Analyzing the partnership between international non-governmental organizations and the Vietnamese government in the post-reform period

Dissertation submitted by

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
ERASMUS MUNDUS MASTER IN PUBLIC POLICY

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Hanoi, 15th July, 2018

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

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Word count: 13580

ABSTRACT

This research analyses the partnership between the Vietnamese state and international non-governmental organizations in the post economic renovation, Doi Moi era. The cross-sector relationship was examined through the three key dimensions suggested by Shigetomi (2003): the economic space, the political space controlled by the Vietnamese Communist Party, and the efforts from INGOs to create a more favorable environment to their work. The decisive factors helping INGOs to effectively altering the environment to their favor are institutional factors, INGOs' characteristics and the socio-cultural context of Vietnam.

The research methods used were literature analysis and semi-structured interviews. It was concluded that, during post Doi Moi era, due to the dire need for resources to eliminate poverty and further integration to global economy, the Vietnamese state has employed multiple strategies to exploit resources from INGOs. At the same time, it managed to keep INGOs under close surveillance to make sure no organizations outside of state umbrella are able to challenge its legitimacy. Among the multiple tactics deployed by the state, the most crucial ones are the required link with local non-governmental organizations in the areas of INGOs' choice, and the excessive amount of regulatory frameworks that INGO have to adhere to. Since mostly all local NGOs assigned to INGOs are an extension of the state's apparatus, the mass organizations, this negatively affects autonomy of overseas non-state actors, as well as the growth of a genuine independent civil society in Vietnam. Local civil society actors play the most important role in promoting participatory governance and democratization (Uphoff, 1986), thus the slowdown in its development bears adverse implications on the path to better governance in Vietnam. Furthermore, if INGOs are in partnership with the closely state- elated agencies, their contribution to the expansion of democratic freedom and the changing dynamics of governance in Vietnam will not be substantial.

CHAPER 1- INTRODUCTION

Vietnam shifted from an agricultural centrally planned economy to an industrial market-based economy through the adoption of Doi Moi, the economic renovation in 1986. This marked a relatively open time for foreign investment and international donors pouring resources to support the country's economic growth. This investment played an significant role in replacing the government in the policy fields where state budget shrank and its ability to reach the poorest was limited. International non-governmental organizations' (INGO hereafter) presence in Vietnam did not involve only economic and poverty reduction for the most disadvantaged population, it also introduced to the national context the idea of civil society, of participatory governance and grassroots democracy. Hence, economic-wise, the state acknowledged the importance of foreign aid and needed it; yet politic-wise, the Communist Party resisted any outside interference that could challenge its legitimacy. The result under this national context is the joint partnership of state and non-state actors, but with a twist. The government has been employing different strategies where the state dominates, such as keeping close surveillance of INGOs through Party's extension organizations or putting into place multiple legal frameworks. All these have served as means to prevent the emergent non-state sector from coming to play a more opposing political role *vis-à-vis* the government. From INGO's end, it managed to find room for maneuvering under the strict single party ruled regime that did not directly threaten the Party leadership. This interaction and dynamic across the state and the voluntary sector is core to the research at hand.

Literature on various forms of partnerships among civil society and the government are not scar, yet these pieces have not capitalized much on the opportunities and challenges that promote or hinder the joint efforts. Furthermore, research on the relationship between non-state actors and the government also lacked paying sufficient attention to the possible implications on the nascent Vietnamese civil society, grassroot administration and democratization process. This research seeks to fill in this gap by analysing both the economic and political spaces made available by the government for the work of INGO. Consideration would also be given to the tactics of INGOs in changing the current rather constrained environment to their favor. However, despite their trying, their contribution for the development of local truly Vietnamese civil society have remained insignificant. Particular emphasis would be paid to the available space in the economy, in political sphere of laws and administration procedure for INGOs, and the varied organizational characteristics, contextual settings of different INGOs and GOs.

To find answer for these research questions, key literature's analysis and interviews with relevant stakeholders were conducted. To study their engagement over time, a theoretical platform by Shigetomi *et al.* (2002) was used as an analytical framework. In the model, the authors used the concept of "economic space" and "political space" that bear impacts on the formation and development of the partnership. In light of this framework, the authors then operationalized what it means by economic and political spaces, thus enabling the resecher to search comprehensively for relevant information regarding stakeholder's role, what resources they have, what contextual factors impact strongly on them, etc.

In the sections below, firstly, I introduce the background of the study, paying attention to the emergence of the non-profit sector in Vietnam and the existing cross-sector difficulties in post reform period, which posing as the main puzzle in my research. Secondly, I describe the theoretical framework which showed me the data to be systematically searched for and synthesized. Thirdly, I present the research design for getting the necessary data and making sense of the data collected. Finally, I conclude discussing the implications of my findings.

CHAPTER 2- LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Đổi Mới: the emergence of civil society in Vietnam

Non-profit organizations and civil society begins to thrive in Vietnam when the country adopted economic reform around 1985. The transformation or Đổi Mới (Renovation) turned the planned centralized economy, where the state acted as the sole provider of social services and welfare and strictly controlled many other aspects in daily life, to the market economy where foreign investments and trading relations with the West were increasingly encouraged. The change in economic policies and the State reduced role opened up spaces for the massive influx of foreign development aid (Hannah, 2007). Multiple international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) entered the country, responded to the shrinking state's budget for public services such as basic healthcare, education, sanitation and poverty reduction, etc. Owing to the provided core values such as capital, new technology and innovations, etc. that are essential for a transition economy, Vietnam was praised by its high growth rate, increasing exports and quick decrease in the percentage of poor household (from 1993 to 1998, the poor household proportion decreased from 55% to 36%) (Ford Foundation report).

Despite these success stories, high level of poverty rate still persisted and had a heavy impact on the ethnic minorities and geographically hard-to-reach population. Moreover, during the

1990s, the image of Vietnam in international media was associated with bloodshed, violence and sufferings from the previous war with America. This called for the INGOs community and philanthropic institutions to get involved, not only showing their sympathy or providing humanitarian and refugee relief to the war's victims, but also promoting means for grassroot development and building local capacity (Salemink, 2006). Notably, INGOs also introduced the instrumentalist concepts of "civil society" and "bottom-up approach" to the transitional socialist context of Vietnam.

The concept of civil society appeared the first time back in the 18th century in publications of Adam Ferguson, a Scottish Enlightenment thinker, and Alexis de Tocqueville, a French philosopher (Salemink, 2006). However, it was not until the 1990s that it became widely seen on all sort political and academic papers, policy research and the public media. The concept was not clearly defined. It was vaguely explained as something not public or private, rather than what it exactly was (Fisher, 1997). Despite the ambiguous definition, it was mostly associated with positive connotations: a counter force to balance the public and private spheres, the most efficient public service providers to reach the poorest and the underprivileged, a "good thing" for democracy and social justice (Salemink, 2006).

Given that the meaning of civil society plays a role in nurturing or hindering its relations with other sectors in specific context, this research adopted two interpretations which were recommended in development literature for the studies of third sector (Salemink, 2006). It allows the researcher to assess how the concept of civil society is used to influence, underline or obscure the state- NGOs synergy. The first is an economic interpretation that looks at civil society work as service delivery and poverty alleviation. The second is a more politicised meaning: NGOs and civil society act as a means to national policy change, freedom and democracy.

In Vietnam, civil society is closely linked with foreign aid and international development agenda. INGOs entered the country when a capitalist market-based economic reform was initiated, along with a massive cut in State budget for delivering many social services. As a country in transition from post-socialism that remains under the rule of one single Communist Party, Vietnam was in need of resources to quickly integrate into the global economy and thus was eligible for the support of INGOs, bilateral donors and intergovernmental organizations (Salemink, 2006). The international donor community felt urged to speed up the economic reform, and fulfill the gap in social service delivery caused by retreating State. This led to a

spring-up in the number of INGOs as complementary actors in the post-reform period in Vietnam.

The path for autonomous and voluntary sector to develop in Vietnam resembles in many ways to the development of non-governmental sector elsewhere in Asia (Sidel, 2003). For example, in China, voluntary groups stepped in a full array of service deliveries to make-up for the gradually shrinking State. Even though in both countries, the third sector expanded quickly, there is one major discrepancy between them. While the voluntary community in China took a more politically confrontational role, sometimes even defiant and aggressive to the State in their early formation, their counterparts in Vietnam were more subtle in their political agenda. Therefore, politics-wise, the non-governmental development in China might had required more exercise of control and suppression from the government in China than in the case of Vietnam (Sidel, 2003). But this fact is gradually changing in Vietnam as many international NGOs have found common ground with the World Bank, IMF or Asian Development Bank in their critique of a 'top-down' centralized approach, state-dominant model from the Party. They advocated for a more 'bottom-up' and participatory development in poverty reduction and reform policies, one could enable more free space for association outside of state's stretch. As the third sector seeks to extend their work and comes to play a more directly political role, the Vietnamese authority currently only tolerates partnerships which do not pose as a direct challenge to the Party's legitimacy.

Many INGOs coming to Vietnam have the objective of promoting local civil society and prefer (or obliged by charter) to partner with domestic non-profit and voluntary sector. As a result, the local civil society is strongly demanded and promoted by international development aids as their local partners. At the same time, this community is suspected under post socialist political regime that does not tolerate shared authority from other social organizations, outside of Communist Party. Civil society concept based on Tocqueville, in which a group of people forming voluntary associations and commonly supported by foreign development agencies, is not allowed under Marxist-Leninist party (Hannah, 2007). While international development literatures assert the necessity of such an assembly, and even the Vietnamese State itself acknowledges the considerable potentials that INGOs have on the economy, the State still retains strict control over secondary associations whom it considered dissent or compete with its supreme legitimacy. This conflict brought about by Doi Moi is among three forces: Communist Party's monopoly over association formation, external donor's pressurization to create voluntary associational life and the same internal desire from

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Vietnamese society. The study of these three forces as well as their relationships are central to this research.

Hence, Đổi Mới era marks the fair openness in transforming economic policies by the Party State in relation to market-based and foreign-invest economy, but still accompanied by the Communist Party's firm hold of societal and political transform. Even though the government prefers a state-dominant model, it does not always have the funds and capacity to sustain it, consequently it has to seek for a support from the other sector such as non-profit. Hence, when INGOs flooded into Vietnam and wanted to bring impacts to development processes: how would the context of post Marxist-Leninist political system affect the work done by INGOs? What strategies have these foreign entities adopted to navigate in the constrained space granted by the regime and still manage to contribute meaningfully? What are the implications that these cross-sector partnerships have on poverty reduction, building local civil society and grassroot democratisation in the country? The following chapters attempt to address these questions.

2.2 Linkages between International NGOs and the Vietnamese government

It would not be an overstatement to say that it was Doi Moi which opened the door for international donors to partake and channel funds for development process. As much of the existing development practice would suggest, INGOs prefer to partner with local NGOs or other civil society groups to implement their projects (Hannah, 2006). Yet Vietnam seemed to be a deviant case due to its very nascent and lacking capacity civil society, causing difficulty for these foreign agencies to identify whom should they support in the name of civil society. Coming with the intention to form Vietnamese NGOs as a foundation for civil society, international actors often had to come to terms with government partners (Hannah, 2006). Therefore, a large number of partnerships between Vietnamese state organizations and international agencies were built to take advantage of funds, both for economic growth projects and institutional building. But the intention of building civil society was kept alive. On the one hand, it was because working through a government network was adverse to INGOs' politics and mandates since their priorities were promoting local civil socitey; on the other hand, many big donors like the World Bank would grant Vietnam a "merit-based" loan if it fulfils the governance criteria on "support the development of civil society" (Salemink, 2006).

The result partner was usually mass organizations. Studies by Dang (2014) noted the hybrid nature of mass organizations. They are under Party leadership at the central level but also have active representational roles at the local levels of district and commune (Sakata, 2006). Example of mass organizations are the Woman's Union, Trade Union, Ho Chi Minh Youth Communist League, Union of Science and Technology and other umbrella organizations. It was without doubt that Mass organizations' political role were explicit as they are entrusted to promote and ensure loyalty to the Party/ State in word and activities regardless of the sectors. During 1954-1986, before Doi Moi, while there was still virtually no space for civic organizations and most of them were small-sized, Mass Organizations have already relatively high level of activities in resources mobilization during the war with America, both locally and centrally. After Doi Moi, they sought more representational functions and took direct charge for social services delivery. For instance, trade unions take the lead to represent workers' interests, they are usually the workforce who were dislocated by economic renovations, involved in conflicts with state or local private firms, or been exploited by domestic or foreign employers (Greenfield,1994). The Women's Union was able to distribute more than $50,000 micro-credit loans to low-income women in rural farming village due to its strong local level presence, and capacity to deliver services (Gray, 1999)

Studies of civil society in Vietnam have not reached a consensus on the position of mass organizations, yet most of them subject mass organizations to a category of civil society organizations. The argument for this inclusion is because of its considerable autonomy at grass roots level, and even though it is funded by the government, the fund covers only core activities so it still depends on INGOs, donors or different sources of financial support (Dang,2014). Nevertheless, field trips to any local People's Committee clearly show the fact that mass organizations are closely tied and housed in the apparatus of the Communist Party and State, possibly can be considered as a junior partner. The dual state-civil society characteristic makes mass organization an important actor when it comes to research on cross sector partnerships.

Study by CIVICUS on civil society space in the region of Southeast Asia found that even though civic organizations in Vietnam have certain leeway in their work, "virtually all organizations in Vietnam are entangled with the state and each other" (Norlund, 2006). Michael Gray expanded more on this stating that, "research to date [as of 1999] indicates that the NGO sector in Vietnam is in many respects a construct of the state". More arguments to this favor this can be found in many other political science theories such as associational

approach and anthropological theory of state. They advocate for the claim that the boundary separating state and non-state actors is hazy (Mitchell, 2001), state should not be seen as a monolithic entity but a multilithic composed of different parts. Hence, dialogues do not occur merely between state and society, many take place within and among their component parts (Kerkvliet, 2003; Vasavakul, 2003). Wischermann (2010) and Hannah (2007) recognized that in Vietnam context (and many others too), "civil society action can at times emerge from within the state itself". Read and Pekkanen (2009) coined the term "straddlers" for organizations which are half state, half non-state; somewhat equivalent to "quangos" concept (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations). But then the question is whether these straddlers are naturally considered part of civil society or only in specific circumstances. The debate on mass organizations position remains. At a later stage, this research will look further at the interplay of mass organizations and INGOs in practice and its implications.

The rapid influx of foreign aid for profit actors and donors has overwhelmed the state legislations (Sidel, 1995) . Before Doi Moi, the concept of civil society was almost unheard of in policy discussions or promulgation. Therefore, during economic reformation with the advent of international entities and the mushrooming of national non-governmental entities, the already scarce regulatory frameworks became outdated, preveting the state from controlling or even classifying the development of these new players. The general guidelines adopted by the Vietnamese Communist Party and the government opted to focus mainly the regulatory efforts and punitive measures on a few associations whom perceived as opposed to the regime (Human Rights Watch, 1996). For the rest of hundreds of not-for-profit organizations, as Chizuko Suzuki (2002) put it "as far as the Vietnamese government is concerned, INGOs are all welcome if they provide the funds, personnel, technologies, and knowledge for Vietnamese's development".

The state, in general, give the green light in their activities, at least on the surface of legal framework. Three primary law sets enforced since 1957 continue to oversee the third sector today (Sidel, 1995). The first set, a sequence of Decrees and Decisions, all issued in 1957(Law stipulating Rights to meet and gathe - Law no.101/ SL/L.003; Decision stipulating the implementation of Law no 101/ on the right to meet and gather in 1956; Law stipulating Rights to form Associations- Law no. 102/SL/L.004; Decision stipulating the implementation of Law no.102 on the right to form Associations) regulates the establishment and functioning of social associations and the-like. These were introduced after a liberal movement by the intellectuals for more openness in society was shut down, thus this is the first time heightened

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reprimand to civil society was exerted by the authorities. These acts, although outdated, continued to rule over the authority and legitimacy for existing NGOs till early/ mid- 1990s. Moving on to a more liberal period, the 1990s policy documents regulate mass organizations and serve to actively promote non-state work as well as the setting up of voluntary associations (Circular 07 of Government Committee for Organisations), while state still hold fast to the control over this development. In 1992, the important Decree 35/HDBT on "Establishment of non-profit scientific and technological organisations" was passed by Council of Ministers, marked the support for the formation of new

Scientific and Technological civil organisations. Even though the sets of law proved useful to validate the existence of NGOs, these were found to be incomplete and ill-suited 5 years later, because some specific articles simultaneously encouraged and restricted the sector's quick expansion (Sidel, 1995). Consequently, a new legislation committee came into being in 1994 to accelerate the formulation of a comprehensive Law on Associations. Two most important objectives of the new law are: to encourage the positive role played by non-state actors; to equip the authorities with mechanisms so that it can keep track of the non-profit activities and its growth. The resulting draft contains a registration and approval procedure for new groups who wish to make entry to Vietnam, and a detailed reporting process for existing players. The draft of Law on Associations was not even smooth sailing because it had been subject to change at least ten times (Hannah, 2003; Sabharwal and Than Thi Thien Huong, 2005). Its adoption has subsequently undergone several delays by lobbying groups such as national professional and business associations (Thayer, 2008).

Notably, despite the fact that the government has adopted various new statutes to take a grip on the speedy development of non-state associations, these sometimes entangled and overlapped. Yet, the circumstance when explosion of voluntary activities outpaced Vietnamese regulatory framework did not hinder the growth of non-profit initiatives. Instead, the bulk of laws, decrees, circulars and decisions that are found conflicting and inconsistent, has opened up legal space for a vast number of organizations to gain at least semi non-state status in a government-prevailed system for service delivery, policy research and other activities (Gidron, 1992). This situation has positively incentivized the establishment of new civil groups.

## 2.3 Different modes of the INGOs-government partnership

Since the 1980s, significant change in Vietnam's political-economy system has offered wider opportunities for international voluntary organizations to enter and get engaged in activities of their choice. Given the extended space, international groups attempted to exert their influence and contribute to a wide range of issues from socioeconomic to governance and administrative reform in Vietnam. Surveys conducted by Fritzen (2003) to measure the extent of Vietnamese civil organizations suggest that the modality for state- NGOs engagement are varied: NGOs could assist in policy research and consulting through provide fundings or establish venues for policy debates with different stakeholders; they could directly train and build capacity for government or local NGOs' partners. INGOs make a pronounced component of external intervention to development process in recipient countries, considering the geographic stretch, considerable capital, human resources and international presence. This brings particular indications for developing countries for both the government and national civil society.

Regardless of these advantages, experience from development projects depicted how carefully INGOs presented themselves to the state to achieve certain goals (Nguyen, 2011; Wischermann, 2013). Initially, almost all organizations worked as partners to implement State's development policy regarding provision of social services, public welfare and poverty reduction. When Vietnam's economy experienced rapid growth, transformed from one of the poorest country into lower middle-income (vastly thanks to development aid as discussed above), foreign donors have started to extent their role. They have included policy advocacy for projects' beneficiaries and also lobbying for policy change (as noted in the discussion on Law on Associations) to their agendas. Yet, Vietnam political environment shows this is not easy. The foreign NGOs are pressurized to see themselves as coordinators, implementers, intermediaries and networkers as most important roles, "they are more likely to be action-oriented, rather than doing advocacy because it seems safer" (Wischermann, 2013).

Hannah (2004) identified a spectrum of civil society roles for NGOs that are active in Vietnam (see Figure 1). He found that the majority of groups being investigated in his paper are nested on the right-hand side. Almost every job done by these groups are supported directly by state's existing programs or part of a large policy goal. Recently, it is trendy for INGOs to represent their constituents to advocate for better state operational procedures, or advise on new techniques to get-work-done faster. The activities, termed "advocacy" by the author, requires more direct involvement with government-implementing agencies. Moreover,

international donors, usually in partnership with local NGOs, exerted influence on changing policies, in other words did "lobbying", to support their beneficiaries better. Hannah's interview with a Party official revealed that those 3 activities-- projects to support state's policies; advocacy for more efficient services provision; and lobbying for improved policy for the disadvantaged-- are acceptable in Vietnam society. Several more roles delineated on the left-hand side such as watchdogs to expose government corruption, opposition to the ruling apparatus, and even public resistance to the regime were not tolerated by the Party state (Hannah, 2004)

Figure 1. Possible Civil Society Roles (by Joseph Hannah, 2004)
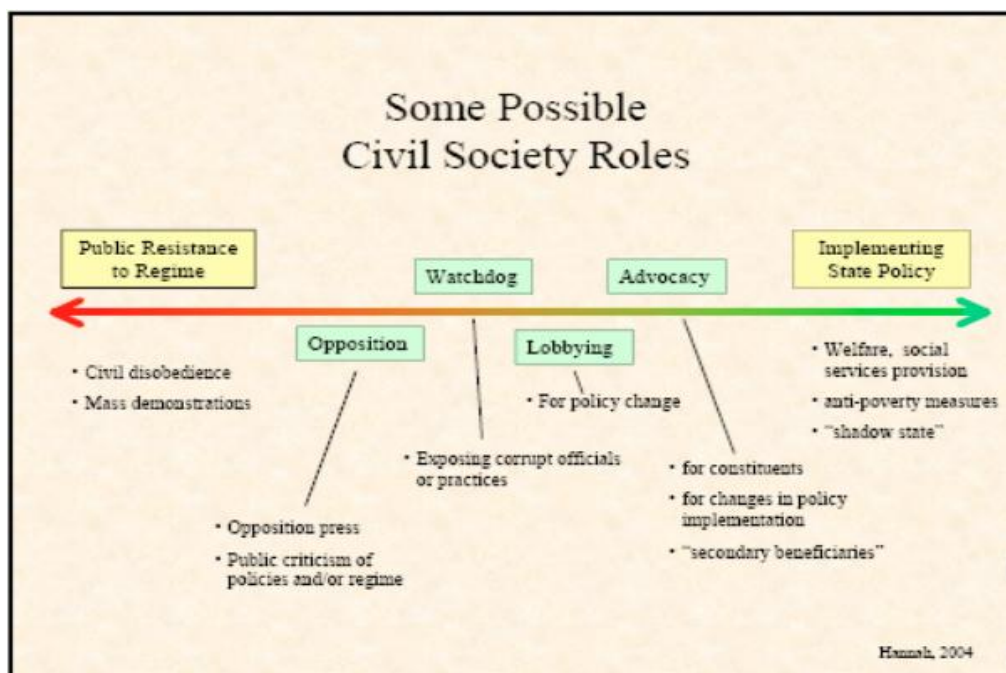
In general, while research on cross sector partnership is abundant, only a few rare pieces are available on Vietnamese civil society's activities which clustered on the left side of the arrow (see Wischermann and Vinh, 2003; Bui The Cuong, 2006). As forms of private owned newspapers or other modes of expression outside official governmental channels are prohibited in Vietnam, the country lacks a defiant press that is critical to state's policies and the single party ruled political system (Giao Nguyen, 1994). Such criticism is largely confined to limited circulation newssheets distributed by pro-democracy dissidents. In recent years, the internet has served as the most important conduit for mobilization, monitoring and communication due to its timeliness and effective mobilization.

CHAPTER 3- THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR STUDYING THE PARTNERSHIP

A model to conceptualize the cross-sector collaboration needs to be comprehensive that considers the context where partnerships emerge, factors supporting or hindering the partnerships, and the dynamics of partnership development (Teamey, 2007). After cautiously reviewing the body of literature on GOs-NGOs linkages, the framework proposed by Shigetomi et.al. is chosen to examine and understand the state- INGOs relations. The framework postulates on the most important function assumed by states: to establish laws and policies that are consistenly applicable to every members of society. Among these rules, two types are essential to the scope of this research on state and non-state partnerships. State introduces rules that firstly, "regulate private interactions among private citizens" and secondly, "control the formation and governance of goods and services not produced by those private interactions among citizens". The two functions are regarded as "despotic dimension" and "infrastructure dimension" accordingly (Hall and Ikenbery, 1989). Other frameworks often time pay heavy attention to merely "despotic dimension" of state (see Fisher, 1998), meaning the extent and the means that State uses to regulate NGOs. This results to an unbalanced relationship assessment. State's "infrastructure dimension" matters a lot too. It shows state's performance when deciding how much resources and in what areas it needs to supply, and thus determines the available space/ activities for other sectors, INGOs in this case.

This chosen framework delves into both dimensions, defined as the "political space" and the "economic space" for INGOs. Consequently it examines how INGOs demonstrate themselves being embedded in these spaces (Shigetomi et.al, 2002).

3.1 The economic space for INGOs

The first decisive factor for INGOs' manifestation is the request from States for the areas and works they lack of resources. Some resources are produced and supplied in the market, some are not. Even in case where they are available in the market, not every citizens can afford to buy themselves, especially in the case of developing countries. State steps in at this stage, supplies ranges of goods and services to its people. However, there are other systems of resource distribution, "which are built-in to society" (Shigetomi et.al, 2002) and being armed with its own different rules can maintain its way to distribute resources that either market or

state are able to. One example in Vietnam could be the Christian societies having their own groups in one municipality through which they offer charity to the marginalized under same area. This kind of redistribution can be considered inherent in society (Shigetomi et.al, 2002). It is not new when communities are regarded as part of the system, close to the side of market and the state. But it is when all these three components failed to redistribute resources efficiently, that room for NGOs emerges (Pesoff, 1992). As a result, NGOs become the fourth actor interfering, or filling up these system's gap. Shigetomi visualized resources allocation and its agents of change by a triangle (see Figure 2).
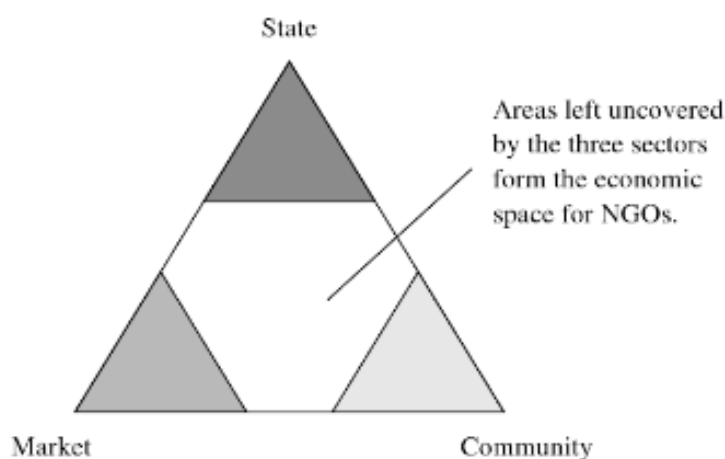
Figure 2. Economic Space for INGOs

The whole triangle embodies resources demanded in a country. On the inside, each actor like the state, the market, and the community meets parts of the requirement. The space left hollow by them, a economic space, is the where INGOs can act. The larger this space gets, the greater the demand for service deliveries by the INGOs. To determine the factors influencing the size of economic space, whether widening or contracting it, it is essential to look at the defects in existing actors' functioning. In this case at hand, the focus will be the state's flaws. The research will discover what public services are sufficiently provided and what are not by the government during Doi Moi? Whether the economic space for INGOs is shrinking or expanding?

3.2 The political space for INGOS

The second determining factor for INGOs emergence and operation is the degree of political constraint exerted on them by the government, or the "despotic dimension" of the state. Many

states hold hostile attitude towards outsiders namely NGOs as they fear the threat from this actor intruding in the existing system of resource allocation, or even taking over it (Hall and Ikenbery, 1989). State's nature is very protective and critique- adversed concerning its authority and legitimate rules. Chances are high that restrictions will be levied on groups whom it deems as outlaws. Shigetomi called the sphere where INGOs can act autonomously and not being under these coercion, "a political space". To identify the size of political space, national regulatory frameworks and administrative mechanism will be examined.

As discussed above, in the case of Vietnam, large economic space will not be enough to make an enabling environment where INGOs can freely operate. Despite the great demand for INGOs' activities, political conditions keep them in check. But it is also important to note that the extent of political controls varies significantly from one area of work by INGOs and their working methods to another.

In summary, the concrete way in which INGOs' activities are manifested is determined by the coexistence of the economic space and the political space. However, this viewpoint takes for granted the existing spaces for INGOs, and then explore how INGOs express themselves. This method has a drawback, since it allows us to only see part of the tactics pushed forward by non-state actors in their work. Scholars in development studies asserted that, in fact, a vast number of INGOs actively seek to alter their surrounding environment (Heyzer, 1995 and Levitt, 1973). While all areas of development work by NGOs will potentially create impacts, clearer evidence can be found when looking at reform-oriented actions by NGOs (Shigetomi, 2002). The following figure 3 is basically similar to the one above, apart from the added space taken up by NGOs. The conditions in developing countries show that the vacant space is still fairly large, meaning that out of the total available area for NGOs to operate, much of it has not been occupied. Yet it reveals positive signs that NGOs are actively working to transform the given environment, even if they do it at a small-scale.

Figure 3. Economic vacant space and political activities by NGOs
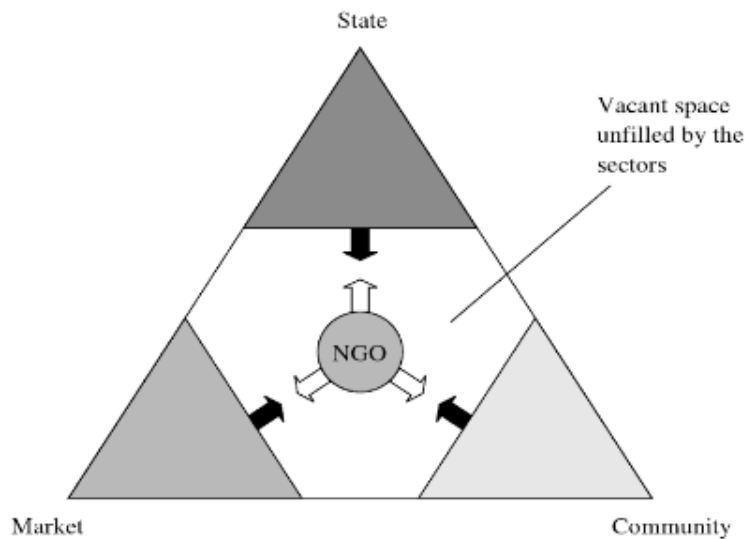
In order to change the surrounding environment (the white arrows expanding to fill in the empty space), INGOs' effort can be categorized into 4 types. Firstly, they can attempt to create more favorable conditions for their work, make it easier to extend their economic coverage. In case they are ready and have sufficient resources to expand but facing political hurdles from existing actors, they need to alter this political conditions first. As it is highly likely that state is the most oppressive actor among them all, this generally becomes the major aim of the reform.

Yet not all INGOs are able to cover the vacant space due to their resource constraint. Here the *second approach* by INGOs is to urge other sectors to increase their activity coverage, expand the distributive mechanism to fill up the blank space. The main actor targeted here again is the state, it will be called upon to better supply public welfare services, or "larger government".

Yet even if the government gets "larger", it remains uncertain that it will adopt resource distributive policies that are desired by INGOs. Hence, INGOs' pursuit for better politics campaign could be the third approach. "Better politics" is changing the process of political, administrative decision making in a way that people's opinions can be communicated easier to the government.

Lastly, the fourth approach is the case where the government and other actors are economically strong that they are able to fill in most of the vacant space, and only a small portion is left to NGOs, then the question is which sector has the comparative advantages.

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There are areas which will be better and efficiently served by non-state actors. Under this circumstance, INGOs may push for "smaller government" to outsource parts of its task.

For developed countries, given that the blank space is virtually occupied by states and other actors and INGOs can competitively bargain to expand their work, Western NGOs' advocacy activities mostly call for "smaller government". For third world countries, NGOs advocacy is leaning more to larger government and better politics.

For the case of Vietnam and the timeframe this research chooses to examine, post Doi Moi, it is recognizable that INGOs, and even the Vietnamese government itself, are rejecting the government's dominance supply and control in all aspects of social and economic life. The government does not have enough resources to dominate welfare, education and other social services anymore, hence we observe a "smaller government" in terms of economics. Nonetheless, at the same time, the Party holds fast to a government-dominant model in terms of politics. Hence, it only allows for the third sector to develop to a certain extent, at which the political role of state is not challenged. Thus, the future for the non-governmental sector in Vietnam is to continue to supply social service on behalf of the state, and advocate for "better politics" under a restricted communist apparatus.

3.3 Explanatory factors

To explain INGOs' trajectories to create favorable environment for their activities, Esman and Uphoff (1986), through their personal observations and literature review, suggested three key explanatory factors:

(1) **Institutional factors**: the factors hypothesized to positively impact partnerships are: institutionally powerful government counterparts since these could be in high position to institutionalize reforms; INGOs who have had long term relationship with the local communities or high reputation in nation; project's political sensitivity is enough to draw attention from high profile policy makers (such as grassroots democracy or welfare of the ethnic minorities).

(2) **INGOs characteristics**: higher impact programs tend to be done by organizations whose organizational structure are flexible and well-staffed, whose manner in approaching the state are strategic that it broadens their chance of getting supported.

(3) Environmental influences: socio-economic and geographical contexts that are critical to project's success are: high population density, less inequality, high level of social and economic development.

CHAPTER 4- RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

To get information and data for this research, two qualitative methodologies were used. One half of the information sources is from collecting and reviewing the literature on development and the cross sectors partnerships. This method is used particularly to look for general information on civil society, the role of foreign donors for economic development and the process of democracy. The other half of the data was collected by semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders. Interviews were utilized to obtain in-depth and contextual information about how the partnerships played out in reality or whether they reflected what has been found in the literature or the context of Vietnam offers something new. The interviews thus enabled the researcher to triangulate prevailing theoretical constructs in document analysis to real life events, increasing the credibility and generalization of research's findings.

Reviews of the literature have provided insightful background knowledge and a conceptual framework to analyze the spaces available for non-state actors when partnering with state-actors. The analysis of documents mostly investigated publicly available primary data sources such as relevant legal and policy documents, press releases and news articles by the Vietnamese state and INGOs. The secondary sources of information were retrieved from academic literature, reports, and surveys that were published by stakeholders who involved directly or indirectly on the cooperations between civil society organizations and state power, such as the World Bank, UNDP, PACCOM (People's Aid Coordinating Committee), and Vietnamese NGOs. Summaries and brief notes from stakeholders meetings and conferences were also taken into consideration. These are produced in both Vietnamese and English so as a native Vietnamese speaker, the researcher had access to rich and insightful data sources.

In order to triangulate the data gathered, to further explore understandings and personal experience in the interdependent or reciprocal partnerships, semi-structured interviews were used as well. The set of open-ended questionnaires allowed the researcher flexibility to adapt the pre-determined questions, both during data collection and the actual interviews. The researcher could do follow-up probes that appropriate to different informants. She could also search for deeper information that she deemed as beneficial and relevant to the chosen topic,

and explore additional data emerged during the interviewing processes (Merriam, 2009). Informants were chosen according to purposeful sampling and snowball technique, given the large scope and limited time frame the researcher had. Purposeful sampling enabled the researcher to concentrate on data-rich and relevant respondents within a broad population. To justify the selection, the researcher opted for operational criteria suggested by Doodley (2007) in the study of the multi-organizational network. Chosen informants needed to qualified for:

- (1) partner types: organizations representative of both government and international non-state actors;

- (2) length of relations: the duration of partnerships can be varied but the minimum should be 3 years; because supposedly the more experience they are into the relationships, the more insightful date they could offer;

- (3) personal experience: the respondents should be the key staffs who have had considerable first-hand knowledge of the partnerships, who have shown their interest in the cross-sector interactions.

Totally, 6 interviews were conducted via Skype and email exchange. Out of them, 4 were representatives from INGOs working in various policy fields, from traditional poverty reduction to the recent expansion of advocacy for policies. They were field operational staffs who, during their work, exposed to INGOs registration process and project management. One was with the representative from facilitating organization called VUFO - NGO Resource Center, the focal center who has acted as the main coordinator for INGOs' activities in Vietnam. The researcher acknowledged the fact of not having contact of government staffs could pose bias to research findings, hence the last person interviewed was a senior researcher whose theme focus is on civil society actions and governance in Vietnam, of which I referred to throughout my writing. His viewpoint played as an objective intersection for the position occupied by both government and INGOs. Therefore, having him as a respondent helped to increase the research's credibility and representativeness. After the first interview, the snowballing technique took place, more interviewee's contact was obtained through referrals. All interviews were not recorded so that the interviewees could feel most comfortable sharing their views, but notes were taken and email conversations were retained.

Interviewees were first asked to explain what had made the collaboration with government agencies necessary, at both central and local level. Then they were specifically asked to

pinpoint the exact factors that had an impact on the collaboration, particularly in terms of the socio-political context, the legal frameworks, administrative procedures, the types of government agencies, etc. Interviewees were also asked to identify the strength and weaknesses of the partnered organizations that might support or hinder partnerships from project formation until implementation and monitoring. And lastly, the interviewee's opinions concerning whether the relationship had involved or developed over time were collected. (The questionnaire is attached in the appendix)

CHAPTER 5- FINDING AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Economic space: The enlargement of economic space during Doi Moi in 1986 and beyond

Before Doi Moi (1976-1986) was the time when Vietnam unified its Northern and Southern parts, so the same unification occurred for Southern INGOs and Northern INGOs. Since the South of Vietnam was under the rule of the USA, the majority of INGOs established there were American NGOs, who had known little regarding project implementation of the Northern counterparts under socialist political machinery and its geography. Consequently, many Southern INGOs were imposed socialist transformation, or got expelled from Vietnam, or were forced to relocate their headquarters to Thailand (Suzuki, 2002). International NGOs back then merely acted as providers for development funding, and practically not able to supervise their projects. The Vietnamese State was actually in charge of project implementation.

In 1979, Vietnam invaded Cambodia, entered into conflict with China, and thus marked an end to the aid received from China and the West, leading to an international isolation for the country. This worsened the conditions for INGOs to operate, thus their activities were drastically decreased even for the provision of humanitarian aid (Suzuki, 2002).

Yet the adoption of Doi Moi in 1986 triggered a grand comeback for INGOs along with their major activities. Doi Moi opened the path for a socialist market-based economy and welcomed trade relations with foreigners. One noticeable change in diplomatic policy was the government's recognition for INGOs potentials and encouragement to their activities. From the government side, there were expectations to develop the economy with foreign investment, together with high hopes for social development through the technical assistance and development fund from INGOs. In 1989, as an effort accommodate the presence of INGOs and boost its contribution for social and economic development, the Vietnamese

Government established PACCOM, People's Aid Coordinating Committee, to exclusively coordinate INGOs' activities. In only 6 years from 1991 to 1998 the number of INGOs in Vietnam doubled, from 114 to 234 organizations (Wischermann, 2003). The two tables below shows the provision of development funds in terms of their activities and geographical areas. Table 1 illustrates that with the advent of high number of INGOs, significant development capital and technology had been put into variety categories. From table 2 it is clear that among different regions, the funds had been distributed evenly, and it even extended the hard-to-reach outlying rural areas. Under socialist regime, the State used to provide resources in almost all geographic areas and social services; but as public expenditure shrank, the state now acts as a mobilizer for development fund and technology from foreign entities.

Table 1. Distribution of development funds by INGOs in Vietnam in 1998, according to activities (source: Vietnam NGOs Directory Office)

	Annual development Co-operation budget (dollar billion)	Activity					
		Healthcare and medical care	Education	Environment	Household Economy	Commune Development	Others
Number of projects		204	114	93	105	66	125
Development funding (dollar millions)	703.69	203.4	131.47	92.56	104.51	65.69	124.41

Table 2. Distribution of development funds by INGOs in Vietnam in 1998, according to geographic location (source: Vietnam NGOs Directory Office 1998)

	Annual development co-operation budget (dollar million)	Region						
		Northern Highland	Red River Delta	Central Northern	Central	Central Southern	Southern	Mekong Delta
Number of projects		146	189	149	90	49	138	163
Development funding (dollar millions)	173.89	110.63	143.47	113.11	68.32	39.48	104.76	127.3

Data published by Vietnam NGO directory office in 1998 further presented the extent that distribution of international NGOs' funds is reflected in State's finance plan, how much of the funds was disbursed and in what policy areas? Vietnamese government incorporated INGOs' funds into the national budget, and out of the governmental expenditure on "education and job training", INGOs' money accounted for almost 45 percent. On "health and medical care", INGOs' funds credited to almost 90 percent of government expenditure. This implies that for main areas of social development such as healthcare and education, bigger share of funding comes from INGOs, making them crucial actors to improve socio-economic conditions in Vietnam.

However, even when aid was appreciated, it did not make the Vietnamese government less vigilant in its aid relationship. It was acknowledged among Party leaders that over reliance on external power must be avoided to circumvent one risk: Western assistance might be used as means to intervene or pressurize domestic affairs. The Politburo put in place principles to prevent aid dependent situations. It states that the link with foreign donors should only be to a certain extent which allows Vietnam to still bring its internal forces into play, to self

determine what/how integration and international relations could be best taken advantage of without sacrificing the autonomy, ownership and national interests. As a result, development projects have been often rejected when aid payments and donors' requirements are strongly attached to political or economic conditionality. The State's strong ownership can also be explained by the fact that INGO's arrivals in Vietnam were firstly made possible because of market-based reform initiative under party's leadership. This differentiates Vietnam to other aid recipient countries in terms of relationships with donors, as it negates the role of foreign NGOs as initiators for economic progress during the past decades. It highlights it was the strong awareness of autonomy and close surveillance over external assistance that have driven new economic development.

It would be over simplified to ascribe all the growth in the economy and expanded space for non-governmental organizations to merely foreign funding. In fact, interview with Interviewees 4 reveals that money from donors did not entitle international actors paramount dominance in domestic policy dialogues. The interviewee made it clear that the situation is not like in Ghana or Uganda. International agencies actually are not in position of that much authority to influence the Vietnamese government, as other people would think. It will not work if foreigners pressure the Party to amend and adjust their mandates just by means of offering or terminating aids. It was the state's priorities that coincided with those of foreign aid agencies. This person added that sometimes it becomes more complicated than just accidentally aligned priorities. The relationships involve a lot of pressure and resistance coming from both sides, but the fundamental element stands still, which means international donors cannot just unilaterally dictate how the agenda should advance but there must be compromises and bargaining. The donors certainly bring about tension and also incentives, but it is the Vietnamese authorities who decide what to take on to fit the nation's purposes. If it did not agree to move ahead, the situation would never reach this stage.

Altogether, these elements have reinforce Vietnamese government negotiating position, which make the nation distinct from other developing countries and its relationships with international donors community: the Vietnamese government constrains the economic and development agenda at a higher degree compared to most other recipients of aids, or as the formal terms appeared in many Party's documents would have it, "to manage the sector properly" (Hannah, 2007)

5.2 Political space

To identify the size of political space, national regulatory frameworks and administrative mechanism will be examined. One basic assumption made by scholars who studied the emergence of civil society is that the economic changes are always interwoven with socio-political changes (Wischermann, 2003). Vietnam is no exception. Even though the Communist Party remains particularly reserved of reform in politics, the economic renovation in the 90s has brought along many radical political changes.

Political changes manifest itself clearly in the system of national laws and regulations (Shigetomi, 2002). On paper, it appears that the political space for INGOs in Vietnam is greatly restricted (Dang, 2014). The Communist Party keeps INGOs registration in firm control and throughout the years, Vietnam has been uniformly rated low on political freedoms in international indices (Schroeder, 2013). Thus national laws and regulations are important elements to examine the extent of available space for INGO's establishment, and how this space promotes or hinders INGOs' partnerships with Vietnamese government.

5.2.1 Regulatory frameworks governing INGOs

5.2.1.1 The generality of legislations: INGOs registration and prohibited activities

The national legislation determines the environment that INGOs can work independently from the government. Legislation on the setting up of INGOs and acceptance for their activities can impose a limit on INGOs freedom, make their activities more difficult, for example the unnecessary bureaucracy, overlapping authorities for registration, high fees, etc. Alternatively, regulations can as well construct an enabling environment for INGOs. It ensures a conducive political space for INGOs' operation and growth, while still subject them to quality and liability checks (Mayhem, 2005).

In a state-dominating political system like Vietnam, the Party has in hand tremendous power over law making. Countless studies and scholars during the 1980s have generally agreed on the relatively constrained and interfering regulations for the establishment or organization of activities outside state's initiatives. The strong, socialist government safeguards its legitimacy via complex frameworks, which mostly tries to control rather than empower the non-state sector. But this has changed in 1980s when Doi Moi was introduced. Since then, the government has been trying to create more accommodating regulatory frameworks to welcome INGOs and foreign donors. More hospitable rules and regulations have been

adopted to involve other actors dealing with social and development issues, rather than putting them all in the hands of government. Despite of these effort, however, "getting recognized legally in Vietnam is still very much a lengthy and difficult process", said interviewee 1.Foreign associations and groups who condemn the political conditions' status quo bear very high chance of never be recognized by Vietnamese government (Khuyen, 2005). The government, in its best ability, seeks to restrict the rights of the organizations suspected as dissidents of government policy.

For the organizations whose objectives and ideologies are not against the regime, their impediments are the complex and redundant registering requirements. To get established in Vietnam, foreign NGOs need to undergo at least 6 months of submitting documents and gaining permission at 3 coordinating government agencies. Multiple approval processes takes place firstly at central or ministry level, then at district and other local levels, then at the Committee for Foreign non-governmental affairs. It triples the bureaucracy processes and more than often, ministerial or local level staffs handling the case do not have sufficient knowledge or decide arbitrarily (as there were no legislations- said interviewee 1) when granting work permit. Nevertheless, interviewee 1, lowering her tone, disclosed to the researcher that onerous documentation can be done easier if members of the government agencies, with whom INGOs partner, have good relationships with the officials in charge. Registration can be done quite easily also if the INGOs carry out their activities in the fields of healthcare, education, poverty reduction, those that are do not directly oppose state's interest (Interviewee 2,3).

Once legitimate establishment has been granted, gaining approval for activities is the next crucial step shaping INGOs upward and downward accountability. Technically, INGOs' competence in carrying out projects will be accessed. Details and information of their partners, activities scheme, human and financial resources will be required. This procedure in Vietnam involves official formality and multiple government bodies, in contrast to other neighboring countries such as Cambodia, who appears having no required project approvals but the initial registered activity fields and annual reports (Mayhem, 2005). Tension arises most clearly in this stage between the government and INGOs. Vietnam is similar to other authoritarian regimes in wishing to maintain its hegemony in public sector but lack of resources to do so, but Vietnam goes the furthest to preserve its dominance via tight and lengthy approval process. In order to work at local level, all INGOs must have a government partner. Additional, INGOs are expected to consult with the government during the

development of project activities. The structural control reflects the government's ongoing suspicion towards of activities that might challenge its ideology and legitimacy.

The most extreme measure by the government to control non-governmental actors is to shut down and to intervene in associations whom it perceived outlaw. Vietnam does not only rank high in the complexity and plethora of tight legislations, its prescribed activities that INGOs are prohibited are also very broad and subjective. According to Article 4 of draft Decree on Registration and Operation of Foreign Non-Governmental Organizations in Vietnam- a guiding regulation for nonprofit sector in Vietnam, a wide and generic range of activities by civil society actors are barred. Article 4.1 inhibits: "All activities of religious and/or political nature or detrimental to the national interests, security and defense and/or the national solidarity or independence of Vietnam"; Article 4.4 keeps out all "Activities detrimental to social morals, fine habits and customs, national traditions and identity of Vietnam". It is noticeable how ambiguous those terms such as 'detrimental to the national interests', 'security', 'national solidarity', and 'national traditions and identity' are. They fail to give INGOs the certainties of what those activities actually are, what is permitted and what is not, and thus what INGOs do would easily fall into one prohibited category or another. They also confer remarkable power on the government to inspect and step in internal affairs of non-governmental associations, thus keep them in wariness when engage with the government.

5.2.1.2 The required link with mass organizations

As mentioned above, one prerequisite for INGOs to obtain approval for their activities in Vietnam is to cooperate with local NGOs where projects will be implemented. This required partnership with local NGOs forms the system for the government to supervise INGOs. PACCOM and VUFO (The Vietnam Union of Friendship Organization) act as local NGOs to mainly manage and control INGOs. Their duties involve granting authorizations for INGOs to set up their offices in Vietnam, or more specifically, PACCOM decides which INGOs are authorized to conduct their activities, and VUFO will oversees the activities throughout development projects, after INGOs have gained authorizations. PACCOM will also make the decision on local NGOs whom international NGOs will partner and introduce them to each other. At this stage, to avoid concentration of aid in one region, it is more essential for PACCOM to consider geographical areas than the development activities that INGOs will perform. This helps to make sure a fair allocation of foreign funding and a balance development between rural and urban areas, both economically and socially. On the basis of government's development policy, it will prioritize undeveloped rural areas first. Unlike

urban areas where the concentration of foreign capital is high and its spillover effect will enable fast social development, the same effect cannot be expected in hard-to-reach regions. The lack of economic boost will deter the social development; hence there exists the gap that needs international support.

After INGOs have started their projects, VUFO will keep track of the use of development funds and status of activities in authorized projects. Under VUFO supervision, information will then be reported to Ministry of Finance and other related government agencies. Other than local NGOs performing management and supervision like VUFO and PACCOM, there are other types of local NGOs assigned by PACCOM to be direct partners with INGO. They are mass organizations, who actually implement projects and maintain on-site activities in project funded by INGOs.

To explain more explicitly the relations between mass organization and INGOs, this research digs further to the case of mass organization called Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) due to its broad representativeness. WWU is the biggest, centrally and locally organized association, which comprises women from 16 years old and above. It was founded in 1930, the same year as Vietnam Communist Party was born. Thus, its long existence history goes hand in hand with the Party development and the state building process. From 1930 to 1945, VWU's main activities were mobilizing woman from all social strata across Vietnam to fight against France and become an independent country. From 1954 to 1975, when Vietnam was divided in two separate parts, women were also called upon mainly by VWU to win over American imperialism in Southern Vietnam and reunite the country. After 1975, when the entire nation was liberated, VWU started to shift women from being 'soldiers' in warfare to join nation-building activities. After the adoption of economic renovation until now, VWU has begun to mobilize women to serve their own rights. One main goal set out in its Memorandum is to protect women's rights and their benefits, to create the environment that secures gender equality and improves the women's lives. Hence, VWU's functions for the whole time have gone in parallel with the history of Vietnam: from the state building to state consolidation, and currently to development policy after Doi Moi. Not only having the long history alongside the Communist Party, VWU has its branches actively spread down to every provinces, districts, to village communes, wards and very remote areas. The broad networks but strongly connected of mass organizations help the partnership with INGOs to yield fruitful results.

Notably, mass organizations carry a highly close link with the State/Party. They have their seats in the Communist Party, receive funding from the party, carry out nation-building function from central to lowest commune level, giving direct communication to the state, etc. This may disqualify them as NGOs according to the frequently used definition in the West as well as what its name dictates: non-governmental organization, or being independent of government. However, the stretched networks, the direct role of being counterparts with INGOs, the partaking onsite activities in development projects by INGOs are quite suggestive regarding the government intention: it has entrusted supervision and acceptance of INGOs to mass organization.

The fact that mass organization is deep rooted in the Party brings about some drawbacks in its partnerships with non-governmental actors. Interviewee no.6, a scholar whose focuses on civil society under authoritarian regime, concluded that Vietnamese civil society (mass organizations included) has a poor democratic base. Its constituents promote and enhance the efficacy as well as authority of the authoritarian party. Even though this statement sounds inflated, it is true that mass organizations and its extended roots do not meet primary international standards of being autonomous, voluntary and representative.

Nevertheless, interviews with INGOs representative (interviewee no.1, no.2, no.4) reveal their preference to partner with mass organizations still. "Thanks to wide networks down to the lowest commune level, they (mass organizations) have in their hand the most information about their localities, i.e which household should is more eligible as projects beneficiaries, whom to contact at local government, the culture differences and local customs where projects taking place, etc." The close links with the government even plays a positive role in a sense that it keeps INGOs projects "aligned with" government development policies, hence increases the chance for project registration and approval. Their readily available human resources in localities and decent funding from the government help a lot in bringing down INGOs' administrative cost (this cost can only account for 10% maximum in INGOs' project budget), and salaries for program officers (because they are actually civil servants enjoying government pay scale). Moreover, they are now fairly proactive in approaching foreign funding and potential projects for their localities. This is partly because of mass organization's well-established and longest relations with foreign funding comparing to other domestic civil society actors, and partly because of the phase out of foreign aid when Vietnam has reached lower middle-income status.

But then one advantage of mass organization mentioned by the interviewee poses an acute question. What does the alignment with state policies mean? INGOs refer to the groups who independently, without state's manipulation, act and organize for the benefit of their aid recipients. They should be "bottom-up" accountable, serving the underprivileged population, not "top-down" accountable, adhering to what state instigates. And hence complying with state policy in order to easily get authorization to work in Vietnam should not come at the expense of constituencies that INGOS aim to assist. The extent of being aligned with state's desire on the one hand, and not being manipulated or control by state on the other hand is what INGOs should be vigilant of co-opting with State's extension such as mass organizations. In order to function meaningfully, INGOs for sure need an accommodating state which tolerates discrepancy in ideas, organizations, practice, and the willingness to cooperate with civil society actors.

When the researcher mentioned that besides mass or other socio-political organizations who closely linked with the government, there are many other partners such as Vietnamese NGOs and professional associations. These organizations do not receive funding from the state and operate independently of the government, they only work for the interest of marginalized population but why are they not chosen by INGOs? The answer was that local NGOs and other informal groups are mostly not registered. INGOs prefer to cooperate with officially recognized partners, or are obliged to do so given their legal charter, together with Vietnamese registration requirements and legal residence in the country. And even if the local civil associations have legal standing, their networks are fragmented, mostly in very poor provinces and armed with incapable staffs who are not familiar with the concept of foreign donors. This requires money for training staffs and capacity building, hence deducts available fund for the actual program's beneficiaries. Mass organizations, in contrast, have been exposed to the foreign donors concept for the longest time so they not only channel funds more effectively to the target groups but also save up costs for INGOs themselves. Even though they boost what the government or the party wants, they now also advocate for their member's interest. For instance, Farmers' Union has criticized the government officers for mistreating the farmers, urged for programs that subsidize rice prices, lobbied for an increase in low-interest loans for farmers, and other measures to support the vast numbers of peasants (Kerkvlie, 2001). There is evidence as well concerning how Women's Union, Farmer's Union, Labor's Association campaigned for the fight against government corruption, mobilized its member to publicize cases where public actors demand bribes, or abuse of

authorities, etc. In short, the roles and efficacy of Vietnam's mass organizations have been varying. Under the state umbrella, they switched from acting as fundamentally mobilizing agencies who implement state's projects and regulations, to acting as a bridge to deliver its members' demands into the policy-making system.

5.2.2 Administrative mechanism affecting INGOs

Another element of political change that associated with the merge into global economy is the mechanism for public administration (Shigetomi, 2002). Concerning administration, scholars put participatory governance and increasing autonomy for local governments to the fore when international trade and market integration occurs (Fritzen, 2003; Wischermann, 2013). In the early 1990s, Vietnam was highly praised by its economic reforms and performances, thus the prominence of foreign donors' aid was on the scene of development and poverty reduction. Yet, the rapid poverty reduction and economic growth at the same time had resulted in inequality and the marginalization of the poorest population, especially in rural and mountainous areas (Fritzen, 2003). And it was not only perceived in terms of economic policy, but also as a matter of governance. From the Vietnamese government's perspective, it viewed this as a deficiency in administrative mechanism. From INGO community's perspective, it started to change dialogues from merely development programs aid to supporting around this state-rural society interplay. Both public and non-state actors were conscious of how this gap in governance could undermine poverty alleviation efforts.

In 1999, the government introduced the policy of socialization (xã hội hoá), through which individual citizens, groups and associations were encouraged to actively participate in solving policy problems rather than counting on the state solve everything. Theoretically, the government offers citizens numerous ways and institutions through which they can interact with the authorities, impart their concern, disagreement and proposal for change. All localities and commune levels have people's councils functioning as the main channel for citizen-government communication and cooperation. The Grassroots Democracy Decree adopted in 1998 has been a milestone in providing local groups political participation, more procedures and platforms for individuals and government officials to interact in numerous policies: participatory planning, participatory budgeting, etc (Dang, 2014). The new law also organizes collective panels made up of both locals and officials to increase the opportunity for people to discuss, inform, contribute and monitor policies. The slogan "people know, people discuss, people execute and people supervise" was nation-wide promoted by the government. It was

the guiding star for any governing activities state may take. In reality, however, this principle often does not live up to expectations. The Decree "has a considerable degree of form without much substance" in almost all districts and sub-district levels (Wischermann, 2013) and did not survive the policy-implementation gap.

As a result, grass root democratization and supporting the Vietnamese government in its implementation appears on top of the agenda of foreign donors late 1990s. The opening spaces offered by the new Decree enable INGOs to rapidly become engaged in policy influence and democratization, collectively with the government. However, it should be noted that the definition of democracy in Vietnam is different than the Western conception. The idea of plural political parties is non-existent in the context of Vietnam and it will not in any case be tolerated by the one-party system. Moreover the actual formation on democratic rights is not very clear and precise in legal documents. INGOs need to be cautious when running advocacy or campaigns due to the vague border of what is permitted and what is not. Based on the broad course of actions suggested in development literature and taking into account the context of Vietnam, the international community identified their key tasks in Vietnam at the time were: (1) population empowerment and (2) transformation of local government (UNDP, 1999). The former means to raise people's awareness of their rights, encourage them to partake in political affairs and voice their opinions. INGOs' means to inform local citizens was to organize training and education sessions, disseminate information to invoke people's interests and also, support their livelihoods (Norlund, 2007). The latter means to revamp local government administration, better their performances by making them more downward accountable and being responsive to the most vulnerable population (Fritzen, 2003).

Working to enhance democracy in a mono-party regime as Vietnam is politically sensitive owing to the ambiguous regulations and the preference of state to not have any external forces, who would undermine its dominant position in society. Therefore, INGOs need to be strategic and taking advantages of the more open post-Doi Moi environment. The strategy, which is typical for NGOs in the West when pursuing administrative and political reforms, is to take the opposing side and bring down the current structures (Rösner, 2005). This approach will most likely not work under the setting of Vietnam. Instead, INGOs' approach here is to blend themselves in the existing system, from then attempt to broaden and carve up more space to improve the local-center relations.

Indeed, informant 5 told the researcher of how her organization intentionally avoid any confrontational tactics in showing disagreement to government's policies such as organized

protests or boycotts. "The Vietnamese authorities will always associate organized strikes or even peacefully marching the street with rebellious identity". Hence doing this will be extremely counterproductive, INGOs would not turn themselves into protesters or rebels. What they do is to "act accordingly to legal frameworks", work with the government through negotiation and discussion for change; engage with all the necessary actors to build dialogues in a "professional" manner. Despite of how common social movements and protests by civil society groups in the West, her INGO is highly conscious of how this could be easily framed as illegal and against the state in the existing Vietnamese political and cultural conditions.

5.3 INGOs actively changing the surrounding environment

As mentioned earlier, the trajectory for INGOs working in Vietnam post Doi Moi is to advocate for smaller government and better politics. The government seeks for a complementary partnership with the third sector in service provider, yet this partnership must not directly threaten its dominance political rule. This section explains the decisive factors helping INGOs to expand its service delivery role and create a more favorable environment for their political advocacy.

5.3.1 Institutional factors

Institutional factors refer to three dimensions: (1) whether INGOs have had high reputation in Vietnam or long term relationship with local communities, (2) whether the government counterparts are institutionally powerful enough to take NGOs initiatives to official policy-making platforms; and (3) whether these initiatives are politically sensitive enough that they attract policy makers' attention (Shigetomi, 2002). The researcher found that almost all these institutional factors were more or less illuminated through interviewees' personal experience. Almost all interviewees agree that the partnered government agencies they are assigned (i.e mass organizations) are hierarchically structured, they directly or indirectly adhere to the principles of the Communist Party. Some leaders of mass organizations are even important figures of the Party, and thus have the final decisions on every activities or partnerships that their organizations might engage.

Informant 5's explanation stressed that, in the late 1990s, her organization advocated for policies changes on the field of HIV/AIDS prevention and these were taken up to state's agenda very fast due to the widespread of this epidemic at the time. They worked closely with several state agencies, such as the Hanoi's AIDS Prevention Committee, Committee on Social Welfare of the Ministry of Health to achieve a remarkable turnaround of State policies. From

publicly condemning people who had HIV/AIDS infection as social crimes, Vietnamese government shifted its attitude and laws to regulate that the patients had assured rights to be treated equally, without any denouncement in their family, in their workplace and in society as a whole. Whoever violates these regulations shall be sanctioned according to what law stipulates. This striking change was officially taken up and institutionalized in Decree 54-CT/TW by the National Committee on Social Affairs of the Communist Party. In the Decree, the term stood out was that the state shall promulgate and take immediate actions to "stop social prejudice and stigma towards HIV/AIDS victims". INGOs, hence, according to the interviewee, contributed greatly to change state perception in the field of AIDS prevention and care services, introducing better alternatives to the existing policies.

5.3.2 INGOs characteristics

INGOs can bring higher impacts to their projects and create favorable environment for their work too if they have facilitative organizational structures and intellectual human resources. Personally, it was clear to the researcher that most informants from INGOs interviewed are critical thinkers, who are willing and committed to work for the interests of the poor and disadvantaged population. Regarding the social background of INGOs' staffs, they are mostly academics or scholars, or drawn from the class of researchers (Wischermann, 2003). This rate in higher in the north of Vietnam (Wischermann, 2003), explaining the fact that there are more research institutes engaging in high-profile political matters in Hanoi, as opposed to the South which dominated by charity and public service delivery. Regarding leaderships and organizational management, INGOs are flexible and creative in its inner decision-making process, compared to the typical hierarchical and rigid structure of state apparatus. One interviewee told the researcher about the self-nomination policy for the leader posts, which have been strongly promoted in her organization. Under this regime, staffs are encouraged to self-nominate for the position of an acting director for some months, regardless of their experience or background. By doing this, the employees are expected to better understand that leader role does not always come with higher salaries and more responsibilities. It is more about how to connect and bond people horizontally and let them have fair say in every activities that their organization pursues. This method contrasts to how public organizations operate, where decision-making processes are top down and centralized.

Additionally, there is currently an interesting phenomenon in Vietnam in which INGOs are attempting to transform themselves into local NGOs, or at least their working manners are

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geared to a localization strategy (Hannah, 2007). "Localization" means to make alteration from being a representative office of an international NGO into a true Vietnamese NGO. Many INGOs now have 100% Vietnamese staffs; the others recruit Vietnamese to hold top leader positions. INGOs in Vietnam are making an effort not to rely on oversea staffs and managers. One frequently cited motivation for converting into local NGOs is that Vietnamese social workers are increasingly developed in their capabilities, knowledge and training. Thus, they are competent in operating the organization themselves; some even do a better job than foreigners thanks to local expertise. The decades of INGO investment in Vietnam have created and coached a Vietnamese social workforce who is adept and proficient in development work (Andrew Dang, 2014). Therefore, INGOs are keen on enforcing the growth and evolution of a domestic civil society.

5.3.3 Environmental influences

These influences imply the fact that the issue-culture context in different regions has varying impacts on the partnership's success. INGOs in dealing with different local governments, who are bounded by different history, traditions and customs, have been adopting versatile strategies to solve regional social problems. INGOs' social practices have in turn implanted in the government sufficient knowledge or new methods to approach problems better. For example, even though INGOs would choose Women's Union to collaborate in most cases, not every local branch would perceive and work with INGOs the same way. Interviewee 2 mentioned the "indifference", "lack of understanding" from some local government officials towards her organization's activities (even it simply was healthcare and disaster relief) manifested in their words and attitudes; as opposed to some very solicitous and welcoming. Also according to her, some state agencies feel bothering when simultaneously have to fulfill their main job duties and partake in non-governmental initiatives. Nevertheless, they would still insist to control, direct, and to guild activities. Typically they would view INGOs as a gold mine and ask for unjustified equipment or infrastructure (to serve their benefits rather than targeted population) when implementing projects. Some other officials took a very long time to understand or get a sense of INGO's objectives and approach.

But, these non-cooperating attitudes are easy to deal with, according to the informant's experience. They asserted that It is important not to put the government agencies on the rival side. If they disagree, INGOs will invite them to discussions and "lengthy talks", in which ideas are shared, both sides' opinions are heard to attain common understanding. Group

consultations with local district and sub-district levels proved to be an efficient and cost-effective means to change and persuade them to believe in such projects and new working manners. After a long period of negotiation, some portions of the government apparatus appear to accept that non-governmental organizations as useful, at least for public social service delivery.

To illustrate her point better, she recounted that her job had had to incorporate a big portion of training and capacity building to commune-level officers in terms of project approach. For the past few decades, the government in sub-district and commune level had rooted their understanding of poverty reduction in the traditional welfare approach, where poverty means lacking of public goods and hence by providing the absent goods, poverty will be alleviated. This method, albeit achieving some success, constructs the government as charity giver and targeted population as charity taker. It not only put the government in the position to merely ask INGOs for finance and public goods delivery, but also deprived the poor from actively seeking for other means to improve their situation. Her INGOs re-assessed and moved towards the right-based approach. The new approach transitioned from supply-side emphasis to more demand-side. On the one hand, this model alters the roles of the poor from charity receiver to rights holders and assists them to overcome what had restricted their rights. On the other hand, it equips the governments with means and knowledge to provide these rights. This new model faced government rejection in the beginning because its results would not be appear in the short term, and mostly intangible (raising the awareness of rights). But eventually, by not explicitly calling the model "right-based" (although it is that in fact), by discussions and group work, her INGO convinced them of their model's worth and expected long lasting effect in the long run.

After all, the informant concluded that "in Vietnam, to establish a good relationship with the responsible officials at various government agencies, is a preferred method for most organizations. This is crucial to determine the outcomes of their programs"

5. 4 Discussion and implication of the partnership

Taking into account the aforementioned dimensions, it could be concluded that foreign NGOs in Vietnam has been endorsed by the government to some extent, especially after the economic renovation to compensate for public sector' reduction in size. Yet, state's tolerance does not and will not come easy but with great deal of bargaining and strategies from both sides.

The proliferating number of foreign non-governmental organizations the early 1990s characterizes the state's relaxation for the involvement of INGOs in Vietnam. As shown above, pooling of resources, flexible institutional characteristics and effective service delivery has always remained as major drives for State's openness. In practice, this closer cross-sector partnership in development projects reflects multiple strategies and control by state and Party when co-opting with the other sector, despite its lack of resources. The measures standing out are the imposed structural ties with mass organizations and the plethora of regulations. As a result, even under a single party ruled system, the Vietnamese state has managed to extract foreign investment but still retained its strong grip on the autonomy and growing space for INGOs. Its attitudes toward third sector, together with the complex and generality of policies show the preference for a government-dominant model in governance. Yet what we have observed from INGO end is that they do not attempt to oppose or confront with the system or its principles. Rather, they try to negotiate with central and local government to seek for its agreement and cooperation. By adapting to the local context, INGOs have gained more space to influence the government, but at the cost of its autonomy.

INGOs are not entirely autonomous from the State and the Party but get intertwined in the regime. In particular the mandatory link with state's extension like mass organization. I argue that it brings out both benefit and harm. The benefit is discussed in details above in terms of mass organization's deep reach down to local beneficiaries and understanding of local context. But the stake is also high. The state, by means of mass organizations, claims dominance in civil society sphere, which in almost all other countries should be occupied by other non-state actors. As a result, INGOs and other local non-state actors such as the Vietnamese NGOs have emerged in an environment heavily controlled by state. The growth pace for local civil society actors, the Vietnamese NGOs and other voluntary associations, would be slow down greatly if mass organizations stay as the main actor for project with foreign donors and INGOs. If INGOs are forced to form partnership with only mass organizations and thus making these organizations eligible for INGOs' funding, this will deprive local NGOs of opportunities and resources for its growth.

Several authors such as Edwards and Hulme (1996) and Thiele (1993) have also mentioned the caveat when "opportunistic" non-governmental organizations appear. It is without doubt that overseas NGOs entering Vietnam always have the priority to seek for partners "well-matched" to receive funding. "Well matched" could be defined as local leaders or heads of voluntary associations who are young, able to speak English, familiar with the concept of civil

society. Mass organizations, especially in district levels, easily found themselves qualified for these criteria as they have existed for the longest time partnering with overseas donors. Not only mass organizations, this tendency of INGOs has fostered the formation of other groups whose primary target is to strive for easy money from external donors, or are more than willing to adapt their projects and mission that match well donor's interests. Local NGOs in Vietnam has still been very nascent in its emergence and hence, not being exposed frequently with the idea of Western funding. They fail to meet INGOs' preferred technicalities. The organization's leaders most of the time are individuals who are passionate about their own cultures and communities that it inspires them to change the surrounding environment for the poorest class of society. These small, private organizations also have the highest probability to carry on independent initiatives and function separately from State agenda. To their disadvantage, they have fragmented networks and low social capital to mobilize for finance, hence they pay for their organizational costs out of their own pocket. This rendered them the most needed fund- receiver but unfortunately not being able to compete with large and well-established mass organizations.

For so many years, literatures on development have stressed that it is the major role of local NGOs to nurture downward accountability, grassroots governance and democratization in socio-political renovation (Wischermann, 2013). In his recent studies accessing different form of development cooperation, Wischermann and other Vietnamese fellow researchers came to a conclusion that "civil society in Vietnam has a very weak democratic basis"; many of them do not survive the basic qualifications of independence, voluntariness and representation. To the extreme, if the definition of civil society organizations requires them to be completely separate from the state, then logically, the findings are that civil society in Vietnam is non-existent, or at least none deserves the name (Salemink, 2006; Thayer 2009). If local NGOs or other more independent forms of civil society do not have enough resources to carry out their mission, or in this case competing with mass organizations for the available resources from donors, the scene for autonomous people organization or a strong Vietnamese civil society will remain pale. Path to democratic governance in Vietnam thus will be substantially impeded.

CHAPTER 6- CONCLUSION

This research analyzes the available economic and political space that promotes or hinders changing state/non-state partnerships. It also illustrates that the tactics and characteristics pursued by stakeholders have actively changed the available space offered to them. This research filled in the gap in interorganizational relations, providing insights and mutual understandings between different sectors, particularly GOs and INGOs as well as local Vietnamese NGOs.

Nevertheless, there are limitations to this research. The number of interviews could be larger to increase the credibility and representativeness of the findings, particularly interviews with governmental staffs. Further studies might expand the sample of GOs and also INGOs to obtain more solid data and increase the generalization of the findings. More effectively worded questionnaires might help the researcher to develop rapport with interview subjects and exploit more complete responses on politically sensitive matter.

The findings from this research bears importance implications for the development of civil society and democratisation in Vietnam. As concluded, in the near future, the non-profit and voluntary sector in Vietnam should have the opportunities to be promoted and to receive more foreign funding its activities. Mass organizations or other state-closely related agencies should not stay as the central of aid-receiving. Being competed with government-inked organizations, local civil society actors remain small, less powerful and not challenging to state power. These occurrence certainly showed state's political preferences: because of its holding fast to single-party polity and authoritarian nature, the Vietnamese state wants to slow down the growth of actor outside its umbrella, such as the voluntary and non-governmental sector. Even though it plays an important role towards the path of more democratic freedom and participatory administration, the Vietnamese civil society sector will take decades to becomes substantial, autonomous and an effective channel to aid and service delivery, if state retains its current policies. The widening scope of civil society to include policy advocacy to its main agenda would even take longer as it might be easily framed as against the system.

Annex 1: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

No	Organization	Category	Status	Format	Recording
1	Operation Smile- Ms. Huong Tran	INGO	Interview via Skype	Semi-structured	Note, written answers
2	Red cross Vietnam- Ms. Linh Dang	INGO	Interview via Skype	Semi-structured	Note, written answers
3	Red cross Spain- Ms. Natalia Anguera Ruiz	INGO	In person interview	Semi-structured	Note, written answers
4	VUFO- Vietnam Union of Friendship Organization's Representative- Ms. Lien Phuong	Socio-political organization coordinating INGOs activities in Vietnam	Interview via Skype	Semi-structured	Note, written answers
5	East Meet West- Ms Chi Nguyen	INGO	Answers via email	Structured	Written answers
6	Dr. Jorg Wischermann	Research Fellow, GIGA Institute of Asian Studies	Answers via email	Structured	Written answers

ANNEX 2: Interview Questionaire

1. Some basic info about you and your organizations. What field are your organization working in?

2. How does your organization choose the right governmental partner? (at both central and local gov, e.g: the Ministries or Mass organization?)

3. What has made the collaboration with that organization (central as well as local partners) necessary?

   What does each side need rom each others?

   - resources such as: finance, human, political resources

   - shared mission

4. What are the weaknesses and strengths of the government organizations that your organization works with?

    Variation among different provinces and cities? Examples?

5. How proactive the government is when approaching or attracting foreign/ donor's support/funding?

6. What have impacts on the collaborated projects? (Possible factors below)

   - bureaucracy legal frameworks?

   - operational hurdles : reporting procedures, limited budget for travel, capacity building for gov personnel

   - cultural difference

7. What were conflicts in roles and responsibility that you have encountered?

   - overloaded duties, large workload

   - low compensation

   - personnel management: overturn rate? staff rotation practice?

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MUNDUS MAPP THESIS REPORT

Tentative title

The impact of regulatory and policy environment on the partnership between International Non-governmental Organizations and the Vietnamese Government in the post-reform period

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I. Introduction

1. Background of the study

Winning independence in 1975 with a long history of planned centralized economic and a one-party political system, Viet Nam did not recognize civil society as a sector outside of party-state. Until 1986, the "Doi moi" (Renovation), or market reform, has fundamentally transformed the nation's economy and societal structure, marking a turning era of openness towards civil society. To implement the renovation, Vietnam needed from other developed countries capital, new technologies, experiences and training to revive the labor forces. Also, as of the precarious economic and political situation brought about by the fall of communism in the former Soviet Union, the country itself was lack of resources to recover, as a result it gained better chance to mobilize and attract foreign NGOs to come to work in the country. A variety of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) entered the country, filled the gap that government and its resources did not suffice. Their emergence responded to the needs of basic public services such as education, healthcare, clean water supply and sanitation, etc.; which state is having difficulties to provide sufficiently or in standard for the hard-to-reach population. Even though INGOs financial support does not occupy large portion of total Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Vietnam, their dominant value given to the country is "the ability to innovate, to experiment with new approaches, to do essential research, to provide high-quality training, and to assist in providing policy makers with good ideas" (Ford Foundation, 2003). Moreover, international development during the last decades has suggested the collaborative partnership among different actors- the outsiders (international organizations) and the insiders (national/ state agencies) as a way to improve development programs' success. Given the crucial role and the contribution of INGOs in development process of Vietnam, governmental agencies' coordination is inevitable in all phases of development projects.

In 1989, in order to improve the coordination and collaboration between the Government and INGOs in a more systematic manner, the People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM) was founded, under Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations (VUFO-NGO Resource Center, 2009). PACCOM is a specialized coordinating body in charge of facilitating INGO's activities locally and their relationships with the domestic counterparts. It also works as a consultancy to advise the Government on the policies governing INGOs' operation in the country. In addition, PACCOM's deals with registration process and working permit of INGOs.

Thanks to this "focal point for foreign NGOs", from 1991 to 2000, the number of INGOs operating in Vietnam had increased more than 388%. By early 2007, there were around 60 new INGOs , who came from 28 countries and territories of different regions in the world, entered the country (PACCOM, 2007).

 The cross-sector collaborations offer distinctive opportunities as well as difficulties to both foreign non-profit agencies and government organizations. Hence, this study focuses on analyzing and examining the development of partnership between INGOs and the governmental organizations (GOs) in Vietnam since "Doi moi" in 1986. It will investigate how the politics and socio-economics environment of a post-reform country impact the success of inter-organizational collaboration. How organizational structures, the institutional and regulatory context condition, motivate or impede both sides in forming and progressing with their development projects.

2. Identification of the problem

Historically, activities of INGOs in Vietnam were considerably limited to only humanitarian aid or refugee relief. Non-profit organizations can merely provide development fund but the Government were the sole actor to implement and monitor projects. The adoption of " Doi moi" or market reform had dramatically changed the way Vietnamese government recognized the role of INGOs. INGOs' potential in bringing into the country specialized knowledge, technical experiences and funding for community development were greatly welcome as the state expected to boost the economic and social development in postwar period. Especially, the Government had had high hopes of INGOs to develop farming in the hard-to-reach rural village, mountainous areas. On account of the changing socio-economic situations, the Government relaxed its former restricted regulations on INGO's operation in the country, turning these international NGOs the heart of the third sector and served as a primary actor in sustainable social development.

The quick glance into the history of INGOs- Government relationships has already suggested the constant evolving interactions between GOs- INGOs to accommodate the changing circumstances (O'Leary, Gazley, McGuire & Bingham, 2008;Ramanath, 2005; B. Gray, 1989). Much of the literatures explicitly depicted the burgeoning emergence of cross-sector relationships as an outcome of democracy, economic development and integration in the global economy (Nye and Keohane 1972; Skjelsbaek 1972). These "bottom-up" approaches, which call into attention sociological, economical and technological forces or to replace states from below, do not suffice to understand the highly growing numbers of partnerships (Reimann K.,

2006). There is an alternative, more "top-down" structural approach in explaining the rapid growth of collaboration. It focuses on aspects of political globalization (i.e. the globalization of political structure or institutions), argues the way states have actively open stimulating environment for INGOs growth from above (Reimann K., 2006) and how state's policies have offered chances for INGOs to mobilize resources as well as political access. Nevertheless, this approach is rather novel and hasn't been subject to many development studies yet. Therefore, this research attempts to explain the burgeoning cross-sector collaborations using the "top-down" theory. The "top-down" theory will offer more insights to understand why INGOs have now gained more authority and political capacity in the country, despite their formerly being under suppression.

Moreover, studies about INGOs- GOs relationship have acknowledged the challenging task to identify and address thoroughly the context in which INGOs and GOs co-ordinate. Not many have studied the partnership between INGOs and GOs in countries going through post-reform period such as Vietnam. As shown above, "Doi Moi" marked the turning point to a more open period. Vietnamese government had left more space and freedom for a substantial number of foreign non-profit organizations to run their work in the country. However, with one requirement, INGOs conducting their projects must cooperate with the local NGOs situated in the region where they have their projects. The firm legal framework stipulates that INGOs must have local NGO partners to gain Government's approval. The local counterparts that increasingly have partnership with international INGOs are Mass Organizations. Interestingly, Mass Organization is partly sponsored by the Government, and its large membership includes social members who belong to mass group like woman, workers or farmers such as Woman's Union, Farmers' Association and Youth Union. As a result, Mass Organizations are able to operate through an extended structure spreading from central to provincial, district and local levels. Possessing a close link with both States as well as grassroots level and local administration, Mass Organizations' hybrid nature certainly influences INGO's authority and the type of projects they could collaborate with the government in the very specific context of Vietnam.

3. Purpose of the study

This research aims at explaining the rise in number, the activism of non-governmental organizations and their symbiotic relation with the State in Vietnamese post-reform context. From there, it continues to analyze the impact of institutional

and regulatory factors, specifically the close link between INGOs and Mass Organizations, in incentivizing or hindering INGOs' work. Based on that, the study detects the reality of contribution of international NGOs in social development in the country. The author attempts to examine and collect empirical data, at the same time interpret previous studies and build upon them to explain the inter- organizational partnerships. This approach, according to Carlile and Christensen (2005), enables an inclusive comprehension of the cooperation dynamics. On the ground of the findings, existing problems from the INGOs-GOs partnership in Vietnam will be explored, and solutions will be proposed to improve the the cooperative projects. Fundamentally, this study resolves to equip first-hand information to international NGOs as well as domestic non-profit organizations, the government agencies as well as local municipalities, to increase learning and policy dialogue between them and for a growing impact in development projects.

The specific research question is " Despite the growing political opportunities granted by the State in the post reform era, how does the regulatory frameworks, especially the required link with mass organizations, affect INGOs' work in Vietnam as well as their collaboration with the government?"

4. Significance of the study

This study provides both hypothetical and applied implementations. Theoretically, it contributes to studies on partnership and interdisciplinary cooperation, especially regarding the third sector and public sectors collaboration. Also, an international and comparative standpoint in development research is contributed to the knowledge field, explaining the rapid growth cross sector cooperation in the post-war context.

Practically, in the complexity of the inter-sectoral partnerships, this study provides joint understanding and communication strategies between governmental agencies and international nonprofit organizations. Therefore, the research helps to increase the likeliness of success and effectiveness of interdisciplinary cooperation. In fact, for public leaders who work in development field, the research can accommodate tactical governing to minimize difficulties and maximize chances in interdependent environment.

II. Literature Review

Overview of non-profit sector and their partnership with the government

In the political development of developing countries, the non-profit sector's roles in general and non-governmental organizations in particular were portrayed by Rifkin's foreword to Fisher's book (Fischer, 1998). He states that rethinking politics is necessary to expand NGOs' role in socio-economic development. "While politicians traditionally divide society into a polar spectrum running from the marketplace, on the right, to the government, on the left, it is more accurate to think of society as a three-legged stool made up of the market sector, government sector, and civil sector. The first leg creates market capital, the second leg creates public capital, and the third leg creates social capital" (Fischer, 1998,p: viii). The balance among three sectors with different capital they bring will allow for reconceptualization of social contract and the meaning of work (Fischer, 1998). Fischer in his book continued to described the interactive dynamics among three sectors who form the nation's development. He categorized six main ways that non-profit sector can contribute. They are: community development and social change promotion; sustainable development and civil societies nurture; promotion of political rights and civil liberties; bottom-up democratization; influence to other voluntary organizations; and promotion of relationship between the for-profit and non-profit sector (Fisher, 1998, p.16).

In terms of the collaboration with the government, NGOs as an actor under new political system, start to question the State's governance. That the government in the developing countries is struggling to address the growing complexity of sustainable development has exposed chances for NGOs "not just replace government but to protest against them, influence them, and collaborate with them " (Fisher, 1998, p. 30). There are wide-ranging strategies that of NGOs use in cooperating with the government. They could firstly, separate themselves or act independently from the state; secondly, associate the state with advocacy work in a non-confrontational manner; and lastly, NGOs and the government can set up partnership in parallel or collaborative development projects (Fisher, 1998).

Osborne and Gaebler (1992) in Reinventing Government, convincingly explained circumstance when non-profit sector win over the for-profit sector in forming partner with the government. The government often finds itself under financial constraints or bureaucracy impairment; yet the second sector (for-profit), while possess flexible organization structure, is more targeted towards jobs that are profitable in nature or investment oriented. NGOs, on the contrary, are made for tasks that do not gain much marginal profit but yield charitable values and benefit for the under-privileged population. NGOs are also relatively flat in their structure and capable of provide goods and services with cost- effectiveness, better quality and higher responsiveness.

Overall, from the government's perspective, partnership with NGOs stands out as a means to assure effective use of limited public budget and gain better access to financial and technology power. From the NGOs' perspective, they get involved with the State in order to carry on with their social objectives and to enhance their development project's impact. The cross-sector partnership directs strength from both parties to collectively obtain something that otherwise hard to achieve independently (Lane 1995).

The socio-political context and legal frameworks around INGOs-government partnership in Vietnam

Up until now, Vietnam still has not had a clear official definition of what foreign NGO is. The term "foreign NGO" includes all international organizations as well as foreign groups such as U.N. agencies (UNICEF, WHO, U.N. Population fund), International Red Cross, Christian-affiliated religious groups, etc. Chizuko Suzuki (2002) showed the stance of INGOs among other non-governmental and governmental organizations in Vietnam. An organization is regarded as non-governmental if it is not Communist Party government organization (GO). These non-governmental organizations are then further being classified as Vietnamese mass organizations, local NGO and foreign NGOs; international NGO thus belongs to the last group. However, the distinction between the foreign NGOs and their local counterparts is getting considerably diminished given the two new trends happening (Norlund et al., 2006). Firstly, more Vietnamese citizens are being hired by INGOs, even for country director posts; and secondly, as opposed to many INGOs whose size are increasing as a way to strengthen their voice and negotiation power, others opt to localize themselves to resemble Vietnamese NGOs. This way they will fit in more easily as well as obtain credibility and bypass unwanted scrutiny to their activity. The two trends in the national context of Vietnam indicate the complex and sensitive strategies from INGOs in dealing with State regimes.

When coming into Vietnam, INGOs do not only provide the host country with financial and technical assistance but also new working manners that center at participation and human resources development (Poussard, 1999). As much as these approaches have been in place for a long time in development field worldwide, they remain new and unfamiliar in Vietnam's context, where it is of highly centralized, hierarchical mechanism under the leadership of one single Communist party. The Government acknowledges of resources and ideology that INGO's bring into the country, thus in 1989, it has established the People's Aid Coordination Committee

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(PACCOM) and The Vietnam Union of Friendship Organization (VUFO) as center points for managing INGOs' activities across the nation. Each and every INGOs is required to register with PACCOM, they will also be granted authorization to set up their offices, conduct their work and have their operation permits renewed annually. PACCOM is the intermediary who accepts international NGOs and receives progress report or projects results from them; while VUFO is the supervisor of the progress from development projects carried out by INGOs after they have the working permit.

Linkages between International NGOs and the Vietnamese government

In the studies of State and NGOs from an Asian perspective, Chizuko Suzuki (2002) found out that "as far as the Vietnamese government is concerned, INGOs are all welcome if they provide the funds, personnel, technologies, and knowledge for Vietnamese's development". Nevertheless, under one condition, INGOs conducting their jobs must cooperate with the local NGOs situated in the region where they are having development projects. To put it simply, it is a must for INGOs have local NGOs partners so that they earn approval for their works in Vietnam. PACCOM decides who the local NGO partners are and connect them with foreign NGOs. At this point, the selection of geographical areas is the priority to expertise/activity areas to make sure development fund is allocated evenly or the concentration of INGOs' activities in one certain region does not happen. Also taking into account state's development policy, PACCOM takes more notice of the under-developed or hard-to-reach regions then arrange local counterparts selections, at the same time consider seriously the areas that INGOs also wish to work. The rationale behind is to let INGOs fill the gaps left by state failure, by the government's lack of social infrastructure or fiscal resources to deliver the service or NGOs just have greater effectiveness in serving difficult to access regions (FarrFarrington and Bebbington 1992; Moran 2006). As Suzuki (2002) noted, unlike metropolitan areas, in which the government expect a spillover effect in every aspects of development drawn by foreign investors, the same effects cannot be maintained and will fade out when reaching remote rural areas. Besides the selection of counterparts, one more crucial mandate of PACCOM is to act as intermediary who acquires developmental assistance brought into the country by INGOs.

VUFO plays the role of supervising international NGOs after they begin their activities. How development funds are utilized, in what stage or activities that projects are proceeding, etc. are the problems VUFO needs to keep track of thereby

report back to the Ministry of Finance or other governmental entities. Activities by international NGOs in different localities of Vietnam are encouraged thanks to the regulation systems of PACCOM and VUFO.

Owing to the government growing facilitation to INGOs, it is now not easy for INGOs themselves to operate autonomously in Vietnam or to deny indirect governmental involvement. As mentioning above, foreign non-governmental organizations must partner with a local NGO to obtain acceptance for their projects within the country. One common local counterpart is *mass organization*. Studies from Norlund et al. (2006) concluded that all mass organizations come under an umbrella organization called the Fatherland Front, led directly by state's leadership. This umbrella organization is the home to 29 registered socio-political entities, containing Vietnam Farmer's Union, Ho Chi Minh Youth Communist League, General Labor Union, Vietnam War Veterans Association, and the Vietnam Women's Union; or any social group belonging to mass classification such as farmers, youth, workers or woman. Sakata (2006) characterized mass organizations to be a four level institutional structure from central, provincial, district, to commune so that their decisions and directives can be conveyed successfully from the highest level to the bottom. Mass organizations are closely tied to the state and Communist Party. They follow the policies of the State and Party; have seats in the Communist Party; and their activities are part of the government's when they do report and communication back to the central government concerning the needs from grassroots level. Mass organization can also not be separated from civil society in general. Thanks to their widespread organizational structures, they could reach each household in rural areas to respond and promote the poor's interests. The "central-local dichotomy" is unique for mass organizations because at grassroots level, mass organizations can "work with substantial autonomy, while the administration higher up in the system often serves as a career ladder, tending to make the organizations function more bureaucratic" (Norlund et al., 2006). Due to this integrative nature of mass organizations, they are growing to be essential partners cooperating with both governmental entities and international NGOs (Sakata, 2006; Norlund 2007). Moreover, central governments will provide funding for mass organizations' core activities only, to cover other expenses they seek from foreign donors' and INGOs' financial support.

Michael Gray expanded this subject more, specifying that, "research to date [as of 1999] indicates that the NGO sector in Vietnam is in many respects a construct of the state: the state has created the frame within which NGOs operate, and control over the 'political space' available to NGOs remains firmly in its hands". In his paper about

"NGO-State relations: cooperation versus conflict", Schroeder (2013) used the Freedom House status of *Free, Partly free and Not free* for 6 states (Bolivia, India, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Azerbaijan and Vietnam) to predict the relationships between NGO sector and States and characterized the connection between two sectors in two general terms: either cooperative or conflictual. His study concluded the environment within which the third sectors have to operate in Vietnam is identified as "Not free". He wrote that the Vietnamese Government is in strict control and retains the most power over NGOs sector than the rest of the countries. One of the conditions for the partnership to be considered cooperative is that the registration process should provide no substantial barriers to the start of the work by NGOs or close oversight isn't required during the course of projects. In Vietnam this is clearly manifested as the central government takes hold of all aspects from establishment to development INGOs and other independent associations. It preserves a quite strict registration procedure and maintains unrestrained discretion in approving or rejecting enrollment mode for entities pursuing lawful accreditation. Schroeder (2013) noted while INGOs desire for more free room to function autonomously and implement their tasks with minor governmental management, the environment in which they work is practically constructed around state's policies. Careful considerations are also paid to non-governmental organizations if the state regards them as threatening to political practice or in the likelihood of a confrontation to national politics. Additionally, the measure of conflict is also met by Vietnamese government for enacting a number of laws which prohibit or limit NGOs' activities concerning advocacy matters or politics and economics policies.

Those measures of conflict, in a sense, are related to conflict that NGOs or civil society from a Western perspective used to confront. As noted by Gray (1999), Vietnam is likely to run its third sector in a degree that resembles Antonio Gramsci's concept of the non-governmental sphere. Gramsci's concept about civil society was that "a social sphere or a public 'space' where political thought is transformed into action". Carlyle Thayer, who called Vietnam's civil society as a developing "political civil society," also labeled the situation similarly even though he included in the term those civil society associations that contemplate to change the status quo of politics. From the viewpoints of these researchers, the Vietnamese government's actions do not necessarily mean as measure of "conflict," but rather, "measure of construction via strict management and control." (Gray, 1999).

Indeed, as reality turns out, the state-controlled organizations have been creating improvement in the localities that their work took place. For instance, Gray noted

that in 1992, a project implemented by the Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU) helped low-income women in rural farming village to have access to micro-credit loans. As a result, during a four-year period, more than $50,000 in loans had been distributed. This was made possible because, in commune-level, despite funds and expertise were provided by international NGOs, VWU's members were actually the ones who utilized the resources and sustain the on-site activities. As international NGOs encourage participatory development to attain sustainable development, it becomes a win-win when Union members, who know of the municipalities well, take the lead in implementation of projects.

Nevertheless, studies by Nguyen (2011) and Wischermann (2013) had asserted how careful and self-conscious INGOs are when they project their image to the state so as to achieve certain goals. Most of them set out not only to fulfill humanitarian values, more importantly, they wish to make changes in sociopolitical situation and capacity building in the long term either for public agents or social workers. However, this proves not easy, particularly in Vietnamese socio-political environment, where there is restricted civic activism in a sensitive and defensive one-party system. Therefore, the non- profits organizations from abroad often see themselves as coordinators, implementers, intermediaries and networkers as the most crucial roles. Alternatively they also regard themselves as "partners, supervisors, innovators and finally advocates". This viewpoint practically reflects the relationship that INGOs want to build with governmental agencies in Vietnam, they are more likely to be action-oriented, rather than doing advocacy because it seems safer (Wischermann, 2013). Hakkairainen and Katsui (2009) also mentioned the government control effects to explain INGO's strategies in Vietnamese contexts. They reported both "explicit and implicit" effects exerted by state on international NGOs' activities. Explicitly, INGOs are expected to work in close relation with either mass organizations or state agencies than with other sorts of entities. Implicitly, INGOs should always engage more stakeholders than needed for carrying out projects to guarantee their legitimacy in front of the government. Those conditions of the relationship are quite unique in the socio-political norms observed in one-party state, in comparison to partnerships in Western countries (Hakkarainen & Katsu, 2009).

Theories constructing the INGOs- Government Partnership

There are multiple theories and theoretical analyses that inform the relationships between INGOs and states from different angles. Some of the theoretical frameworks outlined below are the hypothetical platforms underpinning the partnership

(resource dependency platform, social issue platform, and societal sector platform) (Selsky and Parker,2005); and, theory on political globalization forces and the rise of a pro-NGO norm.

Hypothetical platforms of INGOs-GOs partnership

Partnership literature elicited out of different disciplines and then synthesized by Selsky and Parker (2005) suggests three hypothetical platforms for INGOs- GOs relationships: (1) resource dependence platform, (2) social issue platform, (3) societal sector platform. The first platform reveals the motives for organization's collaboration: reduce resources restraints such as finance, technology, political access, etc., and environmental unpredictability (Pleiffer and Salancik, 2003). Collaboration is an effective solution to acquire new resources. In the second platform of social issue, collaboration is a rational choice when organizations, seen as shareholders of social issues (Waddle, 2005), have the same vision to solve meta-problems that exert effect on all stakeholders but surpass single organization's ability to solve. Lastly, the societal sector platform encourages partnership by putting the emphasis on flimsy borders of all social sectors. The solution from one social sector could be highly complementary or mutually beneficial when applying to another, especially in this globalization era when old solutions are not keeping up to solve new social problems anymore (Selski and Parker, 2005). Therefore all sectors should learn from and cooperate with each other.

In short, the resource dependency platform reveals the resource-based motives and the power structure in the partnerships. The social issues platform demonstrates the shared visions and interests that bond organizations. The societal sector platform highlights sector-based characteristics that can be studied in terms of how they become complementary, mutually beneficial factors in cross-sector partnerships, or vice versa.

Smith and Gronebjerg (2006) also proposed three theoretical frameworks to conceptualize INGO-GO partnerships:

- Demand/supply model: focuses on how GOs and INGOs complement and compensate for one another's weaknesses in providing social goods.

- Civil society/social movement model: focuses on how the social, economic and political environments combine to create the dynamics of partnerships

- Regime/neo-institutional model: focuses on understanding the processes by which INGOs and GOs—as social structures—become institutionalized or transform over time.

It could be concluded from the abovementioned frameworks that although resource dependence approach, which represents the economic means to studying partnerships, has played an important role in explaining partnerships, a sole focus on resource dependence may cause researchers to miss other vital forces that shape the organizations and their partnerships. Not only financial and technical resources, but also political and social resources—of organizations that are connected with coalitions or alliances could further explain the process of partnership development in a much broader context than resource dependency.

Political Globalization forces and pro-NGOs norm

Much of the literatures above relies upon the "bottom-up" approach, dictating cross-sector partnership as a reaction to economic development; to financial, knowledge or technological support from non-profit actors or to state's non-fulfillment on citizen's welfare (Nye and Keohane, 1972). Reimann (2006) argued it is impossible to fully understand the emergence and growth of INGOs just by seeing them as a societal force arising to challenge the states from below. A more "top-down" approach is discussed in his studies citing the way in which governments, international agencies or other different institutions have encouraged and promoted NGOs from above. It is the process of "*political globalization*, i.e. the globalization of political structures, institutions, and Western liberal democratic values" (Reimann, p.46). Specifically, he explains how the expansion of institutions like international organizations, international regimes and reformed government's policies has been providing chances for INGOs to mobilize needed resources and gain political access- -two crucial elements for INGOs' sustainment. As state's regimes have been broadened to deal with emerging global issues, they growingly endorse INGOs as their service suppliers, giving rise to a structural environment highly prone to cross-sector partnership. Along the similar line, there are also sociological institutionalists (Boli & Thomas, 1999) who link the increase of INGOs to the enlargement of international systems: INGOs " emerged in tandem with the universalization of the state...and grew concomitantly with the incorporation of peripheral regions into the interstate system and world economy" (p.30). The advent and quick escalation of new international institutions have provided more complex political opportunities in the form of access to legislations, decision-making, agenda setting, legitimacy and collaboration for

INGOs. Not only offering structural incentives for INGOs' expansion, the international regimes also promote a "pro-NGO norm" by putting pressure on states from above to include and nurture NGOs at national political context. Firstly being partnered with some UN's programs and then further being incorporated into various UN agencies' mandates, the pro-NGO norm has been creating strong UN-INGOs relations. These processes are reinforced when UN bodies encouraged States to foster INGOs' participation at national level by adopting more liberal legal regulations for INGOs'operation (Reimann, 2006). Throughout the decades, the World Bank and multiple international foundations, using their donor position, started to take the stance promoting for clearer, more structured domestic NGOs legislation and urge several Asian nations to remove provisions hampering the growth of third-sector (World Bank, 2001).

Thus, the formations of new opportunities for NGOs, produced by political globalization as well as pro-NGO norms, have proved to be one of the best explanations for a *symbiotic relationship* of mutual growth and codependence between INGOs and States (Reimann, 2005). The relationships have so many prospects for further development as it is based on shared goal by both INGOs, the governments to solve complex global problems. They also rely on each other in terms of institutional and functional reciprocity: INGOs count on states for political access and support that if being deprived, few can attain their missions. States, on the other hand, are becoming more and more reliant on INGOs regarding resources, effective service provision, project implementation and monitoring, etc. for their lack of capabilities.

Taken together, the platforms of partnerships and the "top-down" approach suggest the researcher a comprehensive framework which integrates and combines these various theories. The framework will look at:

- The contexts of the relationship: socio-economic, political contexts of Vietnam

- The dynamics of partnership development :what drives INGOs to connect with GOs and vice versa? What characteristics of INGOs (institutional strengths or weaknesses) or functions (capacity building, advocacy, service delivery,etc.) performed by NGOs tend to encourage or hinder the formation of the partnerships?

This will allow the researcher to recognize the important factors that cause both parties to seek for, to renegotiate, to commit or even terminate their coordination. It also enables the process of identifying possible mechanisms and desirable platforms to yield fruitful partnerships; or stresses the obstacles to GOs-INGOs relationship. It

is expected that while cross-sector co-lab seems to emerge more and more, the forms it takes will probably be very diverse.

III. Research design

The scope of the study will be the post Doi Moi era in 1986, as the increase of INGOs number, their activities and partnerships become more visible after the adoption of open door policy from the Vietnamese government. The independence variable in my research is the regulatory frameworks, namely the mandatory link with local NGOs or mass organizations for INGOs to carry on with their projects. The dependence variables are the strategies, the room and authority gained by INGOs and the extent of success of their developmental projects. To be more specific, I will be exploring whether the required partnership with a local NGOs (mostly mass organizations) facilitates INGO's act or the success of their projects. What are the advantages and disadvantages for INGOs to cooperate with them in the forming and development of projects? Will different types of mass organizations lead to different strategies by INGOs or projects to be implemented?

I will be using qualitative method comprising literature analysis and interviews. For literatures analysis, I examined studies on development, public management and civil society. Apart from that, literatures by scholars on INGOs working specifically in Vietnam are few so I will explore and take advantages of the publications, project reports, training materials, etc. by the organizations themselves as well as relevant state agencies.

To acquire a thorough understanding of the partnership, and to assess how legal framework plays out in reality, I plan to conduct interview with all parties involved and get insight from their perspectives. To add variation to my independent variable, I will examine just one international NGO but in their activities and projects with different government agencies. The selection of the international non-governmental organization is based on the following criteria: the year of experience in the relationship with the government- especially mass organizations; the organization should have faced both successful and unsuccessful partnerships; the cross-sector engagement of the organization should be spread over different fields, for instance woman empowerment, service delivery, poverty reduction, policy making, etc. The reasons for choosing these criteria are to obtain the scale of variation in strategies INGO used, the incentives or hurdles they faced when partnered with different State agencies, different mass organizations across different fields. My top choice for the INGO is Oxfam Vietnam. This is one of the first leading international non-

governmental organizations coming to Vietnam. Its work covers wide-ranging fields, from rural development to women's empowerment to humanitarian relief etc. They have had extensively wide range of being partners with the government, the communities and other non-governmental agencies in Vietnam. Oxfam carried a project called "Indigenous Vegetables"[1] and worked closely with Vietnam Woman's Union in grassroots level of communes and districts with different ethnic groups. This project is promising in providing valuable materials and insights to my research as it involved all key actors in INGOs-State partnership. The data obtained from this first project could lend me support to find a second project where Oxfam partnered with another mass organization, thus highlighting the variation of my independent variable.

Key informants for the interviews will be considered based on their considerable working experience with INGOs-state partnership, their knowledge and shown interest/concern about the interactions between both sectors. I expect to have 6 key interviewees. Two representatives from the INGO, could be the field operation staff who played a role in direct association with mass organization; three representatives from government agencies, out of them there are two coming from different mass organizations who partnered with the INGO in one of the projects, and the other should be official from Communist party/ government authorities (preferably representative of Ministry of Foreign Affairs) who had interacted with INGOs during his job. The last one is representative from VUFO- NGO Resource Center, the focal center who facilitates and coordinates INGOs' activities and relations within the nation.

Data collection will include online research, document collection from Government and INGOs, semi-structured interviews conducting online via Skype given the geographical distance and time constraint. Semi-structured interviews consisting a number of main questions regarding the role of policy environment's role in forming, sustaining or terminating cross-sector partnerships. Once interviewees are clear of the will help me to define the areas I want to explore from interviewees. Then other open-ended questions give me the flexibility to diverge or adjust the questions according to the responses that I need to exploit further in details.

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[1] "Indigenous vegetables": A project aims at helping female farmers coming from multiple ethnic minorities to not only increase their income but also more importantly, showing them that they are capable of being financially independent from man, as patriarchy families are still very common in the least developed mountainous areas in Vietnam. The project develops a value chain model that enables effective direct trading of certified-safe vegetables between local farmers and urban consumers.

IV. Planning on thesis writing

December- March: Data collecting: contacts of relevant people and organizations will be gathered at this point. Initial interviews will be taking place online with them, suggestions for other interviewees from key informants will be taken into account (snowball sampling technique) along with continued literatures, documentation search and analysis.

A number of different projects that Oxfam has undertaken will be carefully studied during this time to find out about another project which offers variation to the type of mass organization, government agencies who worked with Oxfam, how is that partnership different from the one with Vietnam Woman's Union etc,...

April- May: Data analysis to arrive at findings for research questions. This process does not officially start at this point but has been more or less incorporated during the course of data collecting. The researcher needs to consistently interpret the collected data, adjust and adapt them according to the research's ultimate purpose.

June- August: Writing the thesis. This period is the synthesis of on-going refinement in data collection, data analysis, feedback and comments from thesis supervisors and peers.