

Does Tourism Help to Alleviate Poverty?

A Case of Vendors in Rizal Park in Manila, Philippines

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Abstract

Pro-poor tourism, coined in the late 1990s, is a prospective strategy that may alleviate poverty. It emerged through the confluence of two conceptual developments, alternative tourism and the discourse and practices of development. As globalization pushes our society toward a borderless one, international tourism has grown rapidly. Department of Tourism (DOT) in the Republic of the Philippines did not miss this opportunity for its foreign currency acquisition. It launched a series of programs to promote tourism. In this positive environment for tourism, National Parks Development Committee (NPDC), an agency attached to DOT, started a program to help vendors in Rizal Park in Manila. This program legalized vendors in exchange for responsibility to clean the park. The vendors used to be chased and expelled from the park by the authority. Today, they can work there without harassment by law enforcement officers. These vendors are from provinces, who came to Manila for a better life. However, their life is not easy. Many of them are homeless living in the park. They are indebted to usury called Five/Six. Furthermore, the vending does not provide sufficient income for the quality of life. For better life chances, three suggestions are made in this paper. The first proposal is to provide micro finance so that they can be rid of moneylenders. Second, they have to understand the needs of international tourists. By understanding it, they have more chance to improve their sales. Third, they need to develop community leaders so that their daily needs become issues for improvement.

要 旨

1990年代後半に現れたプロプアー・ツーリズムという概念は貧困を削減すると期待される有望なアプローチである。それはオールタナティブ・ツーリズムと開発における言説・実践という二つの概念的発展が合流して形成された。

近年、グローバリゼーションが国境なき社会を形成するに伴い、国際観光が急速に成長してきた。フィリピン観光省はこの外貨獲得の機会を見逃さず、一連の観光推進プログラムを実施してきた。観光にとって前向きなこのような状況にあって、観光省の下部組織である国立公園開発委員会（NPDC）はマニラのリサル公園の露店商人を援助するプログラムを開始した。このプログラムは露店商人が公園をきれいにするかわりに彼・彼女らの公園内での活動を合法化した。かつて、露店商人は当局により追いかけられ、公園から追い出される存在であった。しかし、現在では、彼・彼女らは警官におびえることなく公園で仕事をする事ができる。これらの露店商人はより良い生活を求めて地方からやって来た人々である。しかし、彼・彼女らの生活は容易ではない。その多くはホームレスであり、公園で生活をし、ファイブシックスと呼ばれる高利貸しから借金をしている。さらに、露天業の売り上げは生活の質を保つには不十分である。本稿では露店商人がより良い生活を実現するために三つの提案をする。一つ目は高利貸しに依存する現状を変えるためにマイクロファイナンスを提供することである。二つ目は露店商人が売り上げを増すために国際観光客のニーズを理解するような機会を設けることである。最後に、彼・彼女らの日常の問題点が取り上げられるようにコミュニティ・リーダーを育成することである。

Key words : pro-poor tourism, vendors, international tourists, Rizal Park

キーワード : プロブアー・ツーリズム、露店商人、国際観光客、リサル公園

Introduction

As globalization accelerates freer movements of capital and people through removing various institutional barriers, international tourism has grown rapidly in recent years. In 1970, the number of international tourist arrivals was 165 million people in worldwide. In terms of international tourism receipts, it was 18 billion U.S. dollars. In 1993 when European Union was formed, the number of international tourist arrivals increased to 519 million people and the receipts amounted to 324 billion U.S. dollars (Takadera 2004: 12). In 2004, the number of international tourist arrivals further increased to 763 million people and its receipts

became 623 billion U.S. dollars (World Tourism Organization 2006). Many nations try to exploit this rapidly growing sector for their economic development. Tourism development has potential to obtain foreign currency in developing countries. International development agencies are also interested in tourism development as a prospective approach to development. However, tourism development itself does not guarantee poverty alleviation. We have already seen that many economic development schemes that embraced a trickle-down approach have brought uneven development, polarizing society with the haves and the have-nots.

To ameliorate inequality, institutional arrangements which address more equitable distribution of wealth are necessary. Yet, this is a formidable task to do as it may remove benefit from power holders in society. The more immediate approach to alleviate poverty is consciously targeting the poor in tourism development. This approach is called pro-poor tourism, a relatively new perspective in development. It is a promising idea for the poor. In this study, a specific group in Manila, Philippines was investigated so as to understand the utility of this approach. Fieldwork was conducted focusing on vendors working in Rizal Park in the summer of 2006. In-depth interviews were administered to them using a snowball sampling. When the data was saturated, interviews were terminated. In total, eight in-depth interviews were carried out. To corroborate the information and to grasp the overall picture of the situation, officials in local and national governments were also interviewed.

This paper is organized as follows: first, the pro-poor tourism literature is briefly reviewed; then, the historical background of Rizal Park is presented, where vendors life unfold; third, role of the government is described; fourth, three cases of vendors' life history are introduced with generalization; finally, some recommendation is presented to enhance vendors' life chances.

What is Pro-Poor Tourism?

A precise definition of pro-poor tourism has not been developed yet. However, Takadera has offered a tentative definition. He states that “everything in tourism sector that increases the benefit of the poor is pro-poor tourism (Takadera, 2004: 123).” The lack of precise definition is due to its newness. The term “pro-poor tourism” was coined only five years ago. The arrival of borderless age made tourism growth industry worldwide. At the institutional level, this growth was appealing for international development agencies; they began to see tourism development as a strategy for development in the Third World countries. The first report that used the term ‘pro-poor tourism’ was “Pro-Poor Tourism Strategies” prepared by Britain’s Department for International Development in 2001 (Takadera 2006). The potential benefit of tourism for poverty alleviation were assessed in this report. In the meanwhile, World Tourism Organization (WTO) began to shift its focus from environmental issues and eco-tourism to poverty around 1999. Then, in 2003, WTO officially became a part of the United Nations which made poverty as the organization’s major concern.

Conceptually, the idea and practices of pro-poor tourism emerged through the confluence of two streams, the development of alternative tourism and the discourse and practices of development, in the late 1990s (Figure 1). In the area of tourism, mass-tourism has been the dominant form of tourism. It grew out of the advancement of modern society. In 1841, Thomas Cook Company in Britain started to sell a packaged tour which is considered to be the beginning of mass-tourism. Tourism has become everybody’s leisure-time activity in developed countries. It became readily available through the development of transportation system and the creation of leisure-time among the middle class. Though it is very

popular, the mass-tourism has been criticized for its negative influences on environment and community. It has degraded the environment and disrupted the web of social life in destination communities. The alternative tourism has arisen in response to the criticism. It has various forms such as eco-tourism, community-tourism, responsible-tourism and so forth. These forms of tourism share the idea that tourism evolved through modernization is not sustainable, therefore, it needs to adopt ethical standards to protect the environment and community. Thus, consideration for sustainability and viewpoints of destination communities has become an important factor in tourism development.

In the area of development, modernization theory, the dominant development paradigm between the 1950s and the 1970s had been in decline. Since the 1980s, a new paradigm so called the alternative development has emerged, that shares an idea that mimicking of developed nations is not possible and not even worthwhile. The search for the alternative development was initiated largely by the Third World governments, social scientists and activists as critique to

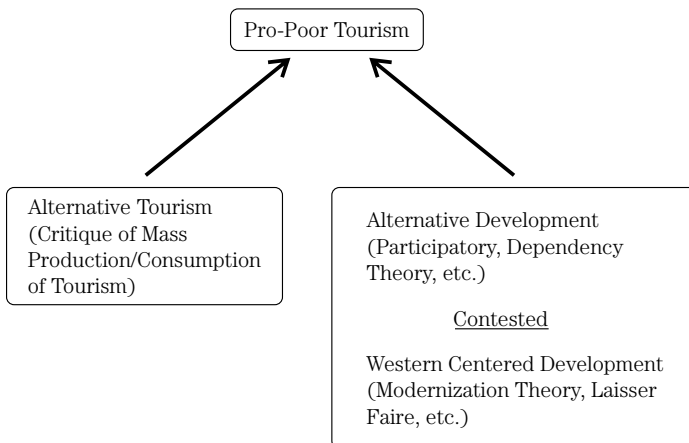


Figure 1. The Development of Pro-Poor Tourism: A Conceptual Sketch

(Created by Yukio Yotsumoto.)

Occidentalism. It came up with directions for development. They are; refusal of externally imposed schemes, more emphasis on the necessity of the poor, more appreciation for the physical environment, more understanding of social network, more concern for sustainability, and more participatory approach rather than technocratic approach (Pottier 1993: 13). In the 1990s, the end of Cold War accelerated the process of globalization which preferred *laissez faire* in many nations. This trend somewhat returns a pendulum to the Western-centered developmental schemes. The discourse and practices of development, thus, has been a contested field in which various actors struggle to prevail.

These two circumstances in the alternative tourism and the discourse and practices of development have influenced the conceptual development of pro-poor tourism. Targeting the poor is an outcome of the influence from the alternative tourism; it focuses on community instead of profit making that is the major driving force of mass-tourism embedded in capitalism. The discourse and practices of development also prompts the conceptualization of pro-poor tourism. However, contestation of the field makes the concept ambiguous. Obviously, more emphasis on the necessity of the poor in the alternative development is the major ingredient of pro-poor tourism. At the same time, the Western-centered idea penetrates into the concept. This is because tourism to be successful, tourism developers need to understand and accept guest's cultural background. Guests especially international tourists have the cultural background of the middle class that possesses the mentality of consumerism. Consequently, to be successful in tourism, the poor are drawn into the system of capitalism. This means that expertise knowledge which is negatively viewed in the alternative development discourse become pivotal. This ambiguous nature of the concept is observed in Takadera's definition. He thinks that any activity in tourism sector that benefits the poor is pro-poor tourism. This implies that both mass-tourism

and tourism development through the Western-centered development can be pro-poor tourism if they can benefit the poor. However, they may not be sustainable, that is, benefits to the poor may be achieved in the expense of environmental degradation or of the long-term prosperity. Therefore, in this paper, pro-poor tourism is defined as “practices of tourism sector that benefit the poor with sustainability.” To be sustainable, in addition to expertise knowledge, pro-poor tourism involves poor people’s participation in its development which utilizes local knowledge and local social networks.

So far, the conceptual side of pro-poor tourism was discussed. Here, its pragmatic side is reviewed. In practice, World Tourism Organization (WTO) identifies seven approaches for benefiting the poor in tourism development (World Tourism Organization 2005: 21). The first approach is to employ the poor in tourism enterprises. For this, the creation of small and medium sized enterprises and of micro enterprises is encouraged. The obstacle to employ the poor is their lack of education and training in addition to the distance between tourist attraction and their place of residence. The second approach is the provision of goods and services by the poor to tourism enterprises. By this, local people can draw the benefit out of tourists’ expenditures. However, goods and services required in hotels and catering establishments demand regularity, volume and quality of their delivery which are challenges to the poor. The third approach is to sell goods and services directly to the tourists. This is the most widely practiced method by the poor. They sell foods and handicrafts and serve the tourists as a guide. These are practiced in the informal sector and starting up the business is easy. The weakness of the method is that the intermediaries often took the benefit out of the poor. The fourth approach is to create and manage tourism enterprises by the poor. If successful, this is the most beneficial approach for the poor as it concerns the capacity building of them. However, it is not easy to operate

business by the poor people who lack capital and management skills. The provision of microfinance and training are promising solutions to make it possible. The fifth approach is to employ taxation which is used for benefiting the poor. The revenue from tax will be used for programs to alleviate poverty. The sixth approach is to rely on volunteerism of people. This can be done by three actors; tourism firms, NGOs and individual tourists. As a part of corporate social responsibility, tourism firms in developed countries may assist poor population in the form of social and educational programs. NGOs may involve in development programs that are related to tourism. Individual tourists who are ethical and responsible may be aware of the situation of poor population in tourism areas and they may want to spend more money locally. But relying on altruism is not stable as the actions are not regulated. The seventh approach is to develop infrastructure such as communications, power supply and a drinking water system. This benefits local population, yet, it requires a large amount of investment. It has to rely on large public and private funds and it is often beyond the control of the poor.

These seven approaches identified by WTO are the rationale to promote pro-poor tourism. Each approach has different actors who determine the activities, technical skills and amount of money involved. Concerning about actors, the main actors in the fifth and the seventh approaches are governments and these approaches are implemented in the overall developmental policies. The first and the second approaches depend on tourism enterprises that are often managed from outside the community of the poor. The sixth approach also depends on outsiders. The third and the fourth approaches grant the most autonomy to the poor. The autonomy is supposed to be good for the poor because they can control their life, and not to be controlled by outsiders. However, tourism is largely defined by outside actors such as hotels, airline companies, and tourism wholesalers. The merger and cooperation of these outside actors to provide products

and services to tourists have standardizing effects that make tourists' expectation for products and services high and uniform. Thus, for example, tourists traveling in Europe expect similar quality of products and services when they travel in remote areas of Asia unless they are enlightened to the alternative tourism such as responsible-tourism or ethical tourism. To provide the quality products and services, tourism enterprises in community need to have external linkages for technology and management skills. In Peaty's study in Ecuador, he concluded that a community-based eco-tourism created, owned and managed by outsider is more beneficial than a community-based eco-tourism created, owned and managed by local community (Peaty 2006). Although each approach is important and may benefit the poor, the third and the fourth approaches promise the most autonomy for the poor. And, the fourth approach has the most potential for capacity building of people and creating social capital of community. The issue is how to meet tourists' expectations without losing the autonomy.

Rizal Park

Rizal Park also known as Luneta Park by the locals is located in the center of Manila city. In its immediate north, there is Intramuros, a walled city developed by Spanish Empire. It was the administrative, religious, cultural and educational center of the massive colonies in Asia, which Spanish Empire maintained for 400 years. In its west, Rizal Park faces Manila Bay, a site for the world famous sunset. In its northwest, there is South Port where many commercial ships anchor. The park's south is Ermita and Malate districts commonly known as the tourist belt. These districts have everything that tourists want such as hotels, restaurants, airline companies, travel agencies, exchangers, banks, etc. In the east of the park, there are many college campuses. The park is 53 hectares in size and a rec-

tangular shape (Figure 2). The main attractions in the park are Rizal Monument which stands in honor of Jose Rizal, a national hero; Chinese Garden; Japanese Garden; and Children's Playground.

Throughout its history, Rizal Park was called Bagumbayan [new town in Tagalog], Plazuela de Isabel II, La Plaza, La Calzada, Wallace Field and Luneta [a detached crescent-shaped fort in Spanish] (Altomonte, no publication date). In the early period of Spanish rule, the area had been neglected until 1574 when a Chinese army led by Lim Ah Hong stormed Manila. During the attack, Bagumbayan became a natural barrier to defend the city. The British Invasion of 1762 prompted the Spaniards to demolish the Church of San Juan which had been built in the area. They destroyed it because it became an enemy's protective shield. Later, the district of Parian was developed in the north part of the area to quarter Chinese. The area was a strategic point yet it had been left as

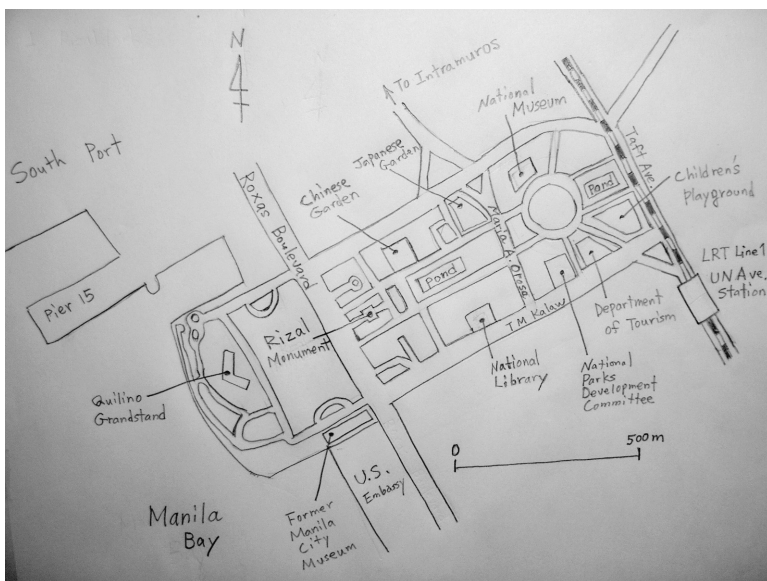


Figure 2. Rizal Park.

(Created by Yukio Yotsumoto.)

marsh until the Paseo de Luneta (promenade) was constructed next to the beach in 1820. It had a bandstand and two fountains, and music was played by Governor's military band in the evening. Suddenly, the place became a gathering spot for the elites to enjoy fresh air and courting. Spanish and mestizo ladies and gentlemen came to Bagumbayan by coach and enjoyed the evening. It also became a place of terror. For 74 years, Bagumbayan was used as an execution ground for rebels and rioters by Spaniards. From 1823 to 1897, 158 rebels who fought for independence were executed by Spanish infantrymen. In August of 1896, the Katipunan led by Andres Bonifacio launched attacks on Spanish regime. Spaniards considered Jose Rizal, a national hero of the Philippine for independence, as a part of the insurgency; they arrested and imprisoned him at Fort Santiago in Intramuros. On December 30, 1896, Rizal was forced to walk to Bagumbayan from the fort and was executed by a firing squad in the ground. For many years, people remembered the place as the execution site for the martyr to the Philippine independence.

The Spanish-American War and Treaty of Paris in 1898 made the country under the control of the United States. In 1902, Bagumbayan was chosen as the administrative center for American government. At this time, Bagumbayan was extended to the westward to Manila Bay and the southward to T. M. Kalaw Street. Buildings for the Congress, Finance (now National Museum) and Agriculture (now Department of Tourism) were constructed. In 1913, Americans erected a memorial for Jose Rizal by raising money from the populace and assistance from Governor-General William Howard Taft. Richard Kissling, a Swiss sculptor, was contracted to make the monument. Since then, the monument which houses Rizal's remains has been one of the most famous landmarks in the nation. By 1917, the park began to be called Rizal Park (Figure 3).

The park was used for many events such as rodeo shows and military parades.

In 1953, it hosted the First Philippine International Fair. However, after the event, the whole area began to be neglected. During this time, the park became a breeding ground for crime and lewdness. Disturbed by this condition, Teodoro F. Valencia, an influential journalist, started a beautification project in the early 1960s. He raised money for beautifying Rizal Monument. In 1964, the National Parks Development Committee (NPDC) was formed (Teodoro F. Valencia became a vice-chairman) and the organization took over the beautification project. During Marcos regime, the First Lady Imelda R. Marcos became the chairman of NPDC. Together with Valencia, they sped up the project. In total, they spent 60 million pesos (Currently, 1 peso is approximately 2.2 yen.) to beautify the whole area. Most of the amenities existing now were constructed during this time.

After the fall of Marcos regime, the park slowly began to deteriorate again as



Figure 3. Rizal Park in 1920. Photo by Yukio Yotsumoto, taken at the former Manila City Museum.

the budget for the park declined. The number of NPDC employees had also declined from about 3,000 during Valencia's era to about 700 in the early 2000. Rizal Park became a deserted area with approximately 3,000 vagrants sleeping there (Marinay, Arcibal and Vicente 2002). Garbage was scattered around many places. Furthermore, it was a dangerous place where muggers and snatchers were roaming around. After Mr. Carlito A. Fajardo, the current executive director, took the office of NPDC in October 2003, the peace and order was restored by the beautification project. Now, the park is a place to enjoy for families and tourists.(Figure 4).



Figure 4. Rizal Park in 2006. Photo by Yukio Yotsumoto; vendors are lined up in a regular distance.

Role of the Government

Department of Tourism

The Philippine economy relies on remittance from overseas Filipino workers. It has been a crucial source of foreign currency acquisition. This labor arrangement creates the middle class in the society, which keeps its economy going. For a family, to have even one overseas Filipino worker makes their life decent. However, the separation of family causes psychological burden to the family members. In contrast, tourism can be considered as a source of foreign currency acquisition without parting families. In recent years, the tourism sector has become a significant segment of the national income generating 8.4 percent of GDP (Kaigairodo Jiho 2003). In 2001, it was estimated that the tourism generated gross foreign exchange receipts of 2 billion U.S. dollars (World Tourism Organization) with the international tourist arrivals of 1,796,893 (Department of Tourism, the Republic of Philippines). In 1977, the arrivals were merely 730,123. The number increased during the 90s reaching at 2,222,523 in 1997. Due to the impact of the September 11 terrorist attacks; after 2001, the number of international tourist arrivals had declined hovering around a range of 1.7 – 1.9 million people. Yet, it started to rebound again recording 2,291,352 people in 2004 and finally it reached at the all time high count of 2,623,084 arrivals in 2005 (Figure 5). The first five months of 2006 shows continued growth of the sector recording at 1,194,417 international visitors as of May 31. This is an 11.8 percent increase from the same period of the previous year.

The government did not overlook this opportunity for economic growth. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo appointed Richard Gordon as Secretary of Department of Tourism in 2001. Gordon was an efficient administrator launching

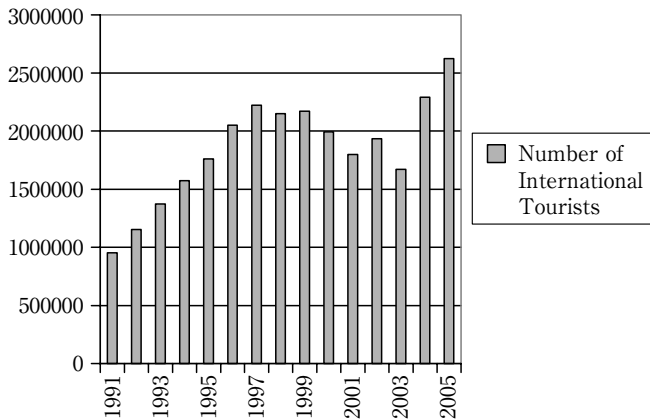


Figure 5. Recent Tourism Trend in the Philippines.

Created from the information obtained at Department of Tourism, the Republic of the Philippines in 2006 and from Gonzalez 2002.

successful projects of Visit the Philippines 2003 and WOW (Wealth of Wonders) Philippines. These campaigns revived the tourism industry suffered from the threat of terrorist attacks and SARS endemic. Visit the Philippines 2003 project had two programs, the Best of the Regions in Intramuros and WOW Makati. The first program showcased the best of the country's regions in Intramuros through cultural shows and travel marts. The second program was intended to make Makati district as the shopping capital of Asia. Makati is a central business district with many modern skyscrapers, where the richest segment of Filipinos live. In the center of Makati, huge shopping centers house department stores, high-grade restaurants and movie theaters. Exclusive hotels and condominiums are also located there. WOW Makati tried to make it the best shopping destination for international tourists. WOW Philippines was an expansion of Visit the Philippine 2003. It was especially successful introducing the best places in each of 13 regions in the country. In each region, four to ten best places were intro-

duced. Also, the program presented cities and municipalities in National Capital Region and five best places in Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. These programs were established by the realization that tourism can be a driving force for economic development and can generate more jobs and livelihood opportunities for all Filipino. However, the government's focus on growth per se in the tourism sector may not improve the life of the poor as many government sponsored growth-oriented development projects have shown. It requires to target the poor deliberately and to develop a program tailored for their needs. An interview with an official in Department of Tourism (July 31, 2006) indicated that the agency has had only one program so far, that is designed for enhancing the livelihood of the poor. Other than that, there has been no program for pro-poor tourism initiated by the department.

National Parks Development Committee

Although Department of Tourism as an organization does not concern the poor, Fajardo, the director of National Parks Development Committee (NPDC) has a clear vision to integrate the poor into the tourism development. NPDC is an organization that manages Rizal Park. When Fajardo took the office in 2003, the park had been neglected as mentioned in the previous section. Thousands of vagrants slept there and it was dirty and dangerous. With a limited staff of 590, he had to develop a plan that maintained the park's peace and order as well as attractiveness for tourists. What he did was to allow vendors to operate their business legally in exchange for help to maintain the park's cleanness. His idea of the relationship between the urban poor and tourism is summarized below:

The Urban Poor is always with us. The number one tourist attraction is the people themselves (Filipinos). That is why the urban poor are the core of

the tourism industry. They complement the surrounding environment. We can give them dignity through work. Tourists don't go to dangerous places. But if there are vendors who have dignity in the park, tourists will be attracted to them (an interview conducted on August 10, 2006).

His concern for the urban poor and his conception of them as human resources are expressed here.

His plan is simple and working well. Under the plan, vendors can legally operate their business; they can form unions; and they can buy in goods from a grocery store started by NPDC. Vendor's obligations are: only registered vendors can operate their business in the park; uniforms and stalls are required when they operate; they have to clean their immediate surroundings all the time; and they have to pay 10 pesos a day for purchasing brooms and dustpans. Through this plan, Fajardo was able to keep the park in good condition. The presence of legal vendors with uniforms and stalls make illegal vendors and vagrants stand out and law enforcement officers or the legal vendors can chase them out easily. Also, cleanliness of the park and attendance of the legal vendors deter crimes. There has been no crime reported in the park since he took the position. Fajardo's leadership has been important to revitalize Rizal Park in recent years. The next section describes how the vendors' lives unfold in this park.

The Life of Vendors

Vendor as a Type of Job in the Informal Sector

The Institute for Labor Studies in the Philippines estimated that the ratio of workers in the informal sector in the Philippines is about 49 percent of the total employed Filipino population in 1999. According to Sethuraman (1981), we des-

ignite a job as the urban informal sector when it has at least one of the nine traits below. They are:

1. The number of employees including temporary workers is less than 10.
2. The operation is not legal.
3. It is a family business.
4. There are no fixed operating hours.
5. The office is a temporary construction.
6. It does not use electricity.
7. It does not borrow money from organized financial institutions.
8. Products are sold directly to consumers as final products.
9. The educational achievement of the employees is less than 6 years.

Typical types of job in the urban informal sector include jeepney drivers, tricycle drivers, vendors, housemaids, contract construction workers, laundry women, fishermen, sari-sari store owners, recycling collectors, carpenters, etc. These are often underemployed jobs. The informal sector absorbs a large portion of the urban poor and new migrants from rural areas.

Vending is a popular and visible type of job in the informal sector. It has many characteristics mentioned above. Actually, most vendors possess all the attributes Sethuraman describes. For further understanding, Nakanishi (1991: 131) divided the urban informal sector into two classes: the low productivity category and the high productivity category. This division is made by the degrees of productivity and of difficulty to enter. The degree of difficulty to enter is measured by five items: the ability to gather information, skills, initial capital investment, education, and traditional custom. For example, carpentry is considered to be in the high productivity category. It is better paid and needs the ability in all the five items. According to Nakanishi, vending is classified as a job in the low productivity category. The income from vending is relatively low. Entry into the job

is relatively easy because it does not need good educational attainment and skills. What is needed are the ability to gather information and the understanding of traditional custom. The initial capital investment is moderately required to purchase goods. In general, observation in Rizal Park and its vicinity confirms his characterization of vendors (Figure 6). Their income is low, for example, a vendor earns a daily income of 100-200 pesos in good days. The educational attainment of the vendors in the park varied from a college graduate to an elementary school graduate. It seems educational achievement is not important for the entry. Concerning about the skill, if a vendor sells foods, he/she needs a basic cooking skill. However, if a vendor sells only beverages and snacks, he/she does not need much skill. The ability to gather information and the understanding of traditional custom are necessary. Vendors need to know where they can purchase goods cheaply and who the boss is in the area. One thing that makes Rizal



Figure 6. A Vendor in Rizal Park.

(Photo by Yukio Yotsumoto.)

Park vendors differ from Nakanishi's description is its difficulty to enter. NPDC limits the number of vendors in the park and does not allow new vendors to open stalls anymore. Currently, 170 vendors are allowed in the park. Initially, when the existing vendors opened the stalls, they needed to understand whom to contact with and to grasp the rules and regulations of business operation in the park.

Three Cases of Vendors

In this section, three life histories are introduced to portray the life of vendors in Rizal Park. All the names appeared here are pseudonyms. At the end of this section, the life pattern of vendors are discussed.

a). Sarah Ocampo

Sarah Ocampo's stall is located in front of the National Museum Building. Sarah is 48 years old. She came to Manila on December 22, 1999 from Bohol Province (Bohol Island) in Central Visayas. The island is located in the southeast of Cebu Island. Her late father was a vendor and her late mother was a farmer. She has five brothers who live in the province. They work as fishermen and drivers. When she was in Bohol, she had a husband but she divorced him. Sarah worked as a laundry woman. Then, she became a peddler selling fish door to door. Her life in the province was not easy. So, she decided to move to Manila by herself, hoping that there are more opportunities in Manila. After coming to Manila, she started to work as a housekeeper. Then, she met Dennis, her live-in-partner. He is 41 years old. They started to vend in Rizal Park in 2002. With Dennis and a friend, she opened a stall here in 2004. To build the stall, she had to borrow money from her friend. In total, it cost 3,500 pesos for construction materials and labor. They started with 500 pesos worth of merchandise. While she tends the stall, her friend carries goods on a tray and strolls around the park to sell. Dennis works as a parking boy. It is a job to watch cars so as not to be van-

dalized. When it is sunny, he can earn 200 pesos a day. But when it rains, he can earn nothing. Basically, the store is open for 24 hours. Sarah and Dennis do not have their house and sleep in the park. Most of the time, she takes a nap by sitting on a chair and when customers come, she wakes up. Everyday, a cab driver of their friend parks his car near their stall to take a rest for a couple of hours. During this time, Sarah and Dennis borrow his car and sleep inside the car. When they are really sleepy, they ask the driver to stay in the stall for an hour or two and sleep in the car. When the driver is not around, they spread out a cardboard on the ground. Their best selling items are coffee, cup noodles, potato chips, soft drinks and bottled water. Coffee and cup noodles are sold well during the night. They buy in goods from nearby supermarkets. The gross daily earnings are about 1,000 pesos from the stall during sunny days. But during rainy days, it is only about 500 pesos. Sarah thinks the income is enough for some days but not enough for other days. Sometimes, foreign tourists buy merchandise from her store. She uses a little bit of English but she cannot speak it well. Although she is not 100 percent sure, most of the foreign tourists are from Japan and China. She can sell her goods very well when there are (Filipino) field trips from nearby schools. Their major business concern is how to raise capital to buy in merchandise. They think if they can display more goods in the stall, more people will buy goods from them. Sarah wants to grow her business more so that she can send money to relatives in the province. In order to increase the merchandise, they need more capital. Thus, they borrow money from moneylenders called Five/Six. She borrows money from three moneylenders totaling 6,000 pesos. Sarah, Dennis and her friend belong to a vendor's association. Sarah is a treasurer in the association. However, they are not satisfied with the association because it is led by a corrupt president. Sarah and Dennis wanted to have their own stall instead of co-ownership with her friend. So, they requested it to the president. But their

request was denied. At the same time, another person requested to have her own stall and the president granted the application. It is an open secret that the person who was granted to open her stall paid him 4,000 pesos. Other than the issue and the lack of capital, Sarah is satisfied with the job.

b). Fernando Santos

Fernando Santos' stall is located next to Maria A. Orosa Street. The street is one of three major streets that intersect the park from the north to the south. Fernando is 48 years old. He has a 36 year-old wife named Vicky and a 9 year-old daughter named Angelika. His hometown is in Tarlac Province in Central Luzon. His parents have diseased and three brothers live in the province. They are farm workers who follow harvests in rice and sugar cane fields. Usually, they work 7 hours a day from 4am to 11am on the field. They can earn 150 pesos a day with a lunch. The life in the province is harsh. As he perceived that there was no means of livelihood in the province, Fernando moved to Manila by himself when he was only 14 years old. As his educational achievement was only elementary school, initially, it was difficult to get a job. The first job he landed was a delivery boy to work at a blood bank. The bank paid him only 200 pesos a month. He slept on patients' beds and whenever there was a need for delivery or some errands, they woke him up. Due to his lack of sleep and the very low salary, he quit the job after six months. Then he became a vender. In Rizal Park, he has been a vender for 26 years. When he started to vend, he sold his blood twice a week for capital. He got 40 pesos for a pack of blood and bought 3 packs of cigarette. He sold the cigarettes piece by piece. When he ran out of his cigarettes, he went to a blood bank to sell his blood. He continued this cycle of selling blood for capital about a year. After that, he started to use Five/Six usury. He got married when he was very young. But it did not last. He divorced his wife and later got married again.

However, this union did not endure again and divorced her. All those years, they had lived in Quirino Grandstand which is located in the west side of Rizal Park facing Manila Bay. Fernando had been homeless until he got married with Vicky. He was 31 years old and she was only 16 years old when they got married. In his third marriage with Vicky, he had to rent a house. Vicky has a heart ailment that requires her to rest substantially. She takes medicine everyday that costs 200 pesos. The medicine is very expensive but it is necessary for her survival. Also, it is vital that she goes to see a doctor regularly. However, it costs 1,000 pesos just for a checkup. Therefore, the last time she went to see a doctor was 8 month ago. No assistance has been provided by the government. Their daughter, Angelika, also has a health problem. Angelika was born after 12 years of their marriage. When she was a baby, she got into dehydration which caused complications. Because of that, doctors tell them not to give her fish and vegetable. These are the main reasons that Fernando decided to rent a small house in Intramuros. They pay 2,000 pesos a month. Having a shelter is also important for Angelika's education. It provides a sense of security and a place to study. Fernando stays in the stall for 24 hours in order to keep an eye on their merchandise and not to miss any opportunities for sale. He sleeps on the bench in the park and goes back home only when he wants to take a shower. Vicky gets up at 3am and goes to a market to get in foods. She cooks foods for sale at home and brings them to the stall. Angelika gets up at 5:45am and goes to school. When the school is over at noon, she comes to the stall to see her parents. All the family stays in the park until 7 pm. After that, Vicky and Angelika go home to sleep while Fernando tends their stall.

They mainly sell foods such as rice, noodle, chicken, fish and vegetable. Foods are put into plastic bags. Two pieces of small chicken and a cup of rice are sold for 20 pesos. Other than foods, they sell cigarettes, bottled water, snacks and soft

drinks. During rainy days, they earn 200-300 pesos a day. During sunny days, they make 700-800 pesos a day. These are net income. They think the earnings are average for vendors. Their focus on foods comes from their observation that foods are on demand and from their lack of capital to purchase the other more expensive items. Fernando thinks foreign tourists have grown recently. They are from Taiwan, Korea, Japan and the U.S. In his stall, they buy bottled water, mangoes and soft drinks but do not buy foods at all. Since he cannot understand English, Vicky who understands English talks to international customers. When they built the stall, Vicky borrowed money from two Five/Six moneylenders. She owes 5,000 pesos in total. Fernando likes to continue this job and wants his daughter to graduate from college. He appreciates Fajardo because they can work in the park legally. Before Fajardo, he had to run away from police all the time.

c). Jolina Brocka

Jolina's stall is the first stall that visitors encounter when they walk into the park from Roxas Boulevard. She is 32 years old woman with four children. They are 10 years old boy, 5 years old girl, 1 year and 3 months old boy, and 25 days old girl. Jolina lives in the park with the new born baby. Her three other children are taken care of by three families. She used to have a domestic partner but now she is single. Jolina was born in Isabela Province, Cagayan Valley Region in Luzon Island. Her parents, one brother and four sisters still live in the province. Her father is a helper in a market and her mother is a laundry woman. Her brothers are farm workers who follow harvests. Their life in the province has been not easy. She graduated from a college in Isabela, obtaining a degree in home economics. She came to Manila to look for a job when she was 21 years old. Soon, she landed on a sales job in Makati city. It was a job to sell an encyclopedia called

Grolier's. She worked for two years living in her friend's house. After that, she took another sales job. Then, 8 years ago, she began to vend around Rizal Park. Three years ago when vending was allowed to operate in the park by NPDC, she began to vend inside the park. In total, she has lived in and around the park for 8 years. Jolina chose to be a vendor because it was a sales job that did not require rent. It involved only a small amount of money to start. In her stall, she mostly sells chips, bottled water and soft drinks. She opens her stall for 24 hours, yet, during rainy days, she can earn very little, sometimes, she earns nothing. During sunny days, she makes only 100-200 pesos a day. She usually buys goods nearby supermarket but when she has enough money, she goes to a market in Paco that is located at the southeast of the park. A bag of small chips is sold at 10 pesos here. She buys it in at 4 peso and 50 centavos at the nearby supermarket, gaining a profit of 5.5 pesos. If she buys it in at the market in Paco, it costs at 3 peso and 80 centavos, gaining a profit of 6.2 pesos. However, she has to do bulk purchase in Paco because the round trip costs 30 pesos by jeepney. Usually, going to the market in Paco means that she was able to borrow money from Five/Six money-lenders. Right now, she owes 2,900 pesos to the Five/Six usury.

Her main concern in life is about her children. It has been very difficult to raise her children in the park with her meager income. One day, a stranger approached Jolina and offered her to take care of her child at their home. Seeing Jolina, a good-natured Filipino family worried about her children. They promised Jolina that they would take care of her oldest son until he graduates from high school. Jolina and the family had an agreement that whenever Jolina wants to get her child back, the family will return him to her. Although they were strangers to her initially, now, they became good friends of her. Her two other children were taken care of by two other families with a similar arrangement. These families sometimes bring her children to her stall and let Jolina stay with her children.

Also, when they visit Jolina, they give her food and money. Her youngest daughter is still 25 days old; therefore, Jolina takes care of her. Her daughter sleeps in a baby carriage and is fed by powdered milk. Jolina hopes that her children complete their study and find permanent jobs. Her dream is to have a house and open a store in the house.

The Characteristics of Vendors in Rizal Park

a). Unstable Nature of Vendors' Life

Vendors' life in the park is unstable in three ways. First, their family is not as stable as the other typical Filipino families in society. Many vendors have non-traditional family structure. The typical arrangement is a domestic partnership. Often the case, they entered into this relationship after they met each other in the park. This pattern is observed in vendors who started vending after Fajardo initiated the legalized vending in the park three years ago. Another type is a family by legally married couples but he and/or she had experienced divorce before. The other type of family arrangement is a single parent with children. This is caused by either spouse's death or separation. Second, their life is unstable because many of them do not have shelters. They use cardboards or benches to sleep in the park. Spreading vinyl sheets from the roof of the stall is a way to protect them from rain. Although the Philippines is tropical climate, sleeping in the park is not easy especially when they have children. Those vendors who have places to stay usually rent substandard rooms in slum. Third, the income from vending is not enough to provide the necessities for the quality life. In sunny days, they can earn 500 pesos a day. In rainy days, sometimes, they do not have enough money to buy foods. The low income prompts them to sleep in the park instead of renting a room. In addition, most of them are indebted to usury. The amounts of debt are over 5,000 pesos. They use Five/Six usury that was devel-

oped by Indians. Although Five/Six's lending system varies, the standard is that if you borrow 500 pesos, you have to repay 600 pesos next month. Five/Six is operated by Indians as well as Filipinos. Usually, Indians are stricter than Filipinos in repayment. Filipino moneylenders sometimes postpone repayment, especially, when typhoons hit the area. They have created a long-term relationship with vendors. To purchase merchandise, Five/Six usury became a part of their vending business. Given vendors' low level of daily income, it has a very small possibility that they can escape from the debt by their own effort.

b). Good Natured Vendors

Before Fajardo took the office of NPDC, the park was a place for vagrants and crimes were committed occasionally. Vendors were considered as social ill, always chased by the police. International tourists also have a negative image of vendors because they sometimes experience vendors selling them goods at a price higher than they normally sell to Filipinos. Many experiences of this kind make international tourists cautious of buying goods from vendors. Through her experience, Jolina, an interviewee, thinks that tourists hold back from buying goods because they are afraid of being cheated during transactions. However, these negative images are not totally applicable to vendors in Rizal Park. Among interviewees in this study, all of them are honest vendors except one. The upright vendors use the same price to international tourists. They use a term "opportunistic" for those vendors who cheat tourists. Opportunistic is a derogative term that differentiates wily vendors from the honest vendors like them. They think that it is natural to take good care of international tourists; the good actions will bring them good results; the opportunists do not have the national character of Filipinos; Filipinos are supposed to have the heart for hospitality. In the park, most of the vendors possess hospitality that they think is their national

character.

c). Organized Vendors

There are 170 legally registered vendors in Rizal Park and they form seven associations. Each vendor is registered in Rizal Park Vendors Livelihood Program under NPDC. Also, each association is registered with Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of the Republic of the Philippines. The number of vendors in each association varies, some are large and some are very small. Under the general guideline of NPDC that requires vendors to construct a uniform size of stall and to wear uniform, each association creates some variations to represent their organizational identity. Some associations paint their stalls in the same color and logo. Also, they wear the same color of shirts as their uniform. The organization's identity is also manifested in the association's name such as Kalabau (Water Buffalo, the national animal) Vendors Association and The Association of the Poor. Members in each association help each other, functioning as a mutual support system. Also, the president of each association becomes go-betweens who negotiate with NPDC. The most important aspect of forming association is its influence on vendor's psychology. It is a legally established business registered in SEC. Considering their life before Fajardo, the legality makes them proud of being vendors. Some of the vendors interviewed expressed their willingness to continue this job and one of them even said that vending is her lifework. They are the authorized vendors and they are the agents who maintain peace and order in the park. It changed them from vagrants regarded as social ill to business owners who are helping the society.

Toward Sustainability of Vendor's Life Space

Vendors in Rizal Park mostly came from provinces to look for jobs in Manila. Although the life in Rizal Park is not easy, for them, it is still a better life than a life in the provinces. Thus, Rizal Park continues to be their life space. In this final section, three suggestions are made for sustainability of vendor's community in the park.

Micro Finance

Vendors borrowed money from usury to build their stalls. In addition, they have to borrow money continuously for capital to buy merchandise. Five/Six moneylenders have become a part of their precarious day-to-day management. The high interest of Five/Six usury created a vicious cycle of dependence. In order to break the cycle of dependency, micro finance with a low interest rate is necessary. Fortunately, Mr. Fajardo has a plan to establish a small loan of 2,000 pesos with a 1 percent interest rate. When this is actualized, it benefits the vendors. However, considering their amounts of debt to moneylenders, 2,000 pesos is not enough to terminate the relationship with Five/Six. Therefore, the amount of loan should be more than 7,000 pesos which is large enough to repay to them and to capitalize for merchandize.

Cultural Background of International Tourists

Although the growing number of international tourists is observed in the park, vendors' sales largely come from domestic tourists. This is because there is a gap between what vendors sell and what international tourists want in travel. In the stalls, a cup of coffee is 10 pesos. It is cheap but it is an instant coffee. Also, they

sell foods such as rice, vegetable, chicken, and fish. A lunch of rice and chicken pieces is 20 pesos. It is cheap but foods are put in plastic bags. For international tourists, they want to experience a moment of pleasure in travel. To obtain the experience, they are willing to spend more money than they usually spend in their daily life at home. So, instead of buying the instant coffee, they may want to experience a moment of pleasure in Starbucks and by eating foods at exclusive restaurants. Goods vendors sell are acceptable for Filipino tourists but not good enough for international tourists. In order to increase the income, vendors need to understand the needs of international tourists. In other words, they have to comprehend the cultural capital of tourists (Hashimoto 2006). Obviously, food and drink offered by the vendors do not meet the quality standard of international tourists. Yet, given the availability of capital, it is not feasible for the vendors to provide a fresh brewed coffee and foods of restaurant quality. Instead of food and drink, vendors can sell handicrafts as souvenirs that may capture the attention of international tourists. They can be cheap or expensive depending on vendors' capital.

Leadership Development

For vendors, Rizal Park is a work space as well as a living space considering that they work for 24 hours and many of them sleep in the park. This implies that the vendor's life space in the park may be viewed as pseudo-community. Currently, the type of leadership in the park is business leadership represented by presidents of vendor's associations. However, if we consider it as a pseudo-community, we need to develop leaders who can be capable of handling issues beyond business. Having a leadership development program that makes those business leaders possess the characteristics of community leadership is encouraged.

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