

# Of City Vibrancy, Character of Place, and Cultural Exchange: An Attempt of Integrating Culture and Art with Urban Development?

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## ABSTRACT

Can culture and art assist in facilitating development within our cities? This article seeks to answer this question by observing, documenting, and comparing data sets that show the benefits of promoting culture through artistically-hinged spatial developments which is believed to supplement a cities' long-term competitiveness. Results of this study point towards the emergence of dynamic spaces of cultural exchange wherein an improvement in life vibrancy in cities is promoted; creating spatial magnets of activity and diversity which, aside from cultivating character of place and a rich array of social activity prospects to benefit people, also suggests the advancement of commerce due to the intensified presence and patronage of consumers in a cultural area that creates opportunities for such endeavors. Collected data also shows the emergence of collaborative partnership opportunities between government, the private sector, and civil society in promoting participatory strategies of urban development. All in all, this article seeks to suggest that by dovetailing culture and art with established development policies, the process of making our cities more dynamic, more competitive and culturally-enriching places to live and work in is reinforced; marking an improved quality of living that facilitates interaction and exchange among people within their built environments.

Keywords: *culture and art, city competitiveness, urban development, creative capital, urban regeneration, mix-use development.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Multitudes of planning luminaries, both from the academe and in the practicing field, have stressed that factors such as adequate transport networks and systems, geographic location, and relative proximity to natural resources are the summary determinants of regional innovation and growth. Merit for these factors has long been attuned towards real-estate prices, the volume of employment opportunities generated and salary disposition as summary determinants of urban development.

Lately however, there has been a growing awareness to explore further the contribution of utilizing cultural interrelationships between people and communities living as well as working



within our cities – its manners of expression, methods of cultivation, as well as its impact to the development of urban spaces - In the context of urban development. To be specific, images of cities as lifestyle and entertainment districts are now being given more thought and as to how it supports the growth of an urban area; making cities more lively, vibrant, and more enticing to both the people and the industries that traditionally fuels its growth and competitiveness.

Richard Florida, in his book *Cities and the Creative Class*, sought to answer the question on why do people, and industries for that matter, continue to cluster in major cities despite expensive standards of living and working, knowing full well the benefits of cheaper rents outside these cities and that of an internet-connected world, where spatial proximity is no longer necessary in conducting one's business (Florida, 2005). Is it simply because of locational accessibility, the presence of superior transport, communication, and other infrastructure systems, as well as the presence of employment opportunities within an urban area? Or could it be also due to the excitement brought about by tolerant, vibrant, and enticing urban settings that utilize culture and art that make life more meaningful among both city workers and residents? Or is it a little bit of both?

A note of clarification: let it be made clear that the notions of importance afforded to cultural interrelationships in the context of urban development presented in this paper are not meant to dispute nor change the established primacy of accepted components leading to urban growth and development; but rather, the points to be raised here are meant to supplement and augment these established precepts and developmental concepts.

## CULTURE AND SOCIETY

It is said that humans are social beings that live and thrive in a web of social relationships; with its communities as its envelopes of shaping experiences that lead to one's preferred quality of life (Schwabb, 1992). Our cities, the main drivers of our societies' economic growth, are of course made up of these same social beings seeking a certain degree of satisfaction and happiness in life through a kind of lifestyle that he or she seeks to pursue and cultivate. To this end, the totality of these social relationships can be summed up and is manifested through the accumulative *culture* cultivated among the people and in their places of engagement.

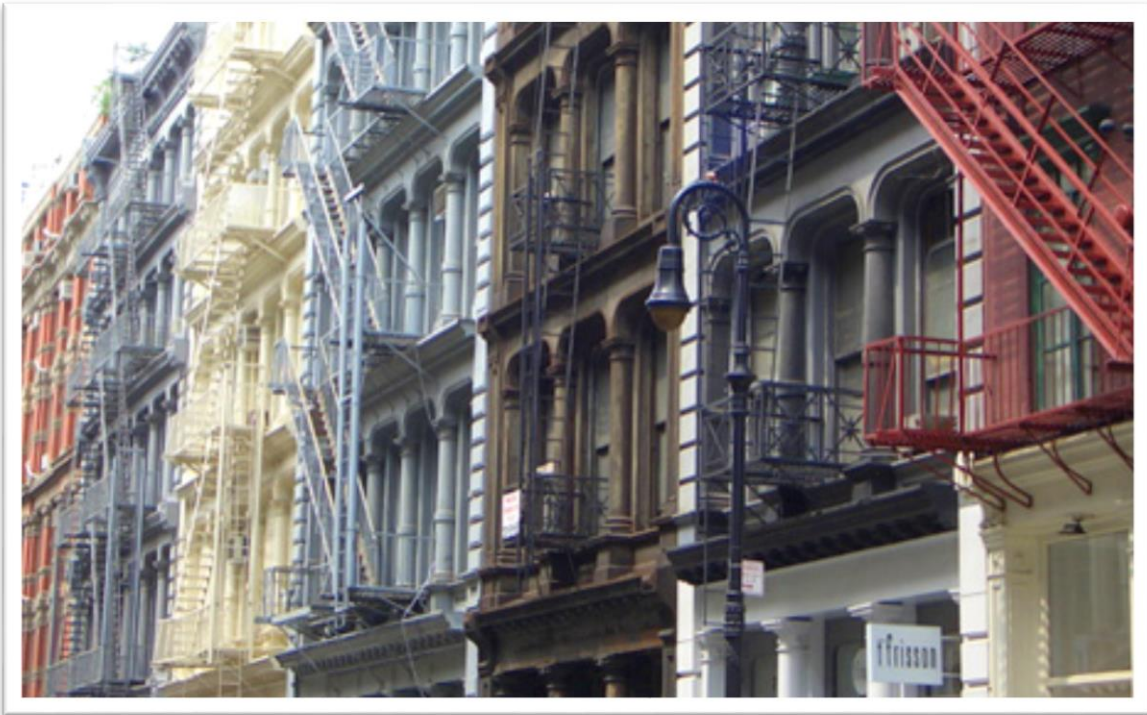
Culture is defined as the totality of values, ideas and beliefs that bind communities and societies together (Throsby, 2006). Passed on from one generation to the next, culture has been an effective binding agent that allows people to define who they are and what they can be; a progressive guide and creative catalyst in the development of people, as well as spaces and places that seek to reinforce the commonality of characteristics and ideals of a particular society. Aside from binding people together, culture also allows people to find commonalities with each other, thereby establishing an endearing sense of familiarity towards a particular place and the people residing in it, making it hard for one to leave due to the sensorial affinity one has grown accustomed to. Culture also enriches the lives of people by providing opportunities where one is perpetually exposed and enlightened with new, innovative ideas; different traditions and practices that enrich as well as expand ones' view of the world.



Produced, promoted, and participated in through a variety of cultural forms, services, and practices, it may be said that culture is most effectively expressed, preserved, and manifested through a societies' accumulated body of art.

### **ART: IMPACTS TO PEOPLE AND PLACE**

A significant contributor in the vibrancy, character, attractiveness, and uniqueness of a place, culture is manifested and fostered in objects and in physical environments that reflect the sum of a people's values and beliefs as a society (Altman & Chalmers, 1980); with the manifestations of which are best expressed and reinforced through various mediums of art. Art as we know it is the creation, interpretation, and expression of an artist's view of reality, as influenced by his values and beliefs (Torres & Kamhi, 2000). The richness of ideas that these creative people offer to society, as manifested in their works or performances, presents a different view of the world; intriguing and exciting, and warranting of critical social discourses and avid cultural exchanges among members of society that chose to be exposed to it. The cultural vibrancy, activity, and diversity that art-engaged communities and spaces bring to our cities is a reason as to why people and industries tend to gravitate towards these centers of artistic expression. As an example, it is of worth to mention the story of *South of Houston* (SoHo) district, a unique neighborhood within the New York City borough of Manhattan, U.S.A.



**Figure 1** New York's SoHo district

Photo Source: from [www.nycgo.com/](http://www.nycgo.com/)

SoHo is a district of Industrial-era factories and cast-iron buildings “mostly for the booming textile industry which flourished between 1840 to 1880. As this industry succumbed to southern and foreign competition after World War II”, (Kostelanetz, 2003) the buildings were abandoned



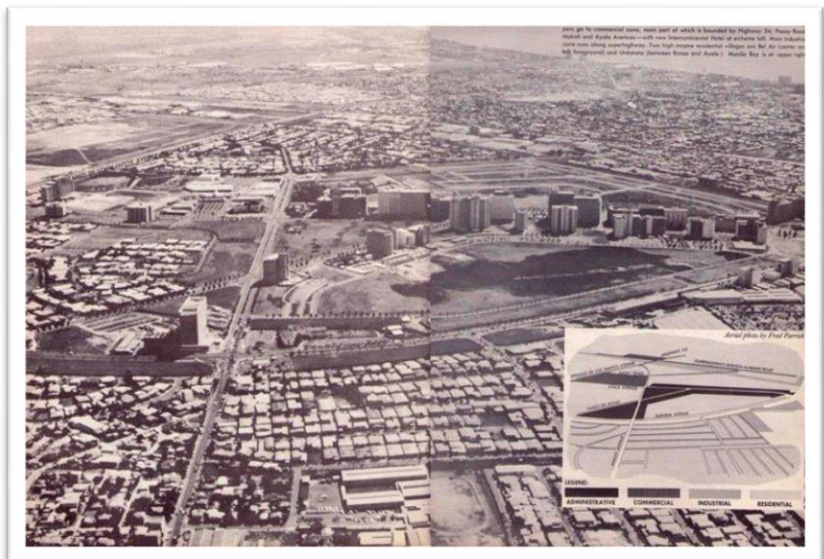
and were left to decay. Many of these buildings, especially the upper stories which became known as lofts, attracted artists who valued the spaces for their large areas, large windows admitting natural light and cheap rents. As the artist population grew, the city made some attempts to stem the movement, especially concerned about the occupation of space that did not meet residential building codes, and the possibility that the space might be needed at some time for the return of manufacturing to New York City. Pressured on many sides, the city eventually gave up on attempting to keep all of the Cast Iron District as industrial space, and the area received historical designation as SoHo.

The neighborhood rose to fame as a neighborhood for artists during the 1960s and 1970s, when the cheap spaces vacated by the factories were converted by artists into lofts and studios. The unique cultural atmosphere brought about by these creative individuals generated attention and attracted people and industries toward this part of New York City. Beginning in the 1980s, this neighborhood rapidly rose up the socio-economic scale; with a variety of restaurants, shops and other commercial establishments deciding to ride along this artistic buzz generated by the original inhabitants of this neighborhood a few decades back. What used to be a haven of poor artists and small factories, SoHo is now one of the more sought after pieces of real estate in New York, and a popular cultural destination for people looking for an exquisite quality of lifestyle. If we are to ask what happened to the artists who made SoHo what it is today, an article from the New York City Official Guide website states: “When SoHo became too upscale for starving artists, many moved further downtown to another, then-half-abandoned industrial district, TriBeCa (the Triangle Below Canal). TriBeCa also became a hot destination, most notably for dining”. Though clear issues of gentrification can be pointed by in the SoHo example, it cannot be denied that the presence of artists immensely helped a once decaying part of New York to become the well sought-after piece of real estate that it is today.

### BEGINNINGS AND RISE OF A BUSINESS DISTRICT

Like New York in the United States, the City of Makati in the Philippines evoke images of tall buildings, businessmen in suits and a steel grey landscape. But once upon a time, Makati was a swampland. “Spanish explorer Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, while traveling up the Pasig River sometime in the 16th century, took one good look at the place and dismissed it as ‘worthless’. This cruel put-down, made in

1571, earned Makati its first mention in history.” (Yap, 2007)

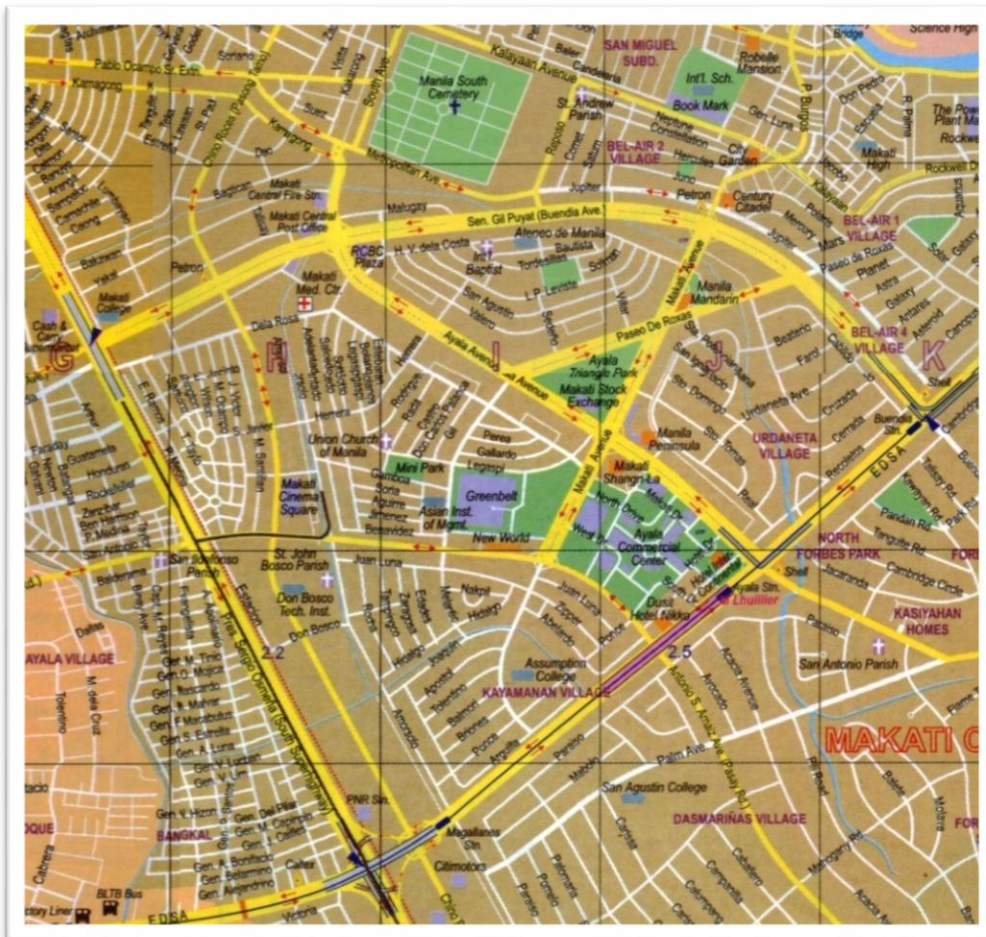


**Figure 2** Beginnings of the Makati CBD  
Photo Source: [www.ayalaland.com.ph](http://www.ayalaland.com.ph)



From what started as a backward town, it was in 1937, during the administration of President Manuel L. Quezon, that the Nielson Airport – named after the American stockbroker Laurie Reuben Nielson, its builder and principal investor – was built. “L.R. Nielson convinced several other Manila-based foreign investors to join him in the project to build an aviation school and airport in Manila. Construction of the airport proceeded after the group leased 42 hectares of land in Makati from Ayala y Cia” (Filipinas Heritage Library, 2010), precursor of the Ayala Corporation. When it was finally inaugurated in July 1937, the Nielson Airport was being touted as the biggest and best-equipped in Southeast Asia; the first commercial airport in the region. “This airport tower and passenger terminal stood on forty-two (42) largely unpopulated hectares of land in San Pedro, Makati, at the apex of a triangle described by two runways.” (Caruncho, 2003).

After more than a decade of service, the hub of commercial aviation moved elsewhere. It was around this time that the privately-owned Ayala group, with the support of the local government of Makati, teamed-up to develop this area and forever change the urban landscape of the then suburban town southeast of Manila. The rest, as they say, is history. “Makati’s Central Business District (CBD) rose around the former airport, with the runways turning into its main streets. Likewise, the Ayala-owned real estate business, Ayala Land, Inc. has grown phenomenally; subsequently venturing into condominium and residential community development, while Makati assumed its position as the country’s foremost corporate center.” (Lico, 2005)



**Figure 3**  
*Map of Makati  
CBD*

The Makati Central Business District became the primary corporate and financial center in the country by basically taking advantage of its strategic location to attract large companies and industries by developing important infrastructure, venues and amenities such as roads, telecommunication facilities, hotels, schools, hospitals, and strategically placing them conveniently close to one another to offer a myriad of services appealing to potential residents, visitors, and investors.

However, with the rise of other business districts in the metropolis, there was a compelling need for the Makati CBD to reinvent itself if it wants to maintain its position as the financial center of choice in the Philippines; there was a need to provide something new and different that will once again set it apart from its competitors. The result of this reinvention, as what will be expounded upon in the succeeding parts of this article, is a type of development hinged upon an culturally integrated, live-work-play lifestyle model that promotes a new way of experiencing life in general. With the development trends highlighted above, a question that begs to be answered is, can the synergy of culture and art into urban development a new dimension in improving the competitive viability of an established urban location? This article seeks to shed light on this matter, using the experiences derived from the Makati CBD experience as a center of corporate and cultural lifestyle integration in the Philippines.

### **REINVENTING URBAN DEVELOPMENT PARADIGMS THROUGH ART & CULTURE: THE AYALA GREENBELT MODEL**

In its quest of establishing variety for a successful integration of the live-work-play lifestyle concept in the Makati Central Business District, an important support system to the residential and financial districts that arose within its environs are its commercial establishments. To this end, the Ayala Greenbelt Mall complex is the Makati CBD's premiere, masterplanned commercial centerpiece aimed at providing its patrons a refreshingly reinterpreted retail store experience with artistically-designed spaces that go beyond the traditionally rigid box-like retail developments which simply maximizes every square meter of possible retail space for profit-revenue.

“Greenbelt, as the name suggests, is located in a park that establishes an environmental rapport with verdant tropical foliage in a highly dense urban area, reclaiming much needed green space for the public. Hence, starting a reversal to the popular perception that malls have invasively conquered and have taken over the city's last open parks and remaining plazas.” (Lico, 2005) The architectural concept of this development focused on allotting large

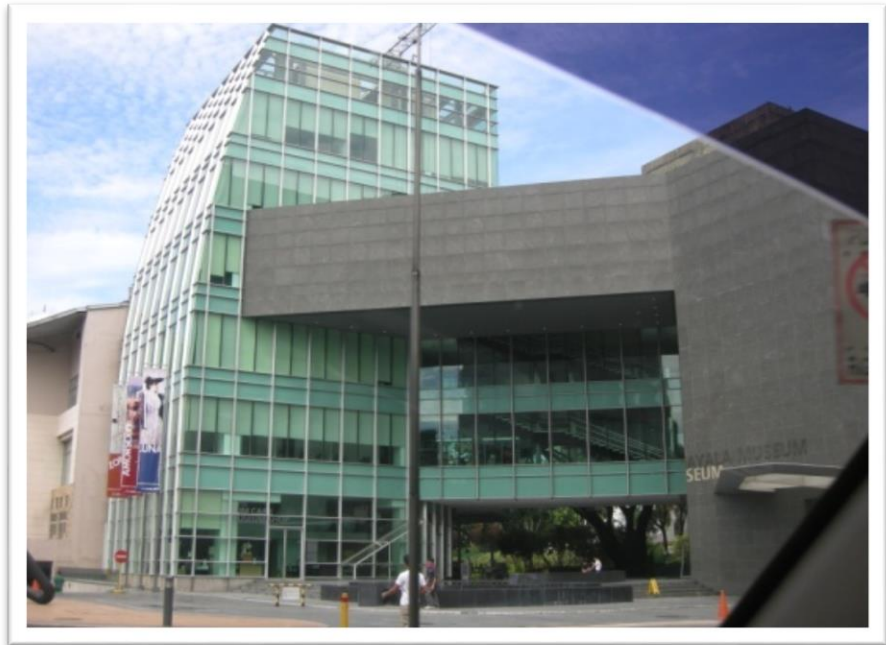


**Figure 4** Greenbelt Mall, Makati City



expanses of prime land to be open, communal spaces for locals and foreigners alike to mingle, interact, and exchange culture and beliefs in; all in close proximity to the retail and lifestyle amenities and conveniences of the mall's overall architecture. By doing so, the Greenbelt development has artistically redefined the Filipino shopping experience by integrating architecturally stimulating built spaces with nature and amidst a whirl of vibrant cultural expressions and interactions; while still carefully integrating and making accessible everything towards the consumers' material needs and wants.

Another key cultural feature integrated into the Greenbelt Mall complex is the Ayala Museum; a cultural institution cleverly integrated into the mall's retail design in a way that maximized foot traffic is funneled along the museum windows and doors, facilitating access and exposing the mall's diverse assortment of patrons and visitors to the vibrancy of Filipino culture and art as they traverse the halls of this retail shopping complex.

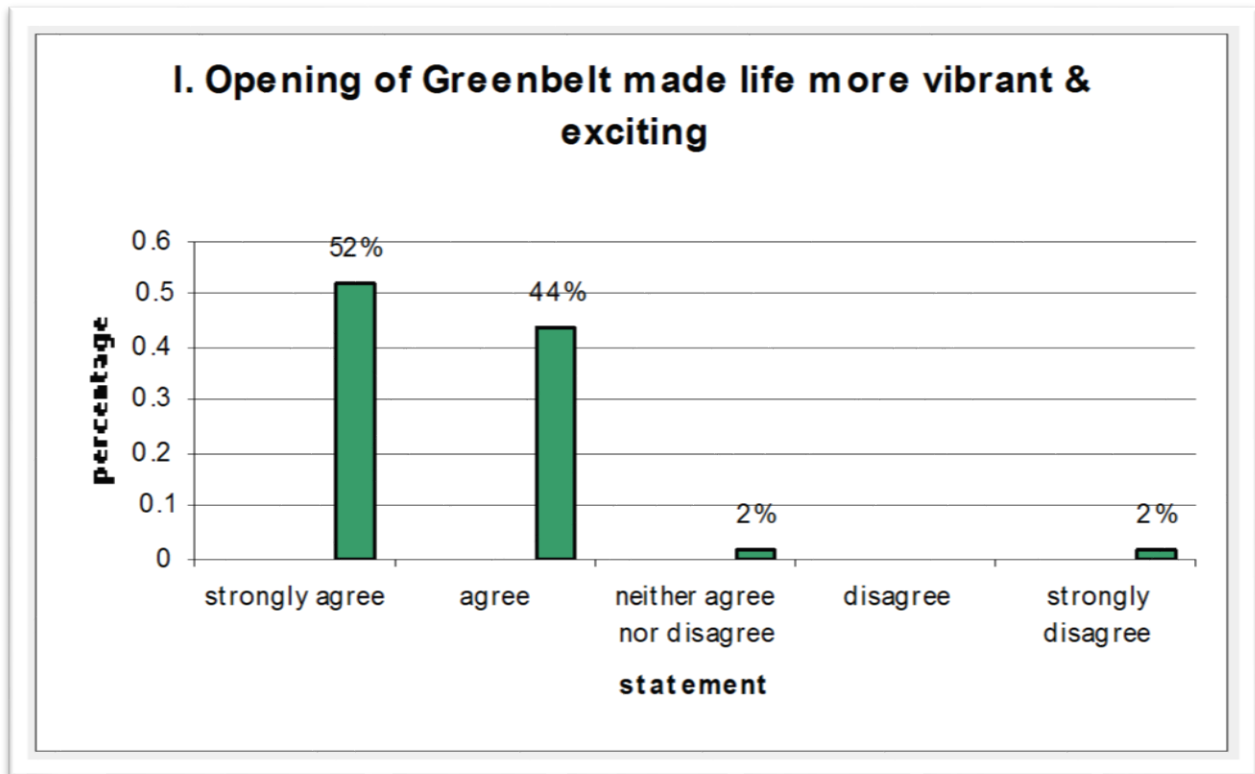


**Figure 5** Greebelt's Ayala Museum

Diversification is achieved by utilizing sound planning and physical development strategies in maximizing the visual attraction and subsequent human traffic which retail malls generate from the local population. All in all, culture and the arts are ingeniously integrated with business and lifestyle, as “a new museological paradigm that conflates the civilizing ritual of museum and consumerist spectacle of shopping” (Lico, 2005). The planning and design of the Ayala Greenbelt complex, together with its park and museum, is an artistic coup bridging culture and consumerism.

In relation to this, a questionnaire-survey was administered to one hundred local respondents, men and women alike living and/or working inside the Makati business district in an effort to determine, among other things, the mind-set of the respondents regarding life vibrancy, as well as art and cultural expression as factor of urban development inside the Makati CBD. Due to problems such as an uncontrolled daytime and night time population, the very busy schedules of the aspired respondents (most of which did not even bother answering the surveys given to them), and the lack of resources to hire assistants in the administering of surveys, a Snowball Sampling technique was used through the help of Convenience Sampling respondents. Among

the questions surveyed, when asked if the opening of the lifestyle commercial center that is Greenbelt have made life more vibrant and exciting, more than half of the respondents, at 52%, chose “strongly agree” as their answer. It was followed closely by “agree” which is at 44%. A small number of the respondents answered either “neither agree or disagree” or “strongly disagree” statements, both statements garnering 2% each. None of the respondents chose to answer “disagree”.



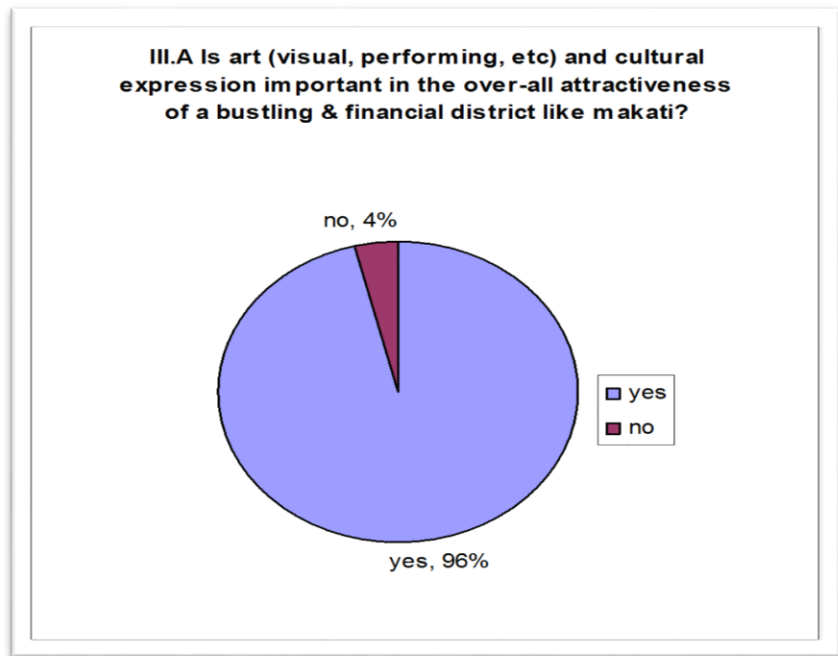
**Figure 6** Contribution to life vibrancy of the Greenbelt Commercial Center

In another question, almost all of the survey respondents (96%) agree when asked about the importance of art and cultural expression, that both are important in the over-all attractiveness of a bustling urban center. Among the reasons for this is that it defines the character of the place, and that art and cultural expression add life and color to the business district. The respondents also mentioned that all prosperous cities have remarkable art and culture, exuding uniqueness and makes as good conversation topics; and that it complements a city’s economic reputation. The respondents also cited that art is an inspiration for them to create and be more innovative, at the same time a good reliever for stress.





Mr. Eric Ganaden, a key-informant in this paper and employee of the Urban & Regional Planning Division of Ayala Land Inc., validates the development strategy perceived by this author of the complimentary relationship of integrating spatial developments geared towards business, culture and lifestyle accommodations in any particular urban center seeking patronage from residents and visitors. According to Mr. Ganaden, "The Ayala Group has been very active in the development of the Ayala



**Figure 7** Art and Cultural Expression as factor in Urban Development

Center, which is geared in providing the people in the CBD a welcome respite to the rigors of city-life. The Greenbelt complex, on the other hand, is an example of providing everyone, regardless of his social or physical preferences, a particular place to congregate and enjoy life." (2007)

Adding to this, Ms. Pinky Peralta, an Interior Designer with a studio along N.Garcia street, formerly Reposo street, in Makati was quoted as saying that, "Business also thrives from the creativity of people who work for these businesses. Everything goes hand-in-hand. And creativity needs to be nurtured through spaces that allow people who create to thrive and prosper." (2007) These spaces, personified by the Greenbelt Complex, is a good example of the socio-cultural and business potentials that can be maximized in developing spaces conducive in allowing people to live and love life.

Another strong point of the Makati CBD is its rich variety of shops and leisure-themed establishments enveloping the district. Defying notions of high-end exclusivity, there is always something for everyone who wishes to visit the CBD, regardless of social class. According to key-informant Ms. Cristina Montalban, a long-time Makati resident and marketing & brand manager of a life insurance company based along Ayala Avenue, "Yes, because it has something for everyone, whether you're an accountant or an artist, a follower or a rebel, *sosyalera* or not." (2007)

Also, in an interview with Mr. Rajo Laurel, a well-respected local fashion designer whose shop is located also in Makati, on his thoughts at the importance of the interaction of local and foreign cultures within conducive physical amenities aimed at cultural and lifestyle development in cities, he says that "They (expatriates) are attracted to places and locales that give them a taste

of local life and culture. Now, these visitors notice the subtle changes going about us; their presence, in turn, gives us fresh perspectives on ideas and on life; helping us improve ourselves in the process. Also, the presence of a ‘foreign envoy’ in a particular location (i.e. Makati CBD, Greenbelt) presents a globalization of awareness that rubs itself in local society.” (2007) This statement by Mr. Laurel simply means that exposure and daily interaction with foreign cultures, most evident in Makati and in places such as the Greenbelt complex, enables the local population to gain a heightened sense of awareness of its strengths and weaknesses as a people. At the same time, this researcher has noted that continuous cultural exposure and exchange on the streets, in parks, and confines of the physical developments within the study model has provided a daily stage to experience and appreciate the interaction of cultures between locals and foreigners alike. A globalization of cultures and physical environments are achieved through the exchange of cultures, traditions, and innovative ideas nurtured amidst the globally recognized and multi-awarded landmark physical developments in the study model.

The synergy of culture and consumerism, as seen in the Ayala group’s Greenbelt Park and Mall complex, as well as in the recent developments in its environs making up the pedestrianization of the district seems to provide us with a new dimension in ways and means to improve the competitive viability of a particular urban location in attracting industries and individuals to invest and settle in it. Suddenly, Makati’s residents and visitors - local and foreign alike - seem to stay longer inside the district, enjoying life in and beyond work better amidst a pedestrian-friendly environment while savoring the relaxing and culturally stimulating Greenbelt and Makati CBD setting.

### **MAKATI’S REPOSO STREET: FROM URBAN BLIGHT TO A CENTER OF ART AND CULTURE**

Beyond the master-planned Greenbelt commercial development, a more organic type of urban growth within the Makati CBD has been observed. During the Spanish era, Reposo street was a charming tree-laden street termed “Placentero” (pleasant place), with beautiful vacation houses flanking both its sides. Behind these houses, rich Filipino and Spanish families would be seen having picnics, while the sounds of hooves coming from fancy horse carriages would be regularly heard plying this street. “The whole stretch of Reposo—which has since been renamed Nicanor Garcia street, after the first mayor of Makati—was then a relaxation haven for the ilustrados who lived in Intramuros, Manila, during the Spanish era.” (Uy, 2006) However, after the American Invasion, the street’s charm faded in memory and gradually lost its popularity to both the rich and the masses.

In 2004 however, Reposo Street started to have a cultural resurrection of sorts. Currently the home of famous names in the arts and design industry such as of Budji Layug, Ito Kisch, and Pinky Peralta; as well as cultural ambassadors such as the Alliance Française de Manille as among its champions of art, culture, and design, the once dirt road has since gradually changed into a neighborhood popular for its art and cultural enclaves, furniture showrooms, chic restaurants, and a mural adorning one side of the street, making the stretch a promising arts and cultural district. The main proponent of this urban renaissance is Grupo Reposo Inc., a non-profit organization composed of more than thirty (30) artist/entrepreneurs that has made Reposo



street their new atelier and base of operations. In an interview by the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Ed Soler, an Art Gallery owner and president of this organization wanted Reposo street to become the “Art Center of Makati; a crossroad of the arts and design from both East and Western cultures.” (Uy, 2006)

Together with then Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and the National Commission of the Culture and the Arts, Grupo Reposo has successfully staged its first street festival in 2006, named “Tibok Sining ng Grupo Reposo”; a festival featuring world class arts, design and delectable cuisine. Maximizing various cultural services, institutions, products, and spaces available in the vicinity of this festival, a street mural painting of the wall fronting the nearby St. Andrew's Church was done by a group of Makati-based artists. Likewise, commercial restaurants that joined the fair featured special dishes. Art galleries and establishments, on the other hand, showcased oriental décor pieces, China and Philippine pottery, fine Philippine baskets, home accessories, decors and crafts, paintings and accent lamps, drawings and art magazines, pen and ink drawings, Marian artworks and Chinese paintings. There were also performances by mime artists and a film showing of critically acclaimed French films. In the evening, the organizers presented an exciting open-air evening program. A workshop led by the participating artists, designers, art collectors, members of the Grupo Reposo, including residents from Bel-Air and other barangays of Makati capped the day.

Comparing the history of Makati’s Reposo Street and the Ayala Greenbelt development, a veritable trend of urban revitalization brought about by utilizing culture and art – may it be from its different manifestations, services, and social exchanges - have emerged. The excitement which cultural exchange, as personified by the artists that champion it, and the patrons which support it, creates a development asset that may be utilized by the private sector as well as non-profit groups in rejuvenating areas within their respective cities or localities.



**Figure 8** Art Bazaar along Reposo Street. Bel-Air, Makati

Photo Source: [www.spot.ph](http://www.spot.ph)

## **GOVERNMENT SECTOR SUPPORT**

We have established the role that the private sector (in the case of the Ayala Greenbelt complex) as well as civil society groups (as seen in the NPO-engaged Reposo street revival) can play in the revitalization of spaces by using culture and art. To this end, local city planners and officials of Makati city is also very much aware and enthusiastic in throwing their support to the efforts of the private sector and non-profit organizations in propagating the development of spaces in the city by using culture and art. In an interview with Mr. Xenon Walde, who is from the Makati Urban Development Department:

Bonus incentives are offered for developments that provide facilities and amenities which are of public benefit and deemed desirable including network of green and open spaces, possible application of land readjustment scheme and heritage areas. Adoption of any of these strategies or approaches will enable the developers and owners to avail of additional increase in gross floor area available for development.

Another program aggressively pursued by Makati City is the promotion of the City as an entry point for international and local tourists planning to visit other parts of the country. The local government pursues this through programs and projects geared on the strengthening of the City's image and building recall. For instance, large planned programs and projects are on the establishment of landmarks and monuments. Programs under this category are also geared towards the promotion of the City in an international level. Promotion of sister cities and link with other international cities fall under this category (2007).

Besides increased allowable floor-area for construction development as incentives for preserving open spaces and heritage sites, and landmark sculptures and monuments dotting the urban landscape of the Makati CBD, many cultural programs and artistically-driven projects are being hosted by the city government regularly and is celebrated in Makati and on its business district. Among these are the "Araw ng Makati"; an annual celebration commemorating the birth a city way back in 1670. Together with the Makati Festivals Foundation, the local government becomes very busy every month of May in spearheading an assortment of cultural and artistic activities for its constituents. Among the more popular is the "Chalk Art and Grand Parade" at Ayala Avenue, Street Parties along Burgos street, "Flores de Mayo" at nearby Rockwell, "Zarzuelas" and "Family Day" celebrations at the City Hall Quadrangle, "Jazz and World Music Festivals", and the Miss Makati Beauty Pageant Coronation Night. Perhaps in the context of this research, an annual "Midnight Madness" sale at the Ayala Center during the Araw ng Makati celebrations is a prime example of the synergy between culture and consumerism; wherein the private sector commemorates the annual city celebrations with an annual sale of its offered goods, all at discounted prices. All of the aforementioned programs and projects were organized for all of the residents, workers, and visitors of Makati to not just to reaffirm and propagate the artistic possibilities of its local creative class, but also for all to take



part in the commemoration of the rich cultural heritage and tradition that is the soul of Makati city.

In a separate Key Informant Interview with Ms. C.H. Cervantes, director of the Makati Cultural Affairs Office (MCAO), she was quoted in saying that, “The culture and arts scene in Makati is conducted in congruence with commercial activities. Art activities (i.e. poetry reading, puppet shows, musical revues, and film showings) are regularly conducted in various shopping complexes and commercial establishments of the Makati CBD” (2007). A prime example of what Ms. Cervantes is trying to share in her interview is the annual Makati Cinemania International Film Festival. In his speech at the festivals’ 6th Awards Ceremonies, then Mayor Jejomar C. Binay was quoted in saying:

By successfully bringing together the best works of eminent film makers from different countries, this festival has once again proven its pre-eminence as a consummate venue for the potent fusion of the most brilliant ideas and distinct cinematic prowess of veterans and emerging masters, who are being held in great esteem not only in their own country, but also in other parts of the globe.

For six years now, Makati has continued to enjoy the distinction of being home to this prestigious festival, cognizant of the vital role it plays in our goal of promoting harmony and understanding among nations through culture and the arts. (2005)

This data set confirms the strong partnership by both private industries and other stakeholders with the local city government of Makati by recognizing the role of culture and art in the development of lively and vibrant spaces within city. By recognizing the private sector’s main motivation factors, local planning officials are continually improving its position to more effectively adapt to the changing needs of its constituents and its city.

## **ON DEVELOPING CULTURE TOWARDS URBAN COMPETITIVENESS**

The importance afforded to the exchange and development of culture within the Makati CBD, highlighted by the creation of lively, diverse, and culturally vibrant spaces in both master planned and organically-developed urban space models reinforce the notion that there is much to benefit from in the integration of culture and art among established norms of sustainable urban growth and development. Makati city in particular has benefited much from integration of culture and art; from the artistical uniqueness of today’s Reposo (N. Garcia) Street shops and artists who continually attract into the city visitors and patrons alike through their art and street festivals, crafts, and trades; to the multitude of spaces inside the Ayala Greenbelt Mall complex that facilitate cultural exchange, social interaction, and an ideal lifestyle experience that improves the quality of life for its many patrons. The volume of people and industries partaking in the culture and arts that these examples exude allows Makati’s main stakeholders to create even better planning developments and more development opportunities for the city and its constituents.

Other local government units may take their cue from established urban centers such as Makati to position themselves as successful urban centers in their own respective locations. Together with strategic location, good infrastructure support, effective policies and management systems, and spatial planning strategies taking advantage to the beneficial properties of culture and art, veritable keys to attract, supplement, and sustain growth may help propagate growth and development in a particular city or municipality. By doing so, we may perhaps hasten the process of making more of our urban centers dynamic, competitive and vibrant places to live and work in; facilitating public and private sector partnerships hinged on unlimited socio-cultural, physical, and economic possibilities.

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#### IMAGE SOURCES

Fig 1: <http://www.nycgo.com/articles/neighborhoods-soho-tribeca> (23 December 2013)

Fig 2: <http://www.ayalaland.com.ph/about/history/> (23 December 2013)

Fig 3-5: from author's own image collection

Fig 8: <http://www.spot.ph/event/47771/tuklas-sining-at-reposo-street> (23 December 2013)