

Homelessness on Guam

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This paper is an introduction to some problems of measuring homelessness in the Pacific Islands, and presents an overview with current cases of homelessness on Guam. While all ethnic groups in Guam are beginning to experience varying rates of homelessness, this paper will focus on one particular group -- Micronesians. We focus on Micronesians partly because their problems adapting to a different life-style are almost certainly greater than other groups, and partly because under terms of the Compact of Free Association implemented in 1986, Micronesians have free access to Guam and the United States. The Governments of Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the United States are all investigating the impact this immigration is having on public services. Services for the homeless are among these services. Hence, this paper will focus on Micronesian homelessness on Guam, knowing full well that other ethnic groups are also suffering.

CURRENT UNITED STATES MEASURES OF HOMELESSNESS

Martha R. Burt (1991a, 1991b, 1992) has written a series of papers about defining the homeless population in the United States. She notes that many of the early studies of the homeless neither defined nor screened nor made efforts to "cover" the homeless. These studies used de facto populations living at certain sites or using certain facilities. Many of these studies were

populations living at certain sites or using certain facilities. Many of these studies were methodologically and operationally eclectic so that little could be said about a total "homeless" population. The definitional problem remains:

We do not have a simple, agreed-upon definition of homelessness. And as we go from the core of the concept to its periphery, there is less and less agreement about who should be included and who should be left out. We do quite well at counting and describing people in shelters, assuming we have some agreement on what types of facilities would be included as shelters. We do reasonably well at counting and describing people who use other services, after adopting some criteria of who should be included as homeless. We do far less well at including people who are not in shelters or using other homeless services -- those on the streets, because they do not want to be found or finding them might be dangerous, and others, including the doubled-up, because we cannot agree on definitions (Burt 1992:2).

Burt gives a series of types of people for consideration. We repeat that list, but modify it for the specific situations found on Guam. That is, which of the following types of persons should be considered "homeless" for Census purposes, or, more generally, for service providers?

Youth on their own, with no permanent residence or even a usual place to sleep, who spend each night in a different hotel [or place]?

Children in "foster" care or living with relatives who have been separated from their parent(s) because of the parent(s)' homelessness?

A young mother and her two children who have lived for two or three months at a time with different relatives during the past year or so, and who expect they will have to leave where they live now within the next few months?

A family or single person who migrated to [Guam] looking for work, lives with relatives and does not pay rent, cannot find work, and does not know how long the present arrangement will last or where they will go if it terminates?

A family or single person whose previous housing was lost recently, who is staying with relatives or friends, not contributing to the rent, for a period expected to be less than 2 months until other housing can be found?

A family or single person whose previous housing was lost recently, who is staying with relatives or friends, contributing to the rent, for a period expected to be less than 2 months until other housing can be found?

A family or single person who left their previous housing and returned to live in their parents' house, with no clear expectation for when this arrangement will end?

A teenager and her baby who remain in her mother's house, with no expectation that they will have to leave in the near future?

People living in stable but physically inadequate housing (no plumbing, no heat, major structural damage, etc.)?

All of these types of people exist among the Micronesians living on Guam. And, in all these cases, traditional homelessness -- literally being without a home -- would never occur because other Micronesians would care for these people. But, as we show in this paper, what was true traditionally, what even remains true in the sending islands even now, is no longer true on Guam. Homelessness now exists on Guam, and is in danger of growing explosively.

Burt has defined types of homelessness. She divides persons into two groups -- those literally homeless, and those "at imminent risk" of homelessness. The literally homeless are divided into two groups, also -- (1) places not meant for human habitation and (2) shelters. For the Micronesians on Guam, this second category, shelters, the Burt definition is easily accepted:

"Shelters" include all emergency shelters and transitional shelters for the homeless, all domestic violence shelters, all shelters and residential centers or programs for runaway and homeless youth, and any hotel/motel/apartment voucher arrangement paid because the person or family is homeless.

The other category is harder to deal with for Micronesians on Guam because of how Micronesians live in Micronesia. Burt defines this category:

"Places not meant for human habitation" include streets, parks, alleys, parking ramps, parts of the highway system, transportation depots and other parts of transportation system (e.g., subway tunnels, railroad cars), all-night commercial establishments (e.g., movie theaters, laundromats, restaurants), abandoned buildings, squatter situations, building roofs or stairwells, chicken coops and other farm outbuildings, caves, campgrounds, vehicles, and other similar places.

As we see below, use of abandoned buildings, squatting, and similar substandard housing is common for Micronesians on Guam, and while it may satisfy a certain definition of homelessness, it is not clear that Micronesians themselves always consider themselves homeless, nor, in all cases, do the service providers always consider these persons homeless.

Burt also defines two categories of "at imminent risk" persons. These include (1) persons in institutions, both children and adults, and (2) "doubled-up" persons. Few Micronesians on Guam live in institutions, so this category is not considered here. However, the second category -- persons living in multiple sub-family situations -- is very problematic, causing the most social and health problems. Burt discusses the "doubled-up" households:

If being doubled-up means that a dwelling unit is occupied by two or more subhouseholds, then the very large majority of doubled-up households are voluntary arrangements and do not imply homelessness or an imminent risk of homelessness -- e.g., a teen mother and her child living with her mother, an elderly couple residing in the home of their adult child, or roommate and college student group house arrangements. The definition given here of people at imminent risk is designed to identify the people in doubled-up situations who might be considered most likely to find themselves literally homeless -- that is, residing on the streets or in shelters (Burt 1992:6)

In this paper, we look at persons in these conditions on Guam to begin to define what is homelessness on Guam. We discuss whether the definitions Burt uses work for Guam's situation. And, we look at traditional housing patterns in Micronesia, then at conditions of housing for Micronesians based on the 1990 census, and finally, at particular cases of potentially or currently homeless individuals who have made use of Guam's Guma San Jose service for homeless persons on Guam.

TRADITIONAL PACIFIC ISLANDER HOUSING

Traditional Housing. Houses are for sleeping. Micronesians live their lives outside, fishing and gardening during the day, sitting and talking (and sometimes drinking) in the evenings, under the stars. They go into the house to sleep, and sleep wherever they feel like sleeping. Furniture is usually neither needed nor wanted -- less furniture means more room for people. Most houses have only one or two rooms, open, as large and airy as possible. Cooking facilities are outside, not only because of the additional heat and insects, but because of the fears of fire destroying the rest of the house.

Western houses, by their construction, are the antithesis of this type of housing. Micronesians are forced to choose a "room" for sleeping, find that air and communication are blocked, and that furniture is expected. Kitchens are moved inside. The free flow of people and goods is severely restrained, if not stopped.

Visiting and migration. Pacific Islanders move frequently, from house to house, and from island to island. This movement, true for all Pacific Islanders, is particularly true for adolescents. Young men, especially, would often see a passing fishing vessel, wave it down, ask to go along

for a while, leave, and come back in a few months or years. This "trip" became the transition from adolescence to adulthood, allowing the young person to return, marry, settle down, and relate the stories of the trip, many of them true.

The trip continues in revised form, with high school graduates (and less-than-graduates) leaving the home islands for the bright lights. Again, traditionally they come back, but as Micronesia has seen little economic development, with the government still the main source of viable employment, many Micronesians take jobs on Guam or in the United States, marry or bring their families later, and end up settling in the new place.

Visiting, too, is a traditional activity which continues, and is also being transformed as more and more islanders move to Guam and the United States. Whole extended families move from one island to another, once upon a time by canoes, now, more likely by field trip ships. These families move in with other family members (no matter how far removed), help with fishing and horticulture, and, when their stay is up, return to their own island or community. Housing is not a problem since houses are used mainly for sleeping, so floor space is the prime consideration.

As we show below, the situation on Guam is difficult -- difficult because the climate is almost exactly likely the climate back home, and the house construction, while probably better than that left behind -- if better means fewer thatch walls and metal roofs -- in most cases, the look and feel of the houses has changed very little. The houses continue to have little furniture, but may have many people in and out.

The big difference, frequently, is how non-Micronesians, particularly landlords, see the situation. If a family comes from Chuuk, lands at the airport (often unannounced), gets hold of relatives, who come in a pickup truck to cart the family with their boxes of taro and fish to the house, the resident part of the family must frequently decide -- risk breaking local laws about numbers of persons per room or unit, or risk alienating part of their family by insisting they move on elsewhere. The decision is complicated by the wish to catch up on the "news" from back home, a process that can take some time, and requires somewhat prolonged contact.

Further, views of public health differ by culture and place. On the atolls and islands of Micronesia, the island and sea give, and they take back. Frequently the taking is benign -- if you leave human or other waste on the shore, the tides cleanse the island by their movements. Other times the taking is malevolent, with typhoons or tidal waves wiping the island of loose vegetation and other debris. How the waste is disposed on a daily basis tends not to be as important as other daily activities on these islands. Inside and outside cleanups may be irregular, and while they may be thorough, many public health officials become unhappy if they happen upon these houses in the interim.

Maintenance also is seen differently. Islanders have always had a back-to-nature movement because traditionally all tools, houses, and vessels were made from materials in the environment, and returned to the environment when no longer used or usable. A rotting canoe or a house with loose, flapping thatch on an island frequently has a physical beauty. A rusting car hulk or a house with floor boarding so thin that people fall through it (or drop garbage through it) does not have the same beauty, at least not to many social welfare workers.

Finally, as part of the introduction to the topic, we must distinguish between homelessness and "houselessness" -- this later being a condition where shelter is obtained, but most Westerners (and many Micronesians) would consider it substandard or insufficient. If a person lives in a structure that is certain to blow away in even mildly windy conditions, than he or she verges on homelessness. If, however, housing is more substantial, say with wooden walls and a metal roof, that structure could remain for years, only to be dislocated in exceptional winds, usually associated with a typhoon. (Most Micronesians do not live in coastal areas on Guam and so would not be affected by exceptional wave motion.) In the next section we look at conditions of Micronesian housing on Guam in 1990, and at whether Micronesians were indeed "houseless."

1990 CENSUS DATA

The 1990 Census data for Guam gives us some insight into houselessness versus homelessness. By looking at some of the results of the 1990 Census, we can get some insight into whether the condition of Micronesian housing is not only worse than other housing, but is "unlivable" by Guam Government standards.

The 1990 Census enumerated 854 Micronesian housing units (houses) on Guam in 1990. For our purposes, a Micronesian house is a house which had a householder of Micronesian ethnicity, whether identified as a Chuukese, Pohnpeian, or other specified Micronesian ethnicity, or as an "other" Pacific Islander. That is, these households were those with all Micronesians, of course, but also those with a Micronesian married to a Chamorro or other ethnicity, but where the Micronesian was listed first. So, if a Micronesian man married a Filipina woman, and they had children, and the Micronesian was listed first on the 1990 Census questionnaire, this house is included. However, if a Micronesian man married a Filipina woman, even if he brought a bunch of children with him from Micronesia, if the woman is listed first on the form, this is a Filipino house, not a Micronesian house. These are Census conventions.

So, of the 35,233 households on Guam in 1990, 854 (2.4 percent) were listed as Micronesian households (See Table 1). Of these households, about half had concrete block outside walls, compared to about 57 percent of all Guam households. A larger percentage of Micronesian households than all Guam houses had metal walls, and almost 11 percent of the Micronesian

houses had wood walls, compared to only 5 percent of all Guam houses. So, Micronesians were more likely to live in houses with "substandard" walls.

Table 1. Type of Construction Materials of Micronesian Households: 1990

Characteristic	Numbers		Percent	
	Total	Micronesian	Total	Micronesian
All housing units.....	35,223	854	100.0	100.0
TYPE OF MATERIAL FOR OUTSIDE WALLS				
Poured Concrete.....	10,136	239	28.8	28.0
Concrete blocks.....	20,085	431	57.0	50.5
Metal.....	2,882	86	8.2	10.1
Wood.....	1,788	93	5.1	10.9
Other.....	332	5	0.9	0.6
TYPE OF MATERIAL USED FOR ROOF				
Poured concrete.....	27,892	601	79.2	70.4
Metal.....	6,354	216	18.0	25.3
Wood.....	462	20	1.3	2.3
Thatch.....	35	2	0.1	0.2
Other.....	480	15	1.4	1.8
TYPE OF MATERIAL USED FOR FOUNDATION				
Concrete.....	32,130	733	91.2	85.8
Wood pier or pilings.....	2,833	116	8.0	13.6
Other.....	260	5	0.7	0.6

Source: CPH-6-G, Table 113 and unpublished tabulations

Similarly, while about 80 percent of the houses on Guam had poured concrete walls, this was true for only about 70 percent of the Micronesian houses. About 1 in every 4 Micronesian houses had a metal roof, a substantially larger percentage than for all of Guam's houses. And, Micronesians were much more likely to have foundations of wood pier or pilings (14 percent) than all Guam housing (8 percent), and less likely to have concrete foundations.

Table 2 shows the combinations for walls and roof. About 78 percent of the Micronesian houses had concrete walls, compared to 86 percent of all units. Also, 70 percent of the Micronesian houses had concrete roofs and concrete walls, compared to 79 percent of all the units. The differences for Micronesians occurred mostly in the other materials, as expected. That is, while 5 percent of all houses had wood walls, almost 11 percent of the Micronesian houses were in this category. Similarly, while about 4 percent of all houses had wood walls and a metal roof, more than 8 percent of the Micronesian houses were in this category.

Table 2. Type of Walls by Type of Roof of Micronesian Households: 1990

Characteristic	Numbers		Percent	
	Total	Micro-nesians	Total	Micro-nesians
All housing units.....	35,223	854	100.0	100.0
Concrete walls.....	30,221	670	85.8	78.5
With concrete roof.....	27,888	601	79.2	70.4
With metal roof.....	2,089	64	5.9	7.5
With wood roof.....	83	0	0.2	0.0
With thatch roof.....	8	1	0.0	0.1
With other roof.....	153	4	0.4	0.5
Wood walls.....	1,788	93	5.1	10.9
With metal roof.....	1,364	71	3.9	8.3
With wood roof.....	322	14	0.9	1.6
With thatch roof.....	15	0	0.0	0.0
With other roof.....	87	8	0.2	0.9
Other walls (including metal).....	3,214	91	9.1	10.7
With metal roof.....	2,901	81	8.2	9.5
With wood roof.....	57	6	0.2	0.7
With thatch roof.....	12	1	0.0	0.1
With other roof.....	244	3	0.7	0.4

Source: CPH-6-G, Table 113 and unpublished tabulations

While the numbers of Micronesian houses remain low in these categories, and we only have the one census report, so cannot see trends, even this number of substandard houses could prove problematic in times of stress, particularly related to typhoons. Persons living in houses with wood or metal walls and roofs are usually advised to (and do move to) shelters during typhoons. The 250 Micronesian housing units not made completely of concrete were only a small percentage of the total housing inventory for Guam. They were, however, a larger percentage of housing than for the whole island. Hence, these people had relatively fewer relatives to stay with than other islanders.

Housing conditions also differ for Micronesians from the total. Almost half of all Micronesian houses do not have complete plumbing (a sink, bathtub or shower, and a toilet) compared to only about 4 in 10 of all Guam houses (Table 3). While more than half of all Guam units had hot and cold piped water inside the unit in 1990, this was true for only somewhat more than 1/3rd of the Micronesian units. The Micronesians were much more likely to have cold water only (32 percent compared to 18 percent of all of Guam's units.) The percentage with no bathtub or shower was slightly more than for all of Guam. But, Micronesians were much more likely to use an outhouse or privy or "other or none" than total Guam -- only 92 percent of the Micronesian houses had a flush toilet compared to 97 percent for all of Guam.

Table 3. Plumbing Characteristics of Micronesians: 1990

Characteristic	Numbers		Percent	
	Total	Micro-nesians	Total	Micro-nesians
All housing units.....	35,223	854	100.0	100.0
Complete plumbing facilities in this unit.	21,218	429	60.2	50.2
Lacking complete plumbing facilities.....	14,005	425	39.8	49.8
Hot and cold piped water in this unit.....	19085	305	54.2	35.7
Hot and cold piped water in this building.	9495	269	27.0	31.5
Only cold water in this unit.....	2979	148	8.5	17.3
Only cold water in this building.....	3307	118	9.4	13.8
Only cold water outside this building.....	68	5	0.2	0.6
No piped water.....	289	9	0.8	1.1
With a bathtub or shower.....	34494	824	97.9	96.5
No bathtub or shower.....	729	30	2.1	3.5
Flush toilet.....	34170	790	97.0	92.5
Outhouse or privy.....	570	23	1.6	2.7
Other or none.....	483	41	1.4	4.8

Source: CPH-6-G, Table 111 and unpublished tabulations

Micronesian houses were also much less likely to have household equipment and facilities than total Guam. For example, more than 10 percent of the Micronesian houses lacked complete kitchen facilities, compared to only 7 percent of all houses. More than 5 percent of the Micronesians had no refrigerator, more than twice the percentage than for all of Guam (Table 4). While about the same percentages were connected to a public sewer, and had electricity, for other characteristics, Micronesians were lacking. More than 60 percent of the Micronesian houses had no air conditioning, compared to only 30 percent of all Guam housing. And, while 7 percent of Guam's units had no telephones, almost 30 percent of the Micronesian houses were without a phone, 17 percent were without a radio (6 percent for all of Guam), and 19 percent had no television (4 percent for Guam). And, 7 percent of the Micronesian units had no vehicle available, compared to 4 percent of Guam's total units.

Table 4. Equipment and Facilities of Micronesians: 1990

Characteristic	Numbers		Percent	
	Total	Micro-nesians	Total	Micro-nesians
All housing units.....	35223	854	100.0	100.0
Complete kitchen facilities in this bldg	32774	767	93.0	89.8
Lacking complete kitchen facilities.....	2449	87	7.0	10.2
No refrigerator.....	884	47	2.5	5.5
Connected to a public sewer.....	26063	634	74.0	74.2
Electric power.....	34679	839	98.5	98.2
No air conditioning.....	10954	525	31.1	61.5
No telephone in unit.....	2468	253	7.0	29.6
No battery operated radio.....	2114	146	6.0	17.1
No television.....	1234	165	3.5	19.3
No vehicles available.....	1502	59	4.3	6.9

Source: CPH-6-G, Table 112 and unpublished tabulations

Clearly, Micronesians are less well off than Guam's total population. But, immigrant populations in general tend to be less well off. And, while the substandard walls and roof must raise concern, a kind of "houselessness," the lack of television and air conditioning is not much of a problem. However, lack of telephone and radio are more problematic, both for their opening up of the world around the household, but also because of their importance in civil defense and natural disasters, like fires and typhoons.

HOMELESSNESS ON GUAM¹

Homelessness occurs as the result of different situations:

1. Overcrowding;
2. Cultural conflicts;
3. Employment problems;
4. Structural problems; and,
5. Landlord problems.

¹This section was written primarily by Eflove Mailos. Mailos works for Guam San Jose, part of Catholic Social Service on Guam. A description of the services this organization provides appears in Appendix A. The cases presented here are fictional, but based on combinations of problems Mailos encounters on a daily basis. Again, individual cases are obscured to preserve confidentiality.

Here, we look at each of these kinds of problems in turn:

1. Family Problems. These are the kinds of problems you would have no matter where you lived if you were overcrowded:

Case 1.² At one time a couple of family members came in and they had been in to see me before. They explained that the landlord told them to move out, all of them, because they are too crowded and they didn't do what he wanted. There were more than 20-some people in a 3 bedroom house. So when they came to the program.

First of all a man and wife came, and they were looking for a place, and he was working and his kids were also able to work. He sent for some of his relatives and his wife's relatives to come and help out with the rent, and they kept coming, they WERE keeping up with the rent, since all of them were working, But the landlord felt there were sanitation problems, so he decided to have them evicted.

So they moved out, and a couple came into the house. Others went off to their relatives and stayed with them. And they finally built a small house on some land a Chamorro friend gave to them to build the house. But up to now they have water but no power. Only some of the people in the original house -- most of them -- are staying there. It is a big wooden house with a tin roof.

And, a second case:

Case 2. A mother with two kids came and was staying with her relatives, but they were very crowded, so she decided to go out and look for a place on her own. She has food stamps, and welfare, but she has no transportation and work, and she is with us. In the first week of August she will be receiving her house, so she will be okay. No job, but food stamps and welfare.

Sometimes, "dependency" is a problem. Some people are depending so much on others, when the people are helping out, when they can no longer support the people any more, the people cannot pay their own way and also help others. So if they can no longer support themselves, they can't support others, and then they have to tell their relatives they have to move out because they can't support them any more:

² All of the cases presented here are composites so do not present any real persons.

Case 3. There is one case where there are two sisters -- the sister who is here is married and has kids. When she had two kids, she sent for her sister to come to help with baby sitting. The sister came, but she already had 4 kids. She worked in Chuuk to earn enough money to come. So they came. After a while the sister kicked the new sister out. When she was kicked out she had nothing at all. She had no public assistance, and no work, and she came to the program, so we helped with public assistance and food stamps, and we worked with GHURA to find her a place. And so she finally got a house although she is still on welfare and food stamps. She has a house by herself.

2. Cultural Conflicts. Many Micronesians bring along with them the idea that everything here on Guam is just the same as back home. They really try to live on Guam the same way they lived back home. For instance, some Micronesians move into abandoned houses, thinking they can live like back home. Back home no one will disturb you if you are in an abandoned house, but here on Guam it is a different place, and it is against the law.

Also, when they come for help, many are too dependent. They do not have the idea of being independent people, they are too dependent on other people. They depend so much, and then the source is dried up, and then they get dried up too. And when then they try to do something, but it is already too late to do something. For instance, in the program, some Micronesians don't do anything because they are depending on United States, and they don't do anything for themselves. When it comes time for them to move out, they go nuts, they try to do something but it is too late. In Micronesia, if you run out of USDA food you can always go and collect breadfruit, but here you can't do that. Eventually you have to start going to the store:

Case 4. Recently a guy came in, he had moved out of his mom's house because she had a fight with her own sister and her sister-in-law because they were beating her up. The problem has to do with money. Money is involved with so many things, it creates problems. The sister in law is asking the client's husband to get some money (the rebate money from the taxes he paid) because she wanted to take a trip. But instead he used the money to pay off part of his car, and to buy things for the kids. And so sister and sister-in-law pulled her out of the car and started to beat her up. So she decided to run away to a place where she could get away from them, and they wouldn't beat her up. So, she came to the unit and they put her up, and tried to find another place for her to stay. And she was helped under GHURA, and now she is with her children. By then she was pretty much split up with her husband anyway, and now they are divorced. He is in a recovery program at the hospital.

3. Employment Problems. Most of the Micronesians that we have at our unit when they come up here, they come up here to work. But, instead of living on their own, they depend on others

for help. They stay with others, usually because they lost their jobs and they don't have enough money to keep up with their rent.

Case 5. There is a family where the husband always gets drunk, and he doesn't go to work the next day because he is too tired, and he is too often absent, so the boss decides to lay him off work. So when he is looking for another job, he has no transportation, and they don't have any money for transportation because they don't work.

Many of the Micronesians have a hard time finding a job, that is, looking for a job. And, one of the problems is transportation. Guam has virtually no public transportation, and the public vans are not always regular, so many times transportation is impossible without your own car.

Even when there is transportation, many times the Micronesians don't feel comfortable with the jobs they are offered. Sometimes the salary is too low, sometimes the cultural context is wrong -- many Micronesians feel uncomfortable in vertical working relationships rather than the traditional, horizontal relationships. That is, while on the island most work decisions are made based on the common good, on Guam, many times Micronesians must do what the boss says, whether it makes sense to them or not. This, combined with low salaries, can create spotty job records, and, therefore, difficulty in getting and maintaining good housing conditions:

Case 6. A family was with us until today, but they have no transportation. These people are picky, when they are offered a job, and they see the salary is low, and they look for something else, and they have no job at all. They work for a month and then run away from a job, and when they keep on doing that, their employment record is bad, and then they can't get a job because their job records are bad.

4. Structural Problems. Many Micronesians live in the substandard housing described above. That is, many live in houses which will not protect them from typhoons or even fires or theft. These houses are not secure. We see many cases of this type of problem. One type of problem is the substandard house:

Case 7. Checked out the trailers. The place looked like our houses back home. I looked at it, to me [as a Micronesian] it is no real problem, it is a good place to live because they can afford it. But according to my boss, and to what I am doing, it is not a place suitable for living, because a typhoon would blow them away. I would call it a "homeless" dwelling -- the people are homeless, because it is not really a suitable place to live. Anyone could break in and do something to it. It could easily burn down because the electrical wires hang down. No icebox. Very dirty. In my mind, I cursed the owner because the owner is a professional and should know better. He is taking advantage -- that damned place.

Many times these houses have specific problems. Many of these problems occur because they were built quickly, and of available materials, usually wood and metal. Besides these initial, weak materials, even more problems occur from wear and tear on the house -- both from wind and rain and salt spray, but also from too many people using the house. Wood floors, especially on pilings, wear out, and you often find holes in the floor:

Case 8. Father X was telling us to go. There is one [house] in a village, right after the typhoon [Omar], you have to watch your step, because you could fall through. They put a blue canvas on the roof, because part of the roof was blown away, and they didn't fix it. Another place in another village, it was like they were hiding in the jungle, the grass around was very tall, the house was very old, so many mosquitos, the windows were not secured. They also used plywood instead of louvers. Looking from the outside, the inside was also bad. We didn't go in, and we told the people to look for another place, because soon something might happen -- fire, because it was very old.

Sometimes, the Micronesians even make use of the shoddy construction, and the resulting dilapidation:

Case 9. There was a house we went to there was a hole in the middle of the living room, elevated, they threw their beer cans down in the hole. When you moved the piece of plywood, you saw garbage under the floor of the house. Instead of them fixing up the place, they let it be. Instead of doing repairs, they just left it as it is. They forget that at some time something might happen, Public Health might show up, they might have fire, no security, They are only worried about making money -- enjoy going out drinking beer, go to hotel with girl, go to the carnival, buy so many things when they are going home, when they go home they LOOK like they live in nice houses, but when they come back, they live in terrible conditions, and these conditions lead to homelessness. They get carried away with life depending on the sources that are there for them.

Security becomes a problem when the walls and floor and roof are not in good condition. Holes in the walls or floor invite security problems, but so far we have had very few problems in this area.

Fire is the biggest threat to substandard housing. Sometimes, in dry times, fires occur only because the wood is old and susceptible to fire. Other times, fires occur because of faulty wiring or old wiring or improper hook-ups to other houses or units. Fire is always a threat on islands, but it is more a threat when the houses are made of wood or thatch. Many Micronesians live in this type of housing, so they are more likely to have fires than other people:

Case 10. Another one is fire victims, like their houses burn down and there is no place to go. This family they had their own house built, a two bedroom house, and the house caught fire, and destroyed the whole place. They were using an extension cord from another house, and maybe something went wrong, or they were using a candle or something. There were 28 people in the house, and it burned down completely. They called Father X at night, called for help, at that time we didn't have anything available, so Father X had to do something. So all 28 people went to his unit. So he was trying to find a place for them. He finally found a house, an important person gave them a house to live in free for 2 months, and then they would have to start to pay.

After 2 weeks in the house, Father X called, had to go because the family had a problem. The head of house was kicking people out because of drinking. This guy kicked out his own wife and kids. Relationships between the wife and sisters because he was sleeping with his wife's sister. And then the wife and kids had to find another place to stay. Then the husband came and took the wife and kids. We sent some of the people back to Micronesia, and they are still there until now.

Sometimes, the general living conditions are just bad. Sometimes louvers break and are replaced by wood, cutting out a good flow of air, and reducing light in the house. Sometimes, holes are worn in the floor or knocked in the wall, and are not replaced, leaving the people open to problems with insects, animals, and other people. Sometimes, the people just don't take care of themselves:

Case 11. One day we were called by the mayor of one of the villages and they told us to come to see a place, because they know that we help with housing, because the house these people are living in is very bad. I went to the place, and when we were approaching the place, we saw they had plywood instead of louvers, the house was elevated off the ground, on pillars, and when we walked into the house flies were all over the place, the house smelled, the beds were unmade. The furniture in the house was ready to be thrown into the garbage. You wouldn't even want to look at it. How could you sit on a couch if you don't even want to look at it? We couldn't even sit down to talk with the family. The floors had holes in them, they were ready to fall. The kitchen floor was already falling down. Left over food was scattered everywhere. These people poured water from pots, with left over food in them -- the food was all poured under the house.

We told them to pack up their things and to move out. They had babies in the house, they had kids, you couldn't believe your eyes that people are living there. The houses in the outer islands of Chuuk and Yap are cleaner than this. So we insisted that they come down to our office and we made arrangements for them to move into one of the houses that we have available for this.

5. Landlord-Tenant Problems. The biggest problem between landlords and tenants is the one you would expect -- money! Money, again. Too often the Micronesians have the money when they get their pay check but either they don't know how to budget, or don't care about budgeting. They forget about helping out themselves. They don't think about later on. This is "Culture shock" or "Culture conflict". Essentially, they are saying "Eat today for tomorrow you may die." Many Micronesians when they get their check, they spend all the money -- on alcohol or jewelry and then tomorrow comes and they don't have money. Rent money often goes for drinking or drugs, and then they can't pay their rent when it is due.

Also, many landlords on Guam worry about the wear and tear on their houses from the large Micronesian families. Not only is there more general damage from more people walking around on the floors and touching the walls and using the appliances, but, in those apartments where utilities are included, electrical and water costs are greater. Also, larger families generate more noise:

Case 12. There is a family that was here on Guam and the landlord kicked them out because they couldn't keep up with the rent. They were getting loud -- making a lot of noise -- and the landlord kicked them out, and they went to the Micro Hotel³ and rented a room for \$39 a night, and stayed there until they couldn't afford to continue to pay the rent, and they came to us, and they are still with us.

CONCLUSIONS

The 1990 Census of Guam did not have a separate enumeration of homeless on Guam because of assumed traditional housing patterns. This paper has shown that even if Micronesians suffered little from homelessness in 1990, they are having increasing problems finding and maintaining sufficient housing during the 1990s. Many Micronesians have family problems, with overcrowding and its concomitant affects the biggest factor in families splitting up. Parts of these families may be unable to find other housing. Cultural conflicts, or just "culture shock" is another factor causing problems, as many Micronesians come directly from outlying islands to Guam, and have not learned how to budget time or money or the necessity of so doing. Others have economic problems, also partly cultural, which make finding and maintaining jobs difficult. A fourth problem concerns the substandard housing many Micronesians are forced to inhabit, housing with both security and physical problems like susceptibility to fire. Finally, many Micronesians have problems with landlords, some having racial overtones, but most having to do with overcrowding and overburdening of utilities, primarily water and electricity. All of these factors contribute to the increasingly likeliness of homelessness for Micronesians as they continue to immigrate to Guam to live and work.

Some of the problems Micronesians face regarding housing were already seen in the 1990 Census data presented here. Many Micronesians suffer a kind of "houselessness." Micronesians in 1990 were much more likely than the general population of Guam to live in less substantial housing, particularly in units with neither concrete walls nor roof. And, Micronesians were less likely to have full plumbing, appliances, and vehicles available. Some of this lack of housing can be attributed to the recency of migration, some to poverty, but the fact remains that in cases of environmental or social stress, this kind of housing is more likely to be problematic.

This study is preliminary and tentative. We hope to expand the study to include more detailed use of the 1990 census data from the original computer files. But more importantly, we had

³The Micronesian Hotel is the traditional entry place for Micronesian families and individuals moving to Guam from other areas of Micronesia. The accommodations are very basic, the housing structure at one time somewhat better than that found in Micronesia. However, time and the wood construction have taken their toll. Also, repeated typhoons and fires in recent years have destroyed many of the units. Current rumor has it that the remaining buildings will be torn down, and a mall constructed.

hoped to include interviews with Micronesians about their view of their housing conditions. These interviews will cover both houselessness and homelessness. Unfortunately, the serial typhoons hitting Guam this year -- first, Typhoon Omar, then Brian, Elsie, and Gay -- have made it necessary to delay interviews until later.

We hope that the on-going research will give insights into the direction necessary for development and implementation of the 2000 Census questionnaire for the homeless in the Pacific Islands areas.

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