more energetically than newcomers. For instance, when Nico and Rigel attended feeding programs, they enjoyed praying, singing, and dancing. I was

surprised at how appropriately they acted when they were in church. Nico explained that although he had been on the street for a long time, he still followed God's words.

Therefore, attending prayer sessions not only made street life endurable, but also enjoyable. People enjoyed singing and found that their lives were fine as long as they kept praying to God. Faith-based organizations might not succeed in helping homeless people overcome homelessness. They supported homeless people so they can live well on the street. However, I am not sure whether they should take pride in this effort.

Irene Grasser argues that homeless people go to soup kitchens not only for food, but also to socialize with other street people (Glasser 1988). Her argument indicates that homeless people are not isolated. I agree with her. However, I would like to argue further that soup kitchens in the Philippines provide street people with more than food and social interaction. They serve as an "opiate" for homeless people as well, in the sense that the message from the feeding programs distracts homeless people from the reality of class conflict and exploitation (Marx and O'Malley 1970:131). Religious matters cover up the reality of street life and how they are exploited. There is no message about social justice in any of the songs that street people sing to praise God. In contrast, the messages of these songs are that they are happy and God helps them a lot. CCT's retreat clearly revealed its views that focus only on personal factors as the cause of homelessness. These feeding programs try to "fix" homeless people, but have never tried to "change structure inequalities producing homelessness" (Lyon-Callo 2004: 217).

Nonetheless, I do not argue that homeless people completely internalize messages from attending Bible study and worship. The literature on social suffering in Scherper-Hughes's book debates whether parents accept the death of their children "without weeping" are of a false consciousness (Biehl and Moran-Thomas 2009: 275; Dossa 2005:44). I agree with Scherper-

Hughes that the stories are more complicated than “false consciousness” (Scheper-Hughes 1992:523). Homeless people in Manila do not simply have a false consciousness. Cynthia Curtis’s dissertation contends that not all homeless people attend worship service because of faith. Many homeless people join for the “performance” and display appropriate gestures in order to get the assistance from the church (2013: 231-232). Likewise, homeless people know how to manipulate resources from these feeding programs, as described above in the incident when Dong presented himself as a person who liked studying the Bible and had faith in God, yet did not feel guilty about lying to get more food.

In the same way, on the day that a nun from the Food for Life Program led a discussion, she asked street people how their faith in God creates good things in their lives. In this situation, homeless people wisely drew from their experiences to answer the question. For instance, Mikel, who has never shown an interest in religious matters, said that the day before he had gotten many recyclables items left over by a warehouse because of his faith in God. Earl answered that God helped him maintain his hope. Earl is an interesting person. He liked to memorize verses of the Bible and he could answer Bible quiz questions at Knox every Tuesday. However, he liked sniffing glue and solvents too. It seems the content of the Bible could not make him abstain from “vice.”

To summarize, this chapter reveals the limitations of both government offices and faith-based organization programs. The government offices provide some programs that can help homeless people leave the street. However, this is in the short-term only because the root of the problem, few job opportunities, has not been adequately addressed. For the faith-based organizations, I recognize the good intentions of the program volunteers and staff members in that they devote their time and many resources to supporting homeless people. Without them,

many homeless people would go hungry. I also understand that they have grown up in a power structure that they cannot see and do not know how to change in the near future. Therefore, they focus on asking homeless people to change their personal characteristics rather than trying to change the exploitative system. However, since they focus much on religious devotion and personal issues, these feeding programs accommodate social injustice rather than challenging or changing it. They become a form of everyday violence that routinizes social injustice.

Chapter 9

The Labyrinth of the street

Tony's story

Tony became homeless in April 2013. Two weeks before I left Manila in April 2014, Tony returned to work. He had high hopes that he would be able to leave the street in the next few months. As a member of the Food for Life Program for ten months, he had gotten a job with the assistance of the program. He was working in the warehouse division of a Korean company. His company imported food to sell to foreigners in the Philippines. The company wanted to hire a person without a criminal record, and Tony qualified. The company was paying him minimum wage—466 pesos a day. His main duties were taking care of the warehouse and loading goods there. Actually, Tony is a college graduate but his job required manual labor. He had no better choice and had to accept it.

When he started working, he was still sleeping on the sidewalk of Otis Street. He had to wake up at 5 AM, and walk for 45 minutes to Lawton to save on transportation costs. Then, he took a jeepney to Tondo, and walked again to his work place. Moreover, since he had no income before starting his job, he had to borrow money from Food for Life's staff and me for his transportation costs and lunch. Food for Life supported him for his first month by giving him dinner, which he also saved it for his breakfast.

Tony is one of my few friends who appeared poised to leave the street. His characteristics are different from many other homeless people. He is in his early 40's, he graduated from college, and he has never been in jail. He was not involved in drugs. He rarely drank, and when he did, he only drank a little. Additionally, he received support from the Food for Life Program

during his transitional period from the street to renting his own room. He enjoyed many advantages over other homeless people, who have not graduated from college, have a criminal record, and are older.

Despite these advantages, Tony has become homeless again.²⁰ He finished his contract, but it was not renewed. Moreover, he did not get paid as he should have been. The company claimed that he had been absent without permission, but Tony said that he was sick. Therefore, Tony has a case pending at the National Labor Relations Commission. Tony's story shows that it is not easy for street people to leave the street. There are many factors that are out of their control, and their life conditions are unstable.

This chapter is composed of two parts. The first part will explore the factors that impede homeless people in overcoming homelessness. Homeless people can overcome homelessness through two ways: namely, returning to their families and/or having a job. This chapter illustrates the possibilities of homeless people returning to their families and getting a job. It will discuss why some homeless people can leave the street for a period of time, but have to return to the street again later. The second part will illuminate the different ways homeless people adapt to living on the street for a long time. Some can adapt to the street life well, but others get worse. Some might commit crimes, become victims of many forms of violence, or die on the street.

Narrow pathway out of homelessness

A rough way to go back home

²⁰ Subsequent to leaving Manila, I exchanged email with the coordinator of the Food for Life Program and received an update on Tony's situation.

Some people think that the best way for street people to overcome homelessness is to return to their families, particularly for those who have come from the provinces. For example, when I talked with a Manila Department of Social Welfare official, she told me that actually street people had homes in the provinces. Therefore, she believed these people should go back to their provinces if they know that they could not succeed in life in Manila (Interview, December 9, 2013). In reality, however, the way back home is not so simple. Two main factors impeded their returns.

First, the tension between homeless people and their relatives makes it difficult to return home. For example, those who come from broken families prefer not to go back home. As explained in the Chapters Three and Four, various family problems push many people to become homeless. Many homeless people had been beaten and exploited by their relatives before they left their relatives' homes, such as Stone and Rigel. Consequently, asking them to go back to their family is like pushing them back to the place from which they have run away.

While some people have a home to return to, some do not. Jhocas is an example of the latter. She always said that she was actually homeless because her parents had died already and she had no other siblings. I accompanied her on a visit to her uncle's house and understood her difficult feelings when she faced her relatives. At first, Jhocas did not want to go to her uncle's house. She asked me to accompany her to a Fiesta at her friend's house in Pasig City, which is close to her hometown. However, I did not want to go there. I told her that I was interested in going to the Fiesta in her hometown, so I could get to know her relatives well. Reluctantly, she invited me to her uncle's house.

On the way there, we got lost. Jhocas had not visited her uncle's house for many years. When we finally arrived, we could not meet with Jhocas's uncle because he was sick and was

resting. Instead we talked with the wife of Jhocas's uncle. The conversation was simple. She asked about Jhocas's job. Jhocas showed her ID card and said that she worked as a parking attendant and slept at a bus stop on the sidewalk. Next, the hostess served us *sopas* (macaroni soup with coconut milk). I ate because I thought it was the polite thing to do, but Jhocas did not eat.

After talking for a while, we left. Then Jhocas angrily said, "You see? She served us *sopas*. Today is Fiesta, but she did not serve us rice. I will not come back here again." I finally understood that Jhocas was angry because she felt that her relatives did not welcome her. On Fiesta Day, a host should offer food—meaning a meal with rice—to guests. Jhocas further said that she had not wanted to go there, but that I had stubbornly asked her to do so. Jhocas's experience indicates that when homeless people are not ready to return to their family but someone pushes them to do so, it can increase the tension between homeless people and their relatives rather than alleviating it.

Some homeless people "have sin" with their family and cannot go back home. As described above, some people, like Martin, left home because of their involvement with drugs. In some cases, there is no actual sin, but their siblings do not want to support them. Roger shared with me that his sister was not poor. She and her family lived in a good neighborhood, but he could not stay with her. He sometimes went to meet his sister, but his sister did not allow him to enter the house. She just talked to him in front of her house, gave him money, and let him go.

Vincente had a different reason not to go back home. He avoided using drugs. I asked Vincente why he no longer sold cigarettes to earn money. He asked me back why he needed to have money. I replied that having money would make it easier to buy food. He said that getting food was not difficult, because there were many feeding programs. I countered that if he had

money he could buy food he liked, but he said, “No. I don’t need money. It does not help. If [I] had money, I’d still have vice. It is better not to have money.” In other words, he was telling me that when he earned money, he spent it on drugs.

Later, I talked with Vincente again. I knew that he liked to go back to his family’s house, but he was still on the street [Vincente was still on the street until I left my fieldwork in April 2014]. I asked him the reason. He said that his neighbors had drugs and it was difficult for him to avoid using drugs when he lived there. I experienced this situation myself when I accompanied him back to his sister’s house on January 1, 2014. Even before he arrived at his house, he met one of his friends. After talking with his friend just a few minutes, his friend asked him to use drugs. Vincente declined, so his friend mocked him by saying “Really? You’ve changed already.” Vincente believes that he is better off living on the streets without money.

Secondly, many homeless people do not want to go back to their families in the provinces because they are ashamed that they cannot succeed in Manila. Many people in the provinces expect that those who go to Manila will be able to earn more than the poor in the rural area. Hence, when people who have lived in Manila for many years cannot fulfill this expectation, they are ashamed to go home (Trager 1984). For instance, when I asked homeless people why they did not go back to their hometown, many replied, “*Mahihiya ako*”, which means “I will be ashamed.”

Roberto is one example. He told me that he had lost his real parents when he was young. He had worked as a child laborer in a sugar cane hacienda with his uncle and aunt. Later, he came to Manila for the first time in 1987. He went back to his hometown again in 1988 and came back to Manila in 1989. After that, he never went back to his hometown again. He told me many times, “My relatives probably think that I have died already. I have not contacted them since

1989.” His old age made it difficult to get a job. I asked him whether it was possible for him to go back to his hometown. I told him that I had heard that he could request transportation assistance either from the DSWD or Food for Life Program. He declined and said:

“Transportation costs are not a problem. I know where I can request fare money. But the problem is how can you go back to the province, if you don’t have pocket money? You have not gone back to your hometown for more than twenty years. When you go back, you have nothing. How can you go there?”

He further explained that if he went back to his hometown, many people would ask him what he does in Manila. He would have to show that he had a job and money.

Ate Reyna provides another example. Unlike other homeless people, who might have problems with their relatives, she can go back to her hometown, but she does not. I talked with her about her plans. She said, “I know. I cannot live on the street forever. I have to go back to my province sooner or later. But before I go home, I have to have something to prove that I was successful here, that I did not waste my time here.” I asked her what it was. She said that she could go back home if she had some money, so she could tell others that she had saved it from her job. Nonetheless, she admitted that the 2,000 pesos she earned from selling plastic mats during the Christmas and New Year season in 2013 had run out already. I could sense her sadness when she had to consider her plan seriously. It is not easy to go back home empty-handed.

Having a, “*pasalubong*,” a homecoming present, is another important issue for Filipinos who go back to their hometown (Trager 1984). According to Philippine culture, those who travel far away should have *pasalubong* for their relatives as a symbol of reconnecting upon their return to their hometown (Trager 1984:337; Alburo 2005). Even without returning, Filipino

overseas workers send gifts to their families (Blanc 1996: Rafael 1997). When I went with Ben to his family's house in Manila, I realized the pressure he was under. I had asked him many times when he was planning to visit. He said that he was not sure yet, because he had to have money first. After our departure was postponed many times, Ben decided to go even though he had no money on that day. It might have been because I had asked him many times, so he felt he was obligated. When we arrived at his house, his nieces and nephews asked him for money. Ben replied that he did not have any. I could sense how his nieces and nephews were disappointed and how Ben was embarrassed to say, "Today I don't have any." Even though he slept on the street, he was still expected to have something when he went back to his house.

Raul's experience illustrates this issue too. He slept on the sidewalk on Otis Street just like I did. He earned his income from his *diskarte* by collecting juice powder from September to October 2013. He walked long distances and spent his money carefully. Finally, he saved 5,000 pesos and went back to his province. Yet, he came back to Manila two weeks later. I wondered why he came back to Manila so quickly. He explained that he did not want to spend all his money in his hometown. Upon his arrival; many friends had asked him to join them in drinking and had expected him to pay for liquor. Everyone thought that he had a high income in Manila. He told me that he did not tell his family and friends in his hometown that he was a street person and had no regular job. Instead he told them that he worked in a company that delivered juice powder, so he had many juice powder packets when he came back to his hometown. As a result, his friends believed that he earned a lot in Manila. Some might have said that Raul was boastful to say that he worked for a company. However, the way he lied about his situation provides evidence of the pressure he felt.

Some street people left their homes when they could not earn money. Therefore, when they had a job and money, they could go back home. For example, Donald's homelessness was closely related to his unemployment. I met Donald in February 2013 when he had just left his family's house. He earned his income in different ways, such as by selling mats and being a part-time construction worker. He said that when he had no money, he could not go back to his wife's house because his wife reproached him. Later, Donald became a regular employee, earning 350 pesos a day. After that, Donald could return to his family. He was happy again. His employer had a contract to develop an area inside Rizal Park. I met his wife and two children when they came to visit him at Rizal Park. His wife admitted that their relationship was not good when Donald did not have regular jobs, because she was under pressure to take care of the children.

Instead of receiving assistance from their relatives who live in homes, street people often sent money to support their relatives. Even though their life on the street was hard, some homeless people still supported their family whenever they could. I respected Anthony in this sense. As stated above, he had worked hard since he was young and become homeless when he lost his job illegally. While living on the street, he did not get any assistance from his siblings. However, when he earned 2,400 pesos from selling mats during the Christmas and New Year Season of 2014, he sent 1,000 pesos to his younger sister. He explained to me that this sister was the only sibling with whom he still maintained contact and that she was poor in the province.

Mikel is another one who supported his son as best he could. He had separated from his wife, and his son lived with her. Mikel contacted his son sometimes, such as on his son's birthday and during the Christmas season. Generally, Mikel earned his income from collecting recyclable items. However, before Christmas 2013, he asked the Food for Life Program to give him any part-time jobs they had so that he could earn extra income to send to his son. The

program allowed him to do laundry for four days. He got 300 pesos a day. Therefore, he could send 500 pesos to his son. He could not hold this job for longer, because they already had a regular employee to do the laundry.

Difficulty in getting a secure job

Homeless people who have a family can often return to their family when they get a job. Some homeless people can rent accommodation when they have a job which provides a secure income such as working as a street sweeper. However, it is not easy to get a decent job. As already explained in Chapters Three and Four, employers take advantage of the sheer numbers of unemployed people. Therefore, it is very difficult for homeless people to get a job that rewards them with a minimum wage.

Another possible choice for homeless people to leave the street is to work and stay with their employer. It is called a stay-in job in the Philippines. However, the problem with these jobs is that people not only receive low pay but also often must stay with their employer where they can be called to work anytime. A typical example of a stay-in job is working on a farm. Work on salt farms and rice fields and other farms is seasonal. I learned about seasonal jobs when I accompanied Iletto to a salt farm where he had previously worked in Bulacan Province. Before I went with him, Iletto told me that he worked at a fishpond. Fishponds and salt farms are on the same land, but the land is used differently in different seasons. Farmers harvest salt in the summer, from February to August. Then, they convert the same land to a fish pond in the rainy season because it is hard to dry salt in the rainy season. When Iletto worked at the salt farm, he carried dry salt to a warehouse. His salary was low at 1,500 pesos a month, so he tried to supplement his income by fishing. He might earn 100 pesos, if he was lucky. When the rainy

season arrives, farm owners do not need much labor. These laborers, such as Ileto, then go back to hang out at Luneta.

Street people are a target group for seasonal jobs. When I arrived at the fish pond, Ileto introduced me to others and said that I was Thai. One employee said that he had already seen me. I was surprised. He asked me further whether I went to the feeding program at Lawton. I replied in the affirmative. He told me that he went to Lawton to look for laborers, and someone had told him that I was Thai. I saw him later at a feeding program at KKK when he went to find laborers to work at a farm. In addition, before Ileto and I came back from the fishpond, the farm owner asked Ileto to go back and look for some laborers to work at her farm. She offered to pay Ileto 500 pesos for each laborer that he referred to the salt farm. She also paid Ileto 500 pesos in advance for the transportation costs of returning to her farm. When I came back to Manila, and shared that I had gone to a salt farm with Ileto, Jun and Jerome both said that they knew the place and the farm owner because they had worked there before. Many recruiters come to Luneta to search for unemployed laborers and offer them a job on a farm, such as a duck or pig farm. As described above, some street people, such as Ben, Anthony, and Mikel, had worked on these farms before. Nonetheless, they got low pay from these jobs and disliked going back to work there.

Similar to other jobs in the informal sector, laborers on farms get low wages, about 1,500-3,000 pesos a month, because employers claim that they provide free food and lodging for their employees. For example, Ileto got only 1,500 pesos a month and he had to spend money to pay for his personal expenses such as coffee, toothpaste, and soap. Mike also tried to work at a pig farm. He had only worked there for two weeks when I asked about his experience. He said

that he disliked this job, particularly because of the smell of pig feces and the random working times. He had to work from the early morning until night.

Stay-in jobs for homeless women, such as housekeepers, have the same situation; they get low wages and have hard working conditions. Rasa's experienced these conditions. As a member of the Food for Life Program, she got a job as a housekeeper for the program's benefactor. Before she left to work, her friends congratulated her on her new job and that she would no longer be on the street. However, Rasa came back to Luneta within three months.

I asked her about her working experience. Rasa shared that her employers were nice. They were a small family, a couple and two children. She worked alone to take care of everything in the house. She cleaned the house, cooked food, and washed clothes using a washing machine. She also said that her employers bought a cake for her birthday. Nonetheless, she left this job, because her salary was so low. She only got 2,000 pesos a month, with free lodging and meals. Rasa said, "My salary is too low, so I did not want to work. I worked all day from the morning to the evening. My salary was only 2,000 pesos. I am tired already. Now, I want to take a rest." She felt that it was better for her to live on the streets.

Those who received jobs but quit, such as Rasa, are blamed for being unable to change their lives. After leaving her job and coming back to Luneta, Rasa was too ashamed to attend the Food for Life Program again. In their views, Rasa had received a chance already, but had given it up. In fact, Rasa thinks that working many hours for a low salary is not better than being a street person.

Balik balik – Back and forth on the streets

Some homeless people get jobs, but they return to the streets again because they can only get insecure jobs. Conversely, those who have jobs and return to their family might be forced to go back to the streets again when they lose their jobs in the future. Homeless people used the term *balik balik* to refer to people who live on the streets, go to work, but return to the streets again. Literally *balik balik* means return-return. For example, Rasa can be described as *balik-balik*.

Balik-balik reflects two fundamental factors that cause homelessness: high unemployment and lack of family support. These two characteristics make the life of many people unstable. Some might think that homeless people are not patient enough to continue working. However, from homeless people's point of view, their job is not worth being patient. Lack of family support, as explained above, also makes many people vulnerable to homelessness because they lack social safety nets to support them (Bayudan-Dacuycuy and Lim 2014:390).

Gorny's experience is an example of "returning" homeless people. Gorny, who is 52 years old, grew up in a squatter area in Manila. His parents separated and he grew up with his mother who was a vendor selling drinking water. His mother was really strict. She always hit her sons and caused her children to run away from the house. Gorny ran away from home when he was 23 years old. He went back home and ran away again. Finally, he did not contact his mother and siblings any more.

In 1985, Gorny left home for Luneta and started experiencing an insecure life. He worked at different jobs, such as a rice farm worker, a laborer in a factory, a vendor selling drinking water and ice cream. He was a vendor, but he did not have his own capital to buy a pushcart. He just sold water and ice cream and got a percentage from his sales, which amounted to 75-200

pesos a day. When he worked, he stayed with his employers. When I met him in March 2013, he had been homeless for three years. His last job was as an ice cream vendor, but he had incurred a debt with his employer and decided to flee from his debt. He was homeless in the provinces for two years before returning to be homeless in Manila. He told me that since he left his mother in 1985, he had been homeless many times. He was arrested for violating the anti-vagrancy law so many times that the judge recognized him.

In 2013, Gorny survived by collecting recyclable items. However, Gorny left the street suddenly in October 2013. I met him again a few months later during the New Year Season of 2014. He was wearing nice clothes and had a cell phone. He said that he was tired of street life, and that he had gone to work as a construction worker in Makati City, and was staying at Barrack. However, I was not sure how long he could continue working.

Ileto is another example of “returning” homeless people. He grew up in a broken family. Later, he came to work in Manila and stayed with his sister, the daughter of his adoptive parents. They lived in a squatter area in Navotas City, Metro Manila. Ileto used to drive a pedicab around the port near his sister’s house. Navotas is a fishing port city. However, his sister’s house was partially burned in 2011. His sister’s daughter had grown up and had a family. There was no longer room for him at the house. Now, when he loses his job, he stays at Luneta and has learned to survive with street people. Ileto has worked many kinds of jobs such as a helper in the store and a worker on a salt farm. He said many times to me that he had almost forgotten that he used to work at a store at Divisoria selling coconuts for almost a year. He continues, “I cannot believe how I could work there for almost a year, in spite of working with a tough boss and getting a low salary.” In his view, the job and reward were not worth being patient. However, Ileto still looks for a chance to go to work when he gets tired of street life. In February 2014,

Ileto left the street. At first, he told me that he worked as a construction helper. Later, he said that he did not have an actual job. He just looked after a house because the owner had other houses. I asked him how much he got paid. He was too embarrassed to answer. He just said, “It is quite low.”

Jerome’s life experience is similar to Ileto’s. He had a tattoo and could not get a decent job. He did not have relatives in Manila. His life was back and forth between the street and stay-in jobs. During my fieldwork, I would see him for a few months and then I would not see him for a few months. Later, he came back to the street again. He told me that in the summer, he had gone to work on a salt farm. In the rainy season, recruiters search for the unemployed to work on rice farms during the harvesting season for a month. His job was to carry rice sacks from the rice field to the granary.

Ben is another example of “returning” homeless. After leaving his aunt’s house in Olongapo Province, Ben came back to Manila and started working with a banana dealer. He went with a truck to buy bananas and brought them back to his employer. He worked about three months then quit because his job was so hard. He first became a street person in 2010. Next, he searched for other jobs. He worked as a re-bagger in a charcoal store for a few months. His employer did not provide accommodations, so he slept at the market. After resigning and becoming homeless for a few weeks, a recruiter met him at Lawton and brought him to work as a caretaker on a duck farm. He worked there for a year, and left because the duck farm closed. He became homeless for a few months before getting a job at as a helper at a canteen in the Quiapo area. His wage was 100 pesos a day. He worked there for seven months and left because his employer reproached him after an absence due to sickness. Ben became a street person again in February 2013, a month before I met him.

These experiences show that the boundaries between being homeless and having a roof are fluid. It seems that it is not really hard for homeless people to get a job as long as they accept low paying jobs and hard conditions. However, they quit their jobs because their wage is not high enough to motivate them to continue working. Therefore, when ex-homeless people have a problem at work such as quarreling or being reproached, they are prone to leave and return to the street.

Adaptation to the street life

In the context of the difficulty of finding a secure and decent job, some homeless people find that their street life is preferable. When they can adapt to street life, they can find its positive aspects. Bona, 45 years old, is an example of someone who said that it was not necessary to rent. She left her relative's house in Tondo, Manila and lived with her partner whom she knew via a text-mate advertisement in the newspaper. They decided to live together when they met in the Christmas season of 2012. They are well disciplined about work. At first, Bona's partner collected recyclable items and bought them from other street people. They were saving at CCT²¹ and then they used their savings as capital to buy cigarettes to sell. During this period, they went to feeding programs both to get free food and sell cigarettes. They sold cigarettes for two months, and changed after their cigarettes were stolen. When, Bona's partner was beaten up and bloodied by people who slept near them at a park near Manila City Hall, they changed to sleep at Otis Street in August 2013.

Later both Bona and her partner got jobs as helpers at a canteen in Intramuros. Each earned 100 pesos a day with two free meals. Nonetheless, both of them still lived on the street.

²¹ CCT provides a feeding program on Thursday afternoon. See Chapter Four and Eight.

On Sundays, they went to wash their clothes at Paco and changed into nice clothes to window shop in the mall. Because their characteristics are different from many homeless people and they had secure jobs, I thought that they might leave the street soon. I asked Bona whether she planned to leave the street. She said that she might leave the street, but at that time she could not afford the rent yet. She preferred living on the sidewalk. Her partner further explained that it was better to live on the street because everything was free. For example, they did not need to pay rent, electricity, or water. For them, street life was fine, but they distanced themselves from other street people.

Jaymar is another example of a person who adapted to street life well. I described his life in the Chapter Three already. I met him when he had only been homeless for two weeks. I watched as he gradually adapted to street life. He went from attending feeding programs to being an amateur *barker*, and finally selling cigarettes. Jaymar described starting his small business with only 200 pesos. He did not use a carry box to sell cigarettes as many others did. He just used a plastic bottle with the top cut off. He explained that by doing so, he could serve cigarettes to his customers, who were mostly truck drivers, faster than using a box because his bottle had no cover. He earned at least 200 pesos a day. He told me in August 2013 that he was planning to go back to work as a security guard. His health recovered and he still had a valid security guard license. It should not have been hard for him to get a job.

However, when I finished my fieldwork in April 2014, Jaymar was still living on the street. I asked him why he was still on the streets. He explained that it was useless for him to rent a room. He was comfortable with street life already. He was not a pitiful person like those who still went to feeding programs. He could buy his own food, and chose whatever he liked. He still washed his clothes at Paco, but he took a bath every day by paying 15 pesos at the Paco market.

Almost every night he sold cigarettes to people who gambled at the horseracing machines. He spent his money on horseracing too. He said that it was his hobby and he might have good luck some days. He justified his actions, saying that he did not use drugs as Vincente did, so just gambling was not so bad. Jaymar asked me to join him singing songs at a karaoke bar. He offered to buy me beer. Jaymar can present himself at canteens or karaoke bars as a housed person. The only thing that is different from housed people is that he sleeps on the sidewalk.

Turning for the worse

Not all homeless people can adapt well to life on the street. Huey argues that when people experience street life, they develop “street smarts” to estimate a situation and avoid getting physically harmed (2012:70). On the other hand, living on the street for a long time can make people vulnerable (Lee and Greif 2008). I have described how some homeless people could adapt to street life. Next, I will explore homeless people whose lives got worse, some becoming victims of violence.

Charlie, 21 years old, is an example of a life turning for the worse. He told me that he had run away from home because he could not get along with his stepfather. Then, he attended a livelihood program at Paco Elementary School. The program taught homeless people to sew and make doormats. He and his girlfriend joined the program for about a week. On his last day, he asked a staff member about the upcoming schedule because the next day was a holiday. The staff member said that there was no practice on the holiday. After the holiday, a staff member found that a sewing machine motor had been stolen. Charlie was suspected of stealing it. The staff member was quite sure that Charlie had stolen it because she felt he had asked her about the schedule to make sure that nobody would be there on the holiday.

Billy's life grew worse, because he took money and ran away. He was nice, and had diligently volunteered at Paco for more than ten years. I was close to him because he always helped me prepare vegetables on Saturday nights. However, he did not have a regular job. He was employed peeling garlic and got a very low wage of less than 100 pesos a day. He asked to borrow money from me because he wanted to sell cigarettes. He showed me a vendor's box of cigarettes to prove that he used to sell cigarettes before. At first, I thought I would support him, but he declined my offer, noting it was hard to sell cigarettes during the weeks of a typhoon. Two weeks later, I asked him again. He said he was fine because he had become a *cabo*, a leader of a ten-person group of re-baggers.²² As a cabo, he was receiving a larger share of the wages.

One day, while I was working at a canteen, Ashley told me about a homeless woman begging to eat food. She had worked as a re-bagger for Billy. After working for nine days, Billy got paid by the contractor. Billy told his group members to eat lunch first and he would pay their share later. Next, Billy said he would go to the restroom. However, he did not come back. He left with more than 10,000 pesos that were supposed to be paid to the group. His group members had no money to pay for food or transportation. They had to borrow money from others to come back to Manila.

Some people get jobs as parking attendants, providing opportunities to commit *estafa* or taking money illegally too. As described in the Chapter Eight, the Food for Life Program helped homeless people get jobs as parking attendants. Their income was twenty percent of the parking fees that they collected. Generally, parking attendants could collect between 500-1,000 pesos a day, so their share was 100-200 pesos a day. I looked at Jhocas's receipts; she only got about 100

²² See Chapter Six.

pesos a day. When some homeless people found that this job was not good enough, they took the money and left.

Tata was a case in point. Because the company is not really serious about finding these people, Tata can still visit Rizal Park. However, Tata still felt guilty. I did not ask him about his “sin,” but he must have suspected that I knew about what he had done. One day when I was discussing job employment and wages in the Philippines with Ate Reyna’s group, Tata spoke forcefully. He said “Boon, this country is ugly. Who can get minimum wage? Nobody!” He explained that he had worked as a painter before. Although painting is skilled labor, he never got higher than 400 pesos. Normally, he only got 300-350 pesos. His salary was not enough. He had a wife who was unemployed also.

People might have a reason to *estafa* money. The stories of Charlie, Billy, and Tata reveal the complications of street life. With little chance to get decent jobs, some homeless people commit crimes and take money illegally. Their stories indicate that not all victims are admirable; they might resist exploitation, but through questionable means. They do whatever they can.

Tragedy of life on the street

Another miserable aspect of homeless life is getting sick or dying on the streets. I knew at least two street people who were shot dead by the police, namely Julio and Isko. Julio was quite aggressive. I knew him during my pre-dissertation fieldwork in 2011 as he was Pedro’s friend. At that time, I witnessed two police officers out of uniform punching him because he had taken two bags of food instead of one from a feeding program at Lacson. The police used their guns to intimidate him and warned others nearby to remain calm.

When I went back to Manila in 2013, I asked Pedro about Julio. He told me Julio had been shot dead by the police. I asked many other people as well, and the answer was the same. They said the police already knew Julio was a stubborn street person. Therefore, when such street people commit crimes, police will not wait to bring them to court. According to homeless people, police can shoot them dead and nobody can complain. Although I could not verify the story, a homeless woman told me that Julio was shot at the underpass in front of Quiapo Church. She saw Julio's body, because she walked past that way early in the morning. It was said that Julio had held up a woman near Quiapo Church at night and the woman told a security guard nearby. Later, police came and shot him. Julio's story reflects the blurred line between a perpetrator and a victim (Levi 1998; Tarlo 2000). On the one hand, he was a victim of structural violence and became homeless. On the other hand, he threatened his comrades. Finally, police shot him and many people thought that he deserved it.

Another tragic story is Isko's. I was surprised when I heard that Isko had been shot dead by the police. When I interviewed him, I was impressed by his good intentions. He described his feelings about his son. He said that he wanted to have a regular job instead of collecting recyclable items, so that he could meet and support his son. He was ashamed to visit his son, and say that he scavenged for survival. Therefore, he became a member of the Food for Life Program and actively tried to change his life. A program official trusted him and gave him a job working as a construction worker inside the foundation. Although his income was low at 100 pesos a day, Isko was diligent. Moreover, after finishing the construction project, the Barangay committee appointed him to become a Barangay security officer. Isko worked as a security guard in front of the institute and could stay and sleep at a pavilion in front of the foundation every day. During this period, his manner improved from when he collected recyclable items. His

appearance was good because he got clothes from the Food for Life Program and could bathe every day. I never saw him drunk.

In the next few months, nonetheless, Isko committed a crime. At first, he stole cigarettes costing more than 500 pesos from someone who slept next to him in front of the foundation. The same night, he also stole two sets of gifts that were prepared for homeless people for the Christmas season. After that, I heard from someone that he hid himself somewhere not far from the institute. A few weeks later came the news that Isko had been shot by police while he was stealing a car stereo. Many people explained it in the same way as they had with Julio. Since police knew Isko as a street person for a long time, when he committed a crime, police did not wait to bring the case to court. I was extremely surprised by this news. He had good intentions, but he had not been able to maintain them.

Since the life of homeless people involves exposure in public spaces all the time, they are at risk of becoming victims of accidents. Public hospitals in Manila do not have basic medical supplies for first aid. Therefore, medical staff can do nothing if patients and their companies do not buy their own medical supplies. As discussed in Chapter Two, I experienced this situation when I went to the hospital with Pedro and his friends after a car hit them. The tragedy after that was at the hospital. We tried to force the car owner to take responsibility for the accident. However, the car belonged to a Barangay Chairman. She arrived at the hospital after she learned about the accident. Later, she and her husband were able to leave the hospital without taking any responsibility even though there were police at the hospital. At that time, we did not know that they had left already. Pedro's leg was injured and his friend had a head wound and was bleeding profusely. We tried to ask hospital staff and security guards for help, but nobody cared about us.

A nurse told us that our friend with the head wound needed to be treated. He said that we would have to go to buy cotton, alcohol, and other medical supplies. Otherwise, he could do nothing, because the hospital did not have any medical supplies. We tried to search for the car driver and his group to ask them to pay for medicine and medical supplies. Finally, the police told us that they had left already. The nurse confirmed that we needed to buy medical supplies to stop my friend's bleeding. We had no choice, so I bought the necessary supplies.

I wondered whether Pedro and his friends' experiences were exceptional. However, the experiences of other street people confirmed that these problems were systematic. For instance, Magmag, a volunteer leader at Paco, was involved in a hit and run on the road near Quiapo Church about 9 PM while he was crossing the street. Someone helped him to a public hospital. He had wounds on his face and head, had lost two teeth, and had broken his leg. Since he had no money to buy medical supplies, medical staff did not treat him even with first aid. He had to send a message to the foundation at Paco where he was a volunteer. A father assigned Ate Fatima, a staff member of the program, to look after Magmag that night. Ate Fatima told me that she arrived at the hospital at almost 2 AM, and Magmag's bed sheet was covered in blood. Nobody took care of him because he and his partner had no money to buy medical supplies.

Another car accident happened in front of Bumbay, a Sikh Temple. The victim was an ex-girlfriend of Lena. Lena recounted how that night her partner had crossed the street to get water from the temple. While she was walking on the street, she turned back instead of continuing forward. Therefore, a car hit her. The driver who hit her took her to a hospital. The doctor and nurse did not take care of her because they knew she was a street person and could not afford the cost. Lena's partner died before her family arrived at the hospital. The last accident

that I know about occurred in the first week of 2014 when a woman was hit by a car and died on the street.

Another form of tragedy for homeless people is when they get sick and die on the street. I knew one person, Manolo, who suffered this fate. He was in his mid-forties, tall and thin. He told me in 2011 that he had grown up on the street since he was child. Many homeless people knew him as a good homeless person who fought and protected his comrades. The many scars on his head showed that he had fought many times. When I met him in 2011, he was still strong, but when I went back to Manila again in 2013, he was quite weak. Pedro told me that Manolo had been hospitalized by a foundation because he had tuberculosis. After he was released from the hospital, his health deteriorated because he continued sniffing solvents. In 2013, I did not accompany Manalo's group, but I sometime met him on the sidewalk. The last time I met him was about a week before he died. I recognized that he was weak and his eyes were unfocused when he greeted me. He slept and died on the sidewalk near on Taft Avenue. His body was taken away by a foundation.

Avoiding getting into trouble

The general image of street life is one of danger and violence (Lee and Schreck 2005; Jasinski et al 2010). For example, a staff at a feeding program asked me whether I was not afraid of sleeping on the streets. She assumed that someone, particularly a mentally ill person, might stab me while I was sleeping. I spent fourteen months of my fieldwork with street people in Manila. Even though I cannot claim that street life is peaceful and safe, physical violence happened only occasionally and the sources of violence were predictable, centering on tough people and drinking. Some physical violence is related to street morality; so if I do not violate

the norms of the streets, I should be fine. Compared with the violence in drug dealing communities in some studies (Karandinos et al 2014), physical violence among street people in Manila is notably less.

Those who live on the streets for a long time have to learn how to avoid getting in trouble. I can compare my own experience when I accompanied Pedro and underwent a lot of “exciting” experiences in 2011 with my subsequent stays. When I look back, I see that I took a lot of risks. When I planned to do my extended fieldwork in 2013, I was concerned about my safety and needed to learn how to avoid having problems. I observed many homeless people whose personality was not tough, such as Tatay Fernando, Mikel, and Donald, wondering whether they were ever bullied on the streets. In time, I found that most people could live peacefully on the streets when they learned how to avoid trouble

Many homeless people warned me that I should avoid getting involved with *sigá*. *Sigá* is slang meaning “a tough guy” or “troublemaker.” Accordingly, *sigá* will bring a trouble, such as fighting. Actually, when I accompanied Pedro in 2011, many people warned me not to associate with him because Pedro was *sigá*. At that time, however, I did not understand this term yet. I finally understood it when I did my fieldwork in 2013. I was at Paco in the late morning. At that time, Paco still opened a restroom for homeless people to take a bath. Boy had finished taking a bath and told Mikel that he could take a bath now because there was no *sigá* in the restroom. Then, Boy turned to ask me whether I understood the meaning of *sigá*. I said no and opened my dictionary. He said, “No. This term is not in the dictionary. It is a street word.” He explained to me that *sigá* meant someone who bullies and always quarrels with others. For instance, if a *sigá* wants to take a bath and takes too much water, others cannot interrupt him.

Julio is an example of a *sigá*. I met him in 2011. Many street people called him *burado* meaning a tattooed man. He had a lot of tattoos on his body, neck, and arms, showing that he had been in jail. He was aggressive, but he knew me as one of Pedro's friends. One day, Pedro, another person, and I went to buy food at a kiosk on the sidewalk. Julio was nearby, and asked me to buy food for him. I did. While we were buying food, my companion showed us a pair of binoculars that someone had left at Chess Plaza. Julio took them from him. A few minutes later, my companion complained that he wanted his binoculars back while Julio was still looking at them. Suddenly, Julio got angry and hit my companion with the binoculars so hard that he drew blood. My companion did not fight back because he knew that Julio was *sigá*.

At Paco, while other people socialized and waited for lunch, Julio was aggressive. He asked someone for money. This person told me that Julio had asked him for money, but acted like he owed Julio money. One week, Julio laid down and snuggled with a woman at Paco. [Generally many people sleep while waiting for Mass and food.] I commented to Ate Reyna that Julio did not seem aggressive when he had a woman with him. Ate Reyna told me that the woman had said that she actually did not like Julio, but because Julio had threatened her, she could not refuse.

Next to *sigá*, drinking also generated quarrelling and fighting. Pedro was the first one who made me realize the dangers of drinking. As described in Chapter Two, Pedro got in trouble because he drank liquor, tried to hit someone, and ended up being hit by a car. There were others occasions when he drank with his friends and later they fought. When Larry fought with Santos as recounted in Chapter Two, they had been drinking.

Drinking among friends frequently caused fights (Seager and Tanasane 2010). Among my friends at Otis Street, Robin, who did not have a regular job, always drank liquor. He

justified his habit by claiming he only drank a little so he could sleep well. Nonetheless, when Robin, Vincente, and Mike drank together, they got drunk and fought. Vincente and Mike had money from selling rice that they had obtained from a big religious organization that gave rice to the poor. Therefore, one Sunday afternoon, they pooled their profits and drank beer. On Sundays, people can linger at their sleeping places in the daytime because offices are closed. Some people joined them. After finishing about six liters of beer, Vincente was drunk. He started to act like he was *sigá*. He hit Mike's head and said that he was just kidding. Robin was uncomfortable with Vincente bullying his friend. Later, Vincente stood up and acted like he wanted to urinate on Mike's head. Robin told Vincente that it was not good to do that. As a result, Vincente turned to Robin and asked him what his problem was. Robin avoided the problem and said that they were friends, so Vincente should not act as if he was *sigá*. Next, Vincente gave Robin a glass of beer and said that it was Robin's shot. However, he splashed beer on Robin. It made Robin angry. Then, they fought. Vincente was too drunk to fight. Robin punched him many times, until Vincente surrendered. It seemed like Vincente was going to sleep, but instead he broke a toothbrush and tried to stab Robin. Robin was able to dodge Vincente's stab, and only got a scratch on his belly. Later, Vincente went to sleep and left before the morning.

Vincente did not go back to sleep at Otis for a week. When he came back, nobody talked about this issue again. However, Robin said that he no longer trusted Vincente. He did not know when Vincente would take revenge on him. He asked me to sleep next to him and did not want to sleep close to Vincente. Many people also thought that Vincente was totally in the wrong. He annoyed others when he was drunk, challenging them to fight, but he lost in the fights. Justine told me that if Vincente could defeat Robin, it would mean he was *sigá*, but Vincente should be

ashamed because he always lost. Justine told me that to live on the streets one needed fighting skills. Then, he turned to me and said that I should know Thai boxing. Otherwise, people would bully me.

Mike who did not usually drink also got in trouble when he drank liquor. After finishing my food at Bumbay and walking back to my sleeping place on Otis Street one evening, I saw Mike drinking liquor with Marlon, an elderly homeless person. Generally, Marlon did not sleep at that place. A hard drinker, Marlon had just accompanied Mike to drink there on that night. It was after 9 PM already and others were preparing to sleep. The surrounding area was quiet. However, Mike and Marlon were still drinking and talking loudly. George, who usually slept at that place, yelled at them to be quiet. He said that he needed to wake up early in the morning to go to work. George was a construction worker. However, both Mike and Marlon kept drinking and talking. George got angry and began walking towards Marlon threateningly. Then Mike and Marlon moved to drink further away. Later, Mike, who was already drunk, walked back to wake George up. Bong was upset, but Jaymar was able to stop them before they got in a fight. People who slept at Otis, including me, knew that George was tough. He had a tattoo. I had seen him punch another homeless person at Bumbay earlier.

Jhocas, who was always drunk, quarreled with her drinking partner many times. Nonetheless, she never got serious injuries. I witnessed one such fight. I met her on the sidewalk one late afternoon. She was already drunk. Her partner was trying to stop her from drinking, but Jhocas insisted on drinking more. Then, she quarreled with her drinking buddies about her share of liquor. Jhocas got angry and took out a knife that she had hidden in her bag to threaten one of them. Fortunately, they only quarreled verbally. Another story involved Jhocas and her drinking friend. She was homosexual too, but stronger than Jhocas. They drank together, but Jhocas was

extremely drunk and challenged her to a fight. Therefore, she punched Jhocas and made her face swollen.

Siga and drinking are related but not the same, because some people drink but do not bully others. Nevertheless drinking can cause problems, even though a drinker might not be a *siga*, such as Jordan. Jordan had a reputation for drinking. I was surprised when I met Jordan at a feeding program one Thursday afternoon. His face was swollen. He had no bag or slippers. His shirt was torn. I asked him what had happened to him. He replied that the previous night, while he was walking to Baywalk, he had been hit by a group of street children. According to Jordan, these street children were high from sniffing and thought that he had some valuable things. I asked Jordan whether he had been drinking that night. He said that he had drunk liquor, but he knew that he was not drunk. I could not verify the fact, but it was possible that Jordan had drunk liquor and gotten into trouble.

In another context, verbal arguments and violence can happen easily in a crowded area, particularly where people compete to get food and other resources. As explained in Chapter Five, fighting always happened in front of Santa Cruz Church. In other places, where management was not good, some homeless people might try to cut in line, such as in front of Quiapo Church, and Binondo. Generally, those who are strong are more prone to cutting in line than others. However, people do not take cutting in line seriously. In a society where respect for people already in line is weak, everyone tries to cut in line. The easy way to cut in line is to ask to stand in front of a friend. Those who allow their friends to stand in front of them are perceived as generous. For instance, Knox announced one week that a sponsor would provide food for the homeless to make merit for her birthday on the following Tuesday. More people went to Knox that Tuesday than in regular weeks. It seemed that there was not enough food for everyone. All

the people sat on benches in the church. Staff asked people in each row to get in line. However, some homeless people left their seats and cut in line when the staff were not looking. I was not in the line yet and saw many people cut in line. Darwin told me to cut in line in front of him because he was concerned that I might not get food. Lena also taught me that I have to learn to cut in line as her partner did, otherwise I would not get food. Therefore, not only can tough people cut in line, but others can too.

Although street people have to compete to get food from feeding programs, life on the streets does not completely follow the “survival of the fittest” rule. There are some moral codes that protect the weak. For instance, there are two lines, one for men and the other for women at Santa Cruz, the most unruly feeding program. Generally, women only make up about 25 percent of the group and all the women can get food. In terms of age, elderly homeless people might be unable to compete to get food. However, elderly people have more chances to get *biyaya* from housed people. The life of disabled people on the street is hard because none of the feeding programs focused on helping disabled people. In fact, not many disabled people go to feeding programs. On the one hand, it might be possible that they find it is just too hard get food at feeding programs. On the other hand, it might also be possible that they can get food from somewhere else. For example, when Tatay Valdez’s leg was broken, he had to fall in at the end of the line at Bumbay because he could not run fast to cross the street to get to the line. However, when his leg was broken, he did not go to feeding programs as often. He told me that he sat on the sidewalk with his crutches. He insisted that he did not beg, but people felt sorry for him and gave him food or money.

Sometimes, fighting on the street is related to the morality of protecting the weak. One day while people were at Salamangga Plaza waiting to sign up for a feeding program on Thursday afternoon, I observed a man named Marco arguing with an old man. I knew both of them, but I was not close to them. Marco used to make fun of me, so I disliked talking with him. After quarrelling with the old man, Marco came to talk with my group. Robin told him that he should not quarrel with an old man. But, Marco walked back to continue arguing with the old man and came back to join our group again. Shortly afterwards, I saw a *sigá* talking to the old man, kissing him to calm him down. Next, he talked with some street children who were there, evidently asking them about what had happened. After that, he came up to Marco who was still chatting with my group. Suddenly, the *sigá* punched Marco hard. Only one punch and Marco fell down, unconscious. The street children also hit Marco with a bar. They quite agreed that Marco had bullied the old man. Then Ferdinand stood between the *sigá* and Marco, asking the *sigá* to stop hitting Marco because he had already fallen down. When Marco was conscious and could stand, the *sigá* told Marco that the old man was old and could have been his father. Why did Marco like quarrelling with an old man? The *sigá* told the Marco that if he liked fighting, he should fight with him. Marco did not reply, and the *sigá* asked him to leave. Ferdinand escorted him away.

A few days later, I asked the old man about the incident. He said Marco always bullied him because he knew that he was old. For instance, when he entered Rizal Park, Marco yelled at him that he could not collect recyclable items there. In fact, the old man was not doing this, but Marco's yelling caused a security guard to pay attention to him. The day of the incident, the old man had urinated inside Rizal Park, which is prohibited. However, some homeless people did it anyway because they did not want to pay the toilet fee. Marco saw him, and made fun of him,

saying he would tell the security guard. Therefore, they quarreled at the feeding program. When the *sigá* asked the street children what had happened, they explained that Marco had bullied the old man. The *sigá* then told the old man to be calm and assured him he would take care of it. Actually, the *sigá* did not know the old man personally, but just wanted to protect him from being bullied.

Ferdinand, who asked the *sigá* to stop punching Marco, did not know the victim personally either. He said that he recognized Marco, but they were not friends. Nonetheless, in his view, Marco should not have been hit after he fell down. Ferdinand said that it was like in boxing, when one fell down, a referee would break the fight. I think that he was brave because the *sigá* and street children might have turned to hit him.

The story above reflects how homeless people employ violence to keep street life orderly. Manny did almost the same. When he and I still slept on the sidewalk of UN Street, two people once drank liquor close to us. When Manny saw them, he got angry. He yelled at them that the area was close to the Manila Police Headquarters and drinking was prohibited. As such, if the police saw them drinking, they would all suffer because everyone who slept there would get in trouble too. One of the people drinking said that it was just a little issue. Nobody knew that he was drinking liquor. After all, he could be drinking soy sauce (the color of brandy can look like soy sauce). Manny got mad at his reply. He walked toward them and almost hit him. However, a few people blocked Manny, warning him that their fighting would cause all of them to get into trouble as well.

I was surprised that Manny got mad at this person. Nanay Joan, who slept close to me, said that Manny got angry that day because he was hungry. He had not gone to Bumbay and had no food. Therefore, hitting someone was a way to release his hunger. Nanay Joan's explanation

was reasonable. The person whom Manny was angry at was small, and he would not have fought back. I discovered later that Manny was being hypocritical since he sometimes drank on the sidewalk as well.

In other countries, such as the US, Bangladesh, and South Africa, homeless women are often victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment (Jasinski et al 2010; Koehlmoos et al 2009 Uddin et al 2009). However, I am not sure about this issue among homeless women in Manila. Two homeless women answered my questions about this issue in opposite ways. I first asked Janice, who was always at Chess Plaza with many men. She laughed and announced loudly in front of many people that I had asked her this question. She said, “No. We are friends.” She said that she had never experienced being harassed. On the other hand, another woman told me that she had been raped by her boyfriend. She had trusted this man, but he had raped her.

Ate Reyna shared her experience that being a woman on the street was hard. She described her own experience, saying that when men saw her without a partner and gave her something, they expected that they could get her. At first, she did not understand the significance when someone tried to share food with her or buy her food. Later, she learned to avoid accepting it. The simple ways of women protect themselves is to have a partner. Another way is having a group. In 2011, when Ate Reyna was still new on the street, she accompanied two other women. They slept together and looked after for each other. In 2013, Ate Reyna accompanied a group of men. She was the only woman in this group of men, but it was clear that she was not the partner of any of them. They were friends only. Moreover, she made friends with a vendor who sold water all night at Baywalk. She was comfortable sleeping near the vendor when her group could not sleep together because some night spaces were not wide enough to sleep as a group. Therefore, the risk of sexual harassment decreases if homeless women have companions.

In contrast, a homeless woman without a companion is at greater risk of becoming a victim. For example, when I walked with Pedro to go to sleep on the sidewalk near Luneta in 2011, we walked pass a homeless woman who was sleeping. Unexpectedly, Pedro touched her breast. I was so ashamed of his behavior. Nonetheless, my status as a man made it difficult to explore this issue because women who experienced sexual harassment might be too ashamed to share this experience with me.

To summarize, this chapter continues the theme of Chapter Eight that the pathways out of the streets are rough. Some might be able to leave the streets, but their life is still insecure due to a lack of family support and inability to get a secure job. Many homeless people go back and forth between the streets and low-paid jobs. Some homeless people prefer street life to work at low paying jobs. They can be free on the street. On the other hand, living on the streets for a long time can make their life trajectory worse by introducing higher probabilities of committing crimes, being harmed by police, getting in accidents, or dying on the streets. Moreover, to live on the street, street people need to learn not only how to find food and earn money, but also how to avoid getting into trouble.

Chapter 10

Endurable and Enjoyable Life on the Street

“I can’t understand how they can enjoy street life! Why do so many people dislike leaving the street? It’s so difficult to convince them to leave the street!” These words were spoken by the coordinator of the Food for Life Program in front of many street people during a discussion session. Although the program tries to support street people in overcoming homelessness, it seems that many street people themselves do not really want to overcome homelessness. The coordinator emphasized the concept of the program, which holds that giving street people food is only a tool and not the end. The aim of the program is to support street people and enable them to become self-reliant in several ways, such as by having a job, returning to their family, or going back to their home province.

Rigel, who was sitting next to me, seemed to disagree with the coordinator. He whispered, “She doesn’t understand. If you sleep in a house, you’ll be hungry and have nothing to eat [*nganga* – slang in Tagalog]. You can only get gifts²³ on the street.” His reaction was quite different from the popular view that street people should want to leave the street when they have the chance. In contrast, some homeless people find that life on the street is preferable.

This chapter will analyze how homeless people think about their life on the street in terms of happiness and suffering. This chapter continues the analysis of Chapter Nine, which discussed the adaptation of homeless people to street life. First, it will describe the stories and events that homeless people said they enjoyed and about which they were happy. Second, I will

²³ In Tagalog, Rigel used the word “*biyaya*,” which means “grace from God,” as will be explained below.

illustrate that homeless people define suffering in two senses: endurance and regret. Only suffering in the sense of regret diminishes the self-worth of homeless people, but not many homeless people perceive their life in this sense. Third, this chapter will synthesize the feelings of enjoyment and suffering in homeless people's views and argues that homeless people's happiness and enjoyment are the result of adaptation to the conditions of street life. This analysis will lead to understanding the phrase "hard but happy" as a coping strategy to maintain their self-esteem. Fourth, the chapter will show that it is on the street that homeless people overcome their shame and recover their dignity.

Enjoyment of street life

I asked homeless people how they enjoyed street life. The three common answers I received referred to street life as being free, having many friends, and getting gifts. First, homeless people enjoy freedom on the street in many respects. They used two terms in Tagalog to explain freedom on the street, namely "*malaya*" ("free") and "*walang pakialam*" ("do not care.") These two terms are related but not identical.

Street people explained "*malaya*" as referring to the sense that they can do anything they want. For instance, Jhocas explained that she could sleep in the daytime. She also said that it was possible to only eat and sleep (*kain-tulog*). "*Kain-tulog*" is a phrase that I repeatedly heard from street people. The actual implication of "*kain-tulog*" goes beyond just "eat and sleep." It implies that they do not need to worry very much and just need to work to have enough. For example, Jerry explained his happiness by saying that he did not need to think about anything. Although it was hard, he was still happy. He could sleep well. It was different from rich people, who had to think about many issues. He just ate and slept.

Moreover, many homeless people compared their freedom on the street to their previous lives, when they lived with others. For example, Isko explained his enjoyment on the street by saying that he could go anywhere he wanted. He said, “If you stay at home, you’ll only be at home. You can’t go many places.” Likewise, Francis explained freedom on the street by saying, “If I had money, I’d be able to drink. Nobody would tell me ‘you can’t drink’.” Similarly, Jhocas said that she could drink and be hang-over on the streets, but when she worked as a maid, she could not.

Nevertheless, it does not really mean that street people can do anything they want. As stated previously, there are many prohibitions in Rizal Park, such as those against lying down and drinking liquor. Martin always complained about the prohibition on lying down, saying, “Luneta is the only park in the world where people can’t lie down.” Security guards always patrol and ask people to sit up if they see anyone lying down. I asked Adrian about freedom on the street. He clarified the topic by pointing out that although there were many prohibitions on the street, these prohibitions were different from the prohibitions at home. For example, he was beaten by his mother at home, but nobody beat him on the street.

“*Walang pakialam*” means “do not care.” Isko was the first person who explained this concept to me. He said, “Street life is *walang pakialam*. For example, if you want to go somewhere, you go. You don’t need to ask your friend. You just do it yourself.” By way of comparison, he said that if he had stayed at home, he would have had to ask permission to go anywhere. However, he was free on the street.

Ate Reyna also helped me understand this point. The story started when I asked why Nanay Ruth was not hanging out with her as she usually did. Ate Reyna explained that they had had an argument. There was another woman who hung out in Karabao whom I knew but was not

close to. She was not really homeless, since she had a house in a suburb of Metro Manila and her children still supported her. According to Ate Reyna, this woman was a drug addict. She asked Ate Reyna to accompany her one day. She bought drugs and wanted to check into a hotel for three hours to use them. Ate Reyna said that at first, she did not know that this woman abused drugs, but it was exciting for her to see how people used drugs, so she went with her. Ate Reyna was never involved in drugs before.

A conflict arose when Nanay Ruth did not want Ate Reyna to accompany this woman. Nanay Ruth explained that this woman had borrowed money from many people, but had not paid her debts. Ate Reyna disagreed with Nanay Ruth. She liked listening to and understanding her friends. She told me that she had worked at a church for many years. It had taught her to listen to others, particularly those who had problems. When I asked Ate Reyna how she enjoyed street life, she remembered this story and said, “You’re free here. Your friends can’t force you to do anything. You do what you want to do.”

Many homeless people like their odd jobs, because they have no boss. For instance, Pepe enjoys collecting recyclable items. He grew up in a broken family and left his aunt’s house when he was 17 years old. He had been in jail for theft. I asked him why he became homeless. He replied, “I’m a street person because I have no education and my employer was abusive. They knew that I had no education. My job was hard, but they paid me very little. When you apply for a job, they don’t trust you.” One evening, I accompanied him collecting recyclable items. After walking for an hour, it was about 6 PM. Pepe suggested that I take a rest. While we were sitting in front of a church, he said to me that scavenging was fine. He could take a rest whenever he wanted. It was better than working as a construction worker, because in construction work, the foreman would order him to do many things and he could not take a rest. He also said that he

disliked having people giving him orders. Pepe experienced working as a construction worker and got only 300 pesos (\$7) a day. As a result, he disliked this job.

Jaymar is another interesting case. He still has a security guard license, but he does not want to go back to work. He explained that selling cigarettes was fine because he had no boss. He recounted that when he was sick and could not work, his former employer had not treated him well. He was demoted and sent to work as a guard in a jail. Therefore, he did not want to go back to being an employee again. Moreover, from selling cigarettes, he could earn almost the same amount as a low-paid employee.

In the same way, Pedro likes being a *barker*, because he can work and stop whenever he wants. When he gets money from a driver, he can go buy liquor and drink, and then come back to work again later. Sometimes, he drinks while calling passengers. Similarly, Donald enjoys selling mats in the park. After coming back from working at a construction site for two weeks, he compared selling plastic mats to being a construction worker. He said that when he sold plastic mats, he could take a rest whenever he wanted. When he had enough money and was hungry, he could have food first, and then come back to sell mats later. In contrast, working at a construction site was hard, because it was hot and he could not take a rest. Similarly, referring to Ate Reyna, Tatay Fernando said, “Although Reyna does not get food regularly, she does regularly get sleep. Sleeping is important for her.” Ate Reyna laughed. It reminded me of something she had mentioned earlier. She said that she disliked working at a canteen and having someone tell her what to do. In contrast, when she sold mats, she was her own boss.

Brother Jonas of CCT also recognized the freedom on the street. He warned me not to live on the street for too long because I would get used to street life. He said, “I know. Street life

is free. You can do anything you want. For people who have gotten used to it already, it's difficult to change. I don't want you to become like that."

Even those without regular odd jobs can be satisfied with street life as well. I asked Lena why she became homeless. She replied that she did not want to go back to her aunt's house and she did not want to work. She wanted to experience street life, such as being hungry, and not taking a bath every day. I asked her further why she was still on the street. She replied, "Because I'm happy." Although she did not have a regular job, she could still get food three times a day. If she had stayed in Bicol Province, she would have no food.

Justine, Lena's partner, explained his idea clearly. He was a jeepney driver before becoming homeless. He still meets his mother, who goes to a feeding program at Lacson on some Wednesdays. At first, he told me that he could not go back to being a driver again, because his driver's license had expired. I asked why he did not borrow money from his family to renew his license and then pay his family back later. The fees and charges for renewing an expired professional driver's license were 642 pesos (\$15), although he might need to pay more for other kinds of ID if they too had expired. In total, it should not cost more than 1,000 pesos, and he could earn 500 pesos a day from driving. It would not be difficult for him to pay back his debt. Finally, he said, "*Wala pang sawa ako*," which means "I am not tired²⁴ yet." Justine said if he wanted to leave the street, he would be able to find his way out, but he was not yet sated with street life.

When people can adapt to street life, they find a positive side to it that enables them to be free. The story of Pepe indicates that he had previous experience working at a low-paid job, which he compared to street life. His situation was therefore similar to others whom I described

²⁴ The Tagalog word "*sawa*" may also mean "sated," as when people get something so many, and they do not want it any more.

earlier, such as Rasa, who came back to Luneta from her work as a housekeeper, and Roberto, who refused to work as a helper at a canteen. They made a choice between being exploited but having a roof over their head, and being free but having no roof. Either choice makes sense. Fried and his colleagues analyze human dignity and argue that human beings do not want to be treated like children, such as being ordered around (Fried et al 2015). Consuelo J. Paz also points out that for Filipinos, being able to rest (*nakakahinga*) is one significant component of well-being (2008). Accordingly, it is hard to blame those who prefer to live on the street as being irrational. Their decision is not about preferring to spend money for drugs rather than paying rent, as posited in another study of the choices of the homeless (Parsell and Parsell 2012). Snow and Anderson also propose that it is not easy to “rescue” from the street those who have already settled into street life (1996:96).

Second, many homeless people say that the great benefit of living on the street is that they have many friends. For example, when they go to feeding programs, they meet many comrades. They greet and talk with each other. Francis explained that having friends benefited him by providing him with company to go anywhere. Mark also said that he was happy on the street, because he could meet many people. He said, “I can talk with my friends, such as Reyna. I am happy.”

Finding enjoyment in having many friends might relate to the background of many street people, who have family problems and conceivably seek compensation for their lack of relatives close at hand. Janice was the first person who mentioned this point to me. I met her when I was hanging out at Chess Plaza in 2011. Regarding homeless people, she said, “We are abandoned. We are from broken families. Therefore, we create a family here.” Likewise, Magmag said that he really liked street life. He was happy because he knew many people. He could talk and share

with others. It was different from when he was at home, where he always quarreled with his siblings.

In contrast, street life is really sad for street people if they have no friends to talk with. For instance, one day Tatay Christ came from his work sweeping in front of a church. However, few people were hanging out at Luneta on that day, as many had gone to register for an election. “Why are there so few people? Today is so sad,” he lamented. I asked him how is happiness? He said, “It would be happy if you came to Luneta and saw your friends, talked with your friends. This is the life of *yagit*, how we are happy.” In the same way, Nico, who came from a broken family, said that his life on the street would be sad if he had no friends. These two stories indicate that homeless people enjoy the company of their street friends.

Related to having many friends is sharing among comrades. For instance, Manny was a volunteer who cleaned the toilet at the Food for Life Program. He received burned rice (*totong* in Tagalog) from the program for his volunteer work. After finishing his duty, he hung out at Rizal Park. When Kyle knew that Manny had burned rice, he gave Pepe ten pesos to buy some cheap food costing five pesos per item, such as fermented shrimp and fried vegetables. In doing so, their group of four to five people could have something to eat before going to Bumbay. In fact, some were satisfied with this simple meal and did not want to go to Bumbay anymore.

Similarly, when Ben worked at a canteen, he brought food back to share with his friends. For instance, he intentionally brought food to Paco on Sunday mornings, because he knew that his friends were hungry, since Paco provides lunch quite late, after 1 pm, and breakfast is light. Even though he could not do it very often, his friends still appreciated his generosity. In the same way, at the Food for Life Program in the morning, when someone had food such as instant

noodles, they would ask for hot water from the canteen inside the institute and share their noodles with their group.

I was given food by other people many times. They shared with me not because I was a foreigner. My alien status was meaningless after having been in the field for many months. They shared with me because I was their friend. For instance, I went to a feeding program at Loreto, but since I was not a regular attendee there, my name was not on their list. Therefore, it was not guaranteed that I would get food. On a week when I did not get food, Ito shared his food with me. He ate some of what he had been given and left the rest for me. Jhocas also shared with me. For example, one late Saturday morning, while I was waiting for food at Malate, Jhocas arrived and asked me to go with her. Next, she bought coffee and bread for me. I wondered why she was being so generous and how she had money. She said she had gotten 20 pesos in Quiapo the previous night, and gotten another 20 pesos in the morning in Dimasalang. She did not pay for her ride from Dimasalang to Malate, which is quite far (6.5 kilometers). However, she spent her money to buy me food. Her action reflects that although homeless people have limited resources, they still have a heart to share with their friends (Wendland 2010).

In another case, I was also given food by Tatay Christ. It was on a Friday evening. I was standing in front of the mall because it was raining. Tatay Christ had gotten food from a canteen. He told me that every Friday, when the canteen closed, the canteen owner gave him food. They could not keep it for the next day, because the canteen was closed on the weekends. However, there was too much food for him, so he was looking for someone to share his food with. When he saw me, he said, “Oh I see my friend already.” He gave me plenty of *sopas* (macaroni cooked with coconut milk) and fried mixed vegetables. He told me to take it to share with my friends at Otis.

I walked past Bumbay first, because it was on the way to Otis. I got some rice from Bumbay. When I brought my food to Otis, many people such as Manny and Justine were happy to have *sopas*. I gave rice to another person whom I did not know, because he was new. He had canned fish, but no rice. Later, Ben came back from his job at a canteen. He had food to share with others too. We all ate together. They said it seemed like a fiesta, because they had a lot of food.

The story of Tatay Christ sharing his food with me shows that when people have so much food, they share it with others, both because otherwise, the food will spoil, and because those who do not share are perceived as selfish. Mary R. Hollnsteiner points out that “sharing one’s surplus with others” is significant in the Philippines (1968:47). In the same way, my friends and I went to Bumbay almost every night. When someone got plenty of bean curry and bread but was full, they brought it back to our sleeping place, because other people who slept there might be hungry and ask for food.

Nonetheless, in general, homeless people have scarce resources, so they cannot share much. For instance, Manny always had burned rice from the Food for Life Program. I contributed by buying meals and eating with him and others, such as Tony and Anthony. Once while we were eating, Mikel walked past us and I asked him to join us. Manny said, “Don’t ask him. There isn’t enough. We can’t afford it.” If someone is not called to eat, they would be ashamed to join the meal.

Third, many street people enjoy receiving *biyaya*, which means “grace” or “gift from God,” as Rigel said at the beginning of this chapter. Rigel said that he could only get many *biyaya* on the street. By contrast, he would be unable to get any if he lived in a house. Likewise, Ate Mai, who used to rent a room in a squatter area, said that living on the street was better than

renting a room in many ways, insofar as there was more freedom, no burden of paying rent, and it was possible to get many gifts. Julie, who had two children, also said that they could get many gifts on the street.

Biyaya, or gifts, can be many things, such as food, clothes, groceries, or money. Sometimes housed people pass by and give *biyaya* to street people. I had many experiences receiving *biyaya*. For instance, while Vincente and I were hanging out at Luneta one day, a group of students came and gave us bread with peanuts, prompting Vincente to comment, “We’re lucky. Just by sitting, we can get *biyaya*.” In the same way, when Mikel and I were hanging out sitting on the sidewalk near the university on Espana Street, a student gave us ice cream. This was also *biyaya*.

For people living on the street, the Christmas and New Year season is the biggest highlight of the year. I heard street people saying throughout the year in 2013 that I should live in the Philippines until the Christmas season, because it was the most enjoyable time of year. I would get many *biyaya*. I felt excited about participating in Christmas celebrations. Close consideration of this period of enjoyment will lead to an understanding of what kind of happiness homeless people feel. I will describe in detail getting *biyaya* from various places during the Christmas and New Year season.

My first Christmas celebration in the Philippines was at Ermita Church. It happened quite early, in the third week of November. The Ermita Christmas party actually marks the beginning of the Christmas season for street people. Some street people who were volunteers at Ermita told their comrades to make sure that their friends did not miss out on getting a Christmas gift, as Eugene, my group leader, told me.

On that day I arrived at Ermita at 5:15 PM. Before going there, I worked at a canteen. Ashley suggested that I not be late, because they might close the gate early. When I arrived there, I realized the importance of this event, as many people had already gone inside the church, which was filled with people. It was different from regular weeks when street people entered the church around 6 PM or later. Many new attendees came because they expected a Christmas gift. There was a little bit of turmoil as many people tried to take a seat in the front rows to make sure they could get a ticket for a gift. A program volunteer announced that only regular attendees could take a seat on the benches in the middle of the church. Irregular attendees had to sit on benches at the sides of the church. As a result, a volunteer in each row had to ask new attendees to leave the row. However, some argued that they were regular attendees and quarreled, questioning why they had to get up and move. A volunteer had to ask the people to be quiet and warned that those who were stubborn would be sent out of the church. She further said that the program had asked the police to help keep order in the church.

Ermita's volunteer prepared the tickets quite well, because they had a lot of experience with unruliness when they handed out gifts. A volunteer announced that no one needed to worry about gifts, because all attendees would receive one. The program staff had checked attendance records and classified attendees into three groups. The first group comprised those who attended the program almost every week. The second group consisted of those who attended the program, but missed some weeks. The last group was made up of irregular attendees and new comers. People in the first group were given more gifts than people in the second group, who, in turn, received more gifts than those in the third group. I observed that only a few people were classified as belonging to group one. I belonged to group two. A volunteer handed out tickets to regular attendees, one by one. Each ticket had the name of the particular recipient and the

signature of the program coordinator to make sure that no one could cheat. Consequently, new comers and irregular attendees had to get up and move to the benches at the sides of the church because their names were not on the list for group one or two. Nonetheless, they were also given tickets for group three.

After everyone got a ticket, people calmed down. However, the main sponsor of the program, a television comedian, was late. People had to wait for her. While waiting, staff asked the homeless people to sing Christmas songs. One sang with the wrong melody, but the audience was having fun and just laughed. Many people danced and relaxed. Unlike the stressful moments during ticket distribution, I was able to get a sense of many people's enjoyment when I heard Christmas songs. Finally, the comedian arrived. People enjoyed meeting her. She was nice and said something to encourage people to not give up and keep maintaining their faith in God. Then they all sang together. Finally, it was time to get Christmas gifts.

A staff member asked people to form a line to leave the church. As they were exiting, they were given food and gifts according to their type of ticket. People in group one got instant noodles, canned fish, powdered milk, and used clothes. People in group two got almost the same as group one, but the amount of instant noodles and canned fish was less. People in group three got only instant noodles and used clothes. Ermita Church could therefore say that everyone got a Christmas gift. No one was left behind by God.

However, I heard many people complain that they were disappointed that Ermita Church had not given out any rice. People need rice the most, but they do not want it for cooking. Instead, they want rice to sell for money. Generally, people can sell rice for 15-20 pesos per kilogram. I heard from a volunteer that the program had actually received donations of rice, but the amount was insufficient to give it to everyone. Therefore, to avoid quarrels arising between

those who did and those who did not receive rice, the program decided not to give out any rice at all. However, the church's formal explanation was that Typhoon Haiyan had struck Tacloban City in November of that year, causing horrible damage. Therefore, many *biyaya* had been delivered to victims in that area. As a result, *biyaya* for street people in Manila was not much. Later, I often heard the same reason cited by other organizations, saying that *biyaya* went to Tacloban. Street people also made a joke of it by saying, "If you like getting *biyaya*, you should go to Tacloban."

After considering the distribution of *biyaya* at Ermita closely, it is hard to say that it was an enjoyable moment. People had to compete energetically to get *biyaya*. Actually, the sense of competition was omnipresent in many places. The next example is at Lacson. Homeless people did not know exactly on which Wednesday Lacson would hand out Christmas gifts. The number of attendees increased beginning from the first week of December through the week before Christmas, which was the last week of service for the year. When I woke up at 5AM, almost all of my friends on Otis Street had already left. I discovered later that many people had woken up at 3 AM and walked to Lacson because they wanted to make sure that they could get a ticket for a gift. When Ben, Robin, and I arrived at Lacson at around 6.30 AM, many people were already waiting in the queue in front of Lacson. Ben and Robin did not get in line at the end, as I did. Instead, they cut in line in front of their friends.

There was a little turmoil, because people who arrived late worried that they might not be able to get a ticket. They tried to cut in line in the middle, as Ben and Robin had. Although it was still morning, the sunlight was strong. Therefore, some people left their bags in line to reserve their place in the queue while they sought shelter from the sun. At about 8 AM, a nun opened the gate and many people who had not been in line ran to take the opportunity to jump the queue.

Four people cut in line directly in front of me. They thought that it was time to get a ticket.

Actually, the nun just wanted to place a garbage bag in front of the church. At about 9 AM, a nun opened the gate again. Some homeless women who had Lacson ID cards entered to attend a prayer session, and a few homeless volunteers helped the nuns manage the people trying to get inside the gate to get a ticket. Groups of ten people at a time were permitted to enter, have their arms stamped, and get a ticket. A barangay chairman and barangay police tried to maintain order in front of the church, but failed. They did not act forcefully, and nobody recognized them.

At first, I was not able to get a ticket, because the church had prepared only 300 gifts. The tickets ran out just a few people ahead of me. However, nuns said from the inside that they could give out 30 more gifts. As a result, I was able to get a gift. When a volunteer said, "Last thirty tickets only," many people ran to jump into the line. I held on tightly to the person standing directly in front of me to make sure that nobody benefited at my expense. Street life had taught me to be tough.

At that time I was close to the gate and heard homeless people inside reciting the Rosary. I marveled at how the nuns and people inside could be so calm, while just outside the gate, people were quarrelling over tickets. Around 30 to 40 people were not able to get a ticket. Homeless volunteers yelled at some people to quiet them down. A little boy privileged enough to get inside to get a ticket was crying because he did not want to enter the gate alone. Nonetheless, his mother yelled at him and ordered him to go inside to get a ticket.

After the tickets ran out, those who had them were satisfied. They waited for their food and gifts. Next, the barangay chairman and barangay police asked the people to form a line again to receive their food and gifts. The gifts were almost the same as those given at Ermita Church, such as instant noodles and canned fish. However there was also one kilogram of rice. An old

lady I had known since 2011 who did not get a ticket asked me for a gift. I gave her my rice and noodles.

Another example is the gifts handed out by the Paco Fire Volunteers Association. This example shows how Christmas gifts are meaningful for street people, and how chaotic it can be to get them. Jun, who had grown up in the Paco area, told me about the schedule for giving out tickets, but I did not go because he told me that they prioritized people living in the Paco area, not homeless people. Yet that night, when my friends and I were walking back from Bumbay to sleep, a car pulled up and parked near us. Actually, there were six of us walking together from Bumbay, but Robin and Peter had dropped behind to urinate beside a bridge. Two men got out of the car and gave Reyes a ticket. I did not realize that Reyes had been given a ticket and was not paying attention to these two men. However, Reyes told me to ask them for a ticket too. At first, I was too shy to ask, but Tatay Elly told them that I was his friend and we slept in the same place, so I was given a ticket.

When we arrived at our sleeping place, Robin and Pastor were upset because they had been unlucky. Robin blamed Peter, who had asked him to pee with him, so he had not continued walking with the rest of the group. Peter was so sad; he almost cried. He said that he had gone to the Paco Fire Volunteer Association in the afternoon to compete for a ticket. Showing a wound on his knee, he said that he had tried to get a ticket, but had fallen down and could not get one.

The Paco Fire Volunteer Association's Christmas gifts were great. They were composed of five kilograms of rice and other groceries, such as instant noodles, corned beef, and canned fish. However, just as at the other Christmas events, it was a mess on the day of gift giving. More than 200 people who did not have tickets waited in front of the Paco Fire Volunteer Association. Meanwhile, there were already around 300 to 400 people who did have tickets. Paco Fire

volunteers used a rope to separate those who had tickets from those who did not. They asked those who did not have tickets to form a line. Therefore, some people expected that they could still get a ticket and receive a gift. However, when a staff member started giving out tickets, it got very unruly. People did not stay in line. They competed with each other to get a ticket. Even though the police came and tried to maintain order, it was useless. The leader of the volunteers had to stop giving out tickets after distributing them to only about ten people.

Since Christmas gifts are meaningful for street people, I was taught to cheat to get them. I actually got *biyaya* from the Manila Police Headquarters by chance on December 14. On that morning, my friends and I were walking past the Manila Police Headquarters on UN Street as we did every day and saw a stage for a Christmas party, but no one paid attention to it, because people disliked associating with the police. Moreover, someone said that tickets were required to join the party. In the late morning, I was hanging out at the corner of Taft Avenue and Kalaw Street waiting to interview someone. Actually, I did not regularly hang out there. Then Richard came to tell me that I should go to the Police Headquarters to get *biyaya*. I told him that I did not have a ticket. He said it was fine, and I could just get a ticket by registering with the staff inside. However, he said that I had to have a kid with me, because the Christmas party was for poor families. Rea told me that it would not be a problem, since she had two kids and could “lend” me her little daughter, who always played with me and was willing to join me. Nonetheless, I still had a problem, because I am not used to lying. I asked what I should say about my wife. Rea said it was easy. She suggested that I say I was separated and the kid had no mother. Finally, I registered and got a ticket. My name was Bong, which sounds Filipino.

The last example of Christmas gifts that I will bring to my analysis is the case of the church on Tayuman Street. This church gives *biyaya* to the poor every year. Although this

church does not run a soup kitchen, many homeless people remember it because of the Christmas gifts it gives away. A few days before December 25, many people were asking about Tayuman tickets. Someone had received a ticket from the nuns, who passed them out to people who hung out at Lawton. I talked to Nico, who had 20 years of experience of street life. He said, “Don’t worry. Even though you don’t have a ticket, you can still go there. But you have to look dirty.” At the time, I did not understand what he meant.

On December 25, three places held events for street people. Aside from Tayuman, the other places were Dimasalang and Paco. On that day, I dropped by at Dimasalang in the morning first. When I found that only 50 to 60 people were there, I decided to go to Tayuman to observe more people. When I arrived at Tayuman around 8AM, there was chaos. There were more than 500 people on the sidewalk opposite the church. Some were in line, but many were walking around, closely following a nun who was handing out tickets. Someone told me if I had a ticket, I could enter the church and did not need to wait in line. Many people were already inside. A nun tried to tell the people to get in line, but it seemed people were not listening to her. She gave tickets to people who looked pitiful, such as senior citizens, women with kids, and dirty people.

It was then that I understood Nico’s point. If I looked dirty, the nun would be sympathetic to me and give me a ticket. Luis looked dirty and thin. He collects recyclable items. However, compared to others, he is still young. Therefore he did not get a ticket the first time the nun passed him. Then the nun walked back and forth to consider people’s appearance. Finally Luis got a ticket. He was glad and showed me his ticket before going inside the church. From my point of view, I would be unable to gain a sense of enjoyment if I had to compete with others to get a ticket, as many people were raising their hands to beg the nun, and walking around following her.

I did not get a ticket at Tayuman and came back to Paco, because I was a volunteer there. There were not many street people at Paco High School, perhaps only around 80. These people, like Tatay Mervin and Bona, did not really need *biyaya*. They had regular incomes. They just went there to take a rest. The family of a previous program sponsor ordered food from a fast food restaurant for the street people. It was rice and fried chicken, but there were no Christmas gifts. Paco gave out Christmas gifts on the following Sunday. They consisted of used clothes and slippers, not groceries.

When I finished the program at Paco, I met Eugene. He had gotten a ticket at Tayuman and was able to get inside the church. However, he complained that the *biyaya* was not good. He got a blanket, but there was no rice. It was quite clear that people had expected rice, which they could then sell at a high price. Then I met Mikel. He was glad because he got 100 pesos from Dimasalang. Mikel told me that he had expected only 50 pesos, so he was so happy when he actually got 100. Comparing Eugene and Mikel, it seems that their different expectations and what they actually received account for their different level of enjoyment. Eugene expected rice from Tayuman but did not get any. As a result, he was disappointed. In contrast, Mikel expected only 50 pesos, but actually got 100. Consequently, Mikel was happy.

Enjoyment under difficult conditions

Enjoyment on the street depends much on the expectations of street people. Referring to coping strategies of homeless people, Elliot Liebow proposes that “the most useful strategy was to expect as little as possible from life and minimize disappointment” (Liebow 1995:178). Homeless people in Manila do the same as Liebow’s explanation. Generally, homeless people have low expectations, so when they get something extra, they are happy and feel enjoyment,

“*masaya*,” in Tagalog. We can understand their enjoyment only when we consider it in the context of street life. Therefore, I argue that enjoyment on the street is the result of adaptation to the conditions of street life.

The Christmas gifts that homeless people enjoy getting in fact are not very valuable for people who have regular incomes. Their cost might range between 50 and 200 pesos. However, they are meaningful for poor street people, because in their daily life, it is hard to earn more than 100 pesos in a few hours. The homeless people who really need the gifts are those who do not have much income, such as recyclers and those who always attend feeding programs, such as Mikel, Rigel, and Luis. Luis’s words exemplify enjoyment of street life during the Christmas season. He said to me while we were walking to sleep on December 24, “Even though I don’t have a house, I’m really happy because I got many *biyaya*. The only problem is the scheduling conflict.” Luis meant it was difficult to make decisions about where to go, because three places were giving out *biyaya* at the same time on the morning of December 25.

By contrast, those who have regular jobs do not care much about Christmas gifts. For example, Tatay Mervin, who sells cigarettes, and Bona, who works at a canteen, went to Paco to have fried chicken instead of competing to get a ticket for *biyaya* elsewhere. Likewise, on the day that the Paco Fire Volunteer Association gave out Christmas gifts, Jaymar, who could earn a good income from selling cigarettes, went to observe. When he found that it was a mess, he left. When I talked with Ate Reyna about my experience seeking Christmas gifts, she was surprised, because she did not think they were important.

During Christmas season, homeless people also appreciated getting special meals, because in everyday life, they rarely had good food, which means a meal with meat. At least two places, Knox and a restaurant in Santa Cruz, prepared special meals for street people. Knox

organized a Christmas party for street people on the third Tuesday of December. Around 300 people attended in that week, which was twice the number of attendees as in regular weeks. The special food provided by Knox was rice, *adobong manok* (chicken cooked with soy sauce and vinegar), and a sweet. Those who were able to get food were happy, but those who could not were disappointed. As with other feeding programs, when the amount of food was insufficient for the number of attendees, people had to cut in line. I did too. Otherwise, I would not have gotten any food.

A restaurant in Santa Cruz also prepared food for the poor and was therefore the source of much enjoyment for homeless people. Around 300 people were waiting in front of the restaurant at 7 am even though they could not get any food until 10 AM. The food was “great.” It was rice with *adobong manok* and fried noodles. However, the most special aspect of this restaurant was that people could go back to get more food until the food ran out. Many people did this. Those who came early were able to get food three times. I got food twice. Some people were already full, but they still got in line again to get special food for their next meal. Just as with Christmas gifts, the food received, such as chicken with soy sauce, might not be important for those who could buy it at a canteen. Nevertheless, it was significant for many street people.

Aside from during the Christmas and New Year season, homeless people are able to feel enjoyment when they get special food unexpectedly. Some housed people want to do a good deed by giving alms to the poor, and homeless people are their target. For instance, sometimes my friends and I, who slept on the sidewalk of Otis Street, got *biyaya*. One night, as we were preparing to sleep, a car came and parked near us. Then a couple got out of the car and gave Styrofoam boxes of food to everyone. There was rice and *lechon baboy* (roasted pork) inside the boxes. Actually, in the Philippines, *lechon* is considered to be a delicious and expensive food.

We enjoyed eating it. I said that it was my first time eating *lechon* in the Philippines. Tony told me that I should write in my dissertation that I could eat *lechon* from *biyaya*. Consequently, I was able to get a feeling for how street life is sometimes happy. On the next day, Jhocas asked me whether I had gotten *lechon*. I said that I had. She had gotten some too. Those who got *biyaya* spoke happily about their good luck. It was quite special for them.

In their daily lives, homeless people enjoy getting special things, even if they might not be valuable for housed people. For example, every night, many homeless people go to get food at Bumbay. They usually get green bean curry, rice, and Indian flatbread (*chapati*). Only on some nights are they able to get something special, such as milk and sweets. Generally, Bumbay does not give milk and sweets on the first round. I do not know the reason. With the exception of milk and sweets, they give all the food items to everyone on the first round to make sure that everyone gets food. Those who are satisfied with their food go across the street to eat. However, many people line up for a second round, mostly because they need more food and some save it for their breakfast the next day. On nights when Bumbay gives milk and sweets, they give it in the second round. When people in line know that Bumbay will give out sweets and milk, they tell others to “have sweets” or “have milk.” Those who are eating on the opposite side of the street come back over to get in line with a smile. I have done the same. I have had the feeling that tonight is so good. I have had sweets. I have enjoyed them. Even though street life is hard, I can still enjoy it with something extra.

I recorded fieldnotes on the night that I got fruit salad. It was very special.

It is rare that Bumbay gives out fruit salad. When I got it, it was so special. Actually I went to Bumbay quite late, so I fell in line and was almost the last one. The rice had run out before me. The milk had also run out. A volunteer went inside to give us fruit salad with condensed milk. It was so sweet. He gave two pieces of sweets too. It has been almost two months that I have not gotten sweets. When I got them today, it was so good.

Luis looked very happy to have fruit salad. Rodel [a homeless volunteer at Bumbay] also asked me whether I got fruit salad (Fieldnotes, September 13, 2013).

Another example of enjoyment of getting something extra is getting promotional products for free. For instance, a company might offer its new products for free, like chocolate biscuit samples handed out at a skyway station. When homeless people know about such opportunities to get something for free, they tell others and go get it. They walk back and forth many times to get many samples. They enjoy having them. One person said while eating, “I got ten,” and asked me, “How about you, Boon?” “I only got seven,” I replied. Then we both laughed.

Endurable life on the street

Next, I will explore how homeless people think about their hardships on the street and how they define suffering. Street life is not always enjoyable. Since I already described street life in previous chapters, I will only emphasize certain aspects here. For example, hunger becomes normal for street life. Although homeless people can have food at several soup kitchens, the food is not served at appropriate times. Dinner at Bumbay is late, from 8.30 to 10 PM on some nights. People run as fast as they can to cross the street to get food, indicating that they really are hungry. When a homeless person at Chess Plaza wrote in my field notes in 2011 that “I am hungry,” I could not understand his feeling yet. However, the first time I had to wait for food at Bumbay, I could understand the meaning of hunger. I really understand the point that suffering is an unspeakable experience; therefore it is difficult to convey (Das 1996, 1997; Seligman 2010). Suffering needs to be experienced in order to understand it. I felt so sorry when I heard a boy say

to his sister while waiting for food at Paco, “I am already hungry.” His voice was plain. It was a simple expression, but it touched my heart.

During the rainy season, it is hard to find a place to sleep. At the beginning of my fieldwork in 2013, I slept at Baywalk, and it sometimes rained. I had to run to find a sleeping place. There are some buildings where street people can sleep when it rains. I experienced sleeping at such places and found that it was really uncomfortable, because many people had to sleep side by side. For instance, I slept at a covered bus stop near the US Embassy. Homeless people are only allowed to sleep there when it is raining. I went there to sleep when I saw signs of rain. Only a few people were sleeping there. However, when I woke up at night, I found there were many people sleeping next to me. My feet were near someone’s head. I would have had a problem for sure if I had kicked his head.

On another night, I went to another place. When I arrived there, many people had already occupied the area. There was only a small space left for me, but I had to sleep next to a man whose leg was injured. He told me that I could sleep next to him, but I had to be careful not to kick his injured leg. I lay down but I could not sleep. I worried that I would have trouble if I kicked his leg unintentionally while sleeping. Ben said when homeless people get wet, it is as pitiful as *basang sisiw*, an expression in Tagalog meaning “a little bird gets wet and cold.”

Some homeless people attribute their feelings of hardship to having to leave their families far away. For example, Jacob said that the hardship of street life is living far away from family. He described feeling jealous when he saw a family come for a picnic at Luneta. His dream is that all his five siblings might one day have dinner together. He said that many years had passed since all of his siblings had last met, because his two younger brothers were in the provinces, but he and his sisters were in Manila and Cavite Province, respectively. Mike always said to me that

street life was a mix between happiness and sadness, but that happiness came in brief moments only. Mostly street life was sadness. He said that he still could not accept the death of his mother three years ago. He still missed her. After his mother died, his siblings never met each other again. Later, Mike said to me one morning that he had drunk liquor the previous night because it was the anniversary of his mother's death. He said, "When parents, brothers and sisters have a dinner together, that is the sense of family." However, he is not sure whether he will ever be able to realize this sense for himself again.

Because they have a hard life, I attempted to determine whether homeless people think of their life as suffering, and how they define suffering. I found that there are two words that homeless people in Manila use to refer to suffering, namely "*pagtitiis*" and "*pagdurusa*" (as a noun). First, according to the dictionary, the noun "*pagtitiis*" means "endurance," while the verb "*magtiis*" means "to suffer" or "to endure" (Bulatao 1968). Therefore, "*tiis*" means "suffering" in the sense of enduring. The first time I heard homeless people say "*tiis*" was on the night that I was in line to get food from Bumbay. I was talking with a man who earned his income from selling various items such as locks and scrub sponges. I met him there some nights, but he did not always go to other feeding programs. I asked him how long he had been on the street. He thought for a while and said it was more than ten years since he had last gone back to his province, but he could still "*tiis*." At that time, I did not yet understand the meaning of "*tiis*." Later I asked Ate Reyna, and she explained to me that "*tiis*" meant "endure." She went on to say that street life was hard, but she could not do anything to overcome homelessness, so she would express the situation as "*tiis na lang*," meaning "just endure it."

Homeless people say "*tiis*" in everyday life to mean they can endure their hardship. For example, I asked Robin whether he was hungry, since he had had lunch at a feeding program at

Lawton, and then nothing to eat until Bumbay at 8 to 9 pm. He replied, “Of course I’m hungry, but I *tiis* (endure).” Likewise, Mark, who never went to feeding programs, shared that sometimes he did not have enough income. Whenever this happened, he said, “I only drink coffee since I can’t afford rice. I have to “*tiis*. ” Tatay Valdez also said that he had to “*tiis*” in everyday life.

Literature in nursing science describes the enduring mechanism as a negative way to cope with suffering, because sufferers do not confront the reality, and try to suppress it (Morse 2001:50). However, as in other cultures, such as Yap in Micronesia and Triqui immigrants from Mexico, homeless people in Manila think of endurance in a positive sense insofar as they *can* endure (“*nakakatiis*” in Tagalog) (Throop 2010:51; Holmes 2007:47). They say they can endure, meaning that they are strong enough to cope with difficulty. As long as they can still endure, they will not go crazy. According to Filipino worldviews, any unsatisfying experiences such as poverty, injustice, and sickness can be overcome by “patience, suffering, endurance” (Bulatao 1968: 78). It is related to religious values and the notion that God will come to help after other means have failed. Therefore “[a] person must suffer before gaining happiness” (Bulatao 1968:79). This worldview makes Filipino homeless people hopeful that their hardship will be overcome. In addition, since the majority of homeless people in Manila are male, enduring burdens or suffering is a characteristic of masculine identity too (Pingol 2001: 226).

The second Tagalog term for suffering is “*pagdurusa*. ” According to the dictionary, “*pagdurusa*” means “suffering” too. Nonetheless, more important than the dictionary definition is understanding how street people define suffering. Actually, I rarely heard homeless people say “*pagdurusa*” in everyday life. When I asked homeless people, some could not explain this term clearly, and many defined “suffering” as being similar to “difficulty.” Nonetheless, Martin explained it to me quite clearly. He is the one who defined his life on the street as *pagdurusa*.

“*Pagdurusa* means you have done something wrong in the past, and now you’re getting the result of it,” he explained. He used his own life as an example, saying, “I shouldn’t be here. I used to have a better life, but because of what I did to my family, I’m here. That’s *pagdurusa*. I’m suffering here.” To clarify the point even more, he further explained that suffering is a kind of punishment that he received because of what he had done. The term *pagdurusa* is related to *parusa* (punishment).

According to Martin, suffering involves a sense of sorrow and being punished. Others elaborated that suffering is related to sin, or *kasalanan* in Tagalog. For example, Gorny explained that suffering is a sense of regret, or *sisi* in Tagalog, relating to the commission of a sin. In this respect, Ito told me that his life was not *pagdurusa*. Instead, he referred to a scandalous person who was in jail because she had cheated the government out of money and said that she should be *pagdurusa* because of what she had done. Likewise, Bona said that she was not *pagdurusa* even though she lived on the street. She said that those who were in jail should *dusa* (the root word of *pagdurusa*), because they had committed a sin. Similarly, Luis said that he was enduring hardship, but he was not *nagdurusa* (past tense form of *pagdurusa*), because he had not done anything wrong in his life.

The explanation that connects “*pagdurusa*” to sin accords with some street people who affirm that their life on the street is filled with suffering. Aside from Martin, Vincente also accepted that he was suffering (*nagdurusa*). Vincente strongly disagreed with the notion that street life is happy. He heard me discussing with others the phrase “hard but happy” while we were preparing to sleep one night at Otis. He interrupted us, saying, “How can you say you’re happy here? There’s not enough food, there’s no place to sleep, and you miss your family!” I asked, “Is it *pagdurusa*?” He replied, “*Pagdurusa talaga* (really suffering).” He went on to say

that he used to get an allowance of 4,000 pesos every month. Now, every night before he went to sleep, he asked himself how long he had been on the street, when he would be able to go back to his family, and what he should do to return to his family. On another day, I was discussing with someone the idea that street life is delicious. Vincente disagreed again, asking, “Who said street life is delicious?” He asserted that to be happy, people have to live with their family, not on the street. His word accords with the argument that living with their family is an important aspect of happiness of Filipinos (Gudmundsdottir 2013). Both Martin and Vincente had been involved with drugs, causing them to leave their family homes and become homeless.

Tata is another person who used to use drugs and defined his street life as *pagdurusa*. He recounted his experience, noting that it was his own fault to have used drugs. He said that at that time, he thought he was using drugs to relieve his stress over his father’s amputation. However, when he used drugs over a longer period, his stress came back again. He has already learned an important lesson. He felt he should not have been on the street, but he was because he had committed a sin. Tata wants to change his life so it is not *pagdurusa* on the street.

Kristine also said that her life on the street was full of suffering (*pagdurusa*). She recounted her bad luck, relating that she had lost her money while coming back to the Philippines. Her appearance was better than other homeless people, but she was still suffering. Almost in tears, she said that her siblings had warned her not to go abroad, but she was stubborn. She said that her karma had caused her to end up on the street. Kristine is an example of someone who explains *pagdurusa* in terms of sin or karma.

The last example of those who had a good life before and end up on the street because they did wrong with their family is Tatay Feliz. He recounted his situation:

“On my first night on the street, I felt sorry for myself. I asked myself why I had left my home. In fact, I still have a home. It’s because I was angry with my situation [he had quarreled with his wife, because he was always drunk]. So I ran away. I’d like to go back to my home, but I’m ashamed. Men have pride. My family should come to ask me to go back home, but they haven’t. How can I go back home if they don’t ask me to go back? So I’m living here.”

Tatay Feliz has been on the street for more than ten years already. He says that street life is really *pagdurusa*. He feels sad about his life and sometimes cries.

Later, I learned that much depended on the Tagalog term that I used to ask people whether they felt their life was full of suffering. If I asked homeless people whether their life was *tiis*, they were prone to reply “yes,” describe how difficult their life was and how they endured it. By contrast, if I used the word “*pagdurusa*,” not many homeless people would agree. For instance, I asked Jhocas whether her life was *pagtitiis*, and she replied in the affirmative. However, when I asked whether her life was *pagdurusa*, she replied in the negative.

In addition, people’s pathways before becoming homeless greatly influence the way they think about suffering. It is ironic that four out of five people (Martin, Kristine, Vincente, and Tatay Feliz) who said that their life was *pagdurusa* came from good backgrounds compared to other homeless people. Among them, three people (Martin, Kristine, and Vincente) have good appearances. They are always clean. Their material situation is better than other street people, but they still think they are suffering because they feel sorrow for what they have done. Many homeless people have done something wrong in the past and have sinned, but they can accept the facts and move on with their life on the streets, such as Pepe and Isko. By contrast, Martin, Vincente, Kristine, and Tatay Feliz compare their previous good life with their current, difficult street life. It makes it hard for them to accept their present life. When they tell themselves that their lives should be better than this, they destroy their self-esteem. They are suffering.

In contrast, Rigel, who survives by scavenging and is sometimes bullied, insists that street life is not *pagdurusa*. He explains his position by pointing out that on the street, he can get much assistance. Street life is not difficult for him. Pepe, who does not have a regular job, used drugs and was in jail before, also says that street life is not suffering, whether in the sense of *pagtitiis* or *pagdurusa*. Both Rigel and Pepe do not have good memories of their earlier family life. Therefore, it is easy for them to accept street life and maintain their sense of self-worth.

Hard but happy: Salvaging their dignity

Now I consider the phrase “hard but happy”, which I highlighted at the beginning of this dissertation. This phrase is widely used by street people. For instance, in my first month in Luneta in 2013, I hung out at Karabao with Ate Reyna’s group. Nanay Luisa saw that I ate food from a plastic bag and kept another plastic bag for going to Bumbay. She saw how I had adapted to street life and said, “*Masaya pero mahirap*” (happy but hard). She told me that street life was fine, although it was hard. Another phrase with almost the same meaning is “*masarap na mahirap*, ” (enjoyable but hard). Among my 100 informants, 82 persons agree with this phrase.

I have argued that homeless people’s enjoyment is the result of their adaptation to street life. It is hard to say that they are really happy with their life. Therefore, greater scrutiny about why the majority of homeless people agree with the phrase “hard but happy” is needed. I argue that expressing and telling themselves that street life is hard but happy is a cognitive coping strategy to maintain their self-worth and recover their dignity. A conversation I had with Nico and Kevin illuminates this issue. Nico always presented himself as having lived on the street longer than many others and also as being happy. Kevin heard our conversation and intervened. He asked Nico whether he really thought that life on the street was happy. Nico replied in the

affirmative, but without much enthusiasm, whereupon Kevin asserted, “Many people are here because they have no choice. You have no choice. And you said you’re happy. I don’t think so.” Nico did not respond.

About one year later, I was close to Nico and discussed street life with him again. He said that he was on the street because he had no choice. Street life was just fine because there were no problems on the street. He did not have his own house. His brothers and sisters had a house, but they were not his real brothers and sisters. His parents were separated. Nico went on to speculate that some might question why he did not work when he had a good body and was able to work. He explained that he did not work because he had a low level of education and it was difficult to get a job. Those who had a house lived at home. He had no house. He followed God. He meant attending a Bible study class and getting free food. He commented further that those who live on the street have different problems. Finally, Nico said, “For me, I am here because I have no choice.”

Nico’s explanation clearly shows that he had considered options to leave the street, such as going back to live with his siblings or applying for a job. Yet he knew that these options were not viable for him. Therefore, he had to continue living on the street and tell himself that his life was not so bad. Kevin had said clearly that he disagreed with the phrase “hard but happy,” insofar as he was on the street because he had no choice. However, not many people think as Kevin does. Instead of saying that they have failed and have no choice, homeless people are prone to thinking that their life is hard, but they can still be happy. They think positively in order to maintain their sense of self-worth.

Another example of complex feelings toward street life can be found in Tatay Feliz’s comments. He described both the positive and negative sides of street life. He said that street life

was both fine and bad. People could get gifts and also be fooled. Street people were both educated and uneducated. He once thought that he had a true friend. He lent 100 pesos to this man. However, after that, the man acted like he did not know Tatay Feliz. Tatay Feliz explained that he had not grown up on the street, but he now had to work hard to survive. He collected recyclable items and had saved his money, but then someone had stolen it while he was sleeping. Tatay Feliz then saved up enough money to buy a cell phone. He was proud of his daughter. I always saw him looking at a picture of his daughter on his cell phone. He liked listening to the radio on his cell phone too. However, his cell phone was stolen. He said that he had to save money again to buy a new cell phone. He was sad about his life and cried sometimes. Nonetheless, he said that it was all right for him to live on the street. When he wanted to have peace of mind, he went to the sea at Baywalk to be alone there. He agreed that street life was hard but happy.

Tatay Feliz's chances in life resemble Nico's. He has little opportunity to overcome homelessness. He is too old to apply for a job and cannot return to his family. For me, however, it is not convincing to claim that Tatay Feliz's life is really happy. As Kevin said, people do not have a better choice, so they have to accept street life. Nico and Tatay Feliz similarly realize that it is hard for them to overcome homelessness, and they have already gotten used to street life. Instead of telling themselves that they are failing and cannot overcome homelessness, however it is better to tell themselves that street life is acceptable and enjoyable. By telling themselves that they are fine on the street, Nico and Tatay Feliz are able to maintain their self-worth by contending that they have not failed.

It is interesting that on the one hand, Tatay Feliz said he wanted to go back to his home, but was ashamed to do so. His family did not ask him to return home, so his pride prevented him

from returning. On the other hand, he said that it was all right for him to live on the street and agreed that street life was hard but happy. Literature on social suffering points out that feeling ashamed is a symptom of suffering (Duffy 2005; Frost and Hoggett 2008). It seems contradictory that Tatay Feliz was ashamed, but could declare that he was happy. Besides Tatay Feliz, many other homeless people described above also expressed the feeling of being ashamed, yet were able to present their life on the street as being enjoyable. This contradiction needs explanation.

Shame (*hiya*) is a significant concept in lowland Philippine society. Frank Lynch (1968) explained about it by pointing to the importance of being accepted by one's family and friends as a good member of society (1968:5). By contrast, when Filipinos realize that they are not accepted by the community, they will be ashamed or *hiya*. The meaning of *hiya* is “the *uncomfortable feeling that accompanies awareness of being in a socially unacceptable position, or performing a socially unacceptable action*” (Lynch 1968:16. Italics are original). Filipinos are taught they should be aware of social sanctions if they do something unacceptable in community, because others will condemn them as shameless or *walang hiya* (Lynch 1968:16). When one realizes that he/she has done a socially undesirable action, he/she will say “*nahihya ako*” (I am ashamed).

Many scholars similarly point out that Filipinos prefer to avoid experiences that may cause them to be ashamed, that is those situations when they know they are in an unacceptable position, such as when they cannot fulfill their social roles or when being humiliated. For example, Naomi Hosoda's study of the relationship between those who migrate from Samar Island to work in Manila and their hometown kin shows that those who cannot support their families in the hometown “keep a distance from the village community. By doing so shame or

confrontation can be avoided” (2012:381). Benedict J. Kerkvliet’s study points out that the common reaction of Filipino construction workers when they are ashamed is to walk out (1990). Workers rarely confront their employers and manager. Rutten described the memory of a farm worker that even at the festive meals, farm workers are too ashamed to sit at the table with their patrons because they do not know how to display the appropriate manners (Rutten 2007).

Likewise, Michael Pinches’s study of the working class in Manila points out that when the poor accompany persons with higher status than their own, they feel uncomfortable and say they are ashamed (1991:178-179). He proposes further that the working class deal with social inequality and minimize their feeling of shame by “avoidance and social closure” (1991:180). They keep a distance from the rich and prefer to socialize in their own communities. They can feel that they are more accepted in their own community where people are relatively egalitarian, as opposed to dealing with their employers and government officials. In this context, the poor can earn social acceptance from their community and “are able to assert, in common, the dignity and humanity” (Pinches 1991: 180). Pinches’s analysis is in accordance with Lynch’s explanation that social acceptance is importance for Filipinos to earn the feeling of self-esteem or *amor proprio* in Tagalog (Lynch 1968: 17-18).

Drawing from these studies, I argue that homeless people in Manila do the same. Living on the street is a strategy to escape the situation of being ashamed in either the past or future and to regain social acceptance or self –esteem. Therefore, they rationalize that street life is all right for them. Many homeless people recounted that feeling ashamed was a pivotal moment before they became homeless. For example, Jhocas was ashamed that she was still young, but was drunk very often and had to rely on Nanay Bina instead of helping her. Therefore, Jhocas left Nanay Bina’s makeshift house and became homeless. Jordan was ashamed that he had spent a

lot of his family's money for his studies, but he could not succeed working abroad as his father expected. When he lost his job, he did not want to go back to his hometown in the province and he became homeless in Manila. Anthony was unemployed and ashamed to stay with his friends because he could not share the rent. Therefore, he decided to leave the room that he shared with them and lived on the street. Tony was ashamed that he, as an older brother, could not contribute to the mortgage payments of his family's house and take care of his daughter, leading him to homelessness.

These people were ashamed due to situations in the past. Therefore, becoming homeless was a way to avoid the situations that brought shame. Jaymar is another good example. Before becoming homeless, Jaymar had stomach problems and had to leave his job, but he was too ashamed to ask for help from his sister because he had never helped his sister before. Finally, Jaymar said, "I wanted to cure myself on the street." I interpreted that Jaymar's words as meaning that he did not just want to cure his stomach ailment physically, but that he also wanted to "cure" his feelings of shame. Later, Jaymar could overcome his shame and adapted to street life well. He prefers selling cigarettes to going back to work as a security guard.

Homeless people can diminish their feeling of shame by socializing with their comrades. Housed people may sometimes not respect homeless people. Therefore, homeless people mostly prefer socializing with their comrades to avoid being humiliated. Similarly, homeless people enjoy having many friends on the street. In my analysis, their enjoyment of having many friends is not only because they can share with and help each other, but also because they are equally homeless, so they do not need to be ashamed in front of each other.

Accordingly, homeless people gradually salvage their dignity. Several cognitive survival strategies that I proposed in Chapter Seven illustrate how homeless people recover their pride.

For example, they tell themselves that at least they have made their own decision to live on the street. Some salvage their self-worth by saying that they can stand on their own on the street. They do not need to rely on others. Many others compare their previous life full of conflict with their relatives with street life where they can get along with their comrades on the street. Therefore, they are fine. Several people blame the government and unkind families for being the cause of their homelessness. They deflect their shame by saying that it is not their personal fault (Bentebya-Kyomuhendo 2015:120). In the same way, telling themselves that street life can be happy is a way to convince themselves that living on the street does not mean they have failed, since street life can be fine. They can have peace of mind and be free on the street. All of these are cognitive coping strategies used by homeless people to recover their dignity and move their life forward.

Similarly, homeless people avoid future situations of shame. Many homeless people state that they were too ashamed to go back to their hometown because they could not fulfill the expectations placed upon them. For example, as described above, Roberto said that he did not want to return to his hometown because he had left there nearly thirty years ago and people would expect that he should have achieved success and earned well in Manila. He would be ashamed if he went back to his hometown with empty hands. Similarly, Kristine said that she was ashamed to go back home because she had gone to work abroad, but had lost her money when she came back to the Philippines. Some in her hometown might not believe her bad luck story and they would insult her.

Likewise, Jordan said to me that he would go back to his hometown only when he could go back with pride. I asked him further what he meant. He explained that having a decent job would allow him to return with pride. If he could not attain this goal, he was fine on the street.

Likewise, I talked with Ate Reyna about her plan to return to her hometown. She had left her hometown because she did not want to be a “burden” on her nieces and nephews. She said that she would return if she could prove that she could succeed at something in Manila. Otherwise, she would remain on the street. She expressed her feelings saying, “When you are here, you eat *pride*.” It is quite clear that pride was important for Jordan and Ate Reyna. They had pride when they were on the street, but they would be ashamed if they went back to face their relatives and friends in their hometown.

Although it is hard to say that homeless people are really proud of being homeless, they feel better on the street than facing their relatives at home. It is on the street that they are able to maintain their self-esteem and avoid situations where they feel ashamed—avoiding situations where they lose their self-esteem (face to face). If their family encountered them on the street, they would lose their self-esteem and be ashamed. When they are not sure whether they will be able to succeed in overcoming homelessness, they prefer to continue living on the street, which is a safer place for them, rather than taking the risk of being shamed. Gwendolyn A. Dordick (1997) argues that homeless people have something to lose if they leave the street. It is their friendships and networks. I argue further that homeless people in Manila do not leave the street because they do not want to lose their dignity. Although their dignity might not be meaningful from others people’s points of view, it is worth too much for homeless people themselves to lose.

To summarize, this chapter analyzes how homeless people think about their life in terms of happiness and suffering. First of all, the analysis should recognize that homeless people are heterogeneous, hence they should be thought about in various ways. Nevertheless, in general, I propose that street people are not really happy with their life, but they can still sometimes enjoy it. Their enjoyment is the result of their adaptation to street life. They lower their expectations

and enjoy it whenever they get something extra. The poorer they are, the more easily they can enjoy their street life. By contrast, homeless people who have a regular income have a lesser degree of appreciation of small things.

In addition, because homeless people have different backgrounds, they think about hardship on the street in different ways. Homeless people who come from good backgrounds are prone to think of the good life they used to have, what they did wrong in the past, and believe that they should not be on the street. Due to this way of thinking, they feel sad about their life and diminish their own self-worth. They are suffering in the sense of regret. By contrast, homeless people who do not come from good backgrounds and might have done something wrong can accept street life easily. Thinking positively, they feel that although street life is hard, they can still endure and survive. They emphasize their ability to survive in the face of hardship. They can succeed in maintaining their sense of self-worth. They are not suffering in the sense of sorrow.

The majority of homeless people agree that street life is hard but happy, not just because they can find some enjoyment on the street. However, the expression “hard but happy” is a significant coping strategy used by homeless people to tell themselves that they have not failed. They could be fine on the street. Particularly, many homeless people have experienced being ashamed, and therefore need to overcome the feeling of shame and recover their dignity. It is on the street that homeless people gradually escape the feeling of shame stemming from the past and avoid potential shame that might arise in the future. In this situation, it makes sense that homeless people prefer to think of their life as hard but happy, because doing so enables them to recover their dignity and maintain their self-worth. It is not a matter of whether they are really happy or not.

Chapter 11

“I’ve gotten used to it already”

“Hey Boon, you’ve interviewed many of us. Today I will interview you. What do you think about street people?”, Ben asked me on the night of April 11, 2014. It was my last night on the street in Manila, because the following day I would go back to Thailand, my home country. That night my friends and I had a simple “party” on the sidewalk, where I had slept for almost a year. Although Ben had already begun working and living in a canteen at Quiapo, I appreciated his intention to join our party that night.

However his question was hard. I could not answer it clearly. I had spent fourteen months on the streets and come to realize that the life of street people is complicated and far more diverse than I had previously imagined. That night, I answered Ben broadly by explaining that there were many reasons that pushed people to become homeless. Sometimes I realized that it was hard for people to get a job, but I knew several homeless people who had refused to take one when it was offered. Some homeless people seemed to prefer street life to being employed and having a house. I told Ben that I would highlight and explain this issue in my thesis. I had discussed my research plans with Ben many times. On the issue of happiness and suffering, I told him that I was still not sure. I could sense that people enjoyed street life sometimes, but it was hard to say that they were really happy. The conversation between me and Ben could not go into depth that night, because many people had joined us and we talked about various topics.

This concluding chapter will emphasize the ways in which street life is complicated and homeless people are heterogeneous. It is not easy to make generalizations about their lives. They

have different reasons for becoming homeless. They also have different ways of survival on the street and think about their street life differently too. Although I will try to conceptualize life on the street in this chapter, I realize that homeless people are not all the same.

Structural violence in camouflaged forms

Literature on homelessness emphasizes that the causes of homelessness are derived from structural and personal factors. I agree with this summary, but this ethnography clearly argues that structural factors, particularly the scarcity of employment opportunities, are the most fundamental cause of homelessness in Manila, the Philippines. Drawing from Paul Farmer's concept of structural violence, poverty is the result of an exploitative system, not the personal failures of the poor (Farmer 1997, 2003; Chopp 1986). Homelessness as a form of "extreme poverty" (Timmer et al 1994) should be considered as the result of structural violence as well.

The structural violence of homelessness in the Philippines is a legacy of 380 years of the colonization by Spain and the US, followed by the 13-year Marcos dictatorship that exacerbated the social polarization between the rich and the poor. From the 1980s to the 2000s, the Philippines was not attractive for foreign investors, and the industrial sector is developed slowly. As a result, unemployment and underemployment rates in the Philippines have remained high.

C Wright Mills argued that if only a few people were unemployed, this could be due to the characteristics of the unemployed persons themselves; however, if many people were unemployed, there was something wrong with the system (Mills [1959] 2000:9; Dugan 2007). Millions of Filipinos are unemployed and ten million are underemployed. Therefore, I argue that the structure of the Philippine economy has created the necessary conditions that have resulted in widespread homelessness. Filipino employers take advantage of having plenty of unemployed

people either by excluding some people from the labor market, or by paying them far less than minimum wage. As a result, those who have characteristics that are unappealing to employers, such as having criminal record, a history of drug abuse, or even being elderly, are exploited and excluded from the labor market, and therefore are susceptible to becoming homeless. They are victims of structural violence, because their life chances are limited by the system.

Nevertheless, not all unemployed people become homeless. The majority of unemployed people are cushioned by their family or kinship networks. Only unemployed people who do not have strong family support become homeless. In the Philippines, since the social welfare system is weak, the family functions as a social safety net to support its members, when they face life crises, such as unemployment or sickness (Medina 2001). As such, those who have family problems and lack social support when they face difficulty are more susceptible to becoming homeless. Most of my informants (82%) have family problems, reflecting their weak family support. The rising number of homeless people in the early twenty-first century indicates that families in the Philippines cannot function as well as they could in the past in absorbing life crises. In sum, two major factors causing homelessness in Manila are unemployment and family issues.

Family problems need to be examined closely, because some might not see how family problems connect to structural violence. My research suggests that family problems are not purely personal issues, but are related to poverty in various ways. For example, many homeless people in Manila were born into poor families. Their parents could not support or protect them well. As a result, some of them have had to work since they were children, and others ran away from their irresponsible parents and abusive relatives. They are victims of structural violence, which is then transformed to family violence (Maxwell 2011; Sta. Maria et al 2014).

Furthermore, the life histories of homeless people reveal that many conflicts between homeless people and their families happened after the people became unemployed, indicating that the conflict in the families actually stemmed from economic tensions. In a poor family, when someone is unemployed, it means he or she adds a “burden” to the family. As a result, conflict in a family can happen easily because a poor family has limited resources to support its members.

Moreover, some homeless men leave their families after being unemployed when they are unable to fulfill their expected role as breadwinner. They become victims of structural violence which is merged with social violence (Kleinman 2000). Filipino masculine ideology affects gendered pathways of becoming homeless. Filipino men are expected to play the role of provider for their family. Therefore, when men cannot fulfill this role, they are ashamed to stay at home. They leave their house and became homeless. In contrast, women who are unemployed can stay with their relatives more comfortably than men. As a consequence, homeless men outnumber homeless women in Manila.

The urban development of Metro Manila also contributes to homelessness as well. Several governments and private sector urban development projects have dramatically increased the price of urban land, causing landowners to protect their land from squatters (Kelly 2003; Choi 2014). Hence, the urban poor today can no longer create makeshift housing as the urban poor in the past could by settling on abandoned land. While my ethnography does not support the hypothesis that slum demolition creates street homelessness directly, it does highlight how slum demolition and the high price of urban land limit the chances of the urban poor to have access to affordable housing.

Comparing my findings on the causes of homelessness in Manila to research on the causes of homelessness in developed cities reveals two similar factors: unemployment and the

decline of affordable housing. However, the particular cause of homelessness in Manila that is different from other cities is associated with family problems. Although some research in developed countries explores family problems, family problems are not mentioned as the major cause of homelessness in the US, UK and Japan (Fitzpatrick and Christian 2006; Hasegawa 2005). Only literature on homeless women and young homeless people mentions domestic violence as the main reason for homelessness in the US and South Africa (Liebow 1993; Jasinski et al 2010; Roschelle 2008; Meth 2003). However the family problems in my study are broader than domestic violence. In another context, some studies of homelessness in Spain and Puerto Rico argue that family problems are the main factor causing homelessness (Vazquez et al 1999; Julia and Harnett 1999). The explanation of the research in these two countries is the same as my analysis, namely those who have family problems lack social support. However, while research in Spain and Puerto Rico focuses on a sole causal factor of homelessness, my research explores multiple, connected factors that result in homelessness in the Philippines.

Nonetheless, the limitation of this ethnography is that I do not directly investigate how mental illness contributes to creating street people in Manila, because mentally-ill homeless people are different and separated from the homeless people with whom I associated. In the US and UK, many studies have pointed out that the decline of social welfare, particularly the closure of mental institutions, has resulted in increasing number of the mentally ill populating the streets. These homeless people with psychiatric troubles still go to soup kitchens and institutions for homeless people (Hopper 1988). However in the Philippines, mentally ill homeless people tend to roam around and isolate themselves from others, so I have not interacted with them. Other homeless people use a different term to call mentally ill homeless people, *taong grasa* (human grease), reflecting that mentally ill homeless people are considered as separate from and are

lower status than other populations on the street. Indeed, the connection between mental illness and homelessness still needs to be specifically investigated in the future.

Street life and other forms of violence

When people become homeless, they need a period of time to adjust to street life. They have to learn how to live outside, and their first priority is how to find food to survive. Aside from attending several soup kitchens that provide food for the poor, many homeless people improvise odd jobs to earn money, such as selling things and offering services. The context of Manila City, which is not well organized or well managed, allows street people to create these informal jobs (Kusaka 2010). By contrast, these improvised jobs are rare in cities in developed countries, where vendors and parking on the streets are heavily regulated, and the social exclusion of homeless people from public spaces has increased (Amster 2003; Fitzpatrick et al 2012).

This ethnography reveals that street life is imbued with several forms of violence. Physical violence presents the most obvious form of violence, as it can happen easily in a crowded area, where people compete to get food and other resources. Drinking on the street can cause quarrels and physical fighting also. Moreover, homeless people can be harmed by the police, as illustrated by the case of the two homeless people who were shot dead by the police while committing a crime, instead of being arrested and brought to court. Since homeless people spend most of their time in public spaces, they are at a greater risk of becoming victims of car accidents. Oftentimes, homeless people get into accidents, and because they have no money, they are unable to receive medical attention as public hospitals frequently lack medical supplies. This

poor quality of public health is another form of structural violence that does harm to the lives of homeless people.

Next, this ethnography explores *everyday violence*, or how social mechanisms reproduce and routinize social injustice (Scheper-Hughes 1992). I propose that while several faith-based organizations serve homeless people food to help them survive on the street, they do not assist homeless people in overcoming homelessness. Most faith-based organizations focus more on religious devotion than the life of homeless people. In their view, street life is fine as long as homeless people continued praying to God. Only a few programs of these religious-based organizations help street people overcome homelessness, but they do it in a way that reproduces an exploitative system. They push homeless people to work and accept pay that is much lower than minimum wage by saying that homeless people have to think “realistically” about the jobs that can get. Moreover, many faith-based organizations disseminate the discourse that people become homeless because of their personal failures, such as vice and sin. They overlook the structural causes of homelessness. Staff of faith-based organizations de-politicize homelessness, and take for granted that homeless people should accept social injustice.

Government officials play ambiguous roles in dealing with homelessness. Some offices, such as the Street Dweller Care Unit (SDCU) of MMDA and Reception and Action Center (RAC) of the City of Manila employ “rescue operations” to take homeless people off the streets and release them later without providing substantial assistance. They are a part of everyday violence that ignores the lives of street people. On the other hand, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) provides assistance programs for homeless people. Among these programs, the Cash for Work Program helps connect homeless people with temporary jobs, such as working as a street sweeper for 342 pesos a day. Although the payment is less than the

official minimum wage of 466 pesos a day, homeless people who can get this job, appreciate it. However, the program only supports individuals for a short period of time. The maximum period is one year. After that homeless people usually return to the street again because they cannot get a job that pays them an “appropriate” rate. In addition, not many street people can benefit from the program.

When I saw that homeless people were glad to get jobs as street sweepers, I realized that street people are willing to work if they can receive “appropriate” payment. They do not have a problem with their work ethic (Wagner 1994). Even though they receive below minimum wage, they are satisfied with the job. However, as long as the labor market cannot expand the number of available jobs, it will be hard for homeless people to overcome homelessness. Although they try to accept work, the jobs homeless people can get generally do not pay well enough to motivate them to keep working for very long. As a result, many people go back and forth between the street and working low-paid jobs. Some call the period of their homelessness “taking a rest.” It implies pleasantness rather than having a negative connotation. Consequently, it is not surprising that many homeless people say street life is hard but happy.

Endurable and enjoyable life on the street

The hardest question that this ethnography tries to answer is how homeless people think about their life in terms of happiness and suffering. I answer this question by explaining how homeless people think about their life based on their different pathways of becoming homeless and their ways of life on the street. Some homeless people have a job and “good” income, which is not much different from people who have a home, such as those who earn money from selling cigarettes or being a regular helper at a canteen. When these people can adapt to street life, they

are satisfied with it, because they can earn a regular income, but their expenses are far less than those who have to rent accommodations. Consequently, they can buy their own food and they are not hungry. Their life is not really hard, and their sense of happiness is not much different from housed people.

Some homeless people have less income and survive by attending feeding programs. It can be said that they are the poorest among the poor. Their income is less than \$1.25 a day. Nevertheless these people can enjoy street life as well. They can find positive sides of living on the streets, such as “being free.” Other homeless people like their odd jobs, selling things and offering services, because they have no boss. They can work and stop whenever they want. In contrast, if they were employed more regularly in the informal sector, they might be ordered by an employer to do hard work and get far lower wages. Marxist theory explains that human beings need human dignity, and the important aspect of dignity is freedom, but the working conditions of labor in capitalism destroy human dignity (Marx 1964; Hodsan 2001; Friedman et al 2015). Homeless people also pursue human dignity, but not in a way that changes capitalism. Rather, they employ “weapons of the weak” (Scott 1985) by escaping from exploitation by an abusive employer and refusing to work for payment far-below-minimum wage. Instead, they do odd jobs on the street and are relatively free.

When homeless people, particularly those who earn little in daily life, can adjust to street life, they lower their material expectations. Therefore when they get something extra, they enjoy it to the fullest extent. For example, they enjoy having real food: a meal with rice and meat. They enjoy receiving gifts, which might cost only 100-200 pesos (\$3-5), but are still meaningful for them. They can find other sources of enjoyment as well. They go to feeding programs and enjoy

prayer sessions, because they are a form of recreation that they can enjoy. They can even joke about their homelessness.

By drawing on the voices of homeless people in Manila, this ethnography argues that structural violence creates social injustice, but does not always create suffering. A popular definition of suffering in anthropology is that suffering entails losing a sense of self-worth (Young 1997; Honkasalo 2006; Wilkinson 2005). Because my research shows that the majority of homeless people can make sense of their life and maintain feelings of self-worth, I argue that homelessness does not necessarily result in suffering. Although many homeless people think about street life as suffering in terms of endurance (*pagtitiis*), this term implies a positive meaning insofar as they are *able* to endure the hardship. Endurance does not threaten homeless people's self-worth. Only those homeless people who think about their sins or good life in the past will think that street life is suffering in the sense of sorrow and being punished (*pagdurusa*). Their self-worth is then threatened. However, homeless people with this outlook did not constitute the majority of my informants.

Two major factors account for why homeless people in Manila are able to maintain their self-esteem. First, because poverty is so widespread in the Philippines, homeless people experience far less discrimination in the Philippines than homeless people in developed countries. For example, in Japan, youngsters beat homeless people, because they think that homeless people are too lazy to work (Okamoto 2004; Belcher and Deforge 2012). In contrast, public opinion in the Philippines, as reflected in the newspaper, discusses unemployment as the cause of street homelessness and blames the government rather than homeless people as individuals (Manila Times, March 29, 2015; Balita, Pebrero 28, 2014).

Second, as many scholars have argued previously (Kleinman 1988; Adam 1998; William 2004), my research suggests that the experience of suffering depends on the social values of each society. While some experiences might be counted as suffering in some societies, the same experiences might not be counted as such in others society (Adam 1998; Honkasalo 2009). For example, research on homelessness in the US reports that the homeless people do not like to be inspected before entering a shelter because they feel they are being treated inhumanely (Hoffman and Coffey 2008). However in Manila, staff and volunteers of soup kitchens regularly suspect that homeless people take more food than they should. Therefore feeding programs, such as KKK and Lacson, stamp the arms of homeless people to indicate that they have received food already so as to prevent them from returning to the line a second time. However none of the homeless people with whom I spoke felt such treatment was inhumane.

Often times, I experienced things that I felt were discriminatory actions toward homeless people, yet when I discussed these occasions with homeless people, they disagreed. For example, the feeding program at Knox makes homeless people take a Bible quiz. Those who correctly complete the quiz receive food, a meal with rice. Many people told me that I should study the Bible to answer the quizzes to be able to get food. I was uncomfortable seeing people compete to answer the quizzes and get food for their reward. After a clergyman would ask a question, homeless people would energetically compete to answer the question. They would raise their hand as fast as they could. Some would approach a staff member, who held a microphone, to answer the question. In my view, only animals should either compete or perform to get food, not human beings. Perhaps such a competition would be permissible if the reward was something else, not food. Research in the US also reports that homeless people feel they do not want to be ordered and unable to make their own decision, because it seems they are “treated like a child or

an animal,” and it undermines their dignity (Miller and Keys 2001:344). I discussed this issue with other street people, but they said that it was not a problem for them.

Similarly, Knox offers baths to homeless people. However there is no bathroom. Therefore Knox asks a fire truck to provide water, and homeless people take a bath on a basketball court behind the church. While I never took a bath there, I saw a video that a staff member recorded and showed on a screen before the beginning of a prayer session. The video showed men bathing shirtless, but in shorts, while women wore all their clothes due to lack of privacy. Whenever the homeless people wanted water, they would walk to the man who controlled the water hose and he would spray them with water. It reminded me of the way that people bathe a dog. I was uncomfortable, because I felt people were being treated “inhumanely.” However, when I shared my opinions with other street people, nobody agreed with me. They said that it was fine.

Another incident that I felt was discriminatory occurred at my sleeping place at Otis one evening. A taxi had been damaged and had to park close to where we were sleeping on the sidewalk. Although we were on the sidewalk, there was no step between the road and the sidewalk so cars could drive right next to where we slept. The taxi driver called his friend to check the car, and later another taxi came and parked near our sleeping place. It was about 9 PM. Some people were preparing to sleep, while others were already lying down. When the taxi driver was able to fix his taxi, he started his engine and drove away fast, close to the people who were already lying down, almost hitting us. I got angry and exclaimed to my friend, Tony, that we were being treated poorly. It seems our life is valueless, I told him. However, Tony did not feel as I did. He said “Boon, don’t get angry. This is the way we are treated. Our life is just like

this. Nobody cares about us.” He suggested that I not think about it seriously, otherwise I would get high-blood pressure.

Just have gotten used to it

Tony’s suggestion reminded me to think about how homeless people have to adapt to their situations in order to survive. I always heard street people say, “I have gotten used to it already” (*nasanay na ako*). That is the last key phrase of this ethnography. This dissertation began from the phrase “hard but happy” and asked how street life could be happy. The idea that street life *can* be happy directly contrasts with the general perception that street life necessarily entails suffering. However, my ethnography shows the complex life on the street and reveals that it is hard to say that homeless people are really happy with street life. Therefore, the phrase “hard but happy” is a coping strategy of homeless people to overcome their feeling of shame and recover their dignity by telling themselves that it is not so bad to live on the street.

Furthermore, when I was doing my fieldwork, I realized that both happiness and suffering are extreme words. In my assessment, street life is neither really happy nor suffering. When homeless people reflect on their situation, they think about their lives in terms of endurance and enjoyment. However, most do not reflect on their lives on a day-to-day basis. Rather, street life is just their way of life and they “have gotten used to it”; it becomes part of their daily routine. The first time I heard “have gotten used to it” was from Martin, when I started doing fieldwork in January 2013. Martin told me about the conditions of street life, such as hunger and how he was unable to shower, and then he said it was all right for him because he had gotten used to it already.

Later I always heard “*nasanay*.” (get used to it) from many homeless people. For instance, Santos asked me why he did not see me sleeping at Baywalk as I did before. I replied to him that it was because of the rainy season. It was difficult for me to wake up at night and run to find a sleeping place. Therefore I changed to sleep at Otis. I asked him how he managed to sleep there when it rained. He replied “*nasanay na ako*,” (I have gotten used to it already). It was no longer difficult for him. On another occasion, Eddy, a drunken homeless person, explained to me in English that “homeless are no longer suffering, because they are immersed in street life already. They get used to it. You will not complain anymore, when you are adapted to it.”

Eddy’s explanation reflects a similar sentiment that I heard from Pepe one night when it rained. While he and I were in line to get food from Bumbay, I said to him “Hard” (*mahirap*) to express my feelings. I thought that he would share the same feeling with me, but he replied, “No. It is not hard. I have gotten used to it already.” In the same way, when I accompanied Nanay Joan on the streets, I wondered whether she thought her life was hard. When I asked her, she replied that she did not know how others people thought about street life, but for her, she did not feel it was hard. She had gotten used to it already.

Overtime, I found myself beginning to use this phrase as well. As I discussed in Chapter Eight, Brother Jonas of CCT approached me at my sleeping place on Otis Street once and commented on how far it was from Taft Avenue. Although he was surprised at the distance I had to walk everyday, I replied “I have gotten used to it already.” It had become normal for me to travel so far. Just like the homeless people with whom I resided for one year, I too found myself getting used to the hardships of street life.

By conceptualizing how homeless people “get used to” street life, we are able to overcome a dilemma in the literature on social suffering. On the one hand, I disagree with the

existing assumption that structural violence always creates social suffering. I have shown that not many homeless people are suffering in the sense of regret. On the other hand, if I propose that homeless people are happy with street life and accept their homeless status, this explanation might be interpreted as implying that homeless people have internalized a dominant ideology and accept their lower status, making them victims of symbolic violence. Philippe Bourgois and Schonberg define symbolic violence as “the mechanisms that lead those who are subordinated to ‘misrecognize’ inequality as the natural order of things and to blame themselves for their location in their society’s hierarchies” (2009: 17). However, this is also not the case for homeless people in Manila, because the majority of homeless people still criticize the exploitative system and corrupt government as the cause of their homelessness. Homeless people get used to street life, but they neither fully accept nor tolerate it. They live with it and simultaneously criticize the system as unfair. Moreover, to argue that homeless people get used to street life can make my position clear that I do not support the social injustice. By saying that homeless people just get used to the system, I do not mean that this system is fair.

Some literature on social suffering calls for changing the exploitative system to liberate sufferers (Farmer 2004; Bourgois 1996, 2003). Literature on homelessness also discusses social movements of homeless people and structural change (Wright 1992; Hasegawa 2006; Lyon-Callo 2004, 2012). Unfortunately, there is no social movement of/for homeless people in Manila yet. Therefore homeless people are only able to deal with the unfair system as individuals. They are unable to change the structure, but they do their best to avoid being exploited by the labor market and abusive employers and maintain a sense of dignity.

Further discussion is required to understand why homeless people have not yet formed collective movements to claim their rights. Filipinos have a long history of protest against

established powers by different sectors such as intellectuals, the left wing, and progressive churches, including small grassroot organizations to large coalitions at the national level (Hollnsteiner 1976; Karaos 1995; Berner 1997, 2000; Claudio 2013). Several sectors in Philippine society have experienced mobilization to negotiate with the government to protect their rights, such as indigenous people, unionized labors, and street vendors (Fabros and Rocamora 2006). However homeless people, who are at the bottom of the social strata, have not yet organized collectively. Their lack of organization is not due to ignorance. Their lack of organization is because their living conditions make it difficult. Although homeless people have social interactions, their relations are weak and easily dispersed. They are different from slum dwellers, who have settled within a defined community and have a strong sense of protecting their community. Homeless people employ evasion strategies when they were threatened by the government officials rather than organizing to confront the authorities.

Moreover, the history of urban poor movements reveals that Catholic liberation theologians along with underground socialists played an important role in organizing slum dwellers to protest against violent evictions during the era of the Marcos dictatorship (Hollnsteiner 1976; Karaos et al 1995). On the contrary, as explained above, existing faith-based organizations that currently engage with homeless people in the Philippines focus much more on religious devotion rather than homeless people's rights. These organizations perpetuate the unfair system rather than changing it. For example, instead of criticizing the government's measures to arrest homeless people, some faith-based organizations condoned them. The experiences of movements of protecting homeless people's rights in many countries, including my own experience in Thailand, show that such movements are not the movements of homeless people alone (Wagner 1993; Wright 1997; Hasegawa 2006; Bangkok Post, August 2, 2001).

Supporters work closely with homeless people. Without supporters who employ a human rights approach, it will be hard for homeless people in Manila to form organizations and to mobilize alone.

My ethnography suggests that those who aim to support homeless people should go beyond helping them survive on the street day to day. They should address long-term solutions and homeless people's rights. Recently, the Philippine government announced its plans to remove all homeless people from the streets of Manila and Quezon City before Manila hosts the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in November 2015 (Mangunay 2015). A DSWD official revealed that street families would get assistance amounting to 3,000 pesos "preemployment assistance" per family and capital assistance of 5,000 pesos per family. However, just how this program helps homeless people overcome homelessness in the long term need to be examined. Moreover, measures need to be in place ensuring that this assistance program genuinely helps homeless people in a sustainable manner rather than merely serving to legitimate the removal of homeless people from the streets temporarily. Otherwise, the Philippine government will simply repeat its exercise in "hiding" the homeless from the eyes of the world, as it did during the recent visit by Pope Francis.

In fact, DSWD already realizes that unemployment is the cause of homelessness and provides some assistance programs for homeless people, such as the Cash for Work Program and the package program for homeless street families. However, the limitations of these programs are that they do not yet cover all homeless people and the duration of the programs are insufficient. Consequently, after finishing the programs, many homeless people return to the street. The Philippine government should recognize that street homelessness is a result of structural problems. As long as the Philippine economy fails to provide enough jobs for its citizens, it will

be hard for homeless people to overcome homelessness in any sustainable way. In the same way, the government should not simply say that homeless people should return to their families or their hometowns. Because of social change, many Filipino families cannot function well enough to support all the members. The government should expand its social programs to support people in need rather than pushing them out of its sphere of responsibility. I have shown that pushing homeless people back to the places where they do not want to go can have a detrimental effect on the relationship between homeless people and their relatives. At the same time, I do not want to propose any sort of assistance programs for homeless people, because I realize that an important principle of supporting homeless people is the voice of homeless people themselves. The government should provide the mechanism that homeless people can propose their demands, listen to them and understand their life first. Without understanding the complex pathways and the lives of homeless people, the assistance programs might not be in line with actual needs.

To summarize, this ethnography has provided the space for homeless people to speak out about their lives. It has shown how homeless people conceive of their own lives, and proposes that homeless people are rational enough to make their own decisions about their lives, considering their limited choices. The life of street people is not different from the life of others. It is neither full of suffering nor happiness. What I am trying to propose in this ethnography is simple; homeless people are human beings. To recognize them as human beings who are the same as “us” is the starting point to de-discriminate against them. Homeless people can adapt to street life. If governmental and non-governmental organizations plan to help them to leave the street, they should offer them assistance programs that are good enough to motivate them to leave the street. Agencies should not think that “they are homeless, so they should take anything

we offer them.” Many homeless people find that living on the street offers them more benefit than working for low pay. They can search for happiness on the street, even though it might just be momentary. To have a moment of enjoyment is still full of value for them as human beings.

In the last week of my fieldwork, a staff member from the Food for Life Program recognized that I had lived with homeless people for more than a year and asked street people to say something to me. One man, Rigel, could hardly imagine my life when I returned to my home country, Thailand, and to the US to finish my studies. His words do not represent the ideas of all homeless people, but what he said to me reflects how he thinks about street life. I will close this dissertation with his words. He said, “Boon, when you go back to your country, and have any problems, you come back here...come to live with us on the streets of Manila. You have many friends here. There is no problem here. It is fine here.”

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