



## Filipino Cultural Heritage and Identity Preservation: The Case of Naga City

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### Abstract

The study explored how the local government of Naga City promotes Bicol's unique culture as an integral part of the Filipino Cultural Heritage and Identity. Qualitative research methods involving document analysis, review of literature, and observations were used for this study. The result revealed that colonialism influenced Filipino cultural heritage and identity. This new identity led to the destruction of many historical landmarks, cultural sites, historical structures for economic development. It was further noted that the government doesn't have enough data on the Philippines' ethno cultural groups, and there is very little research conducted on cultural heritage and identity preservation. Besides, the government hasn't well- implemented the formulated strategy that could help restore the Philippines' lost cultural heritage and identity. However, the Naga City Government holds its annual celebration of the "Our Lady of Peñafrancia Festivals" and other cultural promotion activities. The city government fully funds this festival and cultural activities. Therefore, it seems prudent to mention that Naga is one of the few cities in the Philippines that cherishes and promotes its culture and beliefs.

### Introduction

It was remarked by Aguda, Tamayo, & Barlan (2013) that culture is the distinct and indispensable mark of people while the government is the key institution that enables people to live in a social and developed state. History began with people living with animals, adapted to the natural environment under the law of the jungle. They survived by embracing challenges and developed culture through the wisdom of unity and communal living. They established order and discipline and set rules for governing. This means that only cultural identity can make people live like humans and guarantee a good

living, implying that if culture is removed from our human life, we will return immediately to primitive life (Barthel-Bouchier, 2016).

A mixture of different traditions characterizes Filipino culture because of colonial influences. For instance, according to Castillo, Bansil, Garcia, Castillo, & Peyra (2015), Filipinos are oriental in family, Chinese in business, and American in ambitions. This could somehow explain why most Filipinos feel estranged from their culture. The cultural heritage of the Philippines can be classified into two categories, namely intangible and tangible. The Filipino culture's intangible aspect includes

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oral and written customs and traditions, practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills embraced by the people. The tangible cultural heritage includes built structures with historical, archival, anthropological, archaeological, artistic, and architectural value (Indera & Yahaya, 2016). Presently the Philippine government does not have enough data on the ethnic groups and minorities in the Philippines (Refworld, 2015).

In the Philippines, culture promotion is considered a mandate of the National Government and the Local Government Units (LGUs). It is a constitutionally guaranteed state policy and one among the priorities - "Education shall be prioritized by the state, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports; patriotism and nationalism shall be encouraged, accelerate social progress and promote total human liberation and development" (Sec. 17, Art II, of the Philippine Constitution). The Section 16, Republic Act 7160 of the Philippine Local Government Code of 1991, states that the local government unit shall exercise the powers expressly granted and the authority necessary for its effective and efficient governance and the promotion of good welfare. The Act iterates that the local government units "shall preserve and enrich culture, promote health and safety, augment the people's right to an improved ecology, encourage, support, and develop the appropriate self-reliant scientific and technological competencies. It shall also improve public morals, enhance the economy and social justice, create jobs for residents, maintain peace and order, and ensure the comfort and convenience of the people."

With the role of governance in preserving and enriching culture, Naga City is a typical model. The Philippine government has elected Naga City as the Pilgrim Capital of the Bicol Region. This is solely for the promotion of culture through the Peñafrancia Festival celebrated annually in the region. The Naga City local government is known for its model governance, practices, and innovations. The city has been adjudged three times by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry as the most business-friendly in the Philippines (Tejero, 2016). Naga City positions itself as the religious, commercial, educational, financial, and trading center of the Bicol Region. The Peñafrancia Fiesta is celebrated in September. This Fiesta is the Philippines' most famous and largest Marian devotion. Under the "general welfare clause," Naga City plans and performs several services and exercises its political powers, particularly legislative

and executive powers, to ensure and promote its people's spiritual and material well-being.

Naga City is Bicol's leading city. It is a place where one can find how cultural heritage merges with civilization. Naga is one of the seven original royal cities founded in 1575 by Spaniards. The name "Naga" originated from the Narra tree, locally called "naga". The Narra tree grows along the riverside.

Modernization has led to the destruction of some of the Philippines' heritage sites and ancestral houses; others have been changed into local warehouses, converted to high-rise condominiums, or just left to deteriorate. Indigenous structures and early

Filipino settlements were usually located near rivers and streams to facilitate easy access to transportation and other economic resources. However, the Spaniards completely turned these settlements into structured community centers surrounded by major Spanish structures like schools, municipal halls, churches, and convents for evangelization purposes and easy supervision of their colony. They also constructed brick-made structures made of mud by transforming primitive structures made from dried cogon grass and bamboo called "bahay kubo" (Juanico, 2013).

American occupation rose with massive constructions, infrastructure, and architectural development with improved engineering. This birthed the use of concrete reinforcements, hollow blocks, and hardwood showcasing art deco architecture. Nevertheless, after America's departure, those established infrastructures were neglected as the Japanese grounded all architectural production for three years. Therefore, much of the structures were heavily damaged if not destroyed by the outrage of the Second World War (Yi, 2009). After the Second World War, the construction of commercial centers and complexes started. Commercial centers like Escolta in Manila were developed into economic business districts instead of a command post of political power.

The Post-colonization era contributed to the reconfiguration of the community landscapes as well. As new demands emerged due to the fast-phased modern lifestyle, changes in the landscape were inevitable. Because of this, most communities were reinvented, displacing old structures for new and innovative ones (Reyes, 2015). According to the United Nations, coercions to culture and heritage have increased significantly globally (United Nations Task Force on Habitat III, 2015). explained that urban development is

the undying aspiration of cities-to be international business centers and financial hubs; serious social and environmental problems usually accompany this.

### Objectives

1. Explore the Filipino Cultural heritage and identity crisis.
2. Explore how the city government of Naga City preserves Bicol Culture as an integral part of the Filipino identity.
3. Describe the role of the Celebrations of the “Our Lady of Peñafrancia Festivals” in preserving the Bicol cultural heritage and identity.

### Conceptual framework

Most Filipino ancient literature reflects the people's beliefs and superstitions as depicted in various legends, folk tales, chants, and religious poetry. The other literary forms were domestic and occupational songs, folk songs, maxims, proverbs, and epigrams handed from generation to generation. However, most of those forms of literature are no longer in use today due to civilization and cultural evolution over many years. For example, the onset of Spaniards colonization in 1521 and sovereignty in 1571 subjected most Philippine literature to a paradigm shift, adding some religious and romantic feeling to literature. Those pieces of literature were mostly oral art; they were not made up only of epics, songs, riddles, stories, and debates engrossed in the triumph of good over evil (Paik, Choe, & Witenstein, 2016; Oreiro, 2014).

Spaniard rule led to the classification of most Filipino literature as heresy and therefore was destroyed. This led to the introduction of Spaniard literature focusing on the spread of Christianity and catechism such as prayer books, Holy Bible, Christian doctrines, and the lives of saints and martyrs. The primary aim of introducing that literature was to let the Filipinos gradually disregard anything non-Hispanic. Nonetheless, some of the finest in Philippine literary history stood out at the propaganda crusade; for instance, the works of Jose Rizal, Graciano, Lopez Jaena, Marcelo H. Del Pilar, and other ‘*ilustrados*’ (Musa, & Ziatdinov, 2012).

Aside from the Hispanic influence in Philippine historic literature, the American colonization greatly influenced Filipino education and culture. American rule introduced free public education with the use of the English language. This began a complete turnaround for the Filipinos because all Spanish books were replaced

with English books, including printed materials, the medium of communication and instructions, and lifestyle. The American rule also led to great developments in press production, like the massive creation of literary materials in English such as the Philippine Free Press and the Philippine Herald (Pangilinan, 2015).

However, Japanese colonization almost ended the literary progress. The Japanese implemented censorship, stopping almost all English newspapers; the freedom of speech and the press were almost absent. This was followed by the replacement of English with the Japanese language as the medium of communication. At this point, Filipino writers were encouraged to write in Filipino and contribute to Filipino literature until the Americans took over again during the liberation war and were granted independence shortly.

Those colonial experiences massively influenced the Philippine literary heritage and made it very provocative and dynamic. Though the Philippine literary heritage is dynamic and provocative, modernization, science, and technology have made fewer Filipinos interested in such cultural treasures, particularly in urban centers; this might not be the case for indigenous communities. Some indigenous communities still hold sacred literary customs and traditions and practice them. The digital world has completely lured the millennials, and they seem busy catching up with the latest trends that distract human interaction and socialization (Indera & Yahaya, 2016)

The influence of colonial masters has completely defined the cultural heritage and identity of the Filipinos. For instance, capitalism which was the prime motive of colonialism, has unconsciously thwarted the attitude of Filipinos in regards to approaches to the conservation of cultural heritage. Consequently, the colonial practices set a pattern that seemed to destroy the ancient practices, ways of life, artifacts, and indigeneity to favor the invention of a new age, thus setting a culture of neglect and disregard for cultural heritage preservation.

The inroad of capitalism has made the cultural heritage the least significant, except it is directly connected to economic activities (Ruoss & Alfarè, 2013). Most communities often do not perceive the value of cultural heritage as awesome if it does not generate income. To buttress this point, Chohan & Wai (2005); Nijkamp (2012) both argue that every stage of urban development does not only affect the structure of the city, but it also destroys the cultural and traditional structures, the built environment, social and cultural values and

ancient treasured memory of habitats. With the expansion of cities and the pursuit of urban development, the danger we face is the complete demolition of our rich cultural heritage. This threat goes beyond our cultural heritage to local ecologies and natural resources as well. This means the Philippines faces a persistent threat to the heritage assets, values, and historic urban cities' identity (Hosagrahar, Soule, Girard & Potts, 2016).

Manila's Jai Alai Building, which is considered a historic landmark, was demolished by the local government of Manila in June 2000 because it was considered unsafe. Likewise, the Old Meralco Building and the Army and Navy Club, another cultural heritage landmark in Manila, were demolished in 2013 and 2017. The latter was rehabilitated into the Rizal Park Hotel. These are examples of converting historical buildings into commercial buildings; the list can go on (Lansing, Dharmiasih & Wiwik, 2014).

Ironically, the Republic Act No. 10066 (R.A. 10066) of the Philippines, otherwise known as the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, provides guidelines for cultural heritage preservation based on the instruments provided by UNESCO. The legislation defines cultural heritage as the totality of cultural property preserved and developed through time or passed on to posterity (Art II, Section 3). This means that cultural heritage includes traditions passed down from one generation to another (Balco, 2012; Indera & Yahaya, 2016; UNESCO, 2011). However, this Act is not adhered to. Commercialization seems to be the prior concern of our cities than cultural preservation

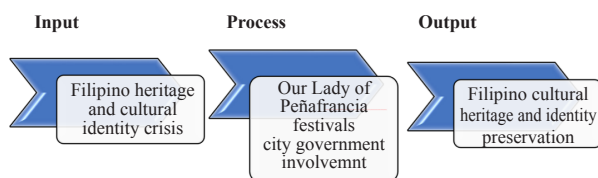


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

### Research methodology

A qualitative method was used in this research. It employed both descriptive and explorative techniques through document analysis, review of literature, and observations. Documents and literature used included the Naga City Gazette: The Official Journal of the City Government. The documents analyzed included (1) Mass Culture and Cultural Policy: The Philippine Experience by Doreen Fernandez published by Philippine Studies, Vol. 37, No. 4, Ateneo de Manila University, (2) The

Perils of Global Cultural Promotion: (Re-Presenting) "European Culture" in Asia through Spanish Cultural Promotion in the Philippines by José Miguel Díaz Rodríguez, Athens Journal of Humanities & Arts-Volume 2, Issue 3-Pages 163-176, (3) A Review of How Philippine Colonial Experience Influenced the Country's Approaches to Conservation of Cultural Heritage by Geoffrey Rhoel C. Cruz, paper presented at the 12th DLSU Arts Congress, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines, February 20, 21 and 22, 2019, (4) Music, Dance, and Negotiations of Identity in the Religious Festivals of Bicol, Philippines by Adiova, Marilynne Antonette, 2014, and (5) Safeguarding Lagaylay, an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Canaman, Camarines Sur, Philippines by Jiye A. Margate, Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, Vol. 3, No. 4, November 2015 Part III.

The prime focus of the study was Naga City. Naga City is considered as a second-class independent city in the Bicol Region of the Philippines. It is the Philippines' third oldest royal city.

The analysis was done using the Scoping Literature Review approach. When doing a scoping review, the goal is to "identify key concepts, types of evidence, and gaps in research relevant to a given region or topic by carefully examining, choosing, and synthesizing existing knowledge".

### Results

#### 1. How has colonization influenced the Filipino attitude toward cultural heritage preservation and identity?

The colonization of the Philippines has greatly influenced how Filipinos cherish life, culture, and society. As a result of the serial colonization of the Philippines by different countries, most Filipinos do not have a sense of cultural heritage. One predominant effect of colonial influence is the loss of Filipino cultural identity. This cultural identity crisis developed due to a continuous impose of foreign cultures and traditions, values, and norms, which led to historical trauma and cultural alienation (Dalal, 2011). Aside, cultural diversity produced by the succession of colonization by the Spaniards, Americans, and the Japanese created a weak sense of Filipino identity and made the people neglect their cultural heritage in attempts to fit into the new systems of colonial masters. This identity crisis immensely contributed to the commercialization of culture enhanced by urbanization; Filipinos valued benefits more than

identity. This has gradually gained roots in the Filipino heart, to do anything for money without thinking about what happens to their identity. Henceforth, cultural heritage preservation has become a financial and material concept (Sembrano, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, the invasion of urban development drastically worsened the issue of cultural heritage preservation in the Philippines. People would always look for economic benefit before thinking of cultural heritage preservation. Seemingly, cultural heritage preservation seems to depend on the value attached to it. Apart from the usual aesthetic and emotional value ascribed to it by cultural advocates, it also includes values seen from an economic perspective. Contrary to how Filipinos perceive cultural heritage, Throsby (2012) explains that cultural heritage is an asset, and any related expenses in its preservation should be considered as an investment. Throsby builds his argument on the principle of capital theory and explains that capital forms one of the factors of production, suggesting that culture could be integrated into the production of goods and services (cultural goods and services), and named it cultural capital.

Cultural capital has two components: direct use value and indirect non-use value of cultural heritage. Use value is the value assigned to cultural heritage properties that generate profits or earnings through cultural activities. Conversely, non-use value has to do with the less tangible benefits of cultural heritage such as the deep affection and appreciation people get from a certain cultural object or historical site; or spiritual and social satisfaction, which cannot be measured in terms of profits, revenues, or the number of jobs and businesses it generates (Pangilinan, 2015; Throsby, 2007).

The World Bank considers the preservation of cultural heritage as part of urban revitalization, i.e. preserving city livability, improving competitiveness, and providing a venue of income-earning opportunities (Ebbe, 2009). Thus, in this perspective, the preservation of cultural heritage is seen as another form of development.

The Americans also introduced new games and leisure activities such as basketball, volleyball, and football. They also introduced new fashion trends by popularizing long gowns, Sunday dresses, tuxedos, and coats. Just like the Americans, the Japanese colony worsened cultural alienation in the Philippines. Their colonial philosophy of "Asia for Asians" attempted to phase out all American influence as they thought it to be oppressive. They then replaced anything related to the

Americans with something Japanese; for instance, the use of the "Mickey Mouse Money" as the currency and medium of trade. The Japanese prohibited the Filipinos from using the English language and were mandated to learn the Japanese language of Nihongo. In their efforts to remove American practices, they introduced various Japanese artworks and forms such as "origami, haiku, and tanka" (Sembrano, 2015).

## **2. How does the city government of naga city promote bicol cultural heritage as an integral part of the filipino identity?**

The Philippines is a country with diverse cultures. However, there is no proper documentation of existing cultures. The country has over 130 languages (Philippines Statistical Authority, 2015). spoken by 110 ethnolinguistic groups. Cultures in the Philippines also vary according to age group, gender, spirituality, and socioeconomic class. Nevertheless, complete documentation of the country's diverse tangible and intangible cultures remains a challenge because data are sparse, scattered, and not regularly gathered. Creating a database for culture has been a problem because of a lack of cultural experts and funding for conducting research and gathering data in a culture-sensitive and ethical manner and sustenance of these activities, respectively (LGUs Annual Regular Income-ARI Data by City FYs, 2009-2016).

The Bicolanos dwell in the south of Luzon. The Bicol region consists of Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate, Albay, and Sorsogon. Farming is the chief occupation of the people because of the large tracts of land. They are also engaged in fishing, logging, cattle-raising, and handicrafts. They are conservative, believing that it is safe to stick to the old than take a risk in the new way of life. Nonetheless, the educated Bicolanos hold a different view of this belief. Their way of life resembles the people of Luzon, who love songs and dances. Typically, the Bicolanos express their feelings and sentiments; thus, they spend leisure time in activities like dancing, singing, playing the guitar, and cockfighting (The Philippines Canadian Inquirer, 2013).

Some traditional practices of the Bicolanos are the "pamalay, pantomina and tigsikan". The people strongly hold the beliefs of God, the soul, and life after death. Closely linked to these, the people hold annual rituals like the "Pabasa, Tanggal, Fiestas, and Flores de Dayo". Spiritual beings as the "Tawo sa Lipod, Duwende, Onglo, Tambaluslos, Kalag, Katambay, Aswang and



Mangkukulam" are the main forces behind the beliefs of the Bicolanos. Till today, traces of Spanish and American traditions are embedded in the value system of the Bicolanos. Accordingly, it is a multi-cultural system that evolved through the years of erratic regional climatic conditions in a diverse geographical setting. These traits are revealed in many Bicolanos folk tales and folk songs; the most common is the "Sarung Banggi".

The valiant stories portray such traits as kindness, the determination to conquer evil forces, resourcefulness, and courage. The Bicolano folk songs include "Awit, Sinamlampati, Panayokyok, Panambitan, Hatol, Pag-omaw, Rawit-dawit" and chants songs of children. Bicolanos celebrate the Magayon Festival. The festival is celebrated in Albay - the Mayon Volcano area. They also celebrate an annual festival in honor of the Virgin of Peñafrancia every third Sunday of September. The towns of Naga become super full of life. During the celebration, the mass crowd and all-male volunteers carry the image of the Virgin of Peñafrancia on their shoulders to the cathedral, shouting Viva La Virgin! For seven days, people visit with lit candles and kiss the image of the Virgin. To the Bicolanos, this festival is both religious and cultural. During the seven days, night after night, shows of the year's biggest cockfights are held at the plaza, bicycle races are held at the river, a lively boat race precedes the usual fluvial procession. The volunteers carry the image of the Virgin of Peñafrancia on their shoulders and precede to the packed waterfront on the third Saturday of September. The statue is carried, and the procession commences (Census of Population, 2015; Department of the Interior and Local Government, 2013). Concerning art, Bicolano art is portrayed in their love songs such as "Sarong Bangul, Burac na Magayon" and others. To the Bicolanos, the Ibalon, a story of heroism, is an important epic.

### 3. Bicol regional cultural promotion plan (2017-2022)

3.1 Values for the common good inculcated  
The following strategies have been outlined in the 2017-2022 regional development plan of Bicol:

3.1.1 Use various channels of values inculcation to reach all community members.

3.1.2 Increase government efforts for promoting values that foster the common good.

3.1.3 Mainstream cultural and values education in the basic, technical, vocational, and higher education systems.

#### 3.2 Our Diverse Cultures Valued

Noticing the value of cultural diversity demands that we recognize, protect, safeguard, promote, and preserve it. To achieve this, these strategies shall be employed:

3.2.1 Develop, produce, and disseminate information on Filipino culture.

3.2.2 Institutionalize and intensify heritage conservation plans and programs.

3.2.3 Expand inclusive cultural structures as civic spaces for dialogue and cultural exchange.

3.3 Pagkamalikha" or creative excellence advanced To achieve a globally competitive knowledge economy, the following strategies shall be implemented:

3.3.1 Enhance the development of Filipino creativity as a tool for social cohesion and impetus for a culture-based industry and creative economy.

3.3.2 Build an appreciation of Filipino creativity.

3.4 Culture sensitive governance and development strengthened

3.4.1 Pursue institutional reforms for cultural development.

3.4.2 Protect the rights of the weak and vulnerable in various cultures and cease from discrimination and fear.

3.4.3 Develop cultural assets in the region.

### 4. The local government support for the tercentenary celebration of the devotion to the lady of peñafrancia in naga city local legislations

**Table1** Enacted local legislations

Legislations	Description
E.O. No. 2009-003	Creating of the naga city tercentenary executive council and steering committees to coordinate with the archdiocese of caceres
E.O. No. 2010-006	Rebuilding of the naga city tercentenary executive council and steering committees.
E.O. No. 2010-012	Amending executive order 2010-006 by creating a joint committee on civic parade and float competition and voyadores Festival.
E.O. No. 2010-016	Creating the naga city peñafrancia tercentenary inter-agency task group and unified command emergency operations center and defining its functions and composition.
Resolution No. 2010-280	Resolution declaring naga city as pilgrimage city this september 2010 and every year thereafter.

Teams were formed to cater to all the various activities and programs. The Inter-agency Task Group performed the following roles:

4.1 Supervised operations and pool of vital resources for security, public safety, health and sanitation, emergency response, and disaster preparedness.

4.2 Carried out the principles of emergency preparedness and emergency management, or disaster management functions strategically in an emergency.

4.3 Established a command, control, coordination and collaboration, and communication system for the overall disaster emergency response.

4.4 Implemented plans and programs, provided security and public safety, addressed internal security and safety threats, fire suppression, responded to emergencies, and implemented disaster preparedness mechanisms for all forms of hazards and biohazard threats.

4.5 Created committees necessary to carry out the aims of this Executive Order.

## **5. Financial support for cultural promotion in naga city**

The local government of Naga City passed the City Resolution No. 2010-280 which declared Naga City as Pilgrimage City. The rationale of this enactment was to honor the 'Lady of Peñafrancia', the Patroness of Bicolandia. The 'Lady of Peñafrancia' has been a part of the history of Naga City for three centuries. In consonance, the City Government of Naga allocated 4-5 million pesos for the Tercentenary (300 years) Celebration of the Devotion to "Our Lady of Peñafrancia".

The major areas of expenditures or program of work were the following:

5.1 Measures to ensure peace and order in the city, especially of the pilgrims and visitors.

5.2 Replacement of lampposts along with Cathedral-USI Area- Archbishop's Palace.

5.3 Maintenance of streetlights.

5.4 Inspection and beautification of bridges.

5.5 Beautification and maintenance of Plazas, center islands, and garden pockets.

5.6 Cleaning of venues, major streets, and roads.

5.7 Identification and preparation of historic-religious sites.

5.8 Establishment of joint pilgrims and visitors' satellite centers (Tourist Assistance Center) in strategic locations.

5.9 Formation of volunteer groups to man the Tourist Assistance Center.

5.10 Welcoming rites of Ecclesiastical Officials.

5.11 Promotional Activities.

5.12 Mass Media coverage of Tercentenary Celebration activities.

5.13 Implementation of Night Market, Trade Fairs, and Street Vending.

5.14 Face-lifting of major routes of INA, instituting pre-Hispanic atmosphere where street lights were already placed with Hispanic designs.

5.15 Renovations of the market for the convenience of the shoppers and other visitors.

Some of the major highlights for this event is the joint celebration of the "Tinagba: Dolot Ki Ina", Civic Parade, Float Competition, and Voyadores Festival, where the Catholic church and city government each gives out three hundred thousand pesos (300,000) to the people as awards to the winners in all the various activities of the festival.

## **6. Support for local culture-related businesses**

Naga City is one of the Philippines' most improved and business-friendly cities. This dynamism and sense of pride extend from its rich cultural heritage to its robust economic activities, business, and trade. Being the host of the country's and Asia's biggest and most spectacular Marian event, the City Government of Naga worked hard in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to adopt regulations for local businesses. In coordination with the DTI, the local government of Naga City adopted a regulation to fast track the issuance of business permits by waiving the requirement for Sale Promo Permits.

With the LGU-Naga as lead agency, the monitoring and enforcement team was composed of DTI, Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Health-Food and Drug Administration (DH-FDA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources- City Environment and Natural Resources Office (DENR-CENRO) (implementing agencies of the Price Act and Consumer Act), as well as other line agencies and members of the private sector. The Bishop Francisco Gainza Trade Fair is a spectacular event is for entrepreneurs and exhibitors. This trade fair promotes entrepreneurship for the low-class Bicolanos. During the trade fair, processed food, homestyle, furniture, gifts, toys, housewares, and wearables, tourism services, organic and natural products, religious and souvenirs are displayed for the public to buy.

One unique highlight of this festival is the 'One Town One Product (OTOP) assembly. This feature is usually themed "Reaping the Gains of Public-Private

Partnership". This assembly is held at the Naga City Coliseum; it attracts over six thousand people from all over the Philippines. Moreover, about 39 hotels and 88 restaurants receive the support provided by the City Government of Naga. During this celebration, hotels in Naga are fully booked due to the influx of visitors and guests.

#### **7. Utilization of State Properties and Service**

The estates of the City Government of Naga could be grouped by use into the estate for public use and estates for patrimonial use. The estates for public use in Naga City include the provincial roads, city streets, squares, fountains, public waters, promenades, and public works. In contrast, all other estates owned by the City of Naga are considered patrimonial. The plazas are cleared of vendors so the pilgrims, tourists, and visitors can use them as a resting place. Churches and schools are also opened to provide free rest places for visitors. Some elementary schools are selected and filled with medication supply to complement City Health Office, Naga City Hospital, and Bicol Medical Center-Health Emergency System (BMC-HEMS) in medical emergencies. Also, about 19 ambulances are used as service vehicles in transporting patients or victims of common injuries needing urgent medical care. Finally, both the local government unit of Naga and the Archdiocese of Caceres create websites to promote the cultural celebration.

#### **8. A National Values Formation Program should be implemented**

A national policy on values development should be designed and implemented to assure national action and higher societal influence. To reach everyone in the community, a variety of methods for instilling ideals should be implemented. To promote positive values and the development of cultural literacy, relevant agencies should continue their involvement with mainstream media, local government units, and civil society organizations. Government should stop its efforts to promote ideals that benefit the greater good. In addition, all federal officials should uphold a culture of ethics, public service, and quality. By utilizing the Civil Service Institute, the Civil Service Commission will create more civil employees who reflect these ideals.

In the primary, secondary, tertiary, and post-secondary education systems, as values are learned in the home, they are also reinforced in schools, starting with children. As a result, elementary, secondary, vocational, and post-secondary education systems will

incorporate cultural and ethical values throughout their curricula.

The following conclusions could be made from the study: Colonial influence made the Philippines unconsciously follow colonial identity (pursuing economic benefit over preserving identity). Due to this, many landmarks, cultural sites, historical structures were destroyed for economic growth. Presently, the government doesn't have enough data on the ethno cultural groups in the Philippines, and very little research has been conducted on cultural heritage and identity preservation. Therefore, the government hasn't well-implemented the formulated strategy that could help restore the lost cultural heritage and identity. Nonetheless, most Philippine cities celebrate festivals every year, partly sponsored by the local governments. For instance, the local government fully funded the "Our Lady of Peñafrancia Festivals" celebrated by Naga City. Tribal groups like the Igorot, Bugkalot, Lumad, Aeta, Iti, Ati, and Dumagat hold to certain traditional beliefs and practices that creates uniqueness and allows them to stand out among Filipinos.

#### **Discussion**

The Philippines' colonial experience bred cultural identity loss. Beginning from Spaniard rule, since capital gain was the prime goal of the taskmasters, though masquerading as Christianity, Filipinos have unconsciously disregarded their traditional practices and instilled a new way of life. It was assumed that the departure of the Spaniard colonial master would bring the Filipinos back to embrace their culture, but this was not the case (Bandarin, Hosagrahar & Albernaz, 2011). American colony further created a more severe cultural alienation leaving the Filipinos in complete despair after one hundred years of Spaniard rule. Just like the Spaniards, the Americans came in for economic gain as well. With the pretense of benevolent assimilation or assisting the Filipinos to gain freedom, they first facilitated the complete neglect of Spanish practices. English language was therefore used as the medium of communication and was institutionalized through free education (Tomlinson, 2011).

The lack of cultural heritage and identity of the Filipino could be attributed to the usual pattern of cultural disregard in the Philippines created by the series of disrupting and replacement of old practices induced by the colonial masters; implying that after the Philippines gained its freedom from colonial rule and



dictatorship, it had forgotten its true culture and identity. The sense of identity was still inevitably reflected through the colonial commodification of culture and the dominance of capitalist interest - unless an economic value is attached to culture, little importance is attributed to it. Hence the problem lies in the Filipino attributing economic value to culture or selling the unsellable rich cultural past (Veldpaus, Roders, & Colenbrander, 2013).

While the Filipino identity has been undermined, intrinsic Filipino values could be nurtured to promote the common good. The colonial experience bred feelings of inferiority and undermined the Filipino cultural identity. This influenced the Philippines to become disconnected from its core culture, leading to fragmented identities. Values like "malasakit and bayanihan" manifest "pakikipagkapwa-tao", a way that Filipinos recognize kinship among themselves, are being promoted by the government for inculcation for national unity and social cohesion. The government has created channels of learning about Philippine history, culture, and values; however, they have not been effective. Formal education across all levels seems to highlight developing literacy and skills in other fields over values-education or critical teaching of history. Therefore, learning is not engrained in positive local cultural values, and practices lack important historical processes or information essential for unity and social cohesion. Aside, mainstream media, including popular shows or movies, have failed to promote positive values in its pursuit of profit for the market-driven entertainment industry. As a result, the level of realization among Filipinos about their own culture and values remains low.

### Suggestions

It suggested that future studies consider the quantitative attributes of the city government's involvement in cultural preservation. Stakeholders should join forces with the city government to help preserve the cultural heritage of the Philippines.

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