
Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT): 4Ps in the Lens of Philippine Decentralization

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Abstract

In keeping with its goal to combat poverty, the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program, known locally as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) provides conditional cash grants to the poorest of the poor. While there had been several initiatives aimed at evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the CCT program, not one has zeroed in on which political set-up the CCT is best compatible with. This study examined how the decentralized political set-up of the Philippines affects the 4Ps in the achievement of its goal as a development initiative. The study utilized a qualitative descriptive survey, the multiple stakeholder perspective approach, and Stakeholder Theory. The Number of Pantawid Pamilya Households by Region, Province, Municipality, Set of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Data as of April 20, 2014 was utilized for the determination of the research locale and the research respondents. As revealed, the different phases of the 4Ps as a poverty alleviation program, namely: detailed local knowledge, design and implementation of transfer, and the targeting of poverty-reducing public investment reflect the dynamic roles of both the national government and the LGU in the process.

Keywords

Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), Decentralization

Introduction and Problem Definition

Development initiatives all over the globe anchor on the constant goal to reduce poverty and design genuine welfare programs that trickle down to advantage their intended beneficiaries. The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program, as a development initiative, seeks to reduce poverty by making welfare programs conditional upon the receivers' actions. Thus, the cash transfer begins only when persons/prospective recipients meet the given criteria. In the Philippines, the CCT exists through the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) vis-à-vis the Sustainable Development Goals which comes as a social development strategy of the national government that provides conditional cash grants to extremely poor households to improve their health, nutrition and education (particularly of children age 0-14). This is the first institutionalized poverty reduction program in the country via Republic Act (RA) 11310, otherwise known as Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Act.

In retrospect, the CCT's origin antedates to the 1990s and expanded rapidly in Latin American States through the years. In fact, these states are now using CCT programs as a major tool in their social policy. Quite interestingly, in these countries, the CCT exists in the backdrop of a centralized governmental set-up. The implementation of their respective CCT programs are spearheaded by line agencies which directly identify the intended beneficiaries based on their given criteria. Brazil, for one, implemented *Bolsa Familia* in a federal government where line agencies monitor the implementation of the said program. These line agencies did well in the implementation as the key personnel were tenured rather than elected. On the other hand, the Philippines operates in a decentralized political set-up, characterized by highly empowered Local Government Units (LGUs) as enshrined by the Local Government Code of 1991 (RA 7160). Thus, while the national executive through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is tasked to implement the CCT (4Ps), the LGU is still accorded a certain degree of participation in the identification of beneficiaries, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the program thus giving an upper hand to the LGU which can very well influence the above-mentioned phases. A number of community residents raised complaints against elected local officials as to their non-inclusion in the list of beneficiaries, whereas there are those who are on the list despite a regular source of income. This, amidst the Commission on Audit (COA) report that there were funds amounting to P10.7 billion which could not be accounted for, P5.4 billion worth of unclaimed financial assistance, and P1.2 billion in 1.89 million accounts with outstanding balances (PhilStar Global, August 18, 2018).

This is where "local politics" would set in. While at the on-set the goals of the CCT of the implementing states are clear-cut, the already existing political set-up may spell the difference on whether or not this program reaches the grassroots and whether or not said program is in a sense, effective. While there had been several initiatives to evaluate the CCT

programs in order to measure its effectiveness and impact, none is said on which political set-up the CCT program is best compatible with. It is this aspect of the CCT that the researchers intend to examine in this paper.

Decentralization in the Philippines, as bolstered by RA 7160, came in the hope of cracking open the blockages of an inert central bureaucracy, giving more direct access for the people to the government and the government to the people, stimulating the whole nation to participate in its national development plans. LGUs are considered a significant arm in the implementation of 4Ps, the Philippine version of the CCT. LGUs assure that certain conditions crafted by DSWD are well carried out by the beneficiaries before they will be granted with 'cash'. However, Lebonne (2010) revealed that CCT in the Philippine has a strong electoral impact as incumbent local leaders benefit more particularly at the height of elections. The dynamics of "politics" and the mechanism of "politicking" at the local level very well affect the operation of 4Ps.

Confronted with these issues, this study seeks to examine whether or not the existing decentralized political set-up of the Philippines affects the current status of the 4Ps. Particularly, it delves on the strategy employed in the identification of beneficiaries, the design of transfer of funds and the manner on how the conditionalities are being checked and monitored. As such, a researchers' crafted archetype for the best application of the CCT in the Philippines was presented for an enhanced and improved CCT (4Ps) taking into account the narratives of experiences of all the stakeholders of this program.

Research Methodology and Design

The research methodology employed in this study is qualitative descriptive survey utilizing the multiple stakeholder perspective approach. *Stakeholder theory*, brings together the perspective of diverse institutions from different sectors regarding a certain issue or concern.

Stakeholder theory, as first detailed by R. Edward Freeman in the book, *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, is a theory of organizational management that identifies the groups which are stakeholders of an organization, and describes and recommends the method of management which can give due credit to the varied interests of the said groups. In this case the government takes on the spot of the organization taking into consideration the pluralistic interests of its constituencies in its initiative to combat poverty.

The survey was necessary to gather data regarding present conditions of the investigated subject. Personal interviews and focused group discussions (FGDs) were done with the varying stakeholders in the identified city per region all over the archipelago. A researcher-made interview guide was utilized during the personal encounters of the researchers with the respondents. Transcriptions of the interview and FGD sessions served as the raw data of the study.

Identification of Research Locale and Respondents

The provinces in the different regions of the country with the most number of beneficiaries for the 4Ps were identified as research locale. In order to have genuine representation of the different stakeholders from the community, the city with the most number of beneficiaries in the identified provinces, are taken as the respondents of the study.

Specifically, the multiple stakeholders included:

- GROUP A - DSWD Regional or Field Office;
- GROUP B - Local Government Unit (LGU) as represented by the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO);
- GROUP C - Program Beneficiaries; and
- GROUP D - Local Community.

To arrive at the list of the identified specific stakeholder indicated above, the researchers made use of the stakeholder mapping technique.

The research team made use of the *Number of Pantawid Family Households by Region, Province, Municipality, Set* of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Data as of April 20, 2014 as the basis of the identification of the research locale and the research respondents. Below is the table showing the research locale in the three island group-Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Table 1 Research Locale of the Study

ISLAND	REGION	PROVINCE	CITY/ MUNICIPALITY
Luzon	National Capital Region (NCR)	Third District	Caloocan
	Region I		
	Region II	Pangasinan	San Carlos
	Region IV-A	Isabela	Ilagan
	Region IV-B	Quezon	Lucena
	Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR)	Palawan	Taytay
		Benguet	Baguio
Visayas	Region VI	Negros Occidental	Bacolod
	Region VII	Cebu	Cebu City
Mindanao	Region IX	Zamboanga del Sur	Zamboanga
	Region X	Bukidnon	Valencia
	Region XI	Davao del Sur	Davao

Scope Delimitation

In some high risks areas which host the most number of beneficiaries within the identified regions and provinces, the researchers did not proceed with the actual interviews and focused group discussions (FGDs) due to security concerns.

Meanwhile, in some other areas identified stakeholders opted to not participate in the data gathering process due to unforeseen circumstances and/or the simple reason of unwillingness to join.

Decentralization: Devolution, Delegation, Deconcentration and Divestment

As espoused in the paper, *Decentralization: A Sampling of Definitions* (UNDP, 1999); decentralization has a variety of meanings, forms and origins:

“One of the most critical perquisites to translate decentralization from theory to practice is a clear understanding of the concept. To be able to better envision what decentralization means, how best it can be planned and implemented, what its intricacies are, and how its challenges can be overcome, development practitioners should be equipped with appropriate tools which could provide an analytical knowledge of decentralization from a conceptual viewpoint accompanied by real and field-tested examples of the concept in practice”

(UNDP, 1999, p.1)

It has to be emphasized then what decentralization is not, in order to deduce its genuine essence. As to forms, decentralization varies depending on the lens one takes on in the analysis.

In a working paper specifically prepared in connection with the *Joint UNDP-Government of Germany Evaluation of the UNDP Role in Decentralization and Local Governance (1999)*, the latter identifies four forms of decentralization, i.e., devolution, delegation, deconcentration, and divestment or privatization. Such categorization was based on Cohen and Peterson’s earlier publication.

Devolution is the transfer of natural resource management to local individuals and institutions located within and outside of the government (Edmunds et al., 2013, p.1). This type of decentralization refers to autonomous lower-level units such as provincial, district, and local authorities that are legally constituted as separate governance bodies. At such, there is the transfer of authorities from central government to new units of governments outside its direct control. This is the most common notion of decentralization.

Delegation is the transfer of managerial responsibility for specified functions to other public organizations outside normal central government control, whether provincial or local

government or parastatal agencies. This type refers to the semi-autonomous lower-level units, such as urban or regional development corporations to whom aspects of governance are delegated through legislation or under contract. In other words, delegation is the transfer of government decision-making and administrative authority and/or responsibility for carefully spelled out tasks to institutions and organizations that are either under government indirect control or semi-independent.

Deconcentration is the process by which agents of central government are relocated and dispersed geographically. This type is commonly referred to as administrative decentralization. According to the UNDP report (1999), this type is sub-ordinate lower-level units or sub-units, such as regional, district or local offices of the central administration or service delivery organization. These units usually have delegated authority in policy, financial and administrative matters without any significant independent local inputs. This involves very limited transfer of authority as compared to the first two types.

Divesting or privatization is the process of transferring an enterprise from the public to private sector. This type refers to units external to the formal governmental structure (nongovernmental or private), such as NGOs, corporations or companies. While sometimes included in discussions of decentralization, the nature of these transfers is not level-specific, i.e., transfers could occur at the same level, which is often the central one. For this reason, others opt to refer to this as divestment. Divestment occurs when planning and administrative responsibility or other public functions are transferred from government to voluntary, private, or non-government institutions.

By virtue of the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991, the Philippines took on a decentralized set-up with the goal of providing a more responsive and accountable local government structure by giving more powers, authorities, responsibilities and resources to the local government units (LGUs). Specifically, Book 1; Section 2 of the LGC stipulates:

Declaration of Policy. (a) It is hereby declared the policy of the State that the territorial and political subdivisions of the State shall enjoy genuine and meaningful local autonomy to enable them to attain their fullest development as self-reliant communities and make them more effective partners in the attainment of national goals... (b) It is also the policy of the State to ensure the accountability of local government units through the institution of effective mechanisms of recall, initiative and referendum ... (c) It is likewise the policy of the State to require all national agencies and offices to conduct periodic consultations with appropriate local government units, non-governmental and people's organizations, and other concerned sectors of the community before any project or program is implemented in their respective jurisdictions.

Moreover, *Section 4-Scope of Application*, stresses the coverage of the code to include all provinces, cities, municipalities, barangays and other political subdivisions as maybe created by law; as well as the officials, offices or agencies of the national government (to the extent provided in the LGC).

The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) - CCT in the Philippines

The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, popularly known as 4Ps is a human development program of the national government that invests in the health and education of poor households, particularly those with children aged 0-14 years old (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, 2013). This program followed the scheme of other developing countries, specifically Latin America that provide cash transfer to identified beneficiaries upon compliance with certain conditions.

The 4Ps has dual objectives, namely;

- *Social Assistance* – to provide cash assistance to the poor to alleviate their immediate need (short term poverty alleviation); and
- *Social Development* – to break the intergenerational poverty cycle through investments in human capital.

Launched in 2009, this program is in support of the Millennium Development Goals, specifically the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, achievement of universal primary education, promotion of gender equality, reduction of child mortality, and improvement of maternal health. In a study entitled *India's Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (the JSY) to Promote Institutional Birth: Is there an Association between Institutional Birth Proportion and Maternal Mortality* (Randive et al., 2013), the cash incentive was intended to reduce financial barriers to accessing institutional care for delivery. This emanates from the fact that increased institutional births are expected to reduce maternal mortality ratio (MMR).

There are two major aspects of the program, education and health. For education, children aged 0 – 14 years old must be sent to school by their parents. Eighty-five percent of the total monthly attendance has to be met in order for a child to qualify for his Php300 monthly allowance. As for health, children aged 0 – 6 years old have to be regularly vaccinated and checked in health centers at least once a month to be provided with the Php 500 monthly health and nutrition allowance for the whole household. Likewise, another facet of health care is the regular monthly check-up in health centers of pregnant women.

Following the initial success of these programs during the mid-1990s in Latin America, CCTs are currently incorporated in welfare programs of over 30 countries. Specifically, money is allotted to impoverished households to supplement family income.

A maximum of three children is allowed to avail themselves of the Php 300 monthly allowance for education in every household. This means a family with three qualified children will receive a cash grant of Php 900 as monthly allowance for education plus Php 500 monthly allowance for the family's health and nutrition. This equals a total of Php 1, 400 monthly cash grant which can be translated to Php 15, 000 annual cash grant (since there is only a 10-month allotment for education allowance and a whole year allotment for health and nutrition allowance). The focused form of human capital investment seeks to stop the vicious cycle of poverty across generations. In Thailand, a study entitled *Alleviating Social Disadvantages of Rapid Economic Growth: A Case for Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Application in Old Siam* (Kostioukova, 2011), proceeds from an understanding of the overall consequences of unequal economic development in Thailand as the rationale for asserting that a CCT program is an appropriate policy tool for the reconciliation effort.

The 4Ps followed suit from the success of the programs before it, from the *Bolsa Escola* (in 2003 merged into *Bolsa Familia*) and the *Progresá* (in 2001 renamed into *Oportunidades*) programs in Brazil and Mexico respectively in the late 1990s. In the later years, other Latin American countries also followed suit almost duplicating the programs of Brazil and Mexico. From Latin America, spreading its wide influence to Asia, thus, the 4Ps of the Philippines. Commonly referred to as the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), the 4Ps grant cash to poor families provided they met the set conditionalities (requirements) as specified.

4Ps in the Decentralized Philippine Government Set-up

In the study, *Decentralization and Poverty Alleviation: International Experience and the Case of the Philippines* Bird and Rodriguez (1999) discussed key aspects of the relationship between decentralization and poverty alleviation in the Philippines drawing from the experiences of some Latin American and neighbouring Southeast Asian countries.

Further, Bird and Rodriguez (1999) cited three ways or phases by which decentralization is expected to interact with a particular poverty alleviation policy. First, it is assumed that effective implementation of poverty alleviation policies requires a detailed and specific local knowledge which may be most readily obtainable through a decentralized and locally accountable system of governance. Second, the design and implementation of transfers exercise an important influence, for good or for ill, on local spending decisions. Lastly, the relationship between decentralization and poverty alleviation depends on the targeting of poverty-reducing public investment by local governments.

Detailed Local Knowledge

This aspect looks into a decentralized and locally accountable system of governance as the most reliable source of information of the profile of the part of the constituency, which can be classified as poor. It assumes that for a poverty alleviation

program to be successful, it should reflect the variation of preferences and choices of the people.

In the examination of 4Ps, the analysis for this aspect centered on the identification of program beneficiaries and the selection process utilized. The table below exhibits the results per area.

Table 2 Detailed Knowledge Data in the Research Locales

Research Locale	Identification of Beneficiaries	Selection Process
Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao	<p>The LGUs were tasked to identify the pockets of poverty in their locality.</p> <p>Enumerators were identified by DSWD who did the actual survey for the selection of beneficiaries.</p> <p>The LGUs provided logistical support and assistance in the conduct of the study.</p> <p>Some cities and municipalities and even barangays are not identified since these are not considered as pockets of poverty.</p>	<p>The National Household Targeting Survey (NHTS) was utilized.</p>

The NHTS is done every three years for the purpose of national census. In 2009, the same survey tool was utilized in the selection of targeted respondents. The enumerators are the field researchers that did the actual interview to come up with the data needed for profiling purposes.

In Bacolod City, a local officer explained that the process started upon the identification of the pockets of poverty at the local government unit level with the aid of a tool provided for by DSWD. The result of the identification of the pockets of poverty became the basis of the targeting during the nationwide survey.

During the nationwide conduct of the NHTS the LGUs participation was by way of providing logistics to the teams that surveyed their cities, municipalities or barangays. Technically, it was still the national government that headed the identification of beneficiaries. The decentralized sampling through the pockets of poverty merely served as the aid in the actual targeting process; not the actual source of the final list of beneficiaries.

Design and Implementation of Transfers

This phase examines the transfer of the funding source of the program. LGUs depend to some significant extent upon transfers from central government. It became imperative to determine the fund source for a certain program to be successful.

According to Bird and Rodriguez (1999), efficient assignment of revenue and expenditure responsibility to different levels of government invariably means that local governments as a group will depend to a significant extent upon transfers from the central government.

Table 3 Design and Implementation of Transfer Data in the Research Locales

Research Locale	Source of Funds	Allocation of Budget from the Lgu Level
Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao	<p>The national budget course through the Department of Social Welfare and Development is the source of funds.</p> <p>The General Appropriations Act (GAA) stipulates the budget allotted for to the DSWD. The department then subdivides its appropriation to the different programs including Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino (4Ps).</p>	<p>The LGU links whose main function is to assist DSWD links are under the LGU. The provision on their monthly salaries is coursed through the LGU fund.</p> <p>Logistics to include transportation, venues and provision on offices and the like are taken care of by the LGU.</p> <p>The LGUs sustained their social services programs through their respective City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO).</p>

With the first tranche of the implementation of the program, it has been launched as among the three major priorities of DSWD alongside *Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan* (KALAHI-CIDDS) and Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP). As such, the Pantawid Program’s funding is taken from the national budget of the said department.

Nonetheless, the LGUs are not hampered from continuing existing and initiating new social services projects for its constituents. In Bacolod City, a parent leader mentioned that because of 4Ps they are now aware of the projects initiated by the LGU which they can avail of.

“Nakatabang namu ang 4Ps..sauna mahadlok mi muduul sa city hall apan karun mu-apil nami sa mga kalihukan sa barangay...” (4Ps really helped us. Before were even afraid to go to the city hall but now we are involved with the activities of the barangay.)

LGUs have their own programs and projects separate from 4Ps on scholarship for education, feeding for the malnourished children, burial, and health insurance, among others.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the DSWD central office and the local government unit is entered to by the two parties to clearly delineate functions, roles and to clear out terms of references.

Targeting of Poverty-Reducing Public Investment

This final phase analyzes how dependent the relationship between decentralization and poverty alleviation program and policy to the targeting of poverty-reducing public investment by local governments. The implementation of the LGU of a specific national poverty alleviation program would have to depend on the nature by which the LGU should operate, categorized as either “narrow” or “broad”. Normally this nature of relationship between the two parties is spelled out in the MOA.

By being *narrow* (narrowly-defined), the transfer of income (in terms of money) is directed to the poor beneficiaries whereas a *broad* (broadly-defined) program encompasses policies intended to increase the productivity of the poor through the formation and maintenance of human capital, education and health, and improved access to markets and productive resources in general.

Further, as espoused by Bird and Rodriguez (1999) the heterogeneity of resources, capacities, costs, needs and preferences that characterize most countries, some local governments will need much more financial and technical support than others will. This notion must be accentuated in the MOA between the national government office and the local government unit.

As for the implementation of the Pantawid Program nationwide, most LGUs share the same degree of role, responsibilities and terms of references. There is a minimal variation in all the areas being mentioned. This would imply that the variety of the profile of the poor regions across the archipelago was not thoroughly considered in the determination of the manner by which the program will proceed. The matrix on the succeeding page emphasizes this point.

On a nationwide scale, the Pantawid Program may be considered as under the mixed broad-narrow targeting scheme. On the one hand, the fact that the cash grant is transferred directly to the beneficiaries through their personalized automatic teller machine (ATM) cards will classify the program as narrow. On the other hand, the holistic objective of

the program that is, social development through investing in human capital formation in the aspects of education and health with the long term goal of breaking the poverty cycle, makes this program broad. Making 4Ps as a mixed bred program somehow causes a gray area in this respect. An empowered LGU like that of Davao City may look at this program to be an easier task for them to handle rather than by that of the national government.

The City Social Services and Development Officer expressed that 4Ps must be devolved to the LGU. It is already present in RA 7160 that all community based projects must be delegated or devolved to the LGU. Since 4Ps is a community based project, LGU's should implement it. This may be an indication that DSWD may have expanded out its powers to implement welfare programs that should have been originally implemented by the LGUs.

Table 4 Targeting of Poverty-Reducing Public Investment Data in the Research Locales

Research Locale	Targeting of Poverty-Reducing Public Investment	Local Government Units' Perspective
Luzon	Mixed Broad-Narrow Targeting Scheme	Majority of the LGUs believe 4Ps should be implemented by the national government through DSWD. In San Carlos City, Pangasinan a local official sees that the LGU should be the implementer of the program. The national government should simply be the supervising agency.
Visayas	Mixed Broad-Narrow Targeting Scheme	4Ps should be implemented by the national government through DSWD.
Mindanao	Mixed Broad-Narrow Targeting Scheme	Most of the areas in Mindanao with the exemption of Davao City believe that 4Ps should be implemented by the national government through DSWD. The LGU of Davao believes that the implementation of the 4Ps should be at their level since it is a community-based program.

Further, she strongly confirmed that in Davao City there is no need for the national government to intervene, they would be able to easily handle and manage the Pantawid Program. She reiterated that social programs have already been in place decades ago.

Meanwhile other LGUs are contented with the current set-up. According to the head of CSWDO-Bacolod City, the program should stay with the national government through DSWD. She stressed the relevance of collaboration between the LGU and the national government agencies implementing the program. As she espoused, *“LGU will only come in where the national government can no longer provide for...”*

Moreover she posited that the role of LGU varies across the phases of the program, to wit: *“..during enumeration, the LGU are there to assist, during Monitoring and Evaluation, the LGU created the Advisory Council now called City Convergence Committee (CCC), to oversee the problems and create solutions. This council is represented by other agencies such as DepEd, City Health Office (CHO)...”*

The perspective of the LGU plays a vital role in the success of the program. The latter would work well for the beneficiaries in the localities where the LGUs perceived themselves as collaborators of the program. In some other areas, the beneficiaries would still be able to receive the cash grant but the services offered in the LGU would spell the difference. There are some local government units however which look at the Pantawid Program as a competition to what they already provide to their constituents.

Conversely, the Regional Office of DSWD in Zamboanga City elaborated that it is better that the national government will do it this is to avoid being used for the political agenda of its local officials. A DSWD link in Palawan had this to say, *“The national are the experts. It cannot be implemented by any agencies except by the national government.”*

Issues, Concerns and Setbacks of The Program

The areas covered by the Pantawid Program share a lot of things in common most particularly in terms of issues, concerns and setbacks. Said issues, concerns and setbacks are displayed in the succeeding table.

As for the first phase, *Detailed Knowledge*, which pertains to the identification of beneficiaries, has three shared concerns. Accordingly, there are those who used to be identified but later did not find their names in the official list. As a beneficiary in Davao expressed, *“Sa una, naa sila pag identify, paghuman kay wala na sila...”* (Before, they were identified, now they were no longer included.)

Table 5 Issues, Concerns and Setbacks in the Three Phases

Research Locale	Detailed Local Knowledge	Design and Implementation of Transfer	Targeting of Poverty- Reducing Public Investment
Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao	<p>The selection process was not made clear to the community.</p> <p>The poor population was not saturated in some areas.</p> <p>The non-identification of qualified beneficiaries and the identification of unqualified beneficiaries.</p>	<p>The delay of the cash transfer.</p> <p>Discrepancy in the amount of cash grant.</p> <p>Misuse of the cash grant (contrary to the intended purpose) of some of the beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Non-compliance of the beneficiaries on some of the conditionalities of the program.</p> <p>Unsystematic and slow update system.</p> <p>The nature of the program (dole out system).</p>

At Barangay Poblacion, Valencia City, Bukidnon, they have this to say; “..kami unta jud ang dapat murecommend sa angayan mahimu ug beneficiaries...kami baya nka-ila aning among mga lumulupyu...ang nahitabu karun kay naay di mga angayan nga naapil..ang mga enumerators kay wala man naminaw sa among mga gipang-identify nga areas..” (We should be the one to recommend the beneficiaries. We are the ones who know the residents. What is happening is that there are those undeserving who are included in the list. The enumerators were not listening with our identified areas.)

Meanwhile, the local community in Calocan City observed that some enumerators simply did an FGD to the residents instead of doing a one-on-one interview with the members of the households in the barangay level. Those identified somehow just got lucky to be identified but should not be part of the beneficiaries in the first place. The locals perceived a lack of coordination between the LGU and the DSWD in reference to conducting the NHTS.

Noteworthy to mention is the case of Zamboanga City and Bacolod City whereby the beneficiaries shared their experience and narrated that they were not aware what the interview was for. The majority thought that it was the usual survey for the census. Others even opted not to participate as they considered the process to be a waste of time.

As for the *Design and Implementation of Transfer*, the primary setback was the cash grant delay. There are instances whereby the cash is lumped with three or even five months before the granting. The cause for the delay is oftentimes not explained to the beneficiaries. In addition, there seems to be a discrepancy in what the beneficiaries received. Some received more while others receive less than what was expected. Those with more school children seemed to have received less than others with only one child attending basic education. When the DSWD links were asked about this concern, their common response was the delay in the upgrading of personal information by the national office.

Finally, the misuse of the cash grant is among the setbacks that are beyond the realm of both the national and local government units. Since the cash was granted directly to the beneficiaries from the national funding thru their ATM cards, it is rather difficult to monitor how the cash granted was spent. The twin areas of education and health for the children as well as pregnant women are the supposed object of the grant. Yet, a few parent beneficiaries spent the money for other purposes.

On the aspect of *Targeting of Poverty-Reducing Public Investment*, the first issue is related to that of the transfer of cash. A number of beneficiaries were found to be non-compliant of certain conditionalities and misuse of the cash grant. Furthermore, this connects to the issue of the nature of the program to which many would claim is still a dole out. This notion of the public is rooted from the fact that the actual cash grant is given directly to the beneficiaries; not coursed through a middle agency.

Lastly, the profile update system of the beneficiaries may be considered as the primary setback of the program holistically. In status quo, from the national to the regional office, the access to the system is allowed whereas at the city level no access is given. This seems to be detrimental in the progress of the program as the City links are the direct contact of the beneficiaries. At their level, the update of the profile of the beneficiaries should already be addressed thus other issues and concerns pertaining to the amount of cash grant received will already be addressed.

The Multiple Stakeholder Analysis

Figure 1 exhibits the *Multiple Stakeholder Grid* in two dimensions. First, the stakeholders were divided according to their stakes on the Pantawid Program. Accordingly, three stakes were determined on the basis of the nature of the interest or involvement of the varying groups to the program under study.

Economic pertains to the monetary and fiscal aspects of the program. All the stakeholders have a stake on this in varying perspective. For the program beneficiaries, the actual cash grant that they will receive, provided the conditionalities are met, is their economic motive in participating in the program. The local community to which these

beneficiaries belong indirectly profits from this program by way of the economic activities stimulated with the cash grant that flows to the pockets of the beneficiaries.

Moreover, the DSWD national office and DSWD links assigned in the cities and municipalities to forerun the Pantawid Program took an economic standpoint due to the nature of the work they do. This set of stakeholders is in the frontline in the implementation of the program. Basically their income is sourced out from their salaries. The agency's budget is also dependent to the programs it provides to the Filipino people, the Pantawid Program as a flagship for poverty alleviation definitely carries the biggest bulk of the national budget allocation of DSWD. Meanwhile, the LGU's concern is primarily economic. The LGUs bear the following expenses- funding for the logistical support and assistance in the identification of the beneficiaries; implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the program on the ground. Most LGUs under study were strict in terms of ownership of a particular program since the Pantawid Program is that of DSWD, a few LGUs were skeptical to source out local funds in terms of the assistance they have to provide in the implementation.

Political stake refers to the administrative and technical aspect of the program. On this, the LGU carry the most fundamental political stake as the program beneficiaries are all constituents of the barangays to which they belong. The LGU has a direct access to the beneficiaries through the deployment of LGU links who are tasked to work closely with the DWSD links. As such, both the LGU links and DSWD links hold some degree of political stake on this regard. To some extent local leaders have the tendency to abuse this kind of access to the beneficiaries particularly during election. If given the opportunity to decide majority of the stakeholders would most likely opt for the cash grant to be coursed through the LGU for easy monitoring of the utilization of the cash by the beneficiaries.

Nevertheless, the beneficiaries who are the target of the program felt otherwise. All of them are contented with the status quo. They thought the DSWD links were doing a great job, reflecting their confidence also of the current administration. The feeling of empowerment and inclusion in governance is definitely a positive indicator in terms of the success of the program. The primary concern of the beneficiaries is rooted in economics as they express the need to increase the cash grant which they perceive as minimal.

Figure 1 reflects the two dimensional grid presenting with the first dimension categorizing the stakeholders by interest or stake and the second dimension categorizing the stakeholders in terms of the phases of interaction between decentralization and poverty alleviation policy.

Phases	Detailed Local Knowledge	Design and Implementation of Transfer	Targeting of Poverty-Reducing Public Investments
Stake			
Economic	Program Beneficiaries Local Community	DSWD LGU/CSWDO	LGU/CSWDO DSWD
Political		DSWD LGU/CSWDO	LGU/CSWDO DSWD
Social (Influencers)	Local Community	LGU/CSWDO	LGU/CSWDO DSWD

Figure 1 Stakeholder Grid for the Multiple Stakeholders of 4Ps

Social stake relates to the collective or societal impact the program has to the local community and to the local governance as well. This stake is also reflective of how the program is influenced by the LGU administration.

The second dimension of the grid analysis is on the phases of interaction between decentralization and poverty alleviation policy as espoused by Bird and Rodriguez (1999).

Detailed local knowledge assumes that the best people who have the information are the local community and the residents (who latter were identified as beneficiaries). It can thus be opined that a decentralized government structure can bring the most direct source of information necessary to come up with a sound program to combat poverty. In this case, the LGU was not directly involved in the actual identification since the official list of beneficiaries came from the national office of the implementing agency, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The identification of the pockets of poverty in their area of jurisdiction merely shortlisted barangays, municipalities and cities to areas of priority but does not directly target deserving beneficiaries.

The profile of the beneficiaries could have been very different had the LGU been given a hand to directly identify the beneficiaries and not just the areas of priority. The enumerators who did the NHTS may have had the perspective of a non- partisan as there was no direct knowledge of the public involved. But there are instances wherein priority areas

were not reached during the survey because the maximum number of beneficiaries allotted for the whole province was already reached. In this manner, genuine identification of the most deserving beneficiaries was not aptly achieved.

The LGU participation in the identification of beneficiaries can still be categorized as logistical. The devolution was only up to the level of the field office that was under the national office of DSWD. The responsibility of the LGU was more of assistance.

Design and implementation of transfer examines the funding source of the program. To some extent, LGUs depend to some significant extent upon transfers from central government. The takers for this phase are the DWSD, with the LGU in the forefront. This has been the primary issue of both the national agency and the LGUs. Politics play a vital role here as this becomes an issue on priority and delivery.

Priority in terms of the thrust of the current administration and which agency or unit can best deliver the expected outcome to the optimum with the most minimal cost. Obviously, the presidency is still inclined to give his full confidence to the national agency than the LGU. Nonetheless, his leadership recognizes the fact that support at the local level is a necessity for the success of the program thus accentuating the role of the LGU as collaborator of the DSWD in the implementation of the program.

For the targeting of poverty-reducing public investment, the takers are the two government agencies – DSWD and the LGU. This phase is highly technical as it analyzes the holistic nature and design of the program. The said agencies are the ones in the position to claim this phase vis-à-vis economics, politics and social facet. These two groups of stakeholders are in the position to influence the program due to their direct interaction with the local community and the national government, of course, with the national agency ahead of the LGU as regards to access (proximity) to the national government.

The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program: The Philippine Archetype

Table 6 4Ps: The Philippine Archetype

Phases of the 4ps	Practice	Modified Scheme
Detailed Local Knowledge	Decentralized	Highly Decentralized
Design and Implementation of Transfer	Centralized	Decentralized
Targeting of Poverty-Reducing Public Investments	Mixed Narrow and Broad	Broad

It cannot be gainsaid that all CCTs generally serve two economic objectives. First, they seek to provide low-income households with a minimum consumption floor. Second, they create channels of opportunity and encourage socioeconomic mobility (Kostioukova, 2011) corresponding to their dual objectives for (1) social assistance, and (2) social development. The CCT program, however, is not a one size fits all, as the uniqueness of the country in terms of structure and policy to which the same is to be adopted, has to be considered for the program not only to gain popularity but to ensure compliance, and ultimately lead to its eventual success. Thus, the study came up with the 4Ps: The Philippine Archetype as gleaned in Table 6 as its recommendation to make the CCT program better suited for the nation.

As to detailed local knowledge, viz: identification of program beneficiaries and the selection process utilized, 4Ps is considered decentralized because of the role of the LGUs in identifying the pockets of poverty which areas are being shortlisted by DSWD, the latter, through its enumerators doing the actual survey through the NHTS. With this process, given the fact that the intended beneficiaries are limited in number, identified beneficiaries only come from these pre-identified pockets of poverty. And even within these pockets of poverty, the survey did not reach other areas (i.e. far-flung barangays, sitios and puroks) because the intended number of beneficiaries was already attained. This pitfall can be avoided if the process of identification and selection of program beneficiaries is made highly decentralized. By this, the LGU would be given an upper hand in the identification and feel empowered in the selection of the beneficiaries. Given the knowledge of the LGUs of its constituencies, the target number of beneficiaries may be equally diffused among the areas included in the pockets of poverty. As such, deserving households living in remote barangays, sitios or puroks would receive equal access to this social welfare program of the government.

In terms of the design and implementation of transfer, 4Ps is considered centralized. There is direct transfer of financial resources from the national government to the intended beneficiaries. Issues as to the delay of the cash transfer, discrepancy in the amount of cash grant and misuse of the cash grant can easily be remediable in a decentralized process of design and implementation of transfer. In a decentralized set-up, the LGUs as the alter-ego of the national government become a conduit of the 4Ps instrumental to its success. First, the LGUs are being tasked to scrupulously monitor that the cash grants are given as scheduled and that the amount of cash grant is exact. Second, LGUs are in the best position to directly check on the proper utilization of the cash grant of the program beneficiaries and it can also arouse civic awareness and vigilance on this regard (i.e. mechanism of feedback and report). Thus, there has to be fiscal autonomy of the LGUs as to the 4Ps fund, as such greater accountability is expected from them.

As to targeting of poverty-reducing public investments, 4Ps is considered under the mixed broad-narrow targeting scheme. Narrow, in the sense that the cash transfer is directly given to the beneficiaries. Broad, as the nature of the program in terms of social development is encompassing. It ultimately addresses the perennial problem of poverty by investing in human capital formation in the aspects of education and health. There are, however, apparent setbacks from having a narrow targeting scheme. First, its dole out nature makes difficult the achievement of human capital formation. Second, there is complacency of the beneficiaries in terms of compliance (or lack thereof) of the program conditionalities. Third, is on the problem of inefficient and lethargic update system which renders difficult the responsiveness of the program to reach its desired goals. In hindsight, 4Ps can best work in a broad targeting scheme. Here, the LGUs role in the implementation of the poverty alleviation program is both dynamic and pragmatic. There is heightened collaboration between the national and local government in assuring that public interest is best served through effective implementation of genuine welfare programs such as the 4Ps.

Conclusion

In the different phases of the 4Ps, namely: detailed local knowledge, design and implementation of transfer, and the targeting of poverty-reducing public investment it is apparent that the roles of the national government (through the DSWD) and the local government (through the CSWDO) vary. Thus, there is a need to constantly monitor and evaluate the program vis-à-vis its intended goals, taking into consideration the issues, concerns and setbacks along the process. Succinctly put, the terms of reference stipulated in the MOA must also be reflective of the different phases of the program and the varying functions the LGU has to take in each of these phases. This is so as to avoid competing interests between the national government and the LGU, taking into consideration that both have the same stake on the 4Ps, be it- economic, political and social.

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