

The Policy Process of the Philippines' Conditional Cash Transfer Program: Analysis of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)

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Abstract: The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program in the Philippines popularly known as the 4Ps or the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program aimed to improve the lives of poor Filipinos and promote better health and social status. This paper discussed the policy process of the 4Ps starting from problem identification to the agenda setting, then policy formulation/legitimation up to the implementation and evaluation. Through a review of related literature, public policy theories and frameworks such as the Black Box, Kingdon's Streams Metaphor, etc. were used in explaining the various stages of the program. Data from the World Bank, NEDA, and DSWD were also presented in order to provide evidence for the different stages of the policy process of the program. Originally, the 4Ps targeted children 0-14 years old, however, it was changed to 0-18 years so as to address the need of the beneficiaries' children to at least finish high school so as to have a relatively good job. Moreover, the 4Ps started with 284 thousand beneficiaries since its inception in 2008. In 2016, the program covers 79% of the poor households in the country which demands more budgets for the program. The formulation and legitimation of the 4Ps can be deduced from the discussion of Curry, et. al. (2013) of whether the 4Ps was truly an adoption of the Bolsa Familia or just an imitation of it. The cost-benefit evaluation of the 4Ps from the vantage point of a transnational actor has rendered it feasible to still be implemented and continued.

Keywords: Conditional Cash Transfer, Public Policy, Poverty Alleviation, Agenda Setting, Policy Process

I. INTRODUCTION

It is said that public policy as cited by Birkland (2011) can be defined as "what the government chooses to do or not to do" (Dye, 1992). The public policy process involves the recognition of a problem or issue which will be transformed as an agenda. From this, the policy or initiative will stem (Weiner, 2011). Certain alternatives will be presented so as to create choices that have its own costs and benefits. The policymaker will now decide and weigh his options in order to arrive with the best possible course to take for the making of the policy. In this light, the policies in place reflect the problems and concerns that a certain government prioritizes and the absence thereof signifies the neglect to pursue certain agendas.

The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program popularly known as the 4Ps or the *Pantawid Pamilyang*

Pilipino Program aimed to improve the lives of poor Filipinos and promote better health and social lives. Interestingly, the program targets families that specifically have children aged 0-18 years old. Moreover, the cash grants are subject to the number of children in the family. The ability of this policy to provide a better life to poor families especially to their children has yet to be proven. This is especially when the 4Ps has been used as disposable income and the fulfillment of the conditions associated with the cash grants has been said to be rather pretentious.

This paper will try to venture the policy process of the 4Ps, starting from the formulation to the implementation together with its respective concerns and issues. The first section will be a presentation of the 4Ps in the Philippines. A discussion of the context and history as well as the emergence of the conditional cash transfer in South America and in many parts of the world was provided as a foundation for the analysis of the 4Ps. The application of public policy theories and frameworks were utilized to provide a substantive evaluation of the 4Ps.

I. What Is the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program?

The Department of Social Welfare and Development is the designated agency to supervise the general implementation of the 4Ps. According to them, the program is a human development measure of the national government that provides conditional cash grants to the poorest of the poor, to improve the health, nutrition, and the education of children aged 0-18 (DSWD, 2018).

The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) has the following objectives as cited from the DSWD:

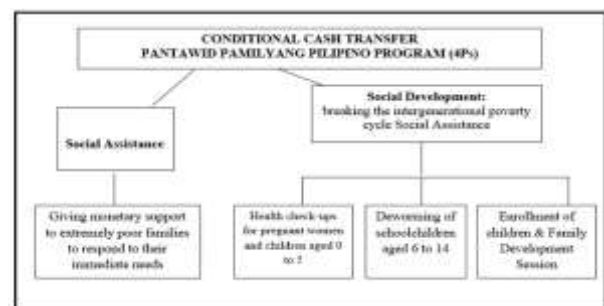


Fig. 1 The conceptual framework of the 4Ps. (DSWD, 2018).

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) specifically *eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, in achieving universal primary education, in promoting gender equality, in reducing child mortality, and in improving maternal health care* are said to be key targets of the 4Ps to address.

To be a beneficiary of the program, one has to meet the following criteria (DSWD, 2018):

1. Residents of the poorest municipalities, based on 2003 Small Area Estimates (SAE) of the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB)
2. Households whose economic condition is equal to or below the provincial poverty threshold
3. Households that have children 0-18 years old and/or have a pregnant woman at the time of assessment
4. Households that agree to meet conditions specified in the program

The cash grants to be given to the beneficiaries of the program are as follows:

GRANT	AMOUNT	
	PER MONTH	PER TEN MONTHS/YEAR
Health	500	6,000
Education	300/child	3,000
Total	1,400 (For Household with three children)	15,000

Table 1. Cash grants for the beneficiaries of the 4Ps. (DSWD, 2018)

provided that they will fulfill the conditions under the social development course of the program (as seen in Figure 1.).

II. CONTEXT AND HISTORY

a. Chronic Poverty

As presented in the study of Dadap (2011), the table below shows the rates of poverty in the Philippines:

Table 1.1. Ratio of Urban and Rural Poverty from 1985 to 2006

	1985	1988	1991	1994	1997	2000	2003	2006
Urban	20.5	17.7	29.3	28.8	22.6	23.5	22.7	25.2
Rural	79.5	82.3	70.7	71.2	77.4	76.5	77.3	74.8

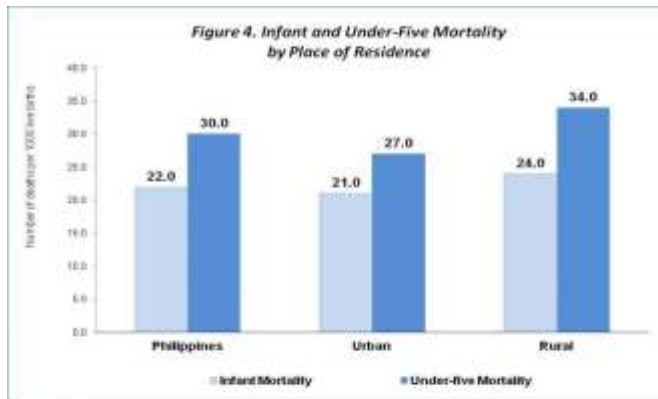
Fig. 2 Poverty Rates in the Philippines. (Dadap, 2011)

The ratio of urban and rural poverty shows how people from rural areas, specifically those that work for agriculture and fisheries comprise more of the poor people in the country. It is also said that these numbers reflect how poverty seems to be unchanging over the years even with measures and policies placed in order to address the problem.

According to Orbeta and Paqueo (2016), despite the economic reforms from the Marcos regime to Arroyo and Aquino’s administration, the total number of poor people has risen from 22.6 million in 2006 to 26.6 million in 2015 but this rise was due to the increase in population and slow decline

of the poverty rate in 2009-2015 despite the implementation of the 4Ps in two administrations.

Aside from this, conditions to sustain and improve lives have resulted to unchanged infant, child and maternal mortality rates, low enrollment in the secondary education levels and same rates of drop-out in schools.



Source: National Statistics Office, 2011 Family Health Survey

Figure 3. Infant and Mortality Rates (NSO, 2011).

GROSS ENROLLMENT AND DROPOUT RATES IN THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY LEVEL

LEVEL	SCHOOL YEAR	GROSS ENROLLMENT RATE	DROPOUT RATES (%)							
			NOT AVAILABLE	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78
ELEMENTARY	1971-72	81.8%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%
	1972-73	81.8%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%
SECONDARY	1971-72	7.8%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%
	1972-73	7.8%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%	22.1%

Fig. 4 Infant and Mortality Rates (PhilStar, 2014).

b. The Emergence of the CCT

Based on the World Bank policy research report (2009), the importance of Conditional Cash Transfers as social safety net programs have been highlighted after the global financial crisis in 2008. The popularity of CCTs started in South American countries such as the Brazil’s *Bolsa Família* and Mexico’s *Oportunidades* which have rendered cash transfers for education and health that benefited millions of people. In Asia, particularly, Bangladesh and Cambodia, CCT programs have been used to lower gender disparity in education. Generally, the World Bank reported that the CCT programs that have been implemented resulted to an increase in the consumption of poor people in the world. Moreover, CCT programs provided poor people with the capacity to withstand the effects of unemployment, disasters and income/economic shocks. The CCT wave is said to have started in the 1990s onwards which can be seen in the figure below. From the South American countries, CCT programs over the decade have been implemented by most of the South American continent as well as countries from Asia, Africa and Europe.

were changed in accordance with the concerns and issues that the program underwent in the past administrations.

In this regard, we can see how the policy process is dynamic and will never be devoid of politics as one policy can change in accordance to the executive and the legislative which are the official actors in the policymaking environment. Moreover, the executive policymaking can be highlighted as Arroyo, Aquino and Duterte’s agenda setting differs in pursuing the same agenda with the same policy.

b. Historical Institutional Approach

In her dissertation, Dadap (2011) used the historical institutional approach in dissecting and understanding the 4Ps as CCT program in the Philippines. As a social policy, the 4Ps has been traced to spring from the necessity of addressing poverty since history shows that the country has been relatively poor and incapable of providing good living conditions to most of its people. Moreover, the declaration of the Millennium Development Goals has pushed for this initiative to create a program that will allow the country to achieve certain MDGs. This was also claimed by the DSWD as one of the importance of the program. However, Dadap (2011) reflected that the social policy that is the 4Ps seems to be manifestation of the:

“country’s unchanged social policy trajectory epitomized by the bias for targeted, palliative, and purportedly apolitical social provision measures, not to mention externally-influenced, drawing —encouragement and financial support from multilateral institutions, all at the expense of structural reform and redistribution”.

It also appeared that the CCT of Aquino failed to recognize and solve certain structural issues which left the policy unable to provide a long-term solution for poverty and inequality. As recommended by Dadap (2011), the Philippines need to realize that social policymaking is not as easy like in many other policies. The junctures in history and the institutions that made up the state are important considerations in making a social policy that is suitable to answer the deeply embedded problems of the Philippine society.

c. Kingdon’s Streams Metaphor

The Multiple Streams Approach or the Kingdon’s Streams Metaphor of the Public Policy Process refers to the convergence of the politics, problem and policy streams that will lead to a certain “window of opportunity”, allowing for a policy to be crafted (Birkland, 2011). This framework is important in the study of public policy since it allows us to understand why certain policy adoptions take place and why some are not.

In terms of the 4Ps, it is clear that problem stream can be described as the unchanging and seemingly unsolvable problem of chronic poverty in the Philippines. As the population continues to grow, the number of poor families and people unemployed increases as well. As the problem of

poverty elevates, the prevalence of crime increases and the number of Filipinos going abroad intensifies now more than ever. Institutional problems arise especially in families wherein poverty creates an environment of dependency.

According to Birkland (2011), the policy stream “contains potential ideas that could be advocated as solutions to a problem”. In this regard, the policy streams for the problem of poverty in the Philippines are numerous. Policies and programs that provide poor people with trainings (TESDA), jobs (DOLE), homes (NHA), financial support for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (DTI), and subsidized education (DepEd) and health (DOH) services are some of the sources of existing policy streams. Kim and Yoo (2015) discussed that after getting independence through the People Power, the Philippine government has utilized various efforts in order to reduce poverty in the Philippines. Below is a table that Kim and Yoo (2015) used to show the different social protection frameworks that have been used in the Philippines.

Table 1. Social Protection Framework of the Philippines

Social insurance	Labour market interventions	Social welfare	Social safety nets
Retirement/pension plan	Employment generation	Basic social services	Emergency assistance
Health insurance	Skills and training	Conditional cash and in-kind transfer	Unconditional cash transfers
Crop insurance	Labour and trade policies	Capacity building programs	Feeding programs
	Agricultural support	Program support (targeting system)	Price subsidies
			Food subsidies
			Emergency employment
			Remittance/emergency loan

Source: NEDA-SDC (2007) and DSWD (2008)

Fig. 7 Social Protection Framework of the Philippines. (Kim and Yoo, 2015).

However, these streams seem to lack the capacity to provide gradual and significant change in the rates of poverty. Thus, the leaning towards the policy stream of the CCT was due to how it was effectively crafted and implemented in Brazil in 2003. As a social safety net program, the 4Ps offers better results as its conditions will require improvement of human capital that is needed for employment and income generation. As stated earlier, the 4Ps was pilot-tested in identified poor municipalities in 2007 by the DSWD.

Finally, the politics stream which was dependent on political and public opinion has been evident in President Arroyo’s administration wherein the people clamored for the implementation of the 4Ps for it will safeguard them from difficulties of unemployment and economic growth. Arroyo supported DSWD’s initiative for the reduction of poverty as the National Economic Development Authority has approved the program for its projected benefits. More importantly, Arroyo capitalized on this demand for cash transfer in order to gain public approval and support especially in the midst of distrust and accusations of corruption that was brought about by the famous *Hello Garci* scandal in 2005.

As these three streams paralleled, the long-standing problem of poverty, the policy stream through the initiative of DSWD in 2007, and the need for political support by Arroyo has led to a “window of opportunity” to formalize and implement the 4Ps in a national scale.

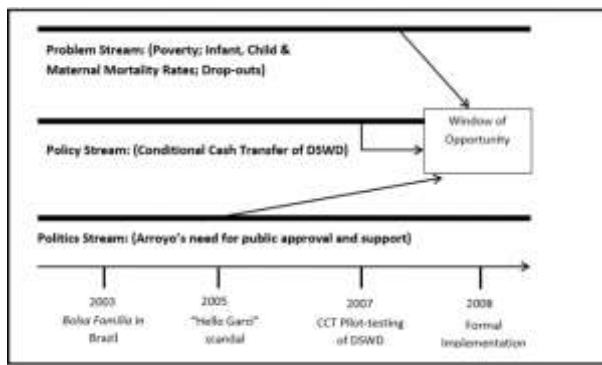


Fig. 8 Adopted Multiple Streams Framework for the 4Ps.

d. Public Policy Transfer Theory

Debonneville and Diaz (2013) discussed why the Philippines opted to create a CCT counterpart of Brazil's *Bolsa Familia*. They claimed that public policy transfer can be defined as the:

process in which "knowledge about how policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political setting." (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000).

This theory is very applicable as the DSWD strongly claimed the adoption of the Philippines' 4Ps to that of Brazil's. Moreover, Debonneville and Diaz (2013) claimed that in relation to assumptions of rationality and intentionality, inspirations can be drawn from the success of other country's policies. Aside from this, it is noticeable that the Philippine government seems to look at the international arena for public policymaking. In this regard, the role of transnational actors, organizations and interest groups had been utilized in order to come up with the notion of the 4Ps.

The World Bank, according to Debonneville and Diaz (2013) has supported the transfer of knowledge through the generation of researches that allowed the Philippines to learn more about the CCT and how it can be made successful. The World Bank initiated international conferences on CCT while the Asian Development Bank sponsored a similar conference in the Philippines during the Aquino administration. Through these efforts, the public policy transfer has rendered capacities for the Philippines to improve the 4Ps and at the same time encourage other developing countries to realize the possibility of using CCT as an anti-poverty measure. As a conclusion, Debonneville and Diaz (2013) claimed that the role of the World Bank in the agenda-setting of the 4Ps has been important in terms of providing our policymakers with the ideas and tools for its creation. The continuous process of knowledge-sharing has been useful to the 4Ps and in providing our presidents with the capacity to better implement the program.

IV. THE 4PS AND POLICYMAKING AS A PROCESS

This section will tackle the 4Ps as a policy through the steps of policymaking process by Dye (2013). The content for each part is a fusion of how 4Ps was created, implemented and evaluated and the other part is the concern and issues that occur on each step.

a. Problem Identification

The problem of poverty as discussed earlier can be related to the rapid growth rate in the country. Based on the NSO website as cited from Dadap (2011), *the 2007 census is 88.5 million, of which 44.8 are males and 43.8 are females. Its average population growth rate as of that same year is 2.04 which registers only a .32 decrease from 2000's 2.36.* Most of the poor families in the country reside in rural areas or provinces. Families from the Caraga Region (39.8%) and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (38.1%) were recorded to have the highest poverty incidence while Central Visayas (415,303) and Bicol (385,338) have highest number of poor families (Dadap, 2011). Associated with poverty are poor living conditions that inhibit a good quality life for the people.

b. Agenda Setting

As already discussed, the agenda that put the CCT forward has been through transnational organizations like the World Bank together with a shift in the strategy of our policymakers to look at the international arena when crafting policies. In the case of the 4Ps, the agenda has been shaped by how successful the CCT in Brazil was.

Orbeta and Paqueo (2016) discussed that the objectives of the 4Ps revolved around (1) *Co-responsibility and social contract approach*; (2) *Demand-side emphasis*; and (3) *Expansion of coverage and costs*. The 4Ps as a CCT can be viewed as a social contract between the beneficiaries and the government. Through the said contract, the government can communicate its agenda in terms of health, education and social welfare. On the other side, the people are held to be responsible to know and to observe practices that will enable them to have a better life. This "*co-responsibility*" that the 4Ps impose on the government to provide the cash transfer and other benefits in time while the beneficiaries are expected to do the conditions that will affect their families' health and education. Originally, the 4Ps targeted children 0-14 years old, however, it was changed to 0-18 years so as to address the need of the beneficiaries' children to at least finish high school so as to have a relatively good job.

In the supply side approach wherein the government allocated resources in the initial implementation of the 4Ps, the problem that arose was that the beneficiaries did not get to fully utilize these resources. Instead of focusing in producing the resources, the 4Ps has been reframed to the demand-side wherein the beneficiaries are being meticulously identified and their needs are recognized before the provision of benefits and the imposition of conditions.

Lastly, the 4Ps started with 284 thousand beneficiaries since its inception in 2008. In 2016, the program covers 79% of the poor households in the country which demands more budgets for the program. As presented by Orbeta and Paqueo (2016) in the figure below, the 4Ps' budget drastically increase from 2008-2014 but was almost constant until 2016. Despite the seemingly large amount of money allocated for the project, the 2015 Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) showed that there is an estimated 135.6 billion pesos gap between the average household income of poor families and the poverty threshold. This requires that the 4Ps should be able to further expand its budget and coverage so as to truly address the problem of poverty in the country.

These objectives can be used to reflect the agenda of the government agencies, the organizations, the interest groups in terms of redesigning and making the 4Ps more effective and efficient as a CCT program.

Figure 2. Budget of Pantawid Pamilya, 2008 to 2016

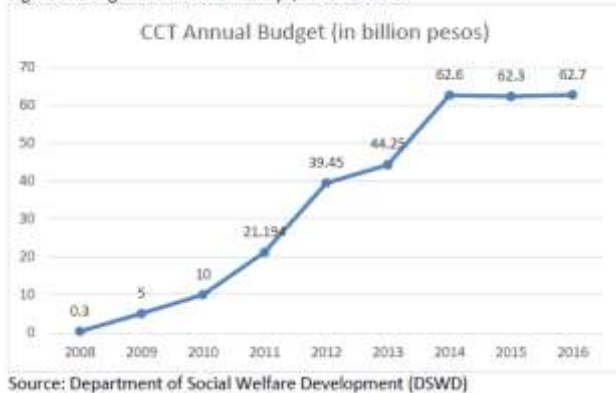


Figure 9. Budget of 4Ps (2008-2016). (Orbeta and Paqueo, 2016).

c. Policy Formulation and Legitimation

The formulation and legitimation of the 4Ps can be deduced from the discussion of Curry, et. al. (2013) of whether the 4Ps was truly an adoption of the *Bolsa Familia* or just an imitation of it. The difference of the CCT in Brazil is that it was already part of the economic reforms that long-been practiced in the country. Unlike the Philippines who are used to policies that lend money and financial support and not really transfer money without it coming back. As cited by Curry, et. al. (2013):

The CCT Programs, as is less commonly known that it should be, were "invented" in Latin America, "bought" by donors, and "sold" as innovative solutions elsewhere. (Britto, 2005, p.25).

This means that the public policy transfer wherein the adoption of "best practices" from other countries does not mean that it will yield the same results. For Curry, et. al. (2013), the 4Ps was a mere imitation of the *Bolsa Familia*, expecting similar results from relying only in the policy.

However, the 4Ps was legitimized in the country because our leaders like Aquino in the assumptions of rationality and

intentionality cooperated in the steps of improving the program. Aside from this, the Filipino people already subscribed to the notion of cash transfers as it seem easier to comply with the conditions of the program than to look for the money that could have been given with this policy.

d. Policy Implementation

Kim and Yoo (2015) looked at the process by which the 4Ps was implemented in the country. As can be seen below, the authors used this table to show that poverty has not change even with the implementation of the 4Ps in 2008. Indicators of poverty remain the same and what is striking as shown is the GDP growth rate has decreased simultaneously.

Kim and Yoo (2015) attributed the failure of the implementation of the 4Ps to generate change against political corruption that was characterized by patronage politics. Since politicians can influence the implementation of the policy even if it is under the DSWD, beneficiaries can be selected on the basis of political interests. Beneficiaries seem to have "utang na loob" to the politicians or the bureaucrats that allowed them to benefit from the CCT.

Moreover, as observed, the 4Ps further pushed the culture of lending in poor people and communities as the beneficiaries of 4Ps observed the practice of surrendering their ATM cards to loan sharks so that they can get the money in advance. Instead of getting the full amount, beneficiaries had to get less of the money as they have to pay for the interest of their loans. This culture is brought upon as well by poor implementation because oftentimes, especially during the initial stage of the program, the cash transfer took longer time than expected. Families now have to find a "financial outlet" for the time being and lending is the preferred solution of most. To this, we can also see that dependency on the program has become the culture of the beneficiaries instead of looking for alternative sources of income.

e. Policy Evaluation

The effectiveness of the 4Ps as a policy is also dependent on how much international organizations such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank will financially support it. In this regard, the Asian Development Bank (2014) published an economic and financial analysis of the 4Ps as it proposed to provide additional funding to the program. According to them, the program has strong economies of as it is expected that DSWD has an adequate absorptive capacity to properly implement the program. Aside from this, the Bank also recognized the commitment of the government in the programs as evident in the share of the GDP that is allocated for social protection (as seen below). The ADB claimed that the institutionalization of the program will render positive results which provide a good enough reason to further finance the program.

Table 1: Comparison of Social Protection and Social Spending (%)

Region/ Country	Latest Year	Share of GDP			Social Spending (d) = c + education + health	Social Portion of Social Spending*
		Social Assistance (a)	Social Insurance (b)	Social Protection (c) = a + b		
Brazil	2010			15.6	27.1 ^a	57.2
East Asia and Pacific			2.6	3.6	9.5	36.8
Latin America		1.3	3.8	5.1	13.4	38.1
Caribbean				5.0	12.8 ^b	39.1
Mexico	2011			1.6	5.7	28.1
Philippines	2009	0.2	1.4	2.3	6.9	33.3
	2012	0.9	1.4	2.3	8.2	28.0
South Asia		2.5	1.6	4.1	7.1	57.7
Thailand	2011	0.9	1.4	2.3	9.0	33.3
Viet Nam	2010			3.7	12.8 ^b	29.4

Fig. 10 Comparison of Countries' Social Protection and Spending. (ADB, 2014).

For the economic analysis, ADB attributed the benefits associated with education, health and economy to the continuance of the 4Ps. To assess the 4Ps in terms of its costs and benefits, ADB introduced the notion of economic costs. Economic cost is defined as *the benefits foregone in allocating resources to one activity rather than another* (ADB, 2014). Through this, the ADB claimed that economic costs incurred in the implementation of the 4Ps has rendered the program beneficial to poverty reduction by improving human capital in terms of education and health.

The impact evaluation of the ADB based on its economic analysis concluded that:

The demand-side support provided by the program to poor families is essential to ensure the achievement of the desired outcomes in health, education, and poverty reduction. Risks can be mitigated, and the potential private and social returns to investing in Pantawid remain substantial (ADB, 2014).

To this, it can be deduced that the cost-benefit evaluation of the 4Ps from the vantage point of a transnational actor has rendered it feasible to still be implemented and continued. As funding from the ADB and World Bank is expected, the capacities of the 4Ps to reduce poverty are better than before. However, it is important to note that even ADB recognized certain risks in the further implementation of the program.

First, there seems to be a danger of having insignificant impact of the program in the elementary enrollment since it is already 98% and getting 100% is less likely to happen. Another risk is on the enrollment in secondary education. ADB claimed that lower enrollment rates might be expected in areas with no high schools and the quality of education might discourage the beneficiaries to send their children to high school. Third, misinformation about the impacts and benefits of the program might undermine the political support to the program. But among the risks, this is the most unlikely to happen. Finally, rate of return for education might fall as the country might have more high school graduates and no jobs to offer.

V. CONCLUSION

A good public policy is indeed important. Conditional Cash Transfer's emergence as an anti-poverty measure has served a great deal of benefits to the South

American people. In the age of globalization, it is expected the transfer of knowledge transcends even in the creation of national policies. What might seem as successful to one country is expected by policymakers to be can equally successful in another. The *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) is complex in the same manner that it tries to resolve a complex problem. From looking at the 4Ps' formulation down to its evaluation, the importance of learning public policy becomes more evident. Moreover, the connection between public policy and politics as exhibited through the different theories strengthens that the two are truly inseparable. Lastly, the 4Ps garnered both positive and negative reactions and concerns from the scholars and the masses. The challenge it would always seem about public policy is to determine how a certain policy can be good and to what extent can it be bad.

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