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Examining the Operative Capacity of the Departments of Makati City and Malabon City at the Onset of the Build. Build. Build. Program

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ABSTRACT

Duterte's Build. Build. Build. Project propelled the modernization of the transportation system of the Philippines that brought about a major shift in the operative capacity of both national level and of local government institutions. Wu, Ramesh, & Howlett's Governmental Assessment Framework posits that institutions should be further dissected into components that should be seen separately but given the same value to the sequential process of institutional capacity building and institutional function. With LGUs subjected to the complications of a high level of bureaucracy and a vaguely defined and practiced autonomy, the purpose of this study relies on the aforementioned theory and focuses on the Operative Dimension of LGUs and its relation to administrative capacity and performance. The data gathered from administrative employees of the Engineering Department of Malabon, Urban Development Sector of Makati, via structured interview, and the responses to the sample survey of commuting populace of the locales, affirmed the two assumptions of this study, (1) major shifts in policies affect LGUs in multitude of ways, more so with their decision making and their functionality (2), operative capacity is indeed related to the ability of institutions to respond efficiently and effectively to change and the disruption it entails." That being said, this inquiry is able to establish the relevance of improving the methods of governmental and institutional assessments by determining the sequential relationship of structural components.

Keywords: *Operative Capacity, Local Government, Government Assessment, Build. Build. Build.*

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INTRODUCTION

With the Build, Build, Build the Duterte Administration placed greater emphasis on infrastructure becoming one of his benchmark projects. Serving as the backbone of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022 wherein its goals to push the country's economy as an attractive site for foreign investments are as thorough as they are grand (Cuenca, 2020). And with a large-scale project such as this that affects the day-to-day function of citizens and is expecting full cooperation from Local Government Units (LGU), they come without complications. As of 2019, the congestion within the major intersections and roads within Metro Manila has gradually worsened due to the increased volume of private vehicles dominating the road (Rith, et al., 2020), contributing to the conditions of public and private commute, are the ongoing infrastructure projects that are designed for the ease of city-to-city travel. And according to the data of this study, the visible downsides of the nationwide infrastructure project revolve around the efficiency of the LGUs themselves.

Concerns about institutions are assessed by the academe by focusing on policies employed by government institutions as benchmark indicators (R.Hamra, 2020), but recent studies contend that approach by utilizing an alternative point of departure spearheaded by Wu, Ramesh, & Howlett's Governmental Assessment Framework in which discusses how government bodies should further dissect institutions into components that should be seen separately but altogether valuable to the sequential process of institutional capacity building and institutional function. Utilizing the aforementioned theory, specifically on the Operative Dimension of LGUs as a focal point that is often neglected in the assessment of Philippine administrations even with the underlying fact that the country is highly bureaucratic, and that the most mentioned problems of constituents are centered around LGU efficiency and effectiveness in doing operative functions (Monsod, 2015). With the given observations and theory, the study hypothesized, that local government units according to Diokno et al., (2018) are "burdened by the occurrence of bureaucracy, financial limitations, and lack of human capital" are restricted in adjusting to the demands of national-level projects, thus disrupting the local operative capacity of these LGUs.

To highlight the dynamic between national and local governments, and the influence of the former upon the latter, the subjects of this case study will be two LGUs and their departments that have been most affected by traffic and the Build. Build. Build. project in the last decade, which in the case of the Philippines, Malabon being the "Funnel City" and Makati as its business center.

Objectives of the Study

With the Build, Build, Build, expected to be in the works in the coming years LGUs are facing problems to comply with the demands of the various responsibilities attached to their

operation and function, the rationale of this study then is to primarily to know and assess the current condition of the operative dimension of LGUs in the country amidst their relationship with "*Build. Build. Build.*". Doing so allowed this research to determine and give an overview on whether that component of government institutions bears a great value to their administrative functions in general, and to the accommodation of the national projects, specifically. As for the realm of the academe, this paper aims to put front and center a new approach to the assessment of governments and the institutions that run them. This will set a precedent to the betterment of making assessments more concise and overarching with their conclusions and prescriptions for other administrations to utilize.

Government Assessment Framework: Operational Capacity

Operational Capacity defined by Wu, Ramesh, & Howlett (2015) is the analysis of LGUs to independently handle tasks by turning proposals into policies, mentioned by Choi (2021) it analyzes the capabilities of LGUs to function dynamically and manage allocated resources. It attempts to alleviate the intrinsic perception to public policy as solely focused on problem-solving, in which case designing policy is but the only essential component of developing and implementing policy solutions aimed at accomplishing a specific purpose (Howlett et al. 2018). However, developing effective policies requires its designers and other parties involved to have specific skill-sets and competencies that address different functions as policy designing is highly theoretical, albeit reinforced by past policies. Operational Dimension, being the central focus of this study, the task to define the parameters to which this study will determine the condition, efficacy and effectiveness of the specific dimension of Malabon and Makati is but of utmost importance as it is vaguely defined in the current literature. To give insight to this study's standpoint, the research utilized the framework definition provided by Ishani Mukherjee & Azad Singh Bali (2019): "...composed of information-sharing architecture among the administrative agencies; managerial competences encompass coordination of resources and personnel among agencies; and political aptitude concerns support and trust within and for public organizations…" as its point of departure. Taking this into account and the provisions that Local Government Units in the Philippines are subject to, the analysis of this inquiry sets *information dissemination*, *workflow dynamics*, *inter-institutional and public trust, and structural stability* as key points of the analysis of this case study.

Challenges Encountered by LGUs

The theory states the key measures that characterize highly performative local institutions require these aspects: disseminates information, workflow dynamic, both institutional and public trust, and structural stability. The characteristics point to observable concerns regarding the decentralization

of government bodies, LGUs entrusted with promoting and sustaining independence and policy autonomy. Attempts made on promoting development are hindered by the presence of local elites, and patronage systems, which affects financial distribution and efficiency (Atkinson, Hicken, and Ravanilla, 2015). In addition LGUs are also marred with institutional weaknesses from the lack of support from regulating entities. A suggestion presented by the study of Krause, Feiock, & Hawkins (2014) indicates a procedure that delegates responsibilities towards administrative bodies tasked with overlooking project development, generating high levels of engagement, due to the profile of projects at hand. Evidently, LGUs face challenges in attaining the degree of growth it is expected to produce, although it is not entirely flawed, requiring further institutional assistance from overseeing bodies. In correlation with the theory this theme dwells into are the common characteristics and problems that are encountered by LGUs. How it was described through the lens of the theory, the current outlook of LGUs indicates unstable internal structures challenged with bureaucracy and corruption and lack of resources to address the needs of the locality.

BUILD. BUILD. BUILD.

Aimed towards infrastructure-driven economic growth, the Build, Build, Build, project prioritizes planning, implementing, and constructing national-level infrastructure that is critical in increasing foreign and domestic investors, with its underlying long-term goals, it has certainly motivated business productivity (Stupak, 2017; Palei, 2015). Under the standards provided by the theory, the conditions of Build. Build. Build. and how this influences local government units are analyzed through these cases, considering the magnitude of the project it is not without its drawbacks, as mentioned by Angara (2017) affecting localities with delays and inconveniences caused by roadside construction, significantly influencing the daily lives of commuters all around. Whereas networks of roads are constantly renovated and worked upon, it is ultimately going to affect both private & public transportation (Camillon, 2018). This burdens LGUs to keep applying adjustments to comply with the requirements imposed by the project, a proposition made by Bino, & Dacanay (2018) indicates that local authorities should be capable of determining urgent needs and reforms analyzed through an independent channel. The project in itself carries heavy expectations that yield a profitable long-term outcome, but it also comes with a cost of short to long-term inconveniences, dependent on the capacity of LGUs to address.

"Funnel "Cities and BUILD. BUILD. BUILD. (BBB)

Both Malabon and Makati city are prone to experience harsh conditions of road congestion and lack of readily accessible public transportation, both affected by the localization of Build. Build. Build; the outcome of this resulted in

constructive feedback from the general public, citing personal inconveniences and city-wide disruptions. To further visualize the themes discussed by the theory, the study observed the LGUs within Metro Manila, and how the implementation of BBB significantly affected local operations and functional capacity. Specifically, Malabon encounters these difficulties on the regular, due to its geographical location, bordering Caloocan, Navotas, Valenzuela city (Malabon CDP, 2018). Solutions presented by Local Government of Malabon, within their proposed annual plan of 2016 and 2017 targets modernization of PUV services within the city; address the problem of flooding; road expansion for traffic flow. Makati, is not exempted from the offset of the widespread infrastructure development, the biggest problem that Build. Build. Build. caused is the displacement of the urban population, wherein unaffordable housing forces the population to utilize recycled materials for shelter (Tomeldan, et al., 2014). Moreover, this confirms that transportation system and road management are important to achieve much more sustainable city and community (Javier, Macaranas, & Manalo, 2020).

Correlation between the national infrastructure project and the aforementioned LGUs provided the details regarding the impacts of BBB, through the lens of the operative capacity theory the analysis included both at an institutional level through the decision making process and its execution, along with the individual level wherein the public demands are focused at addressing daily inconvenience. Ultimately, with the LGUs granted greater autonomy, Dick-Sagoe (2020) concluded that there is a clear correlation between decentralization and performance of local governments, prioritizing local needs before national needs, adjusting when necessary.

METHODOLOGY

Given the nature of the study requiring both the insights of commuters and local officials, the researchers utilized a quantitative-qualitative descriptive approach. Accordingly, this study used a sample survey questionnaire for the commuters and residents, and a structured interview for the respondents of the institutions. These instruments were used as this study deems them ideal to provide a precise overview of the case at hand and a substantive analysis on the effects of national government policies to local government units. Also, at the same time, ensure a concise gauge of the degree of the said effects.

As for the structured interview, all the respondents are subject to consistency and fairness as such, the responses that will be gathered will be less nuanced and carry the same weight (E. Adhabi, C. Anozie, 2017). Being primarily focused on the institutional performance of LGUs, information gathered from the interview are crucial in supplying necessary details of how local authorizing bodies comply and adapt to major project shifts, to which the

answers provided were rooted on first-hand accounts of the experiences and expertise of employed officials (Rover & Lavrakas, 2015).

Furthermore, the analysis of these responses is subjected to the Analytical and Conceptual Framework (Figure 2.1 & 2.2). The Conceptual Framework depicts the interwoven relationship between the national government and of LGUs in terms of defining the overall vision of both. In most cases the former being more predominantly influential as national policies are overarching and requires a great deal of effort from subordinate institutions. This consummated vision and the policies that follow them, is then assumed to trickle down over Local Government Units which affects them. Afterwards, it is assumed that there are direct and indirect effects that have repercussions that vary in degree and affect various components of institutions. This study focuses on one of those components, being the Operational Capacity or dimension of institutions. As for the Analytical framework, the accounts from both sources (the departments and the commuting populace) are taken into account independently and as an aggregate, and will be related to the hypothesis of this subject. Yielding an analysis more accurate in its description of the case of the LGUs of Malabon and Makati in times of critical junctures such as policy shifts and operational disruption imposed by Build. Build. Build.

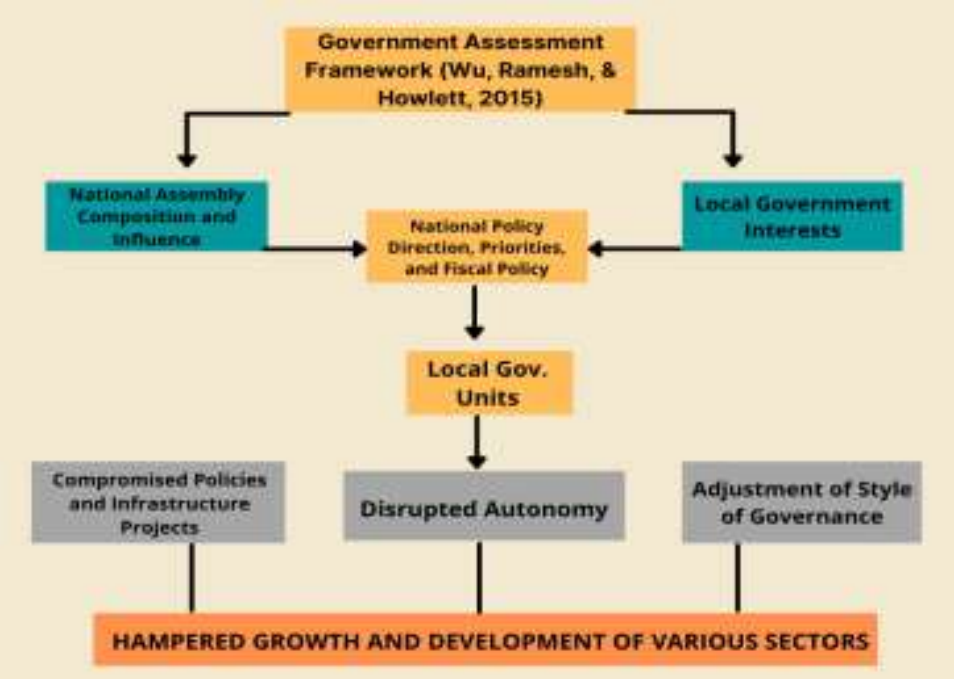

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

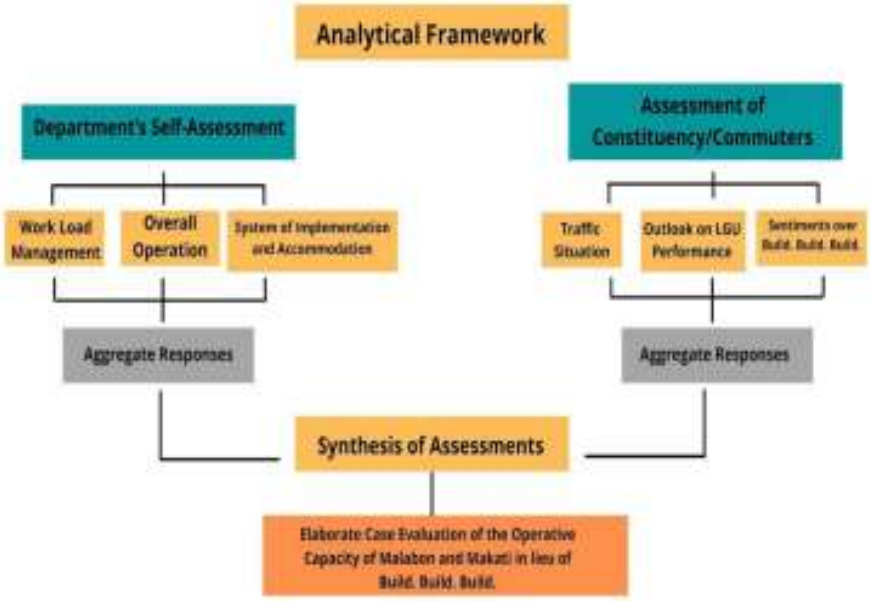

Figure 1. Analytical Framework of the Study

Survey Questionnaire

The Interview is composed of 29 questions divided into subcategories. Besides the profiling, these questions are relegated to specific categories which were categorized based on the topics addressed by questions such as "Contemporary Issues of Local Government Code", "Build. Build. Build." and "Outlook of Malabon and Makati's Commuting Populace". These compartmentalized topics served as working components of this study's analysis on the resident/commuter's response.

For precision and accuracy for this study's analysis, this study urged this paper to achieve 95% confidence level and .5 margin of error. To determine the required number of respondents for this survey to achieve that, the study's estimated daily commuting population for both Malabon and Makati being 800,000 (PSA-NCS, 2019), was calculated using the formula in Figure 2.2 below. This yielded 384 respondents in total, to which this study rounded up to 400 as a baseline number for accuracy purposes.

Structured Interview

To understand how institutions perceive their conditions and performance, more specifically of their own operative day-to-day function, it is important to obtain first-hand insight from those who dwell within the institutions themselves. Even more so with this case study wherein functions and conditions such as workflow, distribution of duties, stability within employed systems are not easily translatable through other mediums, especially through policy outputs wherein a policy's success or failure does not directly equate stability of operation. This study focused on the

Engineering Department of Malabon and the Urban Development Department for Makati as primary sources of information. With both heavily involved in the matter of implementing transportation and infrastructure policies in their cities. This study then took an interviewee for each department, both of which have high administrative roles. The Engineering Department of Malabon was represented by an engineer, while Makati's Urban Development Department, represented by the department head.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presentation of the data gathered, which will be followed by an interpretation and analysis will be encased in this section. Presented below are the data tabulated and grouped into designated subjects for the survey questionnaire, and a coding system for the structured interview, followed by a series of responses to the specific research questions this study hoped to answer regarding the impacts of *Build. Build. Build.* towards the governance and administration of Malabon and Makati. The Operational component of the Government Assessment Framework will be used to analyze the information for applying changes. The methods employed by this inquiry enables this study to affirm or disprove the conclusions of this study on the various short and long-term institutional effects of the program to the Operative Capacity of the local government units as the data from both sources are subjected to cross-sectional analysis.

This section of the study is divided into three parts. The first revolved on the respondents commuting experiences, assessments and perspectives regarding the leadership and the effectiveness of their LGUs in implementing the "*Build, Build, Build*" project, utilizing the parameters of *information dissemination*, *inter-institutional and public trust* as the primary focal point of the public. The next section discusses the responses of the LGUs about their overall assessment of their own institution at the onset of its ratification and their performance amidst its implementation and ratification, within this section the aspects of *workflow dynamics*, *inter-institutional and public trust, and structural stability* shall be the main observing lens that details the intricacies of LGUs. Lastly, the third part discusses the commonalities and discrepancies between the responses of both groups and will provide the overall amalgamated interpretation as well as its implications particular to the subject of this case study. To further ground the findings the researchers utilized the Commission on Audit reports as evidence on the influence of Build, Build, Build towards the operational capacity of LGUs of Malabon and Makati.

Contemporary Issues of the Local Government Code

The first research problem touches on the Local Government Code regarding transportation in Malabon to seek what

fits and supports the subsequent project and policy shift imposed by the implementation of "Build. Build. Build.". These data are shown in Tables 6 and 7 using a frequency of Yes/No and arithmetic weighted mean scale assessed by a grading scale from 1 to 5. Questions raised within this variable correlates with the perceived major issues regarding the local government of Malabon and its local residents, taking into consideration the available information accessible by the general public that concerns proposals and implemented projects addressing said issues.

Table 1: Breakdown of responses regarding the Contemporary Issues of the Local Government Code in terms of Transportation

	Malabon		Makati	
Statements	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
A1.) Is traffic a major problem in your City?	93%	79%	92%	8%
A2.) Has traffic and commuting gotten worse in the last 3 years?	92.5%	7.5%	99%	1%
A3.) Is traffic/commuting in your city a concern that should be addressed by the government?	97%	3%	97%	3%
A4.) Should traffic/commuting be a top priority of the government alongside concerns about poverty, unemployment and the economy?	82%	19%	85%	15%
A5.) Do you think that the local government of Malabon/Makati should do more on solving the traffic situation of the city?	96.5%	3.5%	97.5%	2.5%
A6.) Does the Local Government Unit of Malabon/Makati regularly inform its residents and commuters of the current development of the "Build. Build. Build." Program?	16%	84%	6%	94%
A7.) Are you aware of the planned policies and projects by your LGU regarding traffic, transportation development and infrastructure building before the establishing of the "Build. Build. Build." Program?	39%	61%	35%	65%
A8.) Were you confident about the effectiveness with the plans of the incumbent administration to address traffic, transportation development and infrastructure building before "Build. Build. Build." was put into motion?	17%	83%	8%	92%

Table 1 depicts the breakdown of responses regarding the contemporary issues of the local government code in terms of transportation. The tabulated data overall, indicates the perceived issues and the degree of their effect on issues surrounding the local government code and their desired changes to the current function and activity of their respective LGUs amidst the rise of Build. Build. Build. projects.

The experience of the respondents shows that: (1) there is a significant problem with commuting; (2) it has worsened in the last 4 or more years,

and that there is clamor for the traffic situation to be addressed and prioritized and; (3) the "*Build. Build. Build.*" project, significantly disrupted the developments and projects addressing the problem of traffic and transportation, causing further problems of not being efficient and effective in doing their obligations such as information dissemination and contingency response wherein a working and established operative structure would have been mitigated.

Aligned with the parameters of the theory, this grants the perceived ideas of the public and their general outlook on the national project, raising concerns on these two aspects: *Information Dissemination & Inter-institutional and Public Trust.* Firstly, the public raising their concern on the availability and accessibility records, there is a precedent that covers the first parameter, the public wants transparency regarding the current situation of the national project. Secondly, the degree of trust and support the public have towards Build, Build, Build, data indicates that the public still values the initiative of the national project, yet has reservations towards the means of its implementation. The parameters visualize the connection the public has towards its local institutions and how its utilization provides a much needed ground-level analysis on the national project.

Table 2: Level of Contemporary Issues of the Local Government Code

	Malabon		Makati	
Statements	**Mean**	**Description**	**Mean**	**Description**
The traffic and commuting situation in the city	2.79	**Unsatisfactory**	2.30	**Unsatisfactory**
Level of disruption in the locality affected the decision making and stability of the LGU in regards to its projects regarding traffic and transportation.	2.61	**Unsatisfactory**	2.40	**Unsatisfactory**
Grand mean	3.31	**Unsatisfactory**	**2.78**	**Unsatisfactory**

Table 2 shows the level of contemporary issues of the local government codes. An overall analysis of the results portrays the growing issue of commuting experience that was addressed in a manner that is unaligned with the interests of the general public, affected by the lack of information dissemination and the perceived implementation of Build, Build, Build.

Build. Build. Build.

In order to assess the problem, the "Build. Build. Build." Program required an observation of the operation of the Program and address it for improvements. Questions raised within this category focuses on the administrative capacity of the LGU of Malabon to implement the national project within their locale, highlighting the concern of long-term effects of the project, the initial impacts within the recent years, and the overall public support of Build, Build, Build. The data are shown on Table 8 using frequency of Yes/No.

Table 3. Breakdown of Responses regarding the "Build. Build. Build." Program made by the Local Government Unit of Malabon and Makati

	Malabon		Makati	
Statements	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
B1.) Should the policies and infrastructure developments listed in the "Build, Build, Build" project of the national government compliment the plans of the locale and the LGU of Malabon/Makati?	28%	72%	18.5%	81.5%
B2.) Is the LGU of your city capable of compromise in the near future to offset the effects of future "Build. Build. Build"plans?	69%	31%	56%	44%
B3.) Do you think that the "Build. Build. Build." affected the commuting experience of the locals as well as others that go through the roads and streets of Malabon/Makati?	83%	17%	76%	23%
B4.) Within the past 3 years, has the implementation of projects associated with "Build. Build. Build." deemed effective and provided positive impacts?	28%	72%	5%	95%
B5.) At the current state of the implementation of "Build. Build. Build". within your city do you support the continuation of the development of the program within your city?	65%	35%	56%	44%
B6.) With the current state of the "Build. Build. Build." Program and in conjuncture with the Local Government of Malabon/Makati, as a commuter, do you agree with how the Local Government of Malabon/Makati is implementing the program?	31%	69%	11.5%	88.5%

Table 3 provides the responses towards the "Build. Build. Build." program implemented by the LGUs of Malabon and Makati. By observing the data, this study assumed that the respondents have a high level of trust with the capabilities of both LGUs to produce long-term solutions based on their response to question B2. Regardless of the fact that both data sets indicate that the commuters and locals know and are aware of how different the goals and visions their respective LGUs have, compared to the goals of the national project. The responses in B1 also

indicate that the respondents know how much that dynamic complicates the process for their LGUs to achieve their own goals.

This implies that the subject of creating policies and projects fitted to accommodate the national project, a large percentage of both data sets signifies the desire of the locale's constituents emphasizes the importance of finding a compromise towards the Build, Build, Build, project as they are in favor of its continuation. However, they desire to achieve this with haste as to alleviate the locale and its institutions problems both in the present and future. This ties back to the lack of efficiency of both institutions in question, which under the specifications imposed by the parameters included in the assessment of Operational Capacity, both *inter-institutional and public trust, and structural stability* provide deeper context on Build, Build, Build through the viewpoint of its constituents. The findings under *inter-institutional and public trust* supplements the findings concerning public reservations on the implementation of the national project, showing high degrees of uncertainty on the local implementation, this in turn affects public perception on *structural stability* wherein most respondents arrived at the conclusion that LGUs the approaches undertaken by both Malabon and Makati City have been ineffective. The insights of the public further paints the discrepancy between the LGU and the general public and how the latter holds reservations on the former on its capability to act and continue the national project.

Table 4. Breakdown of responses regarding Malabon as a "Funnel" City and Makati "Business Center of the Philippines".

	Malabon		Makati	
Statements	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
C1.) Has commuting in and out of your city become more challenging?	88.5%	11.5%	97.5%	3%
C2.) Has the implementation of policies and projects related to "Build Build Build" affected the quality of commuting in and out of your city?	84.5%	15.5%	84%	16%
C3.) Has your experience commuting in and out of your city, is there a noticeable difference with the commute flow of neighboring cities?	73%	26.5%	70.5	29.5%
C4.) As a resident or worker employed in Malabon/Makati, has the current impacts of the "Build. Build. Build." Program improved the quality of commuting in and out of the city?	28%	72%	3.5%	96.5%
C5.) As a resident or a commuter who travels in and out of Malabon/Makati city, do you feel that the implementation of "Build. Build. Build." within the city caters to the needs of the commuter?	30%	70%	4.5%	95.5%

Table 4 the breakdown of responses regarding Malabon as a "Funnel" City and Makati as the business center. The responses provided signifies a mixed reaction when discussing the positive influences brought by Build, Build, Build, and prioritization of the program overall. The possible evaluation this study can incur from the responses, is that Malabon and Makati's populace, regardless of hardships presented by the Build. Build. Build., has general support for the national project, but not significantly enough to warrant mass public support through to the noticeable negative impacts produced by the programs implementation. The last segment on the respondents tackles the broad impact of Build, Build, Build towards daily activities of the commuters and residents, placed on the category of *structural stability*. Data provided by the respondents indicate a general poor reception on the immediate influence of Build, Build, Build, citing the conditions of commuting along with the disparity of solutions anticipated by the public.

Data Analysis

Through the use of the Governmental Assessment framework of Wu, Ramesh, & Howlett the researchers provided five parameters to concretize the acquired data, these parameters are as follows: (1) *information dissemination*, (2) *workflow dynamics*, (3) *inter-institutional and public trust, and* (4) *structural stability.* In conclusion, the data gathered from the respondents portray their degree of commuting experience regarding the implementation of the national project. Table 4 portrays the unfavorable commuting experience, stating that the quality of their commute experience declining, with the Local Government Unit of Malabon and Makati, addressing these concerns through localizing the Build, Build, Build program, what can be said is that the commuters and residents do not have access or are not informed of the approach undertaken by the LGU falling under the first category, furthermore, a large sum of respondents discussed that with the implementation of the program has significantly affected daily commuting experience which was placed under fourth category. Based on the data, there is a discrepancy between the public and the Local Government Units, wherein the general public throughout the recent years of the implementation of the Build, Build, Build program has significantly felt a shift in daily commute, be it positively or negatively.

What can be said is that in terms of providing solutions for both commuters and residents alike for those who have noticed the solutions implemented by their LGUs, most are not satisfied with the policies their institutions have implemented as well as their efficiency to counteract the problems with traffic and transportation in lieu of the Build. Build. Build. for the past 4 years. This can be attributed to the gradual increase of difficulty of commuting, the lack of LGU information dissemination regarding the extent of the implementation of the program and the incapacity to have a set system that can respond to the problems of traffic congestion on a day-to-day basis.

Secondly, by discussing Build, Build, Build, the researchers intended to understand the weigh ins of what the LGU of Malabon and Makati has considered in its localization of the projects along with the perception gathered by the public regarding these decisions. With a majority stating their support of the project and the capability of the LGU to mitigate the setbacks and downsides of the project, what is still echoed from both commuters and residents is their preference for a different approach to addressing its implementation. The data also states the diverging perceptions among the respondents and how the program is implemented, stating that respondent support is optimistic, although the problem being the measures on how it is implemented. This can be summed up with the respondents tolerating the offsets of the program for long-term benefits, although at the current stage of its development it will require a different approach to provide tangible benefits.

Third, Commission on Audit reports were also utilized to support the data acquired starting with 2016 wherein the LGU of Malabon acquired a 30.1% budget increase for their Property, Plant and Equipment, while experiencing a decrease in budget for their Repair and Maintenance by 68.8%; in 2017 the city was allocated with 14.2% funding for PP&E, with another 1.42% increase for Repair and Maintenance; proceeding to 2018, the LGU budget for PP&E was reduced by 2.07%, with Repair and Maintenance conversely acquiring a 222.6% increase; in 2019 the PP&E was allocated an additional 15.8% funding, with the Repair and Maintenance funding experiencing a minimal increase of 0.03%; lastly, in 2020 the PP&E budget was increased by 12.1% while funding for the Repair and Maintenance was reduced by 25.7%.

To further ground the articles provided the researchers also included the financial reports from 2016 to 2020, upon observing the audit reports of Makati city, there has been a gradual increase in funding for the category of *Property, Plant and Equipment* and *Repair and Maintenance*, starting from 2015 to 2016, with the former acquiring a .136% budget increase and the latter with a 101.7% increase; from 2016 to 2017 the PP&E of Makati gained a 515.9% budget increase, while the Repair and Maintenance experienced a 25.27% decrease in budget allocation; proceeding to 2018 the Makati budget spending on PP&E experienced a 23.3% increase, while the Repair and Maintenance had a 254.8% increase; on 2019 PP&E budget allocation acquired 0.32% increase, while Repair and Maintenance expenditures gained 6.44% increase; and the latest report in 2020 indicated that the LGU of Makati experienced a decrease in PP&E spending by 0.82% while conversely, Repair and Maintenance reported to have increased by 51.4%.

The data presented shows the LGU of Makati having a stable growth in budget allocation directed for infrastructure development and maintenance. In addition, financial reports from 2016 to 2020 of Makati city

were also used, upon observing the finding indicates a gradual increase in funding for the category of *Property, Plant and Equipment* and *Repair and Maintenance*, starting from 2015 to 2016, with the former acquiring a .136% budget increase and the latter with a 101.7% increase; from 2016 to 2017 the PP&E of Makati gained a 515.9% budget increase, while the Repair and Maintenance experienced a 25.27% decrease in budget allocation; proceeding to 2018 the Makati budget spending on PP&E experienced a 23.3% increase, while the Repair and Maintenance had a 254.8% increase; on 2019 PP&E budget allocation acquired 0.32% increase, while Repair and Maintenance expenditures gained 6.44% increase; and the latest report in 2020 indicated that the LGU of Makati experienced a decrease in PP&E spending by 0.82% while conversely, Repair and Maintenance reported to have increased by 51.4%. According to the data both LGU have a stable rate of budget allocation directed for infrastructure development and maintenance.

Lastly, on the topic of the LGUs respective locale which were subjected to the parameters of: (1) *workflow dynamics*, (2) *inter-institutional and public trust, and* (3) *structural stability.* This section discusses both insights from the LGUs and respondents. The research' inquiry resulted in a lopsided echo of negative changes brought by the implementation and response of their respective institutions. However, with the continued support for the "Build. Build. Build." program, the responses were unusual as the sentiments of the commuting populace about the hardships they face and their distaste are not in line with their inclination to support the national infrastructure project. This can be attributed to the fact that a majority of the populace are willing to endure some degree of prolonged problems in traffic due to the long-term benefits. However both LGUs should take action and establish internal systems that are capable of addressing problems systematically, efficiently and with regard to the growing pains of their constituents.

The data provides a clear analysis of the current impacts of Build, Build, Build, as perceived by the respondents, the noticeable difference being the increased difficulty of commuting, so far at the current state of the Build, Build, Build, the respondents were unable to experience any benefits provided by its implementation nor feel stability in the operation of their LGUs which harkens back to them not seeing consistent and systematic way if alleviating concerns. With a majority stating that the implementation of Build, Build, Build, by the Duterte administration has not yielded desirable results, rather more difficulties, and a large part of the duty of implementing it is delegated in the hands of the cooperation and body of work of LGUs this study stipulates two things. First, there are established operative systems in both LGUs that are involved in traffic and infrastructure concerns but are lacking to an extent. Second, if there is a workable system, the shock brought by "Build. Build. Build" to the policymaking and

implementation of the LGUs and their respective departments has affected the system's viability and should be either reinforced or reimagined.

LGUs willingness to accept responsibility

This paper aims to confirm that there exists a relationship between the national project and the overall operative capacity of the institutions directly involved in the adoption of projects affecting their locale so that we can establish precedents regarding whether the Build Build. Build affected the Operational Capacity of Makati and Malabon - and to what extent. And to do that, questions were raised regarding compromise, work environment efficiency, work dynamic restructuring, and manpower issues. As for the necessity of adjusting and adapting, both LGUs affirm that they immediately took action to adopt all the necessary parameters required of them by the national government. Their reasons as to why they were and are willing to do so are two-fold: responsibility and benefits.

The primary reason behind their willingness, according to interviews conducted by this study, is the delegated responsibility of the Local Government Code (R.A. 7160). Specifically mentioned their duty to serve the best interests of the nation. Both LGUs refer to this codependent and compromisal relationship as a result of consensus agreement of what the whole country should strive towards. The ratification of the national project itself signifies the necessity of compromise, thus making it not only imperative but also perceived as ultimately beneficial regardless whether the project benefits them or the complete opposite. The next reason also being, specifically in their cases, is the actual benefit both LGUs gain from the particular projects allocated and catered to their locales by the national project.

In the case of Malabon, their infrastructure projects are centered around concerns about flooding and their drainage system, thus the increase in repair and maintenance funding indicated by their financial reports. Admittedly, they have issues regarding their status as a "funnel city" as they have provided policies to mitigate traffic from specific areas by implementing contingency plans for rerouting and administering better traffic signal algorithms to address that the national project is not aligned with their current priority which is flood mitigation. Makati responded with confidence that even with the compromise they had to do, especially in terms of alleviating the daily influx of cars and reducing traffic brought by the national project, the city and its LGU is no stranger to large infrastructure projects. Their supposed preparedness to handle diversity in exchange for progress and benefits made them see value in taking on the challenge of adapting.

A cost-benefit dynamic may paint the picture as to why LGUs that has different goals, objectives, and capacities come to the same conclusion of willingness to accommodate. But in the

case of Malabon and Makati, the former presents a lower level of benefit as the national project, at its core, is divergent to their principal problem, which is flood mitigation and drainage system improvement. From here, two questions then arise. First, "*does a disconnect between goals and objectives of the national project and an LGU, affect the overall performance of the latter with its various duties?*" And, "*does the compromise of already established systems and long-term plans affect the operation and organizational flow of institutions themselves*?"

Assessing the Level of Adjustments of LGUs

It is established that adoption and adjustment are imperative for both LGUs and their institutions, to know what steps were taken to commit and adopt the national project and determine whether these steps positively or negatively affected the actual operation of the institutions and departments of Malabon and Makati. To assess the possible negative and positive impacts of the adoption and adjustments of the LGUs, it was important to determine specifically what areas, policies, and organizational frameworks the institution were affected, altered, or abolished to accommodate the said national program. As such, the respondents were asked regarding two aspects of their duties. The first part of the inquiry raised questions regarding the operational capacity and organizational structure of the institutions themselves which is the central focus of this study. The second part being the traditional parameters of assessing the performance of governments, the policy themselves, and their implementation.

The first segment tackles the positive and negative implications of the project towards the respective LGUs of Malabon and Makati wherein the first question takes into account the relevance of compromise on offsetting the institutional effects of Build, Build, Build, towards the locale of Makati and Malabon, with their respective answers indicating that mitigation of any irreversible effects. Specifically, flood control-related projects for Malabon and infrastructure development in Makati.

As per the definition of the operative dimension of institutional assessments, there are fundamental parameters that are understood to be key indicators of efficiency and stability. The first of which is workload management. In this case, Malabon when asked about the effects on their workload management at the onset of BBB and during its implementation, mentioned confidence in their system and their relative stability in the long run even though they faced difficulties in the initial phases of the implementation. These difficulties include the formulation of new policies that accommodate the national project and mitigation of undesirable drawbacks. They also mentioned the immediate rise in the need to work extensively during those times but they were able to cope up with it and ease themselves to normalcy. On the analysis for Makati, regarding work distribution, the infrastructure project had minimal influence in

redirections and if required the LGU resorts to outsourcing for further assistance. Secondly, on the topic of compromise, although alterations to work distribution have been minimal, Makati is still capable of shifting accordingly if the situation calls for it. Lastly, on the parallelism towards neighboring LGUs, urban development for public convenience being the priority of Makati City rooted in the increasing rate of commuter flow within the locale.

The analysis presented goes in line with the notion that enforcing the operative capacity is of great importance to functionality as this prepares institutions for egregious changes. This, in turn, allows them to maximize the long-term benefits of policies whilst minimizing the immediate setbacks that national projects like the *Build. Build. Build.* could have caused it.

Connecting LGU Policymaking, Implementation, Monitoring and Preparedness to the Operational Capacity of Institutions.

In the case of Malabon, as a "Funnel" city, they stated that they are aware of the challenges that the national project imposed on them, especially in the bottle-neck areas where they faced the most problems before and after the national infrastructure project was ratified. Admittedly, the LGU of Malabon and its Engineering Department said that it has been difficult to reduce traffic and handle it on a daily basis. However, according to them, the situation is generally manageable as they have set proper planning for when to use diversion roads to reduce traffic in specific areas and that they already have contingency response policies and plans whenever their main problem in the city "flooding" makes traffic worse and transportation almost impossible. It was mentioned that adjusting and allocating resources was troublesome at first but was put to ease as time went by and that LGUs focus on flood mitigation and sewage improvement was not affected by the national project besides adjusting manpower allocation.

Makati on the other hand does not have a bottleneck situation similar to Malabon, but being the business capital of the Philippines presents a different dilemma. On a daily basis, the locale's streets are bombarded by vehicles (PUV and Private-owned), commuters, and other modes of transportation anywhere and anytime time of the day. Admittedly they mentioned that traffic congestion has gotten worse in the last few years but it was something that they are willing to cater to for the benefit of their locale in the long run. According to the LGU, these new problems are nothing of the sort that their already established system and work distribution practices cannot handle. The infrastructure and project heavy policy "*Makati Code*" of Makati helped them in this case as this well-established system for infrastructure development that is both rigid and flexible helps them push for that agenda. The LGU said that this system enabled them to hastily ratify policies and remedies that they

already had and was at their own discretion to utilize.

Given that they are imbued with independence in discretion by the Local Government Code (LGC) and of course their specific contexts, governments and locales vary greatly in their capacities and policy direction which in the case of Malabon and Makati, was blatantly evident. Regardless of monetary allocations, as expected by this study, both cities stated challenges which they faced regarding the handling of the shift in policy and infrastructure direction. But as per their response as well, these challenges did not affect their capacity to produce, do service and be flexible even though they vary in the timetable wherein they adjusted and resources allocated to them.

The paper then extrapolates that both the already established systems and resources made available to both LGUs have proven beneficial to their performance albeit differing slightly and that it is important for us to take these institutional operative systems into account when we are observing other LGUs that are far distant to the makeup and capacities of these well-established institutions.

Overview of Interview Responses

Both Malabon and Makati affirm that their work management and institutional systems played a big role in how their LGUs were able to adapt with relative ease, what is required of them by the Build. Build. Build. project even when they were facing problems at the earlier stages and in the duration of the national project's implementation. Some of these challenges include lack of manpower resorting to outsourcing professionals and labor workers, the sudden need to re-align projects, policies, and budget in exchange for accommodation, as well as adjusting timetables for expected outcomes from policies and projects implemented by the LGU before the ratification of the national infrastructure project. In this case, however, Malabon had to sacrifice more as the local government had to immediately address the needs of the commuting demographic, as well as to meet the expectations and deadlines of the national government all the while having their plan with Malabon to heavily focus on improving the flooding and drainage infrastructure be affected, albeit minimal according to their response.

The research then concludes that the relationship of Operative capacity, policy direction, and performance exists and that the operative dimension of institutions has relative gravity when it comes to not only critical conjectures of policy change imposed by projects similar to *Build. Build. Build.* but also in the long-standing performance of administrative duties. This leads to the presumption that other LGUs and government institutions should be subject to the assessments done to Malabon and Makati's, especially government institutions that have relatively lower capacities and have areas of public service that are weak or fragile. Doing this assessment on their own structures will allow these LGUs to

exercise precaution by establishing systems of accountability, workload management, and delegation of responsibilities which in the case of adopting national projects or policies, are often tested and challenged.

Making Sense of Constituent Observations and Self-Assessment of Local Government Units

The response of both LGUs indicate their operative capacity ranges from the immediate need to create and reform policies and project timetable projections to direct need to allocate labor force. The general outlook of the public that has experienced the traffic conditions of both cities during the implementation of the national infrastructure project lean towards dissatisfaction.

In analyzing the responses of those who experience commuting on a daily basis, the LGUs of both localities still have a lot to improve in a lot of areas of their policy system and their day-to-day operation. The public believes that the ratification of the national project in the said locales had a great effect on the overall functionality of the LGUs as they have not felt any improvement in the traffic congestion in the last 4 years or for the time that they have been exposed to commuting. Most went as far as to say that it has only gotten worse since the ratification and adoption of the national infrastructure project. The lack of knowledge on policies being implemented by the LGUs can be attributed to the regression operational duty of the institutions to inform the public of their short-term and long-term plans, if they have any. In totality, the responses of the public paints the whole picture of the dilemma that even their supposed prepared and capable government institutions are actually facing a lot of problems when it comes to doing their duties to alleviate the problems in traffic that the Build. Build. Build. imposes. Indeed there is dissatisfaction with the turbulent condition of the LGUs and the departments that are involved in this issue. This furthermore highlights the necessity of accessible information for the public.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, to ensure growth and maintenance of administrative efficiency requires a respectable amount of structural stability and flexibility from government agencies that are delegated with the responsibility to efficiently design policies and implement them. The problems that persist from these specific contexts are at the core of local government agencies being unable to identify and analyze the necessary degree of policy capacity and stability their institutions should possess. This is more evident in conditions where weak and unestablished operational structures are posed with problems by a project as grand as *"Build. Build. Build"* which presents a wide-array of dilemmas and makes the solutions required to be made, more complex. This study not only narrates the probable condition of LGUs in critical junctures of policy shifts as intended for

this case study, but also puts into the limelight the significance of the operational capacity of LGUs in the process of performing their duties such as providing and implementing sustainable policies. With that the researchers provided five parameters: *information dissemination*, *workflow dynamics*, *inter-institutional and public trust, and structural stability* that proved practical in understanding the provided information. The data acquired in this study shows the limitations and capabilities of LGUs in policy and functional adaptability concerning urban development, portraying the relationship between institutional capacity and policymaking, and how this relationship reflects local initiatives concerning social welfare, healthcare, education, and other sectors. The need to further understand this relationship in the said fields thus arises and this study sets a precedent for a new approach to assessing government institutions and their performance.

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