

**FULFILLING THE PROMISE OF LOCALIZATION  
THROUGH ACTIVE DELIBERATION: THE  
PHILIPPINE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE  
(LGC) OF 1991 AS CRITICALLY PROBED IN  
MULTIPLE STREAMS FRAMEWORK  
(MSF) ANALYSIS**

**CLYDE ANDAYA MANINGO**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**IN PUBLIC POLICY**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL**

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**JUNE 2023**

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**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED TO CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
IN PUBLIC POLICY**

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IN PUBLIC POLICY

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.....Member  
(Asst. Prof. Dr. Piyapong Boossabong)

1 June 2023

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To

*the grassroots people and the toiling masses who were  
continually left estranged and muzzled amid the domineering  
podium of discourse and deliberation*



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Clyde Andaya Maningo

หัวข้อการค้นคว้าอิสระ	มุ่งสู่การกระจายอำนาจท้องถิ่นด้วยการปรึกษาหารือ: วิเคราะห์ ข้อบัญญัติการปกครองท้องถิ่นฟิลิปปินส์ ค.ศ.1991 ด้วยมุมมอง เชิงวิพากษ์ผ่านกรอบแนวคิดพหุกระแส
ผู้เขียน	นายไคลด์ อันดาชา มานิงโก
ปริญญา	ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต (นโยบายสาธารณะ)
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา	ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร.พบสุข ชำชอง

### บทคัดย่อ

รัฐบาลฟิลิปปินส์ได้เปิดต้นนโยบายการกระจายอำนาจอย่างกว้างขวาง โดยมีเป้าหมายเพื่อกระจายอำนาจจากศูนย์กลางสู่องค์กรปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่นให้มีอิสระมากขึ้น ซึ่งก็คือ Local Government Code (LGC) ปี 1991 อย่างไรก็ตาม หลายทศวรรษหลังจากดำเนินการที่ผ่านมา การยอมรับ LGC เป็นที่น่าผิดหวังและมีความไม่สม่ำเสมอ (UNDEF, 2016) ในการอธิบายผลลัพธ์ที่เกิดขึ้น การศึกษานี้ได้ติดตามการกำหนดวาระการประชุมของนโยบายผ่านการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลทุติยภูมิ โดยการใช้เครื่องมือ Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) เพื่อทำความเข้าใจเหตุการณ์ที่นำไปสู่การกำหนดบทบัญญัติของ LGC ผลลัพธ์ที่ได้เห็นถือว่าแรงจูงใจ (ปัญหาหลัก) คือ การแยกประชาชนออกจากกระบวนการกำหนดนโยบาย โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในบริบทที่เป็นหมู่เกาะของประเทศส่งผลให้เกิดการกระจายทรัพยากรที่ไม่สม่ำเสมอและขั้นตอนของระบบราชการที่มากเกินไป ซึ่งเป็นอุปสรรคต่อการตอบสนองนโยบายในทันที โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในขอบเขตของการใช้นโยบาย อย่างไรก็ตาม มีหลักฐานเพิ่มขึ้นเรื่อย ๆ ว่าประเทศฟิลิปปินส์ยังคงห่างไกลจากการบรรลุวัตถุประสงค์เหล่านี้ เนื่องจากประเทศยังคงมีการรวมศูนย์อำนาจและเทคโนโลยีค่อนข้างสูง และระบบราชการที่มากเกินไป รวมถึงถึงกระบวนการจัดซื้อจัดจ้าง ซึ่งเป็นอุปสรรคต่อการพัฒนาท้องถิ่น สิ่งเหล่านี้เป็นหลักฐานชั้นดี โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในเรื่องเล่าของชุมชนเกษตรกรรม Siquijor ซึ่งปรากฏขึ้นระหว่างการเล่าเรื่องสามเส้าของเกษตรกร เจ้าหน้าที่รัฐบาลท้องถิ่นและองค์กรพัฒนาเอกชนจากการสัมภาษณ์ KII ที่ดำเนินการ ท้ายที่สุด เอกสารฉบับนี้มีคำแนะนำว่า การใช้ประโยชน์สูงสุดจาก LGC คือ เมื่อจับคู่กับการปกครองท้องถิ่นเชิงบูรณาการที่เน้นการเพิ่มขีดความสามารถในการพิจารณาเป็นหลัก

คำสำคัญ Local Government Code (LGC) ปี 1991 Multiple Streams Framework (MSF)  
ความสามารถในการพิจารณา การปกครองส่วนท้องถิ่น การมีส่วนร่วมทางสังคมและพลเมือง



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<b>Independent Study Title</b>	Fulfilling the Promise of Localization Through Active Deliberation: The Philippine Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 as Critically Probed in Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) Analysis
<b>Author</b>	Mr. Clyde Andaya Maningo
<b>Degree</b>	Master of Arts (Public Policy)
<b>Advisor</b>	Assistant Proessor Dr. Pobsook Chamchong

## ABSTRACT

The Philippine government has launched an extensive decentralization policy that aims to devolve the centralized power and provide more autonomy to local government units (LGU)—the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991. However, decades after its implementation, the adoption of the LGC has been disappointing and uneven (UNDEF, 2016). In explicating this outcome, the study traces the agenda-setting of the policy through secondary data analysis and by employing the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) to understand the events that led to the crafting of the LGC provisions. Results surmount that among the motivations (in the problem stream) was the isolation of the people from the policymaking process, especially in the archipelagic context of the country, which results in uneven resource distribution and excessive bureaucratic procedures which hinder the immediate response, especially in peripheries. Despite this, there is growing evidence that the country is still far from fulfilling these objectives as the country has still been highly centralized and technocratic, and excessive bureaucracy shrouds the procurement processes, which hampers local developments. These are evidenced particularly in the narratives of the Siquijor agrarian community, which surfaced during the triangulation of narratives of farmers, local government staff, and NGOs out of the conducted KII interviews. Finally, the paper proceeds with the

recommendation that the utmost utilization of the LGC is when it is paired with integrative local governance primarily focused on augmenting deliberative capacity.

**Keywords:** Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991, Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), deliberative capacity, local governance, socio-civic participation



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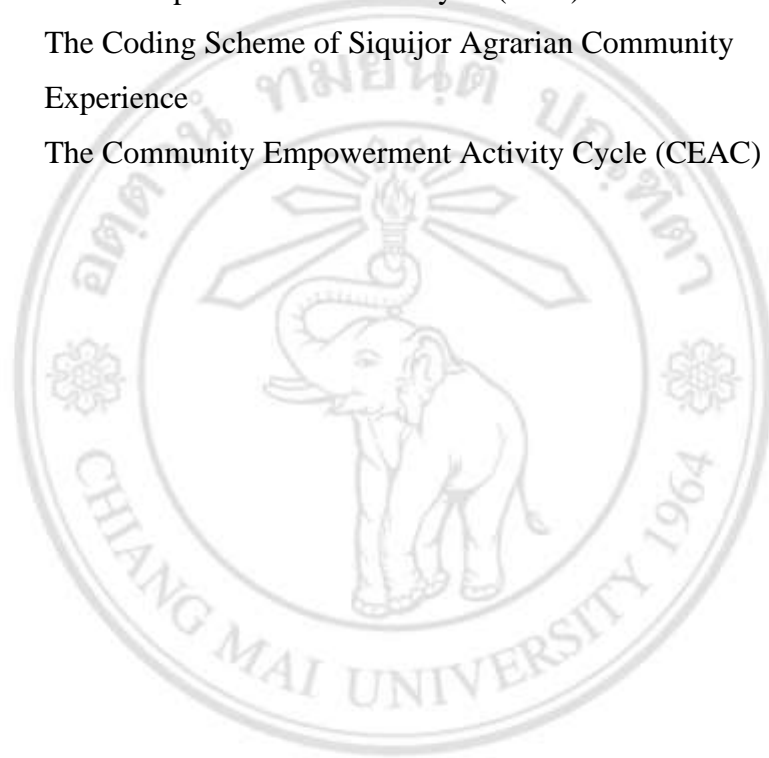
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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Mapping Local Government Code: The State of the Grassroots Decades After its Implementation

The archipelagic context of the Philippines has primarily contributed to the difficulty of allocation management of essential resources and services, which is necessary to reach the secluded and remote peripheral communities, especially during challenging times like unprecedented calamities or catastrophic pandemics. It is in these times when citizen participation is necessary to make national services closer to the grassroots demands. The protection of people's rights to participation and civil service organizations, after all, has been enshrined in Section 16 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, specifying that there shall be "effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making... the State shall, by law, facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms" (Lazo, 2009). Hence, the Philippine government has launched a comprehensive and extensive decentralization policy that aims to devolve the centralized power and give more autonomy to local government units (LGU). It was coined as the Republic Act No. 7160, or the "Local Government Code of 1991 (LGC)," where the primary goal of the policy was to ensure that the critical gaps at the community level are addressed through grassroots participation and that there are loose and localized bureaucratic processes that will cater to the peripheral areas which are often undermined in the centralized means of delivering services. The national government functions are now devolved through its provisions in terms of agricultural, environmental, health, and social services. Nevertheless, the Code still has compelling loopholes and gaps that have potentially hindered its promises from being achieved. This is aggravated by the limited data which indicates the broad assessments predominantly the people's participation, especially into whether it has effectively improved the capabilities of the local governments, has responded adequately to the ever-emerging problems and challenges faced by modern society, or whether it has

genuinely fulfilled the aspirations to an effective, responsive, and viable local autonomy in the Philippine political framework (Ilago, 1997).

## **1.2. The Prevailing Discourses on the Impacts of Local Government Code**

Amongst the most prominent discourse was elaborated by Reyes (2016) in his general conceptions of the impact and challenges of the LGC. He stated that the problematic points of LGC concern: (1) the absorptive capacity, (2) financial challenges, (3) personnel distribution disparity, (4) poverty indices, and (5) the increased political dynasty and elite influence. Firstly, the LGUs absorptive capacities do not match the demands of obligations incurred in the LGC. When the responsibilities and functions are under the prerogative of LGU, it would require technical skills and adequate time to prepare, which some localities entrusted with devolved central power still need to have. For instance, it will need the employment of specializations in environmental management, solid waste management, primary health care, pollution control, and other related functions that would demand technical expertise. Hence, Brillantes et al. (2013) have raised the necessity to strengthen capacity building to empower local governance, as this should align with the promise of devolved powers. Secondly, the financial capacity of LGU is also being left out as it has the principal challenge of finding means to mobilize finances. Brillantes (2013) stated that the decentralization left off the crucial decentralizing of finances is meaningless because some LGUs' fiscal obligation needs to be revised to carry out their functions effectively. The LGUs have also continually relied on the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA), as indicated in the recent study of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, where 63% of the total revenue of the LGUs was not obtained from its capability to generate its finances but of the IRA. The real property taxes (RPT), which are supposed to be the primary source of local revenue, had outdated systems that needed to be indexed to the ever-increasing inflation. Also, the most modern means of auditing the tax base is Geographic Information Systems (GIS); however, the LGUs cannot employ the techniques necessary to maneuver this technology. Thirdly, a growing body of evidence indicates the alarming disparity in the distribution of government personnel in the LGUs and the national government offices. According to the Civil Service Commission (2010), out of 1 409 660 government employees, only 25.9 percent were assigned to LGUs, and the rest were accumulated in national government



offices. Given this number, it is clear why the LGUs could hardly fulfill their responsibilities as suggested by the Code. It is also imperative to restate that the long-term goal of the LGC of 1991 is to curb poverty, and yet, nothing significant has changed 31 years after its implementation. Unemployment and poverty are still endemic in the country, as reflected in the assessment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) analyzed in the first semester of 2014. They estimate this to rise by 25.8 in the proceeding years continually (United Nations New York, 2014). Lastly, the LGUs, as left unmoderated, have allowed the domination of political dynasties on local elective political posts. There has been the rise of ruling families, which denied the opportunity for alternative personnel with immense potential to lead and govern. The preservation of power has shrouded the primary interests of local political systems, and the Code has no say about the prevalence of political dynasties, especially in Philippine politics. Thus, it has undermined the potential of the LGC to encourage collaborative governance and genuine people participation at the local level.

### **1.3. The Research Gap and the Objectives**

As these preliminary evaluations of the LGC solely focus on the broader connotation attached to the aftermath of LGC implementation, this paper solely problematizes the inadequacy of fully utilizing the provisions of the LGC that should have allowed more extensive and robust grassroots participation and community-driven development. The LGC provides the structure, but its operationalization is still in question. For instance, only a few cases, like the Naga City People's Council, have managed to create a genuinely mass-centric organizational system that aims to cater to the demands of the locals (Curato, 2021). However, it is a shallow analysis to only delve into the number of councils and organizations created under LGC as this does not necessarily represent the quality of participation or deliberation. Politicization is always a threat in socially instigated groups. Nevertheless, it is visible in whether people can vent out their demands, thus, the increase in the deliberative capacity. As a purveyor of the LGC structure, the Philippines has a barangay system that deliberates local policies and is supposed to process meaningful engagements (Turok & Scheba, 2020). Yet, many barangay-level projects from local and national administrations need to match the

people's demands, especially concerning their geo-economic situation (Pami, 2022). Growing scholars infer that the LGC promises are not reflected at the barangay level, despite its goal of reaping socio-economic benefits from devolved powers. The seeping of separate policies and services in grassroots sectors manifests through, for instance, red tape or the highly bureaucratized processes that hinder development initiatives, non-proactive service delivery, and the poverty rate. The notions of communal engagement are, then, necessary to tackle in the LGC implementation, mainly as there have been limited studies that tackle the broader provisional evaluation of the LGC to determine whether it has successfully addressed its core objectives of connecting with local communities' demands decades after its promulgation. Hence, this paper addresses this problem through:

1. finding the gap in the agenda-setting of the policy through the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) to shed light on the rationale behind the crafting of the LGC provisions and highlight the notions relating to the demand for grassroots participation or deliberative initiatives,
2. from the legal perspective, seeing the context of the LGC provisions through the case of the Siquijor agrarian community to derive a deeper understanding of the subject focus at an experiential level, especially in resource allocation, support, and grassroots participation.
3. present recommendations in response to (1) the utmost utilization of the LGC that caters to the inadequate community participation programs through CDD and (2) the experiences of the grassroots agricultural community regarding the delivery of services and the notions of increasing deliberative capacity for LGUs.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **The Conceptual Framework of the Study**

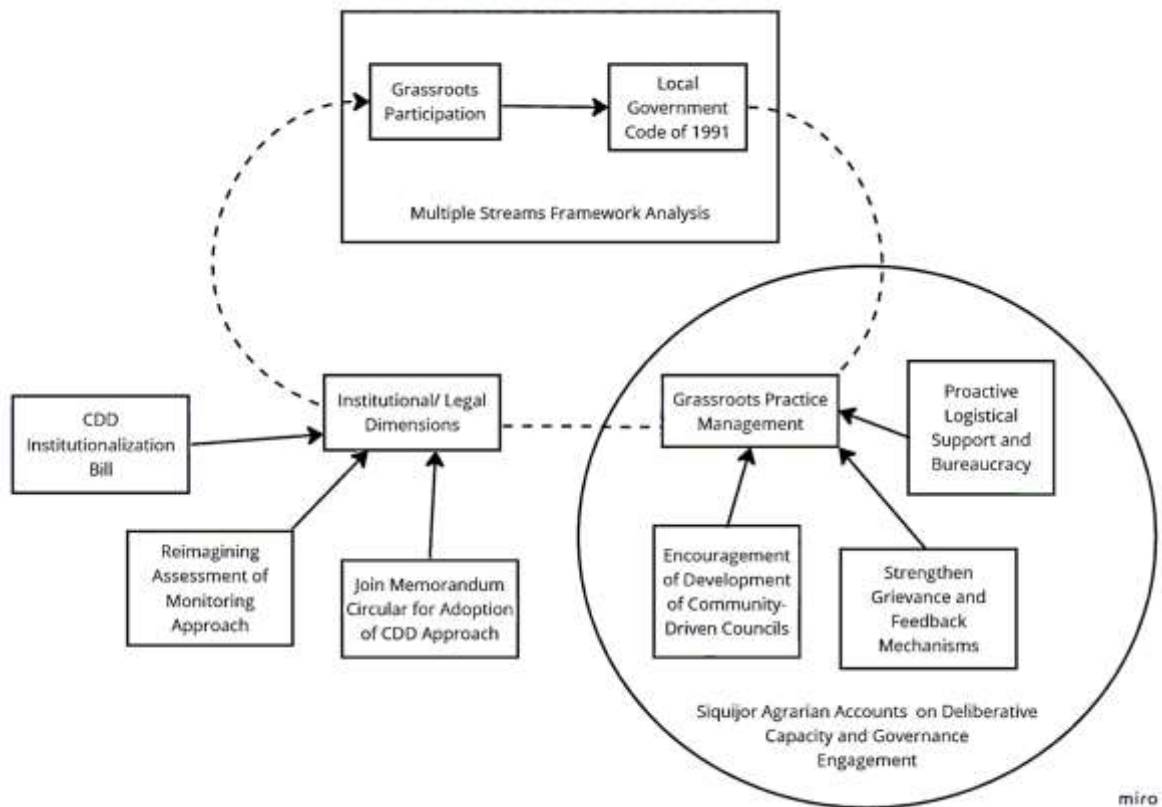
To embody grassroots participation, policies and operationalization must ensure that the undermined class and marginalized sectors are not solely seen as objects of governance but rather as a terrain where the administration system is directed (Kashwan, 2018). It means that they are not distinguished from the policymakers because they and the policymakers are synonymous. Such a notion motivated the Department of Social Welfare's (DSWD) current attempt to undergo any social policy procedures through a bottom-up approach rather than solely relying on the technocratic discourses of credible policy entrepreneurs (Chiu, 2016; Karaos, 2020). Anchoring from this, it is clear that the Philippine government system has long demanded, mainly due to its archipelagic pretext, a society where people have a hand in policymaking—which is among the rationale behind the creation of the LGC. In the present context, LGC is revisited mainly on its function for mundane staff appointments, yet, such a framework is beyond that.

#### **2.1 The Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) Analysis in Unravelling the LGC's Agenda Motivations**

The study abides by the notion of Kingdon (1984) to analyze the LGC's motivation as focused on augmenting civic participation. He stated that we look at policies, not per tasks but by how social actors interact to solve policy problems and their behavior toward the politics surrounding them (Béland & Howlett, 2016). Hence, Kingdon (1984) formulated a framework that would describe how semi-independent streams of actors and events interact to agree on the definition and direction of a policy agenda. Nevertheless, these streams have some complexity, which he describes as occasional chaos and may even be naturally contingent. It explains how policy developments are not spontaneous processes that happen in a single event but built-up occurrences from highly autonomous [yet interdependent] streams. He categorized these streams into three: (1) the problem stream that incorporates the perceptions of the public on a particular issue

and urges the administrative body to create solutions, (2) the policy stream that corroborates inputs from technocrats who are immersed in disciplines to deal with the problem in contention and propose solutions towards it, and lastly (3) the political stream which is the environment that sets the national mood which then influences the body politic to act in a favorable political position. These three streams combine in a specific "window of opportunity" that transforms the perceived problem into a policy agenda (Birkland, 1997). The diagram below showcases this aspiration, specifically in creating the Local Government Code of 1991, especially in how grassroots participation is a motivating variable in the problem stream under Kingdon's (1984) Multiple Streams Framework.

As demand for grassroots participation is among the factors of the LGC's promulgation, it will make the local policies directly linked to people's experiential inputs. However, an increasing body of proof from recent studies has indicated that such an objective is still far-fetched. Among those were the experiential accounts of the Siquijor agrarian society, which still are shrouded with challenges on participation in the local governing process. People are still detached from the policies, and the administrative body generates solutions that do not coincide with their needs. The broken arrow represents this relationship. This paper recommends policy direction centering on first further understanding of the operationalization mechanism as approached at the legal or institutional level, where it highlights the passage of the CDD Institutionalization Bill, the reimagining of the assessment on the conduct of monitoring approach of local policies, and having Joint Memorandum Circular for Adoption of CDD Approach; and second, deriving some inputs from contextual level [obtained from the accounts of Siquijor Agrarian Community] to how the grassroots system operates. It pertains to more proactive logistical support and bureaucracy, encouragement of the development of community-driven councils, and, lastly, strengthening grievance and feedback mechanisms.



**Figure 2.1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study Showcasing the Policy Recommendations and the Utilization of MSF Analysis**

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **The Methods**

The study charts a qualitative research design that covers the rigid process of providing the non-numeric perception of actions and policy processes as obtained from narratives or related notions by past scholars (Fossey et al., 2002). Moreover, the study employs secondary data analysis, a widely used data collection technique in social science research. It refers to the reanalysis and retreatment of previously gathered data to explore a dimension of a multifaceted issue (Punch, 2005, as cited in Phellas, 2006). Such a method has been used predominantly in employing MSF analysis of the LGC. Moreover, for analyzing the Siquijor agrarian narratives, the study employed the case-study design to focus on a specific, real-world subject. It has been employed in the Siquijor community, mainly (2) local farmers, (2) LGU workers, and (2) NGO members. The study also used KII, which treats pre-determined “key informants” as data sources for the webbing, dynamic, and complex topics related to kinship, organization, economic system, religious practices and beliefs, and the political structure (Tremblay, 1957). Furthermore, in unraveling the schema of the local agrarian participation landscape in the Siquijor context, the study utilized thematic analysis, which utilizes independent and theoretically constructed tools to analyze data (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **The Analysis**

This chapter delves into two analyses: the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), which delves into agenda-setting to trace the legal basis of the LGC and the policy's agenda-setting. It also allows us to pinpoint the motivations of the LGC, especially highlighting the necessity for people's participation. The second one is the thematic analysis of the narratives of the Siquijor agrarian community to shed light on the on-ground experiences of people and not solely the legalistic and policy-oriented purview.

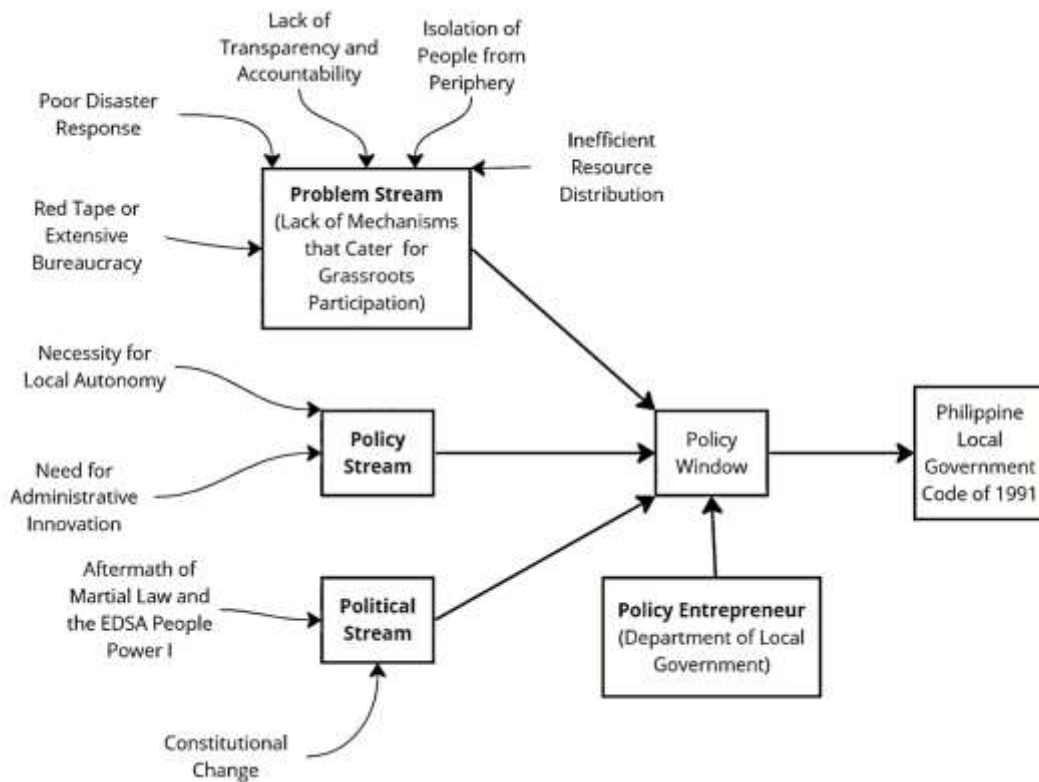
#### **4.1. The Local Government Code of 1991 in the Lens of Multiple Streams Framework Analysis (Kingdon, 1984)**

The figure below showcases how the different streams intersect through the policy window that led to the promulgation of the Philippine LGC of 1991. Notably, the problem stream highlights the need for mechanisms catering to grassroots participation. The driving force behind this is the 1987 Philippine Constitution mandate in Section 16, which specifies that "the right of the people and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making shall not be abridged. The state shall, by law, facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms." During that time, it has yet to be transformed into actual regulation, which will operationalize the direct participation from civil society. Hence, it is indubitable that various problems have surfaced as all policies were top-down, so they cannot meet the constituencies' immediate demands nor provide adequate responses and services to far-flung areas (Matildo, 2022). It then isolated the people from the policymaking bodies, jeopardizing the peripheries with sudden needs and reducing the civic society's engagement in policy formulation processes. The people would also see that the government is not transparent and accountable enough with the disbursement of national funds, as most of them would not reach them—any attempts to include them in development initiatives would require tremendous work and undergo a rigid bureaucratic

process. It also hinders attempts to progress, especially since all the projects for locally initiated developments would first seek permission from the national bodies with no point authority in the local government. It led to the incapacity to mend the grassroots issues, especially for the regions far from National Capital Region (NCR), which highly contributes to the poverty gap and staggering local development (Brillantes, 1994).

Aside from these, the formulation of LGC was due to the analysis of the leading experts of that time, described in the diagram below's policy stream. For instance, *Devolution and Empowerment: LGC 1991 and Local Autonomy in the Philippines* by Tapales (1991) has stated their historical account of why the Philippines has depended on a centralized body traced back to the colonial imposition. The Spaniards arrived in 1521, where they found that the country had been thriving even with the small sovereign units called barangays, which sultanates, rajahs, or bayans ruled. Hence, they must establish a mechanism to colonize the island with a central body that will reign over the archipelago. It led to the establishment of local units, particularly *cabildos* (cities), *pueblos* (municipalities), *provincias* (province), and *barrios* (the reduction of barangay to manageable units). It also made tax collection easier (Laurel 1926; Marcos 1976; Corpuz 1989). As the revolts toppled the Spanish government, Apolinario Mabini drafted an article on local government in the 1899 Constitution. However, it only removed a little centrality "because the needs of the revolution called for Filipino unity" (De Guzman & Tapales, 1973). The same can be said during the reign of the Americans because they saw the pattern of centralism as simple and readily comprehensible to Filipino citizens. (Laurel 1926). These are the prevailing discourses in the conduct of the LGC before its implementation.





**Figure 4.1. The Multiple Framework Analysis (MSF) of LGC**

For the political stream, the MSF probes into these three main domains: (1) the fluctuations of the national mood, which explains the political context, (2) coping with political forces or the perception of the policymakers on the demands of the people, and (3) internal government matters or the situation of the decision-making bodies of the country that will deal with the capacity of the administrative system to approve or disprove changes (Young, Shepley, & Song, 2010).

1. *The aftermath of Martial Law in 1972.* During this time, the country has just recently freed itself from the authoritarian rule of the Marcos regime, which has suspended the local elections. Hence, the people deemed it necessary to retrieve their voice back in the policy formulation process in the Philippine governance system (Tadem, 2015).
2. *The EDSA People Power Revolution I.* The cronies of the Marcos regime lost their political edge in the fall of the dictatorship, which paved the way for the rise of new policymakers. The forces of the public have overthrown the regime, which

indicates that the involvement of the masses in the public policy processes is crucial to political change (Mendoza & Roberts, 2009). If this potential of public participation could overthrow a regime, how much more could it do if it is used at the local level—this would mean empowering those in localities with less to no political participation. This notion has been the encompassing ideology in the policy process, driving the policy entrepreneurs to wield a Code that has the potential to massively change the resource allocation and local delegation processes of the country.

3. *The recent constitutional change.* The 1937 Philippine Constitution barred any attempts to extend local autonomy. Although the 1973 Constitution called for local autonomy in the barrio to manage fiscal administration, it did not have enough effort to ascertain transparency and accountability, especially in governance that gained the global recognition of kleptocracy (Hernandez, 1987). Nevertheless, the 1987 Constitution, which restored democracy, has guaranteed autonomy to the local government through an elaborative system covering fiscal management to agrarian functions, personnel appointments, and other facets of administration. It also established a committee to ascertain the making of such a vision, and this is by the Department of Local Government, which the Joint Legislative-Executive Committee led. This committee has been entrusted with ensuring that there shall be a substantial Code to direct the promise of autonomy in the local governance system (Local Government Academy, 1991).

The policy window refers to the point when the three streams finally become less independent and start to conjoin. It can be referred to as the opportunity or instance to create a substantial policy to address the cumulative problems and circumstances in a particular context. The policy window's opening is said to be triggered by either a remarkable institutionalized event or the presence of a policy entrepreneur. In this case, all the streams would have flowed autonomously without the intervention of an instigated body that would ensure that an elaborated output is made [the creation of a Code]—however, the presence of policy entrepreneurs or the Department of Local Government tightly knitted these streams to formulate the LGC provisions.

## **4.2 The Siquijor Agrarian Community: The LGC Experience and the Emphasis on Deliberative Capacity**

The after-effect of the LGC is noticeable three decades after its implementation, especially in agrarian communities. Notably, it moved the agricultural extension services closer to the basic unit of local governance, which gradually changed the agricultural administrative landscape of the Philippines. Under the devolved administrations, the local government units (LGUs) led the implementations of micro-level agricultural developments and policies, including several provisions of support services like financial aid and deployment of human resources (Manasan, 2022). So, if the deliberative aspects and the dimension of socio-civic participation are the objects of analysis, it is imperative to look through the agrarian community's narratives. While the problematic points of broader operationalization of the LGC have been discussed, the paper reverts to the context of the Siquijor agrarian community, especially to whether they feel more connected to the policymaking bodies of their respective locality. The following themes have surfaced upon being asked about the role of the LGUs in responding to their demands and their participation in the development process, specifically highlighting the deliberative capacity of Siquijor's decision-making bodies: (1) benefit inequality, (2) logistical/ bureaucratic-related concerns, (3) revert to traditional agrarian methods.

For benefit inequality, the respondents' testimonies showed how varied governmental support or administrative intervention notions are between affiliated and unaffiliated farmers. Independent and self-financed farmers deem it difficult to receive support from any bodies (including POs and NGOs) as they were still determining whether these bodies could provide assistance. Meanwhile, the affiliated farmers are more optimistic about agrarian assistance offered by states and organizations, citing their experiences of success in terms of lobbying their grievances. On the side of the LGU, they prefer that all farmers organize their agrarian community or be affiliated with NGOs or POs so that it is easier to distribute assistance, training, and resources. Out of these narratives, reaching out to these independent farmers is imperative to attain equitable service delivery. While there has been an insufficiency of data stating the percentage of unaffiliated farmers on the island, it is irrefutable from the narratives that community organization is a desideratum in the Siquijor agrarian milieu. It coincides with Christens

et al. (2021), who recognize that grassroots community organizing is a distinct but necessary approach for contentious and persisting socio-economic inequalities in different societal domains like the agricultural sector. The sub-theme of the direness of reaching out can be strategized through governmental initiation as empowered by the LGC of 1991. It goes together with the four fundamental strategies for addressing community problems. Beckwith & Lopez (1997), precisely: nurturing aspects of community organizing, advocacy, service delivery, and development which is getting the group to deliver the outcome.

“Usa sa mga problema kay ang ubang independent farmer kay maglisod ug initiate sa pagreach out sa LGU kay di sad sila sure if matabangan sila, or basin di ra jud sila kibalo unsaon pagduol”

*Another problem is that some individual farmers would find it challenging to initiate reaching out to the LGU because they are uncertain if they could acquire help or do not know whom to reach out to.*

For logistical concerns and bureaucracy, it showed lobbying predicaments concerning process hindrances. The respondents have narrated how complicated the process of forwarding demands and concerns is, which discourages availing of existing programs and services. This predicament in public service delivery is not a novice issue in the Philippine agrarian landscape. Several reforms have already been implemented to thoroughly lighten the bureaucracy in the public sector, including the RA 9485 or the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007, which attempted to make public service efficient (Del Mundo Jr., 2022) and the Governance Cluster and the Good Governance Initiatives under the Aquino III administration (Villamejor-Mendoza, 2015). With this, it is integral to empower conducts of assessments to see whether these initiatives still retain their conduciveness and relevance in local settings. The poor government response makes grassroots communities less apprehensive of collaboration and restricts the formation of a deliberative and participatory policymaking system. This notion has been furthered by the findings of Francisco et al. (2020), which see that regulatory compliance hinders the probability of growth among SMEs in the Philippines. Their findings raise the critical action of easing the burden of regulation not only in enterprises and firms but in all

sectors, including agrarian communities, which undermines the time and money compliance costs.

“Oo, nakaduol kos akong mga demand ug concern pero dili paspas oy. Niabot ug usa ka bulan before ko natagaan ug binhi tungod daw sa mga paperwork ug uban pa.”

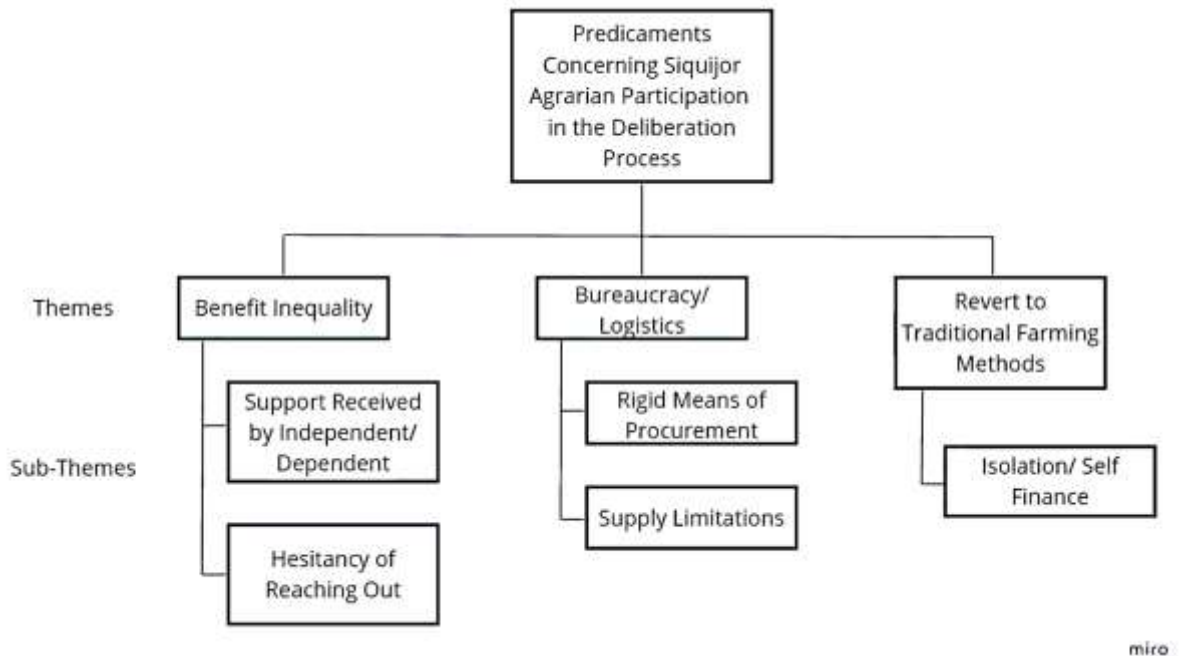
*Yes, I could lobby my demands and concerns, yet it was not immediate. It took me a month to have the seeds, citing paperwork and logistical concerns.*

The preference for traditional agrarian methods expounds the sentiments of the LGU extensionists who have worked on the ground and attempted to connect to the grassroots. As they were motivated by goodwill, it does not transform into actual alleviation of situations of these communities, nor can they adapt immediately to scientific developments implemented by informed academicians, policy experts, and scientific scholars. It is then necessary to go back to the context of deliberative capacity, which values the authentic, inclusive, and consequential communication process. In the same way, the scientific community's input is imperative, yet, it must not go in the form of tight imposition. Pursuing joint goals must be based on a mutual understanding that such objectives are inherently merit-worthy. Such a notion has been the process invoked by Habermasian communicative rationality (Lubenow, 2012). Suppose the agricultural grassroots change its traditional ways; in that case, it must be motivated by inherently consensual forms of social coordination rather than imposition--or any attempt to assist these people will remain futile.

“Naay mga farmers na gahi ug ulo ug dili maminaw sa among suggestion, then magpadayon lang sa ilang naandan. Ang dakong kalisdanan kay kaning makigesturyag dili maminaw. Ang solusyon ra ani kay esturyaon ilang presidente dayon mangayog tabang aron makahinay hinay ug hatag sa ilahag ideya saon pagusab ilang methods. Pero of course, di sad ni para sa tanan. “

*Some farmers are hard-headed, will not listen to our suggestions, and would pursue their traditional methods despite all the efforts to educate them. The major challenge we encountered was calling out these hard-headed farmers. The solution is to talk to the association's president and ask for help to slowly seep*

*their ideas into the methods of these specific farmers. Though, this does not apply to all.*



**Figure 4.2. The Coding Scheme of Siquijor Agrarian Community Experience**

Undoubtedly, it is critical to avert the academic gaze on the internal facilitations existing in the Siquijor context and analyze from the purview of grassroots voices the delivery of national and local services, mainly stemming from agricultural support, which is an integral component of the country's general economy. In doing so, it is imperative to implicate the contextual deliberative potentials and initiatives by delving into the dynamics of stakeholder integration in agenda setting and the genuine deliberative involvement of the locals in the policy process.

## CHAPTER 5

### The Recommendations

The following encompasses the recommendatory measures that the Philippine government must proceed to ensure the utmost utilization of LGC to augment socio-civic participation. As the agenda-setting of the LGC, as revealed in MSF, is revealed as anchored in the lack of people's hand in the local decision-making, the following points ensure the acquisition of such objectives as stemming from the institutional or legal operationalization to many comprehensive measures in the localized and grassroots setting.

#### **5.1. Institutional/ Legal Dimension: Solidify the Operational Mandate of Communal Engagement in LGC Provisions**

It is integral to mention that the strengthening of inclusiveness and accountability of government programs and projects was under the Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS or KC), which is through the DSWD. It is among the means to operationalize the LGC and target impoverished communities through facilitating barangay-level projects. Nevertheless, partisan politics still shrouds the country, which means the support from barangays is only accumulated based on connections and nepotism (Gomez, 2016), which hinders direct participation from the grassroots and inability of the proposed policy to the stakeholders who direly need such solutions.

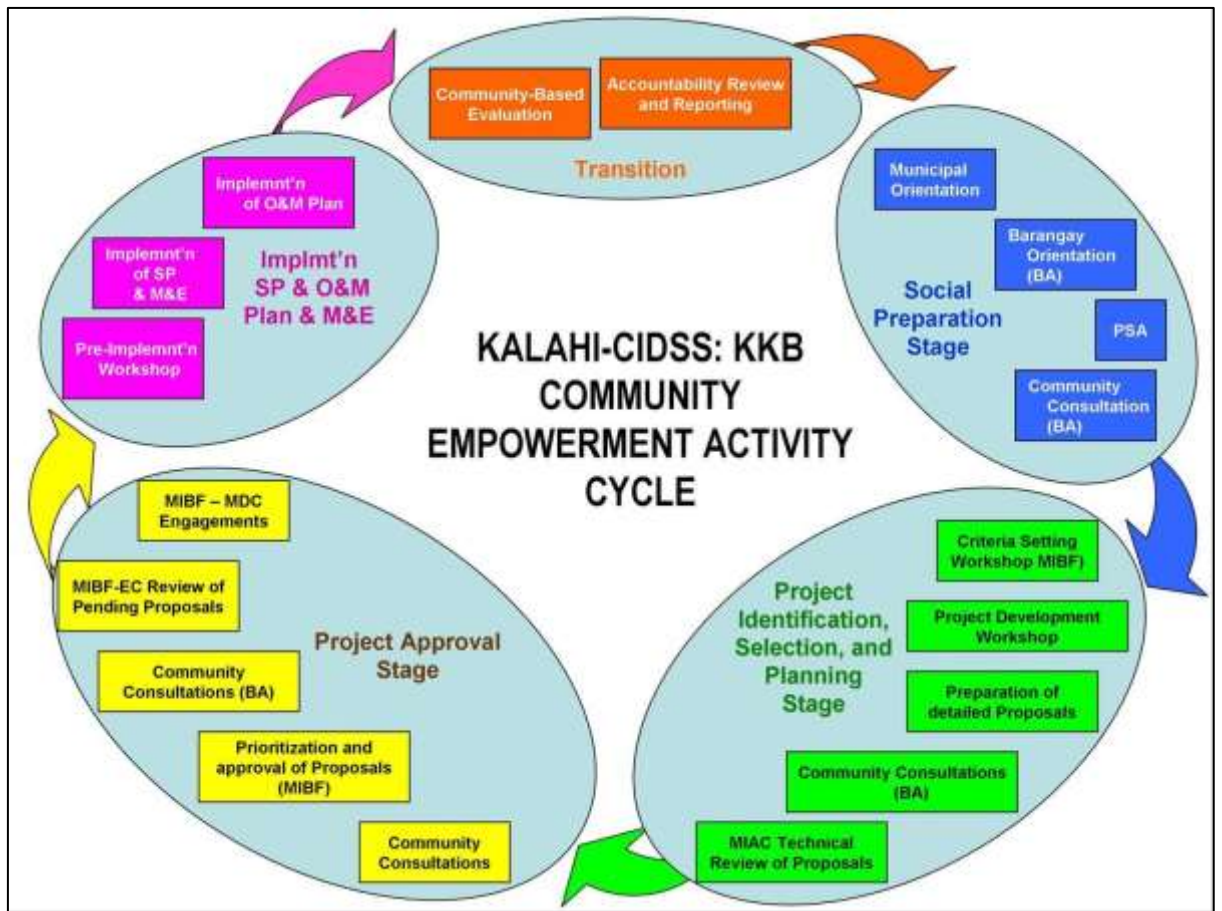
*Crystalizing the LGC Further Through Passage of the CDD Institutionalization Bill.*

The CDD approach is a comprehensive approach that various countries like India and Brazil have used in the Rural Poverty Reduction Project (Brazil) and National Program for Community Empowerment (India). The CDD's principles are rooted in (1) the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu, Robert Putnam, and James Coleman, who postulated that the historical development and cultural and social institutions are crucial explanations of

seeing patterns of cooperation and development, and (2) in the 2004 Development Report, *Making Services Work for Poor People* released by World Bank where they indicated the necessity for greater accountability of service delivery derived from the combination of giving client groups control over the resource, information, and choice and also the traditional development strategies. So overall, the CDD can be defined as an approach to development that ensures community control over investment and technocratic planning. In this way, the people have the prerogative to control the management of resources should, and the experiences of poor people, most significantly, are treated as integral narratives for the direction of the development process, with the help of existing institutions and organizational capacity (Wong & Guggenheim, 2016). So, it also allows financing communal groups that encourage inclusivity and creates an environment that will facilitate institutional reforms. People's insights are also treated as the means towards growth as they make efforts more responsive to demand, ensure sustainability and inclusivity, and are more cost-effective than centrally initiated programs. (Dongier et al., 2003).

Currently, the CDD is implemented only through the KALIWA-CIDSS, which targets municipalities to be empowered and participate in local planning, budgeting, and implementation. Under this program, they have improved essential services specifically to the target population or those in the 70% poverty incidence. They did this through community-driven subprojects that address the most pressing matters in the locale. The incorporation of CDD in the KC-National Community Driven Development Program (KC-NCDDP) through the Community Empowerment Activity Cycle (CEAC), which comprises four stages of participation: (1) Social Preparation, (2) Community Planning, (3), Community-managed Implementation, and (4) Community Monitoring.





**Figure 5.1. The Community Empowerment Activity Cycle (CEAC)**

The CEAC operationalizes under the principles of participation, transparency, and accountability. KALAHI-CIDSS uses this to link the communities to appropriate formal planning and budget programming, which tends to be separate from the implementation mechanisms. This process has been very fruitful as roughly a third of the barangays where such initiatives were implemented receive subprojects per year, unlike when no framework guided KALAHI-CIDSS implementation (Beatty et al., 2018). However, despite how practical such an approach is in laying down the framework of socio-civic participation, notions of CDD are only being implemented through KC-NCDDP. Other than that, people are still detached from the policy process. Various bills related to CDD were proposed in the 18th Congress of the Philippines, for instance: (1) Senate Bill No. (SBN) 1057, (2) House Bill Nos. (HBN) 4407, 4470, 4764, 5250, 7866, 8935, and 9065. Nevertheless, to no luck, these CDD Institutionalization Bills failed to be passed. DSWD also forwarded a more direct draft in July 2022 to the Chief of Staff

of the legislators of the Philippine Congress, containing the Administrative Bill, which also recommends passing the CDD Institutionalization Bill. It contains five bills: House Bill Nos 3008, 443, 500, 1910, and 3458. These initiatives still hang by a thread.

*Reimagined Assessment and Monitoring Approach of LGC and the Government Policies*

The assessment and monitoring of LGC is a very complex matter which cannot quickly be resolved in a broader approach as it encompasses, in the majority, how the administrative system should work at the local level—covering not just the socio-civic participation but the dynamism of national-local interactions, political and economic maneuver, financial appropriations, and devolved powers to all local agencies. Hence, it is necessary to focus on the local level or the specific policies empowered by the broader constitutional provision of the LGC. Delving into the accounts of each local governance, we can think of a standard way to monitor policies. It has been the subject of scholarly curiosity of Pami (2022), which raised questions about how we analyze the efficiency and viability of policies implemented in the grassroots setting. The indicators are coined as a grassroots-oriented multi-goal analysis that addresses the acquisition of objectives of policies as it corresponds to people’s welfare, efficiency, and security.

**Table 5.1. The Principles of Welfare, Security, and Efficiency for Grassroots Program Monitoring and Assessments**

<b>Core Principle</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
Welfare	Households have better access to basic services.	Reduction of travel time and financial costs to obtain water: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Average total minutes fetching water per week per household</li> <li>● Average cost for drinking water per week per household</li> </ul>
		Reduction of transport costs for agricultural products per trip

**Table 5.1. The Principles of Welfare, Security, and Efficiency for Grassroots Program Monitoring and Assessments (Continued)**

<b>Core Principle</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
		<p>Reduction of travel time and costs to key government services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Average total minutes per household spent on traveling one-way to government facilities.</li> <li>● Average total travel cost per household for traveling to government facilities</li> </ul> <p>Increase in the number of daily visits to a health facility.</p>
Efficiency	Improvement of the socioeconomic status of households while utilizing the same amount allocated for local government projects and programs	<p>Increase in per capita consumption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Food</li> <li>● Non-food</li> </ul> <p>Reduction in poverty levels.</p> <p>Increase in employment rates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Labor Participation Rate</li> <li>● Employment Rate (of % of labor participation rate)</li> <li>● Unemployment Rate (of % of labor participation rate)</li> </ul>

**Table 5.1. The Principles of Welfare, Security, and Efficiency for Grassroots Program Monitoring and Assessments (Continued)**

<b>Core Principle</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
Security	Local communities are assured that government projects are tailored to fit their needs.	<p>Increase in household participation in barangay assemblies and other related activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Number of barangay assembly meetings held in the last month.</li> <li>● Average number of people who attended the last barangay assembly meeting.</li> <li>● Number of BDC meetings held in the last 12 months.</li> <li>● Average number of people who attended the last BDC</li> </ul> <p>Increase in local government projects that correspond to ex-ante preferences of the communities</p>

Nevertheless, even such sophisticated criteria must corroborate with the narratives of the people to match them with mass-centric ideas shaped explicitly by communal and circumstantial contextuality. The efficacy of this monitoring and assessment method solely depends on the affirmation of the grassroots, or else it will just be another technocratic maneuver.

*The Joint Memorandum Circular as a Support Network for Increased Coordination in Local Planning Process as Informed by the CDD Approach.*

In some dimensions, the Philippines' administrative landscape is highly technocratic. It deems collaboration initiatives with LGUs unnecessary so long as the offices in the higher strata of bureaucracy have approved consent. It has been evident in

the dynamisms of DSWD and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the two primary government agencies that cater to increasing the standards of life at the grassroots level by providing welfare or implementing infrastructural support and development in these sectors. While there are initiatives to include people in the decision-making among these departments, there has been an insufficiency of expanding these to correspond with the needs of the LGUs, primarily as facilitated by the CDD Approach. Among the initiatives includes the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in 2020 by the DSWD and DILG to delineate the responsibilities of the two agencies in the local planning process as informed by CDD Approach. The Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 2021-087 followed, issued in the succeeding year by the DILG. It states that there must be a community-driven, comprehensive, and multi-sectoral frame among policies to ensure that programs align with the needs of communities. However, these agencies focus on DSWD-DILG roles for MOU, whereas the DILG-LGU is for the MC. As these three are critical institutional dynamics to ensure that grassroots suggestions are put into action, this paper direly recommends that such provisions be expanded to a Joint Memorandum Circular among DILG, DSWD, and LGU to ensure that there is a clear delineation and establishment of roles are following the CDD ideas. The JMC should be able to establish guidelines on how the DILG and DSWD should respond with adequate assistance, while the LGUs be able to conduct local development planning, implementation, evaluation, and monitoring processes at the community level.

## **5.2 Grassroots Practice Management: Harnessing the Deliberative Capacity**

The above notions provide suggestions at the institutional level, particularly in the LGU-DSWD-DILG dynamics. Nevertheless, this aspect of this paper's recommendation delineates how to harness the LGC provision regarding the LGU-NGO-grassroots integration. While existing mechanisms facilitate these interactions, there are still prevailing lapses in terms of what constitutes "genuine" participation in correspondence to the growing evidence of a lack of LGU-grassroots coordination evidenced in the country's poverty index and the excessive bureaucracy. Moreover, there is a connection between genuine participation in the discourse of deliberative capacity and the presence of authentic, inclusive, and consequential political deliberation that

democratizes a given political system (Dryzek, 2009). As portrayed in the experience of the Siquijor agrarian landscape in general, the existing institutional framework that caters to grassroots participation is rendered futile without thorough consideration of the deliberative capacity. With this, this paper highly recommends the following:

1. *Strengthen the Grievance and Feedback Mechanism Through Utilizing NGO/CSOs/ POs-Grassroots-Government Dynamism.* The role of the NGOs should be complementary and supportive to the programs raised by respective LGUs. From the obtained narratives of the Siquijor farmers, they are more inclined to connect with the NGOs as direct point persons of their demands. It can be done by aligning NGO roles to the provisions of the LGC: (a) allocating seats in local governing bodies and (b) allowing easy conduct of joint ventures, undertakings, and cooperative arrangements among NGOs through lifting bureaucratic restrictions.
2. *Proactive Logistical Support Roles Among NGOs and LGUs.* It has been underlined that logistical support does not necessarily come for individual/unaffiliated farmers. Regardless of why they remained this way, may it be geographically rooted or personal choice, it is the responsibility of the agricultural administration to ensure that their services will reach all constituencies, even those in the peripheries. It also applies to impoverished sectors without contacting the involved agencies for assistance. Most of the time, these people are the ones who need support the most as they remain left behind, which could also contribute to the poverty situation of the country (Biao, 2007)
3. *Encouragement of Creating Community-Driven Councils.* From the narratives of the Siquijor agrarian community, they find it more empowering to participate in decision-making bodies when affiliated with an NGO. It also allows them to exercise their rights to extensively organize and lobby their demands. Considering deliberative mechanisms, these initiatives come from a unified body of people with shared visions and interests, which is integral in shaping authentic, inclusive, and consequential policies as they collectively relay their demands to people in power (Fischer & Gottweis, 2012). It is evident in the success of the

Naga City People's Council (NCPC) where: (a) it allowed widened areas for people participation (which means more power and responsibility handed directly to the people as the NCPC would send representatives to all government committees, councils, boards, and task forces, and there in the deliberation, conceptualization, implementation, and evaluation of government projects and activities); (b) inclusive partnerships were reignited as NCPC worked hard to make both the people and the government ready for partnership which they did through capability-building programs for their members; (c) a fostered shared vision with different sectors of Naga City identifying their development agenda in pursuit of each sector's vision; (d) and the constituents liberty to criticize. Alongside the partnership, NCPC maintained its role as a critic of the government on issues that it finds detrimental to the cause of the CSOs. The promotion of the agenda of the sectors was done within and outside of formal avenues offered by the government bodies (United Nations Democracy Fund, 2016).

In a comprehensive light, deliberative capacity is the presence of an authentic, inclusive, and consequential political deliberation that democratizes a given political system (Dryzek, 2009). The findings above demarcate the salient problems of agriculture when deliberative capacity is not upheld. Benefit inequality persists in the lack of inclusivity and initiatives to organize independent farmers, which then discourages participation and results in policies deprived of authentic inputs from the policy targets, such as the Siquijor farmers. Meanwhile, the logistical concerns, administrative hindrances, and repulsion to advances and sustainable agriculture methods from farmers offered by extensionists are manifestations of the disregard for the consequential element of deliberation, which means having policies that are informed by stakeholder influence rather than a one-sided regulatory imposition. With the detachment from the marginalized and grassroots, it is indubitable that it might be interlinked to the continuing distrust in government and the initiatives for reforms. In the findings of Brillantes & Fernandez (2011), the discouragement of governmental support is traceable to the waste of public resources, poor leadership, excessive red tape, centralization, and, lastly, inefficient and ineffective delivery of services. Among her recommendation are reforms that not only include restructuring the organizations and paradigms but also allowing

citizen engagement and participation in decision-making, thus, increasing deliberative capacity among Philippine agrarian communities. To conclude, while the LGC of 1991 truly changed the local administrative landscape of the Philippines, it would only prove possible by incorporating policies to the needs of the people. Thus, the most efficient means of utilizing any policy implementation is to ascertain that the people are empowered to create meaningful institutional changes that would address their specific needs, and this is reached if the LGC of 1991 has explicit provisions that would state matters of the national government, LGU, and grassroots integration.



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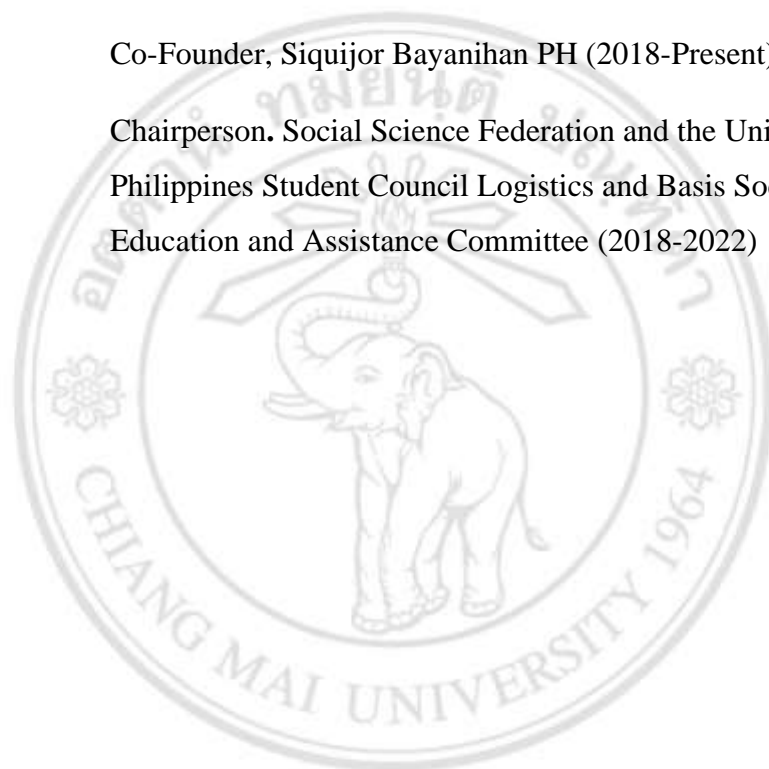
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