

Citizen Participation in Urban Development in Vietnam

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Key words(중심용어): 시민참여(Citizen Participation), 지역개발(Regional Development), 도시계획(Urban Planning), 베트남(Vietnam), 외국인직접투자(FDI)

국 문 요 약

1986년 도이모이개혁 조치 이후 사회주의 국가인 베트남에서도 도시개발과 관련하여 분권화와 주민참여 요구가 크게 증대되고 있다. 특히 2004년에 개정된 토지이용법과 건설법에서 주민참여와 분권화 관련 규정을 명시한 것은 역사적인 사건으로 평가되고 있다. 본 연구는 도시분야에 있어 베트남의 주민참여제도를 살펴보고 설문조사를 통해 공무원, 대학생, 일반시민의 주민참여의식을 조사하였다. 베트남에게 한국은 외국인 직접투자(FDI) 규모가 1위인 매우 중요한 국가로 인식되고 있으며 현재 포항건설, 금호건설 등의 한국기업이 하노이와 그 인근 지역에 대규모 신도시 사업을 진행하고 있어 양국의 관계는 다른 어떤 국가보다도 밀접해지고 있다. 본 논문은 베트남의 도시개발 관련 제도를 한국의 학자들에게 소개한다는 점에서 의의가 있을 것이다.

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I. Current Decision-Making Mechanism for Regional Development

1) The Process of Decision-Making Mechanism for Regional Development

(1) A top-down approach

Vietnam has three levels of local government and a central government. In the central government, national assembly holds the power to issue laws to approve national budget. The article 84 of the constitution stipulates that the national assembly is responsible for approving budget for central and local government. Central government holds the power of state administration headed by prime minister. National assembly appoints prime minister and other government members. Communist party is the ruling party and the only party that can operate in Vietnam. Vietnamese constitution, in its 4th article, states that communist party stands for all classes of residents in Vietnam and is the ruling party. Hence, every decision or resolution of the communist party will be a direct guidance and a direction for the government.

In the local government, provincial, district, and commune residents vote for provincial people's council, district people's council and commune people's council respectively. In turn, local people's council votes for local committee. A chairman of a lower local people committee is appointed by the chairman of the higher local people committee. Prime minister appoints chairmen of provincial people committees. In this structure, there is a clear connection of power between central government and the three levels of local government. Decisions made by central government will be guidance for local government in issuing its own decisions. This process creates a top-down approach to decision making in Vietnam which is not an exception for regional development in Vietnam.

According to the Construction Law, 2004, stipulated in article 12, there are 3 types of planning in Vietnam: 1) Regional Planning; 2) Urban Planning, including Urban Master Plan and Detailed Urban Plan; and 3) Rural Settlement Planning. Article 13 stipulates that detailed urban plan must follow urban master plan, and rural settlement planning and urban planning must follow regional planning. Ministry of Construction is responsible for planning the focal regions and inter-provincial matters. After receiving the plan from Ministry of Construction, the prime minister is responsible for approving the plan. Then, provincial people committee will be responsible for its detailed regional planning. Regional plans and urban master plans

will be concreted frameworks for any lower level of planning.

(2) Toward a decentralized decision making mechanism for regional development

In 1986 the Communist Party has initiated the overall renovation (Doi Moi) of the country with the focus on economic renovation. After 5 years of renovation, considerable results in economic development have been achieved such as high growth rate of GDP and poverty alleviation. The success of economic reforms has led the attention to the weaknesses of the state administration and local administrative. Vietnam, then, considers administrative reform as a focus of the reform process to build and perfect the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. On this reform process, Vietnam has stepped a long way toward a decentralized decision making mechanism for regional development. In 2004, National Assembly has approved two important laws, land-use law and construction law, which are frameworks for more decentralized mechanism.

According to article 11 of the construction law, 2004, local people committees construct their local planning with regard to the upper planning. In case local people committee cannot construct the planning, they can hire consultants for the planning. Construction law even provides a more discretion power to local government in provincial region development and urban planning. It passes the responsibility to approve the level-3 and level-4-urban planning to provincial and district people committee. Land-use law, 2004, also provides discretion for local government on regional development. It hands over the registration and management of land use right to local government and issues a standardized procedure. It states the role of people participation and asks for people participation in the regional development. However, it is not a fully decentralized mechanism where central government and Ministry of Construction still hold the power to approve regional plans for specialized region, general region and big cities region.

(3) People participation in the decision making mechanism for regional development.

The slogan “people know, people discuss, people do and people inspect” was emphasized in the communist party congress VI, in 1986. To comply with the Communist Party’s instructions, in 1998, the government issued democracy statute to promote a cornerstone of a democracy – people know, people discuss, people do and people inspect. After 5 years of implementing the democracy statute with not much achievement, the government issued degree 79/2003/ND-CP to replace the 1998 democracy statute by a new democracy statute in 2003. However, according to vietnamnet on 17th Oct, 2006, reports on the implementation of

the democracy statute seem to be decorations. Even the chairman of Hanoi People Committee doubted the truth of the report which stated that 99.42% of people's opinion was incorporated. In a news conference, Mr Dang Van Khoa, a member of Hochiminh (HCM) people's council, said that in reality, each local government does exist in a formalistic democracy.

Amongst the four components of the slogan, "people know" is the most important factor influencing all the other three components - "people discuss, people do, and people inspect". People have no chance to know to participate unless related information is disclosed. Therefore, article 32 of the construction law stipulates that within 30 days after approving a planning, the planning must be disclosed to people so that people know, people inspect and people do. In the process of planning a detail planning, article 32 also stipulates that related organizations and people must be get involved. However, the law and the degree seem not to be in effect as related organizations and people face many obstacles in being informed about planning. For instance, the construction association has asked the Hanoi Department of Planning and Architecture to disclose information on the planning of Hanoi, but they could not access the related information as the Hanoi Department of Planning and Architecture refused to disclose it. Mr. To Anh Tuan, the director of the Hanoi Department of Planning and Architecture explained that the construction association asked for too much information to disclose. According to his understanding, planning disclosure means disclosing just a planning map but not other related information. Understanding that the obstacle to people participation lies under the problem of information disclosure, the government issued degree 92/2006/ND-CP which came into effect on 12th September, 2006. The degree stipulates that ministers, directors of ministry level organizations, directors of bodies under the government, chairman of people committees have responsible to disclose planning so that all citizen, businesses, investors can easily access to the information. The degree received much support from citizen. People believed that if the degree can come into effect, it will be a cornerstone for a democracy where people can know, people discuss, people do and people inspect. Unfortunately, however, the case of Thanh Xuan crossroads detailed planning is another evidence of violating the degree. Mr. Hoang Nam Son, vice chairman of Thanh Xuan District people committee said that they can not disclose all the needed information as they do not have enough information⁴). In reality government officers can not provide people with related information. The people themselves have to search for information and related materials for their participation. The case of Thanh Xuan crossroads detailed planning is a funny case where people on their own found the related materials and information but government officers could not. It is doubtful how information can be disclosed with this type of administration.

2) Survey Findings

(1) Survey Design

The survey is designed to evaluate the current decision making mechanism in Vietnam with regard to people participation. The survey uses an in-depth-interview method to get information from government officers and citizen and get qualitative information. The purpose of the interviews is to narrow down the matter of concern to a limited hot issues. This source of data is analyzed for the questionnaire construction. Then questionnaires are designed based on the above information. Surveys are conducted to examine issues related to people participation in decision making mechanism in Vietnam in order to produce a tangible outcome, a governance approach or model of effective decision making mechanism with people participation.

(2) Sampling Process

Theoretically the target group of interest is all the government officers. However, it is hard to contact geographically wide spread population. So the 13 government officers who participated in the study tour program held in Korea are selected for the interview. In fact the 13 government officers, including central government and local government officers, were selected by the National Institution for Urban and Rural Planning (NIURP), a government research institute under the Ministry of Counstruction.

According to a findings from the in depth interview, it is worth to distinguish the differences between three groups of participants, government officers, general citizen and well educated citizen. For the survey respondents are divided into 3 groups: 100 government officers; 200 general citizen and 150 graduated students

Only valid sample enables generalizing the findings from the sample and it depends on how well the sample is chosen with proper sample size. The sample size must be large enough to ensure a stable input covariance matrix so that the correlations and the parameters of the sample can represent for the study population. The deviation of the population and the number of variables in the model are the important factors affecting the stability of the input matrix. However, the deviation of the study population is difficult to estimate prior to data collection. The number of variables becomes the major indicator to determine the sample size. Bentler and Chou (1987) found that the ratio of sample size to parameter estimates should be in between 5:1 and 10:1. The asymptotic theory is also important in determining the sample sizes for the study. According to the theory, the sampling distributions of the parameter estimates follow either a normal or chi-square

distribution in relatively large sample sizes. Boomsma (1983) and Marsh, Balla and MacDonald (1988) suggested that a minimum sample size of 100 is necessary for asymptotic theory. Based on these arguments the sample of 100 government officers, 200 general citizen and 150 graduated students is believed to be representative of the population.

The study uses 2 types of questionnaire, one for the in-depth interview which is a question check list and the other for the survey. The question check list used for the in depth interview is designed according to the model built based on previous literature review. The question list covers eight main types of variables: the level of necessity of people participation; the methods of people participation; the contribution of people participation to planning; information disclosure; problems related to planning, perception toward people participation; factors affecting people participation and their suggestion for effective people participation. Data from these interviews are much qualitative data and it builds a frame for designing survey questionnaire.

The questionnaire for survey is designed according to the qualitative data collected from the interviews. It also covers the 8 variables described above with more emphasis on the key issues affecting people participation. Most variables are designed in the form of ordinal variable with 5 levels of order coding from 5 to 1. Even though interval variables are easier to analyze by using various statistical tools, they are not proper to use in this study because the questionnaire will be very complicated and respondents will reluctant to think carefully to response correctly. So 5 point scale is most suitable to get the valid data for the study. Some qualitative data is also collected through open questions.

To reduce measurement errors, a pilot test was performed to test the designed questionnaire, to get feedback from respondents regarding how easy or hard the measure was and information about how the wording and testing environment affected their answers. The questionnaire is pilot tested with a smaller group generated from the population of study to confirm that it has high validity and reliability of getting the correct data. The participants are assured that their responses to the survey will be kept strictly confidential. The questionnaire is provided in appendix.

(3) Survey Results

■ Sample Characteristics

As designed, the survey received 100 answered questionnaires from government officers, 200 questionnaires from citizen and 150 questionnaires from graduate students. The statistical analysis of the demographic variables (appendix 1) shows that the samples are representative of the population where the sex and age of the respondents are appropriately proportional.

The responses of question 8 and question 17 in the questionnaire for government officers show a clear co-relation with $r=0.82$. These two questions ask the same matters of the necessity of people participation in decision making and planning process but are in different wording. Hence, a strong co-relation between the two variables produces reliable information provided from the questionnaire.

■ Necessity of People Participation in Decision Making

All the three groups of respondents share the perception that people participation is important in decision making and regional planning. Ninety six percent of the respondents who are government officers believe that it is necessary to have people participation in decision making process. The figures are high as 98.5% and 100% for citizens and graduate students respectively. Though there is a light difference between the figures, statistical test shows no evidence to distinguish the differences between the three groups.

However, there are differences between three groups in their perception of the reasons for people participation in decision making and planning. Most of the government officers (87%) explained the necessity of people participation as the laws stipulate the requirement of people participation in planning. The other two groups do not explain their choice by the same reason as government officers. Only 28% of the citizen and 46% of the graduate students see that people participation is necessary because of the law requirement. Their reasons are “for serving people better” and “for a democracy administrative”. The 81% of the citizen and 88% of the students select the reason of “for serving people better” while the figure of government officer is 74%.

Graduate students recognized that people participation is necessary in all stages of the decision making and planning process, from problem identification to evaluation stage. The citizen group, on the other hand, just focus on the stage of analyzing and choosing alternatives, stage of implementing and the stage of evaluating. From this finding, we can see that higher education will have a more positive view on people participation. Highly educated people may ask for their participation right at the beginning of the process. Government officer group believed that people participation is especially necessary in the stage of information collection for decision making and planning. According to the finding from the in-depth interview, government officers believed that people’s opinion is an important source of information for decision making and planning. Government officers also saw that it is necessary for people to participate in the stage of implementing. However, they did not recognize a strong need for people participation in the other stages of decision making and planning process.

Both government officers and citizens understand the importance of people participation in

decision making and planning. It is a way to serve the citizen better and a way to exercise a democratic administration. However, both the government officers and the people believed that, in reality, people participate just little in the process of decision making and planning. In this perception, there is a difference amongst the three groups. The group of citizen shows the most conservative view; 67.5% of the respondents believed that people or citizens participate just little or very little in the process of decision making. Only 12.5% of them believed that people do participate much in the decision making process. Government officers share the same view but with a more optimistic eye; 21% of them thought people did participate much or very much on the decision making process and other 44% have opposite perception. Graduate student are those in the middle; 52% of the graduate students believed that people participate little or very little in the decision making process.

When the decision making process is broken down into a number of stages we even get a worse picture. Only 4% of the government officers believed that people participate much in the first stage of decision making and problem identification stage of planning. Up to 64% of them see that people participate little or very little in this stage. The stage where people participate most is the implementation stage. At this stage 69% of the government officers believe that people participate much or very much. However, in the view of the citizen group, people still participate little in the implementation stage; 51.5% of them thought people participate little or very little in this stage.

■ Contribution of People Participation in Decision Making and Planning

All the three groups of respondents shared again the view that people participation did contribute little in the decision making and planning process. The figure is quite similar amongst the three groups. The 54% of the government officers, 56% of the citizens and 57.3% of the graduate students believed that people participation contribute little or very little to the decision making and planning process. According to the qualitative data from the opened question government officers explained that citizens lack of knowledge on the matter of decision making and planning, therefore, though people participate in the process of decision making, they do contribute little to the effective decision. In contrast, citizen group and graduate student group believed that their participation can contribute much more if they have more chance to participate in the decision making process. There are strong relationships between variable people participation and variable people participation's contribution in all the three groups with $r > .55$ and a significance at the 0.01 level. This means that the more people participate in the process, the more they can contribute to the final decision to be effective.

From this finding, we can see the problem of top-down approach in decision making

mechanism. According to the construction law 2004, detailed urban plan must follow urban master plan, and rural settlement planning and urban planning must follow regional planning. The regional planning will be a concrete frame for any lower level of planning. However, the data from the survey show that people participation contributes very little to regional planning and master urban planning. Furthermore, they also have very little chance to participate in the regional and master planning. What they can contribute and participate is for the detailed planning and project planning though it is not much realized. That is why the opinion, the will of the citizen is hard to play as an active input for the decision making and planning process. The 94% of the government officers believe that people participation contributes little or very little to regional planning; 89% of them shared the same view with regard to master planning. With a top down approach in decision making and planning, people need to participate right at the top level of planning and decision making. Otherwise a bottom up approach is more practical and effective.

■ Information Disclosure for People Participation

There is a clear difference between government officers' perception and the citizens' perception about information disclosure for people participation. Government officers believe that information is disclosed to the public while citizen still think that information is closed. 70% of the government officers believed that information is disclosed comparing with only 49% of the citizen. Theoretically, people should participate in all of the stages but the data shows that it is only possible at the stage of agenda setting and information is very closed.

Another problem with information disclosure is related to timing. All the three groups of respondents agree that the time of information disclosure is too late. Sixty seven percent of the citizens believe that information is disclosed late or very late after everything is done. There is a very little chance for citizens to make a change on the decision or planning through their participation. People often organize themselves as an interest group to raise their voice to the related government bodies in order to change the decision if it affects their interest or benefit. Sometimes, mass media also put a hand on the process of participation in decision making. After decision is made it is hard to change. The case of Thanh Xuan crossroads detailed planning is a strong evidence of this matter. Here the citizens, under the influence of the planning, raised their voice. When it is hot, mass media, including television, radio and news papers, transferred the voice of people to the public and all government institutions. However, all the change they could make was delaying the implementation of the planning.

One government officer said in the interview that he was asked to give his comment on a

proposed planning but he received the proposed planning just one week before it came into effect. According to him, one week is not enough to understand what it is about. However, when the planning is issued, it is said that all the stakeholders were informed and made their contribution. He explains that this is a type of formalistic participation.

There are different levels of people participation from a low level of information sharing to a high level of partnership or shared control participation. One of the conditions for high level of people participation is early information disclosure so that people can actively participate in the process of decision making and planning. The current situation of late information disclosure is a main cause for a low level of people participation in Vietnam. This can be a reason to explain a low contribution of people participation in decision making and planning.

■ Level of People Participation in Decision Making and Planning

Respondents were asked to choose the most suitable level of participation which can be effectively applied to the process of decision making and planning in Vietnam. The four levels of participation are: informing; hearing; joint decision making and partnership or shared control. Most of the government officers choose the low-end level of the participation. Seven percent of the government officers choose the level of informing, other 52% of them choose hearing level and only 4% of them choose the most high-end level of participation. According to government officers even though there has not been deep participation in the past, a low-end level of participation is the most suitable level, because if government applies a high-end level of participation, the situation can be uncontrollable. Government officers, 77% of them, believe that citizens are willing to participate in the decision making process and planning if it is related to their benefits. However, according to government officers, as affected people are just interested in their own benefit and often they are not well educated, their opinions and ideals may not worth to be considered to change government decisions.

In contrast, citizens and graduate students ask for a higher level of participation. Only 37.5% of the citizens choose the level of informing or hearing for their participation. The other 62.5% ask for the level of joint decision making and shared control. Graduate students even choose the high end with more proportion. The 74% of them choose the level of joint decision making and shared control, while none of them choose the lowest level of participation, informing (See Appendix 7). As the economic condition becomes better, citizens are more educated, and they are asking for a more influence in the process of decision making especially for those decisions affecting their benefits

■ Methods of People Participation in Decision Making and Planning

According to the interviews with government officers, there are 5 common methods for people participation in Vietnam: (1) as an individual, (2) through group activities, (3) through Mass media, (4) through organizations such as NGO, social organizations, interest groups, and (5) through their own representatives.

After using the statistical analysis tool, the above methods are ranked with no significant difference amongst the three groups. The most common method to get influence and take part in the process of decision making and planning is group activities where a group of people joint together to raise their voice. Right after the group activities is the method of using their representatives in people committee or people's council. People either can send their requests to the representatives or meet the representative to express their concern. The mass media increasingly exert their power in the process of decision making. People can participate in the process with the support from mass media. Organizations such as NGOs, interest groups seem not to be a suitable choice; it is ranked fourth, even though NGOs and social organizations have done much for the will of people and made much contribution to the process of decision making. However, people seem still unfamiliar with the use of NGOs and social organizations to participate in the process of decision making and planning. The last choice is the method of individual participation. Though this method is commonly seen in practice, people recognize that it is neither a suitable and nor an effective participation method.

■ Factors Affecting Current People Participation Mechanism in Decision Making and Planning

Government officers are generally happy with the current mechanism for people participation. Only 37% of them consider the current mechanism is bad or very bad. However, most of them, 72%, agree that the government should take some action to improve the mechanism so that people can effectively participate in the process of decision making. Graduate students and citizen also express their strong demand for a better mechanism: 87% of the students and 78% of the citizen. These two groups seem not to be very happy with the current mechanism as more than 50% of them complain about the current participation mechanism.

Analyzing various factors affecting people participation mechanism, a clear difference between the group of government officers and the other two groups is found. The 47% of the government officers consider that knowledge and education of the people are the main negative factors hindering effective people participation mechanism. Only 22% of them see the challenge lies on the factors of procedure and method itself. And 11% of them recognize

that administrative staff is the obstacle to effective people participation, while 42% of the citizens and 34% of the graduate students find that procedure and method of people participation are the major obstacles. The citizens and students do not think that their knowledge and education are the problems for participation; only 7% of the graduate students and 16% of the citizens select this as a cause of participation problem.

3) Major Problems with the Current Decision Making Mechanism

The analysis by this study shows that the current decision making mechanism in Vietnam ensures only a low level of people participation though the government is now encouraging people participation in the decision making process. In addition, with a top-down approach in decision making and planning, the lower levels of planning and decision making have little room for their discretion. These two constraints have led to many problems in decision making and planning as Dr. Luu Duc Hai stated.⁵⁾ According to the interviews and the analysis of qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions, the common problems in decision making and planning can be seen as:

- (1) A top down approach makes it difficult to construct and approve for the inter-provincial regions as there is no regional government or regional council to take the work done. In this case, the planning has to go through a long procedure and the coordination amongst related institutions and organizations becomes extremely hard.
- (2) Conflicts between government decision and the citizen interest often occur late in the process of decision making. People often actively participate in the stage of implementation as at that time the information is disclosed. When the decisions are already made, it is hard to change it unless government spends much more money and resources to resolve the conflict.
- (3) Unfair participation may lead to inequity for the people especially for the old, the handicraft and the poor. Those who participate in the process are often concerned much on their own life because of their poor economic condition. NGOs and social organizations may play an important role in raising their voice for the rights of the socially less-represented people..
- (4) People participation in the implementation stage often shows off the matter of corruption in the process of decision making. According to Dang Van Khoa, a member of HCM people's council people, mass media often find the problem of corruption but it is too late when it has become serious problems. If people have chances to participate early in the process of decision making, it can prevent corruption somehow⁶⁾.

- (5) People may lose their belief in the government as their voices are not seriously considered. That is the problem when people participate after decisions are already made. People participation becomes a formalistic decoration.
- (6) Government officials still doubt about the contribution or the effectiveness of people participation as they believe not-well educated people may not contribute much to the process. Though the survey shows that government officials understand the necessity of people participation they get stuck on how to utilize people's input in the process of decision making.

These major problems can be solved if the government can effectively apply a bottom up approach and model of people participation in decision making. The following part examines a theoretical framework for building a model of people participation in decision making which can be applied in Vietnam.

II. Theoretical Framework for a Model of People Participation in Decision Making

As defined by Mekong River Commission, people participation is a common concept in modern administration. It can be understood as a process through which the key stakeholders, including citizen, gain influence and take part in decision making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects. People's participation should be viewed as an active process in which people take initiatives and action that is stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation and which they can effectively influence. Participation is therefore more than an instrument of implementing government decisions. In order to gain influence and take part in the process of decision making, it is required that people are not only informed about the issue but their voice must be treated as an input constraint for a decision. The concepts of public participation, people participation and citizen participation are sometimes used interchangeable. They all mean taking the voice of large people into the decision.

Much has been written about the role and structure of people participation in the decision making and planning process. Some researchers have suggested that the traditional public hearing, when used effectively and early in the process, can be a useful means of involving people (Kweit and Kweit 1990). Others argue that though many literatures classify people participation into several levels from a very low end as being informed to a full participation

level of shared control, people no longer accept the readymade decisions which affect their benefits and their will (Fulton 1989). Checkoway (1981) asserts that there is not a single best approach to facilitating people participation, but instead, the approach selected must be attuned to the community in question and its particular social, economic and political environment..

According to Hinojosa, Lyons, and Zinn (1992); Benveniste (1989); Backoff and Nutt (1988), decision making and planning take place in a variety of contexts; under a variety of circumstances. Decision maker and planner must select a level of people participation that best fits the decision and planning. In some situations decision maker uses a broad-based, consensus-building approach where a high level of people participation is applied. Others require a less degree of citizen participation and a focus on quick, decisive action.

The level of people participation is classified differently among scholars. Harashina (1994, 2001) structured the model of people participation into five levels: (1) informing, (2) hearing, (3) reply only, (4) meaningful reply, and (5) partnership. The eight ladders defined by Arnstein (1969) are regrouped into three levels of participation which are Non participation, Tokenism and Citizen Power.

Asian Development Bank (2003), on the other hand, creates its 4 level model of people participation ranging from shallow to deep participation. The four levels are: information sharing, consultation/ seeking feedback, collaboration/ joint decision making and empowerment/ share control. At the low end level, people passively participate in the process by just receiving the information or voice to a readymade decision. The major characteristic of this level is one way communication. At the higher level, consultation, people were asked for their opinion about the matter under decision and decision makers and planners listen to their voice. The people involved exercised no responsibility in formulating the original plan or the decisions and the decision makers and planners have no responsibility to incorporate their voice. In the upper high level, collaboration, people are actively engaged and sustained results are achieved. The decision makers and planner take the peoples' perspectives seriously and act on them. And at the deepest level of participation, people become empowered by accepting increasing responsibility for developing and implementing action plans that are accountable to group members.

At the high level of participation, people participation process can be divided into 4 stages: information gathering stage, information dissemination stage, consultation stage, participation stage.

(1) Information Gathering Stage

The first stage of people participation is to understand the issues or problems to be

solved. The important types of information are social, cultural, economic and political. This understanding will help in doing a stakeholder analysis to determine the key stakeholders. Ideally, this stage should try to encourage an active, participatory relationship between those who seek and those who provide relevant information. An effective way to accomplish this idea is to undertake information gathering in conjunction with the second stage, information dissemination.

(2) Information Dissemination Stage

At this stage, information is provided to all stakeholders. Dissemination can take a variety of forms and should aim to provide information that is understood and useful to the stakeholders. The next stage cannot be reasonably achieved if stakeholders are not adequately informed about the project and its implications.

(3) Consultation Stage

This stage goes one step beyond dissemination and creates an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss and negotiate their needs and preferences. It is here that ideas from stakeholders can start to affect project design. This step is crucial in the sense that it sets the rules and creates the opportunities by which stakeholders can influence a final decision (the final stage).

(4) Participation Stage

The final stage is participation where stakeholders are able to directly contribute their ideas and preferences. In other words, they take part in decision making.

It is said that a participatory structure would seek to eliminate, or at least reduce, the barriers to entry for the key stakeholders. Many scholars have been building a framework for people participation so that barriers to participation are eliminated. Yasuyoshi (2006) listed five basic principles for people participation as below:

- (1) People must have equal chance to participate from the first step of planning. This principle emphasizes two major points, equal chance to participate and the timing of participation. The later the people participate in the process the less effective is the decision making.
- (2) Information must be disclosed in the fair and understandable form otherwise it will be meaningless.

- (3) People should have chance for free discussion during the activity of people participation.
- (4) It should be secured that people can freely express their opinion at the discussion in small group.
- (5) By recognition of importance of people participation, the whole fair decision making process is agreed among participants, government and assembly. The above principles of people participation have been widely used for small projects and have been very successful. This research, therefore, tries to apply these principles for people participation in Vietnam to prove the importance and the contribution of people participation in the decision making process.

III. Model of People Participation in Decision-Making for Regional Development in Vietnam

Scenario 1: A Model of Top-down Approach with Late and Passive Participation

The people participation in decision making in Vietnam falls in the informing and hearing level of participation, which is at the low end of the participation level. This approach has created many protests from people during the process of planning, implementing and evaluating.

In Vietnam citizen contributes a very small portion to the provincial people committee to make a provincial/district plan. Even though the article 13 of the construction law stipulates that planning has to create an environment for the citizen according to their mental and physical needs, citizens have a very little chance to participate in the planning process. Hence, the chance that planning does not match citizen need is high. Mr. Duong Minh Quang, Hoc Mon people's council worries in the council meeting about the formalist people participation in planning. When the people's council approves the plan, the people's council members just receive and know about the plan a few days in advance. He believes that it is very hard for citizen to approach to the plan and he doubts the effectiveness of the contribution of the resident-the final beneficiaries- participating in the planning.

This approach matches with the scenario of top down and late participation, where people participate in the process when every detail has been decided. The consequence of the model

could be a strong protest from resident or ineffectively satisfying the need of the resident. As the above case of Thanh Xuan cross-road detailed plan, resident strongly opposed the plan when they saw the signed and sealed plan. In 2002, Thanh Xuan resident received a drawing of the detailed plan for Thanh Xuan crossroad. Three hundred households strongly opposed the plan because it asked for much of their land. They claimed that the plan was odd with a very large part in the North and a very small part in the South. When the Thang Long project management division and local authority held a meeting with the resident to carry out the plan, the resident strongly opposed the readymade plan and proposed a new plan with 4 narrow-even corners which matched with the plan approved by the Prime minister.

It took 4 years for the Thang Long project management division to revise the plan to meet the resident's need - even crossroad plan. In 2006, they released a new approved plan with 4 large-even (not 4 narrow-even) corners. One again, the resident opposed the plan as it unmatched with the plan approved by the Prime minister. Local authority and most of the unaffected resident, on the other hand, feel a need for a new plan which meets the development of the local transportation. It has been 6 years since the Thanh Xuan crossroad detailed plan was done and it is still on a paper.

This case stipulates two major problems, top down approach and late participation. A top down approach may be an obstacle to lower level participation. In this case, even though the detailed plan meets the need of majority resident, it is legally not accepted unless it follows the regional plan approved by higher authority. Late participation is the other part of the problem. People were informed when everything has been decided. It will take a very long time (in this case 4 years) to change a readymade plan.

With the development of IT and a more democratic society, the above model seems to be ineffective and time consuming. It is now to move forward to a new model of decision making.

Scenario 2: A Model of Bottom up Approach with Early Participation

Nhon Hoi Economic Zone is a result of typical successful approach in planning. It is established in an area of about 12,000 hectares. This is a zone with a defined geographic boundary within the national territory and under the national sovereignty but having a separate economic space with favorable business and investment environment. In June 2005,

the Prime minister decided to open Nhon Hoi Economic Zone through the proposed plan from Binh Dinh Province. In April 2006, it received 40 projects with registered 3.3 billion USD capital. Since then this zone has become a model for planning which consists of 2 major stages.

Stage 1. Information Disclosure and Public Hearing

At the very first step, Nhon Hoi has disclosed the initial planning issue to the local citizen and organized meetings, hotlines, workshop to hear public opinions. Nhon Hoi has made sure that before hearing the public, local resident must know what was going on and what would positively and negatively affect their lives. Meetings and workshops were major key channels to involve public in the planning process. Public opinions became a major input for local authority to make a plan which is compatible with regional plan and local need.

Stage 2. Continuous Communications, Negotiation to Match Regional Plan with Local Need

There are often conflicts between governmental regulations, regional plan and local need. In this step, local authority needs to keep communicating with residents and other stakeholders to erase the gap between local need and other constraints. In the case of Nhon Hoi economic zone, residents asked for a much higher price than land clearance price set by the plan. Residents also asked for support to find a job in the economic zone. Those who live nearby also asked for a strict environmental protection method such as not allowing pollution industry in the zone. On the other side, local government and investing firms wanted the side as soon as possible. A solution was that beneficiaries of the economic zone somehow pay more for land clearance at a price less than requested by residents. Local government and other stakeholders opened training courses for those who lost land for the project so that they could get a job when the project completes. Local authority also pledged an environmental protection method. This negotiation was successful with citizens actively participated early in the planning process.

Applying this approach, Nhon hoi economic zone became a mystic story where a huge land - 12,000 ha - was cleared in a short time with full support from local resident. In terms of cost benefit analysis, this approach also was very much effective as the project came into operation earlier.

However, this approach still has planning problems which need to be solved. In many cases, resident just focus on short term and direct effect of a plan. Their will and the need might not go any further because they cannot anticipate what will happen in the future and sometimes they don't care about long-term effects. The case in point is the Highway number

1 rebuild project initiated by the ODA from Japan. This project uses similar approach for early involvement of people participation. Before designing a plan, the design consulting company has surveyed the will and the need of local resident such as planting trees and building crossroad for residents and put them into consideration. In general, the local residents were happy with the new plan for Highway Number 1 by which the road is to be built much higher so that resident still can travel in flood season. However, in 2007, after the Highway number 1 was rebuilt in the middle of Vietnam, it plays a role not only as a road but also as a dam - a negative affect that local resident could not recognize in the initial planning. Households in the western part of the high way were heavily flooded in flood season as the Highway number 1 has prevented water drainage. Then residents recognize that the high way number 1 lack of drainage tunnels across the road. Even though people participated from the initial stage of planning and the consulting firm had experience in designing and building road, it proved to be ineffective. NGOs and interest groups should be players in the planning process to solve this kind of problem.

The model shows the interaction among stakeholders. In order to make a provincial/urban plan, people committee needs 4 major inputs: (1) upper level plan such as regional plan which provides direction for planning at lower lever, (2) experts/consultant organizations who help people committee for planning, (3) citizen - the final beneficiary, and (4) NGO, interest groups, social groups. Those organizations may cooperate with citizen or be representative for citizen. This model asks for a change of higher level of planning if it does not match with the need of local residents or with a change of society. In the process of planning, planners may provide feedback to upper level if they find the upper lever plan becomes a obstacle for local planning.

A plan will satisfy local residents' needs if local residents including NGO, social groups have chances to express their needs. The sooner the planners have voice of local residents, the more chances they can build a good plan. To make the voice of local resident effective, the process of people participation should focus on the following four steps:

Step 1. Identifying the Stakeholder Groups Including NGO and Interest Group.

It will not be possible for the planners to hear the voice of all local residents. Hence, it is important to take time in identifying stakeholders in the planning process and developing a mechanism for involving individual representative members of the stakeholder groups. The stakeholder groups can be categorized into 5 groups:

(1) Directly affected people

This is a group of stakeholders who will definitely be key stakeholders. They will be

those who directly be affected by the plan negatively or positively. A fair participation requires that all classes of directly affected people are included regardless of age, sex and wealth.

(2) Indirectly affected people

Some of these people will also be considered stakeholders though not as important as those directly affected. They are the people who live nearby and/or use resources from the plan area and others such as those who trade occasionally with those in the first group and others who simply live nearby and/or occasionally use the resources from the plan area.

(3) Public sector

Those agencies who are critical to the planning are also stakeholders. Those might be police, administrative bodies, and mass media.

(4) Private developers

The companies are direct investors in the plan. They should be qualified as key stakeholders. Other private developers may be interested in investments that would become feasible or profitable if the project goes ahead.

(5) Other key stakeholders such as donors, NGOs, interest groups

Donor agencies and NGOs may or may not be key stakeholders depending on their role and modus operandi. If the NGOs, interest groups are locally operated, then, they could be representatives of directly affected people. Regional, national and international NGOs on the other hand, may also play such a role if the plan is of a regional planning. Environmental group, farmers' group, women's group could also be the key stakeholder in the planning process. Once the stakeholder group is identified, it is important to take on an identity that can easily be distinguished.

Step 2. Fully Informing All the Stakeholders about the Planning Intention and Organizing Meeting with All Stakeholders for Consensus Building

All the stakeholders should understand the planning problem in the same way by full access to the related information. Information disclosure may occur via mass media, direct mail, and meeting. It is also important that stakeholder groups understand the local planning problem to be solved, have a strong desire to make a positive change, and be open to outside help.

Step 3. Developing a Preliminary Planning and Getting Feedback.

Once the stakeholder group is in place and fully informed, it needs to identify the community's assets and liabilities and establish a future direction. This is where the external planner/expert or consultant can best serve by playing the role of educator and facilitator. They can explain the general planning process to the group and help them to begin that process by acknowledging their problems and laying the groundwork for generating their goals and objectives. From the planner's perspective, the way in which this step is accomplished is more important than the output generated. The knowledge base for carrying out much of the effort is established here. This is also the stage in which initial citizen "buy-in" is achieved. This step must not be rushed. Participants must be permitted to develop and generate their own conclusions

The planner can assist by using stakeholders' opinion, solution to draft an initial set of goals and general objectives from which to begin work – a variation on the "one-text procedure" in negotiation. This consists of putting together a draft agreement to which participants can respond. Groups have difficulty drafting their own documents from scratch, without something to react to. These can be brought to the stakeholder group for discussion. The planner then becomes a facilitator in helping the group to achieve consensus on an acceptable set of goals and objectives. Consensus can only be attained by repeated discussion of the topic until everyone has had a chance to air his/her concerns, express fears or frustrations, and fully understand what is at stake and where his/her fellow group members are coming from on the issue. This can, and often does, take time, but it is time well-spent. On occasion, it may be necessary for the planner to employ conflict resolution techniques.

Using the achieved consensus, the external planner prepares a preliminary plan. The preliminary plan is then taken to the stakeholder group for comments, feedback, and changes. Care should be taken to permit full group discussion of the plan. The planner must take the time to explain her/his translation of the group's agreed upon direction fully in layman's terms. An extra effort should be made to get a full turnout by the stakeholder group at these meetings.

Step 4. Developing the Final Plan and Disclosing the Plan.

Once agreement on the preliminary plan has been reached, the planner can proceed to prepare the final plan and facilitate consensus on it in the same basic fashion as with the preliminary plan.

IV. Concluding Remarks

The success of economic reforms brought out by the Doi Moi reform in 1986 has led the attention to the weaknesses of the state administration and provided a momentum for decentralization and people participation in Vietnam. It is important to note that the slogan “people know, people discuss, people do and people inspect” was emphasized in the communist party congress VI, in 1986. It is a historical event for the National Assembly of Vietnam to pass the two very meaningful laws, land-use law and construction law in 2004 which became crucial frameworks for more decentralized decision-making mechanism with people participation. In addition the government’s decree in 2006 helped solving the problem of government information disclosure to people

According to the survey of this research, public officials, college students and citizens share the perception that people participation is important in decision making and regional planning. Nonetheless highly educated people ask for their participation right at the beginning of the process while government officers believe that people participation is necessary in the stage of information collection. Both government officers and citizens understand the importance of people participation in decision making and planning as a way to serve the citizen better and a way to exercise a democratic administration.

This study recommends a model of bottom up approach with early participation for the effective decision-making in Vietnamese urban planning context. It promotes active interaction among stakeholders with four major inputs: 1) upper level plan, 2) experts and consultant organizations (3) citizens, and (4) NGO, interest groups, social groups. In the process of planning, planners should provide feedback to upper level if they find the upper lever plan becomes an obstacle for local planning. The sooner the planners have voice of local residents heard, the more chances they can build a good plan. As President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines asserts “good governance is always a two way process involving not only government but also the citizenry.”

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Abstract

Citizen Participation in Urban Development in Vietnam

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Since the introduction of Doi Moi reform policies in 1986 Vietnam has witnessed a great demand for decentralization and citizen participation in the area of urban planning and development. The land use law and the construction law revised in 2004 are regarded as a symbolic milestone for people participation and decentralization trend in Vietnam. This paper reviews Vietnamese institutions related to citizen participation and analyzes people's view on this matter through questionnaire survey. In Vietnam the level of FDI made by Korean firms is so high uncomparable with other countries and now many Korean construction companies including POSCO and KUMHO are involved in large scale urban development projects in Vietnam. This paper is expected to provide useful information on urban development issues of Vietnam to the scholars who are unfamiliar with policies and institutions of this socialist country.

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