Identity as a Development Catalyst for both Community and City (The Case of Baguio City, Philippines)

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Abstract

The inability to rise above poverty weakens one's sense of pride and self-confidence, increasing vulnerability to social exclusion. To address this concern, access to education enables the poor to acquire skills that enhance quality of living, improving their level of acceptance in society. Unfortunately, many developing societies find it difficult to ensure access to education for all its citizens, especially the poor.

In search for alternative platforms that poor citizens may use, it was found that education is a cultural development medium that provides skills celebrating values and beliefs binding people together; making it easier for people to be accepted in the communities which they seek to belong in. Aside from education, there are other platforms of cultural development such as sports, religion, and art. In search of a cultural development platform to focus this research on, "Art" was found to not only provide skills and opportunities promoting acceptance amidst poverty-driven social barriers, but also highlight distinct local cultural attributes unique in a city as expressed via tourism; a development catalyst hinged on a city's unique identity.

This paper discusses the case of Baguio City, home to a community adorned with an indigenous identity where not only is this identity used as a city development catalyst (tourism), but its governments' collaboration with art-engaged volunteer groups enable us to look deeper at theoretical discussions stating that 'improved social capital establishes a sense of identity'. To a certain degree, identity can also be recognized as a development catalyst –and not just a result - of enhanced social capital due to the learnings captured in this research.

Keywords: Poverty, Art, Local identity, Social capital, Cultural development

1. Introduction

Poverty is and has always been a sobering reflection of failure to create a just and humane society. Though there have been significant improvement on poverty reduction, progress has been uneven; some regions in East Asia and Southeast Asia may have met the target of halving its poverty rate, but other regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, still lag behind (United Nations, 2014). Moreover, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) states that as early as 1990, major population movement began shifting the main burden of poverty to urban areas (United Nations, 1990), establishing the urban spatial trend where poverty will become more pronounced in decades to come. Amidst well-documented discussions on economic vulnerabilities encountered by the poor (Chamhuri, Karim, & Hamdan, 2012), the inability to rise above poverty also leads to a weakening in one's sense of pride, dignity, and self-confidence; factors that increase one's vulnerability towards social exclusion (Grabska, 2006; Howe & McKay, 2007; Jenson, 2000; UNESCO & IOC, 2010).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recognized these factors in poverty's absolute and relative impacts to society. In the words of UNESCO:

"Absolute poverty measures poverty in relation to the amount of money necessary to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. (However), the concept of absolute poverty is not concerned with broader quality of life issues or with the overall level of inequality in society. The concept therefore fails to recognize that individuals have important social and cultural needs. This led to the development of the concept of relative poverty. Relative poverty defines poverty in relation to (or compared with)…other members of the society: people are poor if they fall below prevailing standards of living in a given societal context." (UNESCO, 2009).

Simply put, this paper seeks a social understanding of poverty amidst an abundance of literature that measures poverty by means of a person's ability to acquire or consume commodities.

The study likewise considers an approach that dwells on how individuals or groups are able to stack themselves up against a community perspective in determining one's state of being poor, and their ability to get out of poverty's social consequences (Howe & McKay, 2007).
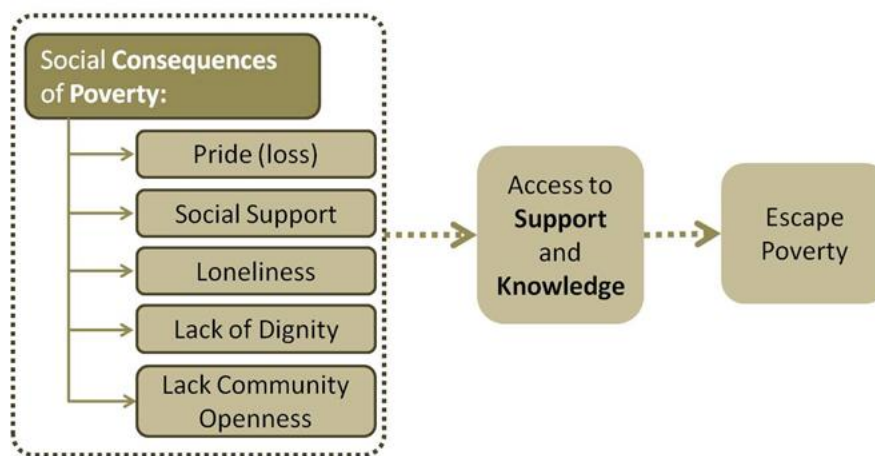

Figure 1 Social Consequences to Consider in Escaping Poverty (Howe & McKay, 2007).

2. Review of Related Literature

In Search of a Catalyst Development

*S*ince "access to support and knowledge" is an effective way of addressing social concerns of poverty (Howe & McKay, 2007), development platforms have been used by government to address it. For instance, education – long considered as society's 'great equalizer' (Mann & Mann, 1868) - has been a medium that upholds numerous social, economic, and cultural advantages, as well as one that aids in the development of vital skill sets that is of benefit for an improved quality of living among the poor (Tarabini, 2010). Education is also seen as an effective medium used by government to enhance the poor's quality of living and level of acceptance and standing in society (Griliches, 1996). Unfortunately, many developing societies, particularly those with high poverty rates, find it difficult to ensure access to education for all its citizens. In their work entitled "Issues and Concerns of Philippine Education through the Years" Durban and Catalan (2012) wrote the following:

Education has been looked into as the means of alleviating poverty, increasing economic benefits and ultimately uplifting the standard of living of the Filipino masses. However, it is a sad reality that due to poverty, only seven out ten pupils who enroll in Grade 1 finish the elementary curriculum, and from the seven who continue to secondary, only 3 are able to complete the curriculum. From this three, only one can complete the tertiary education. Based on this scenario, how can we expect our students to help in nation building when they do not have the necessary skills and trainings?

This phenomenon is happening in other developing countries all over the world as well. In 2005, only 68% of the primary school-enrolled children in Sub-Saharan Africa reached the last grade of primary education. Even worse is the situation in Uganda, where only 32% of the children enrolled in the first grade finished the last grade of primary education. These sobering statistics are aggravated by observations that not only do early school leavers lack certificates, those few years in school most likely do not equip them with skills useful for their future lives (Blaak, Openjuru, & Zeelen, 2013). In this regard, are there alternative mediums – aside from education - that poor citizens may also use to access support and knowledge, so as to address (among others) the social consequences concerning poverty?

Literature states that education is a medium of cultural development; providing skills that recognize and promote aspired values and beliefs that bind people together, as well as benefitting people (e.g. the poor) who express these celebrated values and beliefs in an impressive manner. Obtained through "cognitive development, recreation, spiritual enrichment, and aesthetic experiences" (Church, A., Burgess, J., Ravenscroft, N., 2011), these values and beliefs are both developed and expressed through education, sports, religion, and art (Cochrane, 2006; Tarabini, 2010; Throsby, 1999; United Nations, 2005).
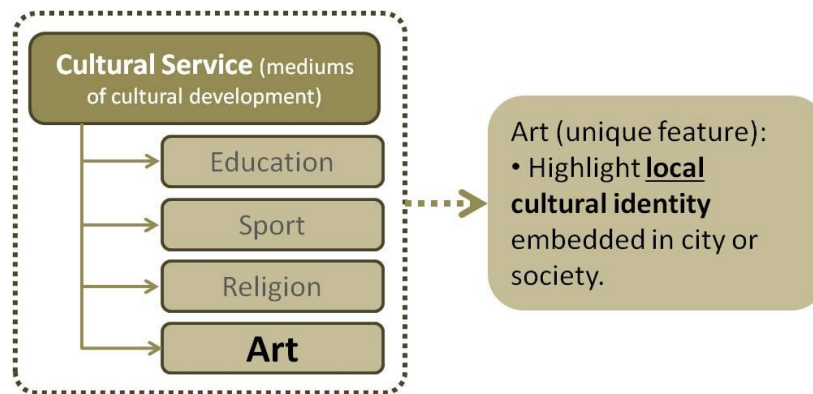
Figure 2 Unique Feature of Art as Cultural Development Medium.

Culture Expressed through Art: Impact to Community and City

In search of a cultural development medium to concentrate this research on, Art is found to not only provide skills and opportunities promoting acceptance amidst poverty-driven social barriers (i.e., as a community development catalyst), but also highlights local cultural development attributes unique in a city (i.e., as a city development catalyst). Identity is defined as a set or collection of "cultural experiences that characterize and reinforce one's sense of self" (Wilson, 1984) as well as "the extent to which people recognize a set of focal elements that set their culture apart from others" (He & Wang, 2014). It is the expressed totality of cultural values and beliefs binding people and the city together, highlighting the features that make them unique. Identity thus enables them to not only promote a sense of belonging and acceptance among communities, but may also be used to package a city's unique identity as part of its tourism agenda.

Identity, reflected or expressed through acquired skills used to celebrate a community and city's binding distinctiveness, underscores a role in local cultural development that improves investment opportunities (e.g. via tourism) and city competitiveness. It establishes a distinct program theme (e.g. music festivals, art performances) where people engaged in art - especially the poor - can participate in its activities and events, and serves as a catalyst of broader social engagement with local and visiting communities patronizing said cultural development program (i.e., improved community relations, social access or acceptance). To be more specific, several academic researchers highlight the notion of art in promoting a "sense of belonging and engagement with disempowered members of the community as well as providing a means of expression and a vehicle for public participation" through projects, as embedded in local tourism programs (Goldstein-Gidoni, 2005; McHenry, 2011; Nakagawa, 2010a; Pol, 2002; Sasaki, 2010).

Seeking to understand these benefits further, the study focuses on the role of social capital in the context of cultural development. Broadly speaking, social capital is "understood as referring to community relations that affect personal interactions" (Durlauf, 2005). It is a recognized fact that social capital is a positive externality from an organizational standpoint, and an aspect that focuses on relationships forged between individuals (Durlauf, 2005; N Lin & Et.al., 2001). Perhaps of greater value for this research, particularly on the aspect of social capital, is that "inventory of social capital (by itself) is impossible to conduct because virtually any kind of social network relationship and set of social norms counts as social capital" (Putnam, 2002). As such, there is a need to pinpoint specific variables as measurable contexts that enable us to establish a positive externality that would lead us to discussions on the enhancement in social capital. For this particular research, these variables are deemed to be "skills development" (cognitive art-skills), alongside community relations, as well as social access/acceptance for the benefit of people especially those who are poor.

Interestingly, Wuthnow mentions of possible "new forms of social capital", such as "social skills to help make people comfortable in these groups and organizations (e.g. self-confidence; a non-cognitive skill-set), and the networks that may be helpful in elevating one's place in the community. But these associations have not been fully successful in bridging socio-economic levels or drawing in marginalized people" (Putnam, 2002). Wuthnow's search for social skills could be drawn towards non-cognitive skills-sets such as self-confidence; further, his search for networks could be related to art-engaged groups or organizations where poor individuals are seen to join and benefit from. Based from these discussions, this study may contribute and move social capital discussions forward in terms of using culture – particularly in the promotion of identity through excellence in a cultural service – to bridge people in improving community relations and gaining social access by membership to groups espousing these cultural services, especially the poor.

Putnam (2002) himself appears to share this line of thought (i.e., social capital for the poor), when he wrote the following in 'Democracies in Flux':

Most empirical research on social capital thus far has focused primarily on the quantity of social ties, but the social distribution of social capital is at least as problematic as trends in the overall quantity. Social capital is generally distributed unequally. Citizens who lack access to financial and human capital also lack access to social capital. Social capital is accumulated most among those who need it least. Social capital may conceivably be even less equitably distributed than financial and human capital.

Identity (A Root Social Capital Feature?)

Amidst definitions cited in previous parts of this paper, perhaps what is of value to know is that social capital is based on "social networks and social relations measured relative to its root" (Nan Lin, Cook, & Burt, 2001). To be more specific, Lin mentioned a strategy of conceptualizing and measuring social capital based on a resource ("root") embedded in the individuals and communities where interaction and engagement is taking place. In the words of Lin, valued resources in most societies are (usually) represented by wealth, power, and status. Thus, social capital is analyzed by the amount or variety of such characteristics in others with whom an individual has direct or indirect ties (Nan Lin et al., 2001). Based from this notion, we understand that people and groups tend to aspire engagement with individuals and organizations that embody qualities reflecting, among others, wealth, power, and status; as such, they tend to benefit from acquired social networks and relations which lead to enhanced social capital. However, beyond "wealth, power, and status" (a bit exclusionary or elitist in nature?), are there other resources that possess a more inclusive feature or "root" to enhancing social capital?

It is at this juncture that this research sought to find out what particular binding agent promotes the creation and strengthening of social networks and relations due to its root feature of being embodied in everybody regardless of wealth, power or status, thereby serving as an inclusive platform that may augment city development via a cultural identity-based tourism strategy.

In search for an answer, this research came across an assessment of Putnam regarding the unique feature of culture in society. In the words of Putnam, while the world is becoming smaller and more homogenous at some levels, local cultures are making efforts to retain or, in some cases, rediscover their identity in a variety of ways (Putnam, 2002). As reflected in Table 1, cultural identity – binding values and beliefs promoted, expressed, and celebrated through cultural services – is a resource embedded in everyone, enabling social networks and relations to take root while devoid of notions of privilege or exclusivity, and this is observed in other social capital resources such as wealth, power, and status. Culture is thus positioned as being an inclusive medium connecting people in a social fabric and bound together by a common identity, benefitting people most especially the poor and marginalized.

3. Methodology

In line with previous observations regarding deprived access to education among the poor in the Philippines, efforts to identify local study areas, particularly those that use art as an alternative skills development platform, were limited to the most populous island within the Luzon Island cluster in the Philippines (Durban & Catalan, 2012). Online research among government websites comprising the fifty-one (51) potential case study areas within the island mass was initiated; looking for local governments that specify "culture" and "art" as key drivers in their city

Table 1 Identity as a Social Capital Resource

Social Capital resources embedded in societies (Nan Lin et.al., 2001)	Impact to enhancing social capital	Observed Notion
• Wealth • Power • Status	Aspire engagement with **organizations** or **networks** embodying these qualities	Highlights **privilege** or **exclusivity** embedded in societal groups (Are there other mediums that possess a **more inclusive** quality in enhancing social capital?)
Proposed Social Capital resource highlighted in this study		Observed Notion
• **Identity**		A base or root **resource** (based from culture) **embedded** in **everyone**; individuals and communities in society regardless of one's wealth, power, or status

or municipality's overall development agenda (evident in policy pronouncements stipulated in each of the government unit's official website). Out of this web-based search, three (3) cases emerged where government efforts of using culture as a development catalyst in the city also facilitates improved skills development (through art), community relations, and social access; embodied through the efforts of volunteer art groups that highlight the role of "culture" and "expression of identity through art" to influence enhanced social capital. The identified study areas are the municipality of Angono, and the cities of Baguio and Makati (see figure 3 below). For this article, the city of Baguio is focused on.

After interviewing concerned national and local government officers (specifically those in charge of cultural development policy and tourism programs), requests were made to local government officials to introduce this researcher to art-engaged volunteer groups that serve as active government partners in cultural development. Once contact was established, interviews were conducted with these volunteer groups to determine in what ways these volunteer groups are using culture, through art, in line with the cultural development and tourism strategies of the local governments that they are collaborating with, with emphasis on how it impacts the poor.

4. Results and Discussion

Cultural Development Policy in the Philippines

Literature on cultural policies by government highlighting how culture impacts the lives of the poor is few and far between; most of the literature encountered pertains to "cultural development" as a policy which focuses on construction and expansion of facilities for urban regeneration, diplomacy or exchange, as well as funding for cultural activities and events (Attanasi, Casoria, Centorrino, & Urso, 2013; Ogoura, 2009; Strom, 2003). Efforts were made to discover if the same policy thrusts are manifested in the Philippines, a developing society believed to adequately represent a study area that shows how cultural development impacts the poor.

Cultural development in the Philippines is led by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). Acquired NCCA policy documents and interviews with NCCA officials point towards "identifying, preserving, and promoting cultural features" as the national agency's main and recurring policy theme, classified though five (5) program tracks namely: (a) Cultural Education, (b) Cultural Diplomacy, (c) Cultural Heritage Conservation, (d) Culture and Development, and (e) Artistic Excellence and Creativity. Based from acquired data, it was found that Philippine policy thrusts share the same as that of other countries, one which is focused on "cultural development" itself.
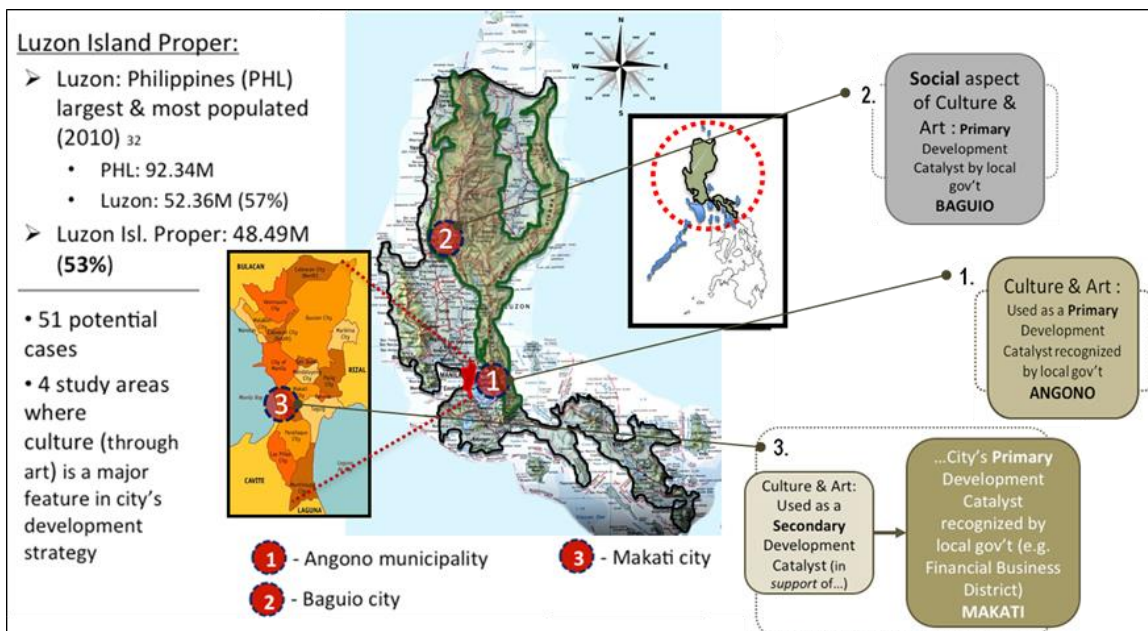

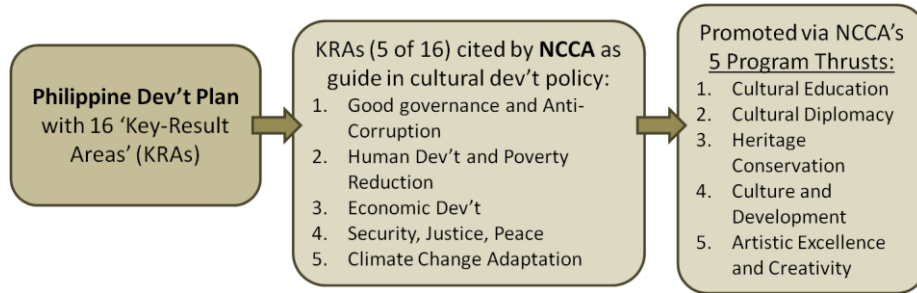Figure 3 Luzon Island Proper Showing Possible Study Areas.

Figure 4 Policy on Cultural Development based from 'Philippine Development Plan'.

Regarding the role of cultural development for the poor, the NCCA recognizes that its policy efforts are reflective to parts of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017 to 2022, the overall policy document drafted by the current Philippine administration. Created through the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), the PDP is considered as main policy guide by the Philippine government for its governance functions. It is the PDP, with its key-result areas specifying "poverty reduction" that serves as inspiration from where NCCA policy on cultural development implies reflective policy connection. Specific cultural programs and projects directly mentioning "poverty reduction" were not found; the reason perhaps being that the main task concerning the social needs[1] of the poor is primarily delegated to another government agency, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The department is tasked to develop and implement social protection and poverty reduction solutions for and with the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged (Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2015).

An observed pattern is that governance themes seem to be entrusted to specific government agencies, each with their own institutional mandates that other agencies recognize. Based from interviews conducted with government officials in charge with cultural development, caution is exhibited with regard to "overstepping" into the mandates of other government agencies (in the case of DSWD, service provision to needs of the poor and marginalized),thus, defining NCCA's focus on the cultural development mandate that was entrusted to them (Morales, 2014a, 2014b). Amidst notions wherein issues concerning poverty is implied or reflected in cultural policy, but not specifically mentioned or listed in NCCA program and project levels (i.e., national government level), focus was moved towards the local level, buoyed by an observation that cultural development engagements with the citizenry (i.e. communities and individuals, especially the poor) seems to be more evident at local or city level.
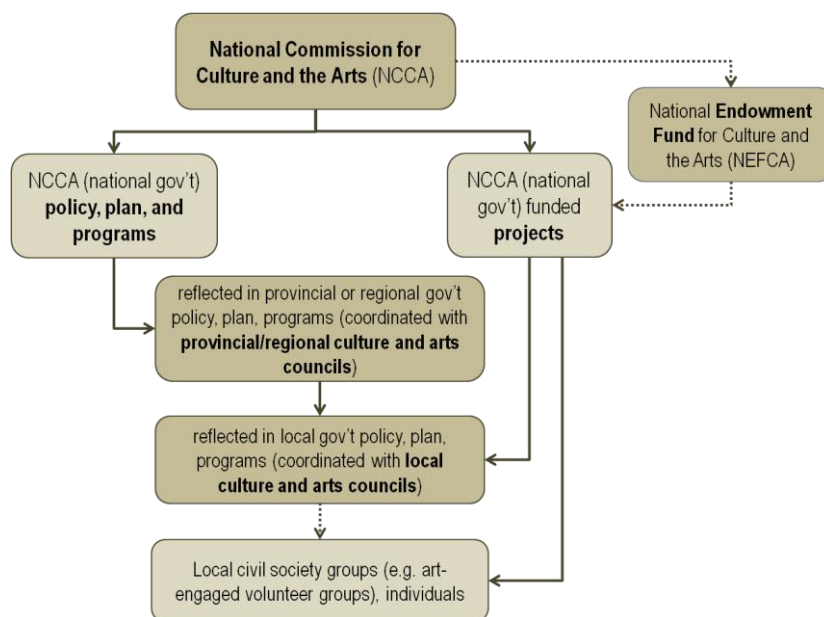

Figure 5 Cultural Development through Art from National to Local Government Level.

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[1] The social aspect of poverty is focused on in this study, as mentioned in terms of "social exclusion" because of poverty.

An interesting feature of cultural development policy in the Philippines is that it allows itself to connect "cultural development" with "poverty alleviation" through the participation of community-based, art-engaged volunteer groups with their local governments' cultural development plans, programs, and projects. The section entitled "Profile of Baguio's Art-engaged Volunteer Groups" later on discusses the current economic state of the member s of these groups (most of them falling under the poverty line), and how they take advantage of the skills they acquire (and benefits/opportunities that they are exposed in) by being members of such groups.
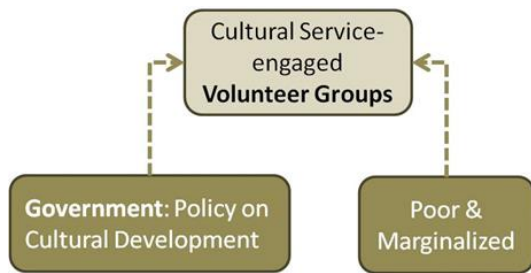

Figure 6 Volunteer Groups as Government Partner: Enabling Cultural Development to Directly Benefit the Poor.

Likewise, interviews conducted discuss members being bounded by a common inclination towards a cultural service (i.e., art) and where social exclusion (e.g. due to poverty) is lessened due to the prioritization of a common passion for excellence on the said cultural service skill-set (e.g. dance, painting, music as art-forms) by these groups.

By using culture - through art expression - in creating groups that seek to be a positive influence on society, discriminatory issues related with poverty (which leads to marginalization) is put in the back in terms of importance to group membership; rather, it is the group's common passion to develop and excel in a cultural service – may it be education, sport, religion, or art – that is brought in the forefront of the group members' collective mindset.

Baguio's Cultural Identity as a City Development Catalyst

Baguio City was used as the case study in this paper to test the relevance of reviewed literature as applied in the Philippine context. The city is famous for its history as a mountain retreat in the beginning of the early 1900s; when the city was made into a rest and recuperation center for American forces due to a climate/temperatures similar to the United States. Today, Baguio continues to be a preferred vacation spot for both locals and foreigners seeking respite from the high temperatures prevalent in the lowlands, especially during the hot summer months (Baguio CPDO, 2010). Beyond its temperate climate, Baguio's city government uses a characteristic that not only augments its reputation as a tourist vacation area, but also as a regional center representative of Cordilleran tribal

culture in the Northern Philippines. To be specific, Baguio attracts indigenous groups coming from different provinces in the Cordillera region which it belongs to – Ibaloi, Bontoc, Kalinga, Ifugao, and Kankanai groups – allowing the city to have a unique cultural identity that sets it apart from other regional centers in the country (Baguio City Tourism Office, 2013). This indigenous Cordilleran identity – an intangible cultural feature - is embraced by Baguio's local government to enrich the city's overall socio-cultural experience for both local and foreign residents and visitors. This is most evident within the mountain plateau located in the northern part of the city where most of the city's developments are concentrated, and where majority of its facilities and spaces as a tourist spot and regional center are based. This is the reason as to why Baguio was chosen as case study for this paper. Baguio city[2], with majority of its developed areas located on a mountain plateau on the northern part of the city is located in the province of Benguet; two hundred and fifty (250) kilometers north of Manila, on an elevation of 1,400 meters, and with a total land area of 57.5 square kilometers (Baguio CPDO, 2010).

Baguio City espouses a "culture through art"-based tourism strategy as a unique identity feature and urban development catalyst. As such, developed art-skills expressing this unique identity (i.e., Cordillera tribal heritage) have more use or applications within this study area. Moreover, Baguio is characterized as a cultural center, and possesses numerous opportunities for people with developed art-skills (observed to be beneficial especially to the poor who are engaged in art skills development); perhaps due to Baguio's culture-based tourism strategy as based on its unique tribal heritage. With Baguio's unique identity, as well as its position as a regional and urban center in Northern Philippines (i.e., industries and development opportunities are seen to be cluster in Baguio), it is not farfetched to see that Baguio's art-skill based opportunities are in abundance especially for poor and marginalized individuals possessing art-skills.

Profile of Baguio's Art-Engaged Volunteered Groups

As noted in earlier sections of this paper, the role of art-engaged volunteer groups enhance the cultural development policy of Philippine cities[3]. .Interviews conducted show that the art-engaged volunteer groups in Baguio City are school/university - based groups, as well as community-based groups; this may be a reflection of the numerous academic institutions inside Baguio, as well as a regional center in the Cordilleras.

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[2] Baguio city is classified as a 'highly urbanized city' under the Philippine's Local Government Code.
[3] Kindly refer to the last two paragraphs in the previous section of this paper entitled, "Cultural Development Policy in the Philippines".

Interviewed leaders of volunteer groups mention that many of their members who make an effort to join this groups belong to the poorer income groups among Baguio City's population, as well as other neighbouring municipalities. Interviews with local government officials convey that both group types are engaged within a relatively equal manner by government. School/university-based groups that are sponsored by academic institutions are mainly in search of talented individuals - usually given academic scholarships as members of said groups - to represent their school or university in related cultural events or engagements happening in the city. Meanwhile, community-based groups are viewed as more grassroots-oriented, serving as an initial training ground for members to develop skillsets that they may choose to use in applying for school-based volunteer groups. This allows them continue their academic aspirations, or as a number of key informant interviewees mentioned, these community-based groups serve as a means of acquiring skills useful for employment. Moreover, interviews also revealed that there are many members of these groups who belong to the poorer income groups (for some, even the most destitute) of the communities they belong to (Morales, 2014a, 2014b).

Table 2 Summary of Volunteer Group Information[4]

> 1) Community-based groups complement school-based groups (in terms of being a grass-roots program), teaching the basics to members to improve their potential or gain skills; give them a better chance of acceptance to school-based groups;
> 2) In case of community-based groups: members not enrolled in school (e.g. out-of-school youth, working full-time) are still able to acquire art-based skills; learn and interact with members who have formal education training (esp. beneficial to poor and marginalized members);
> 3) Community-based groups exhibit a wider age-bracket range among members (young and old); while age-bracket of school-based groups are limited to school age brackets; and
> 4) Members of school-based groups given educational scholarships by academic institution governing it; individuals w/ potential in a particular art-form/discipline that said volunteer group promotes (e.g. dance, music, painting, etc)

It was also observed that both community-based and school-based volunteer groups are vital partners in cultural development, with the grassroot-level feature of community-based groups finding and developing talent acts as a preliminary training ground or platform that makes an individual more competent in a particular art form or medium, thus increasing their chances of being accepted in a school-based volunteer group (and acquire an academic scholarship) should he or she choose to pursue it. Both

community- and school-base groups help the said individual further improve skills on their chosen craft, continue one's formal education aspirations, as well as increase their employment prospects (i.e. skills developed, academic credentials, etc.). This observed complementary relationship between community- and school-based groups is of particular value to people who are poor, given that these community-based, grassroot skills provided by these groups serve as a development platform that increases a person's chance at education scholarships. People who are in greater need of support in terms of acquiring skills are given the opportunity to earn them, thereby increasing their chances to get out of poverty. Interestingly, results of interviews seem to show a causal relationship between 'skills development' (cognitive art-skills, non-cognitive self-confidence), alongside improved community relations and social acceptance benefitting members of these groups, especially those who are poor. Governments are in turn supportive of both types of art-engaged volunteer groups, creating collaboration opportunities through cultural development activities and events, as well as other means of support (e.g. finding talented individuals, institutional support, providing or matching fund sources) so that the partnership between these two group-types would be better integrated with the government's own cultural development strategy (i.e., tourism agenda of the city).

5. Findings: Role for Cultural Development for Community and the City

Amidst renewed focus by government institutions on "cultural development" and "poverty", research conducted shows that local governments – due to its proximity to communities who are poor (in contrast with national government) - highlight the value of a city's art-engaged volunteer groups as a partner in cultural development especially for the poor. To be specific, local governments recognize the role of these volunteer groups in helping provide skills and employment opportunities for the poor, and are manifested in pronouncements of scholarship support by government as entrusted to these volunteer groups (Morales, 2014b). Interviews with local government officials also show recognition in providing these groups, especially its poor members, a medium or platform to showcase their skills to the communities in which they interact – or seek to interact – with. This is exhibited through cultural activities and events in the city as embedded in its tourism agenda.

Art-engaged volunteer groups likewise use the cultural service of art to help promising and deserving individuals, especially those who are poor and are deprived of access to education, with opportunities to hone and showcase their talent into something that they can use in society.

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[4] This information will be substantiated by a survey that will be discussed in future research papers.

Local governments get to tap into the skills acquired or developed by these groups by integrating them into the city government's cultural development programs and events (e.g. tourism programs highlighting the unique culture of the city); this will prove to be a mutually beneficial relationship between government and volunteer groups with regard to cultural development. As these volunteer groups provide its members with the skills needed to excel in their craft, its members (especially those who are poor) are noticeably able to also augment their level of social acceptance to the communities that they seek to gain better access into[5].

By excelling in a medium (i.e., art-skills) that allows them to express and celebrate values, beliefs, or important features that highlight the identity of communities they seek to access, their social capital is seemingly enhanced by using identity as a development catalyst.

6. Conclusions

This paper sought to establish a theoretical foundation which will form the basis for cases to be documented, such as the establishment of a sense of identity in the midst of cultural development (Nan Lin et al., 2001; Nakagawa, 2010b; Wilson, 1984), and how the expression of local identity (i.e. unique cultural values and beliefs) - best expressed through art – impacts community (with emphasis on the poor) and the city they are based in. Information discussed in this study gives us ideas of possible causal relationships among 1) acquired or developed art-based skills, 2) self-confidence, 3) community relations, and 4) social access.

These assumed relationships developed from reviewed literature and interviews[6] will form the basis of survey questions that will gather quantitative data sets and variables in terms of respondents' relationships with the community and the city, and will be analyzed in greater detail at future articles.

In conclusion, it seems that the collective expression and celebration of local cultural identity – through artistic proponents and initiatives – open cultural development opportunities (e.g. art-engaged tourism) in both communities and cities; enhancing potentials of urban areas mainly through related industries (such as tourism), activities and events beneficial both for the city and the people comprising urban environs. Moreover, there is potential in the notion that seeks to connect positive benefits to poverty-stricken individuals who join groups that allow them to develop skills expressing art-forms that celebrate unique identity features embedded in the communities and cities that they are a part of; especially through the lens of enhancing their social capital. Moving forward, succeeding research papers will be written to apply the abovementioned theoretical ponderings towards statistical applications that can further give credence to the ideas put forth in this paper. Nonetheless, it is at this juncture that we may cite reviewed literature stating that 'improved social capital establishes a sense of identity' (Nan Lin et al., 2001). Alongside using cultural identity as a catalyst for city development (viewed as a catalyst - not simply a result - of improving social capital in our communities.
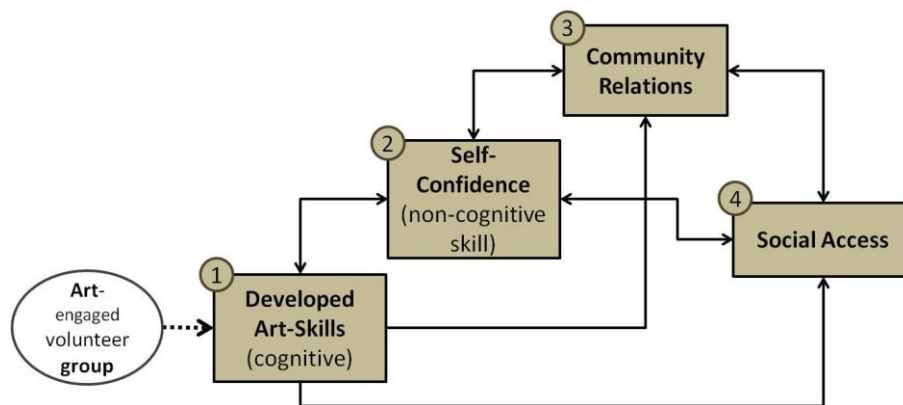

Figure 7 Causal Relationships on Skills Development, Community Relations, and Social Access (a Path Diagram in relation to art as cultural service).

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[5] This information will be substantiated by a survey and will be analyzed via Path Analysis, and will be discussed in future research papers.

[6] Please refer to Figure 7.

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