The relationship between economic development and homelessness in South East Asia

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Abstract

The accelerated globalisation of the last two decade has seen the growth of South East Asian countries as major centres of manufacturing and information processing. Whilst stimulating national economies and improving life for some, there remain many millions of people in these countries whom the benefits have not reached. This economic development has been a catalyst for increased rural to urban migration at a time when structural adjustment policies have resulted in the deregulation and privatisation of urban services and housing sector. Thus, increasing poverty, massive urbanisation of production and economic activity and failing state provision combine to make the people of these countries more vulnerable than ever to homelessness. Drawing on a study of homelessness in nine developing countries, this paper explores the relationship between global economic activity in four South East Asian countries and increasing levels of homelessness.

Introduction

This paper reports some of the findings of an international study on homelessness in nine developing countries as they appertain to the South Eastern Asian countries in the sample, i.e., Bangladesh, China, India and Indonesia.[2] We have chosen to discuss the situation in South East Asia specifically because many of the countries within this region, unlike others in our sample, are actively developing high

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[1] The authors acknowledge the contributions made by writers of the four country case studied drawn upon in this paper: Shayer Ghafur, Hou Li, Peu Banerjee Das and Tjahjono Raharjo.
[2] Between them, these four countries contain almost half the people in the world.

technology-driven global market.   Whilst this has, in many cases, brought great economic gains to these countries, it may also have served to widen the gap between rich and poor, arguably increasing the latter. Thus, in some of the new economic activity in our four South East Asian countries, the implications for homelessness could be great. Moreover, it may be that this economic development is, to some degree, dependent on people on a workforce willing to move to urban locations and live, either in abjectly poor conditions or be homeless, simply to get a job.

Over a decade ago, Castells {, 1989 #449} noted that high technology-led economic development in western economies resulted in income disparities between sections of society. In developing countries only the smallest minority of people are likely to benefit directly from such development, as structural adjustment policies have pushed many governments to deregulate and privatise many of their functions, and removed what rudimentary support networks existed.

It is reasonably obvious that, while homelessness in industrialised countries does not tend to be driven by housing shortages, in developing countries many people are homeless simply because there is no suitable accommodation (in terms of price and location) for them. Governments in South East Asia have mainly been unsuccessful in ensuring that there is sufficient appropriate housing for their people, especially those in the very lowest income ranges. From a policy stance of providing well-built though small dwellings directly through public sector activity, most could not keep pace with demand and have now withdrawn from direct mass supply. This is in line with the letter, if not the spirit, of the enabling approach which has been encouraged by international agencies since the 1990s (see for example {UNCHS, 1996 #34}. Thus, Bangladesh, India and Indonesia all have relatively small direct-supply initiatives (mainly for government employees) and some initiatives to supply land to low-income households on which they should build their own dwellings directly or through contractors. China, however, has continued to carry out direct housing supply through its local authorities in truly heroic quantities and as the main provision mechanism for low income households. Although supply falls short of providing for all households, it has increased more rapidly than population, even in urban areas, and there was an improvement from an average of 3.9 square metres per person in 1949 to 9.7 square metres per person in Shanghai in 1988 {Shanghai Statistical Bureau, Various years #400}.

In India for example, even though the number of plots supplied to low-income households is very large indeed, urban population growth[3] exceeds the ability to supply plots and shortfalls are still very great. For example, a recent report estimates the shortfall of permanent (*pucca*) dwellings at 8.87 million with the great majority – about 7 million – needed by households with less than Rs.5,500 (£60) per month income (HUDCO and UNCHS, 2001). Just as in Bangladesh and Indonesia, most low-income households in Indian cities resort to accommodation in informal settlements which may be very rudimentary in form and with some degree of insecure tenure. In China, matters are different as the socialist state supplies most housing which is then allocated by employers (work units) to their workers at subsidised rents. If no housing is available for workers, they can stay in a hostel with other workers awaiting accommodation, or continue to live in their family homes until the work-units can allocate dwellings.

About the empirical study

The research, which was funded by DFID,[4] was carried out between April 2001 and May 2003, by the Centre for Architectural Research and Development Overseas (CARDO).[5] The nine countries involved were selected for a number of reasons. Firstly, they present a range of housing and homelessness situation and degrees of poverty. Whilst the mass of the population in all nine countries is poor, the social marginalisation of the poor differs, for example between Bangladesh, where poverty is all pervasive, and South Africa, where it is concentrated predominantly amongst the majority black population.   Secondly, they give a range of different cultural experiences and understanding of housing and homelessness. For example, cultures connected with property ownership differ greatly between China, where private ownership is just re-emerging and Zimbabwe, where anyone who does not own their own house is considered as homeless. China also offers the opportunity to explore the effects of new population mobility and an emerging market economy on housing and homelessness. Thirdly, they present a range of institutional situations and welfare regimes. For example, South Africa has a well established pensions policy and some degree of welfare, whilst most others have virtually no welfare support at all. Fourthly, for logistical purposes, they are all countries in which CARDO has good connections and can employ country-based researchers with

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[3] Annual Compound Growth Rate was 3.14 per cent between 1981 and 1991{NIUA, 2000 #325}

[4] DFID Research No.ESA343. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) supports policies, programmes and projects to promote international development. DFID provided funds for this study as part of that objective but the views and opinions expressed are those of the authors alone.

[5] Now incorporated in the Global Urban Research Unit (GURU).

whose work they are familiar. Finally, they are all countries in which DFID has research interests.

A researcher was commissioned in each of the nine countries to undertake the study according to a specification which details several main areas of investigation[6]. The work included conducting a local literature review, trawling secondary sources for statistical data, and (where possible) undertaking interviews with homeless people and representatives of government and non-government organisations. Specific case studies of 'typical' homeless households were sought through interview and oral testimony.

For a number of reasons the availability of data varies very widely among countries. Firstly, availability of data is likely to be influenced by the 'service statistics paradox', in that, those countries with a willingness to acknowledge homelessness, and to establish services for homeless people, are more likely to be able to locate and count them and, thus, will have more accurate (and higher) figures {FEANTSA, 1999 #136}. Secondly, definitions vary widely and are non-existent in some countries.   The lack of definitions is probably brought about, in part, by the politically sensitive nature of homelessness. Where housing is seen as a basic right of citizenship, to acknowledge homelessness is to admit a failure of the government to support citizens or that the social system is failing {Jacobs, 1999 #425}. Cultural differences further complicate the definitions of homelessness. For example, in the Twi language used in our Ghana study city, Kumasi, there is no word for homelessness, as 'home', in its broadest sense, is related to family and kinship. Therefore, only those people without any family anywhere, however, remote, could be homeless.

The direct empirical data, including quotes and oral testimonies, was collected by the authors whilst visiting the countries, or by the in-country researchers for their reports. Where some data were collected by the authors, the in-country researchers acted as interpreters and, where necessary, transcribed and translated discussions and offered contextual information. The use of this data is discussed further in a later section. This paper is based on the element of the study which explored the causes of homelessness in the four south east Asian countries

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[6] The main areas of investigation are: current housing supply characteristics; current definitions of homelessness; what the median household would regard as unacceptable shelter; appropriateness of western typologies; numbers of people involved in types of homelessness; systemic causes of homelessness, isolation or exclusion of homeless people; characteristics of homeless people; street children, typologies of street children; causes of street child phenomena; conditions of living; responses to homelessness; actors and agents. Within each of these sub sections are explored in detail.

Definitions of homelessness

As most accepted definitions and typologies of homelessness have been developed for industrialised countries, and are generally inappropriate to either street homeless people or squatters in developing countries, it is valuable to begin with an explanation of the different ways in which homelessness is defined in developing countries in general and our 4 countries in particular.

UN-Habitat, addressing developing countries, defines a home in terms of whether or not it is "adequate" measured by whether it has tenure security, is structurally stable, has infrastructure support, and is convenient for access to employment and community services (for an explanation see {UNCHS, 2000 #126: Annex ii}.

By this definition most of the world's urban squatters (probably about a billion people) would be considered homeless. We do not necessarily feel that squatters should be excluded from a definition of homelessness but, if they are to be included, their sheer numbers would distract attention from those in more desperate circumstances, such as the street homeless, without any form of shelter. On the other hand, some squatters live in such poor structures that their circumstances may be as desperate as many of those on the streets. There is, thus, a fuzzy margin but we still regard it as valuable to consider the differences between squatters and street homeless people as summarised in table 1. compiled by our Indian researcher {Das, 2002 #451}.

Table 1. Differences between squatters and street homeless people in India

Definitions of homelessness differ between our four South East Asian countries. For example, the Census of India defines homeless people as those not living in "census houses", i.e., structures with a roof. People are eligible for support under housing land allocation programmes if they do not have a roof or land. However, if a household has a plot in a regularised area, but only a shack upon it, it is not regarded as homeless because of the land holding. By a quirk of policy, pavement dwellers are usually not included because they are rarely on the voters' list or in possession of ration cards.

In Bangladesh, only those in inadequate or inappropriate structures are homeless {Ghafur, 2002 #450}. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics {BBS, 1999 #14} suggests an official definition of homelessness, which it uses for census purposes, as:

> *"[The] floating population are the mobile and vagrant category of rootless people who have no permanent dwelling units whatever …and they are found on the census night … in the rail station, launch ghat (terminal), bus station, hat-bazaar (market), mazar (shrine), staircase of public/government buildings, open space, etc.".*

In China, the concept of a floating population is also the basis for homelessness. By law, all households must be registered, but those not resident in the area in which they are registered are regarded as floating. Most of these are migrants to the urban area who have travelled without permission. Among them, the least rooted are labelled "*mangliu*" meaning "blindly floating people". They are not entitled to housing, education, or many other social benefits available to the registered population and must return to their place of registration to obtain them {Li, 2002 #445}.

In Indonesia, the census of 2000 divides the population into two main categories, those having a permanent place to stay (*mempunyai tempat tinggal tetap*) and those not having a permanent place to stay (*tidak mempunyai tempat tinggal tetap*). Those not having a permanent place to stay include ship's crewmen, nomadic people and people living in houseboats or floating houses, as well as the more obvious *tunawisma* – houseless {Rahardjo, 2002 #213}.

As we see, all four of the countries use definitions based to some degree on rooflessness and have little concern for quality of shelter.

Numbers of homeless people

It is very difficult indeed to enumerate the scale of homelessness in the Asian context because:

- Each country defines homeless people differently and does not necessarily include all people whom we or other commentators might regard as homeless;

- Numbers of homeless people admitted by states are influenced by the 'service statistics paradox' {FEANTSA, 1999 #136}, in that those countries with well developed services for homeless people are more likely to be able to collect more accurate data showing more homeless people.

Acknowledgement of homelessness, and a willingness to enumerate it, is also conditioned by the way in which a state wishes to be seen by international aid

agencies. If housing is seen as a right of citizenship, it is often more beneficial to prioritise poverty but play down homelessness {Jacobs, 1999 #425}.

Table 2. Homeless population estimates

With the above caveats, our best guess at the numbers of homeless people in our four South East Asian countries (as shown in table 2.) is **Error! Reference source not found.** (but only 0.4 per cent of the population), with a capital cities total, excluding Beijing, of **Error! Reference source not found.** (8 per cent). The former figure compares with UNCHS {, 2000 #126} estimates that Canada and America have between 0.15 and 0.25 per cent. The latter figure is heavily influenced by the relatively high figure for Jakarta which includes residents of the poorer squatter settlements (*kampung kumuh*).

The urban concentration of homelessness is no surprise. For example, in Indonesia, 14 per cent of the population of Jakarta is homeless compared with only 1.5 per cent of the national population.

Global economic development and homelessness

Along with shortfalls in the housing supply system (above), the fundamental cause of homelessness in South East Asia, and other developing countries, is poverty, especially rural poverty which drives large numbers of people to seek employment in cities {Rahman, 1993 #23}.[7] Most often a single man will move to the city to work and send money back to the family home. As he will usually have little to offer the urban economy but his strength, he will only find a low-paying job such as day labouring, market portering or rickshaw pulling. Once earning, he will often choose to sleep on the city streets or in a public space rather than spending any of the little money earned on accommodation and transport to work. If the weather is bad, he might pay to stay in a hostel, if places are available, but the rest of the time he will save money by sleeping rough. In some cases, other family members will follow him to the city as his earnings are insufficient to improve their rural lives. This use of homelessness as part of a housing career is particularly common in India and

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[7] There is a particularly acute form of rural impoverishment in Bangladesh where annual river floods change the shape of the land and rob some people of theirs while endowing others with extra. Many homeless people have suffered this way.

Bangladesh, where we more commonly encountered families living in the streets than in other countries, such as Peru or Egypt {Speak, 2004 #328}.

However, as well as the push of poverty, rural people also respond to the pull of perceived wealth and increased opportunity of the city. This pull probably exists in all developing countries but is arguably stronger in those countries where urbanisation is driven by a rapid rise in economic activity, such as in South East Asia. For example, while rural to urban migration in Peru has swollen the populations of cities such as Lima, from 5 million in 1985 to 7.4 million in 2000 [UNCHS, 2001 #327], it has taken place at a time of economic stagnation. Thus, those arriving in the city are competing for very limited jobs and money. However, in some South East Asian cities, rural migrants have arrived at a time of great economic expansion based on developing new technology and industries. Whilst they might not be directly involved in the new industries themselves they might benefit indirectly by finding a niche in the informal economy, such as retail or informal building and development, serving those more directly involved. However, this does not mean that their involvement in such an informal economy places them in a particularly strong position.

Eviction is also a common cause of homelessness. Although states should defend their most vulnerable people, it is unfortunately quite common for governments to use their powers to evict people who have neither the money nor the power to defend themselves. People are evicted to clear land for more valuable development or to improve the city's image for special civic events or city marketing [Agbola, 1997 #200]; [Audefroy, 1994 #171]. Often such evictions are violent; disrupt precious, newly formed social networks; cause trauma amongst the evicted, affecting women more than men and the old more than the young; and cause even greater poverty amongst the evicted [Agbola, 1997 #200].

Now we turn to discuss how increased activity in a global marketplace has been a force generating homelessness for many people in our four South East Asian countries.

A. Bangladesh

According to the 'Census of slum areas and floating population, 1997', there are 32,000 floating people in 118 cities and towns in Bangladesh and 15,000 floating people in Dhaka {BBS, 1999 #14}.   The survey for the 'Urban Poverty Reduction Project' merges homeless people with 'street dwellers' who are defined as people

who sleep on the streets, in railway terminals and platforms, bus stations, parks and open spaces, religious centres, construction sites and around graveyards, and other public places without having any roof over their heads {ADB, 1996 #9}. This exercise numbered street dwellers in Dhaka at 12,600.

Bangladesh is best known in the global market place for its garment export industry, which accounts for 75 per cent of all the country's exports. This industry has weathered a number of storms, both economic and literal, in recent years, which could have had a devastating impact on its place in the global market with serious implications for employment and poverty reduction in Bangladesh.

First, many of the economies in the region, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea, and the Philippines, suffered near economic melt-down in the late 1990s. Some of these nations are also major exporters of clothing to the same countries as Bangladesh. As their currencies suddenly depreciated, their exports became considerably more competitive. Moreover, the investment of some of these countries in Bangladesh, particularly in infrastructure, was also reduced.

Second, the floods of 1998, which took the lives of 1100 people, caused considerable damage to infrastructure and many textile manufacturing companies and handlooms. In reality, the textile industry sustained itself remarkably well in the face of such devastation. However, this does highlight the dangers of placing so much reliance for export income and employment on a single industry.

In recent years another export industry, shrimp farming, has been increasing. It is this which has a more direct potential to ruin rural household incomes and push people to migrate to cities, joining the swelling numbers of urban homeless 'floating' people. The major cause of the growth in urban homelessness is rural to urban migration, underpinned by poverty. Rural livelihoods in Bangladesh are predominantly agricultural in nature and land remains the main asset for generation of household income. However, according to 1995/96 Household Expenditure Survey (HES), 5.5 per cent of the total rural households are landless while 49.5 per cent of households are 'functionally landless' (i.e. owning up to half an acre). The total number of these two categories is a staggering 10,181,000 (55.0 per cent of households in Bangladesh).

The high incidence of poverty in rural Bangladesh has long been associated with the high proportion of landless households, which is increasing, in part due to a change

from a predominantly agricultural and rice-based system to one based on shrimp farming for export. This change has been brought about by a combination of factors. First, in the 1960s the water board built polders to help protect the coastal area from cyclonic surges and limit the incursion of saline water. Second, the damming of rivers in India, as part of the Green Revolution in the 1970s, led to the diminution of flood waters flowing through the rivers in Bangladesh and into the Bay of Bengal. In turn, these two actions have led to the increase in controllable brackish water in the low lying tidal flood plains which have traditionally been used predominantly for rice cultivation, or a combination of rice and shrimps {Deb, 1997 #326}, {Ahmed, 2002 #329}.

This brackish water renders the land and water less suitable for rice cultivation but good for shrimp production, which has been a traditional activity on a smaller scale and in a fragile balance between rice cultivation and shrimp farming. The high price of shrimps, compared to rice, on the global market has led to a major interference in favour of highly saline land and water to support a lucrative export industry in shrimps. A study of one area, Rampala Upazilla in the Bay of Bengal, identified an increase in land used for shrimp cultivation from 4% to 17.5% in the ten years between 1993-2003 {Hasan, 2004 #330}.

Whilst shrimp cultivation may bring high profits it is not labour intensive, and many rural landless people, once employed in agriculture, have lost their employment. Some new 'service sector' jobs have developed, such as caretakers and night watchmen or shrimp processing work {Ito, Date unknown #331}. However, both Kendrick {, 1994 #332} and Rutherford {, 1994 #333} have expressed concern that employment opportunities might disappear once all the available land had been converted into shrimp *ghers*.

It is not only the landless who suffer. So lucrative are shrimps that the few companies which monopolise the industry are assembling massive land holdings. In some cases they buy land from households at market prices but often they force owners to sell cheaply. There are local reports of people being forced off their land, against their will and often violently {Karim, 2003 #334}.   From her study on rural homelessness, Rahman {, 1993 #23: 75} reports that while 30 per cent of her sampled households were landless before becoming homeless, 54 per cent homeless households had previously owned land within a range of 0 to1.65 acres.

Figures 1 & 2 much of the once green agricultural landscape is now turned over to shrimp farming

Shrimp farming is almost totally for export market. Shrimp exports earned Bangladesh around US$ 2.9 million in 1972/3, less than 1% of the total exports from the country. However, by 1999-2000 earnings from frozen shrimp alone were around US$356 million, accounting for 6.28% of total export earnings {Pokrant, 2001 #335}. As yet, these companies are virtually all Bangladeshi in origin. However, that does not mean that global wealth from shrimp exports, estimated is pouring into the country via this industry or its backward linkages. Corruption is so prevalent in Bangladesh, and the welfare system virtually non-existent, that redistribution of this wealth to the poor is scant.

Whilst the global demand cannot be blamed for the increased suitability of the Bay of Bengal for shrimp production, it is certainly the driver for the way in which land ownership is changing hands, and the resultant unemployment and poverty.

B. India

Poverty and homelessness have always existed in India, although precise numbers of homeless people are hard to determine. Apart from official Census figures, two enumerations of homeless people have been undertaken, one in Calcutta and one in Delhi. In the Socio-Economic Survey of Pavement Dwellers in Calcutta undertaken by the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority in 1987, 55,571 homeless people were found {Jagannathan, 1990 #336}. In a headcount of homeless people in Delhi in 2000, using a similar definition to the Census, Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan (AAA) [, 2001 #271] counted 52,765 homeless people,[8] compared to 19,366 counted in Census 1991, an increase of over 33,000 (2.7 times as many). AAA believe this to be the minimum number of homeless people as they recognise survey limitations such as many migrants being home for the harvest season and people sleeping in places that are not visible such as the roofs of shops and inside flyover girders. An estimate of about 100,000 [The Pioneer, 2000 #409], almost twice that of AAA, accords with the estimate provided by the Slum and Juggi-Jompri Department of Delhi Development Authority who believe approximately one percent of the total population of Delhi is homeless [Dupont, 1998 #143].

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[8] As shown in table **2.**

In other cities, only very rough estimates are available. SPARC estimated there to be 100,000 homeless people in Mumbai in 1985. However, they include those with structures on the pavement in their definition of homeless (SPARC, 1985). The Tamil Nadu Government estimates that, in urban areas of the State (including Chennai), there are 69,000 homeless families "living in objectionable areas along roads and canals and places required for public purposes" [Mody, 2001 #403]

Recently, India has actively founded its role in the global economy upon the information technology sector. From software development to information management, India has more recently engaged in providing call centre support for some of the world's largest companies. The city of Bangalore, in Southern Karnataka, is at the epicentre of an explosion of IT companies which have brought increased employment and wealth to a growing middle class. This move has demanded considerable development, with major IT parks springing up on low-value land on the city's periphery bringing a booming housing market for a new wave of middle class households [Madon, 1997 #404]. Land is somewhat cheaper in Bangalore than many Indian cities.[9] This has, no doubt, helped Bangalore develop this industry but land of little commercial value is often the very land on which informal settlements form, and remain uncontested, for years. Rising land prices mean that informal and illegal settlements, in cities, and at their peripheries, become obstacles in the way of development [Berner, 1997 #225]; [Berner, 2000 #67]. Those living in such settlements are increasingly at risk of eviction, especially tenants and sub tenant, who are the least well protected [Durand-Lasserve, 2002 #410].

Although Bangalore has had a somewhat lower proportion of people living in slum areas than other major cities [De Wit, 1992 #406], the proportion has been growing rapidly since the early 1990s. While this has been occurring, the urban poor and the original middle classes have been edged further and further out of the city by rising land prices, increasing rents and, sometimes, by evictions {Madon, 2004 #453}.

During our study, one of the authors visited Bangalore, where she was shown some of the peripheral development underway. People had been evicted not only to make way for the construction of an IT park but also to clear the way for a major road to service it and link it to the city. Moreover, land adjacent to the new road, previously

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[9] According to Payne {, 2002 #211}, Mumbai had some of the most expensive in the world by the mid 1990s.

too remote to be of interest to developers, was suddenly subject to speculation and clearance ready for further development.

This construction itself provides valuable jobs for people who will never be employed in the high technology industry. Nevertheless, there was no system for providing compensation or support for those who lost their (albeit poor) homes because of it. Moreover, the construction workers, and their families who accompany them, are themselves homeless, living in the poorest of straw dwellings at the side of the construction site. Indeed, it could be argued that new economic development is, to a degree, dependent on the willingness of a labour force to live in the poorest conditions. In this respect new economic development not only stimulates homelessness but is dependent on it.

Figure 3 Construction worker's families' huts by the roadworks for a new technology park, Bangalore

Clearly India's meteoric rise in the global information technology market is a major achievement for a country with a literacy rate of only 52 per cent {National Literacy Mission - India, n.d. #448} It presents the opportunity to achieve incomes and a standard of living for many which would have been unthinkable two decades ago. However, this new affluence is not only limited to a very small elite of well educated middle class Indians, it also has little impact on the wider state economy. For example, over 75 per cent of the state's population still live in rural villages. Whilst high-technology companies are offering a salary of $395 per month, 90 per cent of the rural population lives on little more than $100 per year {Madon, 2004 #453}. Moreover, achieved as it is in a context of deregulation and privatisation of urban services and the housing sector, this new economic development seems doomed to leave many in a worse position than they were before it, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.

C. China

It is very difficult to estimate the scale of homelessness in China or in any Chinese cities. No public sector or non-governmental organisation could provide useful information to our researcher. Since the ending of the old housing allocation system, the government no longer collects the number of houseless people but there are some data showing the scale of poor housing in the social welfare system. For example, according to a joint survey of those households in Shanghai who received

the minimal living security support from the Shanghai Real Estate Management Bureau and Civil Affairs Bureau in 2000, 11,320 out of the 5.3 million households have living spaces of less than six square metres per capita and 3,183 households have less than four square metres per capita {Cai, 2001 #407}. But this number excludes the people who are self-employed and live in very poor accommodation.

There are two groups in China who most closely represent homeless people, the floating population and the blindly floating population or '*mangliu*'.   Both of these are composed of people who have left their place of origin, where their household registration or *Hukou* would be held, and travelled to other parts of the country, generally in search of work. The blindly floating population, those who do not re-register for a Temporary Living Permit and are considered illegal by the government, are unable to access state employment and through it state provided worker's housing. They are, thus, likely to be under- or unemployed and badly housed.

 The scale of the 'floating' population varies dramatically from different sources. According to the national spot check, there were 29.7 million in 1995 (2.4 per cent of the national population) of whom about 19.4 million people (1.6 per cent) were 'floating' in the cities. In the Fifth National Census (2000), the number was 8.8 million. According to the new (2001) statistics of Chinese Floating Population Management Authority, the national floating population is nearly 110 million in 2001 (8.5 per cent of the national population). However, anecdotal evidence among academics would put the figure between 80 million to 120 million in the whole country (6.2 to 9.2 per cent). According to the Fifth National Census, a transient population of 3.87 million lives in Shanghai, 1.84 million in Beijing and 2.68 million in Guangzhou in 2000.

It is even more difficult to estimate the scale of the most marginal group in the floating population, the '*mangliu*' (blindly floating people). According to the spot check in Shanghai, *mangliu* accounted for about 1.07 per cent of the floating population. If we assume the national percentage is similar, then the total number of blindly floating people in China should vary from 0.8 to 1.2 million. This number is very close to the more than one million people who are reported as sent back to their native place by about 700 'repatriation stations'[10] annually in recent years (South Weekly, Dec.13, 2001).

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[10] There is a policy of returning people to their place of registration through these institutions.

If we were to add those people who live in dormitories or work-sheds (about 40 per cent of the floating population) to the homeless category, the homeless total will be between 33 million and 49 million.

The numbers of blindly floating people are undoubtedly increased as economic growth in the cities of the south east attract rural households to the potential for enrichment. China has been remarkably successful in changing from a centrally planned economy to one in which the market has a major role. Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows rose from US$916 million in 1983 to almost $3.5 billion in 1990 and to nearly $53 billion in 2002 when it was the largest recipient of FDI in the world.[11] The growth in economic performance, at 8 per cent per annum in 1998, has made China the sixth largest economy in the world, bringing with it major benefits in poverty reduction. However, it remains at 127th out of 208 economies in Gross National Income per capita [Davies, 2003 #424].

Guangzhou has a majority of its workers not registered to live there (2.7 million {Li, 2002 #445} out of its 3.9 million residents in 2000 {UNCHS, 2001 #327}). The rapid urban growth occurring in Guangzhou (formerly Canton) is partly associated with its especially successful Free Trade Zone.[12] FTZs (or Export Processing Zones - EPZs) have played a significant role in the economic growth so evident in South East Asia. However, they have been extensively criticised by trades unions and labour organisations (not least the ILO) for the suspension of whatever workers' rights pertain in the country at large. Thus, jobs there tend to be low-skilled and low-paid, and give workers little prospect for improvement {ILO, 1998 #454}. The success of Guangzhou's FTZ would have been impossible without the large numbers of migrants (floating people) and the unknown proportion of them who are *mangliu*. As Zhang et al {, 2003 #444} report, they mainly occupy poor quality housing in villages aggregated into the urban area (known as *chengzhongcun*) and subsequently developed by house-owners keen to make money from rooming accommodation.

A recent development has indicated a change in attitude of the government to *mangliu* in the cities of the south east. Recently, a young man who went to Guangzhou to find a job to pay for his university fees was found dead in the local

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[11] There are grounds to believe that this may be higher than actual FDI levels owing to some emanating from China itself via Hong Kong (known as' round tripping' investment), and some overstating in China's figures compared with the donors' [Davies, 2003 #424].

[12] Covering an area of 1.4 square kilometres, Guangzhou Free Trade Zone has been one of the most successful in China since its approval on May 13, 1992, Nearly 1,000 companies from 15 nations and regions have registered there, with investment of US$4,200 million.{Rexco Global Trade Information, 2003 #446}

'repatriation station' where he had clearly died from torture. His story generated a national discussion about the repatriation policy which resulted in a new policy being implemented with remarkable speed. This was assisted by their being a new central government and the outbreak of the 'SARS' epidemic.

In June 20, 2003, the state council announced the new policy for blindly floating people. Since August 1st, all repatriation station should change into 'succour station' where *mangliu* can choose to go for help. For example, they will be given food, shelter, or tickets to go home. Although the policy is arousing much comment from the local government and academics, repatriation stations in most cities have begun to adjust to their new role. There was concern that the removal of 'repatriation' would result in many beggars but the increase appears to have been less than expected (Hou Li, personal communication, November, 2003).

D. Indonesia

There is very little known about the nature of homelessness and the number of homeless people in Indonesia. In fact, there is no official definition of 'homelessness'. The National Census category of those 'not having a permanent place to stay' ('*tidak mempunyai tempat tinggal tetap*') [Badan Pusat Statistik, 2000 #418] includes not just homeless people (*tunawisma*), but also ships' crew-members, people living in houseboats/ floating houses, and itinerant or semi-nomadic groups of people (usually living in remote areas). According to the Census, more than 3.5 million Indonesians (from a total of 203.4 million people) fall within those 'not having a permanent place to stay'. The daily newspaper, Republika (29 July 1998), reported that the number of *gepeng*[13] in Jakarta increased by 30 per cent, prostitutes by 30 per cent, street vendors by 75 per cent and street children by 200 per cent since before the crisis.

Some writers treat occupants of poorly serviced settlements *kampung kumuh* as homeless [Sriyuningsih, 2001 #393]. The most recent figures available for these are from 1991 showing 2.3 million in Jakarta, 901,000 in Surabaya, 439,000 in Semarang, and 205,000 in Bandung [Yudohusodo, 1991 #385].

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[13] A term often used to describe homelessness (but not in official documents) is '*gelandangan*', derived from '*gelandang*' (to wander), meaning 'tramp'. This word is often used in combination with '*pengemis*' (beggar). Given the Indonesian penchant for acronyms, from the words '*gelandangan-pengemis*' a new word, '*gepeng*' has been coined.

Throughout the last quarter of the 20th century, Suharto's New Order regime followed two basic policies in ruling Indonesia; maintaining political stability and promoting economic growth {Budiman, 1993 #419}. To maintain political stability, the military became prominent in politics at the expense of political parties, the press, and labour organisations. To promote economic growth, foreign loans were used to control inflation until Indonesia became one of the most heavily indebted countries in the world[14]. During this period, its GDP per capita rose from under $200 in 1974 to over $1,000 in 1997 (Economist, 2000). However, for the sake of attracting investment (mostly rent-seeking companies well connected to the ruling elite), the rights of workers were suppressed so that they became the most lowly paid in the region {Budiman, 1993 #419}. Strikes were outlawed and those who dared to question the government's labour policy were dealt with severely[15].

Much of Indonesia's urban growth during the 1980s and after (at rates in excess of 5 per cent per year) was fuelled by declining agriculture in the outer islands and high levels of foreign investment in export-oriented manufacturing, especially along the northern coast of Java {World Resources Institute, 1999 #455}.

During the last decades, many people have been evicted from the land they had been occupying for generations, because it was needed for a new toll-road, an office block or a factory. Eviction did not just take place in urban areas and in the surrounding rural areas but also in remote places. In Kalimantan and Irian Jaya, indigenous tribes were 'resettled' to allow for the exploitation of their rich natural resources. Even after the fall of the Suharto regime, eviction of people from their land has continued.

In testimony to the fragility of such military controlled economic development, General Suharto's kleptocracy was ousted in May, 1998 amid severe recession, lack of confidence in the economy and steep falls in the value of the Rupiah. In August, 1998, the Rupiah stood at 13-15,000 per dollar whereas in had been 2,500 per dollar only one year before (Economist, 1998). The GDP per capita had fallen to below $500 in 1998 (Economist, 2000). Despite initial optimism arising from the change of

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[14] In 1996, Indonesia's debt was 30 per cent of its GDP; in 2000, following the crisis it had risen to 128 per cent of the GDP. The government had to allocate 40 per cent of the total expenditure in the 2000 state budget just to pay loan instalments [INFID, 2000 #411].

[15] The UN Committee Against Torture has expressed its concern on reports of violence towards workers conducted by Indonesian military personnel, allegedly for security reasons (Kompas, 24 November 2001)

government and a rallying of the Rupiah, the economy continued to be extremely troubled.

The situation was further exacerbated by civil unrest and a consequent down-turn tourism even ahead of the September 11, 2002, events and the Bali bombing, both of which occurred after our study period. The price of rice, a popular barometer of well-being in Java, more than tripled in 1998 so that government estimated that 17 million households (89 million people) could only afford one meal a day (Economist, 1998).

As a result of the prolonged crisis, which showed no sign of ending in 2001, more than 100 million Indonesians (or nearly half of its population) are living close to or below the poverty line [Jellinek, 1999 #412].   It is estimated that the collapse of the formal economy has cost 20 million people their jobs while unemployment is estimated at 17 per cent [INFID, 2000 #411]; [Wirakartakusumah, no date #414][16].

We have no details of whether the economic collapse at the end of the century drove many middle income households into homelessness. However, evidence from Thailand {Yasmeen, 2001 #456} suggests that many formerly relatively prosperous households will have had to make major adjustments to their lifestyle. The more fortunate or entrepreneurial will have managed to survive through establishing small enterprises but some of the less fortunate may well have joined the ranks of the homeless.

Conclusions

In this paper we have tried to highlight some of the negative aspects of economic development in four South East Asian countries, as they appertain to homelessness. We have also begun to highlight the dependency of economic development on a highly mobile labour force, willing to live in poor conditions to be near sources of work. We would, of course, not suggest that this much-needed economic development should be hampered in any way. However, it is important that governments and investors are not blind to the inequity of the benefit it brings to developing countries.

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[16] Some analysts however believe that the number of unemployed people might actually have decreased, not because there has been more job opportunities open in the formal sector, but because there are fewer people who can afford to be unemployed. Being unemployed has become a luxury as there is no social security system in Indonesia. People have no alternative but to work to earn a few rupiahs just to survive [Wirakartakusumah, no date #414].

Following the transition from an industrialised economy to an information and service sector economy, many western governments pinned their hopes on the concept of 'trickle down'. The belief at the time was that the benefits of new technology, information and service sector industries would eventually flow down to those not directly involved in them, through increased employment in a range of support activities. In countries with poorly functioning taxation systems, where the majority of the people operate in the informal sector, the redistribution of new wealth and opportunity is likely to be even more difficult. This is particularly so in the context of the structural change which has pressurised governments to reduce their welfare and public service spending and adopt an enabling approach to housing.

Moreover, in these countries the new development brings with it direct negative externalities, in this case in the form of massive land use changes in places to which homeless people resort and the displacement of many of the most vulnerable people in their societies. Planning systems oriented towards economic goals, in which social goals are regarded as only peripheral, cannot address these.

In the above discussion, we have shown that the number of homeless people has probably increased as one of the effects of particular aspects of economic growth. Increasing pressure on land, removal of livelihoods, and eviction of both rightful owners and informal settlers, swell the ranks of homeless people, especially in the cities. One of the ways to combat inequity in development is compassionate and appropriately-located interventions to assist currently homeless people in their quest for economic and locational security. This will undoubtedly include devising means leave the former occupants in a materially better condition when low-quality accommodation is removed from potentially valuable sites. Mechanisms for this include;

- The involvement of the 'victims' of relocation in planning their removal and rehousing, as in the classic Mumbai case assisted by SPARC, Mahila Milan and National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF). In this project, the NGOs encouraged the residents to count themselves and collect data on their employment and other characteristics. With this, they were able to persuade Mumbai Municipality that they had the right to be treated as citizens and to be involved in the design and implementation of the relocation site and process. As a result, over 60,000 people were relocated peacefully [Patel, 2002 #199].

- Land sharing in which squatters are rehoused on a well-developed portion of the site in exchange for use of the rest, as reported in, among other cases, in a sprawling squatter settlement called,Klong Toey in Bangkok. There, with NGO assistance, the community countered eviction threats by the Port Authority, which wanted the land for expansion. Their successful solutions involved the National Housing Authority building rental flats on one edge of the site for resettling 1,440 families (1981), servicing plots on long-term lease for 1,300 families in a "land-sharing" agreement in the centre of Klong Toey (1983, in situ "reblocking" projects for 950 families who adjusted their dwellings to make way for services (1986-2003), and serviced plots with free land title for 400 households in resettlement sites 20 kms away {Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), 2003 #447}.

The continuing relocation of the poorest people in society from one newly valuable site to another soon-to-be valuable marginal site, in a continuously repeating process, is neither morally defensible nor an efficient way to deal with very-low-income accommodation. In the light of the continuing debate on how to interpret housing rights, particularly as represented by the Grootboom case in South Africa, (refs), it may be more efficient to impose a charge on those who benefit from land use changes to benefit the displaced persons and homeless people in general.

Zhang et al {, 2003 #444} point out how important is the low-quality housing provided to poor urban migrants in the aggregated villages "chengzhongcun" to the economic development of cities such as Guangzhou. Not only does this housing allow *mangliu* to overcome politically-directed housing barriers and settle in the cities where their work is needed, but also it reduces the demand on city authorities to provide low-priced housing and services fully to cope with the rural to urban migration. Thus the "chengzhongcun"

> "[allows] city governments to take advantage of cheap and flexible rural labour without bearing the extra costs associated with labour relocation and without risking a great deal of social shocks which could lead to instability" {Zhang, 2003 #444: 934}

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