

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Night Market as Lived Space: The Case of Davao City, Philippines

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Abstract: This paper explores and examines the Roxas Night Market in Davao City as lived space. Following Lefebvre's (2014) idea of space as lived this paper looks into their migration story that led to their inclusion in the night market, which helped condition the symbolic meanings that they attach to the site. Using the case study as the privileged research design of this investigation, this approach upholds two saturation points: first, the numbers of vendors have been limited to nine after their stories have reached a repetitive story line, and second, the theory of Lefebvre (2014) on space as lived has been satisfied. Conforming to the assumptions of a descriptive-qualitative approach, the stories of the vendors are convened and analyzed from which unfolding themes are identified. To critically appraise the descriptions, de Certeau's (1984, 1992) concept of perpetual departures and strategies is used. With the critical vantage point, the night market is construed not simply as a gathering of histories and anticipations of the future of migrants who became street vendors in the city but as a location where creative and practical capacities or agencies are demonstrated. Considering the regulative role of their stories, the Roxas Night Market as lived space further means that it forms part of the vendors' long journey and quest for enabling and fulfilling spaces of work, and overall well-being.

Keywords: Roxas Night Market, lived space, Lefebvre, street vendors, de Certeau

Night markets in the country are usually located in urban city centers. The presence of night markets in such locales, however, have remained understudied as an urban and social phenomenon (Milgram, 2014). While Milgram's article on the Harrison Road Night Market in Baguio City is a good attempt to understand what the night market means for street vendors and the local government unit (LGU), the write-up occasions the need to study the night market from two unique considerations: (1) the history of street vendors

and symbolic meanings that append to the night market because Milgram's article focuses on issues surrounding legality and illegality in the Harrison Road Night Market; and (2) the perspective of Lefebvre's concept of space as lived (2014) which looks into the inclusion process of street vendors into the night market, and their anticipations of the future as they are shaped by their experiences in the night market.

The Roxas Night Market in Davao City is the selected subject and location of the study. The street

vendors in the night market hail from various parts of the city and Mindanao. Conditioned by different socio-political and economic backgrounds, the night market has become a unique space for many of these street vendors who find economic relief and social meaning in their enterprise in the area. Considering the theory of M. de Certeau (1992) on perpetual departures in his *The Mystic Fable*, this study attempts to piece together their stories as vendors, and the meanings that they attach to the night market. Assuming that their departures or movement from one point to another has become an important feature of their life, their narratives are also looked into from de Certeau's (1984) concept of strategies in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. More to the point, the term strategy pertains to capacities to influence, figure, or re-configure in an environment which a person has mustered to take shape or develop (Cueto, 2002). In relation to the street vendors, strategies can refer to their creativity and resilience as they make the most of their departures from one place to another and their current livelihood spaces in the Roxas Night Market.

Methods

Aside from the two saturation points as delimiting structures for a case study research design, a key methodological consideration in this study is the criteria in selecting key informants so the interviews can commence (Creswell & Plano Clarke, 2011). Two qualifications were considered. The vendors must (a) have experienced the rules of the night market under the term of the previous city mayor and the three-month scheme implemented during the term of the current city mayor, and (b) be vending in Davao City since 2010 to ensure that they have enough experience in vending which disposed them to reflect upon their situation and the meanings that are attached to vending as a livelihood activity. Guided by these qualifications, key informants were identified through purposive and snowball sampling.

In the process of selecting the informant, choosing these individuals means distinguishing them from vendors who are new in the vending enterprise because almost all who were informed of the draw lots system were allowed to participate. This means taking time to go through the routine of asking the vendors for their background in the hope that they qualify with the pre-determined criteria. Also, the snowball sampling

only helped identify one informant because many of the informants were unsure if their friends are willing to take part in an interview. Moreover, the informants that were selected informed me that they had some trust issues because they associate my posture and demeanor as someone who is working for the night market office. This remark prompted me to wear simple shorts and shirts to appear less formal and be dissociated from the personnel of the night market office. After the interview, the ensuing task was to study my notes and make transcripts of the recorded interview. The transcripts were, however, not verbatim. For this task, I had to quickly arrange the stories so I can go back to the informants and read the abridged story to them for possible comments.

With the foregoing methods, a content analysis of the narratives was done which helped describe the Roxas Night Market as lived space and yielded these themes: (a) finding one's peace and place in the city, (b) between fate and decision-making, (c) as symbolic space: surviving the tests of time, (d) vending as family enterprise, and (e) dreams and aspirations. In relation to Lefebvre's (2014) idea of lived space as referring to ideals, vision, and imagination, the identified themes serve as my appropriation of lived space. The identified themes highlight the historical character of the vendors' experiences that disposed them to aspire for better places and conditions such as finding more permanent spaces in the night market where they can sell and earn in legitimate and, hopefully, more favorable conditions.

The gathered themes from the narratives of the vendors also signaled the start of the critical analyses of this study. With de Certeau (1984, 1992) providing the lens, the night market is construed as a reminder of the departures of vendors as they proceed in their quest for a better life and living conditions. This makes the night market a testament to their endurance and capacities to create opportunities for themselves and their families. While the Roxas Night Market may be reckoned as a space primarily created by the LGU of Davao City, the street vendors themselves help frame, hence, condition the existence of the night market as a site by making it a place where their stories of resilience and efforts are not to be wrapped up or engulfed by poverty interface. With the aid of de Certeau's notion of perpetual departures (1992) and strategies (1984), the night market as lived space can be construed as an affirmation of the street vendors'

agencies and their protest to disabling conditions which prompted their journey and search for safe and productive lives.

Location of the Study: An Overview

The LGU of Davao City created the night market in Roxas Avenue through the passing of the Night and Weekend Market Ordinance No. 089 (2013). Hon. Tomas J. Monteverde IV initiated the filing of the Ordinance, which the 17th Council of Davao City approved. It was a project which the then City Mayor, and now President of the country also supported.

The Roxas Night Market officially opened on January 22, 2014. The market was arranged and organized for the vendors in San Pedro and other streets in the city who were demolished from their posts in 2013. Prior to the creation of the night market office in 2016, the Drainage Management Unit (DMU) was the office in charge of the area and was tasked to identify who shall be prioritized in the new location of the night market in Roxas Avenue. A vendor applicant also needs to pass these requirements: (a) he/she is an indigent, which means that the vendor does not have other means of livelihood, which is established through a personal interview and background check, and (b) a barangay clearance or voter's ID to ascertain the applicant's residency in the City.

The increasing number of illegal street vendors in San Pedro Street prompted the local government of Davao City to re-assign the vendors to a location where they can be monitored. To initially address the need to regulate vending activities in the street, the city government conducted a meeting in Almendras Gym in 2013 to discuss with the illegal vendors their case and the possibility of transferring them to a new site. The city government allotted 2,000 seats for the activity but 3,200 attended the gathering (Radyo Natin, 2013). In 2014, the LGU came to a decision choosing Roxas Avenue as the new vending site given that the avenue is located between two big institutions, the Ateneo de Davao University (ADDU) and Aldevinco (Commercial Institution), and is relatively not busy at night. In July 2016, however, certain changes took place in the management of the night market office. More to the point, the current city mayor decided to confer the night market under the direct responsibility of the City Transportation and Traffic Management Office (CTTMO).

As a livelihood area, the night market has these key features: (a) The night market on weekdays opens from 5:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., and starts at 4:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. on weekends; (b) The area has four blocks or sections, which is divided according to the type of goods or products sold. The first block is the area for accessories. This space pertains to all types of goods that are neither food nor *ukay-ukay* (second-hand items). The second block is for food, while the third block is for *ukay-ukay*, and the fourth section is the massage area; (c) The size of a single space for rent is 1.5 by 2 meters which is comparable to the size of two folding beds given that folding beds are the usual choice for display for shoes, bags and other accessories; (d) As tenants in the night market, vendors are required to pay certain fees: Php15 for *arkabala* (rent for space use) and Php10 for light usage. This means that every vendor needs to pay Php25 per day or Php750 per month. For all vendors, a health certificate is required. Also, for food vendors, a food handling training certificate is needed, which is earned after attending a seminar conducted by the City Health Office. For the massage therapists, certificates from TESDA are expected so they can do massage in the night market.

At the time of current city mayor and under the supervision of the CTTMO, the night market, however, only hosted around 350 vendors, and the four sections, namely: *ukay-ukay* section, massage area, food section, and accessories are now delineated by steel barricades/fence with entrance-exit checkpoints and with patrolling police and military officers. The change in rigor in security measures was a response to the bombing incident last September 2, 2016. Given the reduced number of vendors, the first batch of vendors can lease spaces for three months starting August 15 to November 15, 2016. The stint for the second batch is November 16, 2016, to February 15, 2017; with the third batch vending on February 16, 2017, to May 15, 2017; and the fourth batch occupying their spaces on May 16, 2017, to August 14, 2017. This new scheme is the LGU's way of delimiting the number of vendors in the night market and providing a chance for everyone to have a space/stall in the area. On such note, the second batch of night market vendors was drawn on November 10, 2016, at the Almendras Gym with the CTTMO facilitating the activity. With regard to rules, each vendor now needs to sign the waiver and contract which stipulates the rules and regulations of the night market. An important stipulation in the contract holds

that if violations are incurred, such infringements shall serve as a ground for the eviction of the vendor from the stall.

Literature Review

As an informal economic enterprise, street vending in the night market can be historically situated along the development of the formal and informal economy discourse. Moser (1978) noted that the informal sector stands in contrast to the formal sector. This is the classical treatment of the informal sector. On such note, the informal sector is considered a result of the efforts of the class of laborers, farmers, and workers. The rules of the elite, the landed, or the owners of business firms, however, govern the formal sector. The difference between the two economic systems serves as the backbone of economic and hierarchical dualism between formal and informal work. To be more specific, the informal sector is inferior to the class of work performed in the formal sector. Such dualism is also present in Hart's (1973) reflection on the meaning and nature of the informal sector. Recognized as the first academic scholar to use the term in published documents, Hart, in contrast to Moser, specified the resilience in the informal sector in times of economic adversity. He noted how the informal sector mimics the story of Cinderella who has the capacity to endure, stay patient, and be victorious in the midst of difficult times. In this respect, Hart acknowledged the dynamic potential of the informal sector to help families and communities economically stay afloat, which in turn provided the foundation of Moser's point of view.

Another way of looking at the informal sector is through Sethuraman's (1976) position. He found it problematic to distinguish the informal from the formal sector through the difference in income level. While the informal sector is classically associated with less income, he noted that instances or cases abound that can dispute such stereotype. This is because there are accounts of informal street vendors who earn more than regular employees in private and formal firms. In this case, Sethuraman questioned the characteristics assigned to the formal and informal sector and asserted that the two sectors are not mutually exclusive terms when the sectors are gleaned in terms of its characteristics. A similar attempt to blur the boundaries between the formal and informal sectors can be recognized in Mazumdar (1976). He reckoned

that what is more crucial is the quality and degree of labor absorption. In this regard, it is the absorptive capacity of the location of work that matters, and the formal and informal sectors have unique vantage points in relation to such concern. Mazumdar's position also included a discussion on the rising number of invisible home-based work, which is attached to big companies abroad. Although the International Labour Organization (2002) considered and maintained invisible home-based work as part of the informal sector, the presence of these home-based workers is an outcome of private firm's incapacity to absorb labor from their end, forcing such companies to re-strategize through outsourcing. In this respect, Mazumdar (1976) magnified the intricate relation between formal and informal work in complex or multi-layered economies.

The discussion on the changing perspectives on the informal sector can be recognized in some of the elements that figure in night market discussions. In Baguio City, for instance, Milgram (2014) reconstructed the night market street vendors' struggle for legal recognition and their subsequent victory when they were transferred to a more viable economic space in the Harrison Road Night Market. On the one hand, the success story depicted the struggle of overcoming the inferior treatment of the night market as informal work. This is reflected in the way street night market vending was previously perceived as illegal and transitory. On the other hand, the creation of the new space for the night market points to the LGU's changing perception of the night market as a possible viable economic space for its people. Through the City Mayor's Administrative Order No. 203 (2006), and the incessant lobbying efforts of organized street vendors, the Harrison Road Night Market now addresses and mitigates intersecting concerns and issues such as legality, the right to decent work, and a sense of permanence over one's place of work (Milgram, 2014). Moreover, the Harrison Road Night Market has become a must-see destination which implies that its sense of self has become a symbolic marker of an aspect of the local culture of Baguio City. This gained feature speaks of the dynamic nature and evolutionary character of informal work, which both street night market vendors and the LGU of Baguio City benefit from.

Another way of understanding night market is by looking at its instances in Southeast Asia, and the

country. In Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are a few of the often-cited countries where night markets subsist which intertwine with discussions on history, local culture, and the urban environment (Pottie-Sherman & Hiebert, 2015). In Indonesia, for instance, two different cases of night market subsist. In Bali, the street vendors hail from nearby provinces and cities. The urban locales seldom participate as vendors in the night market. However, in Jakarta, it is the local residents who work as night market vendors (Cukier & Wall, 1994, as cited in Hsieh & Chang, 2006). Hadfield (2014) noted that the two types of night market vendors can appear disorderly for tourists who bring with them the Western paradigm of order in their night markets.

Thailand also hosts popular night markets. A key feature of the street night market vendors in this country is that majority of them are college degree holders and are within the fold of middle class. This means that they have above average incomes (Lynch, 1999, as cited in Hsieh & Chang, 2006), which is a stark contrast in relation to minimal night time activities such as prostitution conditioned by abject poverty and is finding its own path within the landscape of the night market (Bishop & Robinson, 1999).

The case of Singapore night market also has its unique feature. According to Henderson, (2000, as cited in Hsieh & Chang, 2006), Singapore has traveling night markets, which are temporarily pitched in open public spaces. Moreover, senior citizens spend their evening in the night market while taking the local food delicacies (Henderson, 2000, as cited in Hsieh & Chang, 2006). Hong Kong, with its busy vending enterprise, becomes a source of attraction for visitors to observe at the local articulations of capitalism (McGonial, 1993, as cited in Hsieh & Chang, 2006). From these night markets, Taiwan has a more formalized approach to street vending. In this country, a license to operate is required which undergoes a process and is granted by the Tourist Night Market committee. This means that the activities in night markets are carefully studied and attended to by the local government (Hsieh & Chang, 2006). This is also supported by the numerous articles that study the tourist's perception of the night market in Taiwan (Kuo, Chung, & Kuo, 2012), the level of hygiene knowledge and practices of night market food vendors (Sun, Shu-Tai, & Huang, 2012), and the leisure motives of local people in eating in night markets (Chang & Hsieh, 2006).

Given the studies done on night markets in South East Asia, there are differences in the typology of reasons as to why the local people and tourists gravitate towards the night market experience. The dissimilarities also point to the unique terrains and considerations which night markets work with, such as the local government (Chang & Hsieh, 2006), the cultural backgrounds of street vendors (Pottie-Sherman & Hiebert, 2015), the varied intent emanating from the gaze of the tourist, and the culture that evolves in the ecology of the night market (Hadfield, 2014). The differences, however, do not negate the possibility of similarities. A common element among night markets in South East Asia is the night market's capacity to offer livelihood opportunities for locals and even foreigners as in the case of Bali, Indonesia. This means that the night market can be an economic zone and may transform itself into a public good as space where families, friends, communities, and other forms of the collective are involved and participate in the re-mapping of the spaces, values, and culture in the night market (Chwe, 1998).

In relation to night market studies in the country, there is a sole published article accessible online that provides a substantive glimpse on what it means to subsist in the night market for street vendors and the role that the LGU assumes as it exercises its regulatory functions over such space. Milgram (2014) did a study on the Harrison Road Night Market and centered on the street vendors' capacity to carve new spaces within the spaces of the night market. It is, however, important to note that Milgram is not a Filipino and resident in the city. Consequently, there is a need to encourage local researchers to reflect on other possible issues that may emanate from the night market in the city and compare with Milgram's work, or convert unpublished thesis or dissertations on night markets into published articles.

Milgram (2014) interpreted the Harrison Road Night Market as public space where street vendors assert their right to work, and where the LGU demonstrates its flexibility to rules and policies especially in view of the night market's capacity to generate income for the city's treasury. The interface between the vantage point of the street night market vendor and the LGU is characterized as an interplay between formality and informality, or legality and illegality (Milgram, 2014). This is where the article highlights the precarious relation between the illegalities of the night market

as it goes against the rules of the city, and the street vendors' right to safe and enabling working conditions. This tension, however, was mitigated by the creation of the City Mayor's Administrative Order No. 203 (2006), which eventually led to the formalization of the Harrison Road Night Market in August 2011 (Milgram, 2014).

An important feature that is not explored in Milgram's (2014) study is the role of cultural history of the street night market vendors who migrated to city centers like Baguio City for livelihood options and opportunities. The gap begs the question of representation and identity, which may be silenced, reduced, or further marginalized as the street night market vendors carve their way into the night market as public and evening economic space. The gap also points to the need to inquire on the nature of social inclusion, which the Administrative Order No. 203 (2006) in Baguio City confers to the night market street vendors. Is it a type of inclusion that highlights economic gain over a more holistic approach such as well-being and cultural representation?

Milgram's article (2014) also downplayed the "night" element in the Harrison Road Night Market in Baguio City. This perhaps stems from the lack of serious security issues in the area. In places in Mindanao, for instance, where conflict and security problems pose threats to sites where people gather, the night element needs to be dissociated from danger and other forms of insecurities. This is part of the challenge that awaits night markets in places that do not have a high sense of security. In the absence of such condition, creating a night market will not be feasible, as residents of the city would need to be home before evening sets in. This need for security may stand as a requirement for the street night market vendors' over-all sense of social well-being.

Despite the dearth of published articles on night markets in the country, Google map and newspaper articles help identify and describe existing night markets in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. In Luzon, in addition to the night market in Baguio City, these are some the following night markets: (a) the Night Market Angeles, in Angeles City, (b) the Good Shepherd Night Market in Paranaque, Metro Manila, (c) Tutuban Divisoria, Manila, (d) Midnight Mercato Centrale in Global City, Manila, (e) Night Market in San Fernando, La Union, and (f) Banchetto Night Market in Pasig. In the Visayas, these night markets have been installed: (a)

Colon Night Market, Cebu, and (b) Rizal Boulevard, Dumaguete. For Mindanao, the following night markets are identified: (a) People's Market in Roxas, Davao City, (b) Tagum City Night Market, (c) Iligan City Night Market, (d) Night Bazaar in General Santos City, (e) B-Walk Night Market in Koronadal City, (f) Tsibugan Night Market in Pagadian, Zamboanga, and (g) Paseo del Mar, Zamboanga City.

Although the list of night markets is not exhaustive, a few shared threads from the itemized markets can be observed. The first shared feature is the LGU's perspective that the night market provides legal and regulated spaces for illegal street vending (Colina, 2015). In this respect, the night market functions as a solution to unwarranted use of public spaces and other issues that may emanate from having unregistered activities such as street vending in public domains (Hsieh & Chang, 2006). Issues such as security, sanitation, and welfare are also looked into as the LGU assumes the responsibility of managing the night market.

Another shared stance among night markets is its capacity to transform into a tourist attraction for local and international travelers. Its relaxed yet busy ambiance invites residents and visitors to partake or immerse in the evening activity (Hsieh & Chang, 2006). This bustling atmosphere is also coupled with the inexpensive price and bargains that attract consumers to search for rewarding bargains (Chang & Hsieh, 2006). Because the night market offers a multi-sensorial experience, it projects a fluid character, which consumers may want to immerse with and perhaps re-create (Pottie-Sherman & Hiebert, 2015). This is the local experiential attraction, which can fascinate local and foreign tourists, and may partly explain why night markets eventually become a must-see marker in a city.

The third shared feature of night markets in the country is its diversity (Pottie-Sherman & Hiebert, 2015). In this case, night markets serve as a location where a diverse selection of goods and food are on display. This can be recognized in street vendors' attire, the manner of transaction between vendors and consumers, food options and preferences, and the variety of language and accents one can hear in the night market (Chang & Hsieh, 2006). This is why the night market experience is enjoyed or re-created (Pottie-Sherman & Hiebert, 2015) and why night markets provide a feel for multi-culturalism as a time-

bound and place-bound area. The fourth shared feature of night markets in the country is its liminality. While the LGU may enforce the rules and regulations, the transactions may bend some rules such as the presence of illegal pirated films and music or other counterfeit items sold in the area (Milgram, 2014).

Results

Narratives

The following narratives were selected and abridged to help describe the Roxas Night Market as lived space:

(1) Roman from Agusan del Sur. In the night market, Roman occupies a stall in the *ukay-ukay* section. He is 54 years old and is currently a resident of Sandawa Road, Matina, Davao City. Originally born in San Francisco, Agusan del Sur, his family moved to Tagum City when he was still young. This transfer, as shared by Roman, was conditioned by the re-assignment of his father to the City, who was a soldier of the Philippine Army.

The ease in accepting the decision to transfer to Davao City was also conditioned by his father's prior purchase of a house in the city. This was how he explained why he has been residing in the city after his days as a college student. In his first few years in the city, he worked as a contractual traffic enforcer. While working in a local government office, he was also working part-time as an *ukay-ukay* shoe vendor in San Pedro Street. Roman even cited an incident when he received a fine from a CTTMO staff after selling his *ukay-ukay* in one of the busy streets in the city. Such experience, however, did not discourage him from continuing in the informal enterprise. He decided to go full-time in the *ukay-ukay* business. He realized that he could attain better economic security if he works as a vendor compared to being a contractual employee. Roman specified that working eight hours a day as a contractual employee does not provide an adequate source of income. When compared to "jackpot days" or instances when one can sell many used shoes, Roman noted that the income can easily compensate for days when there is no income, or when income is lean.

Becoming part of the night market also meant a more stable source of income for Roman given the number of people who flock in the area. Unfortunately, Roman was not picked during the drawing of lots in

Almendras Gym on August 15, 2016. But in September, he gained access in the *ukay-ukay* section through an abandoned space in the area. How did Roman gain access to a space in the night market? He explained that he first went to the night market and observed if there were unoccupied spaces. Upon realizing that there was a space that appeared to be abandoned, Roman approached the CTTMO head and presented the case of the free space in Roxas Night Market. The head of the CTTMO then instructed his personnel to verify if such space indeed exists. After validating the information, Roman eagerly shared that the head of the office awarded the space to him because of his clear records—which means that he followed the rules, paid the dues, and did not cause any conflict in the area. Roman, on such note, proudly stressed how his perseverance paid off. This is why despite the fact that Roman will only have two more months to operate, since our interview, he remained optimistic by saying that he will make the most of such opportunity. He added: "*Maayo man dyud nang makaplastar ta diri para smooth ba ang atong pagpanginabuhì, kay didto sa San Pedro sa una, bawal man ang magtinda kay dakpon man*" ["It is better to sell in a place where business can be properly set-up as it makes selling less worrisome. Unlike in San Pedro street before, vending was not allowed and the authorities were tasked to apprehend vendors"].

Roman also shares that the life of an *ukay-ukay* vendor is not easy because it is influenced by luck and conditioned by many uncertainties. When asked what he did for a month because his name was not called in the draw lots, he shared that he went back to a section in San Pedro Street where he used to operate. Is such decision part of his response to the policies, which the LGU has created for the street night market vendors in the city? He said that when there are new policies, he needs to be obedient and understanding of such rules as the government is only trying to accord order in the way things are governed in the city so harmony can subsist in the way the city is arranged or re-arranged.

When asked what challenges Roman faced while in the Roxas Night Market, this was his point of view: "*Syempre kanang kadaghanon sa tao. Kung pangit pud ang panahon, kung muulan wala pud mi kita ana kay wala may mga tao nga musuroy pud. Nah, ang ulan klastmeyt naman namo na*" ["Of course, the number of people is a major concern. If the weather is not good, or if it rains, it means fewer people will visit the night

market. At times, the rain is already our classmate”]. With this point, Roman seems to suggest that they have become accustomed to rainy nights. Despite such challenge, Roman maintains his optimistic posture by saying that “*Basta sa aning negosyo, kung kabalo lang mudiskarte, mugunit sa kwarta, mu-asenso man jud ka*” [“In this business, as long as you have tactics and ways, and you know how to manage money, you will succeed”].

Roman also has strong words with some of the abuses of vendors in the night market especially that Roman has been submissive to the government regulations: “*Kanang mga Muslim man gud nang mga labad, ila man na ipang baligya kanang pwesto nila. Ang ako kani lang dyud (pointing to the folding bed). Wala man tay mabuhat kung unsay plano sa taas, musunod lang gud ta, total para man ni sa kaayuhan nato tanan, di ba? Maplastar ra man gihapun ni*” [“Some Muslim vendors cause difficulty in the night market given that some sell their slots for a price. For me, my only companion here is my folding bed. We just need to follow the rules imposed by the government and everything will just fall into place”]. This was how Roman evaluates the causes why the night market was closed and put on hold by the city mayor.

(2) Roldan from Jose Abad Santos. “*Kanang mag-ulan, wala man gud masilongang ang mga tao... so pag-ingana man, manghipos na lang pud mid, manguli kaya wala man gihapun mi kita kay wala may mangaon*” [“If it rains, people do not have a place where they take temporary shelter. In such case, we also just clean up, pack and go home because we cannot also earn given that no one will eat in our space”]. This was how Roldan describes a challenge as they vend in the night market.

A 20-year-old resident of Claveria Street, Roldan lives with his brother in Davao City. He is originally from Jose Abad Santos, Davao Occidental, and was first exposed to the world of street vending in 2010. Prior to the initial engagement, Roldan already worked as a griller in one of the barbeque stops outside People’s Park. When the night market opened in 2012, he decided to work with a small barbeque business in the night market area, which is being supported by his boss who is also his elder brother. When asked if it is okay for him to be interviewed, he said that it is okay as long he is not busy, or “*kung wala kaayoy customers*” [“If there are not so many customers”].

Roldan’s townmates influenced his decision to move and settle in Davao City. He even identified three vendors in the night market who are also from Jose Abad Santos. His older brother owns the barbeque stall in the night market and is also the owner of a boarding house in Claveria Street, with tenants who are primarily from Davao Occidental. Roldan cited that the agricultural products, such as coconuts and other derivatives from the coconut trees, provide the main source of income for people in their hometown. To this kind of environment, he specified that: “*Lisod man kaayo sa probinsya*” [“Life is very difficult in the province”]. The idea of being in a city proved fascinating and attractive, which disposed their decision to try their luck in Davao City. For Roldan, Davao City is seen as a provider of economic opportunities: “*Maayo man ang syudad kay daghan man ta matrabahuan.*” Roldan added that his prior work and involvement in a food business provided the detailed ideas on the operations of a food vending business. This is a background which Roldan is consciously trying to capitalize on. Also, Roldan specified that they put much of their time into the food vending business given that it is their primary source of income. Although vending is an evening activity, they need to prepare for it the entire day. This includes buying and bargaining for meat early morning, slicing, and preparing every item needed to run the food-vending stall. In his words, “*kuti man ni sya trabaho...kapoy kayo ni nga trabahoy, mag sayo gud kag mata para muadto sa palengke, unya pagkahuman mag prepare pa ka, i-marinate pa nimo ang karne unya magtuhog paka*” [“This is highly detailed and demanding work. You need to wake up early every day to buy meat at the wet market, skewer the meat after marinating them.”].

Roldan considers the night market as a good place for him and his brother because people flock to the Roxas Night Market. The number of people who visit the area ensures or guarantees a steady flow of income. This picture of assurance, however, changed after the bombing incident. Their joy while vending in the night market was replaced by worry and fear. Aside from the decreasing number of people visiting the night market, they also needed to face their own fears and security concerns. Their income also significantly decreased. However, Roldan was quick to regain his composure in our conversation by saying that their life must not stop because of the bombing incident. As a migrant, he needs to maximize resources, time, and opportunities.

A case in point is his story of their effort to put up a makeshift tent near their home on rainy days. Life must not wait, so to speak. When asked about the draw lots system, Roldan expressed that he has no issue with the method of selecting the vendors of the night market. Even if his group will only be allowed to sell for three months, the idea that additional spaces will be opened to vendors in Roxas Night Market implies the possibility of maintaining a space in the night market even after the three-month term expires.

When I asked Roldan if he plans to re-visit his hometown, or if still considers going back to Jose Abad Santos for good, he has these interesting words to say: “*Magbakasyon lang siguro. Mahal man pud gud ang pamliti didto, 500. Kung sa plano nga magpuyo na Davao pirmanente, di ko sigurado kay wala pud bayay forever*” [“I will visit Jose Abad Santos just to have a short vacation. However, it will require me Php 500.00. As to living in Davao for good, I am not sure, since there is no forever”].

(3) Mila from Marawi. A mother of seven children, Mila is a native of Marawi City and now lives in Trading Boulevard, Davao City. At 42 years old, she already resided in the City for the past 30 years, since she moved to Davao City when she was 12 with her parents. When asked what her primary livelihood engagement is, Mila shared that she has been into street vending ever since she started working.

As a Maranao, Mila shared that Davao City does not only provide economic opportunities for her small food vending business. She also appreciates the tolerant and peaceful co-existence of people from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Asked further what made her decide to stay in Davao City, she acknowledged the role and influence of the then Mayor, and now President of the country. She specifically mentioned how the former city mayor communicates his love and respect for the Muslims. When he became the President, she even loved him more because his election to the post provides a sense of security to Muslims like her and the Muslim community.

With the bombing of Roxas Night Market, Mila had her bouts of unstable or unpredictable income from her food-vending stall. This is a far cry from what she used to earn in the night market, which was usually between Php 1,000 to Php 2,000 per night, and dwindled to Php 300 to Php 500. Despite such situation, Mila remains hopeful that the night market

will regain its vibe. She specifically cited that before the freak incident, it was the vendors who wanted to have a space in the night market. After the senseless attack, it is now the LGU who requests vendors to go back to their spaces in Roxas Night Market: “*Kita pa ang naga gukod sa una, pero karun, kita na ang ginahangyo nga magtinda.*” Also, the bombing in the night market marked a challenging turn in the life of Mila and her food vending business. When asked if she ever thought of transferring to another place, this was what she had to say: “*Wala ko nahadlok kay wala man koy laing maadtuan*” [“I was not afraid of the incident because I also have nowhere else to go”].

When asked if she was one of the vendors demolished by the LGU in 2011, the facial expression of Mila changed and she became a bit sad that the incident happened. She said, “*Ningkalit lang sila (Demolition Unit) niabot. Gikuha ang amu paninda ug mga gamit. Nawala pud ang usa namo ka bike ato. Sa amu kasuko kay nakig-away mi ato nila*” [“The demolition unit suddenly arrived. They took all our goods, even the bike. We were so angry that we also fought back”]. Mila also noted that they went to the Office of the City Mayor and complained. The former city mayor somehow appeased them by saying that they would just need to wait because something will be opened to them, which was the Roxas Night Market.

Next to the demolition, Mila recounted how the sudden closure of the Roxas Night Market also affected her. At that point, all of her goods were already arranged and ready for the night market. Upon realizing that the city mayor has closed the night market, Mila expressed how worried she was considering that her capital for that night will be lost. Although she was one of those vendors luckily drawn, she still remembers her dismay over her lost capital because the incident left her with no choice but to borrow from *bombays* or money lending Indian Nationals for her next vending enterprise. “*Dili gyud to fair*” [“It was not fair”]. This was how Mila summarized the sudden closure of the night market.

Finally, I asked Mila if she has plans of leaving Davao and transferring to another place. She shared that she last left Davao for Marawi when her mother died in 2005. Other than that, she will not leave the City of Davao because it is here where she finds a space for her small business. Also, vending has been part of her life. “*Mao na ni ako digak-an nga pagnegosyo.*”

Normal na sa ako maninda” [“Vending is something that I grew up with. It is an activity that is so normal to me”]. With the kind of esteem that Mila accords to street food vending, she even remarked that it is something her children can also do and follow as their source of livelihood.

(4) Acman from Marawi. Acman, a Maranao vendor of *ukay-ukay* clothes in the night market is originally from Marawi. As far as Acman can recall, he was already in Davao City when he entered college where he took up BS Customs Administration in Agro-Industrial College Foundation of the Philippines. He is now 52 years old, an age that he only estimates because in Islam there are neither birth certificates nor birthdays. He also estimates having lived in Davao City for almost 40 years.

Acman has his own family in Davao City and is married to a Christian who converted to Islam. They now have four children. He also shared that his first wife is a Muslim with whom he had a child. He explained that in Islam, it is allowed to have multiple marriages so long as the man can sustain the needs of his families. Acman is happy to note that his children are already grown up and some are even already operating their own restaurants. With regard to sources of income, Acman shared that they do have a grocery store, which is currently managed by his wife. With the grocery store and *ukay-ukay* vending stall, his estimated gross household monthly income is around Php 50,000 as he earns Php500 each day on ordinary days and Php2,000 per day on special occasions. This also means that some vendors can have a bigger income compared to those working in formal establishments.

Acman added that he had crucial involvements and role in the governance of the Roxas Night Market. He used to be the president of the organization of the vendors selling clothes in the night market. Hence, he also served as one of the over-all representatives for Roxas Night Market vendors. With the position, he is aware of the various complaints of his fellow *ukay-ukay* vendors, which are regularly submitted to him and are subsequently relayed to the meetings with the LGU. Acman, however, noted that such organization dissolved because of the LGU instruction that vendors that their problems and issues are to be sent directly to the head office. This means that the vendors themselves should individually raise their concerns to the LGU office. Consequently, the vendor’s organization is no

longer functional or recognized.

When asked how Acman became an *ukay-ukay* vendor, he shared that selling used clothes was a family business passed on to him by his parents. They usually buy their supply of clothes from Uyanguren Street. They also used to station their business in Bangkerohan, then transferred to San Pedro Street. Now, they are now in Roxas Night Market. In Roxas, his grown-up son assists him in running their business. His son’s tasks include selling used clothes, giving changes to customers, and attending to queries-concerns from customers. He also affirmed the role and contribution of the local government of Davao for giving small entrepreneurs like him a chance to live a more comfortable life even though they are originally not from Davao City. He further shared that even if your business is just brined anchovies, as long as it is legal, you will really have a happy life in the city.

I also asked him about his other aspirations in life, if he imagines himself taking part in other business ventures outside night market vending. To such query, he confidently said that he would pursue this business as long as he lives. Such business, he said, can guarantee rice for his family. Working in a company, meanwhile, cannot provide such certainty. Even though he graduated with a degree in BS Customs Administration, he has no plans of pursuing a career along such course. He was even quick to note that he only used and applied the ideas he learned in school in his current business.

Aside from migrating to Davao City to study, his family came to Davao to live in peace. Acman recounted that back in the late 1970’s, war and terrorist attacks frequented the south. They sought refuge in Davao because they believe, quoting a familiar slogan in Davao, “Life is here.” They started a new life here and brought with them their business of selling used clothes. I asked him how their stay in Davao was for almost 40 years. He said that he first felt foreign to the place in contrast to where he came from. But today, if he travels and visits other places, he immediately wants to go back to Davao, which he now considers his home. To quote, “*Wala na ko naanad didto (Marawi)*” and “*Kung muadto kog Manila, three days lang ko didto kay dili ko ganahan kay wala may negosyo didto*” [“I am no longer used to living in Marawi; and if I visit the place, I only stay there for three days because I do not like staying there for long given that doing

business there is not good”]. The statement evidently establishes Davao as his home and a productive locale of his business.

(5) Ricky from Sta. Cruz. “*Naa man guy tulis sa una. Naay patay sa lawod ba. Nadiscourage akong papa, naluoy siya unya nahadlok pud mi. Naa mi gamay tigom, ning-adto mi og Davao*” [“A robbery happened which resulted in the killing of a person whose body was found floating at sea.. My father was discouraged by the incident and we became extremely scared that the senseless act will happen again. With our little savings, the family decided to move to Davao City”].

Ricky is a Bisaya *ukay-ukay* vendor, and he occupies stall #141. When asked what made him decide to leave his place of birth, he said that it was a decision born out of fear after his fellow fisher folks were killed in their barangay. Ricky further shared that he and his father witnessed the attack, which immediately forced them to transfer to a place where their safety can be guaranteed. For Ricky and his father, Davao was the viable place where they can seek refuge. It has been nine years since they transferred to Davao.

Born in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur, Ricky further described the movement of his family after witnessing the senseless attack. They first moved to Malita where they stayed for three years. This is where Ricky also learned the ropes and skills of a fisherman, which he then practiced within the next few years. Such work served as the backbone of their family’s survival as it provided for his family’s needs. Ricky further stated that he took on such responsibility as he was the eldest among nine siblings. When times became extra difficult, he recalled those instances when he was forced by their circumstance to steal bananas from their neighbors just so the family could survive. He also shared how simple their house was, and how they all managed to fit in their makeshift hut. Life was not easy, says Ricky. At an early age, he was also forced to sacrifice his studies, which explains why he was only able to earn a high school diploma. At some point, he still finds himself thinking of entering college but he would soon remind himself that it is too late for him to consider the idea seriously and thinks of it as a dream that has become almost impossible to accomplish.

When he and his family migrated to Davao, they first lived with their relatives. Ricky only decided to move out of his relatives’ residence when he got married and

started his own family. This situation also required him to find a job. Ricky said that he was employed first as a dishwasher in the food court of Victoria Plaza—one of the first malls in Davao City. After which, he became a cook, a job he did for a longer period. From being a cook, Ricky then transferred to Goldstar Hardware where he worked as a checker. It is in this hardware where he also became a regular employee in a formal establishment. Although his monthly wage allowed his family to eat three times a day, Ricky never stopped hoping for and dreaming of a better life. Guided by such a dream, he did something that somehow disposed his family to certain economic risks: he resigned from his tenured post. With the little money that he managed to save, Ricky used such meager amount as start-up business capital. It was his wife, he said, who actually suggested that they go into the *ukay-ukay* business. Similar to many small and trial or experimental businesses, Ricky described how they went through several rounds of hardships. This included stories of skipping meals and days of not having any profit from their business venture. For a specific turning point in their family life, Ricky acknowledged the help of his neighbor who sells used shoes in Toril, Davao City. His neighbor suggested that they sell shoes instead of clothes, and explained that the capital needed for an *ukay-ukay* shoe business is bigger but can be more financially rewarding. After carefully listening to the advice, they started buying select used shoes instead of solely purchasing bundles of clothes because they would want to see if selling shoes would indeed work and be more profitable as promised.

In 2011, the street market in San Pedro was demolished. This turn of event meant having to skip meals again and sell anywhere despite the threat of getting evicted yet again. Also, Ricky continued selling in pathways and streets despite the rain and other weather conditions. With the uncertainties in Ricky’s business looming, the eventual opening of the Roxas Night Market in 2012 was a huge blessing as it sought to accommodate all those street vendors who were demolished and evicted from their livelihood posts. Ricky remains thankful that the Roxas Night Market was created for them although there were some protests over its creation and that the City Mayor initially disagreed with its creation.

For Ricky, the Roxas Night Market is a great place for business. It is in such a place where his daily income increased to Php1,500 on ordinary days and

Php2,000–Php3,000 on special days/occasions. His expenses for the use of space in Roxas Avenue are also measly, which includes Php750/month for the rent and electricity, Php100/day for the labor in bringing his goods to the market, and Php800/month for the rent in the garage where his goods are kept before and after the night market operations. As a shoe vendor, his capital for every sack of shoes is Php3,000. When buying a sack of shoes, Ricky said that they could neither see the quality of shoes inside nor segregate and select the good shoes over the bad ones. Hence, their income from every sack varies depending on the quality or kind of shoes present or available in each sack. Despite such uncertainty, Ricky holds that no matter how bad the condition is of some shoes, they still try their best to wash them up and sell them. Ricky, however, admits that at times, some shoes are discarded because they are beyond repair or can no longer be restored. Moreover, some shoe sack offers quality or high-end original pairs of shoes. If such pairs can be found in a sack, Ricky becomes excited because the pair can be sold for a bigger price. At times, an original pair of shoes means an easy and quick recovery of their capital. Also, they can swap a pair of original shoes to a customer who also has a pair of original shoes. In this case, whoever has the least price will pay to match the pricier pair.

Because of their business as night market vendors, they were able to buy a residence in Boulevard, which is now filled with appliances. Ricky jokingly adds that his family can now sleep properly because they also have an air conditioning unit. Kidding aside, Ricky said that they could also sleep well because they are no longer worried over their daily income. The kind of life that he is living now is way different from their impoverished lives when they were still starting in the *ukay-ukay* business. Looking back, Ricky said that he used to dream of having a TV set and watch television shows. Before, he did not have the chance to enjoy such luxury because they had no TV set. Now, he said in jest that he could watch TV shows anytime because he already has a flat screen TV. Asked if he has any plans on working again instead of selling in the night market, he said that he no longer wants to get into another kind of job especially in formal establishments. For him, working in a company means that it is the owners who will only get richer, with the poor even becoming poorer. He adds that salaries derived from work in a company are unjust, unlike in a business where one's efforts can be easily compensated with big returns in

investment.

In his years of doing business, Ricky said that he did not get into any conflict with his fellow vendors. Every vendor is expected to obey the rules and regulations previously laid out to them because if two conflicting vendors do not settle their problem, both vendors will be evicted from their stalls and slots in the night market. In the words of Ricky, "*Kung mag-away mi, duha mi matanggal. Magpailog na lang dyud. Unsaon na lang akong pamilya, akong mga anak*" ["If we get into a fight, both of us will be expelled. I just gave way to somebody. If such instance happens, what will happen to my family and to my children?"]. Although Ricky noted that the way some vendors behave and act could sometimes get into his nerves, such as those who do not mind leaving their garbage behind or those who do not clean their respective places, some concerned vendors clean the other areas themselves just so they will not be reprimanded by the CTTMO Demolition Unit. On such occasion, Ricky explained that the failure of a fellow vendor would also be to their disadvantage. This is why Ricky and the other more responsible vendors try to help each other in reminding fellow vendors of the consequences of their actions to the whole group. Despite knowing the three-month limitation of their stay in the night market, Ricky pointed out that it is better to finish the entire three months rather than getting expelled before the three-month contract ends.

As the head of the family, Ricky works hard and proudly claims to be vice-free. He also remains thankful for his wife for initiating the decision to go into such a business. Such a decision is the reason why Ricky's family is now living an affluent and comfortable life, which is a big contrast to the kind of life that he had when they were still starting in Davao. Ricky shared that he now has three children who are eight and four years olds and a 10-month-old baby. He is proud and happy that he can support their education and provide for their needs. Ricky is motivated to ensure that his children will not experience the struggles that he went through as a growing kid. Even if after three months his business will be displaced from the night market, Ricky will continue with his business in other parts of the City. Ricky no longer has plans of returning to his hometown.

(6) Maisa from Lanao. "*Sa una man gud na panahon, gubot kaayo sa Lanao (Del Sur). Nangita mi ug pamaagi na mabuhi mi. Ning-adto mi ug Davao*"

[“In those days, Lanao (Del Sur) was stricken with war and chaos. We tried to find a way to survive and live. This is why we went to Davao”].

Maisa, a Maranao vendor of accessories, occupies stall #71 and is from Lanao Del Sur. In the interview, she shared her story on the reasons that made them decide to move out of their place and transfer to Davao City as a possible place of refuge. Maisa sadly recalled the traumatic sight of seeing death and hearing the screams and shouts of people as bullets were sporadically fired in their community.

As a short background of her family, Maisa shared that her mother died of an illness when she was still three years old. From then on, it was their father who raised them. When she was 12 years old, his father was shot dead by a police officer for unknown reasons. This event meant that she and the other siblings would be at the custody and care of their eldest brother, who was only 15 years old then. His brother tried to live up to his role by planting rice and corn in their own land. He also worked as a tenant in fields owned by other people.

When Maisa was 30 years old, Lanao remained chaotic. Such environment forced her to borrow money to start a life away from their place. She decided to transfer to Davao City with her family and lived with their relatives in Mini Forest, Boulevard, Davao City. When they reached Davao, life was difficult at first. There were times when they would have nothing to eat. This forced her to persistently look for a job so her family could survive and live.

She also tried selling accessories outside Victoria Plaza for five years, and then transferred to San Pedro Street to sell the same goods. Fortunately, her small business ran well and their family was able to live comfortably. She and her husband have three children who are now all married. However, because her daughter-in-law died and her son got married and had a family again, she now has two grandchildren who are staying with her today. Maisa is already 60 years old and her husband is 62, but she is still working selling accessories. For more than eight years now, her husband is suffering from asthma, which means that he is no longer fit to work. The situation also means that Maisa needs to work for his medication and their daily needs. Maisa had to do it all alone—make a living, and making a home.

Maisa chose to sell accessories instead of food and used clothing because selling accessories only require a small capital. She cannot afford to invest a huge

amount of money because she has no other source of capital. Even the capital she used for her business comes from *arawan* or debt that she has to pay daily with a corresponding daily interest rate. Maisa shared that she can earn Php500–Php1000/day depending on how ordinary or how special the day was. Her daily income, compared to other vendors, is small. But if compared to an ordinary worker, it is big enough to provide for their daily needs. Maisa would also recall her days back in Lanao when they would just sell vegetables and firewood every time I asked her what had changed in their lives when they moved to Davao. In her 30 years of stay in Davao, life did not come easy at first for Maisa. There were instances when she would bring and sell her goods outside Davao City such in Kapatagan, General Santos City, and Bansalan. She proceeds to such areas where there is a fiesta because it means that a hefty number of people will flock to such places, and would possibly generate more income.

The stories on the struggles of Maisa, however, did not end there. In 1999, a fire took down Mini Forest, and Maisa was in Toril at that time vending in a fiesta. She hurried back home only to find their house and all the other houses in the community burned down. She was unable to save anything from their household belongings. Fortunately, nobody from the family was hurt in the incident. As to how the fire started, a gossip circulated that it was a case of arson. More specifically, a Bisaya was accused of doing the act because Muslims primarily occupied the place. Maisa, however, added that the allegation was never proven with the lack of evidence. After the fire incident, Maisa’s family, along with the other fire victims, stayed and lived in the gym for more than a month. At that point, the then city mayor and, now President of the Philippines, gave them Php20,000 cash to help them rebuild their homes and somehow re-start their lives. The LGU also handed them kitchen utensils, pots, rice, and canned goods while they were at the gym. Within the next month, a second fire broke out and fortunately the fire did not reach their village.

As a migrant and a Muslim, Maisa feels that she does not really belong to the community—she and her family are different from the rest. Although such thought and feeling has been with her for a long period, she remarked that today, Christians and Muslims, migrants and original residents of Davao City are friends and live in peace. When further asked about

her future plans, or if she has any plans of finding a new source of living, she said that all she ever wants in life is to be wealthy someday so she can rest and live comfortably. She added that she has no plans of returning to Lanao because Davao City is already their home stressing that she has more reasons to stay than to leave: *“Lisod man sa uban lugar, mag gyera didtoa. May pa sa Davao”* [“It is hard to live in other places because there is war. It is better here in Davao”].

While she has some earnings from her stall in the night market, she also needs to deal with her monthly dues which she is yet to pay. On the night of my interview with her on October 28, 2016, the night market staff delivered to her this piece of paper that notifies her that if she does not settle her dues, she might be blacklisted or be evicted from her site. The night market in-charge signed the notice.

(7) Sonny from Sultan Kudarat. *“Ako mismo wala ko katuo na naay lugar pareho sa Davao na dili mag-gubot ang Kristiyano, Muslim. Pwede magsagol ang tribo Maranao, Tausug, kay sa amo lahi man gud. Ang isa ka lugar Maguindanao tanan, ang isa Ilonggo tanan”* [“I never imagined that a place like Davao exists where there is peace between Christians and Muslims, where different groups like Maranao and Tausug can be together. Because back in our place, the situation was very different”].

Sonny, a 24-year-old brand-new shoe vendor in stall #41, is originally from Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat. As a migrant, he expressed his gratitude for finding refuge and peace in Davao City. Comparable to other vendors, Sonny and his family were forced to migrate to Davao because of war in his hometown. When asked what kind of war? He retorted that in their place, war is usually caused by clan war, which he also considers as the reason for his family’s migration.

Sonny’s sister also sells bed mattresses in the night market. They actually stayed with her family in 2007 when he was in the middle of second year high school. In 2008, he continued schooling. When he transferred to Davao City, he felt different from his classmates because of his language. Back then he spoke Tagalog, which somehow forced him to learn the local language. He also remembers getting into small fights because his classmates would call him *Moklo* and feels as if they are teasing him. His teacher confronted him and asked him straight if he is ashamed of his Muslim identity

because he would get angry if others call him *Moklo* which means Muslim. When he knew that *Moklo* stands for Muslim, he apologized to his classmates because he thought he was being bullied. It was also only in his third year in high school that he had friends because he had already adjusted to the people in his community, the school, and Davao.

He graduated from high school and took civil engineering in Jose Maria College (JMC). While studying, he got his girlfriend pregnant, a mass communication student at the University of Immaculate Conception. The situation made him stop studying and look for a source of income for his own family. He collaborated with her sister in their business of selling bed mattresses and used clothes in the night market. He was 19 years old then, and he now has a son who is five years old. His wife is working in Sutherland, a BPO Company from 3:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m. When Sonny gets home at 2:00 a.m. after working in the night market, he waits for his wife and takes her to work using the motorcycle he was able to purchase from the profit in their business in the night market.

To date, Sonny and his family live in Indangan in the house of his mother-in-law which is quite far from Roxas Night Market. Before, they lived in Isla Verde which is near Roxas Avenue. The fire incidents in the area, however, made them decide to transfer. Houses in Isla Verde are too close to each other and are usually made of light materials. The fire-prone location and the birth of their son made it clear to them that they should relocate to a safer place. He and her sister shared in their business even if they have different families to feed. They sold used clothes in Roxas for a year and stopped because of the closure. When they had the opportunity to start their own business because of the raffle draw last August 2016, they took the opportunity to start again. Luckily, their names were both drawn. His sister proceeded with selling second-hand bed mattresses, and Sonny decided to sell brand-new shoes. The separation somehow felt good because they no longer need to split the profit and share in the capital. However, Sonny still confided that at times, he could not bring home any money to his family: *“Naa dyuy panahon ma-zero. Part man dyud na sa negosyo”* [“There are days when I really cannot earn a cent. That is part of the business”]. However, Sonny is thankful that his wife no longer gets angry if he cannot bring home any money. “She understands,” says a proud and lucky husband.

Sonny also observes that the management of CTTMO is fairer and more honest than the former DMU. He actually labeled the DMU “*sindikato*” [syndicate] because he witnessed how they collect bribes from families who have five stalls in the *ukay-ukay* section before the city mayor closed the night market. However, this three-month rule is very unfavorable according to Sonny. For him, it makes their lives unstable. He said, “*Kung muingon sila na diri na mi forever, seryosohon nako ni. Three months lang, dili nako isalig among kinabuhi diri. Opportunity ra pud akong ginahulat, pwesto na stable*” [“If they say that we could sell here forever, I would take this business seriously. Now because we only have three months, I will not entrust our lives here. I am only waiting for an opportunity, a stable place”].

Sonny has plans of returning to school this second semester if the 3-month rule would be put to action. He plans to take marine engineering. However, Sonny honestly answered that if he is to choose between work and business, he will pursue business. He said, “*Sa negosyo, walay amo, walay oras. Sa trabaho naa kay amo, stressed pa dyud ka, naa pa dyuy kailangan na oras pero kung dakog sweldo, okay ra. Pero kung ang sweldo nimo makuha ra nimo sa negosyo, negosyo na lang*” [“In business, you do not have a boss and you own your time. In work, you have a boss, it will give you stress, and your time is not yours. But if it pays well, it is okay. But if your wages can be earned in a business, you should pursue it over work”]. He added, “*Nganong manerbisyo man ka sa negosyante kung pwede ka magnegosyo? Kanang imong gitrabahuan, negosyo man gihapon na*” [“Why would I work for a businessperson if I can do my own business? That company whom you are working for is also doing business”].

Being young and able, Sonny has his options open. For now, he is happy and satisfied with his business. He can even see some of his high school friends strolling around the night market and some of them are already successful in their careers. Asked if he feels intimidated by them if they see him in the night market selling shoes, he said, “*Ako ray na-behind pero di nako ikaulaw ni kay legal man. May mag nangawat, wala ko nangayo sa uban tao, naningkamot ko para sa akong sarili, sa akong pamilya. Honor student man ko sa una pero wala ko nila gina-down*” [“I may be left behind but I am not ashamed of what I do because this is legal. I am not stealing or asking from others.

I am working hard for myself, for my family. I am an honor student before and they do not put me down”]. Sometime this year, Sonny went back to Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat when his mother died. He does not have any other reasons to stay there except to visit his family and relatives. Asked if he has plans of migrating to another place, Sonny reiterated that life is found here in Davao.

(8) Ondo from Panabo. Ondo already lived in Davao City for 11 years. Prior to his stay in the City, he lived in Panabo where he worked in a shop as a welder. He eventually decided to stop such work because of the effects of welding on his health. In the search for a viable work, he proceeded to Davao City where he learned the ropes of vending balut in 2007 in an overpass in Uyanguren Street. This is a job which he did for two years. Since meeting his wife who is a massage therapist, he eventually worked as a massage therapist in Osmeña Park.

As a massage therapist, he specifies that he has been doing such work the past three years. Ondo is also happy to note that he was able to create an organization and apply for a slot in the area in the night market, which he considered as his most stable job in contrast to the previous jobs that he was into. In the group of massage therapists that he is part of, he functions as the organization’s (*Makamasa Hilot Association*) president. This means that he oversees the collection of fees from his fellow members as they are expected to pay a monthly fee of Php2,500 which radically increased to Php7,000 as a group after the bombing incident.

In the interview, Ondo is very apprehensive with the second round of drawing of lots which was then scheduled on November 10, 2016, to determine the next batch of night market vendors. He stressed that he is uncertain over the fate of the massage therapists if they will still be included in the night market or will be totally removed because of the bombing incident. With this uncertainty, Ondo stresses the role of the local government, especially in providing workspaces for indigents like him. In his words, “*unta huna-hunaon sa gobyerno ang mga gagmay nga naninda parehas namu labi na ingon sa gobyerno nga ang night market para sa mga pobre*” [“I hope the government will give importance to small vendors like him because the night market should be for the indigent or poor people like me”].

Ondo specifically recalls his role during the bombing incident. Although he feels lucky to be spared from any direct hit from the bomb's shrapnel, he shared how he struggled to regain his focus and confront his fear so he can help those who were injured by bringing them to taxicabs because the LGU emergency unit only arrived at the scene an hour after. Despite the shock, he recounted how he was able to extend his physical strength to those who were crying and in pain. Since the incident, Ondo shared why he returned to Roxas Night Market and continued with providing his service as a massage therapist in the area. He noted, "*Survivors na man gud mi karon. Gusto nako makapakita nila nga kini na ang bag-o namu nga role diri sa Davao—nga kami ni-survive sa nahitabo*" ["We are already survivors after the bombing incident. This is what we want to show to others that this is our new role—to demonstrate to others that we survived the incident"]. In uttering these lines, Ondo looked at his wife and grandson who were also survivors of the incident. Such stare made me realize how Ondo remains thankful that no one in his family was injured in the blast.

When asked if he has plans of transferring to another site in Davao City, Ondo shared that he has already acquired many life skills which will ensure him of income and provide him with opportunities. For instance, he explained that when the city mayor closed the night market for almost two weeks, he rented a bike-tricycle which allowed him to earn Php200 a day. The closure did not stop him from using his other skills to earn a living. Although Ondo shared that giving a massage is easier than driving, he is proud to note that he survived those weeks when the LGU rendered their decision to close the night market. In his words, "*bisag asa ko ibutang, buhi gyud ko*" ["I will live and survive in any place that finds me"]. Despite the challenges, however, Ondo reiterated his request to the LGU that they will not be removed from their posts and spaces in the night market. As he expressed, "*kami nga mga gagmay, dako gyud ning tabang ang night market sa amua nga mabuhi ug tarung*" ["For people like us, small-time vendors, the night market has been of big help for our decent survival"].

(9) Sohayá from Cotabato City. "*Mao na ni akoo nadak-an nga trabaho sa akoo ginikan*" ["This is the type of livelihood that I grew up with, with my parents"]. Sohayá just turned 19 years old and she is working as a vendor in the accessories section of the

Roxas Night Market. Unlike her peers and classmates, she juggles education and night street vending so she can help finance and support her education and even contribute money to their household. Sohayá recalled that she has been working in the night market for two years in a row now. Her young age has never been an issue for her because she has been into vending since she was just eight. Vending, according to Sohayá, is a skill that she feels naturally inclined to do. When her grandmother invited them to try their luck in Davao City, her family took the opportunity and decided to migrate. She recalls that in their town, they could hardly eat three square meals a day. This is an issue which her family no longer worries given the economic opportunities of vending in other parts of the city and the night market.

Before her vending stint in Roxas Night Market, she recalled frequenting New City Commercial Complex (NCCC) Mall, and Gaisano Mall selling plastic bags, *turotot* (horn) during Christmas, and other accessories. Such experience is the reason why she is also selling in the accessories section of the night market. Looking back at their troubled lives in Cotabato City, she is now committed to graduate and eventually earns a college degree so she can find other forms of work. Despite such possibility, Sohayá shared that she will still find ways to vend even to her future office mates, or still vend in the night market if there is an opportunity. Sohayá, in this respect, regards vending as something which she will not abandon because it is a practice which has always been part of her life. "*Sayang pud ang kwarta kung dili ko maninda maskin naa nako trabaho sa umaabot*" ["It will be unfortunate if I will stop selling some items or goods and possibly earn simply because I am already working in the future"].

In relation to the ordered closure of the night market in August 2016, she remembers how her mother got worried because vending in the night market has been their primary source of income. Sohayá also thought that if the situation does not improve, she might need to give up her studies to ease the economic burden of the family. These are the same worries that she experienced after the bombing incident in the massage area of the night market. Thinking of the possibility of permanent closure of the night market, her family responded to the invitation of the city mayor to continue vending in the place. Bracing fear that the incident may happen again, she and her family went back to the night market after five days. The other vendors also did the

same. Sohaya shared that in their conversations with the other vendors, they reminded each other that if they do not resume in their vending operations, the City Government may eventually decide to just close the Roxas Night Market. “*Magbantay-bantay lang ta ug sayo mu-uli*” [“Just remain vigilant and go home early”]. This was part of her mother’s remark on trying to be extra careful as they slowly resume vending in their stall in the night market.

When asked what the meaning of Roxas for her and her family is, Sohaya said that the night market is a symbol of hope. She explained that the Roxas Night Market has on many occasions saved her family from the brink of economic despair. She reiterated the effects of the sudden closure of the night market that if the LGU extended it to three to four weeks, it would have already exhausted their family savings, and that her father already told her in advance that she would need to stop schooling. With such stories on how the family could regain their sense of economic stability, Sohaya affirmed that the role of the night market in their life—as a symbol of hope for a better life.

Emergent Themes from the Narratives

In this section, the themes in the stories of the key informants shall be outlined highlighting nodal points in their stories that describe the night as lived space—a space of personal meanings and symbols that pertain to the role of the night market to their lives and work as vendors. Through the stories of the informants, they revealed their experiences and insights especially on their travails and successes as they depart from one space to another, and eventually finding enabling spaces in the Roxas Night Market. With the abridged stories, the following themes unraveled:

Finding one’s peace and place in the city. The night market vendors share in the idea that the Roxas night market is part of their journey in search of a place where peace and economic security subsist. The narratives of the informants intersect in Davao City’s capacity to provide the requisites of a locale where in-migrating vendors are given the opportunity to start anew and eventually carve an economic niche that can almost guarantee relief from lack of income, shelter, and food. This is a shared memory amongst the vendors I interviewed given that they all traversed from moments of uncertainty as they migrated from another part of Mindanao to the city of Davao.

Was their decision to migrate to the city center, right? When asked on possible reasons or conditions that will motivate them to go back to their place of birth, the narratives hold that family remains the sole reason for going back to their province specifically when one member of the family gets ill or unfortunately dies. Other than such reason, the night market vendors do not see the importance of returning to their respective provinces.

In addition, some of my informants stressed the relevance of living in a place where peace or freedom from terror and violence is almost guaranteed by the LGU. As individuals who strive to make better economic gains, finding peace in Davao means having less threat to their entrepreneurial activities and plans. The sites of terror—which Maisa from Lanao, Mila from Marawi, and Ricky from Santa Cruz witnessed—are situations that they would not want to see again. For these informants, the Roxas night market stands as a symbol of peace and security given that they could not imagine having economic activities such as the night market in their respective places. This is where the symbolic stance of the night market as an indicator of peace and economic prosperity comes in. As a symbol, it also overflows into the LGU’s strength and character as the city serves as answered prayers given that some people in Mindanao continue to seek for a place that can protect them from violence, threat, and lack of economic opportunities.

Does the night market affirm the ideal conditions that Maisa, Mila, and Ricky aspire for? While there are issues that they still tussle with as night market vendors, their present arrangement and location in the city is a far cry from what they have experienced in their places of birth. Given such line of thought, I consider their location in the night market as part of the journey of reclaiming their dignities as individuals who aspire for better arrangements and opportunities for their families. This also makes street vending in the night market an important part of their personal space, history, and movement from one less ideal place to hopefully more rewarding locations (Nirathron, 2006).

Between fate and decision-making. Since the closure of the night market for almost two weeks, the narratives of the night market vendors that I interviewed all point to a period of uncertainty and disbelief that such a decision could have unfolded. While Roman was the only one who was bold enough

to acknowledge the lapses of some vendors in the night market who took advantage of the lenient rules of the LGU with regard to the regulations of the space use in the Roxas night market, the rest of the informants agree that the night market has provided them with ample savings that could be of help if ever they will not be drawn from the next raffle draw where the next set of night market vendors will be determined. This is what Ricky underscored as he mentioned that he would make the most of his three-month time as a vendor. The same can be said of Roman who only has two months to stay in his space. This is where the interface between accepting fate—the decision to trim the number of vendors to half, and applying the three-month rule—and making decisions as the vendors see the need to maximize their stay in the night market. This is perhaps the reason why Ricky in our interview, while struggling with fever, decided to still be present in the night market and sell shoes.

The notion of having less time in the night market seems to have motivated Ricky and Roman to make the most of the opportunity. While Ricky has been sentimental in thanking the night market where he worked for two years already, he acknowledges how the night market has helped him save money for his family. This is perhaps one reason why he was teary-eyed while reading his story when I validated his narrative with him. The fact that he has provided better living conditions for his family compared to the struggles he faced while growing up somehow made him realize the contribution of the night market to his life as the breadwinner of his family. Finding a space in the night market can, therefore, be considered as a continuing story of one's fight against poverty (Nirathron, 2006).

Roman also chose to remain optimistic despite the limitations of the three-month rule of the LGU. Knowing that his obedience to rules of the government and his clear records helped him avail of a slot in the *ukay-ukay* section, Roman knows that having such opportunity was not just based on luck. It was a reward for his conscious effort to uphold the rule of the LGU. This is a consciousness which I can see in his remark that the LGU is there to put order to things and that the people will eventually see the wisdom of the new rule of the city. In this respect, Roman's narrative speaks of the need and possible benefits of cooperating and working with the LGU. Will this optimistic frame remain when I see Roman in the future in another

quarter of the year as night market vendor? This is something that I hope to discover in the near future.

The same worry conditioned the disposition of Maisa, Mila, and Sonny as they near the eve of their last night in the night market. In my talk with Sonny, for instance, he expressed sadness in seeing a few people at the eve of their last night as vendors in the Roxas night market for the quarter. He said that it appears that the people of Davao are resonating with their worry that they will be replaced by a new batch of night market vendors. When asked what will be his recourse now that he will soon be giving up his slot in Roxas, he expressed his plan of transferring to other places in the city where people also flock at night. This answer gave me two impressions: that the vendors in the city have a good grasp of evening economic activities in the city, and that Ricky—like the other seasoned vendors—is always ready to transfer and start anew. As to whether the new spot for vending will viably match the income that can be generated in the night market, Ricky has these hopeful words to say: "*Pwede man ko muadto sa mga fiesta kay dinha makabawi gyud ko ana*" ["I can always go to the places celebrating their fiesta because it is in such areas where I can earn well"].

Surviving the test of time. This theme in the narrative is specifically conditioned by the experiences of the informants after the two-week closure of the night market as ordered by the city mayor due to the bombing incident. The closure of the night market, for instance, brought back memories of uncertainty, despair, and even anguish for some vendors during the 2013 city-wide demolition of day-time vendors in principal streets in the city center. Familiar questions on space access and the need to engage the LGU through possible dialogues emerged, which reminds of the constraint when one works in shadows of informal economy (Milgram, 2014). Despite such setback, the vendors expressed a strong sense of readiness when such type of surprise unfold.

As Ondo remarked, he made use of his previous skill-set in driving by renting a bike-tricycle. While doing such work has been physically demanding when compared to giving a massage, he underlined his readiness to face the uncertain. This survivor persona is something, which Ondo also claimed after braving through his fear when the bomb exploded a few feet away from where he massaged his client. Immediately

checking if his wife and grandson were unhurt, he recalled how he pushed himself to overcome his shell-shocked situation to assist those who were injured. Remembering such scenes, Ondo remarked how he had survived the trying times occasioned by the incidents in the Roxas Night Market. Aside from offering affordable massage therapy to the urban dwellers as his way of contributing to the overall health of the people of Davao, Ondo has symbolically considered the night market as a place where he has discovered the better version of himself. This makes the night market for Ondo a witness to his courage and resilience. Sohaya also recounted how her father got worried because it took two weeks for the night market to open again since the city mayor's closure order. Considering the night market as a place of hope to help assure the continuity of her studies, the two-week period convinced her of the help that the night market gives to her family and its value in reaching her dreams.

Despite the two-week uncertainty, Sohaya like Ondo made use of her skills to ensure that she can still earn a few bucks while waiting for the LGU's decision. Since she has been into vending since a kid, she went out of Roxas night market for a while and tried vending in Uyanguren Street on weekends. The bomb incident also did not waiver Sohaya's determination to earn for her future. Invited by her friend to share a space with her in the accessories section, she hopes that she can return the favor if she gets picked in the next drawing of lots. Her friend, on this note, assured her that she will not lose her access to a space in the accessories section. Taking full advantage of the generous offer made by her friend, Sohaya was able to continue vending. The night market is a symbol of hope that she can finish her college education is now coupled by another symbol, and that is as a survivor of the trying times in the history of the night market.

In conjoining surviving and the night market as a symbolic space, the other narratives of Sonny, Roman, Mila, and Maisa underline their worries but at the same time their abilities to look for other viable spaces and opportunities as vendors in the city. In this respect, the vendors in the night market has become accustomed to departing from one place to another—which is a case of perpetual departures according to de Certeau (1992), that unexpected events such the closure of the night market and the unforgiving effects of the bombing incidents point to their strong disposition to survive and reflect on what they can do

so as not to succumb to the pressure of uncertainty, and even that of violence.

Vending as a family enterprise. The narratives of the informants all underscore another important theme: the story of their family's quest for better life and opportunities, and how vending is playing a crucial role in their lives as a family unit. As a family experience, vending has served as a platform where family members have acquired skills or have been taught, such as the case of Sohaya who started vending at a very young age. In the case of Ondo, vending has led him to find his new family in Davao and even learned the vending skill of his wife—through massage therapy—which he now considers as the easiest form of work in contrast to his previous vending experiences selling *balot* in the streets of Davao City for two years. For Ricky, vending has also been central to their family story. Surpassing the tests of time, he now considers himself to be in a better position because of the blessings received from the vending enterprise. Today, his wife helps him in the cleaning, repair, and sorting of shoes which he brings to the night market for display. While I was not able to meet his wife personally, his narrative made me imagine how vending has conditioned the assignment of certain tasks in the family, and the night market's link to the hopes of these family members that their vending enterprise can sustain their needs.

When the night market closed for almost two weeks, its effect was also immediately felt by the entire family. Sohaya, for example, was advised by his father if the night market will not open soon enough, she may need to stop her studies because the night market provides them their primary source of income. Ondo also had to reclaim his other skill in driving *trisikad* so he can earn at least Php200 per day and sustain the needs of the family members. For Mila, the closure of the night market meant having to find ways to earn so that she can pay some of her debts. Working in a food-stall station with her daughter, Mila was just happy that the night market re-opened but was also saddened by the fact that they will only be vending for three months.

With the family's security on the line, vending has occasioned the family members to assist their parents, spouse, or kin to make their vending enterprise productive (Nirathron, 2006). This makes vending a socio-cultural experience which has found its way to condition and organize the roles (Low, 2017), and

assignments of family members as influenced by and response to their vending history and their vending experience in Roxas Night Market.

Dreams and aspirations. The night market is a symbol of hope (Nirathron, 2006). This was how Sohaya described the meaning of the night market for her and her family. She stressed that as long as the night market exists and provides a vending space for the family, she is optimistic that she can finish her studies and combine vending and formal work in the near future. This vision of a bright future is also anticipated in the narratives of the other vendors. Understanding the responsibility of being parents to young and growing kids, many of vendors like Ricky, Mila, and Ondo know too well how the daily grind of living equates to expenses, and how the educational needs of children will use up a big portion of their income and savings. As vendors, they try their best to take advantage of the economic opportunities presented to them by the night market as they share in this dream that they can always be responsible parents to their children and fulfill their duties as fathers and mothers and even grandparent as in the case of Ondo. This is the kind of vision that I also see from the eyes of my informants when they look at the future and imagine the kind of life that they can provide to their children.

Believing that there is life outside the boundaries of the night market, Sonny—who is still a young father—does not want the three-month rule of the LGU to bring him to despair, noting that other opportunities will always arise. In this sense, Sonny stresses the need to always look beyond and prepare for ways to face challenges that lie ahead. Building on his education and the skills that he has learned in vending, Sonny is convinced that he will thrive and succeed in the future. The same spirit of hope is present in Roman as he prepares for the end of his three-month stay in the night market. In my visit to the *ukay-ukay* section in July 2017, there I saw him and we shared some updates on his whereabouts. He shared that he is now working in one of the offices as an assistant in the Sangguniang Panlungsod during the day and he comes back to Roxas Night Market around 10:00 p.m. to assist his wife in their *ukay-ukay* stall. Upon listening to his account, it made me realize that the night market has definitely become a lived space—a meeting point between the past, present, and anticipated plans in the future (Lefebvre, 2014).

On Perpetual Departures and Strategies

The decision to move and transfer to another place appears to be a capacity, which street vendors have acquired in the course of seemingly perpetual departures. While the transfer to Davao City, for instance, has been conditioned by the lack of security and opportunities in their respective points of origin, the migration story has created a sense of readiness for these vendors to depart—to extract one's self from a location and learn to adapt to a new site. In re-reading the migration story of the street vendors, de Certeau's (1984 year) notion directs us to such a unique ability to embrace departing as part of the reality of street vending. This is where his concept of strategy as referring to the capacity to figure and re-configure new environments can come in. This means that for every departure, a strategy would need to be thought of, applied, tested, and assessed. Strategic thinking, in this respect, is a key feature in the ability which street vendors have learned through the course of departing from one place to another.

When recognized as part of strategic thinking, street vending can be reckoned as an activity where these insights—shaped by its historic character—are put into use (Brown, Lyons, & Dankoco, 2010). This is perhaps the reason why street vendors also gain such type of courage to move and transfer amidst uncertainties and insecurities. Courageously standing in front of the unfamiliar, the vendor looks forward to new and better possibilities. In using de Certeau's (1984, 1992 year) notions, street vending can, therefore, be seen as the antithesis of resignation. While other may regard vending as surrendering to the difficulties of the time, it can also be aptly considered as the vendors' articulation of strategic thinking coupled with their unique relation of perpetually departing from a different province, or within the expanding landscape of the urban city life.

Should the street vendors depart to another location? The narratives of the vendors suggest that moving to another place outside the confines of the Roxas Night Market is not a welcomed idea. This is where the converse of the experience of departures becomes vivid. While transferring to another place is a big decision to muster, departing remains a difficult choice. Even if the place of origin, for instance, is deprived of real and enabling opportunities for well-meaning lives, the fact of the matter remains that

bidding farewell to a place where one lived for many years remains a non-easy task. This is where the more abstract sense of de Certeau's idea of the perpetual departure helps frame such experience. Instead of seeing the movement in terms of a transfer from point A to point B, the departure also stands for a break or a crack. In this sense, the departure is inherently challenging. Interestingly, this encounter with the unknown is where the logic of strategic thinking also derives its character.

With the foregoing analysis of the night market as lived space using the lens of De Certeau, an emerging point of inquiry is how do such analysis figure within the history and perspectives of night markets as an instance of informal sector, and how does the Roxas Night Market initially compare with the other night markets in Southeast Asia? Upon analysis, the Roxas Night Market leans towards two threads in night markets in Southeast Asia, namely: (1) It upholds diversity (Pottie-Sherman & Hiebert, 2015), and (2) It provides a legal and regulated frame and spaces for street vendors (Milgram, 2014). The first thread is instanced in Roxas Night Market given that its vendors hail from various locations in Mindanao, and their vending stint in the area is interpreted within their narrative as they continue to search for better economic and living arrangements in Mindanao. This quest for better life conditions also conversely revealed their struggles to get away from situations of war, conflict, and poverty in their places of origin. Thus, the night market in Roxas Avenue, when considered as lived space, also needs to be grounded upon the vendors' departures or in-migration from one place to another site in Mindanao.

The Roxas Night Market also overlaps with the second thread common to Southeast Asian night markets. As legal and regulated spaces, these areas have assumed stable and almost permanent spaces in urban city centers. However, the stability and permanence of night markets are also largely assumed or estimated despite the enabling rules and regulations because night markets still have specific types of vulnerabilities. For instance, the bombing incident in the area in September 2016 manifested the possibility of closing the area for good, or the release of certain decisions from the LGU which may necessitate the area's closure. With such infirmities with regard to a night market's stability, De Certeau's (1992) year

notion of perpetual departures is also waiting to reactivate its theoretical force and its significance in shedding light on the street vendors' affair with partings or departures.

Conclusion

The narratives and the emergent themes underscore the historied character of the presence of vendors in the night market. Emerging from various backgrounds and situations, what the vendors share is the desire to look for better working and living conditions. This vision is a human aspiration which serves as the background where the efforts of the vendors derive its strength and even significance. This is the key element which makes the Roxas Night Market a lived space—a continuum between the vendors' past and their anticipation of the future.

As vendors narrate their stories, they are also disposed to realize that they have contributed to the story of the night market. Marking the Roxas Night Market as an unfolding event, what vendors accomplish and the struggles that they deal with are no longer confined to individual stories. Rather, the vendors had contributed a unique strand to the story of the night market especially when they decided to stay in the area despite the bombing incident and showcase their courage and resilience to the people of Davao. This means that as the vendors share their past, they too have become co-authors of what the Roxas Night Market has become.

From a physical space created for vending purposes for those who were demolished from their vending posts in 2013, to a place of refuge for other vendors who wanted to thrive with the night market's growth, to the presence of violations which sparked the LGU's decision to close the night market, and the vendors' resolve to request the LGU to re-open the vending site, to the bombing incident which cost the lives of 15 persons and injured 70 more individuals, to its transformation as a place of healing and remembrance, and becoming as a symbol of strength and resilience against terrorism, these transitions underscore the living and evolving realities that make the Roxas Night Market a lived and living space. As Lefebvre (2014) noted, imagination and vision create representational space. Their narratives of the past and vision of the future are not directly perceptible when one ventures

inside the night market. These stories and meanings are hidden from the untrained eye yet it these narratives of the past and the future that designs the socio-cultural and economic life (Yeo, Hee, & Heng, 2012)—fears, hopes, income, debts, stories, and meanings—that subsists in Roxas Night Market. It is these narratives which also situate, hence, contextualized de Certeau's (1992year) notion of what it means to experience perpetual departures where strategic thinking is honed and re-invented.

Conflict of interest

None.

Ethical clearance

The study was approved by the institution.

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