

**ASSESSING DELIBERATIVE POLICY PRACTICES
IN MYANMAR: POLICY PERSPECTIVES TOWARD
EFFECTIVE AND LEGITIMATE DELIBERATION**

THUREIN LWIN

**MASTER OF ARTS
IN PUBLIC POLICY**

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CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY

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

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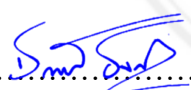
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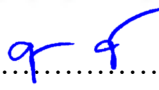
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Advisor :

..........Chairman
(Asst.Prof.Dr.Theerapat Ungsuchaval)

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

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

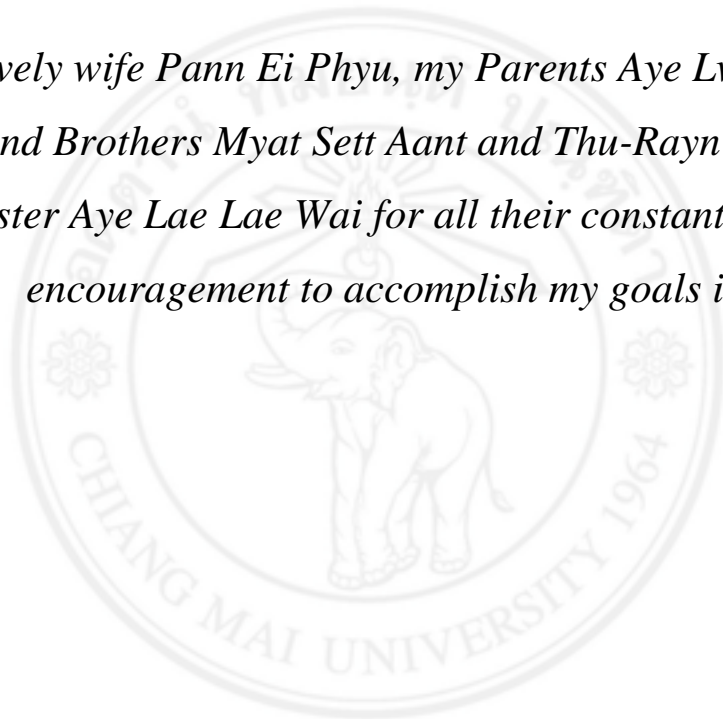
..........Member
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30 May 2024

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To

my lovely wife Pann Ei Phyu, my Parents Aye Lwin and Khin Nwet and Brothers Myat Sett Aant and Thu-Rayn Thwin, and to my sister Aye Lae Lae Wai for all their constant support and encouragement to accomplish my goals in life.



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Thurein Lwin

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หัวข้อการค้นคว้าอิสระ	การประเมินการขับเคลื่อนนโยบายเชิงปรัชญาหรือในเมียนมา: มุมมองนโยบายเพื่อการปรัชญาหรือที่ชอบธรรมและมีประสิทธิผล
ผู้เขียน	นาย ทูริน ลวิน
ปริญญา	ศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต (นโยบายสาธารณะ)
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา	ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ ดร. ปิยะพงษ์ บุญบงก์

บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีเป้าหมายเพื่อประเมินนโยบายภายในระบบธรรมาภิบาลท้องถิ่นของเมียนมา ระบุช่องว่างในการส่งเสริมการมีส่วนร่วมของสาธารณะ และเสนอนโยบายเพื่อแก้ไขปัญหาเหล่านี้ วัฒนธรรมราชการของเมียนมามีลักษณะ 'ไม่ทำอะไรเลย' และหลีกเลี่ยงปัญหา ส่งผลกระทบต่อการกำหนดนโยบายของประเทศ การมีส่วนร่วมของสาธารณะในระดับท้องถิ่นมีมากกว่าระดับรัฐและสหภาพ แต่รัฐบาลท้องถิ่นยังขาดอำนาจการคลัง ภูมิศึกษาขององค์กรปกครองท้องถิ่นแสดงให้เห็นว่าการมีส่วนร่วมของสาธารณะเพิ่มขึ้นส่งเสริมความชอบธรรม ความไว้วางใจ เสถียรภาพทางการเมือง และการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืน การฝึกอบรมแบบรวมศูนย์สำหรับเจ้าหน้าที่ระดับชาติและรัฐ และการขาดการสนับสนุนการฝึกอบรมสำหรับเจ้าหน้าที่ท้องถิ่น เป็นอุปสรรคต่อการมีส่วนร่วมของสาธารณะ ความขัดแย้งระหว่างฝ่ายที่ชนะและระบบราชการที่มีอยู่ขัดขวางการปฏิรูปนโยบาย เพื่อแก้ปัญหานี้ จำเป็นต้องปรับปรุงกฎหมาย กฎระเบียบ และขั้นตอนการทำงานเพื่อส่งเสริมการประสานงานระหว่างระดับชาติ รัฐ และท้องถิ่น พร้อมสร้างแพลตฟอร์มการเรียนรู้และวัฒนธรรมการทำงานที่มีประสิทธิภาพ ข้อเสนอแนะคือการส่งเสริมฟอรัมนโยบายอุดมคติ (IDPF) ผ่านโครงการนำร่อง โดยเฉพาะในพื้นที่ที่ควบคุมโดยกองกำลังต่อต้านติดอาวุธชาติพันธุ์

คำสำคัญ พิจารณาอย่างรอบคอบ, เมียนมา, นโยบาย

Independent Study Title	Assessing Deliberative Policy Practices in Myanmar: Policy Perspectives Toward Effective and Legitimate Deliberation
Author	Mr. Thurein Lwin
Degree	Master of Arts (Public Policy)
Advisor	Asst. Prof. Dr. Piyapong Boossabong

ABSTRACT

The research aims to evaluate deliberative policy practices within existing local governance systems, identifying gaps in promoting public participation spaces, and proposing policies to address these gaps for enhancing effective and legitimate deliberation. Myanmar's bureaucratic culture, characterized by a *'Do nothing; be uncomplicated; and avoid trouble'* ethos, along with the influence of the *Parachute Policy*, significantly impact the country's policymaking environment. Public participation opportunities are more accessible at the local level compared to the state and union levels, yet local governments lack fiscal authority. Policy recommendations include fostering the **Ideal Deliberative Policy Forum (IDPF)** through a pilot project especially in areas controlled by ethnic armed resistance forces. This initiative, in collaboration with scholars and development agencies, will fill existing gaps and promote the quality of public participation, legitimacy, and effectiveness in local governance in Myanmar.

Keywords: Deliberative, Myanmar, Policy

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The objective of the study is assessing the deliberative policy practices to understand the gaps in existing local governance systems in promoting public participation space. Developing the ideal deliberative policy forum is essential for enhancing effective and legitimate deliberation, thereby promoting the quality of public participation.

It is noteworthy that the people of Myanmar are highly engaged in political activities, make thoughtful political decisions, and actively participate in political reforms with rationality, clarity, and honesty. All political leaders and scholars acknowledge that the people have played a responsible role in navigating the ups and downs and the challenging cycles of Myanmar's political landscape.

The people have continuously and relentlessly fought across generations for the country's significant milestones, including the independence in 1948, the end of the Burmese Way to Socialism, and, since 2021, the struggle against military dictatorship and the establishment of a federal democracy. This struggle is likely to continue for many more years.

In Myanmar's political systems, the role of the people has always been important, but these systems have restricted public participation. The lack of political space for people to be involved in the political system has weakened political culture and had reciprocal effects. The figure 1 illustrates how political culture improves as the political space for people's participation increases.

CHAPTER 2

Problem Statement

In the same way that there were restrictions on the processes by which the people could participate in policymaking, the construction of Myanmar's government bureaucracy also inherited a colonial legacy, becoming a bureaucratic system lacking accountability and responsibility to the people. This government bureaucracy fosters a **'Do nothing; be uncomplicated; and avoid trouble'** bureaucratic culture and **Parachute Policy**. In Myanmar, the practice of appointing high-ranking military officers to oversee ministries and other administrative departments from above has completely undermined the government's administration. This culture refers to a government culture that operates with entrenched traditional practices, rejecting innovation and reform within its bureaucratic framework. This government system limits the political space for public participation in policymaking and prioritizes a culture where only traditional policy analysis (TPA camp) such as government officials, politicians, and experts lead and carry out reforms. As a result, the public feels discouraged from engaging with government departments, believing that their quality of life will not improve and will, in fact, encounter more complicated and delayed systems.

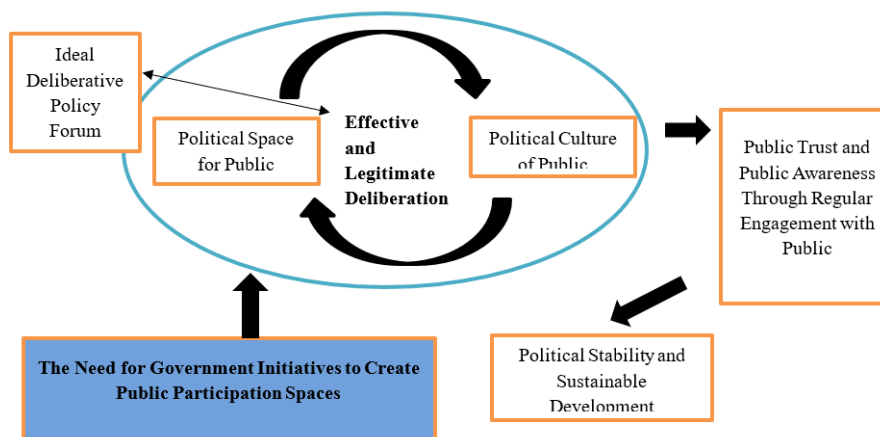


Figure 1 Political Space and Political Culture Reciprocal Effects

Source: Author simulation (2024)

Since the implementation of the 2008 constitution, there has been a limited space for public participation in policymaking channels. However, this has led to the emergence of public participation spaces at the local government level, also known as the third tier of government. Within these local governments, three main departments facilitate public participation in policymaking: (1) General Administration Department (GAD), and (2) Township Planning and Implementation Committee (TPIC) and (3) Development Affairs Committees. Development Affairs Committees and organizations are overseen by state-level governments, while the GAD coordinates government units nationwide under the administration of the union government. TPIC serves as a public platform for collecting annual plans and is managed by the union government.

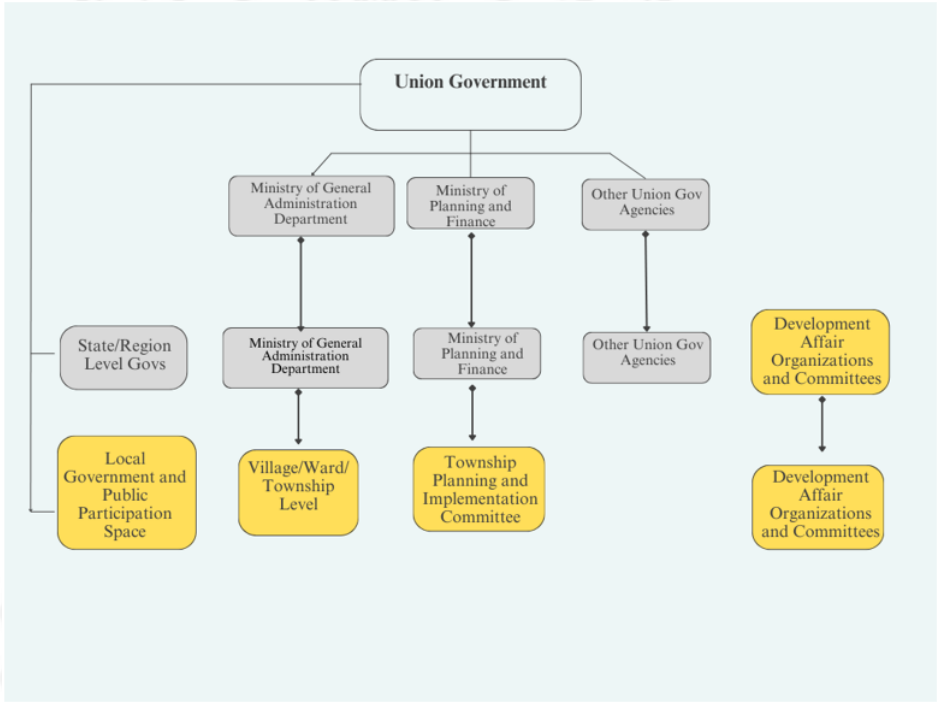


Figure 2 Different Layer of Government and Public Participation Space

Source: Author simulation (2024)

In 2010, the Union Solidarity and Development Party, backed by the Tatmadaw, won the election under the Tatmadaw-drafted 2008 constitution. During President Thein Sein's administration (2011-2015), military leaders transitioned to civilian roles, and policy-making remained centralized among presidential advisors, experts, and government ministers. As a result, people-oriented policymaking was rare. For instance,

although President Thein Sein suspended the Myitsone Dam power generation project with China, this did not indicate a shift towards more people-centered policies. In the 2015 election, the National League for Democracy Party, led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, won with the slogan "*Only the people are important.*" Her government implemented decentralized policies, promoting direct public interaction through mottos like "*Together with the people.*" Policies were shaped by citizen input and advice from officials and experts. Despite the presidencies of U Thein Sein and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi announcing local government establishment, these efforts failed due to the absence of a systematic bureaucratic structure for local governance. Public participation in municipal committees, village administration, and planning processes remained minimal, with poorly defined involvement and a lack of political will for reforms.

2.1 Case Studies of Public Participation in Municipal Government in Myanmar

Before 2008, urban and rural development projects were primarily overseen by municipal organizations known as Development Affair Organizations (DAOs). These DAOs were required to generate their own revenue under their financial rules and were unable to access government subsidies from the state and central levels.¹ However, a significant shift occurred after 2010 with the establishment of the Union-level Ministry of Rural Development. This change resulted in municipal organizations being tasked solely with urban development projects. This separation of urban and rural responsibilities within government departments placed greater emphasis on municipal bodies for urban development. However, their funding remained limited, which meant that they were not required to engage in rural development activities as extensively as before, despite their reduced responsibilities. This constraint stemmed from their reliance on their own revenue sources, given the absence of substantial grants from the state and central levels.

Since 2016, municipalities across Myanmar have attended annual Good Practice Sharing Workshops hosted by The Asia Foundation and the Renaissance Institute (RI). Over time, these workshops have established an informal network of municipal officials committed to learning and improvement. These annual workshops provide municipal

¹ Central level = Union level/ Union Government, Subnational level = State governments or Regional government and Local level = Local governments such as DAOs

officials with opportunities to hear new ideas and build relationships but do not require a large time commitment and lack public participation. Additionally, the workshops offer limited opportunities for municipalities to communicate their needs to state, region, and union governments.

Table 1 Role of third tier government on public services in Myanmar

Sector	Spending responsibility	Administrative decentralization
Health	Union only	Deconcentrated: Union line ministries as implementers
Education	Union only	
Rural roads and highways	Shared Union and Subnational level	
Electricity	Shared Union and Subnational level	
Water supply	Shared Union and Subnational level	
Urban services: waste management and sanitation, water supply, street lighting, etc.	Subnational level only	Decentralized and responsible of Cities and Development Affairs Organizations as third tier government

Source: Based on 2008 Constitution, Myanmar Subnational Public Expenditure Review: Fostering Decentralization, May 2020, World Bank Myanmar and Renaissance Institute

Municipal governments represent the third tier of government and are the government entities that have the most direct interaction with the people. Since 2015, Myanmar's cities have undergone numerous policy reforms. This session highlights the public engagement reforms in Myanmar from 2011 to 2020, primarily relying on primary and secondary data collected from annual horizontal learning workshops hosted in collaboration with The Asia Foundation (Myanmar) and the Renaissance Institute.

Taunggyi municipal policy reforms have enhanced interactions with the public, fostering a positive relationship between the government and its citizens. This improved relationship resulted in increased tax collection and higher tax revenues. In 2017, the

Taunggyi Development Affairs Organization (DAO) embarked on a groundbreaking initiative by introducing the very first municipal citizen's budget document in Myanmar. (Renaissance Institute & The Asia Foundation, 2020) This pioneering step reflects the unwavering dedication to transparent, accountable, and responsive municipal governance. U Aye Ko, the Acting Director General of Shan State DAO, emphasized that the release of this inaugural budget report is poised to significantly bolster trust between DAO Officers and the public. Such enhanced trust has the potential to catalyze increased revenue generation for city development projects. *“People will not be afraid or reluctant to pay taxes if they realized where public finances are used for. And this can be one of the initiatives for other state and regions to adopt such kind of budget transparency,”* U Aye Ko, also the Acting Director of Shan State Development Affairs.

In 2015, under the new government, Dr. Ye Lwin, a medical professional, appointed as the role of Mandalay City Mayor in Myanmar. During his tenure, he harnessed the power of social media to collaborate with the public on various reforms. For instance, he encouraged people to report issues related to city services on the city's Facebook page, and frequently, relevant department personnel were assigned to address these concerns directly on the same platform. This direct interaction with the people allowed for active engagement in urban development efforts, and as a result, many individuals regularly contributed funds to support their vision of creating a Smart City.

Monywa City is the largest city in Sagaing Region, Myanmar. Monywa's municipal authorities typically organize monthly meetings in collaboration with civil society organizations to engage with the local population, listen to their concerns, and prioritize development projects. One case study of public engagement during the NLD government involved the chairperson of the development committee attempting to raise the tax rate on shopping mall rentals. This action faced public protests, leading to his dismissal from the committee. The study indicates that not considering the public's voice can lead to political repercussions. In the Sagaing region, there are regular discussions as public townhall meeting between the public and local government officers to improve government services. The public has the opportunity to ask questions directly to government officers. This practice has inspired other cities to enhance engagement between the people and government officers.

Yangon City, located in Yangon Region, serves as Myanmar's economic hub and provides civic services across various urban areas. Yangon was a pioneer in implementing Participatory Budgeting, but there was a lack of public participation in the discussions. However, various state-level government agencies were included in drafting the annual plans.



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CHAPTER 3

Conceptual Framework

Basic to DPA is a method for bringing together a wider spectrum of citizens, politicians, and experts in the pursuit of policy decisions (Fischer & Boossabong, 2018). The key insight of DPA is that democratic governance calls for a new deliberatively-oriented policy analysis. Traditionally, policy analysis has been state-centered, based on the assumption that central government is self-evidently the locus of governing. However, DPA explores the new contexts of politics and policymaking, examining the influence of developments such as increasing ethnic and cultural diversity, the complexity of socio-technical systems, and the impact of transnational arrangements on national policymaking (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003).

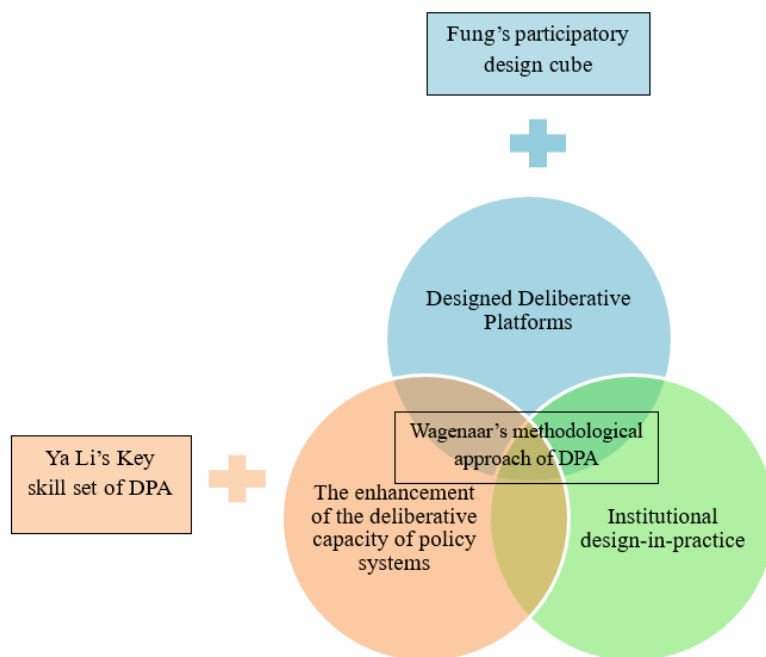


Figure 3 Ideal Deliberative Policy Ecosystem

Source: Wagenaar, Archon Fung and Ya Li

DPA is an approach to policy analysis that emphasizes public participation and deliberation between citizens and officials. It seeks to enhance the deliberative capacity of policy systems and is useful to policymakers, stakeholders, social activists, and researchers alike. Designed Deliberative Platforms (DDP) are an important methodology for working through conflict-ridden policy issues with the affected actors. Among different DPA approaches, this study adapts Wagenaar's methodological approach of DPA as the main analysis to frame a critical assessment of existing practices for identifying challenges and propose enhancing public involvement in local government. This approach considers three core angles of DPA, including (1) Designed Deliberative Platforms incorporate Fung's participatory design cube, (2) the enhancement of the deliberative capacity of policy systems incorporate Ya Li's DPA skill set and (3) institutional design-in-practice. Thus, the study analyzes the sufficiency and inclusivity of the onsite and online deliberative platforms, the adequate capacity of public servants in facilitating deliberation, and the openness of public organizations to harness horizontal collaboration and bottom-up participation.

3.1 Methodology

For the documentary research and primary data collection, interviews were conducted from February to March 2024. This involved 15 Key Informant Interviews (KII) with a diverse group of participants, including local government officers (CDM), members of development affairs committees, representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), politicians, and scholars who have led local government reforms.

CHAPTER 4

Policy Analysis

Based on the KII interviews and assessment, the local level of public participation is significantly better in terms of participants, authority, and communication and decision-making modes compared to state and national levels. This is attributed to the allocation of authority to the local level under the 2008 constitution. It is evident that higher levels of government have less public participation and reduced authority and power to influence policies through public engagement.

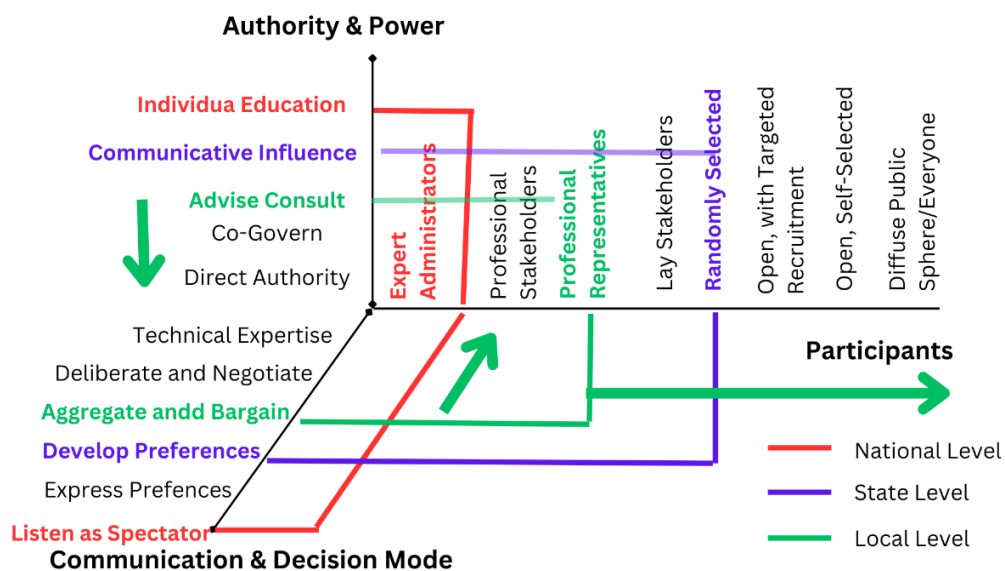


Figure 4 Assessing Myanmar Practices of Deliberation

Source: Archon Fung, *Varieties of Participation in Complex Governance* (2006)

On the other hand, there are three main government bodies at the local level where the public can officially participate: General Administration Department (GAD) This department is one of the most extensive administrative bodies in Myanmar, organized down to the ward and village levels nationwide. Before the 2008 Constitution and from 2011 to 2015, it was under the Ministry of Defence. During Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's government in 2018, it was transferred under the Ministry of the President's Office. However, post-2021 coup, it was reverted to the Ministry of Defense. Ward and Village

Tract Administrators are elected by public vote. Township Planning and Implementation Committee (TPIC) operates under the Union-level Ministry of Planning and Finance and is organized at township, district, regional, and union levels. It is responsible for drafting and approving plans and budgets across various departments. While public involvement is officially designated, effective participation is limited, especially for non-governmental organizations in more influential roles, with direct public involvement being rare. Development Affairs Committee (DAC) is the only legalized to coordination with Development Affairs Organizations as the public participation space and also the only government body free from direct Union-level control, providing municipal services. It allows public representatives to formally participate in decision-making regarding municipal services, making it the sole public participation space with direct public decision-making authority. Other government departments in Myanmar also have public participation spaces. For example, the Department of Rural Development at the Union level conducts town hall meetings to gather public input for policy innovations. However, these are not formal decision-making spaces for the public. Therefore, this study prioritizes the Development Affairs Committee at the local level, focusing on its framework for public participation and decision-making authority. Findings from this research will be detailed in the subsequent sections. DAOs and GAD public participation effects, DAOs get representative from GAD ward officers as a representatives.

Under the 2008 Constitution, local governments are granted authority for urban development and can be considered decentralized. However, while they have the power to implement projects, they lack financial autonomy. For example, the authority to generate their own revenue is controlled by the union or state/regional governments. As a result, despite having the authority, the necessary funds are often insufficient, limiting their effectiveness. To gain public recognition and legitimacy, local governments must first invest in projects funded by their own revenue sources that can earn public trust. Once the public sees the results of these projects, there will be increased trust, leading to higher tax revenues needed for long-term development. In Kyauk Myaung Township, Sagaing Region, although initial interactions between government staff and the public were met with apprehension, regular engagement helped build trust. This increased trust

resulted in higher tax revenues. Consequently, this rise in tax revenues encouraged government staff in other townships to engage more with the public.

Table 2 Analysis of Designed Deliberative Platforms in Myanmar

4.1 Analysis of Designed Deliberative Platforms in Myanmar

No.	Designed Deliberative Platforms	Practices	Challenges
1.	Deliberation Strategy	Limited participation of public and CSOs	Legitimacy of public participation and public trust
2.	Visual tools	Facebook, Applications, Website and one way communication	Barriers to increase the public participation
3.	Who participates?	Limited space for public and less of public	Representation and legitimacy
4.	How participants communicate with one another and make decisions together?	Limited representatives in public committee	Barrier of election and public committee
5.	How discussions are linked with policy or public action?	Lack of influences on government policies	Lack of policy design for public engagement platforms

Source: Wagenaar and Fung

Visual tools: Myanmar's local governments are demonstrating the value of incorporating policy entrepreneurs within their administrative structures, particularly given their significant authority over urban services. For instance, the mayor of Mandalay actively utilizes his Facebook page as a primary platform for engaging with the public. When citizens express their needs for city services, prompt and efficient responses are often provided. Similarly, the municipality in Taunggyi City utilizes automated responder systems on their Facebook page, along with the establishment of an Information Center for direct engagement with the populace. Moreover, in other major cities, tax collection is facilitated through tablet-based systems, complemented by the availability of online tax payment options and local government websites, ensuring ease of access for citizens. Nonetheless, there remains a necessity for further improvement in communication methods to enable citizens to effectively articulate their perspectives.

Who participates: In local governance, facilitating meaningful citizen participation in policymaking is of paramount importance. Under Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's administration, policy reforms were advocated under the slogan "the people matter most". Nevertheless, despite legal provisions granting local communities the right to participate, poorly crafted policies often hinder effective citizen engagement.

How participants communicate with one another and make decisions together? Myanmar's local and municipal governments represent the primary avenues through which people can legitimately influence policy-making. However, concerns arise regarding the representativeness of the system for electing ward-level representatives, where each household is represented by a single individual. Additionally, within the Development Affairs Committee, representation is predominantly based on skill sets, with only business-based organizations represented, often comprising municipal government officials. Therefore, there is a pressing need to reform the system to ensure more inclusive representation, potentially through the implementation of a quota system based on ethnicity at the federal level. It is also crucial to incorporate representation from diverse regional languages and cultures. The formulation and allocation of government plans and budgets by the existing municipal development committees warrant discussion. Although some degree of negotiation may be assumed, variations exist based on the priorities of regional and state governments. For instance, in 2020, the Yangon Region government tried to reform the budget and planning process by coordinating with various departments to initiate Public Participatory Budgeting and Planning reforms. However, public participation remained minimal. This underscores the need for dedicated spaces for public engagement in policy-making processes. Despite efforts to implement participatory reforms, such as involving government staff at all levels in budgeting and planning, misconceptions persist, with the process often mistaken for true Participatory Budgeting. Between 2019 and 2020, members of the Nay Pyi Taw Municipal Development Committee convened regular meetings with the public. However, these interactions primarily served as platforms for government employees to inform attendees, often limited to the immediate neighborhood, about their tasks and progress. This sometimes results in one-way

communication, with participants merely responding to queries rather than engaging in meaningful dialogue.

How discussions are linked with policy or public action? At the local level, public participation spaces encompass the community's input on government projects and budgets, which can be prioritized accordingly. However, in centralized policy areas such as environmental protection and recommendations for enhancing urban services through tax increases, public influence is often limited. Hence, there is a need for a shift in the approach of state and federal governments towards greater interaction with the populace.

4.2 Analysis of Enhancing the Deliberative Capacity of a Policy System in Myanmar

Table 3 Analysis of Enhancing the Deliberative Capacity of a Policy System in Myanmar

No.	Enhancing the Deliberative Capacity of a Policy System	Practices	Challenges
1.	Institutional Environment for policymaking process	Myanmar Bureaucracy Culture of <i>'Do nothing; be uncomplicated; and avoid trouble'</i>	Corruption and under wages of government salary, lack of policy initiatives and highly centralized traditional and norms of bureaucracy.
2.	Key skill set of DPA	Centralized design for training programs by Union Civil Service Board.	Effective training support for local government.

Source: Wagenaar and Ya Li

Institutional Environment for policymaking process: Burma's bureaucratic system, inherited from its colonial past, remains largely unaccountable to its citizens. Rather than prioritizing public welfare, government officials often focus on avoiding displeasure from their superiors, leading to a culture of compliance rather than innovation. This mindset, combined with meager wages, has allowed corruption to

permeate various levels of government, stifling the emergence of new policies and perpetuating a cycle of stagnation. The prevalent mantra of *‘Do nothing; be uncomplicated; and avoid trouble’* further reinforces a culture of risk aversion, discouraging employees from proposing novel ideas or initiatives. To dismantle these entrenched norms, systemic changes are imperative, particularly in reforming performance evaluation mechanisms like the Performance Appraisal system. Moreover, local governance practices must be revamped to center on community needs and public service delivery, fostering a more citizen-centric approach. Adequate training for government officials is crucial to facilitate meaningful public engagement, while addressing language barriers at the federal level is essential for inclusive policymaking. Deliberative analysts, public engagement professionals, and subject experts should be empowered to facilitate constructive dialogue, resolve disputes, and promote consensus-building among stakeholders.

Key skill set of DPA: Myanmar's government employees primarily receive training from the Union Civil Service Board. However, the credibility of these training institutions came into question in 2019 when it was revealed that some courses were offered in collaboration with fake universities. While there are specific training programs for government departments under federal ministries, local government employees lack tailored training opportunities. Senior officers often receive the same training as new recruits, without specialized programs. Many junior employees, like the interviewee, join municipal organizations without undergoing formal training. Even technical subjects like engineering are mainly taught by senior colleagues. Consequently, local government staff often lack essential training, particularly in technology, hindering their ability to effectively engage with the public. This deficit was highlighted by the Mayor of Mandalay during a 2019 property tax workshop, where he emphasized the challenges posed by the lack of technologically proficient staff in implementing policy reforms.

4.3 Analysis of Institutional Design-in-Practice in Myanmar

Interconnectedness: Formally established platforms for local governments to collaborate and share insights are lacking. To address this gap, the Asia Foundation and the Renaissance Institute annually convene municipalities nationwide for discussions on policy changes. These gatherings, known as National Horizontal Learning Workshops,

facilitate collective learning and problem-solving. However, cooperation is hindered by regional variations in political practices and the absence of formal linkages, limiting the scope of collaboration.

Table 4 Analysis of Institutional Design-in-Practice in Myanmar

No.	Institutional Design-in-Practice	Practices	Challenges
1.	Interconnectedness	Lack of platforms to network	Lack of the knowledge and practices sharing platforms
2.	Higher-order effects	Parachute Policy (Moe-Kya-Shwe Ko) The tradition of military officers in government bodies.	Creates a hierarchical bureaucracy that stifles policy innovation and prevents policy entrepreneurs.
3.	Institutional relationships between local/regional and national levels of management	Various working committees and same responsible person	Capacity and expertise burden
4.	Organizations rules and norms	Outdated laws, corruption, reluctance to work, lack of accountability.	High bureaucratic resistance
5.	Political risk	Differing party priorities and election risks heighten tensions between MPs and officials.	Politician-bureaucrat agenda conflicts cause policy instability.

Source: Wagenaar and Ya Li

Higher-order effects: In Myanmar's local governments, the pervasive phenomenon known as the "parachute policy"—where high-ranking military officers are inserted into key administrative roles—has severely disrupted governance. This practice, where military appointees often supersede civilian authorities, has entrenched a bureaucratic culture of inaction, avoidance of complexity, and risk aversion.

Consequently, it stymies efforts for bureaucratic reform and diminishes the government's capacity to enact and enforce policies effectively.

Institutional relationships between local/regional and national levels of management: Government institutions often consolidate various departments and establish multiple working committees to enhance coordination. However, the presence of the same government officers across numerous committees can diminish their effectiveness. A significant challenge arises from the divergence between federal and state government priorities within the highly centralized system, leading to friction. Furthermore, despite possessing powers, local governments lack financial autonomy as per the constitution, resulting in insufficient tax revenues from regionally produced resources. Inter-institutional policies and legal regulations exacerbate friction due to procedural complexities and obsolescence. To fortify institutions in the long term, legal amendments pertaining to decentralization must be drafted and implemented.

Organizations rules and norms: As procedures and policies become increasingly outdated, adapting to the changing times becomes challenging. The ineffectiveness of archaic laws and policies hampers the evolution of the democratic system and bureaucratic mechanisms, fostering a culture that prioritizes decisions solely based on superiors' directives. Government departments operate under disparate policies, complicating coordination and often leading to policy changes influenced by personal relationships between department leaders. Consequently, adherence to laws and regulations takes a back seat to obedience to superiors' orders, perpetuating a culture of compliance rather than critical evaluation.

Political risk: The varying policy priorities of political parties that won elections between 2010 and 2015 significantly influenced the bureaucratic machinery. During President U Thein Sein's administration, there was a focus on short-term benefits, resulting in a lack of attention to long-term reforms in laws and regulations. While commendable progress was made in peace process, economic and social reforms within a brief timeframe, these initiatives lacked sustainability. Conversely, under Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's leadership, efforts were made to instigate enduring reforms by amending regulations. However, resistance from both party policies and government officials impeded these endeavors. The uncertainty surrounding government challenges hindered

the alignment of political reforms with bureaucratic performance. Thus, there is a pressing need to synchronize political reforms with the operational efficacy of the government apparatus.



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CHAPTER 5

Policy Recommendation

Myanmar's current deliberative practices and local governance systems limit public participation, despite policy recommendations. An ideal deliberative policy forum will address these gaps and enhance public participation, legitimacy, and effectiveness in local governance

Designing the Ideal Deliberative Policy Forum (IDPF)

Deliberative Platforms

Action by: Forum

1. Advocate for the involvement of alternative power holders in ethnic armed organization areas to initiate deliberative forums.
2. Launch pilot projects focusing on local issues.

Deliberative Capacity

Action by: Deliberative Policy Analysts (National, State, and Local)

1. Provide training for community youth to improve facilitation, moderation, and analysis skills.
2. Build local DPA teams to support the forums.

Institutional Design-in-Practice

Action by: 3 Phases of Forum Design

Step-by-Step:

- Identify relevant stakeholders through stakeholder analysis.
- Select hearing participants to attend an ad hoc forum, ensuring representation of the case.
- Ensure equal opportunities for participants to express their voices.
- Provide necessary background information with the support of the DPA team, including experts in related fields.

Phase 1:

- The DPA team facilitates, observes, and analyzes the interests behind positions, appeals, discourses, and metaphors to develop narratives and storylines, and gather core evidence.

- Conduct debates, dialogues, and deliberations.

Phase 2:

- Conduct joint fact-finding.
- Engage in subsequent negotiations.

Phase 3:

- Conduct interest-based negotiations focusing on resolution and consensus building.
- Provide TPA support for the negotiation process.

Final Results:

- Document the negotiation process and final results, including the consensus reached, the jointly accepted fair scheme, and the transformation of people's views and preferences in the DPA report.
- Advocate for the DPA report to policymakers.
- Evaluate the forum design in practice.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Author's Name	Mr. Thurein Lwin
Place of Birth	Mogok, Myanmar
Education	June 2023 – June 2024, Master of Arts (Public Policy), 1st Class Honors, School of Public Policy, Chiang Mai University, Thailand 2021, Myanmar Initiative Fellow, The University of British Columbia 2015/16-2017/18, Master of Development Studies, Yangon University of Economics, Myanmar 2017, Diploma in International Relations, University of Yangon, Myanmar 2009-2012, Bachelor of Science, Subject of Specialization: Zoology, Dagon University, Myanmar
Scholarship	2023, Myanmar Reimagined Initiative Scholarship, School of Public Policy, Chiang Mai University
Publication	2022, Overlapping Crises of COVID-19 and Coup: Impact on Myanmar Business Environment in 2021, Inya Economics Lwin, T., Thu, P., Nwe, T., & Htain Linn. (2022). Why does the 2021 Military Coup happen in Myanmar? A way to move forward for constitution. <i>Inya Economic Journal</i> , 138-172. 2021, Survival Game: COVID-19 impact on Myanmar's Businesses, Inya Economics 2021, Myanmar Business Insight Report 2019, Series 1 & 2, Inya Economics 2021, Building Municipal Networks: Options for establishing a municipal network in Myanmar, Renaissance Institute

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Lwin, T. (2017). Difficulties of Fixing the Minimum Wage and its Impact on Inflation in Myanmar. *Inya Economic Journal*, 121-137.

Experiences

January 2023 – 2024, Executive Director, Inya Economics, Myanmar

June 2022 – June 2023, Advocacy Coordinator, Oxfam in Myanmar

June 2022 – June 2023, Advocacy Coordinator, Oxfam in Myanmar

Sep 2021 – Feb 2022, Economic and Fiscal Affairs Tax
Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB) Project Intern, UNDP

May 2019 – June 2021, Program Associate, Renaissance
Institute, Myanmar

May 2017 – August 2017, Research Intern, Centre for Economic
and Social Development, Myanmar



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