

INTRODUCTION

- The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are **17** global goals intended to guide governments toward more sustainable and equitable development (United Nations, 2015).



- SDG 11** focuses on inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities; **Target 11.1** includes adequate, safe and affordable housing.
- Having been born in **Manila** and later immigrated to **Toronto**, I witnessed how housing shaped our family's opportunities and stability, it motivated the questions at the heart of this research.

- Toronto** and **Metro Manila** provide two very different governance settings. Rather than using one case as the standard for the other, the report asks what the same global commitment reveals when it passes through two different systems

KEY TERMS

SDG localization: The adaptation of a global SDG commitment to local institutions, plans, budgets, indicators, and implementation.

SDG visibility: How directly a policy document names the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda, or SDG 11.

Policy translation: The movement of a broad commitment through interpretation, authority, implementation, monitoring, and feedback.

Translation depth: How far a commitment can be traced through the policy process..

Translation break: A point where the connection between the original commitment and downstream policy becomes weak, unclear, or stops.

OBJECTIVES

Research Question:

- How have the SDGs shaped municipal housing policy in Toronto and Metro Manila, and how do political and institutional factors influence this process?

Three Main Objectives:

- Compare Toronto and Metro Manila to understand how different political and institutional systems shape SDG localization.
- Trace what happens to SDG 11 as it moves through policy, authority, implementation, monitoring, and accountability.
- Identify where translation weakens and what each case can reveal about the other.

METHODOLOGY

How I traced the Policy Translation:

- Comparative qualitative document analysis of housing governance in Toronto and Metro Manila.
- 16 core policy/reporting documents: 8 Toronto + 8 Metro Manila
- Inductive coding identified recurring themes including SDG references and governance restraints
- Evidence was organized into six housing-policy pathways, three for each case.

SIX POLICY PATHWAYS				
Pathway	Focus	Visibility	Translation depth	Main break
T1	Rights-based housing strategy	Indirect	Higher / embedded	Attribution; feedback
T2	Inclusionary zoning	Indirect / absent	Higher, constrained	Authority; territorial reach
T3	Rental replacement & tenants	Indirect	Higher / embedded	Long-term lived outcomes
PH1	SDG localization & shelter planning	Explicit upstream	Lower-moderate	Implementation; feedback
PH2	Socialized housing & 4PH	Explicit → indirect	Moderate / interrupted	Divided responsibility
PH3	Flood risk & resettlement	Explicit upstream	Substantial / interrupted	Jurisdictional fit; human outcomes

Figure 1. Used to trace the policy pathways.

SDG TRANSLATION CHAIN

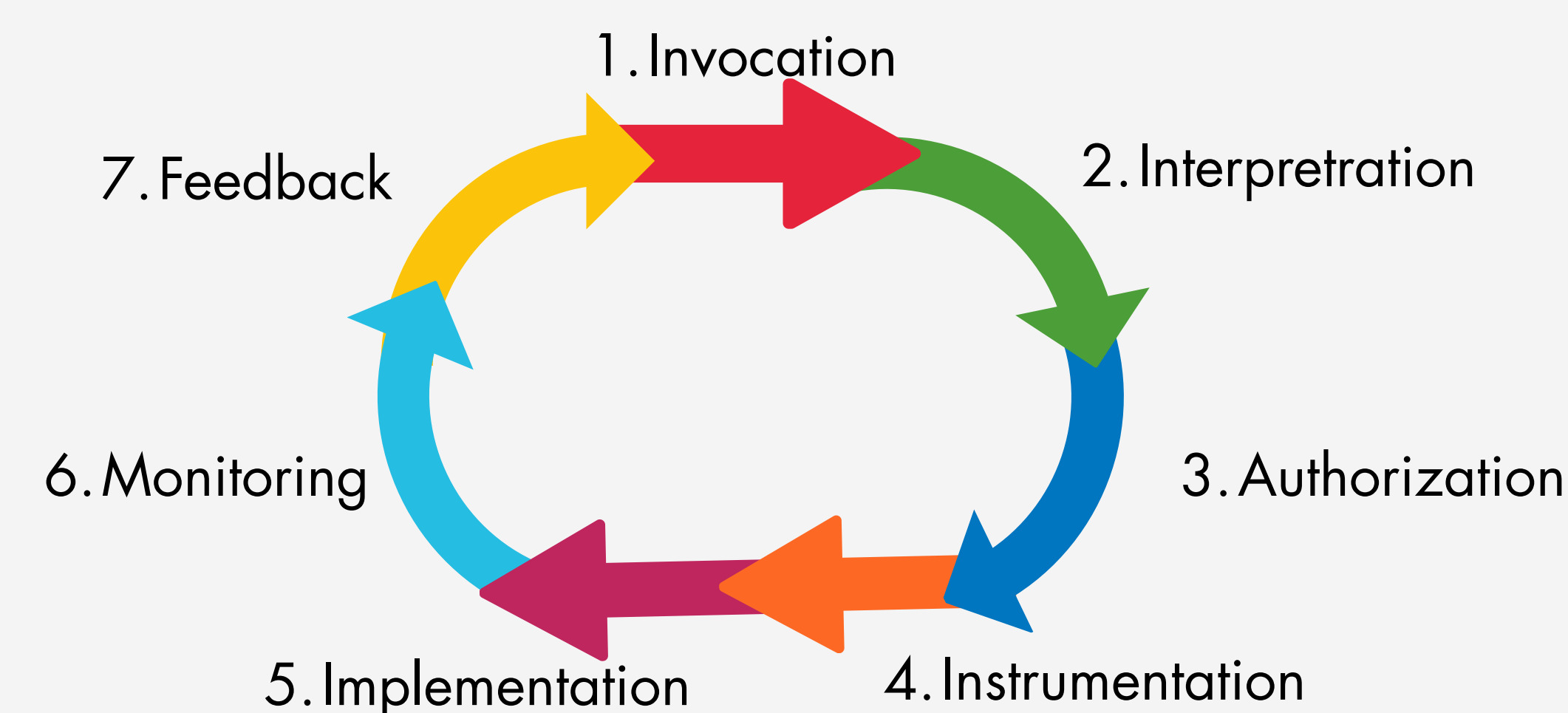


Figure 1. Used to trace the policy pathways.

VISIBILITY ≠ TRANSLATION DEPTH

	Lower translation depth	Higher translation depth
High SDG visibility	Explicit but shallow	Explicit and embedded
Low SDG visibility	Weak or unrelated	Implicit but embedded

Table C1. Final pathway classifications and decision basis.

FINDINGS



1 SDG Language

- Explicit SDG references do not always mean meaningful localization.
- Toronto often embeds SDG-related goals without naming the SDGs.
- Visibility ≠ institutional impact.



2 Jurisdictional Fit

- Housing problems cross municipal and institutional boundaries.
- Authority and responsibility are often divided across governments and agencies.
- When responsibility is unclear, accountability weakens.



3 People & Visibility

- Governments often measure units, approvals, projects, and relocations.
- Lived outcomes like affordability, security, and community ties are harder to trace.
- What is easiest to count is not always what matters most.



4 Comparative Learning

- Oranges-to-apples:** Different systems make different problems visible.
- Toronto: highlights clear municipal duties and enforceable policy tools.
- Manila: connects housing to resilience, livelihood, and multi-level governance.

CONCLUSION

Key Takeaway: The success of a global goal should not be judged by how often it is mentioned, but by what it actually changes. Does it change a rule? A budget? A responsibility? A policy instrument? And when the policy fails, is someone clearly responsible for responding?

Future Research can move beyond policy documents and speak directly with residents, housing advocates, policymakers, and implementing organizations.

Ultimately, this research is about the distance between a global promise and everyday life. Making sure that, its purpose and the people it was created for, do not get lost along the way.