

The Role of Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness and Public Trust In Enhancing Citizen Participation In Social Media*

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Abstract

Purpose - This study aims to investigate the antecedents that influence public intentions to use social media for e-government services.

Design/methodology/approach - The original data was gathered by distributing questionnaires to Vietnamese of a rural city having prior experiences in e-government services. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to test the final data set of 455 respondents.

Findings - The findings show that significantly positive association between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and trust and intention to engage in social media for e-government services. Furthermore, the study finds that the variation in intended behavior on social media for e-government services can be explained by 57.8 percent through the constructs.

Practical Implications – The study goal was to understand the public perception and trust for government agencies to implement appropriate policy initiatives to promote their engagement in social media for e-government services. The results imply that agencies should enhance citizens' trust and confidence in using social media rather than conventional services.

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It suggests that government agencies should create consistent and comprehensive activities on social media for citizens' ease to understand and perceived benefits of using e-government services through social media. Besides this, the local government may build a distinct site on social media to learn about citizens' questions and complaints. As a result, agencies can rely on the response to upgrade information and communication technology (ICT) systems for e-government services to maintain advanced data quality to reinforce their readiness to accept social media.

Originality/Value - Although prior studies have analyzed citizen behavior in using e-government services, it rarely considers the context of social media due to novelty. This research adds to the research body about the prior determinants of involvement in social media for e-government services in developing nations, specifically in the Vietnamese context. Moreover, it provides a comprehensive framework by considering the public trust and two elements of TAM to reason the intention to participate. This integrated framework contributes to the corpus of information as prior research has discussed the impacts of these variables on the adoption of e-government services individually.

Keywords: E-Government Services, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Introduction

Social media can support the government in enhancing interaction and communication with citizens (Bonsón et al., 2019). Interaction and communication play key roles in encouraging later collaboration and citizen engagement in e-government services (Hung et al., 2020). Users are allowed to create and share content on social media based on Web 2.0 paradigm (Pallant et al., 2022). For instance, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, etc.) are great tools to reach and respond to citizens' queries and complaints through the Internet. Social media, as opposed to one-way communication on e-government websites, provides a two-way interaction channel between the government and citizens (Arshad & Khurram, 2020; Hao et al., 2016). Based on information from citizens through sharing on social media, government organizations may use it to make policies to provide appropriate and transparent solutions for problems, thus gaining public trust (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2020; Matheus et al., 2021). Moreover, the adoption of social media assists governments in providing low-cost and easy-to-use e-government services to attract people with varying degrees of technical abilities (Hung et al., 2020). Thus, social media is expected to be widely used due to its support of citizens in easily and quickly interacting with government institutions and government in making conscious decisions and policies. Despite the advantages and potentials of social media, the barrier to public participation in social media for e-government services is still a concern (Aladalah et al., 2018). In developing countries, social media for e-government services is still at the informative stage as it is only utilized to update important news and announcements (Mansoor, 2021).

Trust significantly increases citizen usage of e-government services and building a positive relationship between the government and citizens on social media (Abdulkareem, Abdulkareem, Ishola, & Akindede, 2022; Abdulkareem, Abdulkareem, Ishola, Bello, et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2021). Despite the abundance of tools, citizens are reluctant to use social media for e-government services (Aladalah et al., 2018). The public is afraid of information being stolen or exploited by illegal third parties when it is available online (Zahid et al., 2022). Moreover, in the online context, due to limited physical interaction with government agencies, citizens easily fail into skepticism and uncertainty. Thus, trust in social media should be more assessed. However, a lack of trust creates difficulty for governments in establishing e-government services in developing nations (Shao et al., 2023). Developing countries, including

Vietnam, also deal with problems in developing e-government services (Apriliyanti et al., 2021). The availability of various online public services in Vietnam demonstrates restrictions in quality and complexity for users (Nguyen Trong et al., 2022). The public is likewise hesitant to trust new approaches and is more inclined to rely on traditional methods of obtaining government services in Vietnam (Dinh & Hanh, 2020). Thus, trust is still a key challenge for the government to implement e-government services in Vietnam. Trust plays a significant role in building a positive influence on the acceptance of e-government services in other developing countries like Jordan (Almaiah & Nasereddin, 2020). However, due to a lack of research into citizens' trust elements for e-government services in Vietnam, there is a need for more studies in this field.

The mediums utilized to convey government information and electronic services significantly impact public trust and attitude toward technology (Porumbescu, 2016). Social media is one of the well-known channels to promote participants in e-government services (Abdulkareem, Abdulkareem, Isola, Bello, et al., 2022; Sawalha et al., 2019). However, social media is frequently considered independent from the realm of the state in Vietnam (Nguyen-Pochan, 2021). Due to the novelty of social media in e-government services, there has been a paucity of studies into the trust and intention to engage in social media for e-government services, especially in Vietnam. As a result, the goal of this research is to develop a comprehensive model of various antecedents of intention to engage in social media for e-government services in the setting of Vietnam. To accomplish the goal, this study associates trust with variables in Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to generalize the overall effects on the intention to participate in social media for e-government services. The findings of this research could help governmental organizations increase citizens' trust and acceptance of social media for e-government services. By understanding citizens' perceptions, the Vietnamese government may have appropriate and effective social media strategies to promote participation in e-government services. Furthermore, this research may give helpful insights into the area of knowledge for future scholars.

We organize this paper as follows. First, the review of the adopted model and theory, the literature review of previous research, and the research model are proposed. The methodology is provided in the next section. The findings of the data analysis using PLS-SEM via SmartPLS v.4.0.9.1 software are then presented. Finally, the study's discussions are given, along with some limitations and recommendations.

Literature Review

Technology Acceptance Model

Extending from the internal perceptions of citizens, this paper also concentrates on their perceptions of external systems for e-government services, such as social media, to determine their trust and intention to participate. In the digital context, the consensus of authors applies Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to reason how useful and easy-to-use characteristics of technology relate to user willingness to embrace new technology (Chen & Aklikokou, 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Puthur et al., 2020). Perceived usefulness (PUF) and perceived ease of use (PEU) are two main concerns when adopting TAM (Davis, 1989). Perceived usefulness is described as an individual's belief that adopting a system will assist him in improving work performance (Davis, 1989). Perceived ease of use is the users' belief in easily using technology to implement tasks without effort (Baabdullah et al., 2019; Davis, 1989). Users' directions are designed to attract potential users by making e-government services easy to use and useful and technical assistance and by enhancing the system's additional value while decreasing its complexity (Chen & Aklikokou, 2020). Additionally, when online actions are user-friendly, citizens are prone to increase perceived usefulness and are likely to utilize social media to acquire e-government services (Khan et al., 2021).

Hypotheses development

Citizens' trust in using social media for e-government services.

Trust is an important factor in the intention to use social media for e-government services (Abdulkareem, Abdulkareem, Ishola, & Akindede, 2022). It is vital to consider the effect of residents' trust in both systems and the government on generating the intention to participate in electronic feedback, chats, and online interactions with the government (Holzer et al., 2019). During the online data collection process, customers are willing to share personal information with organizations only when they trust in the technology and government competence on social media. Moreover, online trust should be critically concerned due to the lack of direct interaction with agencies (Patil et al., 2020) as information is uploaded through social media and conserved by service providers. When trust is formed, users will reduce their skepticism and increase their intention to use the platform (Khan et al., 2021).

Hence, trust build a positive relationship with user intention to participate in social media for government services (Abdulkareem, Abdulkareem, Ishola, & Akindele, 2022; Khan et al., 2021).

H1. Trust positively relates to citizens' intention to participate in social media for e-government services.

Perceived Usefulness

Perceived usefulness is defined as the extent to which people can attain more benefits or achievements when using social media through the disintermediation process to enhance service quality compared to conventional government services (Chen & Aklirikou, 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Nair & Jain, 2022). People can be indirectly involved in e-government services through commenting and interacting on social media without spending time traveling to government institutions. People, therefore, attain their e-government service goals in less time and at a lower cost with the support of social media so citizens increase their willingness to participate in social media to attain e-government services (Alzahrani et al., 2018). As a result, perceived usefulness has a substantial direct impact on the intention to use social media for e-government services (Khan et al., 2021; Singh & Srivastava, 2019).

H2. Perceived usefulness positively relates to citizens' intention to participate in social media for e-government services.

Perceived Ease of Use

Perceived ease of use is the degree to which a person thinks that using a specific system without effort (Davis, 1989). The significant effect of perceived ease of use on perceived usefulness of mobile wallet payment has been proven thanks to the convenience and effectiveness of the portal (Shaw & Kesharwani, 2019). Similarly, in the e-government services context, perceived ease of use is an internal conviction in the social media age to readily utilize social media for e-government services without constraints and difficulties. With comprehensive social media platforms, users learn how to operate and access useful information easily. As a result, they witness the usefulness of social media by saving their time and getting more benefits in executing their activities on social media. Thus, perceived ease of use positively relates to the perceived usefulness of using social media for e-government services (Khan et al., 2021; Singh & Srivastava, 2019).

Moreover, an easily usable system can create trust among users since it can manifest service provider competency in inventing the system (Khan et al., 2021). In other words, when citizens grasp friendly manipulation of social media for e-government services, they reduce skepticism about quality and increase their willingness to use the services. If people find it difficult and complicated, they will avoid using social media at any cost (Singh & Srivastava, 2019). It is also reasoned that the amount of effort that users put into the platform will affect their intention to participate (Dewi et al., 2019). Thus, perceived ease of use is a crucial concern relating to the intention to participate in social media for e-government services, which was also proposed by (Khan et al., 2021; Singh & Srivastava, 2019).

H3. Perceived ease of use positively relates to perceived usefulness of using social media for e-government services.

H4. Perceived ease of use positively relates to citizens' intention to participate in social media for e-government services.

Figure 1 presents the research model with hypothesis development.

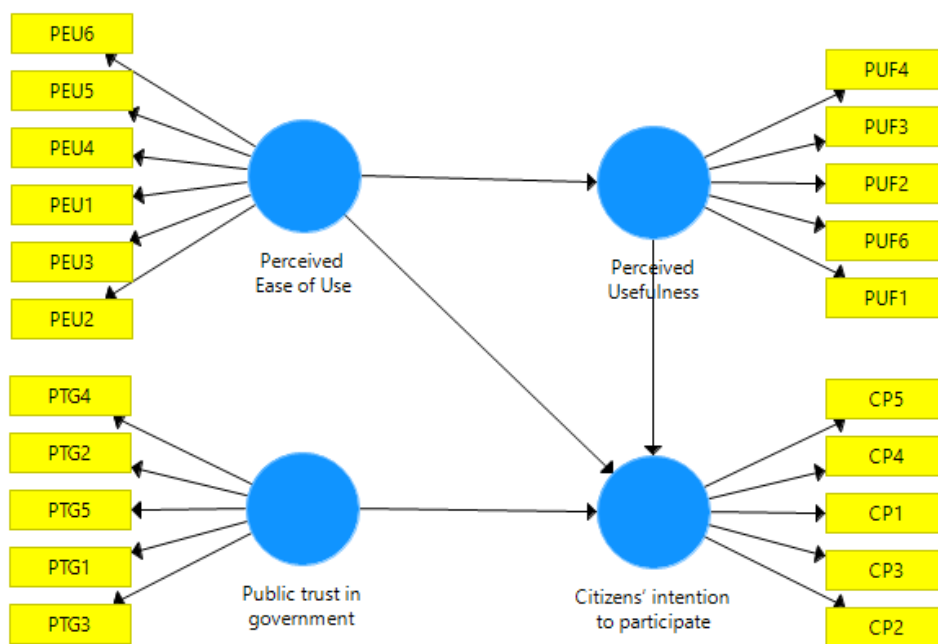


Fig. 1. Research model.

Methodology

Sampling and data collection

This study adopted a quantitative method to analyze the relationship between constructs. A survey with 22 items was distributed among residents in Tien Giang (Vietnam). To collect data from interviewees, a cross-sectional sampling method was applied, which was also utilized in prior studies (Hung et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Mansoor, 2021). In addition, to ensure coverage, the cluster sampling technique was employed during the data collection. A team of three members collected the data in Tien Giang, including authors, researchers, and voluntary non-authors. Each member went to assigned different locations within Tien Giang to distribute the questionnaire and obtain the answers. The survey was conducted within two months from 01 June 2022 to assure the large coverage among people living in Tien Giang Province.

Moreover, before the data collection process, items were aggregated and translated into Vietnamese for people's ease of understanding. People still mainly use Vietnamese during daily activities and studying in Vietnam so the translation from English to Vietnamese was necessary to conduct the survey. To ensure the holistic meanings of items, the questionnaires were sent to an expert in fields related to digital transformation and public services for revising and correcting.

During data collection, respondents were briefed about the application of e-government services, the survey objectives, and information security assurance. Then, participants were initially asked a selection question of whether they have already used e-government services or not. It can support this study in identifying the shift in citizens' perceptions towards the additional benefits from the application of social media over traditional e-government portals. If the respondent did not have prior experience with e-government services, the next possible respondent would be approached. We first conducted the pilot test and received 50 responses to ensure the reliability of the constructs. After that, the survey received favorable results. In the actual mass examination, the survey with whole items continued to share with the citizens. Finally, the results received 1100 responses. It was screened to help the authors overcome the respondents' bias when filling out the questionnaires. As a result, 455 responses (41.36%) were valid for further analysis.

Instrument of the study

This study used a quantitative method to analyze the relationship between components. Nine constructs are examined in this section. Five-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”) was utilized to evaluate. Perceived security (6 items), perceived ease of use (6 items), perceived usefulness (6 items), citizen trust (5 items), and intention (5 items) to participate in social media for e-government were referred to Khan et al. (2021).

Demographic characteristics

A total of 455 responses were analyzed in this study. Respondents are made up of 52.5% men and 47.5% women. In terms of age, 28.8% of participants were between the ages of 18 and 25, 39.1% were between the ages of 26 and 40, 24.0% were between the ages of 41 and 60, and 8.1% were over 60. The education level of 33.8% of respondents was graduating from high school, 15.2% were graduating from vocational school, 20.9% were graduating from college, 26.2% had bachelor's degrees, and 4.0% had higher education like Master's and Ph.D. degrees. In terms of occupation, 30.5% of respondents were working in government agencies, 18.0% were from private business, 12.7% were from the health and education sector, and up to 38.7% were working as freelancers. In particular, 71.2% of participants were staff or employees, 20.7% were managers, and 8.1% were private business owners.

Analysis

Measurement model

Table 1 illustrated the confirmatory factor analysis. “Cronbach’s α ” and “composite reliability” (CR) are adopted to assess the items’ reliability (Henseler et al., 2009). The CR and Cronbach’s α in Table 1 were all above 0.70. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of all variables confirms “convergent validity”, which was above the minimum threshold value of 0.5. In addition, an outer loading greater than 0.5 indicates a reliable assessment of the dependent construct (Hulland, 1999). Outer loadings smaller than 0.4 should be eliminated (Hair et al., 2021). Furthermore, if the removal raises the values of composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) above an appropriate level, the item with outer loadings between 0.4 and 0.7 may be removed. Loading values higher than 0.7 should always be kept.

Table 1 showed outer loadings of PUF5 did not meet the standards and thus were excluded. The retained indicators passed the test of reliability and convergent validity.

The measure of discriminant validity is interpreted through the Fornell-Lacker criterion and Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of the correlation technique. As illustrated in Table 2, all constructs showed discriminant validity by using Formell-Lacker criterion. To demonstrate high discriminate validity, the square root of AVE for each variable should be more significant than its association with other variables (Hair et al., 2021). Furthermore, as shown in Table 3, the discriminant validity has been well established in this study since the values of constructs passed the value of $HTMT < 0.85$ and $HTMT < 0.9$. This result is acceptable due to showing similarity with prior results (Hair et al., 2021). Thus, all constructs are ensured discriminant validity.

Table 1: The measurement model

Constructs	Indicators	Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's α
Participant Trust in e-Government services	PTG1	0.848	0.669	0.910	0.877
	PTG2	0.860			
	PTG3	0.820			
	PTG4	0.798			
	PTG5	0.760			
Perceived Usefulness	PUF1	0.736	0.628	0.894	0.851
	PUF2	0.842			
	PUF3	0.809			
	PUF4	0.799			
	PUF6	0.771			
Perceived Ease of Use	PEU1	0.767	0.631	0.911	0.883
	PEU2	0.811			
	PEU3	0.797			
	PEU4	0.796			
	PEU5	0.821			
	PEU6	0.772			
Citizens' Intention to Participate	CP1	0.786	0.689	0.917	0.887
	CP2	0.828			
	CP3	0.823			
	CP4	0.849			
	CP5	0.862			

Table 2: Discriminant validity using fornell-lacker criterion.

	CP	PUF	PEU	PTG
CP	0.830			
PUF	0.699	0.792		
PEU	0.731	0.781	0.794	
PTG	0.380	0.384	0.401	0.818

Table 3: Discriminant validity using Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	CP	PUF	PEU	PTG
CP				
PUF	0.803			
PEU	0.825	0.898		
PTG	0.426	0.441	0.456	

Structural model

The structural model of the study is indicated. The collinearity problem was first addressed by determining whether a VIF value higher than 5 exists (Hair et al., 2021). All factors have VIF values between 1.639 and 2.736, which are less than the threshold number of 5. Thus, the result of the structural model in this study is confirmed not to be influenced by collinearity.

The bootstrapping method was then used to evaluate the path coefficient, followed by 5,000 re-samples to verify the hypothesis's relevance. This paper utilized β -coefficient, t-value, and p-value to verify the hypothesized relationship. Illustrated in Table 4., citizen trust ($\beta = 0.077$, $t = 2.085$, $p < 0.05$) shows a positive relationship with citizens' trust for e-government services, thus H1 was supported. Perceived ease of use ($\beta = 0.781$, $t = 22.034$, $p < 0.01$) significantly positively related to perceived usefulness, supporting H3. Moreover, perceived usefulness ($\beta = 0.314$, $t = 3.082$, $p < 0.01$) and perceived ease of use ($\beta = 0.455$, $t = 3.984$, $p < 0.01$) exhibited a positive effect on citizens' intention to participate, thus H2 and H4 were supported.

The level of R2 (Coefficient of determination) was simultaneously used to evaluate the overall model fitness. Perceived usefulness had an R2 of 0.609, which reflected 60.9% variance explanation of antecedents in perceived ease of use. The level of R2 of intention to participate

was 0.578, showing that perceived usefulness and trust can explain 57.8% of the change in citizens' intention to participate. All latent variables, perceived usefulness and intention to participate held substantial R2 values, respectively, 0.609 and 0.578. Thus, the explanatory power of the model is quite well reflected through the R2 value (Cohen, 1988). In addition, the effect size f^2 was also considered to measure the change in R2 when a particular independent construct was removed from the structural model. Exogenous factors have f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, corresponding to minor, medium, and large impacts. In explaining citizens' intention, perceived usefulness (0.091) and trust (0.012) indicated a small effect size while perceived ease of use (0.187) showed a medium effect size. The standard root means square residual (SRMR) was employed to observe model fit. The well-fit model's threshold value should be 0.08 (Hair et al., 2021). This study's SRMR score of 0.056 was within an acceptable range for model fit.

Table 4: Results of the structural model

Hypothesis	Relationship	β -coefficient	t-value	p-value	Result	f^2
H1	Participant Trust In E-Government → Citizens' Participation in Social Media	0.077	2.085	0.037	Supported	0.012
H2	Perceived Usefulness → Citizens' Participation in Social Media	0.314	3.082	0.002	Supported	0.091
H3	Perceived Ease of Use → Perceived Usefulness	0.781	22.034	0.000	Supported	1.561
H4	Perceived Ease of Use → Citizens' Participation in Social Media	0.455	3.984	0.000	Supported	0.187

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the factors that influence residents' intention to use social media for e-government services in Vietnam. The result supported that citizens' trust significantly associates with the intention to use social media for e-government services. It is consistent with the outcomes of (Hooda et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2021), who depicted that people with higher trust will have higher intention to use e-government services. Moreover, trust has been proven to be an important antecedent of intention to use mobile banking and mobile wallet in India (Chawla & Joshi, 2019; Shankar et al., 2020). Thus, government agencies should highlight the necessity of strengthening citizens' trust in social media for e-government services, as it will help government agencies create relationships with individuals in order to increase participation and engagement.

Perceived ease of use was indicated to significantly correlate to perceived usefulness, which is in line with prior literature of (Chen & Aklikokou, 2020; Khan et al., 2021; Pipitwanichakarn & Wongtada, 2020). People using e-government services with effortless experience will find it useful. In addition, the results implied that perceived ease of use critically affects the intention to engage in social media with e-government service purposes. The results were found to have consistent outcomes with (Chen & Aklikokou, 2020; Karim & Qi, 2021; Khan et al., 2021). Thus, it is critical for government institutions to concentrate on building quality in order to have a system free of complications in order to increase the desire to use social media for e-government services. Finally, perceived usefulness was shown as a significant antecedent of the intention to use social media for e-government services, which is in line with the findings of (Chen & Aklikokou, 2020; Karim & Qi, 2021; Khan et al., 2021). Citizens' willingness to engage in e-government services via social media will grow as they realize the benefits of saving time when using social media for e-government services versus conventional methods. Hence, the government should also concentrate on enhancing website design in terms of usability and utility to boost citizens' involvement in e-government services via social media.

Theoretical Contributions

The research has some theoretical contributions. It has fulfilled a gap in existing body research by addressing the absence of prior studies on factors affecting the intention to adopt social media for e-government services. Although earlier studies have investigated the intention to use e-government services, there are limitations in existing studies on the impact of social media on the intention to participate in e-government services. This paper offers comprehensive discussions of antecedents of intention to participate in e-government services with the support of social media by employing trust and TAM framework. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) can reason citizens' perceptions about the services and system design to analyze the public trust and intention to engage in social media for e-government services. Our study points out that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness can be used to explain individuals' intentions to use social media.

Another significant contribution is the study conducted in regional countries to extend the literature since it is difficult to empirically validate citizens' intention to engage in e-government services through social media in developing countries like Vietnam. The study focuses on the benefits of social media in obtaining information for public purposes, as emerging nations embrace it with a desire for innovative ways in which the government uses these tools to serve people. Vietnamese government agencies have to understand citizens' perceptions when adopting social media instead of imposing ways of interacting with those systems on citizens.

Practical Contributions

This study has some significant practical implications in increasing people's intention to involve in social media for e-government services in Vietnam. Government-affiliated media agencies should develop communication projects and promote information and propaganda about e-government services on social media sites managed by agencies. In particular, the propaganda contents must be specific, easy to understand, and appropriate for people to understand the favorable benefits of using e-government services via social media, including the efficiency and effectiveness of e-government services. Thus, people will have confidence in e-government services, thereby positively affecting people's intention to use social media.

The government should increase its responsibility in actively informing, posting, and providing news on issues related to the rights and interests of the public on social networks to serve them. Concurrently, the local government should assign specific responsibilities to each subordinate agency, closely associated with the expertise of each branch. Hence, each agency oversees providing information to serve the people in a timely and accurate manner. Moreover, the local government has set up a

separate channel on the state-managed social media sites to answer questions and complaints from people when people use social media to learn about government services, thereby creating people's trust and increasing the level of readiness to accept social media.

Finally, the government should standardize information and activities between government portals and social media, among state agencies, between state agencies and organizations and individuals participating in the provision of e-government services to ensure the interconnection and smooth in the government's operating process to serve people when using social media for e-government services. Besides, the agencies should focus on upgrading equipment and information and communication technology for e-government services to ensure stable data quality. As a result, it will raise people's awareness about the usefulness of social media to support information and communication technology in providing e-government services.

Limitations

Apart from its useful implications, the present research has some limitations. Firstly, the data was collected from people in rural areas, leading to bias in overall Vietnamese perceptions. People from rural areas may have lower trust and perception toward social media and electronic services. It was also reflected in the results that the explanation of intention to participate in social media was only 57.8%. Moreover, the degree of acceptance of social media and e-government services of urban citizens may be less challenging than those in rural areas. Thus, future research can study people in both rural and capital areas to have better generalization. Second, to gather responses, this research used a cross-sectional study approach. Due to the constraints of resources and time, the antecedents for intention to participate in e-government services via social media were measured concurrently. Hence, a longitudinal study design may be considered for future researchers to better understand the mediating effects among constructs and on citizens' intention to participate. Thirdly, the quantitative research method was employed in this study to analyze the hypothesized relationships between perceptions of people towards social media and e-government services. Future researchers may apply the qualitative method approach to insightful subjective responses or reasons to deeply analyze citizens' perceptions under the context. Moreover, the mixed-method approach can also be utilized to explore, test, and confirm new antecedents of intention to participate in social media and relationships between constructs.

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Assurance of Human Rights for Prisoners Serving Prison Sentences in Vietnam's Law on Criminal Judgment Execution

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Abstract

Human rights are fundamental liberties that no one or any authority should be allowed to violate. The Vietnamese government gives human rights special consideration, care, and complete implementation, and it protects citizens' human rights as well as their legal rights and interests. Vietnam always ensures that convicts can fully exercise their legal rights and interests in matters about the execution of jail sentences and other rights as study, work, and daily life... are outlined in legal papers, structured to adhere to the Constitution's and laws' requirements, following the rules of international law in guaranteeing human rights in the execution of jail terms. This paper clarified that prisons properly grasp the provisions of the law, strictly implement the spirit of guidance of superior leaders in the management of detention and education of prisoners, and carry out the education of inmates in various ways and different forms, contents and methods. Also, officers and soldier of the Prison Police force are always a shining symbol of revolutionary ethics, being a shining example for prisoners to learn and follow.

Keywords: Human Rights, Prisoners, Prison Sentences, Vietnam's Law,
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General overview of human rights assurance for prisoners serving prison sentences according to Vietnamese law

Human rights are natural human rights and cannot be taken away by anyone and any government. As defined by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner, human rights are universal legal protections for people and groups against acts or omissions that violate human dignity and fundamental freedoms³.

Human rights are both universal, embodying the aspirations of all humanity, and are particular to each society and national community, which are inscribed in the United Nations Charter. That popularity and specificity complement one another constantly so that they might exist and grow.

Human rights are given special consideration, care, and complete implementation by the government, which also upholds citizens' legal rights and interests. Vietnam has actively engaged in the UN's international treaties on human rights ever since it first joined the organization (in 1977). In 1981, 1982, and 1983, Vietnam ratified seven international human rights conventions, including the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); Convention on the Non-Applicability of Status Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Until now (2022), Vietnam has ratified and acceded to 7/9 of the basic UN human rights conventions and 25 ILO conventions, including 7/8 basic conventions. Vietnam's membership in international human rights conventions is comparable to many other nations in the area and developed nations. All of the international human rights treaties, of which Vietnam is a member, we commit to implement and regard it as the political and legal duty of the government. Vietnam adheres to the same perspective throughout all of its endeavors, initiatives, and policies, which is to "Put importance on taking care of human happiness and comprehensive development, protecting and guaranteeing human rights and their legitimate

³ Phuong Minh (2020) Human rights and ensuring human rights in Vietnam, www.Quocphongthudo.vn

and interests, and respecting and implementing international treaties on human rights to which our country has signed”⁴.

According to Article 14 of the Vietnam’s 2013 Constitution, “Human rights and civil rights in politics, civil, economic, cultural, and social are recognized, accepted, respected, and guaranteed in Vietnam abide by the law and the Constitution”. Only in circumstances when it is required for reasons of national defense, security, social order and safety, social ethics, public health, and copper can human rights and citizen rights be restricted by the law”⁵

The manner jail sentences are carried out in Vietnam also clearly reflects the country’s commitment to human rights, in which the government guarantees the human rights of those serving prison sentences following the Vietnamese Constitution, laws, and international conventions and treaties to which Vietnam has signed and acceded (Rules for lowering expectations and treating inmates with prisoners; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights). The Criminal Judgment Execution Law 2019, which is the primary legal document governing activities related to the execution of prison sentences, includes provisions for the protection of prisoners’ human rights. These provisions also adequately and specifically reflect the rights and interests of prisoners, illustrating the Vietnamese government’s humanitarian and humane attitude toward offenders.

The 2019 Law on Criminal Judgment Execution was enacted as a result of taking into account the successes over 69 years of enforcing jail sentences in our nation as well as worldwide experiences in the field of criminal justice. The provisions of the 2019 Criminal Judgment Execution Law have demonstrated the spirit of the norms and standards set forth by other countries on the execution of prison sentences. Accordingly, the 2019 Law on Execution of Criminal Judgments provides for decisions on execution of prison sentences and execution of decisions on execution of prison sentences; procedures for postponing the serving of prison sentences, execution of decisions on postponement of serving prison sentences; documents for sending the convict to the place to serve the prison sentence; the regime of receiving, managing, incarcerating, educating and reforming inmates; notify the status of serving sentences and coordinate with inmates’ families, agencies, organizations and individuals participating in inmate’s education and re-education; release prisoners and execute

⁴ Tuong Duy Kien, Achievements in ensuring human rights in Vietnam in the process of state building socialist rule of law, xaydungdang.org.vn

⁵ Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam 2013, National Political Publishing House, 2015

admission decisions, transfer to the person serving a prison sentence; regulations on diet, clothing, accommodation, distribution from the site, physical training and sports activities, cultural and artistic activities, regime of meeting relatives, receiving communication gifts and providing medical care for prisoners; regimes for pregnant female inmates, raising children under 36 months old and settling the case of death of inmates, providing for the execution of prison sentences for inmates who are under 18 years old, ensuring humanity, development normal development both physically and mentally.

And under Article 27 of the Law on Criminal Judgment Execution of 2019, it is specified that prisoners have certain legal rights and privileges while serving their jail terms, including: “To have life, health and property protected, honor and dignity respected; to disseminate their rights and obligations, and the internal rules of inmate detention facilities; To be guaranteed diet, accommodation, clothing, personal living items, medical care as prescribed; send, receive mail, receive gifts, money; read books, newspapers, listen to the radio or watch television in accordance with the conditions of the place where the sentence is being served; To participate in physical training, sports, cultural and artistic activities; To work, study, and learn a job; To meet and communicate with relatives, representatives of agencies, organizations or individuals; for foreign inmates who are allowed to visit and make consular contact; To perform civil transactions on their own or through a representative in accordance with law; To be guaranteed the right to complain and denounce; to be proposed for consideration of special amnesty and compensation for damage in accordance with law; To participate in voluntary social insurance, enjoy social insurance regimes and policies in accordance with law; To use scriptures, express beliefs and religions according to the provisions of law; To be commended for achievements during the execution of the sentence”⁶. These are basic rights that are following the Vietnamese Constitution, domestic law, and international law. They also provide wrongdoers opportunities and serve as obvious signs of the State's stance toward them. Learning, overcoming adversity, rebuilding their life, demonstrating the humanity of the execution of a prison sentence, presenting a humane Vietnam in the eyes of foreign allies, a responsible Vietnam with signed international law provisions, a Vietnam that respects human rights, ensures human rights, and respects human rights in all facets of social life.

⁶ Law on Criminal Judgment Execution 2019.

Vietnam's practice of protecting prisoners' human rights while they are serving jail sentences

The execution of state policies toward inmates demonstrates very explicitly how human rights related to the rights and interests of inmates are ensured, resulting in the fair and humane treatment of prisoners serving sentences to respect the law in regards to all regimes and policies, to get care for their material needs, to secure mental health, and to exercise the proper rights and interests following the law to establish a safe atmosphere. It is most convenient for prisoners to re-learn in peace, own their errors, and get pardons early so that they go back and re-integrate into society.

The factual investigation and exchange of opinions with practitioners indicate that under the unified leadership and guidance of the Vietnamese government, all government departments have conscientiously implemented the provisions of the Constitution and laws, and uniformly implemented prison sentences. This process has been synchronizing and complying with the law, meeting the requirements of building a socialist country under the rule of law, meeting the requirements of judicial reform, ensuring prison safety, helping to maintain security and order, cracking down on crime, and implementing policies to protect human rights and human safety.

The discussion held at the 70th-year scientific seminar on the construction and development of the prison management police force showed that representatives evaluated the humanitarian, meaningful, and benevolent nature of Vietnam's criminal execution work. Scholars, scientists, and practitioners agree to ensure the legitimate rights and interests of prisoners while serving their sentences, and to promote the rights and obligations of prisoners.

Conducting on-site investigations on prisons that organize prisoner education activities with educational content, methods, and diverse forms are closely related to the daily lives of prisoners, which leads to gradually forming a positive lifestyle and gradually avoiding and eliminating bad habits and establishing a culture and civilized life during the imprisonment period.

Previously, the ministries and branches took the requirements of the Constitution and the law seriously and organized the execution of jail sentences under the unified leadership and guidance of the Government. This progress has been coordinated, synchronous, lawful and satisfied with the conditions for establishing a socialist state based on the rule of law to

satisfy the conditions for judicial reform; guarantee prisoner safety; contribute to maintaining security and order; combat crime and be associated with the implementation of laws ensuring human rights and human security.

Prisons plan educational programs for convicts using a variety of educational topics, approaches, and formats that are integrated into daily activities and progressively shape inmates' lifestyles. When criminals spend their time in jail, they actively and gradually kick bad habits and adopt a cultured and civilized lifestyle. Sentence reduction, amnesty, and conditional jail release are always carried out following the law, which builds beliefs in prisoners and motivates them to actively pursue education and work toward a prompt return to their families and society. To be specific:

The following is detailed in Decree No. 133/2020/ND-CP, dated November 9, 2020, which also lists several provisions of the Law on Criminal Judgment Execution 2019: According to the law's requirements, prisons also enhance inmates' living conditions by providing goods from their work, increasing food rations, ensuring proper nutrition, and providing acceptable living conditions for inmates. A new, contemporary, clean, and hygienic concept is being used to construct prisons, with at least 2m² of space allotted for every prisoner, with an emphasis on guaranteeing environmental safety, personal cleanliness and disease prevention. Every prison subdivision has medical rooms, enough medications, and physicians and nurses to evaluate and treat convicts, thus the inmates' health care is always guaranteed. Every jail division has a library with a substantial collection of books and newspapers. According to the Law on Belief and Religion, inmates who identify as religious or have other convictions are permitted to utilize texts to communicate such beliefs⁷.

The visiting regime of prisoners is always facilitated, prisons simplify the visitation procedures, meeting the practical needs and aspirations of prisoners. 100% of prisons arrange standard visits in prisons, according to statistical reports of Vietnamese government agencies from 2011 to 2022, 4.791.877 prisoners were organized. 1 hour visitation, 280.757 inmates visit over 1 hour, 48.495 inmates are visited in private rooms, and more than 5 million prisoners receive gifts from their families, 6.139.729 prisoners are contacted by phone with relatives. The implementation of national policies for prisoners in terms of sentence reduction, conditional parole, and amnesty have always been paid special attention by prisons to each prisoner. From 2011 to 2022, 695.148 prisoners have been reduced to serving prison sentences.

⁷ Decree No. 133/2020/ND-CP dated November 9, 2020 detailing a number of articles of the Law on Criminal Judgment Execution

In 03 years of implementing the Project on Conditional Prison Release (2018 - 2021), 5.333 inmates have been released from prison. conditionally ahead of time. From 2009 to 2022, the President signed a decision on amnesty for more than 92.000 prisoners and 1.132 people to suspend the execution of prison sentences, and amnesty for many prisoners sentenced to death down to execute the life sentence, opening the way for the inmates to get compensation⁸.

According to some experts' opinions, practitioners in various prisons believe that prisoners' human rights have had a positive impact on the psychology of prisoners, giving prisoners the motivation, confidence and will to struggle, overcome the difficulties and obstacles during their prison sentences and rest assured to reform.

Those results have had a positive impact on the psychology of the collective of prisoners serving their sentences at the prison, helping inmates to have motivation, faith, and will to strive to overcome difficulties and barriers while serving the sentence in the prison for re-education. Correct and humane policies have great effects in educating and persuading prisoners, influencing the thoughts and actions of prisoners from negative psychology, boredom and even depression. The spirit of resistance to violating the rules of the first days of entering the prison has been replaced by positive thoughts, voluntary actions, and striving to study and well implement the rules and regulations at the prison. Inmates who were lazy and dependent before entering the prison, are now self-conscious, active workers who love working; those prisoners who used to be in a depressed psychological state or a mental breakdown, erratic eating and drinking, becoming a healthy lifestyle with a positive lifestyle, and transforms in thoughts, attitudes and actions.

The execution of prison sentences in the prisons of the Ministry of Public Security in recent years has shown humanity, demonstrating the precious tradition of the Vietnamese people of love, helping creating conditions for offenders to be repaid, to have their lives restored, in association with ensuring human rights and security, inmates' rights and interests during the execution of sentences in prisons.

The execution of prison sentences has been transmitted by the media communication to people at home and abroad, to international friends through categories such as "Portrait and life" on VTV4, "Recognizing the truth" on VOV1, "A view of the truth" on ANTV and VTV1, "Human rights and life" on Party Building Magazine... In addition, prison units cooperate with

⁸ Reports on the results of criminal judgment enforcement.

other institutions Agencies and mass organizations at the place where they are stationed, central agencies and mass organizations to organize events, and programs that are meaningful, impressive and emotional as: “Belief and good direction”, to organize a contest “Writing apology letters” among prisoners... This has helped the masses and international friends to have a better understand, the right view, objective and comprehensive on the execution of prison sentences in Vietnam, seeing the humane values in the aspects of the execution of prison sentences in prisons.

Experts, scientists, and practitioners evaluated in the 70th-year of scientific seminars of the construction and maturity of the prison management police force. They believed that prisons had correctly applied the Party’s policy line, flexibly applied and innovated the Constitution and laws on safeguarding human rights and personal safety, the rights and interests of prisoners under all conditions and circumstances is for the purpose of educating and educating prisoners; opposing the erroneous arguments of hostile forces regarding the imprisonment work in Vietnam, and fully and comprehensively understand the humanitarian spirit in Vietnam’s education and prisoner rehabilitation work from international friends.

Especially, research on the management and education practices of Vietnamese prison inmates has shown that if prisoners violate rules and laws during their sentence, they can still ensure their legitimate rights and interests. There is no unfair treatment or torture or corporal punishment for prisoners. Inmates who commit violations still receive the same food, clothing and housing benefits as other inmates. Vietnamese law stipulates disciplinary measures for violators, including condemnation, warning, and bringing them to the disciplinary room. If a new crime is tried fairly, its sentence will be the same as that of other criminals. Through investigation, Vietnamese law and prison work practices have shown that despite committing new crimes and violating the law, they still receive very humane treatment, full of humanity, with tolerance and fair treatment, in accordance with international law signed by Vietnam.

It can be seen that the prisons have properly, flexibly and creatively applied the Party’s lines and guidance and coincided with the provisions of the Constitution and the law on ensuring human rights as well as the rights and interests of inmates in all conditions and circumstances for the purpose of educating and inspiring inmates; fighting against false arguments of hostile forces about the execution of prison sentences in Vietnam and proving to international friends a full and comprehensive understanding of the humanitarian spirit in working, educating, reforming prisoners in Vietnam.

In the coming time, prisons with their functions and duties will continue to research, innovate, create, and properly apply the State's viewpoint on human rights and security according to the Constitution and the law, fully implement the provisions of the law to ensure the legal rights and interests of the prisoner. Government agencies advise the State on promulgating guidelines, guidelines and legal documents in organizing the implementation of the State's regimes and policies towards prisoners, promulgating legal documents to ensure that inmates are protected. In line with the spirit of the 2013 Constitution on human rights, the rights of prisoners are synchronously implemented in prisons.

Prisons properly grasp the provisions of the law, strictly implement the spirit of guidance of superior leaders in the management of detention and education of prisoners, and carry out the education of inmates in various ways and different forms, contents and methods with many creative ways to create a favorable environment for inmates to feel secure in their thoughts on reform, to believe in their guidelines, policies and laws of the State, to strive for good rehabilitation to return to family and society soon.

Officers and soldiers of the Prison Police force are always a shining symbol of revolutionary ethics, being a shining example for prisoners to learn and follow. The officers is dedicated, devoted to the cause of education, instilling respect for prisoners lawful rights and interests of prisoners, fair and humane treatment for inmates, helping them find new light, find a way to return to their lives, become an honest person, live useful to society. Thus, those officers deserve to be "Teachers", "Silent ferrymen" for those who have made mistakes to return to the wharf of redemption.

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Bamboo Diplomacy: Crumbling Strategy Amid the Sino-US Competition*

Charissa Suk-ieam¹

Abstract

The diplomatic tradition of Thailand is known as bamboo diplomacy. It is the norm in the making of Thai foreign policy, because it is believed to be mechanism that helps protect the country's sovereignty and autonomy. However, the major power competition has seemed to challenge the doctrine, as its recent conduct indicated the country "bandwagoning" to the rising China. The study argues that Thailand does not abandon the traditional approach. After Obama's Pivot to Asia, it has attempted to create equilibrium of relations with Washington and Beijing to maximize leverage gained from both powers. The increased engagement with China after the 2014 military coup was to alleviate political pressure from the United States. The paper also discusses the bamboo diplomacy in the perspective that it can be considered to be impractical. The intensified major power competition could break the bamboo.

Keywords: Bamboo Diplomacy, Small Power Politics, The Sino-US Competition

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Introduction

The lexicon of bamboo diplomacy has been used to describe Thai foreign policy. It is comprised of three unique characteristics. The first one being hegemonic dependency. As a small power, Thai foreign policy is hemmed by self-identification of a weak state. It is therefore confined to Lilliputians' Dilemma (Keohane 1969), the quandary in which small powers rely on assistance from bigger states to safeguard their national security because of insufficient capability. This influences the second trait of bamboo diplomacy, responsive flexibility. Inadequacy of power forces Thailand to sensitise to global politics. The time and leeway to make right decision for survival are limited. Thailand therefore sways to any stronger nation of the moment for dependence. The last hallmark is opportunistic détente.² Uncertainty in international arena has led the country to always look for opportunities to prevent strained relations with major power by playing the role of neutral state and maintaining good relations with all powers.

The rise of China has triggered new area of great power competition. In the late 2011, Washington under Obama administration announced Pivot to Asia, the ambition to contain the rise of China and reclaim the US profound hegemonic presence in Asia-Pacific. The collision has put the bamboo in a difficult circumstance and the stakes have become high. It is increasingly propelled to choose side. Pongphisoot (2016) argues the rise of China and significance of its market to Bangkok challenge the continuity of bamboo diplomacy. It has appeased China in several affairs. Murphy (2010) suggests bamboo diplomacy is no longer employed. She classifies Thai foreign policy to China's rise as bandwagon. Based on Thailand's moving closer to China, the concern is whether it signifies departure from the classical approach of Thai foreign policy or not.

The Setting of Sino-US Competition in Thai Foreign Policy

The US-Thai relations deepened during the Cold War. The United States saw Thailand as critical anti-communist frontier, while it depended on the United States as the country's

² Jittipat (2022) introduces the discourse of bamboo diplomacy as attempt to détente. See Jittipat Poonkham. (2022). A Genealogy of Bamboo Diplomacy: The Politics of Thai Détente with Russia and China. Australia: AUS Press.

hegemon who could protect it from communist ideology. However, the bilateral relations between the two gradually declined. Right at the beginning of 1970s the Vietnam War came to an end. Positioning costly war as priority was irrational. Accordingly, the United States reduced presence in Asia (Tow 2015). Deficiency of mutual interests disrupted substantial alliance. This was at the same time when the regional great power reformed its foreign policy. China moved from being isolationist to be more active in global affairs (Glaser 2012, 89). The US disappearance impelled hegemonic anxiety to Thailand. It drove Bangkok to reconstruct the bamboo diplomacy. It was built to engage more with the great power of Asia.

During the time when the US foreign policy was dedicated in the Middle East, China became stable and thriving market for Thailand's agricultural products (Anuson 2015). Sino-Thai relations were normalized. Bamboo diplomacy nonetheless encountered to the windstorm of Obama's Pivot to Asia, the indication of the US security dilemma. The aim was to limit China's sphere of influence, which was predominant in Southeast Asia. Thus the region became the theater of major power competition. It was highly 'geopoliticized'. The United States ramparted the region with foreign policy to counter the rise of China. It institutionalized regional order with US leadership and hinder China from the cooperative framework. The proposal of Lower Mekong Initiative in 2009 tangled half portion of Southeast Asian nations with mutual interests. The areas of cooperation were all critical security cores. Pandemic assistance, environmental protection and nontraditional security threats were included. This was the effort of the United States to enrich relations between itself and the countries of the Mekong region (Kurlantzick 2015).

China, on the other hand, has attempted to secure its strength of influence by binding Southeast Asian states through the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC). The institution was comprised of a number of crucial development programs such as health security, economic growth and education³. China's provision of financial supports to the program has enhanced diplomatic relations as well as fostered the Chinese sphere of influence in the Mekong sub-region. The confrontational setting of major power competition challenged the conduct of Thai foreign policy. The former Prime Minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva, stated in his interview in 2015 that the United States excluding China from regional economic agenda put Thailand in a difficult situation to make decisions (Zawacki 2017).

³ See Speech by Premier Li Keqiang at the third Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Leaders' Meeting http://english.222.gov.cn/premier/speeches/202008/25/content_WS5f4448cac6d0f7257693ae42.htm.

China's foreign policy has threatened the US security. It is seen as an ambition of restructuring newfound international architecture in order to triumph hegemonic credentials (Nexon & Andersen, 2021). It has strategically molded the linkage of mechanisms to diminish traditional world order and thus the US world's dominance. The first effort of global reconstruction deals with international economic order. In 2013, President Xi Jing Ping introduced the building of a New Silk Road Economic Belt connecting China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe by land and proposed the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, the sea route linking China with Southeast Asia, South Asia, the South Pacific, the Middle and East Africa. The land and sea infrastructure ambitions were combined and became known as 'One Belt One Road' initiatives (Jenkins 2019). The economic masterplan became primary in China's foreign policy.

In order to draw states to participant in the framework, China offers Silk Road Fund derived from the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). China's multilateral development bank has also challenged the Bretton Wood System. As the existing process of getting financial assistance from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been dissatisfied by various states, China introduced an attractive proposal of non-conditionality and non-interference. The principles are probable to decouple states from US dominant structure and hence weaken the norm of global currency. The bank can hallow out dollarization and Chinese currency of renminbi can replace (Bader 2021).

The second norm countering aspiration centers around the South China Sea maritime dispute. South China Sea has been considered as important strategic location since the 18th century. The dominant power of the region has authoritative power over transregional trade between China, Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean, and accordingly is able to exert substantial political influence. China had had the dominant control over the area before its defeat to the British in the Opium War (Wasana 2019). As stated by Xi, "national rejuvenation has been the greatest dream of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation" (Nikkei Asia). China's national interest to reestablish the center global trade to itself through the One Belt One Road Initiative has made South China Sea crucial to the ambition.

One of the traditional value of the US-led global order is freedom of navigation in respect to the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). However, China building artificial islands and facilities including airstrips and ports despite it being unlawful is to justify China's rightful claim of sovereignty in the South China Sea over the nine-dash line. On that account, China rejects free access to sea. Also the permission of navigating the waters is to be

allowed by the Chinese authority. Apart from the construction, China has claimed the maritime region through military means. It has militarized the expanse by situating military armaments including missiles, fighter aircraft and radar systems (Kuik 2016). This contradicts to the US doctrine of coercion deterrence that both Obama and Trump administrations have advocated (see National Security Strategy 2010, National Security Strategy 2015, National Security Strategy 2017, and Free and Open Indo Pacific).

While the two powers are walking towards the Thucydides Trap, Thailand has sought for an opportunity to détente in a role of mediator in the South China Sea dispute as a strategy to impede security risk for national survival. As Thailand is not directly affected by the maritime dispute, it was an opportunity for the country to search for room of neutrality in order to maneuver if the relation between it and major power happens to strain. It has done this by two procedures. First, Thailand has offered to play a role of mediator to settle the conflict. Both Yingluck and Prayut administrations hosted the High Level forum on China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership.

Secondly, Thailand hedges in the endorsement of international guidance. Although the UNCLOS was not in China's favor, in the 2013, 2016 and 2021 Annual Reports, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized that the international law should be respected. It notwithstanding supports the Code of Conduct and agrees on ASEAN-China mechanisms (2014 Annual Report). From this it can be seen that Thailand has made best attempt to avoid frustration from both sides because it could jeopardize the bilateral relations between it and major power counterparts. The strategy is to extent Thailand's flexibility to sway to any nations for the country's survival.

Thailand's Foreign Policy Towards the United States and China After Obama's Pivot to Asia

The United States' reengagement with Thailand surfaced Bangkok under Yingluck administration. It can be argued that Thai foreign policy of Yingluck polity was best to be described as balancing. It consented on security and economic cooperation to both the United States and China. By having multiple providers of military and economic assistance, it could maximize national capabilities and decrease the country's vulnerability as a small power. The

United States' revised foreign policy to Asia took on significance for Thailand. Although Thailand was not directly affected by the South China Sea dispute, China's maritime claims and denial of freedom of navigation were a threat to Thailand's security. In the post-cold war environment, the military elites have contended the offshore competition to be a struggle for Thailand's security regarding national economy. Thai economy has depended on international trade where 95 percent is ocean trade (Panitan 1998).

To escape the dilemma, Thailand provoked counterbalance measures. The support of the US hegemonic order balanced China's determination to dominate the sea expanse. Therefore, the two countries signed the 2012 Joint Vision Statement for the Thai-US Defense Alliance (Bangkok Post 2012). The military training between the two nations was also expanded. The Commanding General of the United States Army Pacific and Thai army established the Hanuman Guardian exercise (The Nation 2022). Moreover, soon after Washington's official announcement of Pivot to Asia, Bangkok did not hesitate to lengthen its position as a host and had continued playing the role throughout the administration.

Obama's Pivot to Asia did not pressure Thailand to not strengthen relations with China. China's aggregate and proximate powers were too severe for Thailand to ignore developing closer ties. Only a few months after the 2012 Cobra Gold, Yingluck paid a visit to Beijing, in which Bangkok and Beijing agreed to sign the Comprehensive Partnership. The agreement strengthened the Sino-Thai bilateral relations in a greater extent. It covered a wider range of cooperative areas where economy, security and environmental protection were included (MFA of PRC). Thailand additionally enlarged bilateral security cooperation with China. In the same year, Thai and Chinese marine corps held the military exercise codenamed Blue Strike, in which the training was focused on counter terrorism (Storey 2019). It can be argued that the naval training was to balance the Thai-US Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training, also known as CARAT.

Economic relations were key node in the Sino-Thai relations. Between 2010 and 2014, trade between Thailand and China surged 42%, whereas Thai-US trade grew 27%.²⁵ In December 2011, the People's Bank of China and the Bank of Thailand signed 320-billion-baht currency swap agreement (See BOT Press Release No.59/2011). This deal reinforced the strength of economic relations between the two countries. Just a year after the agreement was signed, Chinese investment to Thailand increased in a total of 462.37 million baht (The Board of Investment of Thailand 2013). In terms of trade, China was the second largest trading partner of Thailand. Similarly, Thailand held rank of the second largest volume of trade among

ASEAN member states to China (Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the Kingdom of Thailand). At the same time, Thailand developed relations with the United States on the subject of economic cooperation when Yingluck was in power. During the 2012 Obama’s visit to Bangkok, Yingluck announced that Thailand aspired to participate in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which could pave the way for the development of US-Thai Free Trade Area (Fels 2017).

This paper argues that the success of being a balancer occurred by accident. Diplomatic relations with Thailand served the national interests of the United States and China. The Obama administration circled around positive portrayal of the United States as the world leader. As the Bush Doctrine resulted in negative worldview towards the hegemon due to the US invasion in the Middle East being unjustified (Foley 2012), it was necessary to restore the US prestige that was destroyed by the former government (Layne 2010). The President advocated in the promotion of democracy abroad with the notion that it was the basis for American strength and power in the world (National Security Strategy 2010).

Thailand under Yingluck administration ticked all the boxes of the US criteria in the matter of democratic government and being the first Asian ally to the United States. Thailand therefore was recognized by it to play an “important strategic role” (Joint Statement of the Fourth US-Thailand Strategic Dialogue). As Thailand was the suitable to be the first jigsaw for the United States to rebalance the region, it was selected to be Obama’s first overseas trip after his victory in the 2012 US presidential election. Likewise, it was unavoidable for China to tighten relations with Thailand. China envisioned to connect Kunming in Yunnan Province down to Singapore through the high speed rail network (Shambaugh 2021). Thailand’s geography was therefore critical to China’s grand strategy of One Belt One Road Initiative. Locating at the central heart of Southeast Asia, Thailand became the country that China prioritized in its economic expansion (Zhao 2018).

The domestic political factor challenged diplomatic success between Thailand and the United States. The corrosion largely dealt with the political upheaval concerning the clash between Shinawatra supporters and anti-Thaksin and Yingluck movement. The controversy instigated when the Foreign Minister, Surapong Tovichakchaikul, allowed passport of the former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra to be reissued. The permission, which Surapong stated to be “Thaksin’s new year present” (Thairat Online 2011) was upsetting to the Thaksin dissidents. The matter led Thaksin oppositions (e.g. the yellow shirt) to be anxious about every move made by Yingluck government in foreign affairs. Few months after the passport

contention, the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) proposed Southeast Asia Composition, Cloud Coupling Regional Study. However, the proposal raised two concerns mainly by resistance of both Thaksin and Pheu Thai Party.

The first apprehension involved China. The US intelligence operations were suspected to be direct to China's national security and was hide behind NASA's climate study (Kitti & Tow 2015). As Thailand heavily relied on China's economy, the public and politicians were worried about China's view on Thailand's giving the United States permission (Bissonnette 2012). The second concern connected to the passport controversy. The Democrat Party, Pheu Thai's opposition, raised a speculation that the government allowing the United States to use U-Tapao facility in Rayong was in exchange for the US visa for Thaksin, Yingluck's older brother (Bangkok Post 2012). Because of the political tension, Bangkok was unable to meet the deadline for the US space agency to approve NASA access to U-Tapao for the study to be carried. The sustainability of the US-Thai relations muddled with Thailand's political instability.

Furthermore, the US-Thai security partnership mingled with dissatisfaction on arms procurement from the Thai side. As a result of unreliability of security guarantee, the aspect of bamboo diplomacy, responsive flexibility, was employed to cope with the problem. Thailand sought for an alternative to the United States regarding arms provision and China was an attractive choice. The Thai Military General once said China sold arms to Thailand below half of their actual price (Chulacheeb 2009). Therefore, it had become an alternative provider of military equipment. Thailand as a goods wanting state and China's capability to be a provider of that goods have established knot of foreign relations between Thailand and China⁴.

Bangwagon?: The Shift of Thailand's Foreign Policy Under Prayut Chan-Ocha Administration

The 2014 military coup had an impact in the decision making of the country's realignment in the major power competition between the United States and China. This study argues that the traditional diplomatic approach still maintained. The characteristic of hegemonic dependency was altered concerning aligned major power. Additionally, the

⁴ See the theory of Good Substitution in Andersen, Cooley & Nexon (Eds.). (2021). *Undermining American Hegemony: Goods Substitution in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

elements of bamboo diplomacy on the subject of responsive flexibility and opportunistic détente can be observed in the Prayut Chan-o-cha administration.

Thailand's reconstruction of its hegemonic dependency can be seen after the military ousted Yingluck government in May 2014. The premise arose from one main component which was the US reaction to the coup. The US response to the coup deteriorated the US-Thai alliance and opened deeper diplomatic tie between Thailand and China. The United States strongly articulated disapproval gestures against the coup. The US Secretary of State John Kerry strongly voiced "there is no justification for this military coup" and urged that the civilian government should be restored as soon as possible (Brunnstorm & Mohammad 2014). The military was publically criticized at the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit in Singapore. On top of that, Washington frankly declared it would employ every mean to force the junta out from the governmental system (Jory 2014). It imposed several punitive measures to pressure the return of the civilian government through democratic election.

Since the United States perceived the coup to be a human rights abuse, Thailand was barred from participating in the world's largest international military maritime maneuver, the Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) (Pavin 2016). The Cobra Gold was persistent in 2014 yet it was scaled down. The United States stated its consideration to relocate Cobra Gold 2015 out of Thailand (AFP 2014) to pressure the restoration of democratic regime. In addition, foreign assistance from the United States was suspended. Under the US law, the government from the coup d'état shall not receive any foreign aid from the United States. It therefore cut \$4.7 million in security after the coup (Brunnstorm & Mohammed 2014)

The US cold shoulder response affected Thailand's decision of shifting China's embrace as major power whom Thailand shall be depended on. Thai defense officials noted "Bangkok may make a dramatic shift toward Beijing because of Western reaction to the coup" (Fels 2017). At the same time, China filled in the void. Thai military was forbidden to receive education from the US military institution due to the termination of annual funding of the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program (Storey 2019). Thai military officers were allowed to attend the Chinese defense academic institutions. The Sino-Thai security cooperation, including joint military exercises, had been extensively expanded after the coup (Chambers 2020). Moreover, as stated by the Defense Minister Prawit Wongsuwan, "China has agreed to help increase protection of its own country and advise on technology to increase Thailand's national security" (Wasana & Patsara 2015).

High-level bilateral meetings between Thailand and China were frequent. Bangkok viewed Beijing as ‘strategic partner’. The Annual Reports throughout the Prayut administration emphasized that the Sino-Thai friendship was based on trusts and that the relations were solid and “at all levels on the basis of equality and mutual interests” (Annual Report 2016-2017). Several Memorandums of Understanding was signed covering various areas such as rail system technical cooperation and trade. The Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership had continued to be strengthen throughout the administration.

Domestic determinants were factors that influenced Thai foreign policy agenda under Prayut administration. The military regime deemed China as potential source to achieve the outcomes that the military state desired. Consequently, the regime adaptably realigned. It can be argued that the first outcome that was expected was for governmental justification from both international and state levels. For the international level, the coup titled themselves ‘The National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO)’. It depicted itself to be ‘guardian coup’ who aimed to uphold peace and safeguard democracy (Ikome 2007). However, it was still unacceptable to the Western society. The European Union imposed sanctions and froze the ratification of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Thailand. Few western countries banned the members of the NCPO from traveling there and postpone diplomatic activities (Pavin 2016). On that note, the military regime did not have any ‘international recognition’ in accordance to international standard⁵.

In the domestic level, in spite of absolute control, the military government encountered to intrinsic resistance from pro-democratic opposition. The regime hence aimed to secure its power and status through economic success in order to gain legitimacy from the civil society. Pavin stated in his interview with World Political Review that strained relations that Thailand had with the West had caused it to be anxious about its legitimacy. The regime viewed China’s infrastructure investment as a source to obtain acceptability (World Politics Review 2017). China became a choice in the making of foreign policy as it gave the regime recognition in the international level and economic cooperation could lead to governmental acceptance in the domestic level.

Soon after the coup, government officials under Prayut administration were welcomed by Beijing. China, the regional patron of Asia, gave the regime legitimacy through instant

⁵ According to international law, the definition of ‘recognition’ is formal acknowledgement of other governmental entities and states must have legal support in order achieve such recognition (See Peterson, J., M. (1982). Political Use of Recognition: The Influence of the International System. World Politics, 34(3), 324-352.)

diplomatic recognition (Fels 2017). In the domestic level, if the military was able to demonstrate the efficiency of the government through national economic prosperity, positive public opinion would emerge and that would elongate military control. According to the 20-Year National Strategy, Thailand aspired to be regional hub of logistics and transportation (Bangkok Post 2018). Chinese investment and e-commerce experience became a resource for the regime in the national projects of Thailand 4.0 and Eastern Economic Corridor to foster Thai economy (Li & Gong 2020). The proposal of “Connecting the Connectivities” (Annual Report 2019) happened to be in accordance with China’s infrastructure project.

The EEC was considered to be a potential doorway for Thailand to escape the middle-income trap within 20 years and that the per capita income was expected to grow from \$6,500 to \$20,000. The BRI Initiative would also boost Thailand’s technological industry since the EEC transport links of high-speed rail and airports are connected to China’s planned avenue. This makes the modes of regional transportation within an hour’s reach (Raymond 2019).

2017 witnessed the rejuvenation of the US-Thai relations. PM Prayut was invited to the White House through the direct phone call from President Donald Trump himself (Annual Report 2016-2017). For Washington, reengagement with Thailand was unavoidable. The United States took a u turn because firstly, Thailand’s strategic location was crucial to the US security interest of placing 60 percent of its navy in Asia by 2020 (O’Callaghan & Mogato 2012). It was situated at the epicenter of Southeast Asian region. Additionally, the US-Thai reengagement could add regional pressure on North Korea to denuclearize which has been an attempt of the Trump administration during this time (Kavi 2019). This affair represents an illustration of bamboo diplomacy. Thailand immediately jumped in when there was a chance for the country to détente and ease detrimental relations in the aftermath of 2014 military coup. This indicates that Thailand did not pursue an extreme diplomacy of abandoning the United States and realigned. The visit normalized the US-Thai relations, and Bangkok finally gained international recognition from the West.

The visit nevertheless demonstrates Thailand’s desperation to sustain the US-Thai relations. Thailand was swayed by the wind and fell to a ploy that served the US interests. Pongphisoot (2017) dubs Thai foreign policy to Washington in this time as ‘shopping diplomacy’. The imposed measures were advantageous to Trump’s domestic policy of American First. In terms of trade, Thailand lifted ban on the US export poultry products, which were previously detected to contain pathogenic avian influenza. Furthermore, the two countries signed MOU and Thailand invested \$6 billion to the United States. It would reduce

employment rate, one of the objectives of Trump's policy. For security, Thailand agreed to purchase helicopters, missiles and gunship from the United States. Pongphisoot argues that the employed diplomatic tool was not sustainable due to limited financial budget. It was impossible for Thailand to continue making a significant purchase to obtain the US satisfaction (Pongphisoot 2017).

The vaccine provision amid the COVID-19 pandemic is another case study that bamboo diplomacy was employed. The China's vaccine procurement narrated tighten Sino-Thai relations and depicted Thailand's possible realignment. However, it can be argued that Bangkok bended to Beijing because of the Trump factor yet swayed back to the United States in time of presidential transition. Trump's criticism toward the World Health Organization and decision of withdrawal were influential factor of Thailand's security anxiety to depend on the US assistance.

On the other hand, China's global vaccine distribution was a strategy in political game competing for hegemonic status and could be regarded as public diplomacy. Vaccine diplomacy can be described as "propaganda of the deed". Such diplomacy aims to harvest soft power which influences the behavior of countries that receive goods or service given by the provider (Jakusne & Muranyi 2022). It would increase the optimistic perception that they had towards China, which would result in the expansion of China's sphere of influence worldwide. China's public diplomacy had made it easier for Thailand to get access to Chinese produced vaccines due to less complicated procedure to import the goods, whereas Western made ones were highly demanded so it was more difficult to obtain (Kavi 2021).

However, Thailand took an opportunity at the time of presidential crossroad and turned to the US embrace to get assistance when there was a rise of new clusters and a number of infected patients. The Biden Administration underwrote the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) to be a kernel of American policy in the Indo-Pacific region. It promised to provide vaccine initiative to manage pandemic devastation (Vasudeva 2022). The US vaccine commitment echoed a sentiment of security guarantee from small powers regarding the public health crisis. The change of presidential term caused Thailand to revise the traditional diplomatic tool. Bangkok flexibly bended to Washington to receive assistance in which the United States donated 1.5 million Pfizer doses in July 2021 (U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Thailand 2021).

Problems and Prospects of Bamboo Diplomacy

Although bamboo diplomacy had always been utilized in the Sino-US Competition by both governments, it can be a dangerous diplomacy to pursue and potentially put Thailand into a risky position. This article argues there are three traps of bamboo diplomacy. The first one is the trap of hedging strategy. One of the significant elements of bamboo diplomacy is to hedge. Hedging signifies the diplomatic act of maintaining relations with all major powers, in order to minimize risks while maximizing protection and options (Kuik 2021). However, there are two ploys that might not be aware of.

Firstly, it is a dilemma of security anxiety. The hedging mechanism prevents the influence of major power to be entirely impacted within the sovereign sphere. As that power cannot be achieved, states will seek for other ways to increase capabilities to secure their safety. The growth of aggregate power and offensive capability will ultimately cause security anxiety to hedgers. They will find themselves struggling in the spiral model in the end. Ambiguous stance also opens wider possibilities for hedgers to side with the threat, making them a threat to major power themselves. The second one is low-profit tragedy. Committed engagement with states that their allegiance is not guaranteed charges major power high political cost since the return is not assured.

The second trap is the trap of small power perception. Thailand has constantly viewed itself as a small power⁶. However, according to the Lowy Institute Asia Power Index, Thailand is considered to be a middle power. It is ranked number 10 out of 26 nation states in 2023. This can have a negative impact in the formation of foreign policy. The perception restricts Thailand to play leading role and only be a follower.

The last trap is Thailand's geography. As it has been discussed earlier, Thailand's geography seems to give the nation advantages since it is in line with both China and the United States' strategies. However, Thailand's geography can be a two-edged sword. Thailand is located at the focal point of both countries' ambitions. It is an epicenter of the cold peace. The northern part borders Myanmar whom China is an important arms supplier for the military government. It is also the country's biggest partner, and Myanmar is moving closer and closer to China's orbit (Aljazeera

⁶ See Theh Chongkhadikij, 'Pridi: Recognize China now', Bangkok Post, 7 November, 1971, 1.; Sarasin Viraphol, Directions in Thai Foreign Policy (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), 1976, 3.; Explanation of Vote after the Vote by His Excellency Dr. Suriya Chindawongse, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United States, before the 11th Emergency Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 2022.

2023). The northeastern part neighbors Laos and Cambodia where China's investment has been flaunted. The south is next door to the Indo-Pacific where the United States is dominant. Thailand is surrounded by geopolitical influences of both sides. When the wind truly blows, the bamboo is likely to break.

Jittipat (2022) has proposed 'leading from the middle strategy'. He suggested that small to middle powers should hedge but hedging should not be done alone. They should bind major powers under a rule based order. According to Long (2016), legal norms can secure the sovereignty and survival of small states. Jittipat's proposal echoes existing mechanism of ASEAN centrality. Thailand can increase political and economic leverage through ASEAN by initiating security initiatives to manage mutual threats of ASEAN member states such as drug trafficking, transnational crime and climate change, and include powers outside Southeast Asia in the platforms through the architecture of ASEAN Centrality. This will allow major powers to have discussion while strengthening Thailand's dynamism in foreign policy and the regional institution of ASEAN as a catalyst for peace.

Conclusion

Bamboo diplomacy is a traditional approach of Thailand to conduct foreign policy. It comprises of three hallmarks which are hegemonic dependency, responsive flexibility and opportunistic détente. The bamboo is standing in the middle of the clash of international orders. The United States has put on an effort to sustain its hegemonic status, while China has attempted to restructure world order. However, both Yingluck and Prayut administrations were able to maintain the diplomatic tradition. Yingluck government balanced the two major powers by cooperating with both nations in terms of security and economy.

However, the deterioration of the US-Thai relations resulted because of the domestic factors. Because of the US reaction towards the 2014 military coup, Bangkok made an adjustment in terms of hegemonic dependency to Beijing. The realignment was nevertheless not permanent. When there was an opportunity, Thailand bended to the United States to fulfill national interests. Still, bamboo diplomacy is not a sustainable diplomatic practice. Thailand can fall into the traps which could risk the nation's sovereignty and autonomy. Thai foreign policy at the turning point. It has been by unclear if bamboo diplomacy will still be employed by the Srettha's administration or not. Therefore, it should be continually observed.

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Circular Economy is Essential for Vietnam's Sustainable Development – Experience from Singapore

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Abstract

Circular economic development is an inevitable trend for the sustainable development of all countries in the world in general and Southeast Asia in particular, of which Singapore is considered one of the typical countries on promoting circular economy from a very early age and effective implementation true to the nature of a circular economy model has helped Singapore significantly reduce negative impacts on natural resources and the environment and help develop its economy sustainable economy. The circular economy model in the policy orientation of the Singapore Government is also established based on a basic principle of "utilizing - minimizing - limiting" through the introduction of advanced technical means, Scientific methods and legal policy tools to implement the circular economy model in practice, such as applying technical solutions in processing emissions sources into energy and promulgating legal policies to create a foundation foundation for implementing the circular economy model. Therefore, on the basis of analysis and research of circular economy in economic development, from a certain perspective, further perfect the circular economy model in Vietnam from the process of researching legal policies and Singapore's renewable treatment method for emissions sources.

Keywords: Circular Economy, Sustainable Development, Economic Benefits

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Introduction

In Vietnam, the Circular Economy is concretized in Ref. 55-NQ/TW Resolution of the Politburo on Orientations of the Vietnam's National Energy Development Strategy to 2030, with a outlook to 2045 and the Prime Minister has issued Decision No. 687/QĐ-TTg dated June 7, 2022 on approving the scheme for circular economy development in Vietnam. In particular, the Government that the development of the circular economy is an inevitable trend to contribute to building a modern developing economy, adapting to changes both inside and outside. It is an open approach associated with the 4.0 industrial revolution and digital transformation in socio-economic activities. The proactive implementation of measures to promote internal resources as well as attract support resources from developed countries. However, to ensure the effectiveness of the circular economy, the Government focuses on issuing long-term policies in order to promote, facilitate circular economy development, including a specific roadmap and results, while developing stable legal grounds and creating flexibility, initiative in order to utilize the circular economy model in appropriate levels in local sectors, departments, and authorities; avoid uniform implementation of circular economy across the economy.

Research objectives

Vietnam is being affected by environmental pollution and scarcity of resources for sustainable development goals. Therefore, the research goal is to clarify the connotations and principles of circular economy and issues of applying circular economy in Vietnam from the perspective of successfully applying and developing circular economy in Singapore.

Methodology

The article is an overview in the form of economic theory, using the dry chemical objectification method, the specific method of political economy for research and drawing a table. Regarding the basis for general discussion, legal documents on green economic development and sustainable economy. In addition, primary and secondary data are collected from articles by scientists and journalists related to the topic, combining statistical, analytical and synthetic methods.

Significant and contribution

Developing a circular economy helps Vietnam solve the challenge between economic growth and environmental protection, as well as optimize economic efficiency in different fields, from raw materials, production, and consumption, disposal; from the scale of factories, businesses, industry - agriculture - forestry, local, regional, national, regional and international economies.

Literature reviews

The circular economy was first used formally by Pearce and Turner (1990) to refer to a new economic model based on the basic principle of “everything is an input to something else”, which is different from the economic model (Pearce, DW and RK Turner, 1990). Traditional economies operate like a flow, turning natural resources into basic materials and products and then selling them through a series of value-added steps, following the trend of selling as much as possible, leading to wasteful use of resources in normally saturated markets (Tập chí tia sáng, 2016).

Circular economy is understood as “a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended” (Parliament, 2023). Ellen MacArthur Foundation describes it as an industrial system that restores or regenerates by intent and design. It transitions to renewable energy, eliminating the use of hazardous chemicals and waste that degrades reusability through the superior design of materials, products, systems, and business models. In other words, circular economy is turning the waste output of one industry into an input resource of another industry or circulating within an enterprise itself. The circular economy contributes to adding value to businesses, reducing resource exploitation, reducing waste treatment costs, and minimizing environmental pollution.

Therefore, it can be understood that the circular economy is an economic model that increases the efficiency of resource use, paying special attention to urban and industrial waste, and reducing the dependence of the developed economy based on natural resources aimed to achieving a better balance between economy, environment and society by promoting certain applicable production models within the economic system.

Research material

Circular economic policy in Vietnam

Currently, Vietnam is a developing country, although the size of the economy is not large but it is facing many challenges in terms of resource depletion, pollution, environmental degradation and climate change. Up to this point, there is about 1.83 million tons/year of plastic waste generation; about more than 61,000 tons/day of domestic solid waste generation (Schneider, P.; Lämmel, A.; Schmitt, A.; Nam, N.P.; Anh, L.H., 2016); Vietnam has had to import coal since 2015, it is forecasted that by 2030, it may have to import up to 100 million tons of coal and many resources are currently seriously decreasing each year (Thi, G. P.; Trung, T. N.; Herat, S.; Thanh, T.N., Dev. 2021). According to the World Bank, by 2035 Vietnam will lose up to 3.5 % of GDP due to water pollution (Nguyen, H.T.; Aviso, K.B.; Le, D.Q.; Kojima, N.; Tokai, A., 2018) and to 2030 climate change and natural disasters may cause losses up to 11% of Vietnam's GDP (Giles, J.; Grosjean, G.; Le Coq, J. F.; Huber, B.; Le Bui, V.; Läderach, P., 2021). Besides, according to the annual report The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) in 2022, Vietnam ranks in the top 10 countries with air pollution in Asia and the top 30 countries with air pollution in the world (IQAir, 2023). Notably, the total amount of dust in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City is continuously increasing, making the air quality index (AQI) always at an alarming level. Therefore, the selection of a circular economy in Vietnam is an indispensable requirement to overcome the limitations of the traditional growth model, associated with the goal of rapid development, sustainable, energy saving and environmental protection.

In order to realize the goal of sustainable development, the Party and State have issued many guidelines and policies on transforming the growth model towards sustainability. Based on promoting the circular economy have been demonstrated, especially:

Law on Environmental Protection 2020 in Article 142 introduces the concept that “Circular economy is an economic model which encompasses the design, production, consumption and services activities aimed at reducing raw materials, extending product life, reducing waste generation and minimizing adverse impacts on the environment”. At the same time, Law on Environmental Protection 2020 also emphasizes the requirements of Ministries, Ministerial agencies and provincial People’s Committees shall incorporate circular economy immediately at the stage of formulating a development strategy, planning, plan, program or project; managing, reusing and recycling waste and the Government shall elaborate on criteria,

roadmap and mechanisms for encouraging the implementation of circular economy in conformity with the national socio-economic conditions.

Decision No. 889/QĐ-TTg, dated June 24, 2020 of the Prime Minister approving National Action Program for Sustainable Production and Consumption for the 2021 - 2030 (hereinafter referred to as “Program”), in which the program is one of the important solutions to promote sustainable production and consumption “Promote efficient and sustainable use, extraction and management of natural resources, fuels and raw materials, encourage development of ecofriendly, renewable, reusable and recyclable natural resources, fuels, raw materials and products; boost sustainable production and consumption based on innovation, practical experience and development of sustainable production and consumption models, promote sustainable domestic production and consumption, create stable jobs and green jobs, encourage sustainable lifestyles and enhance people’s quality of life, and aim for development of the circular economy in Vietnam”.

Decree No. 08/2022/ND-CP of the Government has specified the provisions on circular economy in Chapter X, Section 3 as follows: Article 138 general provisions on circular economy; Article 139 roadmap and responsibilities for implementing the circular economy; Article 140 mechanism for encouraging implementation of circular economy. In which: identifying 3 pillars representing 3 groups of common criteria on the basic economy, including: The first group, reducing exploitation and use of non-renewable resources, water resources; increase efficiency in the use of resources, raw materials and materials; energy saving; The second group, prolonging the use time of materials, equipment, products, goods, components and components; The third group, limiting waste generation and minimizing adverse impacts on the environment, includes: reduction of solid waste, wastewater, emissions; reduce the use of harmful chemicals; waste recycling, energy recovery; reduce single-use products; green shopping . In addition, this Decree also prioritizes investment in the development of the knowledge economy for the following activities: scientific research, application development, technology transfer and equipment production, human resource training to implement the knowledge economy; Providing for a platform to sharing information and data about the economic sector. Organizations and individuals that have activities and projects applying the concept of the economy that are eligible for incentives and support for environmental protection, projects granted green credit in accordance with the law are entitled to incentives, support in accordance with this Decree and other relevant laws and incentive mechanisms on green credit and green bonds.

Decision No. 687/QĐ-TTg on Approval of Circular Economy Development Project in Vietnam (issued on June 7, 2022) with the policy that circular economy development is inevitable, in line with the trend of the circular economy direction, require breakthroughs in economic recovery and implementation of sustainable development goals. And in the document of the 13th Party Congress, Vietnam's most recent Party concretized its view on the circular economy, which defines the development of roadmaps, mechanisms, policies and laws to shape the circular economy. Establish and operate a circular economy model. The 13th National Party Congress affirmed that the policy of circular economy development is the focus of the socio-economic development strategy to 2030 (Vietnam, 2021). This is a policy in line with the global trend, and is an indispensable part of the times in the coming time.

In fact, Vietnam has initially approached the circular economy model, which has brought certain results, but there are still some limitations such as: The model of garden - pond - barn, garden - forest - pond - barn, gas recovery from livestock waste, cleaner production models in small and medium-scale industrial production. However, at the present, a number of new models that are closer to the circular economy have been formed such as: Model of eco-industrial park in some localities; the initiative “Do not discharge into nature” initiated by the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI); model of processing aquatic by-products; Vietnam Packaging Recycling Alliance; Vietnam's global plastic partner... (Tha, 2021). These models, when summarized and evaluated, are based on basic principles and criteria with the awareness of the importance of the circular economy, the weekly economic model in Vietnam will continue to be supplemented and improved in the coming time.

Developing a circular economy is a way for Vietnam to fulfill its international responsibilities in its commitments to environmental protection, response to climate change, and nationally determined contributions (NDC) supporting businesses to reduce risks of overproduction and resource scarcity; create motivation to invest, innovate technology, reduce production costs, expand supply chains, and at the same time create new markets, new job opportunities, improve the health of people, communities and the world naturally. However, the circular economy development in Vietnam is stopping in the spirit of guidelines and theories, has not been implemented and applied much, so it is not possible to evaluate the effectiveness in the short term.

Circular economic policy in Singapore

Singapore believes that the circular economy will benefit the environment and create economic opportunities. It is an alternative to a traditional linear economy (take - make - waste) as well as (make ↔ use ↔ recycle) and It seeks to reduce waste, recovers resources at the end of a product's life, and channels them back into production, thus significant reducing pressure on the environment (Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, 2021).

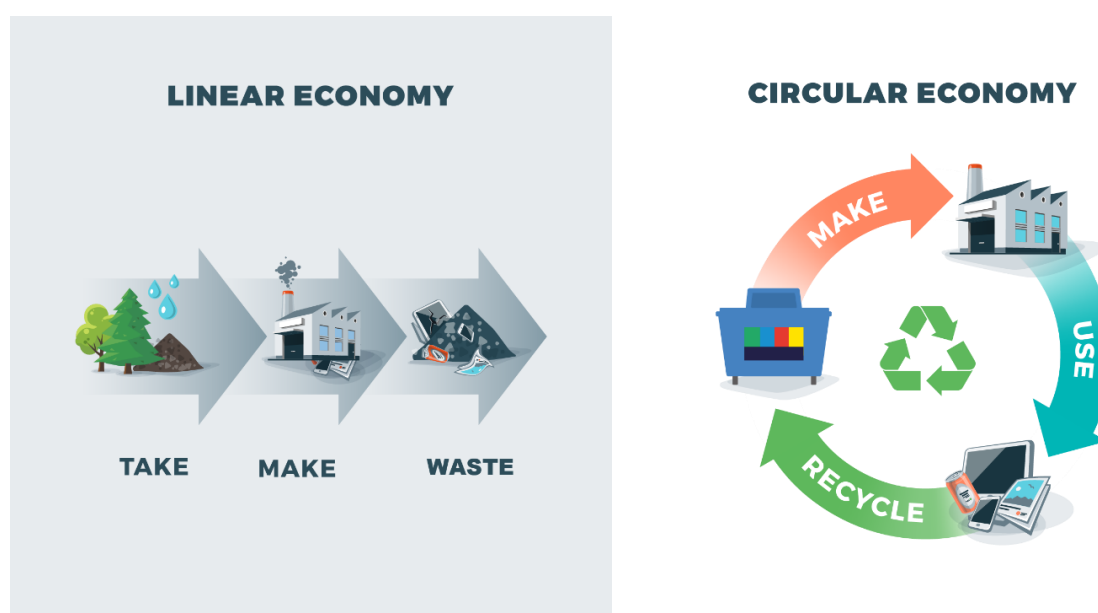


Figure 1: Closed-Loop VS Open-Loop systems

Source: <https://www.towardszerowaste.gov.sg/circular-economy/>

Currently, Singapore's towards a zero waste nation with strategies to build a sustainable, resource-efficient and climate-resilient nation. This includes adopting a circular economy approach to waste and resource management practices, and shifting towards more sustainable production and consumption by building three new resiliences (Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, 2021):

- **Climate resilience** to address the existential threats of climate change, especially rising sea levels
- **Resource resilience** to ensure a safe and secure supply of critical resources
- **Economic resilience** to ensure the future Singapore economy remains competitive by overcoming carbon and resource constraints

To realize the goal of “Zero Waste Nation” with the model “Smart waste management system in Singapore” and the Model 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle), and focusing on closing three resource loops: food, electrical and electronic equipment, and packaging, including plastics. Specifically:

FOOD

Singapore is exposed to the volatilities of the global food market as we import over 90% of our food supply. So, In 2019, Singapore National Environment Agency (NEA) is responsible for Food Waste Management Strategies with the key message was to encourage everyone to “Buy, Order or Cook Just Enough” from the Food Waste Reduction Ambassadors (FWRAs) program through educational materials with 25 hawker centers and reduction organizations such as Dairy Farm Singapore, NTUC FairPrice, Prime Supermarket and Sheng Siong Supermarket, as well as schools and Institutes of Higher Learning, to engage consumers at points-of consumption and food waste is donate them to food distribution organizations such as The Food Bank Singapore, Food from the Heart, Willing Hearts and Fei Yue Community Services. Beside that, the NEA is also supported On-site food waste treatment systems convert food waste into non-potable water, liquid nutrients or compost or TURNING FOOD WASTE INTO ENERGY by the combined food waste and used water sludge undergoes a process called anaerobic digestion, where biogas is formed through microbial activity in the absence of oxygen.

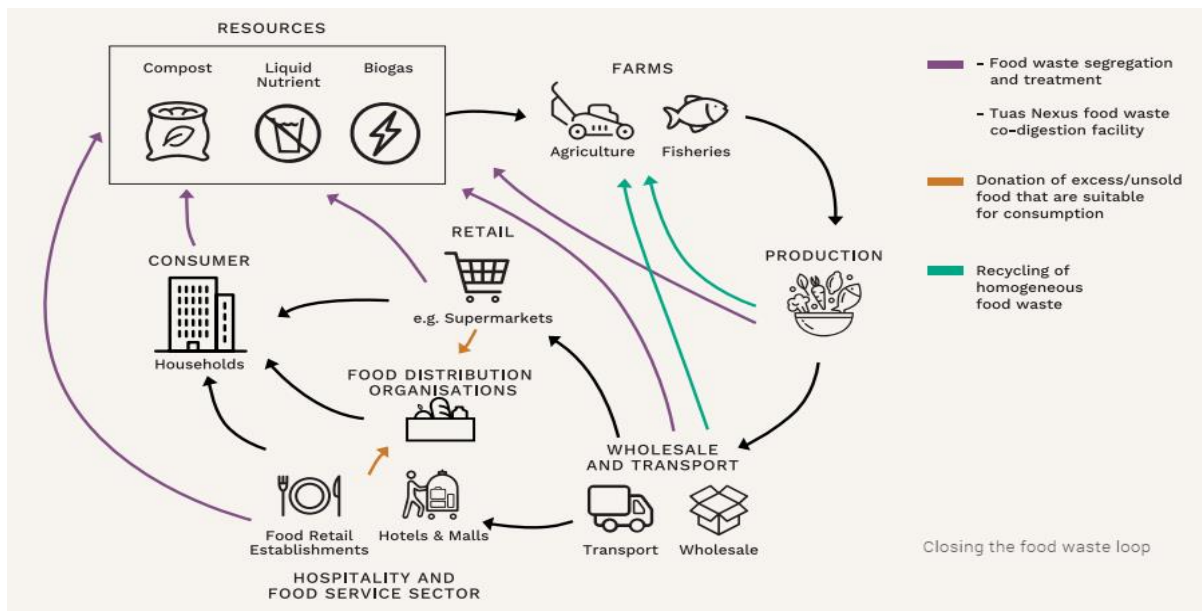


Figure 2: Food Waste Management Strategies

Source: Zero Waste Masterplan Singapore, p.41

ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT (EEE)

Singapore is a developed country so electrical and electronic equipment is huge with 60,000 tonnes of e-waste yearly (11kg of e-waste/person), EEE deals to anything powered by an electrical source, including laptops, mobile phones, televisions, refrigerators, as well as batteries and electric mobility devices. It makes up less than 1% of total waste generated in Singapore but contains small amounts of hazardous substances such as mercury and cadmium and may be potentially harmful to human health and the environment if improperly disposed of. So Singapore has restricted six hazardous substances found in common types of EEE to reduce the chances of these substances entering our environment due to improper disposal methods from June 2017 (Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, 2021, p. 41).

6 Restricted Hazardous Substances	HEXAVALENT CHROMIUM (Cr VI) POLYBROMINATED BIPHENYLS (PBBs) POLYBROMINATED DIPHENYL ETHERS (PBDEs)	LEAD (Pb) MERCURY (Hg)	CADMIUM (Cd)
	Allowable concentration limits	MAXIMUM 1,000 PPM (0.1% by weight)	MAXIMUM 100 PPM (0.01% by weight)
Controlled EEE	Mobile phones	Portable computers	Refrigerators
	Air conditioners	Panel televisions	Washing machines

Figure 3: Restriction on hazardous substances in EEE

Source: Zero Waste Masterplan Singapore, p.41

The day of 6 March 2018 – As announced at the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR)’s Committee of Supply Debate, the National Environment Agency (NEA) will introduce regulatory measures to ensure that electrical and electronic waste (e-waste) is managed effectively and efficiently in Singapore. Building on existing voluntary e-waste recycling initiatives, the e-waste management system will be established by 2021 through the assignment of responsibilities to key stakeholders in the e-waste value chain through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) include Producers; Producer Responsibility

Organizations (PROs); Electrical and Electronic Equipment Retailers; E-waste Recyclers who will responsibilities will be assigned to the key stakeholders in the e-waste value chain.

As well as conveying the message to consumers only that Buy only what you need by asking yourself before each purchase: “ Do I really need this ?”; Repair or replace which you are excited to repair instead of your own items give you a sense of accomplishment; it helps you save money and protect the environment!; Donate your usable items because You may not have use for the electronic device anymore, but that does not mean it is of no use to others!; Recycle e-waste at designated bins which Recycling allows for materials such as gold, silver, copper and plastics to be recovered and made into new products (Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, 2021, p. 44).

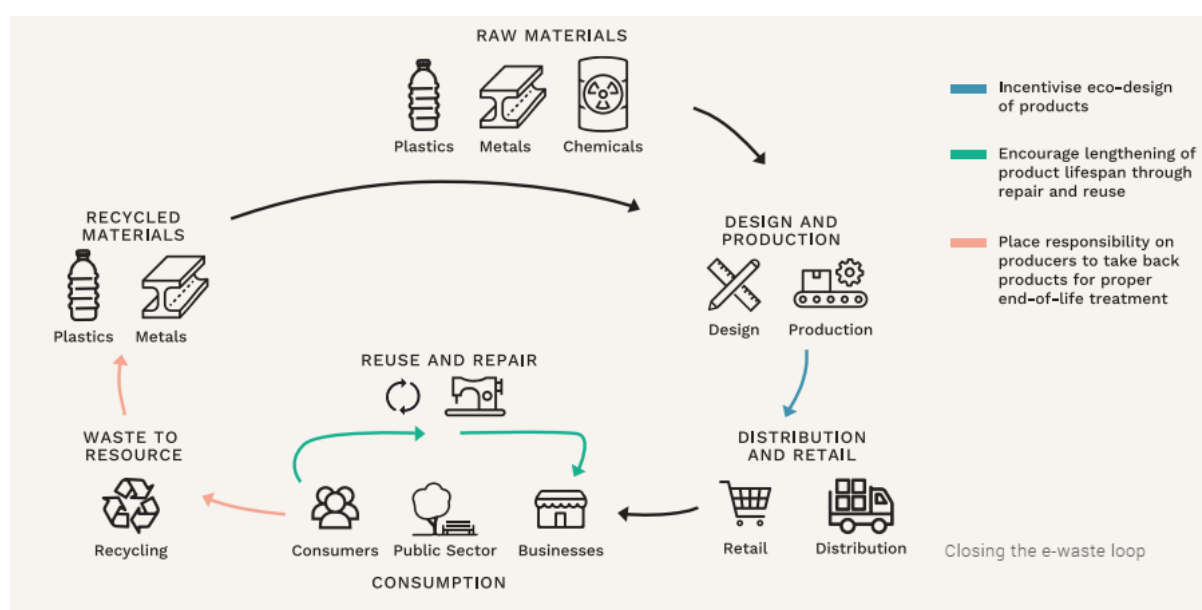


Figure 4: Closing the e-waste loop

Source: Zero Waste Masterplan Singapore, p.44

PACKAGING

Singapore has researched to recycle plastic bottles made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET) material into an ultralight aerogel material with soft, elastic and very light physical characteristics for reuse in production and serving demand life, as well as taking advantage of waste sources to turn garbage into energy, which helps to reduce 90% of waste to be landfilled, which is converted into heat energy to generate electricity and ashes formed from the incineration of waste and other substances. Non-burnable waste is sent to a landfill at Semakau Island for treatment (NEA of Singapore, 2023).

In addition, to implement the “Zero Waste Nation” policy, Singapore has issued the Resource Sustainability Act 2019 to promote the development of a more effective circular economy model, ensuring implement a regulatory framework in which those who benefit from the supply of products bear the costs of collecting and disposing of these products when they become waste; (ii) encourage packaging manufacturers to reduce, reuse or recycle packaging; (iii) allow proper segregation and disposal of food waste (Parliament, 2019, pp. Article 03, Section 01,) and to protect the ecological environment, the Singapore government levied the first “Carbon Tax: The carbon tax rate is set at S\$5 (SGD) per ton of CO₂ (tCO₂e) emissions for the first five years from 2019 to 2023. Singapore's carbon tax of SGD 5/tCO₂e is implemented in 2019, for with facilities emitting more than 25,000 tons of greenhouse gases per year, including six greenhouse gases, namely: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFC), perfluorocarbons (PFC,) and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆). From 2024 onwards, the scope of the carbon tax will be expanded to include nitrogen trifluoride (NF₃) emissions. This is in line with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which requires all member states to include NF₃ in their reporting of climate change their national emissions by 2024. And the carbon tax rate is set to increase to SGD 25/tCO₂e in 2023, SGD 45/tCO₂e in 2026 and reach 50-82 SGD/tCO₂e by 2030” in Southeast Asia since January 1, 2019 (National Climate Change Secretariat, 2019).

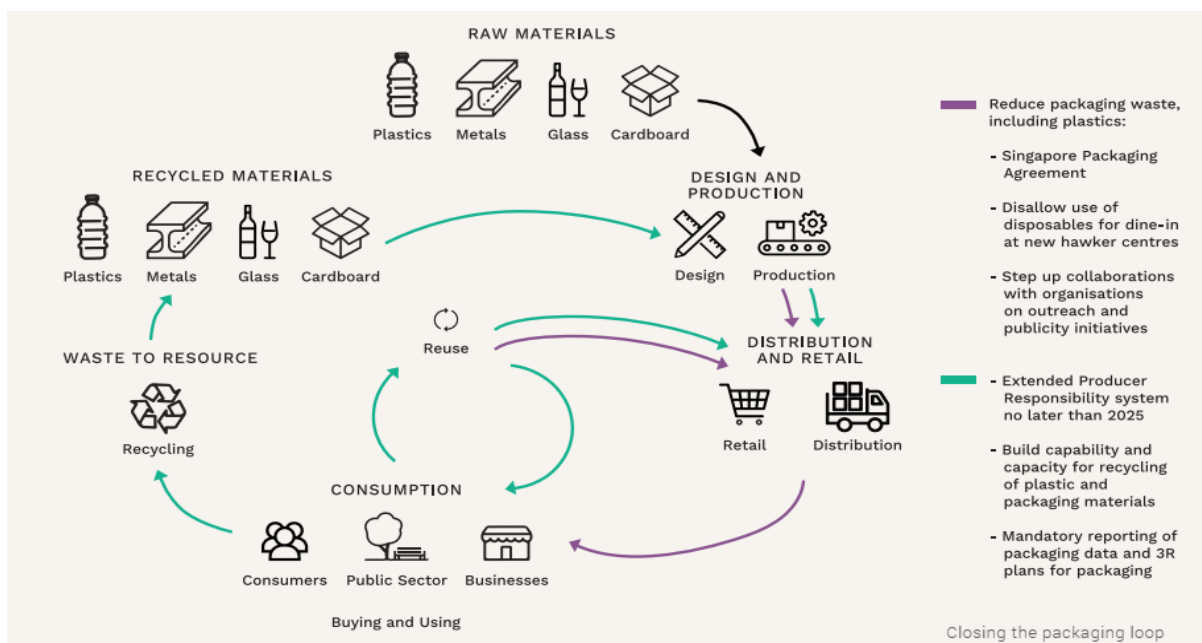


Figure 5: Closing the packaging loop

Source: Zero Waste Masterplan Singapore, p.48

Comparing circular economy policies between Singapore and Vietnam

The circular economy model of Singapore and Vietnam is aimed at a society with no more emissions and all emission sources are recycled, true to the nature of the circular economy model. However, compared to Singapore, Vietnam has initially planned quite specific circular economy development policy, but has only stopped at legal documents and cannot evaluate its feasibility and effectiveness because it takes some time to practically implement the regulations. And currently, Singapore is applying a number of policies and bringing many positive effects by strategy “Zero Waste Nation” with the model “Smart waste management system in Singapore” and the Model 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle). As follows:

Firstly, deploy the model “Smart waste management system in Singapore”. This system uses technology to effectively track, collect and process waste, including the use of advanced technologies such as sensors, artificial intelligence and smart management systems to maximize Optimize waste collection and recycling processes.

Second, the Model 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) is encouraged and widely applied throughout Singapore. This country targets not only a segment of the population to participate in reducing waste and protecting the environment, but also wants to influence the most core factor, people's consciousness. Through propaganda, advocacy and regulation of waste reduction using the 3Rs model right from the source, Singapore has successfully reduced pressure on the waste treatment system and gradually established a successful circular economy.

Thus, the way to implement circular economy policy in Singapore is based on scientific and technical foundations and people's awareness of sustainable development and environmental protection to build a waste-free society. Therefore, for the circular economy to be successful in Vietnam, Vietnam not only needs to mention it in its guidelines and policies but needs to realize the policies. So, the Government needs to specifically implement:

Firstly, building a model of reuse and limiting emissions in production, business and household activities through the “Waste Reduction Ambassadors” model to directly support and guide production businesses. Sustainable production and sustainable household consumption through Informational advertisements and educational videos on practical ways to reduce food waste were featured on various mass media platforms to reach the public. A comprehensive handy guide was also developed and made available online and distributed at community events.

Secondly, strengthen cooperation in the transfer or use of technologies and methods for renewable treatment of emission sources in developed countries, especially Singapore, which has a high level of science and technology and is located in the Southeast region. Asia should be easy in

cooperating and supporting Vietnam in dealing with hazardous waste sources from technology products. Besides, Singapore is also a country that effectively applies waste into electricity, which will help Vietnam solve the shortage of electricity.

Finally, the “carbon tax”. Currently, Vietnam as well as other countries in the world are being adversely affected by the greenhouse effect and this problem is not new, but in order to enforce tax regulations on greenhouse gas emissions in Vietnam, it is necessary to consider Singapore's regulations because from 2025, Vietnam allows the establishment and pilot operation of a carbon credit exchange, but based on the prescribed greenhouse gas emission niche, not on the amount of carbon. Taxed like Singapore, Vietnamese businesses do not want to change systems and technical equipment for production and business activities to reduce carbon emissions, but only need to sell excess carbon to effectively reduce emissions carbon in Vietnam may not achieve the desired results. Therefore, in order to reduce carbon emissions, Vietnam should consult Singapore experts on how to calculate a carbon tax in parallel with setting up a carbon credit exchange.

Conclusion

Transitioning from a linear agricultural economy to a circular economy in Vietnam is an inevitable trend. In fact, in recent years, Vietnam has appeared circular economy models, but the above models are not many and not popular. Currently, Vietnam has also issued many legal policies to transform our country's economy towards green, sustainable, and environmentally friendly development, but has not created motivation to develop a circular economy due to lack of guidance and standardization for circular economy implementation. Since then, the author has raised 3 solutions to develop a circular economy for sustainable development in the coming time: building a reuse model and limiting emissions sources in production activities, and strengthening cooperation transfer or use of carbon-related technology and policies. However, to realize this orientation, the author believes that there must be efforts from all sectors of society, especially businesses are the central driving force, the state plays the role of creating, leading and collaborating. Participate in implementation to change both the awareness and behavior of the entire society so that the development of a circular economy in Vietnam will be effective.

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Neo-empiricist vs. Critical Debate in Public Policy Analysis: Fundamental Dimensions and Focal Considerations

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Abstract

In the modern-day world, the complexities of public problems are one of the wicked scenarios that most academics and public policy practitioners deal. Hence, it is essential to rethink the question: are absolute paradigms that advocate for linear and scientific alternatives or solutions to policy analysis still relevant? This integrative research extensively delved into the debates between the neo-empiricist and critical traditions of ‘policy analysis’ in public policy by explicitly looking into its history, evolutions, and continuing contentions. Moreover, the work mapped out that by looking at the technocratic policy analysis traditions and the deliberative policy analysis approach, we will clarify where and what about the contentions and debates between the neo-empiricist and critical schools. It is important to note that these traditions have strengths and weaknesses that respond to the need to address a public concern. The significant takeaway from this exploration is that the absolutist and exclusivist orientation surrounding the debates ought not to be that relevant as we deal with complexities and uncertainties. Towards the end, the work referred to stirring novel directions in doing policy analysis as it approaches a more holistic, assimilative, and productive consideration that is not within the confinements of a ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution.

Keywords: Critical, Deliberative, Neo-empiricist, Policy Analysis, Technocratic

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Introduction

As a process, policy analysis is crucial to public policy since it provides ways to understand different social and political problems and, at the same time, identify possible sound solutions to these concerns. Foremost, it is essential to point out that scholars have understood policy analysis through varied approaches and interpretations. Dye (1978), for example, provided a government-centric understanding that policy analysis is concerned with what governments do, why they do it, and what the difference it makes since analysts systematically identify the causes and consequences of public policy, utilize the scientific standards and inferences, and investigate the reliability and generality of knowledge. On the other hand, Dryzek (2002) states that policy analysis is about looking closely at public policies, understanding them better, and figuring out how to improve them using evidence, arguments, and interpretation. This means studying, assessing, and improving how policies are made and what they are. Shafritz (2018) said that it involves a set of techniques that aim to predict the likely outcomes of a policy before it is put into action. A contemporary definition positions that its scope includes examining the policymaking process and implementation or assessing policy alternatives (Kraft & Furlong, 2021). Aside from being systematically inclined, it is a political process that requires analysts and practitioners to speak to power (Wildavsky, 1979).

Policy analysis has a wide variety of approaches to dealing with public problems, which come with different styles, focuses, and units of analysis. These varied approaches believe that their unique and authentic ways will decisively identify and analyze the immediate concerns faced by governments and the public and, therefore, will create sound innovation and alternatives as immediate action and response. Some of the approaches in policy analysis include the comparative policy analysis (Béland & Howlett, 2016; Rose, 2019) that helps provide insights into addressing public problems by modes of comparing and contrasting equivalent units of analyses, using either or both quantitative and qualitative methods. Another is interpretive policy analysis (Hendriks, 2007; Jennings, 1983; Yanow, 2000), which focuses on studying by unpacking policy's ontological and epistemological conjectures, specifically more concerned about meanings. Another critical-oriented policy analysis like the discursive (Fischer & Miller, 2017; Mathur, 2006), is an attempt to understand public problems as a discourse embarking from a Foucauldian school that focuses on the text and con-text in the construction of policy (Prior et al., 2012). Also, narrative policy analysis (Roe, 1994; van

Eeten, 2007) holds the idea of analyzing public problems using stories (scenarios and arguments) as stabilizing agents towards suppositions in making policies for uncertain, complex, and polarized issues. It is crucial to notice that (a) some of these approaches in policy analyses have overlapping methodical and ideological underpinnings, and (b) these have specifically targeted policy issues that, through their unique ways, have become productive in determining policy alternatives.

However, policy analysis has never been so immersed in an intense debate between neo-empiricist and critical approaches as to ‘which to consider’ as appropriate and sound in doing policy analysis. It is significant to point out that the Technocratic Policy Analysis (TPA) as part of the neo-empiricist school and Deliberative Policy Analysis (DPA) of critical orientation have enriched the field of public policy considering the novelty and valid points of the discourses that encouraged scholars towards rethinking the methodological and theoretical approaches in problem identification and decision making. The TPA camp has been mainstreamed as a pioneering and foundational approach to policy analysis and decision-making, employing technical knowledge and techniques for policy analysis. In the opposition, the DPA camp emerged to argue to bring the process closer to the public and other stakeholders to decide policy initiatives to aid public problems. The two camps have a long history of bragging, contesting, and debating what approach should be considered sound to understand, analyze, and rethink the wicked, uncertain, and complex public problems towards possible initiatives or alternatives to propose. The debate also extends to what strategies to consider sufficient to justify their approach to policy analysis. In colloquial terms, policy analysis is crucial to thinking about public problems, finding possible sound alternatives to propose, and reflecting on the possibility of public acceptance and legitimation.

This integrative research extensively delved into the debates between the neo-empiricist and critical traditions of ‘policy analysis’ in public policy by explicitly looking into its history, evolutions, and continuing contentions. In this work, we question whether absolute paradigms that advocate for linear and scientific alternatives or solutions to policy analysis are still relevant in real-world policy practice. Moreover, the work mapped out that by looking at the technocratic policy analysis traditions and the deliberative policy analysis approach, we will clarify where and what about the contentions and debates between the neo-empiricist and critical schools. It is important to note that these traditions have strengths and weaknesses that respond to the need to address a public concern. With these theoretical backings, we will immensely articulate the developments of policy analysis in general and the DPA and

TPA approaches in particular, emphasizing each camp's principles, strengths, and limitations. Then, the paper will highlight some core concepts as opposing or common grounds of these approaches to elucidate their enduring debates. The work proceeds with the discussion of the present novel directions to policy analysis that embarked from the continuing debates, which can be beneficial to advance alternative lenses and new curiosity in pursuing policy analysis in development administration, public administration, and social development, among others. The last part will emphasize the significant contribution of these research ideas to public policy discipline.

Policy Analysis: Historical Evolutions and the Clashes

The theoretical developments in public policy have evolved over the past decades, leading to determining and identifying itself as a productive and distinct discipline in social sciences. Specifically, the field of "public policy analysis" has developments that became popular to theories and practitioners considering those intense debates, specifically in the TPA and DPA approaches. This section will present the history and evolution of PA that matter in becoming a productive sub-discipline. The succeeding discussion will concisely elucidate the features of the TPA and DPA camps as vital approaches to policy analysis and the continuing debates between them, which will help explain the gap in this study.

Dunn (2018) substantially presented the history of policy analysis, which he traced from ancient civilizations, modern societies, during the wars, up to contemporary society by highlighting how it evolved and is known today. In ancient Mesopotamian and Babylonian civilizations, legal codes served as social and legal contracts and instruments on public affairs concerning economic and social structures, urban settlements, rights, obligations, and social positions. Relatively, ancient Asian civilization has its share, and he exemplified India's Arthashastra, which serves as a systematic guide to policymaking, statecraft, and government administration (Dunn, 2018). Plato, Aristotle, and Machiavelli's time is the era of 'thinker's advice' to ruling classes in kingdoms, city-states, and civilizations. Max Weber's time advanced the idea of 'expert officialdom,' where political analysts of that time supported rulers in decision-making through their technical assistance on issues relevant to finance, war, and law (Dunn, 2018). The industrial revolution was pivotal to developing science and technology,

allowing it to address public problems. At this time, scientific theories became popularly used to understand and solve social problems, which later became essential to policy science in responding to problems posed by the world wars. Hence, this started a systematic and scientific-oriented approach to policy research.

Dunn (2018), Fischer (1992), and Majone (1987) traced that the foundation of policy analysis is linked to hard sciences; hence, it is essential to mention that the first developments in policy analysis approaches are backed with highly technical knowledge and process. Majone (1987) mentioned that people who first used this method said they could offer valuable guidance by using scientific techniques to analyze information gathered from real-world activities. At that time of the century, practitioners of policy analysis relied on empirical methods to provide surface solutions towards issues on national security, social welfare, war production, food, and the price of goods, among others. They have systematically understood these problems by employing economic modeling, decision analysis, and policy experimentation to name possible sound solutions in addressing a well-defined problem (Dunn, 2018). It is noteworthy to say that despite public policy emerging out of public administration—then a part of political science—the developments of policy analysis approaches in history are from hard sciences (i.e., engineering applied mathematics, among others) through employing highly scientific methods to problem-solving (Dunn, 2018). This is why, in the early developments of policy analysis, analysts were immensely trained in scientific knowledge and practice that led to significantly dominant ‘technocratic ways’ of identifying solutions to public problems in contemporary times.

Of course, developments in policy analysis have been pivotal in addressing wicked issues and public problems brought about by industrialization, globalization, and aggressive developments in the latter part of the 20th century. Analysts and practitioners of policy science have worked together to combat and address issues concerning humanity, such as pollution, global warming, public health, and epidemics, among others, on the international, national, and local scales. On the other hand, policy analysis has also encountered existential criticisms like an emerging field or discipline that has led to ‘new’ perspectives and lenses in understanding its existence and purpose, with the mainstreamed propagation of the conventional conception of policy analysis dominated by ‘technocratic scholarship,’ a people- or citizens-centered approach emerged from critical policy scholars of ‘deliberative orientation’ with philosophical and ideological orientation in deliberative democracy. Hence,

the debate between these two prevailing camps in policy analysis heightened when each side presented support for its existence and criticism against the nature and work of the other.

Since hard sciences generally back policy analysis in its foundations and original formation, TPA emerged as a consolidation of all technical developments in dealing with public problems. The technocratic camp claims nothing more reliable than presenting obscure, verifiable, observable, and evidence-based facts to look into public problems and find alternatives (Dunn, 2018; Kraft & Furlong, 2021). On the other hand, the technocratic camp pursues those public problems that can be treated as ‘value-free,’ devoid of interference of politics and opinions based on bias and partiality. That is why, from a positivist’s point of view, TPA can direct analysts to use scientific methods to select the right direction in dealing with budding issues surrounding industrialization, economic development, and globalization. This is exemplified in the recent works of (Andrews, 2007; Berman, 2007; Edler & Fagerberg, 2017), who emphasized the use of a technocratic paradigm in viewing emerging problems systematically and scientifically and were inspired that is best addressed through empirically viable methods through technocratic innovations.

On the other hand, DPA has pivotally become advantageous in policy analysis. Hajer et al. (2003) identified DPA as interpretative, practice-oriented, and deliberative. They referred to the term ‘interpretative’ to the policy analyst as someone aware of and ready to identify behavioral dispositions, ‘practice-oriented’ meaning that policymaker analysts must engage with the real world on public problems, and ‘deliberative’ refers to the complexities and conflicting nature of policy environment that needs the value of discourse and deliberations in identifying problems and alternatives. Hajer (2003) also put forward the analytic model of DPA with its three dimensions: discourse, dramaturgy, and deliberation. Li (2019) also states that doing DPA essentially involves three main activities: examining conversations, studying a series of planned events, and considering the thought process that goes on throughout the whole process. Boossabong and Fischer (2018) explained that DPA contributes to the policymaking process because of its interpretive aspect that helps further understand the process of defining and reconstructing policy action. Also, it takes the form of judgment due to its practice-oriented process of policy deliberation where emotions and the moral aspect of the deliberative process are considered, and it creates storylines, vocabularies, and generative metaphors vitally important as an alternative perspective in policymaking. Certainly, DPA’s qualities provide the direction toward representativeness and a more democratic policymaking process. They even underscored that from this perspective, working together

through conversations and democratic discussions is crucial for justifying the transition from traditional government systems to new, adaptable forms of governance that are more efficient, accountable, and democratic.

Table 1: Comparing Technocratic and Deliberative Approaches to Policy Analysis

Aspects	Technocratic Policy Analysis	Deliberative Policy Analysis
<i>General Approach</i>	Highly technical, expert’s opinion is at the core of PA	Democratic in nature, people-centered, and open to deliberation/discussion in PA
<i>Orientation toward the problem and alternative identification</i>	Highly quantitative orientation; utilizes scientific methods; high regard for a step-by-step or structured process to surface problems and identify innovations	Flexible and context-oriented; high regard for the role of communication and deliberation in the process; the public is a crucial actor or agent in identifying problems and alternatives
<i>Unit of analysis</i>	Numbers as empirical facts/evidence	Narratives, stories, and opinions from deliberations as evidence to support arguments
<i>The Public vis-à-vis Policy Analysis Process</i>	The public is distanced from the process (limited involvement); modeling and laboratories are instrumental	Public as part of the process; involved mostly in every policy process
<i>Analysis and interpretation</i>	Scientific methods using models and frameworks developed by technical experts; numbers reflect facts	Use of qualitative techniques to analyze and interpret opinions and narratives; firsthand opinions are crucial evidence
<i>Decision making</i>	Technical experts and analysts in research facilities or laboratories get to decide what is the right or fit innovations for public problems	The public has a strong voice on what problems to address and solutions to consider. Participatory and collaboration in decision-making are in place.
<i>Policy Alternatives/Solutions</i>	Technocratic policy innovations are highly technical, as suggested by experts to policymakers	People-led solutions: It is up to the public whether to consider highly technical or local-based initiatives or alternatives
<i>Policy legitimation</i>	Policymaker-led: People in power have the final say on policy alternatives to follow	The general agreement is central to legitimation. The power hears the public’s opinion.

Table 1 comprehensively compares characteristics of the technocratic and deliberative approaches to policy analysis. It presents the general approach, their orientation towards the problem and alternatives identification, the unit of analysis, the role of the public in the PA process, how analysis and interpretation are conducted, how decision-making is made, the kind of policy alternatives each approach come up, and how policy legitimation takes place. The comparative presentation has contrasted the differences between the two approaches. However, the study also acknowledges the core differences in the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of each approach that contribute to their unique dealings in addressing public problems and putting forward public policy. Regarding epistemology, the technocratic approach would leverage the idea of an objective truth based on concrete objective facts observed in the real world.

On the other hand, the critical approaches would focus on subjective truth based on contextualization, construction, and interpretation of those experiencing policy issues on the ground. Moreover, the technocratic approach would answer the ontological question of identifying and addressing public problems based on more empirically evidenced and informed ways (may it be on numbers, empirical data, or test results). However, on the critical discourses, the answer to the ontological question navigates along the line of thinking about values, beliefs, and norms fundamentally linking to the real world, which society constructs and interprets.

Taking off from different poles of worldviews, these approaches to public policy analysis may have showcased the merits of its dominant epistemological and ontological standpoints, which, as a result, have framed the way in dealing with and addressing public problems. However, the work does not position these qualities and characteristics of the approaches from an absolutist point of view. The discourse is open to exploring practical dimensions that may have been hidden within these mainstream approaches. To understand problems critically and pragmatically, the work positions that there is a need to navigate along the lines of potential compromise between different approaches to policy analysis. The assumption is that there might be instances that are more fundamental (or better yet, progressive and productive) to start with a deliberative approach to engaging various actors in deliberating genuine and authentic agenda concerning the public. However, there might always be a point where one needs to reassess the approach and consider navigating with multiple strategies inspired by various approaches in policy analysis, whichever is considered complementary and

sound. Hence, it is fitting to identify the continuing debates of these two approaches to construct and assess the potential entry point(s) for compromise.

Enduring Debates

The growing contentions created by the evolving approaches in policy analysis, specifically with TPA and DPA, have brought an ‘unending’ debate as to which approach is ‘more sound’ in addressing problems of public concerns. As a mainstream approach, TPA gained continuous momentum in policy science when society confronted numerous problems brought by the aftermath of wars and the effects of industrialization and globalization, which demand highly expert opinion, and governments have been dependent on technocrats of their technical knowledge. However, critiques emerged when the DPA camp pointed out that the technocratic approach is highly biased towards policymakers because of the inevitable expert-politician patronage in a world where most technocrats’ projects depend on commissions of policymakers and those affluent few in power. This is what Fischer (1992) referred to as the ‘theory of governmental decision-making.’ On the other, growing debates in the field of political science and public administration heightened the concerns about the politicization of bureaucracy and government decision-making (Amirkhanyan et al., 2008; Gunnell, 1982), on what scholars have referred to as the politics and administration dichotomy (Overeem, 2005; Svava, 1999) which have supported the technocratic stance. However, the DPA camp argued that these highly technical ways employed by the TPA do not sufficiently address these issues, and subjectivities brought by politics are inevitable in the policy processes. Thus, the DPA camp asserts that policy analysis should not distance itself from the public and should consider that, regardless, policy analysis will never be impartial or insusceptible to politics.

Perhaps what has been presented so far is just the tip of the iceberg of the TPA versus DPA debate. Conversely, it is sufficient to present two more premises of critical fragments over this long-standing clash between the two opposing camps in policy analysis, which is how these camps conceptualized ‘rationality’ and, in effect, the nature of their approach towards doing PA. Foremost, the ‘rationality’ argument has been the nucleus of the TPA-DPA debate, contending whether the approaches proposed by the opposing school are rational and impartial. TPA believes that employing rationality will raise the capability to efficiently respond

and direct the issues to sound policy alternatives through scientific knowledge. This knowledge helps us understand various phenomena and the reasons behind them and serves as a factual foundation to make more informed decisions, establishing validity and reliability to strengthen claims and realize sound outcomes (Andrews, 2007). The high regard of social and political organizations for ‘specialized knowledge of technologies of the sciences’ (Dunn, 2018) has backed the thought that rationality is an important element in policy analysis. Dunn (2018) referred to the systems perspective in dealing with public problems, which is an expansive way of using evidence by technocratic analysts.

On the contrary, the DPA camp pursues that rationality is achievable not only through what TPA believed as systematic ways of knowing. DPA camp linked this to using a participatory approach to uncover the deliberation process to dialectics. Rationality, per se, is not solely about numbers or scientific explanation backed by hard science’s ‘verifiable and reliable’ facts; rather, it is a product of discourse and philosophizing other than the claimed ‘purely scientific and empirical investigation.’ DPA then argued to integrate into the policy analysis discourse the importance of opinions and values that play crucial roles as a unit of analysis in the policy analysis process. With this, TPA’s too restrictive and ‘undemocratic’ nature enables the opposing camp to rethink the exclusion of culture, values, and belief system’s influence on policy analysis and towards finding sound alternatives to public problems, which Majone (1987) referred to as intertwined elements.

Ascending from the rationality arguments, it is equally relevant to consider a policy analysis approach to public problems, what unit of analysis should policy analysis cover, and what methods will soundly direct to the right answers. For example, Andrews (2007) and Yang (2006) have elaborated on TPA’s imperative advantages, including utilizing quantitative methods for problem definition, understanding the problem’s impacts, and identifying potential solutions. Primarily, the role of scientific experts has been constantly emphasized in technocratic scholarship’s defense. Significantly, according to Yang (2006), the quantitative method of TPA research in this field aims to uncover if there is a connection between how policies are designed and the results they produce. It seeks to determine whether these findings can be applied to similar situations, measure the extent of policies’ impacts on social, economic, and political aspects, and discover improved policy options. In achieving these objectives, various methods such as modeling, assessing inputs and outputs, summarizing data, making statistical judgments, employing operations research, conducting cost-benefit analysis, and assessing risk and benefits are commonly utilized in policy studies.

However, as early as the work of Majone (1987), the DPA camp was already concerned and contested about what analysts think a good model should portray the formalized structure that hard science suggests. This generalization is dangerous because analysts would think of outputs from these models as ultimate facts rather than evidence to support arguments and other information. Also, the proprietorship over these models prevents clients (or generally the public) from accessing assumptions and processes; they are directly led to the results. Back to the technocratic modeling processes imposed by TPA, Majone (1987) even reiterated that simplifying reason to mere logical calculations leaves us with a fragmented view of the world, where our values are isolated from our rational abilities as if they exist on opposing sides. Separating values from facts simply poses policy analysis to disaster since it delimits rational capacities (expression of facts), which are supposedly instrumental to fully understanding the complexities of public problems. On a critical note, technocratic analysts are also biased in assessing their innovations since technocrats often see that their proposals or innovations can achieve what they claim and aim for; thus, negative consequences are set aside or, worst, shrugged off (Majone, 1987).

In this vein, the DPA camp has been too firm that policy analysis is mainly argumentative (Fischer & Forester, 1993; Fischer & Gottweis, 2012; Hajer et al., 2003). It is insufficient that policy analysis is only confined to purely algorithmically objective and scientific approaches; therefore, argumentative skills should also prevail to be persuasive analysts in probing policy problems and collectively identifying policy alternatives. This means a value judgment is central to policy analysis, where analysts can explain and justify using argumentative skills for public discussions. Stevenson (2016) even highlights that deliberation and discourse analysis are two essential aspects of DPA. Deliberation comes from the tradition of deliberative democracy together with legitimacy, participation, representation, and accountability. Li (2019) also remarked that discourse analysis anchors to the interpretive traditions of involvement with diverse interpretations encompassing a range of values, interests, and underlying assumptions. Li (2015) backed DPA by highlighting its four core principles: it rejects the so-called value-neutral process; public participation is foundational to DPA efforts; basic analysis units are dialogue, argumentation, and deliberation; and DPA practitioners at the same time are expected to help assist and connect policy actors with the citizens and the stakeholders. In addition, Fischer (2007) and Forester (1999) also emphasized the critical role of the practitioner in democratizing policy analysis, not only through advocating public participation but also in presenting real political opportunities for deliberative and transformative practices.

DPA practitioners significantly assist politicians and the public by incorporating diverse interests, arguments, and perspectives into the analytical process. This approach ultimately results in the development of alternatives that genuinely address the needs and interests of the people rather than being dictated and molded by external influences (Fischer, 2007).

The previous section provided an in-depth discussion of the continuing debates in policy analysis between TPA and DPA. Specifically, it focused on each camp's conception of 'rationality,' considering the differences in worldviews (epistemology and ontology). In enriching such discourse, the discussion also pointed out the enduring clash of the 'preferred' direction towards tools and strategies between camps (may it be on how each approaches policy analysis of public problems, what central unit of analysis is at the interest, and the method of scrutinizing such). Framing these elements is substantial to the debates; however, there are still other things to learn and unravel. While the discussions have portrayed the core debates of the TPA vs. DPA, there is also a need to see the line of arguments vis-à-vis counter-arguments that these schools of thought in policy analysis have done in the last decades of the field's development.

Critiques to TPA, Counter to DPA

Fischer's (1992) early critique of the technocratic approach to policy analysis underscores several fundamental points that shape the role of technocrats in the policymaking process. According to Fischer, technocrats tend to advocate for the primacy of technical expertise in decision-making, viewing their tasks as objective and apolitical. This inclination can sometimes lead to skepticism or hostility towards politicians and political institutions, as technocrats might perceive them as hindrances to rational and efficient policy formulation. Furthermore, this perspective may not align seamlessly with the principles of political democracy, as technocrats might prioritize expert-driven solutions over open and equal participation. In addition, Fischer highlights that technocrats often avoid ideological or moralistic considerations in policy debates, favoring practical and programmatic terms. Their emphasis on technological progress and material productivity can sometimes overshadow concerns related to social justice and the equitable distribution of resources.

On the other hand, Gunnell's (1982) support for technocracy builds upon Fischer's observations by underscoring the challenges associated with achieving 'rational' public control

in policymaking. He suggests that policymaking often becomes entangled in the complex dynamics of interest groups seeking power through the government and the government's pursuit of authority through these very interest groups. This intricate interplay can create a situation where technical elites appear to wield significant influence, shaping policies rooted in scientific and technological rationality. These policies may ultimately serve the interests of dominant economic and social groups, highlighting the nuanced realities of policy formation where practical considerations often take precedence over idealized notions of public control and democratic decision-making.

Moreover, Majone (1987) defined policy analysis as a process that begins with plausible ideas and diverse viewpoints rather than being rooted in fixed principles and facts. It does not aim to offer absolute proof but starts with persuasive arguments. Ultimately, this process leads to criticism and advocacy, encouraging public discussion. Majone also emphasized that effective policy analysis goes beyond data crunching and modeling; it sets standards for argumentation and provides a framework for public discussions. Even if its conclusions are not universally accepted, the language, categories, critique of conventional methods, and promotion of new ideas influence the policy debate. However, Torgerson (1986) highlighted the concept of technocracy, where positivism can create an impression of research neutrality by separating the analyst from the subject of study. In this scenario, the researcher is seen as a detached, impartial observer of facts. Whether policy analysis should be integrated into political decision-making becomes a political matter involving collective choices. Such policy analysis inherently assumes a particular form of political relationship that distinguishes between experts and citizens in the decision-making process.

In addition to the discourse, Landwehr (2010) emphasized the importance of not loosely labeling all forms of communication as deliberation and cautioned against considering deliberation as the sole and superior mode of political interaction that should replace all others. Instead, he advocated for a more systematic approach to defining and comparing various forms of political interaction. He also stressed the need to examine different ways of institutionalizing deliberation and the consequences of these institutional choices. This scrutiny applies to experimental citizen participation models like deliberative polls or consensus conferences and establishing expert and stakeholder commissions, often promoted as 'deliberative' by governments. However, Boossabong and Fischer (2018) countered this perspective by pointing out that mainstream policy analysts often argue that deliberative policy analysis consumes too much time, deeming it impractical for the policymaking process.

Nonetheless, they also defended deliberation by highlighting its potential benefits. They argued that deliberation could result in policy decisions that consider a broader range of issues, adding a degree of legitimacy to the policy process that conventional empirical policy analysis may lack. Furthermore, they noted that deliberation can foster greater motivation among relevant citizens and stakeholders, making it a valuable component of the policymaking landscape.

In more recent discussions, Bartels et al. (2020) highlighted that the foundations of Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) were built around the idea that the prevailing positivist and empiricist approach to policy analysis tended to overlook the argumentative processes involved in policymaking and the underlying political values and power dynamics. Instead of framing policy analysis as a rational exercise primarily serving decision-makers, IPA envisioned it as a communicative practice committed to democratic empowerment and social justice. On the other hand, Bertou and Caramani (2020) described technocracy as a concept primarily operating at the macro level. They noted that at the meso-level, there are more detailed concepts such as bureaucratic politics, epistemic communities, independent think tanks, and, moving towards a larger scale, Majone's concept of 'the regulatory state.' In the realm of policy analysis, there is a prevailing emphasis on the utilization of knowledge and the democratization of scientific and expert insights. This perspective underscores the importance of incorporating expert knowledge into policymaking and making scientific expertise more accessible in decision-making processes.

In a nutshell, as the field of policy analysis progresses, the debates widen and heightened significantly as to what approach is sound that will best respond to emerging and re-emerging problems in our society. The discourses and critiques only present the core of the TPA-DPA debate, which the preceding discussion will supplement by highlighting other opinions and arguments from scholars in both technocratic and deliberative policy analyses. Besides the debates, progressive scholars have attempted to provide remedies but were unsuccessful in mending the conflict. For example, Dunn (2018) and Shapiro (2016) attempted to balance the attributes of two opposing camps; however, they later emphasized that the technocratic approach is more dominant and superior by reiterating that deliberative strategies are inevitable, but the technocratic approach does much work in policy analysis. Similar manifestations can also be traced in the works of Andrews (2007), Bertou and Caramani (2020), Edler and Fagerberg (2017), Griggs (2007), Hermans and Thissen (2009), and Yang (2006), among others, who advance the use of more systematic and technical ways in their work, and

are prudent on the use and implications of the deliberative school of thought (in general) or the DPA approach (in particular). Regardless, what is certain at this point is that the two schools of policy analysis approaches have difficulty identifying grounds for a compromise that could have been instrumental in advancing a holistic policy analysis to address public problems effectively. So far, the discussion has highlighted how heated the TPA-DPA debate is and the valid stance of each camp. Therefore, it is fruitful to say that it is worthwhile to investigate these debates further, identify the gaps where contemporary research in PA can come in, and propose a possible remedy to make public policy analysis productive.

Stirring novel directions?

Not many public policy research works have focused on critically defining and examining a ‘productive policy analysis.’ This paper’s concept is crucial to the TPA and DPA debate since it presents that doing PA aims to generate sound alternatives or policy options to public problems. The previous section suggests that despite differences in approach, the process is aimed towards a productive policy analysis as long as the public is engaged. Koyama and Varenne (2012) underline the notion that policymaking is an inherently productive process. However, they acknowledge that public policy does not follow a straightforward path from agreements to implementations, especially when numerous actors with varying authorities and knowledge are involved over time. In the context of Public Administration (PA), their perspective aligns with the idea that there will always be some degree of flexibility, room for negotiation, interpretation, and selective adoption as policy directives transition from administrative centers to diverse local contexts. Consequently, the role of the public becomes particularly crucial in ensuring that PA remains a productive and adaptable process, where various stakeholders contribute to the ongoing evolution of policies to suit their unique circumstances and needs.

A step back to the ‘publicness’ matter in policy analysis is what Hajer (2003) meant by mentioning the ‘polity’ as a crucial component of the discursive paradigm in policy analysis. Not to wrangle the two opposing sides, Hajer’s (2003) predicament that the stability of a political entity, often represented by the nation-state, is rooted in the intricate connections

among three key components: politico-administrative institutions, societal dynamics, and cultural attachments. These cultural attachments draw from what can be described as the ‘structures of feelings,’ which encompass a society’s collective emotional and cultural fabric. This interplay among institutions, societal processes, and cultural elements plays a fundamental role in upholding the stability of the polity. Focusing on the second and third elements shows that those impact how policy analysis works. Hajer (2003) asserts that the ‘network society’ and the ‘space of flows’ underscore that societal processes and cultural affiliations do not adhere to traditional geographical boundaries. Instead, they exhibit distinct patterns that extend across various territorial spaces, whether within the realm of the economy or in the sphere of cultural identities. These concepts highlight society's increasingly interconnected and global nature, where information, communication, and cultural influences transcend traditional physical constraints. This supports the stance that socio-cultural considerations direct to productive policy analysis, especially on points where these considerations are crucial in engaging public participation. It is also important to point out the role of informal communication that is relevant in the Asian context, where studies have proved that socio-cultural notion better facilitates understanding and knowledge sharing (Ahsan & Panday, 2013; Chen & Ke, 2016).

It is, therefore, highly impressive to note that the concepts also re-center policy analysis in the co-production and co-creation discourse. Co-production has been vastly explored as a concept in public policy relevant to public services (Brandsen et al., 2018; Durose et al., 2017; Ryan, 2012)m, while co-creation has been integral to strengthening public participation or the role of the citizens. Co-production is usually seen as a collaboration between citizens and the government, where service users work together with officials (Pestoff, 2014). This approach has proven to be a valuable asset for achieving effective and productive public policy. Brandsen et al. (2018) argue that there is a distinction between co-production and co-creation. Co-production typically relates to services that citizens receive during the implementation phase of a project, while co-creation focuses on services at a strategic level. Co-creation is especially important in public administration because it aims to involve citizens in the early planning and initiation stages of projects, going beyond co-production, which usually begins when policy alternatives are already formulated. This perspective encourages

reevaluating and broadening the idea that effective policy analysis requires public participation and engagement in co-creating solutions tailored to a given situation's specific social processes and cultural contexts.

What is in Store for Future Curiosities?

The debates that the previous sections in this paper have presented are insights that potentially inform future directions in doing extensive research in policy analysis. We acknowledge that the debates this integrative research has highlighted are fundamental take-off points to a productive policy analysis sensitive to contexts, realities, and complexities of social-cultural-political systems. For once, policy analysis as a focus in public policy is fundamental in putting alternatives to public problems. However, the approaches on how policy practitioners mechanize strategies and instruments have been surrounded by epistemological and ontological clashes that influence the options on navigating for the 'best,' if not sound policy alternatives. These debates have brought the work to rethink how we intersect the work of John Forester (2013, 2017) extensively on evolutions of critical pragmatism to policy analysis' planning, theory, and practice. We understood that these works of John Forester have particularly touched on the critical and pragmatic direction in deliberative practice, creative negotiation, and planning. But, using critical pragmatism as a lens in forwarding a more productive policy analysis approach is particularly relevant if we consider real-world policy practice. Alternatively, to see critical pragmatism as a methodological complement for critical and pragmatic methodologies in public policy analysis in practice is worth further exploring.

In this article, we reflect that through the lens of critical pragmatism, we can further the discussion of a policy analysis that is more holistic, practical, and critical. As informed by the debates between the mainstream policy analysis approaches, the discussions unravel that there is much to consider informing the process of policy analysis, especially when we consider that the problems of our society are too complex and uncertain. From debates, we see that a critical and pragmatic approach in doing policy analysis would potentially navigate

around the assimilative agenda of connecting and complementing various approaches with strategies from the other. It is worth further seeing how we can consider technical approaches to complement those critical ones and how these directions and connections can soundly apply in real-world policy practice. Moreover, we wanted to know how informalities can become a productive counterpart in policy analysis. Despite being deliberative (or, better yet, critical), literature would always point out the concept of ‘equality’ among actors in a deliberative arena to conduct discourse in bringing up a sound alternative. However, in a context stricken by high inequalities, as policy planners, how can we navigate to elevate the voices of those who need the most representation the most? Finally, the term resilience in policy analysis discourse is also worth mentioning and exploring. Fundamental to the assumption is that resilience does not follow the static conception of building back better; rather, it is in a more systematic way that reflects what policy analysis could do in the context of uncertain and complex crises.

Implications to the Discipline: An Epilogue

The previous discussions have specifically conveyed the significance of looking at the policy analysis process and lensing through the neo-empiricist and critical debate. The paper discussed policy analysis, its definitions, history, and evolutions. At the same time, it proceeded with the debates surrounding policy analysis, where the two opposing camps, the deliberative coming from the critical alternative, and the technocratic from the neo-empiricist tradition. The debates highlighted various concerns from each camp on the need to strengthen their stance and push for foundational principles that they believe will greatly contribute to policy analysis. Also, various concepts referred to as strings and soul of the TPA-DPA were highlighted in the discussion, considering these are essential concepts that need to be dilated for further examination. The integrative research discussions have led to a rethinking of the TPA-DPA debate that has directed this work to question whether the conflict between the two camps is still mended. Then, the discussion proceeds with a consideration as to what novel directions of stirring the discourse may proceed to link the opposing camps and mend the debate. What is certain from this point is that the theoretical debates, the gaps, and the

research ideas presented will become vital initiatives to enrich the discourse in policy analysis further. Aside from mending the debates, the research ideas presented in this paper would also attempt to provide a fresh or alternative perspective in policy analysis that is both more inclusive and productive in dealing with uncertain and complex public problems as society moves towards inclusive and sustainable development. As novel as it may sound, this attempt is a reasonable step to mending, if not conducive, finding a critical and practical compromise between the gaps in policy analysis by acknowledging that opposing schools of thought co-exist and that these oppositions can re-connect in the future.

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Treating the Philippine Rural Water Systems as a Common Pool Resource: The Role of Institutional Design and Social Context in the Sustainability of Community-managed Rural Domestic Water Systems*

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Abstract

Access to water for domestic use is limited in most rural areas in the Philippines. To address this, the government funds the construction of Level II water systems in rural areas, which are turned over to recipient communities with the expectation that they will be operated and maintained by a community-based organization (CBO) within the barangay. However, some of these water systems have not been sustained. Scholars in the Philippines contend the variability of sustainability of CBO managed water systems is underpinned by weak and fragmented institutional design within and across organizations, coupled with an unclear water property rights regime. However, this still does not completely explain why some water systems sustain while others do not. This study argues that treating unsustainable water systems as a collective action problem and water systems as common-pool resource will provide deeper insight into the contextual factors that inform the success of water systems. Using a multi-method comparative study of three KALAHI-CIDSS-funded barangay water systems in Janiway, Iloilo, it is argued that the institutional design established by the CBO coupled with an enabling social and political context are drivers of collective action. The findings reveal that CBO that were able to sustain their water system had all the elements of the CPR theory; and that the interweaving of these institutions in the sociopolitical context of

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the community created an enabling environment. Insights from the comparative study point to the importance of nature of the decision-making centers on who makes the rules, how rules are made, and the extent of autonomy enjoyed by the CBO.

Keywords: Water Governance, Common-Pool Resource, Collective Action, Social Context, Rural Water System

Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO)–United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) reported that as of 2015, estimated 90% of Philippine rural communities have access to improve water supply through community water system piped into dwelling, yard or plot, public tap, and protected well or Level II water systems. While only an estimated 30% of the rural communities have access to water that is piped into their premises or Level III water systems, an estimated 94% and 59 % of urban communities have access to improved water supply and piped water systems, respectively (UNICEF, WHO, 2015). This is indicative of how access to water for domestic use is still not fully achieved in rural areas in the Philippines.

KALAHI-CIDSS Funded Rural Water Systems

One of the programs instituted by the government was to fund the construction of a Level II (see Table 1) water systems under the Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS). The water projects are then turned over to recipient communities with the expectation that they will be operated and maintained by a barangay water association which is a category of community-based organization (CBO) (see Velasco et al., 2021, p. 25). The barangay is the most basic political and administrative unit in the country. Based on an excel sheet containing the list of KALAHI-CIDSS funded water system sub-project constructed in the Island of Panay provided by the Regional Office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the construction 94 water systems have been funded by KALAHI-CIDSS in Panay Island, with over 17,000 household beneficiaries. However, according to an official of the Region VI KALAHI-CIDSS (personal communications, September 2016), over half of the water systems were reported to have bogged down and are no longer functioning.

Table 1: Water System Level Classifications

Level	Definition
Level I water supply facility/service (point source)	A protected well or a developed spring with an outlet but without a distribution system, generally adaptable or rural areas where the houses are thinly scattered.
Level II water supply facility/service (communal faucet system or standposts)	A water supply facility composed of a source, a reservoir, a piped distribution network with adequate treatment facility, and communal faucets
Level III water supply facility/service	A water supply facility with a source, a reservoir, a piped distribution network with adequate treatment facility and household taps.

Note. From Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) Resolution 9, series of 2012.

Studies on the water governance in the Philippines point to the fragmented nature of institutions (Rola et al., 2015; Rola et al. 2016). This legal-institutional approach has been extended and further deepened by other scholars who further investigated this fragmentation of institutions. Specifically, these fragmented and diverse institutions across different levels have enabled conflict and contestations among actors (Hall et al. 2015) and have resulted to a weak property rights regime that have a direct consequence to the sustainability of water systems (Lizada et al. 2019). This legal-institutional approach to water governance have proven valuable in defining the overall structure of water governance in the Philippines. However, such work has been largely focused on the ails of the water governance system. A particular focus on the experience of communities, especially in the rural areas, have been largely understudied in terms of why some water systems established under this fragmented water governance regime have succeeded while others have failed. This is problematic as the whole objective of the water governance regime is the provision of water to it citizens. Considering this, this study argues that further clarifying why water systems fail can be done through reconceptualizing water systems as a common pool resource (CPR) that can be effectively managed by a community. Pulling from the greater CPR literature (see Ostrom 1990; 2010), this paper argues that rural water systems have a greater chance to sustained if they governed and managed under the design principles advocated by Ostrom (1990) coupled with an enabling social context (see Edwards & Steins, 1999; Arana & Wittek, 2016). A key

element of this argument is the departure from strictly institutionalist point of view but instead it looks into the role of participatory rule-making and decision-making processes, and the role of an enabling social context weaved into the institutions.

Arguing that the sustainable collective action of barangay beneficiaries and members of a CBO managing a water system determines the sustainability of the water system that the CBO manages, this study looked into three cases of KALAHYAN-CIDSS constructed water systems that were handled by a CBO after being turned over in January, Iloilo. In the Municipality of Janiway, a town in northern Iloilo, the KALAHYAN-CIDSS constructed water system in Barangay Aguingay was upgraded to provide water Level III from a Level II water system while the Barangay Gines water system, another KALAHYAN-CIDSS constructed water system, bogged down and was downgraded to only accommodate a specific zone of the barangay, instead of catering to the entire barangay. Both water systems were constructed through the funds of the KALAHYAN-CIDSS, yet one was sustained and the other was not. Given that both water systems had a sufficient source of water; this paper argues that the divergent outcomes were influenced by how the water systems were managed by their CBO.

Review of Related Literature

The model of water governance promoted by KALAHYAN-CIDSS in the water systems that they constructed is the current global consensus of rural water governance—a community-managed water system (see World Bank, 1988). It promotes a participatory approach to water governance. The beneficiary community takes responsibility of the control, operation, maintenance, and management of their water system (Harvey & Reed, 2006). This model is a product of the shift of the understanding of water governance (World Bank, 1988) from the supply approach that advocates a more top-down state led approach to the demand-driven approach that promotes a more participatory model through localization (Harvey & Reed, 2006; Marks, Onda, & Davis, 2013; Cleaver & Toner, 2006). According to Harvey and Reed (2006, p. 367) the rise of the community-managed water systems can be attributed to factors such (1) inefficiency of state institutions, (2) suitability of the model to the projects of NGOs, (3) Western 'cultural idealization'.

Members of the community or in this case, the residents of the barangay form an organization through a cooperative agreement to operate, maintain and monitor the water system through a cooperative agreement (see Marks & Davis, 2012). Communities are both service providers and clients of the water system.

These community-managed water systems promote a participatory approach to water governance. The beneficiary community takes responsibility of the control, operation, maintenance and management of their water system (Harvey & Reed, 2006: 365). Empirically, it has been observed in some cases of CBO's managing water systems in the Philippines, participation of local stakeholders in the planning, implementation, decision making and maintenance of these community-managed water systems create a sense of ownership of identified problems and solutions, thereby ensuring the drawing up of sustainable water management plans (Rola et al., 2004: 179).

Given the critical role of rural water systems in the provision of access to water, the sustainability of these water systems is a salient issue in the literature of water governance. When the management of water systems fail and are not able to sustain, it often leads to the community that managed them to either go back to self-provisioning, adopt a market model or seek for state provisioned water systems (Cleaver & Toner, 2006).

In explaining the drivers of the sustainability demand-driven water systems, the role of “sense of ownership” of communities is considered by scholars to have contributed to this (see Whittington et al., 2009; Marks & Davis, 2012). Participation of community members in the management and operation of a water system creates a sense of ownership which in effect, encourages members to continue their cooperative arrangement (Whittington et al., 2009). However, using information gathered from 1140 households in three provinces of Kenya, Marks and Davis (2012) argued that not all forms of community participation are equal in how they promote a sense of ownership instead it was found out that participation in the decision-making had a higher significant association to ownership as opposed to labor contributions. Building on this further Marks, Komives, & Davis (2014) looked into handpump projects in Rural Ghana, and the authors found out that water committees or water associations that have a greater share of community participation in the decision-making have higher likelihoods of sustaining a water infrastructure as opposed to participation in technical decisions. However, scholars note that external institutional support to communities managing a rural water system is an important factor in maintaining in water system as it provides financial, technical and planning support. Specifically, this post-construction support (Marks, Komives, & Davis, 2014),

the provision of monitoring, planning, capacity building and technical assistance (Harvey & Reed, 2006). What can be derived from the literature community-based water governance is that simply having institutions is not enough, it is important to consider the nature of decision-making, and the way the community interacts with it. These are insights that directly correspond to the literature of common-pool resource theory (see Ostrom, 1990). Specifically, it points towards the value of both a robust a institutional design and enabling social context. Arana and Wittek (2016) argued that while the institutional dimension is undeniable as an explanatory variable, there is also value to investigate and combine behavior and social dynamic of the community that supports the development of a robust institutional structure. Simply put, by looking at the decision-making and participation dynamics of CBO members managing a water system in the one can examine the role of such dynamics in the development of robust institutions—formal and informal— that influence the sustainability of water systems.

Philippine context

In the case of the Philippines, literature on water governance is described to be complex and fragmented which is a result of confusing legal and institutional mandates in the national level affecting local service delivery, lack of coordination between the several water agencies, and inadequate resources such as data for planning, human resources and financial resources (Rola et al., 2015). This fragmentation is observable across hierarchies of government that span across both private and public sector as a key factor that informed the unsustainability of water systems. This fragmentation was further clarified by Rola et al. (2016) where, through a survey of experiences of 299 water managers in the Philippines, they further shed light on the water managers are subjected to several overlapping and unclear laws such that the experience of various variesr systems vary from formal to informal structures. Scholars recognized that the existence of several legislations and policies in the national level has made the landscape of water governance reflects “multiple paradigms” (Hall et al., 2015, p. 950) where mandates between oversight agencies overlap (Rola et al., 2015). The role of the Philippine government is described to have shifted from the “sole provider of water at a subsidized price toward more market and regulatory orientation” (Hall et al., 2015, p. 955). Lizada et al (2019) argued that this fragmentation of institutions have resulted to problems in the property rights regimes of water system. Moreover, this fragmentation has also resulted to a multitude of actors that participate in the Philippine water governance space and whose

interest vary and sometimes compete (Hall et al., 2015; Rola et al., 2015). One such actor is the CBO which can be in the form of: barangay water and sanitation association, rural water supply association, and cooperatives (see Velasco et al., 2021, p. 25).

Domestic water associations or CBO's have a crucial in the provision of basic access to water in rural areas. However, CBO's in the Philippine often function independently such that they are loosely governed by oversight agencies in the national government (Velasco et al., 2021), and water managers often rely informal mechanisms in addressing concerns while formal mechanisms such as prevailing water rights regimes are not utilized (Hall et al., 2015). Organizationally, according to Rola et al. (2016), domestic water CBO's are loose organizations, mostly without legal basis, but follow customary rules. Some supply both domestic water needs and irrigation; most of these organizations either charge minimal fees for operation and maintenance or in some instances, no charge at all.

Overall, the literature on Philippine water governance have focus on the role national and local institutional that compound with the lack of a clear property rights regime for water. This treatment of the sustainability of water system in the Philippines largely advocates for institutional and legal reform. However, insights from the literature largely focus on the experience of water system that have sustained however, a key questions arises on why are some water systems able to sustain, and even further developed despite being subjected tot these political and social realities. This paper pulls from the perspective of common pool resource theory where the combination of a design principles that enable participatory decision-making that is autonomous in nature (Ostrom, 1990) coupled with an enabling context (Steins, 1999; Arana & Wittek, 2016) allows from self-governance regimes of natural resource to sustain and thrive.

Some scholars have discarded the necessity of promoting an institutional perspective by arguing that community participation, not community management is necessary to promote sustainability and that external support from the market or the state is still necessary (see Harvey & Reed, 2006). The integrated framework of Arana and Wittek (2016) incorporated Ostrom's (1990) design principles of managing common-pool resources (CPR) and Lindenberg's (2014) Goal Frame (GF) Theory. Ostrom's (1990; 2000) design principles emphasized the need for collective and participatory rules created by members thus answering participation while promoting management, with the state refraining from a top-down approach but being aware and respectful of the rules created by a community. Arana and Wittek (2016) argued that only relying on rules as the determinant is limited in explaining sustained collective action and

instead proposed that social dynamics and the behavioral aspect of the community that manages the CPR is also an important condition in promoting the sustainability of a CPR.

The researchers used the framework set out by Arana and Wittek (2016) to understand why some community-managed water systems introduced by KALAH-CIDSS in Janiway, Iloilo were sustained (or not) by arguing that a strong institutional design that is created by the community to manage their water system coupled with the existence of a salient normative goal frame among the members of the community inform the propensity of members collectively acting together to sustain their water system.

This paper aims to contribute to literature in four ways. First, it argues that an institutional perspective in explaining sustainability is still relevant in rural-water governance. Second, it seeks to further clarify the debate on what governance arrangements enable the sustainability of the management of natural resources. Third, it adds in the limited literature on access to water by Philippine rural communities where access to water is an equally important issue to that of urban spaces. Fourth, since water governance studies in the Philippines have mostly been focused on national policies, this paper looks into the localization of national programs like the KALAH-CIDSS using a modified theory of CPR by Ostrom (1990) that was last used in the Philippines setting in 1980's looking at irrigation systems.

Integrated Theoretical Framework: Common Pool Resource Theory and Goal Frame theory

Treating the water system as a CPR, this paper argues that collective action among users of the resource is a necessity or else the water system will face the - tragedy of the common see (Hardin, 1968). The CPR theory argued that in order to effectively manage a CPR, certain institutional design principles have to be followed (Ostrom E., 1990; 2000):

- *Clearly defined boundaries* mean that members of a group are aware and informed as to who belongs to the group. This promotes trust and reciprocity between group members.
- *Equity rules* that give benefits to members of the group while at the same time requiring members to give commensurate and required inputs and responsibilities.
- *Collective and adaptive rules* emphasizes that importance of participatory rulemaking process where rules are able to change in response to changing conditions and where the main the decision-making entity is the group that manages the CPR.
- *Monitoring* is the formal or informal mechanism that makes sure that the members of the community are compliant to the rules made by the group.

- *Graduated sanctions* means that norm-violators are sanctioned but at the same time, the sanction is commensurate to the severity of the violation, which means that the situational and contextual conditions are highly considered.

- *Conflict Management Arena* is the system in which conflicts are aired and treated quickly to strengthen norm compliance.

- *Institutional awareness* is the recognition of the local authorities and external institutions to respect the rules and regulations of the organization. There is recognition that the highest decision-making body is the community.

Arana and Wittek (2016) added that the social context of the community is also a determinant of promoting collective action among members of a community. Lindenberg’s Goal Framing (GF) Theory argued that aside from getting the rules right, there is a need to look at the tendency of individuals to participate and cooperate in the rule-making and comply with the rules set out by looking at the overarching mindset of individuals. Such mindsets influence an individual’s preference, prioritization of what is right, attention and expectation of others (Lindenberg, 2014, p. 74). There are three goal frames: hedonic goal frame, gain goal frame, and normative goal frame. The salience and dominance of the normative goal frame among individuals of a group is essential for members to be willing to cooperate, and follow the norms set out by the organization. Lindenberg argued that two factors determine the salience of a normative goal frame: (1) collective identity which means that individuals are able to identify with group interests and objectives, and have some sense of belonging in the group, and (2) feasibility beliefs which is the confidence of individuals in a group that other members of the group will contribute and, because of the cooperation, individuals will gain. This variable in turn is informed by previous experiences of working together among the members of the community, monitoring and leadership style (Lindenberg, 2014). Arana and Wittek (2016) integrated these two frameworks and argued that the salience of a normative goal frame among a community is a necessary prerequisite for the CPR design principles of Ostrom to prosper and yield benefits.

This paper uses the integrated framework of CPR theory and GF theory (see Figure 1). Specifically, the paper describes the institutional arrangement of the CBO or the water association that is in charge of the operation and management of the water system. The next section describes the salience of the normative goal frame among community members by looking at the existence of both the collective identity and the feasibility beliefs. The next section describes the extent of collective action of community members of CBOs.

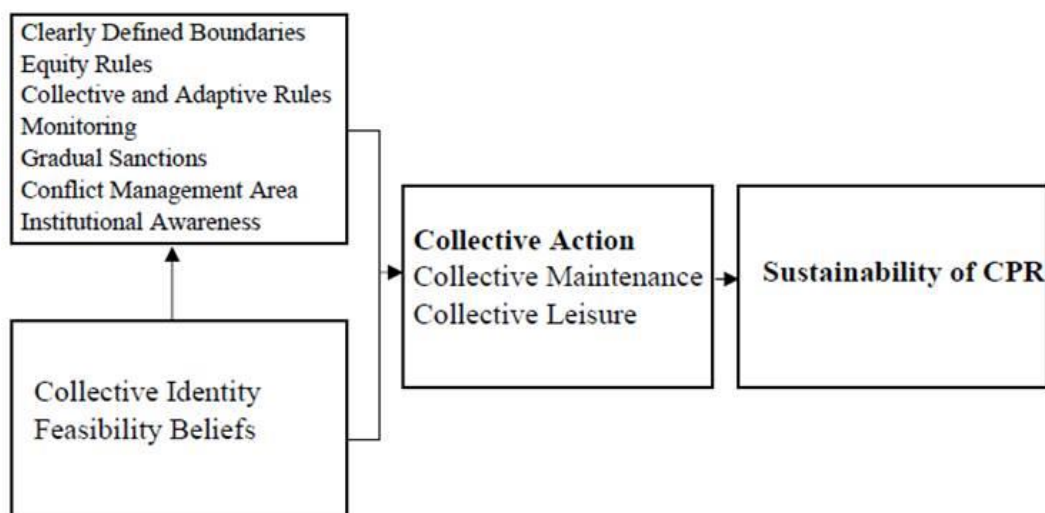


Figure 1: Integrated Theoretical Framework: Common Pool Resource Theory and Goal Frame theory

Methodology

Table 2: Description of Case Studies

	Gines (Zone 1-4) GWA	Gines (Zone 4) GWA-4	Aguingay BAWASA
Population	1004	281	393
Number of Households	224	69	83
Water Association	No longer functioning	Gines Water Association Zone 4	Aguingay Water Association
Number of resident households that utilized the water system during the installation	135	17	59
Current number of member households using the water system	*Zone 4 Only	19	70
Level of Water system upon construction	Level II	Level II	Level II
Current level of water system	Level I *water system is maintained by municipal government	Level II and Level III	Level II and Level III

This is a correlation study that explored the effect of the institutional design of community-based organizations and collective orientation of community members with the sustained cooperation of community members to pursue the sustainability of the water systems introduced by KALAH-CIDSS in Barangay Gines and Barangay Aguingay, Janiuay, Iloilo. The study employed a most-different comparative method to analyze why government-initiated community-based water systems projects are sustained while others are not. Data gathered were purely qualitative. Observations, Focus Group Discussions, and Key Informant Interviews were the methods used in the collection of data in the two barangays.

Cases: Two Barangays but Three Water Associations

The researchers selected two (2) barangays in Janiuay, Iloilo from the list of Water System Subprojects in Iloilo provided by the KALAH-CIDSS Region VI where community-based water organization or associations were formed to maintain the KALAH-CIDSS water system projects installed in their barangays are still in place. Using the most different system approach, one barangay was chosen with a sustained water system, while the other did not. Per the list provided by KALAH-CIDSS and conversations with the technical officer, the barangays selected are: Barangay Aguingay and Barangay Gines.

The municipality of Janiuay is a first-class municipality in the 3rd district of Iloilo. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, as of 2015, it has a population of 63,905 and a land area of 17,910 hectares. Barangay Gines has a population of 1,004 with 206 households of which 19 households are members of the Barangay Gines Water Association (henceforth referred to as GWA). On the other hand, Barangay Aguingay has a population of 393 with 83 households, of which 50 households are members of the Barangay Aguingay Water Association (henceforth referred to as BAWASA).

During the installation of the Level II water system, there were 135 member households of the Barangay Gines Water Association. However, the water system bogged down and currently only caters to 19 households located in Zone 4 of Barangay Gines, meanwhile households located Zone 1, 2 and 3 of Barangay Gines returned to self-provisioning or level I. A water association was therefore formed in Zone 4 of Barangay Gines (henceforth referred to as GWA-4)

Data Collection

Purposive sampling was utilized to gather the participants in the study. Twenty-four (24) respondents for the focus group discussion were chosen from the records of the water organizations. Twelve (12) of which were from Barangay Gines and another Twelve (12) from Barangay Aguingay. Two (2) FGDs was conducted per barangay. The first group was composed of six (6) members of the CBO while the second group is composed of six (6) non-members. The present president, secretary, maintenance officer, treasurer, water manager, and a former officer of the community-based organization were invited for the key informant interview.

Gathering preliminary data from the two locales was conducted through a baseline study that was carried out in September 2014. The information collected served as a basis for selecting the locales of the study. Information obtained from the KALAHI-CIDSS regional office, KALAHI-CIDSS office in the municipality of Janiuay, and from the water organization and barangay records were obtained. Letters for the water organizations, barangay captain of the two barangays, and the municipal mayor of Janiuay were sent to notify them of the research study. Letters for the Key Informant Interview participants was distributed in the same month. Actual gathering of data together with the key informant interview and focus group discussion were conducted.

Data Analysis

The key informant interview guide contained questions probing the informal and formal institutions and rules that are promulgated by the water CBO in the two barangays— how are the rules made, the duties and privileges of the members, how these rules are enforced in the community, how is conflict managed among members and the extent of local government support. The focus group discussion looked into the perspective of the community members on water organization rules and in addition also probed past experiences of working together, the existence of leisure activities among members, and the degree of their participation in these activities. Observations were conducted to look into the extent of the community's cooperation and collective orientation. Review of reports, minutes of the meetings and other documents were examined for the attendance of members, rulemaking mechanisms, payment of members, and contributions to the maintenance of the water system. An ocular visit was also made before the conduct of the study to have formal communication with the local government unit of Janiuay, Iloilo.

Scope and Limitations

This study was limited to domestic water systems installed by KALAHI-CIDSS in the Municipality of Janiuay. Thus, the results of the study should not be generalized to the situation of water systems in the country. Several factors such as the geophysical situation and socio-economic factors were not included in the analysis of the results of the study.

Table 3: Summary Table of Findings

	Gines (Zone 1-4) GWA	Gines (Zone 4) GWA-4	Aguingay BAWASA
Collective Leisure Activities	Barangay meetings, barangay fiesta	Own Christmas party separated with the other zones of the barangays, and geographically separate celebration of the town fiesta	fiesta, church related activities and Christmas parties
Collective Maintenance Activities	None maintenance of the water system was predominantly lead by the barangay council	Contribute fifty (50) pesos per month for maintenance, extra assessment, participation in repair	Paying of bills, extra assessment, cleaning of water system, providing paid labor
<i>Institutional Design</i>			
	Clearly defined boundaries	None: no exclusive membership benefits or access	Membership fee of 100.00. Access of non-members is managed by members.
			Members of the BAWASA pay 2.00 per container of water while non- members pay 2.50
<i>Equity rules</i>	None Minimum basic benefit of access to water is not met due to constant breaking down.	Minimum basic benefit of access to water with an obligation to pay contribution.	Minimum basic benefit of access to water with an obligation to pay. Free water consumption during occasions

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		Minimum basic benefit of access to water with an obligation to pay. Free water consumption during occasions	
Collective adaptive rules	None Despite members being aware of CBO, rule violators are often not identified	Penalties for those who does not pay for 2 months.	Notice of disconnection, partial payments are accepted

Table 3: Summary Table of Findings

	Gines (Zone 1-4) GWA	Gines (Zone 4) GWA-4	Aguingay BAWASA
Monitoring	None Despite members being aware of CBO, rule violators are often not identified.	Fixing leaked pipes, reporting to maintenance officer.	Fixing leaked pipes, reporting to maintenance officer; monitoring mainly made by the officers
Gradual Sanctions	None No clear mechanisms to impose sanctions. Members incurred debts with the CBO, yet payments were not collected.	Firs offense (non-payment) will result to a personal warning From the water manager; Sanctions in the form a fee for members who haven't paid their dues are levied by the water manager.	Members are required to pay 10 days upon the issuance of bill; Extensions are allowed to members who are unable to pay. Personal warning is given to violators; Sanctions are levied (i.e. disconnection)
Conflict management arenas	None	Officer in Charge who functions as the water manager, settles some conflicts personally but meetings were also used to settle concerns.	Meetings were used to settle conflicts and answer concerns

Table 3: Summary Table of Findings

	Gines (Zone 1-4) GWA	Gines (Zone 4) GWA-4	Aguingay BAWASA
Institutional awareness	None	Local barangay chairman, and chairman of water system decides and manages the O & M.	Local barangay council only provides assistance if CBO decides to ask the local barangay. Local barangay council participates in the decision making but does not decide for the CBO; Function is advisory and assistance.
Normative Goal Frame			
Collective identity	Meetings, paid labor for construction and improvements	Attendance in meetings every last quarter of the month; members complied with monthly contribution; participation in rulemaking was evident	Attendance in meetings every last Saturday of the month; members complied with bills and rules; participation in rulemaking was evident.
Feasibility Beliefs	None negative experiences of working together (i.e. previous domestic water CBO's failed, low participation in the consultation of KALAHICIDSS)	Successful experiences of working together (i.e. CBO members collecting extra-assessment for Operation & Management. Alternative domestic water CBO is functioning.)	Successful experiences of working together (i.e. meetings, cleaning the water system when necessary and installing the water system, communal garden in the barangay)

Findings

The findings are summarized in Table 2. The experience of the defunct GWA is indicative of how sustainable cooperation among members is necessary to sustain a water system. In both collective leisure and maintenance activities, these were not evident. Collective leisure was only manifested by virtue of their events in the Barangay but there was no direct connection of their leisure activities with the water system. In terms of collective maintenance activities, members only showed interest when there was monetary compensation. Moreover, according to an interview with their previous president, members did not participate in meetings this was particularly evident in the planning of the construction of the water system where an estimated 35% of the required number of households attended. Conversely, both the BAWASA and the GWA-4 have their water systems still functioning and are still providing domestic water access to the members to their respective communities.

According to Arana and Wittek (2016), - sustained collective action related to the maintenance of a viable physical and social infrastructure is more likely in communities whose members share a salient normative goal frame and who implemented proper institutional arrangements to solve CPR dilemmas. It therefore follows that in this study, the water system whose CBO's members show evident signs of collective action should have these two elements: (1) a salient goal frame shared by members of the CBO, and (2) a CBO where the design principles of the CPR theory is present.

The corroborated findings support the claim posited above. The existence of the design principles in the institutional arrangements and a salient normative goal frame were evident in the CBO's whose members showed a strong sense of collective action - The BAWASA and the GWA-4. Conversely, the GWA, the CBO that did not indicate a strong level sustained collective action, did not show the existence of the design principles of the CPR theory in their institutional arrangements and a salient goal frame was not strong among the members.

GWA-4 and BAWASA used membership as a means to provide clear and well-defined boundaries. On the other hand, GWA does not have a well-defined boundary since members and non-members pay the same amount to access the water. Equity rules were also only clearly evident in the CBO's that sustained their water systems. Although both BAWASA and GWA-4 afforded basic the basic benefit of water access in exchange for member contribution and payment of bills, BAWASA members were allowed to have free water during occasions.

GWA, on the other hand, their water system constantly malfunction, and the oftentimes, its users did not pay for the services and incurred debt. Collective and participatory rules were also evident only evident in both the water systems that sustained. Members in both GWA-4 and BAWASA influenced the rules and collectively adjusted rules when problems occurred. On the other hand, this was not evident in GWA as manifested in the fact that the previous president recalled that the barangay council unilaterally decided for the water system (i.e. buying new pipes).

Monitoring was also strongly evident in the water systems that sustained. Both GWA-4 and BAWASA used water meters to measure the contribution of members and used assigned personnel in the community to monitor and made sure that people pay when using the tap stand. In GWA, monitoring was largely weak in terms of payment. Members were aware of rule-breakers (i.e nonpaying members, and unknown people who cut the pipes) yet there was no clear effort to address this.

Gradual sanctions were also only manifested in both the GWA and BAWASA. In both CBO's, non-compliance with rules (i.e. not paying their bills) are first met with warnings, and if non-compliance is continued their access is cut down. GWA, however, did not manifest this and this can be attributed to their monitoring system. The same reason can be used to explain the lack of a conflict management arena in GWA. On the other, both GWA-4 and BAWASA showed evident signs of a conflict management arena. Their meetings allowed members to vent out concerns regarding their water system, or some instances violators. In GWA4, use both informal and formal methods while BAWASA was more formal in approach.

Lastly, institutional awareness was very much not evident in GWA. Their barangay council almost always unilaterally decided on what the water system will do. Their local Barangay Council through their barangay chairman provided financial support to the CBO such as new electric motors and covering the expenses of the CBO. However, after the loss of the barangay chairman that supported them, the water system also stopped functioning. While in GWA4, the local government had comparatively, the least instance where the local government supported them According to their CBO's officers, they only ask their respective barangay council if they lack resources. The local government here is reactionary, or waits or only responds if the CBO asks them. On the other hand, BAWASA the barangay council in BAWASA a more active and participative role. For instance, the barangay chairman was the one who suggested to transfer their water system, kagawads (barangay officials) functioned as maintenance officers, and it was through the barangay council that they have access to the

one million pesos from the Bottom-up budget from the municipality. The local government here is more participatory but it does not decide for the water system and is still subject to the consent of the CBO.

Analysis

The findings also reveal that salience of a normative goal frame among members had an interconnecting and reinforcing relationship with the presence of the robust design principles of the CPR theory in the respective CBO. A salient normative goal frame was demonstrated in both GWA and BAWASA as manifested in their positive experiences of working together, effective monitoring and leadership that originates from the community. On the other hand, GWA did not demonstrate a salience of a normative goal frame as demonstrated by the negative experiences of working together (i.e. failed past water systems), weak monitoring and a leader whose origin is from the local government, and functions as a water manager. The findings, therefore, support the argument of the theory used by the study.

Aside from supporting the theory, the researchers also noticed that local social dynamics may have contributed with the sustainable cooperation among members. BAWASA is characterized by a community of households functioning in a compound system. This facilitates non-members to access the water through non-member households accessing the water of other households who are their relatives. This allows the CBO gain more revenue while at the same time being removed of the need to manage all the households in the community. In GWA-4, the territorial element of their zone coupled with the fact that their community is elevated and less accessible may have affected the development of a salient normative goal frame among them.

Moreover, both BAWASA and GWA-4 are considerably far from the water town proper. The members of GWA-4 all lived in an elevated area while BAWASA was in a far-flung barangay in the outskirts. This geographical dilemma may have incentivized the community to cooperate because they are left on their own.

The findings also suggest that the size of the CBO is not a strong indication of sustainability BAWASA significantly provides access to a larger number of households when compared with the GWA-4. The BAWASA has a membership of seventy-two (72) households out of the entire eighty-two (82) households in Barangay Aguingay. As compared to the GWA

that supports a total of nineteen (19) households out of a total of sixty-nine (69) households in Barangay Gines, Zone 4. BAWASA's membership is bigger yet it has prospered more compared to the smaller GWA4. This goes against the argument of Olson (1971) in his seminal work - The Logic Collective Action where he argued that a collective action project is more optimal \square in smaller groups than larger groups.

The phenomena above can be explained through looking at the nuances of both collective maintenance activities and collective leisure activities of BAWASA. The members of the BAWASA had a comparatively stronger sense of these indicators. Only the BAWASA had their water association directly connected to leisure activities (i.e. weddings and funerals). BAWASA is the only CBO where a leisure activity is directly connected to leisure activities (i.e. weddings and funerals). BAWASA's members were also the only members of a CBO that offered unpaid efforts such as cleaning the surroundings of the water system.

Moreover, a pattern in the findings may contribute in the explanation phenomena stated above. The nature of local government support in the CBO's varies among the three CBO's. As stated above, GWA's Barangay Chairman actively decided for them and provided financial support. This may have affected the sustainability of the water system in two ways: (1) it may have developed complacency among members thus limiting the need to cooperate, and (2) when the barangay chairman lost his reelection, the CBO also lost a substantial pool of resources that have contributed to its operation. In GWA4, their Barangay Council is reactionary. It only provides financial assistance when the CBO decides to. This means that the CBO has less access to resources that allows it to further develop because the instances where the CBO asked assistance was for maintenance purposes, not development. BAWASA's local government is more participative. Their local government actively knows the problems of the CBO, and it can provide assistance even if it was not asked. Yet it is still subject to the approval of the CBO. This balance of local government participation, and being subjected to the CBO's approval allows the CBO have access to funds that can be used to develop their water system while at the same time making sure that an unstable leader like a local government does not unilaterally decide for it. This supports the studies about rural water systems in Africa where most scholars argued that intervention from external entities were important in the sustainability of a water system. However, the study puts a caveat that the community should still manage the CPR.

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