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POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CORPORATE  
PACKAGED FOOD : A STUDY OF EXCHANGE  
AND CONSUMPTION IN METRO MANILA'S  
SLUMS( Digest\_要約 )

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## ABSTRACT

We are living in a planet of slums (Davis, 2006). Approximately 820 million inhabitants live in insecure and precarious houses, surrounded by threats of different kinds. Rural misery, conflict, land dispossession, climate change, etc., are still driving people to migrate to main cities, and as a result, the access to food becomes one of the main concerns. In this sense, this study is motivated to answer if slum populations are destined to be dependent on 'others' particularly to corporations to sustain their lives, or if there is a space for their own emancipation through a conscious food exchange and consumption practice. To answer the question, the research relied on quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. Original data was gathered from 61 slum women of three different generations and 8 slum store grocers in Metro Manila, a place ranked in the top five of the most densely populated cities worldwide within which approximately four million inhabitants dwell in slums. The selected analytical framework consists of the market and meanings spheres. It combines insights from political economy, sociology, anthropology and business management that enrich the vision and understanding of corporate packaged food (CPF) exchange and consumption and serve as a platform for sustaining a critique to the ongoing corporate domination over society.

The main thesis is that there is an ongoing appropriation of slum dwellers' food. This appropriation is being done through the conquest of market spaces and people's mind. Food corporations have managed to manufacture and retail one piece or small size products in an affordable price, available in the next door, and adaptable to local tastes and culinary customs. In parallel, by using a mix of marketing tools, corporations position their brand names, logos, mascots, and slogans in the slums' meanings sphere. In the market sphere, it was found that CPF accounts for an average of 31.8 percent of the total household food consumption, and 53.5 percent of the store profits. The proportions are significantly higher in comparison to their estimated equivalents in the 1980s; CPF represented less than 10 percent of the store revenues (Silverio, 1982) and CPF consumption was occasional and limited to a few products (Ponce, 1986). Also, five categories of CPF meanings were identified in slum households: physiological, rational, socio-cultural, affective and occupational. For slum grocers, CPF mostly refers to a source of income via sales increase and facilitation of their business. These food retail and consumption practices facilitate the industrial capital realization, and at the same time, it reproduces new generations of dominated urban bottom people.

The capital intrinsic need to accumulate and reproduce and of the margin to expand in slums makes us conclude that the processes of penetration, conquest and appropriation of food consumption would continue, having important social and cultural effects on present and future generations of slum dwellers. Considering the structural backwardness and fetishized common sense, if there is not countermovement that involves people inside and outside the slum boundaries, it seems to be difficult that slum dwellers can gain consciousness and emancipate themselves.

Keywords: corporate packaged food, political economy of consumption, micro-retailing, sphere of market, sphere of meanings, appropriation, slums, Metro Manila