

**UNCOVERING COMMUNITY CAPACITY FOR  
POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

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## **Abstract**

An alternative approach to development is more inclusive, including dimensions of economic, human, and social development. With this alternative paradigm there is a greater emphasis on social capital and capacity. In response to this, a conceptual framework of community capacity is offered. Community capacity is the ability of a community to produce outcomes through its actors by utilizing the resources at its disposal. The case of Pagudpud, Philippines is presented to explore the components of community capacity, its attributes, agents, and actions, outlined by the framework and highlighted by the case. The attributes of community capacity are the sense of community, commitment, ability to set and achieve objectives, and the ability to recognize and access resources and the community agents are the basic actors and the actions are the functions that a community performs. The basic factors that affect these, the contextual influences, are also described through this work and the case study. Through examination of the case, community capacity can be understood in context, particularly the context of a developing rural community. The intention of this paper is to expand upon this conceptual framework in the hopes that it can later be incorporated into participatory evaluation practices.

## **Key words**

Community, community capacity, social capital, assessment

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## **Author's Biography**

Cindy Lyn Wachowski is a PhD Candidate in the field of Asia Pacific Studies at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. The themes of her research encompass sociology, governance, and development and have included projects in Indonesia, East Timor, Japan, and the Philippines. She also has been assisting with JICA area-focused trainings for rural development and community capacity building since 2006 and working with her research group to establish the Institute for Community Design.

## Introduction

The concept of social capital has emerged as an important theoretical contribution in development studies (Gittell & Vidal 2001; Putnam 2000). The inclusion of social capital into consideration for development projects and other dimensions of governance stems from the realization that past projects and policies failed to recognize social aspects as key factors for sustainable development (Aguirre 1998, p. 189). It is a key component of community development because it leads to ties between people involving greater trust and cooperation, as well as networking opportunities, and better access to resources (Gittell & Vidal 2001, p. 15).

Capacity development strategies that seek to harness, manipulate, and build community capacity for the improvement of living standards and to facilitate participatory governance find their base in the concept of social capital. The concept of community capacity has much to offer in this regard because it combines aspects of social capital with other indicators to render a complete picture of the nature and functions of a community to provide a mode through which social capital can be analyzed and strengthened in practice. Community capacity is “the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community.” (Chaskin et al 2001, p. 7). For the purpose of this paper, a working definition community capacity is offered: community capacity is the ability of a community to produce outcomes (actions) through its actors (agents) by utilizing the resources at its disposal (based on Chaskin et al 2001 and Miyoshi & Stenning 2008; see also Wachowski 2008c).

The concept of community capacity stems from varied perspectives, including sociology, urban planning, psychology, and social work. This multi-disciplinary background of the concept of community capacity lends itself to a more unified and comprehensive approach to development planning and governance. Although the basic concept of community capacity has been outlined,

there is still need for research so that the concept of community capacity can be better identified and utilized for development and poverty alleviation (Chaskin et al 2001, p. 2). In response to this need, a practical framework for community capacity that can be used for evaluation is being developed through this work. The Attributes-Agents-Actions (A-A-A) cycle of community capacity is offered herein as a conceptual framework and an assessment tool to correspond to the basic outline of community capacity as presented by Robert J. Chaskin, Prudence Brown, Sudhir Venkatesh, and Avis Vidal in the 2001 book *Building Community Capacity*. This work is unique in that it presents a framework for identifying community capacity and seeks to demonstrate the necessity of social capital for building strong communities, as well as offering some strategic directions to help enhance community capacity.

The main research questions for this paper are: 1) What does community capacity mean in the context of a developing country? 2) What is the relationship between community capacity and rural development and poverty alleviation? 3) Can the A-A-A conceptual framework be further developed into a functional assessment tool for stakeholders?

The main purpose of this paper is to expand upon the concept of community capacity through the introduction of the A-A-A cycle. The case of Pagudpud, Philippines will be introduced to put the concepts of the cycle into context and to demonstrate their links to development, governance and poverty alleviation. After the case study analysis, a summary of the results and a brief overview of the main topics of this paper will be discussed in the conclusion.

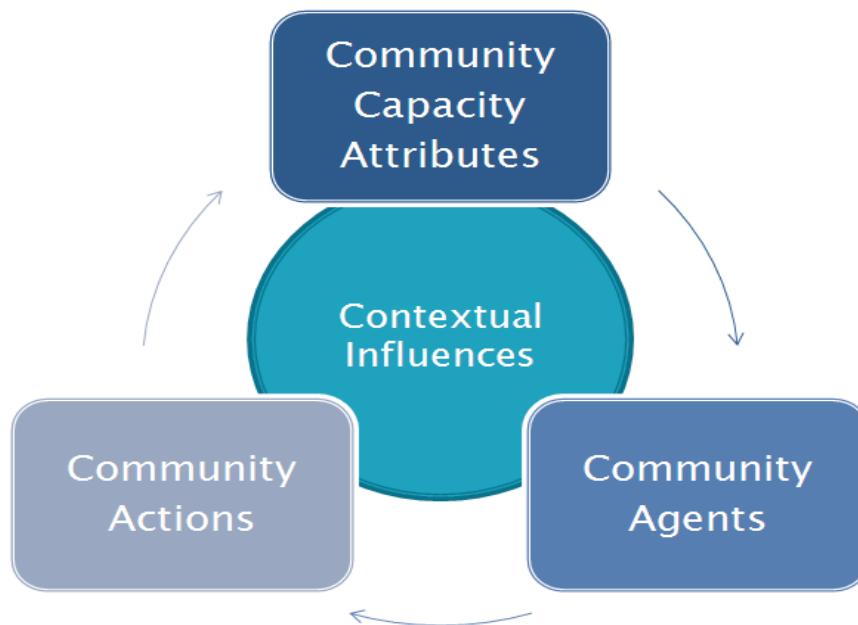
### **The Community Capacity Framework**

A community is more than just an administrative unit or a group of people with similar interests and attributes, it is a physically conceivable area and it includes all of the relevant stakeholders in that area including, but not limited to, the people residing in the area, local government officials,

bureaucrats, administrators, businesses, institutions, and the civil society organizations with membership or activities within the area. Furthermore, members of a community recognize and identify themselves as a community (Miyoshi & Stenning 2008).

The basic idea of community capacity is the ability for a community to utilize the assets at its disposal to set and achieve objectives. Although this work relies heavily on the formal definition of community capacity, it departs from it slightly in that ability to set and achieve objectives is used in lieu of solve collective problems, and recognize is added to access resources (See also Miyoshi & Stenning 2008).

The model presented in Figure 1 demonstrates the way in which the attributes of community capacity are engaged through community agents to produce community actions and the contextual



*1 1: A-A-A Cycle of Community Capacity (working model based on Chaskin et al 2001; Miyoshi & Stenning 2008)*

influences that affect this process. This is the basic model of community capacity is called the Attributes-Agents-Actions (A-A-A) cycle of community capacity. This framework uses qualitative methods to provide a descriptive analysis of a community.

The A-A-A cycle is not merely linear, but it is a continuous process within the community.

Community Actions help fortify the Community Capacity Attributes and then the cycle proceeds again to produce more intricate and beneficial Community Actions. The Contextual Influences can affect any part of the A-A-A cycle; therefore they are placed in the background to demonstrate their persistent effect.

A sample assessment of community capacity using the A-A-A model will now be presented through the case of Pagudpud. Through the analysis, the concepts will be clarified and identified in context.

### **Case Study: Pagudpud, Philippines**

The first exploratory field trip for this work was conducted from August 12 to August 31, 2007 and the second trip from April 13 to May 7, 2008. Information gathering techniques include in-depth interviews, conversational interviews, a qualitative Focal Point Questionnaire, and observations (Patton 2002). By using conversations, interviews, and observations a comprehensive view of the community can be determined (Patton 2002, p. 342). This qualitative and holistic interpretation of the condition of the community is more comprehensive and useful for community-level planning and evaluation, rather than relying solely on economic, administrative, or other aggregate indicators. The value judgments have been made according to basic comparisons of Pagudpud with other communities in the Philippines, as well general sentiments from the community members. The following case study reflects information gathered from these two research trips.

Pagudpud has a population of 21,857 people (Socio-Economic Profile 2006), and is the third largest city in the province of Ilocos Norte. Almost one half of the total land area of Pagudpud consists of mountainous areas (Socio-Economic Profile 2006). About 70 percent of the municipality consist of forested areas (M. Sales 2007), a large portion of which has been declared a Natural Park and a critical watershed by Presidential Proclamation (Department of Environment and Natural

Resources 2007). Pagudpud also has the largest stretch of national highway in Ilocos Norte (M. Sales 2007), following the north coast of North Luzon.

The overall hard infrastructure of Pagudpud seems to be well maintained and in good condition. This includes the national highway, smaller locally maintained roads (some of which were created by Mayor Sales at the request of residents (Viola 2007), public buildings, electricity and water supplies. Although the infrastructure was intact, there are some supply issues when it comes to water and electricity. There are frequent brownouts during times of high electricity consumption and after typhoons. Although all the brangays<sup>1</sup> and 85 percent of households have access to electricity (Socio-Economic Profile 2006), household and business freshwater supplies are sometimes problematic. Still, there are few problems with irrigation. Housing stocks are generally conservative consisting of wood or brick construction with thatch or tin roofs.

Other social services in the municipality include two hospitals, one rural health center, five health stations, and seven health sub-stations. As for the education sector, there are twelve elementary schools, three complete primary schools, six incomplete primary schools, three public secondary schools, one private secondary school, and sixteen day care centers (Socio-Economic Profile 2006).

Transport within and through the municipality relies largely on private transportation, public transport via intercity buses that make stops along the national highway, and individually hired tricycles that are hailed from the road or called by telephone (they may or may not be part of the tricycle drivers' union) and the tricycle post in the town center operated by the tricycle drivers' union.

### **Attributes of Community Capacity**

*Sense of community.* The *sense of community* highlights a connectedness between community members and recognition of a mutuality of circumstance (Miyoshi & Stenning 2008) and includes collectively held values, norms, and vision (Chaskin et al, 2001, p. 14). Another way to describe the sense of community is a feeling of belonging and that members matter to one another and the group (McMillan and George 1986, p. 9). This Attribute is indicative of strong ties among members and fosters the development of other characteristics of community capacity (Wachowski 2008c).

The sense of community overall is adequate with a sense of friendliness and familiarity betwixt the people. A collective identity as Ilocanos exists, but the collective identity is not necessarily specific to Pagudpud and often times people identify with their brangay. This is particularly true for people who live in barangays farther away from the town center, such as Pasaleng and Pancian (Calventas 2008). One of the most common sentiments among the people of Pagudpud is that they are hospitable (FPQ Results 2008). Furthermore, there are no strong, overarching principles, goals, or visions that guides the community yet; but many respondents to the FPQ noted that there is shared interest in seeing progress and improvement in Pagudpud, as well as developing the area into a notable tourist destination (FPQ Results 2008).

*Commitment.* When people have a vested interest in a place they are more willing to contribute to the community and demonstrate concern for it. Commitment can be defined as the willingness of individuals, groups, and organizations within the community to take responsibility for what happens in the community (Miyoshi & Stenning 2008). Furthermore, this means that the actors in the community see themselves as stakeholders in the community and are willing to take action and participate as such (Chaskin et al 2001, p. 15). This willingness to participate in community activities stems from the sense of community that exists within the community and begins to



manifest into action. This is because “feelings of belonging and emotional safety lead to self-investment in the community (McMillan and George 1986, p.15).”

Community members are largely committed to the community, but do not necessarily recognize themselves as stakeholders. This leaves the community with a moderately low amount of commitment. This can be seen through the trend and the positive sentiments of young people towards leaving the community to work overseas (FPQ Results 2008; Calventas 2008; Ubaso 2008). Although some people send money back or re-settle in Pagudpud later in life, there is no real sign that these Overseas Foreign Workers (OFWs or balik bayan) consider themselves as stakeholders in the community. The a priori concern of OFWs is income for their immediate family, not necessarily the improvement of the community. However, some efforts are being made to welcome OFWs back into the community, as well as to entice them to donate back to the community of Pagudpud. This can be seen through the Balik Bayan Night and the crowning of Most Popular Balik Bayan (based on the amount of their donation) every year during the town fiesta (Wachowski 2008b).

*Ability to set and achieve objectives.* Commitment falls short of producing overall community capacity if it fails to result in action. Crucial is the ability of a community to identify issues and desires and devise strategies to address them (Miyoshi 2006) and the necessary steps toward community action. A community must be able to translate its commitment into action in order for it to be said that a community has capacity in this respect (Chaskin et al 2001, p. 16).

It can be said that there is an adequate amount of this attribute in Pagudpud. Formal leaders such as elected officials can generally assess the situation of the community and achieve objectives, often through participatory methods such as the barangay meeting or face to face contact with constituents (Calventas 2008; Wachowski 2008a) and achieve objectives, as well as be responsive to the needs of their constituents. However, the speed of this process varies. This is particularly true because the mayor often faces opposition from the vice-mayor. Overall, it seems as though

individuals feel free to voice opinions and demand results from local administrators, organizations, and institutes. However, the results of these demands depends on the political will of the local administrators; thus resulting in little faith in change overall (FPQ Results 2008).

*Ability to recognize and access resources.* Resources of a community can include economic, human, physical, and political resources (Chaskin et al 2001, p. 16). The ability for a community to obtain resources is one of the most important reasons to study community capacity, as adequate resources are what generally separate people from a low and a high quality of life and leave people in poverty (Quibria 1993, p. 5).

Although many resources of Pagudpud are being exploited, they are not necessarily recognized by or used for the benefit of the community. Contemporary use of natural resources and tourist promotion can be seen, but there is minimal diversification in the recognition of local resources. Many of the FPQ respondents cited the natural beauty of the area as a source of their resources, as well as hard working and friendly people (FPQ Results 2008). However, it seems as though sectors of human resources may also lie untapped and under-utilized, which is reflected in the lack of diversity in means of production and services provided in the town, as well as the propensity for overseas employment migration.

Table 1 provides an overview of the community capacity attributes of Pagudpud. This information helps to provide a baseline for inquiry into the situation of the community, as well as point to some potential areas for intervention, such as commitment or ability to recognize and access resources. A consolidated effort to increase these attributes in Pagudpud may have a positive effect on the other attributes and lead to overall community improvements.

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Indicator Description</b>	<b>Perceived Level</b>
Sense of Community	Sense of friendliness and familiarity, some collective identity as Ilocanos with attachment and identify also linked to barangay, view selves as hospitable, kind, and hardworking, share general vision of progress and improvement in Pagudpud	Adequate
Commitment	Largely committed and responsible, do not recognize themselves as stakeholders, people often leave for economic reasons	Moderately low
Ability to Set and Achieve Objectives	Formal leaders assess community and achieve objectives, speed of progress varies, Mayor is facing political opposition to participatory methods, individuals feel free to voice opinions and demand results but actual results vary depending on political will, little faith in change	Adequate
Ability to Recognize and Access Resources	Some use of natural resources, tourist promotion, minimal diversification in the recognition of local resources, many human resources untapped, obtaining resources locally is not easy	Moderately low

*Table 1: Community Capacity Attributes of Pagudpud*

## **Community Agents**

A community agent can be defined as any actor that brings about change within the community.

“Community capacity is engaged through varying combinations of three levels of social agency: individuals, organizations, and networks of association” (Chaskin et al 2001, p. 19). . Capacity

building strategies, as well as local interventions, often identify these specific agents within a target community to enact their plans.

*Individual community agents.* Individual community agents include elected officials such as Mayor Sales, Barangay Captains, such as Lorenzo Domingo, Sanguinian Bayan (Council Members), such as Efren Cimat, and other local administrators (FPQ Results 2008). Other individual agents include formal leaders of organizations such as Mrs. E. Sales of the Tourism Committee and Mrs. Linda Viola of the seniors' organization, as well as local business owners (particularly those with strong family and political ties) such as the brother of Mayor Sales, the Garvida family, and the Benimeritos.

*Organizations as community agents.* There are many organizations at work as community agents in Pagudpud and there is a large and active membership to many of them. A full list would be difficult to compile, but the most frequently noted and discussed organizations in Pagudpud are the Boy and Girl Scouts, the Tourism Committee, the Seniors' Group, the farmer's organization (SANJERA), the tricycle drivers' union (PATODA), Barangay Health Workers (BHW), religious organizations, the youth organization (SK), shellcraft makers' organizations, the Barangay Police, parent-teacher organization (FPTCA, particularly important in addressing needs within the barangay (Calventas 2008)), Pagudpud Volunteers for Progress (organization endorsed by the mayor to drum up support for his initiatives (Ubaso 2008)), tour-guides' organization, and the Women's League. From this brief list of organizations it can be seen that there is a large variety of organizations in place, from social to community-based, to issue-based, and that the organizations cover a wide breadth of the community including women, youth, the elderly, and the devout.

*Networks as community agents.* Networks in general are difficult to see and enumerate particularly

interpersonal and informal networks. However, some examples of networks in Pagudpud that can be seen include the national and international organizational networks (such as the Boy/Girl Scouts and Kiwanis), local political and business networks (Sales/Garvida/Cimatu/Benemerito families), provincial political networks (Pagudpud has strong connections with Governor Marcos-Keon of Ilocos Norte), OFWs, repatriated Filipino migrants (seeking business opportunities in Balaoi's tourist area (Wachowski 2007c)), national and international tourists, police officers (FPQ Results 2008), networks with and within the LGU, and local organizational networks (such as the BHW). Table 2 identifies the Community Agents of Pagudpud.

Agents	Indicator Description
Individuals	Elected officials – Barangay Captains, Council Members (Sangunian Bayan), Local administrators (Mayor Sales, Captain Lorenzo Domingo, Councilor Efren Cimatu ), formal leaders – Mrs. Emelin Garvida Sales (head of Tourism Committee), Mrs. Linda Viola (head of seniors' group), business leaders
Organizations	Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Tourism Committee, Seniors' group, farmers' organization - SANJERA, tricycle drivers' union – PATODA, Barangay Health Workers (BHW), religious organizations, youth organization (SK), Shellcraft makers' organization, parent teacher organization – FPTCA, boatmen's organization, Pagudpud Volunteers for Progress, tourguides' organization, Barangay police, Women's League
Networks	local political and business networks (Sales/Garvida/Cimatu?Benemerito families), networks within the LGU, provincial political networks, OFWs (Overseas Filipino Workers), repatriated migrants, tourists, police officers, local organizational networks (BHW), national and international organizational networks (Boy/Girl Scouts, Kiwanis)

*Table 2: Community Agents of Pagudpud*

## **Community Actions**

Community actions are the work a community performs (Chaskin et al 2001, p. 22). In essence, it is a greater amount of community actions that community capacity building seeks to achieve. The ability of the community to better perform community functions and engage in sophisticated action is related to governance and the ability of the community to effectively participate. The four major

categories of community actions are governance, planning and decision-making, production of goods and services, communication, and organization and advocacy (Chaskin et al 2001, p. 22).

When community actions occur and become more sophisticated through policy interventions and projects that involve the community, the attributes of community capacity are fortified (Saegert, 2005; Chaskin et al 2001, p. 22) and the progress of the A-A-A cycle can be seen. This idea is reinforced by researchers in the fields of community building and social capital (Putnam 1993, 2000). Any community-based activity brings numerous personal and community-wide benefits, thereby fortifying the overall capacity of the community and leading to increasingly sophisticated community actions and policy structures (Miyoshi 2006; Miyoshi & Stenning 2008). In this way, an articulated understanding of the community capacity in an area through a comprehensive analysis of the A-A-A can enhance poverty alleviation efforts and rural development.

*Governance, planning, and decision-making.* This category of actions demonstrates the energy of the polity and the involvement of the community in politics. In Pagudpud, the construction of the municipal market, refurbishment of Municipal Hall, road construction (including farm to market roads), the economic stimulus plan (tourism and local goods promotion), irrigation assistance, coordination and assistance with trainings and seminars (mat weaving/dying, adventure tourism), the organization and execution of the town fiesta, purchase of the garbage compactor and introduction of waste disposal plan, purchase of a new police cruiser, and the introduction and use of participatory planning methods (including household livelihood assessments) by the mayor are examples of governance actions (FPQ Results 2008, M. Sales 2008). These actions seem to be improving, especially with the introduction of participatory methods. However, more sophisticated governance and planning activities are needed for Pagudpud to reach its potential.

*Production of goods and services.* Only a moderate amount of goods and service can be seen and

procured in Pagudpud. Outside of some basic needs, primary goods, most residents of Pagudpud travel to Laoag for secondary commercial products, entertainment, and even schooling (FPQ Results 2008). Community members of Pagudpud even have to travel outside of the municipality for banking services. Otherwise, goods and services that can be found in Pagudpud include local handicrafts (mat weaving, shellcrafts), traditional noodle soup (miki), tourist sites (Maria-Ira, Bat Cave), a construction company, homestays, hotels, and resorts, subsistence and small-scale agriculture production for the local market, fish and marine products for the local market, motorcycle and auto repair, basic goods market, internet shops, coconuts and coconut products, and rice for the local and external domestic market (FPQ Results 2008; Wachowski 2007b; Wachowski 2008a).

*Communication.* The modes of communication in Pagudpud are also basic. The spread of information largely relies on word of mouth and face to face contact, as well as cell phone (text message) communication. Pagudpud is internet accessible, but it is rarely used en masse. Most public announcements are posted in municipal complex area (Wachowski 2007b). Furthermore, most people rely on television (from the national station and international stations), radio, and newspapers (provincial and national newspapers) to get information about the happenings outside of Pagudpud (FPQ Results 2008).

*Organization and advocacy.* There is basic organization in civil society organizations, generally stable memberships, and evidence of some issue-specific organizations (Pagudpud Volunteers for Progress). However, the depth, sophistication, and effectiveness of these organizations is not entirely evident. There is little in the way of outcomes for many organizations, despite the large amount of members and activities (Wachowski 2007b). Organizations for social purposes are particularly active, as well as activities in the Sitios, sub-communities within the barangays, and



within the schools. Organizational activity spans all ages and demographics within the community (FPQ Results 2008). Table 3 provides a summary of the activities in Pagudpud.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Indicator Description</b>	<b>Perceived Level</b>
Governance; Planning and Decision-Making	Construction of municipal market, road construction (farm to market roads), economic stimulus plan (tourism and local goods promotion), participatory planning methods, irrigation assistance, fiesta, renovation of Municipal Hall, coordinate attendance to trainings and seminars (mat weaving/dying, adventure tourism promotion), garbage compactor purchase and introduction of waste disposal plan, purchase of new police cruiser	Moderate - improving
Production of Goods and Services	Local handicrafts (mat weaving and shellcrafts), traditional noodle soup (miki), establishment of tourist sites (Maria-Ira, Bat Cave), construction company, homestays, hotels, and resorts, subsistence and small-scale agriculture production for local market, fish and marine products for local market, motorcycle and auto repair, basic goods market, independent internet shops, coconuts and coconut products for local market, rice for local and external domestic markets	Basic
Communication	Word of mouth, face to face, cell phone (text message) communication, internet accessible, public announcements posted in municipal complex area, television (national and international), radio, provincial and national newspapers	Basic
Organization and Advocacy	Basic organization in civil society organizations, few issue-specific organizations, high level of organizational activity – especially on a social level and in the barangays and sitios within schools, some	Moderately High

	evidence of activities of organizations, spans ages and occupations	
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*Table 3: Community Actions of Pagudpud*

## **Contextual Influences**

The Contextual Influences rely partially on the idea of Maslow's hierarchy of needs; people need to have their basic needs met before they can begin to engage in anything beyond mere livelihood activities (Maslow 1968). These factors are considered to be the basics of the community that cannot necessarily be changed through mere capacity building activities and are taken as the inherent circumstances of the community. Contextual Influences include basic conditioning influences such as safety and security, structure of opportunity, and the distribution of power and resources (Chaskin et al 2001, p. 24). However, in addition to basic conditioning influences, a few more considerations can be added and modified to assess contextual influences (see Wachowski 2007a). In the context of a developing community the basic economic condition and physical location of the community must also be taken into consideration, as well as the maturity of civil society, institutional development, and political stability, accountability and participation. Patterns of migration and depth of relationships have been represented as stability of residence and the condition of race and class dynamics have been incorporated into the contextual influence of history and culture. For the sake of brevity, the rationale behind each of the contextual influences will not be described here; rather their description in the case will serve to explain their importance (see also Chaskin et al 2001 and Wachowskki 2007a).

*Location.* The municipality is relatively isolated at the very tip of Ilocos Norte, more than an hour's drive to the nearest city with an airport, Laoag. Although Pagudpud has access to both land and sea transportation, it is still far away from major transportation and production hubs, such as Manila. Furthermore, transportation in Pasaleng and Pancian is more easily accessible to Bangui, which further separates these barangays from the hub of Pagudpud town center (Calventas 2008). The physical location of Pagudpud can confound market development, networking, as well as the ability for the community to obtain external resources.

*Safety and security.* Pagudpud is generally safe and secure. There are not many instances of petty crime, which in turn, helps to foster trust among community members (FPQ Results 2008; Calventas 2008; Ubasa 2008). There are not many natural disasters in the area of Pagudpud (M. Sales 2007), which also helps to maintain the overall stability of the community. The contextual influences do not have many negative effects on the community and may even contribute to an increase in the trust and social capital of Pagudpud.

*Distribution of resources/Structure of opportunity.* The distribution of resources is somewhat unbalanced in Pagudpud. Although most of the people in the community find themselves in similar economic circumstances (M. Sales 2008), some well-connected people live markedly better lives in comparison (Calventas 2008; Wachowski 2007c). It can be inferred that the distribution of resources has a moderate affect on the community capacity in Pagudpud.

The structure of opportunity has a moderate affect on the functions of the community capacity cycle in Pagudpud. Most community members have similar circumstances and opportunities; however having a relationship with those that have resources is the key to success, both economic and political in Pagudpud. Nepotism is prevalent in politics and business and relationships are of vital importance to obtain and sustain anything in the municipality. A common saying in the area is "it's the 'know-who' that matters more than the 'know-how' (E. Sales 2008)."

*Stability of residence.* There is some influx in the residency in Pagudpud. Most people in the community have lived there, or in the vicinity, for generations and it seems as though they will continue to do so. There are many instances of young people leaving to work or attend school in other cities. Also, there are some circumstances of people leaving to work as OFWs (FPQ Results 2008; Wachowski 2008a). Some areas are experiencing people moving in, either re-settled OFWs or new residents trying to capitalize on the tourist market in Pagudpud. This contextual influence plays a role in the development of sense of community, as well as trust and commitment. With many people going outside of the community for work, there are lessened opportunities for the development of trust and identity among community members. Furthermore, with the transient nature of the OFWs it is difficult for them to truly see themselves as part of the community and as stakeholders.

*History and culture.* This biggest issue with history in Pagudpud is the political turmoil of the recent past between the Sales family and the Benemerito (governing family in the 1980s and early 1990s) (Wachowski 2008a). The difficulties between these families play a role in politics, business, and sometimes even social events. Additionally, there is ongoing political issues between the mayor and the vice-mayor that affect the effectiveness of the LGU and any plan or project in all of Pagudpud. A point of interest for the municipality of Pagudpud's history is the political affiliation that the governing polity has with Governor Marcos-Keon (nephew of former President Marcos) (Wachowski 2008b) and the lingering positive sentiment in the area towards the Marcoses (Wachowski 2007c). Furthermore, there seems to be a cultural reverence and acceptance of seemingly minor abuses of power and position by politicians, wealthy families, and other people with authority. It can be noted that this sentiment is not particular to Pagudpud, but rather, common all over the Philippines. The historical and cultural impediment to community capacity in

Pagudpud can be considered significant.

*Economy.* The overall economic conditions of the community are poor, estimated nearly 70% of the population is in poverty by national standards (M. Sales 2008) and the area, in the past, has been the recipient of national and international assistance. This means that the basic economic conditions will guide the hearts and minds of the people largely, as well as the direction of the local government. For these reasons, it can be noted that the economic conditions have a large affect on the community capacity.

*Maturity of civil society.* The lack of maturity of civil society in Pagudpud affects its capacity of the community. Large civil society groups, such as the Boy Scouts, are well developed and serve many functions within the community. However, indigenous civil society organizations are not as sophisticated and often lack internal and external networks, as well as basic functional organization, funding sources, stable membership, and successful outcomes (Wachowski 2007b). Local civil society groups will need to become better organized and effective in order to benefit Pagudpud's community capacity.

*Political stability, accountability, and participation.* This has a significant effect on the community capacity cycle in Pagudpud. Also, there is a sense of apprehension regarding politicians and their activities stemming from the volatile political history of Pagudpud (Calventas 2008, Ubasa 2008). However, there is still reverence for political leaders and some have faith remaining in other administrators such as the barangay captains and the Sanunguin Bayan (FPQ Results 2008). But some current political tensions are having a large impact on the administrative actions in the municipality. However, it should be noted that the local administration seems largely accountable and compassionate towards its constituency.

*Institutional development.* There is only a moderate impact on community capacity in Pagudpud from institutional development. The local institutions are in need of further sophistication to have a broader, more positive effect on community capacity. Public institutions, such as schools and hospitals, function perfunctory and basically. However, it can be noted that there are minimal instances of private institutes (Wachowski 2007b; Wachowski 2008a).

The contextual influences on Pagudpud play a large role in the community capacity of the area, as well as in the ability for the area to alleviate poverty. Table 4 offers a glimpse at all of the contextual influences at play in Pagudpud.

<b>Contextual Influence</b>	<b>Indicator Description</b>	<b>Perceived Effect</b>
Physical Location	Relatively isolated, far from transportation and industrial hubs	Significant
Safety and Security	Safe and secure, low instance of petty crime and natural disasters	None
Distribution of Resources/Structure of Opportunity	Basic life needs being met, few families maintain a lot more physical, financial, political, and social resources, most have similar circumstances and opportunities, relationships with those that have resources important, nepotism prevalent in politics and business	Moderate
Stability of Residency	Little influx in the residency, some instances of young people leaving to work in cities or as OFWs and of older OFWs returning, some new residents in Pancian, Pasaleng, and Saud	Moderate
History and Culture	Well known political problems within the Sales family and with the former ruling family, the Benemeridos – affects contemporary ability to solve problems through the administration, cultural acceptance of power discrepancies, political affiliation with Marcos	Significant
Economics	Overall economic conditions poor	Significant
Maturity of Civil Society	Large civil society groups well developed, local civil society organizations not sophisticated, but have large, stable memberships	Moderate
Political Stability, Accountability, and Participation	Current political instability, polity seems largely accountable, participation of community in political activities high, especially at the barangay level	Moderately Significant



Institutional Development	Public institutions function perfunctory and basically, minimal instance of private institutes	Moderate
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*Table 4: Contextual Influences on Pagudpud*

Overall, Pagudpud seems to be at a very basic level of the community capacity cycle. The community in Pagudpud has a minimal to adequate amount of the community capacity attributes through which they will need to further execute the A-A-A cycle. Pagudpud has an array of community agents through which the capacity attributes can function to produce the variety of community actions they undertake. The level of sophistication of community actions can be considered to be basic with a high point being the level of governance activities that take place, particularly those participatory in nature. These governing activities will help to continue the cycle of community capacity and fortify the community and improve their capacity in the long run. Although some contextual influences have little to no effect in Pagudpud (safety and security and stability of residence) some contextual influences (location, economics, history and culture, and political stability, accountability, and participation) play large and often detrimental roles in the effectiveness of the A-A-A cycle in Pagudpud. The community agents (including individual leaders and organizations), government entities, and external entities will have to continue to devise interventions and strategies to further promote community capacity and community actions in Pagudpud to further push the community capacity cycle to ever increasingly more sophisticated levels.

### **Conclusion**

Community capacity is the ability of all members of a community to access and use their assets to set and achieve objectives. Community capacity in the context of a developing community needs

special consideration, especially in comparison to already modernized and developed contexts. The A-A-A framework also provides the special considerations that are specific to any context by articulating many factors that can be easily overlooked by traditional planning, such as the identification of multitudes of stakeholders, the contextual influences, and taking the entirety of the community into consideration.

Community capacity is becoming increasingly more important as authority is being decentralized, as it is in many countries. This is because communities with a high amount of community capacity have a better understanding of the assets at their disposal, as well as a greater understanding of knowing what they need and want and avenues to achieve such. Community capacity facilitates governance and the A-A-A framework is a tool through which communities can better identify and assess their situation to further facilitate local activity planning. Rural development and poverty alleviation is aided by considering community capacity because it helps to illuminate alternative, local, and organic ways in which a community can utilize its assets for local improvements that best reflect the needs and desires of the local people.

Having an available method and procedure for the analysis and assessment of community capacity will help local agents and development practitioners and any other party interested in fostering growth and development of an area to better formulate projects and plans that will fit and serve a community appropriately. Simply by framing a community in terms of its attributes, assets, and abilities will provide improved guidance in any sort of activity planning. The conceptual framework for community capacity seeks to provide this comprehensive look at a community along with an appropriate structure to consider the important factors needed for rural development and poverty alleviation.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Barangay is the smallest unit of governance in the Philippines. It was the traditional governing unit and was reinstated as such by Ferdinand Marcos in the 1970s in an attempt to re-establish Filipino identity (Ferdinand Marcos Museum, Battac, Ilocos Norte).
- <sup>2</sup> High season for tourists is during the dry season, February through May.

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