

早稲田大学大学院アジア太平洋研究科

# 博士論文審査報告書

## 論 文 題 目

Original Title	The legitimacy of the Communist Party of Vietnam and its democratic claim through the National Assembly's election and operation
In Japanese	ベトナム共産党の正統性と国会の選挙・運営を通じた民主的正統性の主張

## 申 請 者

氏 名 Name	姓 Last Name	Middle Name	名 First Name
	Nguyen	Hoang Thanh	Danh
学籍番号 Student ID	4015S008-4		

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## **1. Abstract of the Dissertation**

The dissertation analyzes the legitimacy of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), in order to understand its resilience as a ruling party.

The dissertation puts the hypothesis that the CPV has four main sources of legitimacy: (1) tradition-based achievements, (2) Ho Chi Minh's charismatic leadership, (3) socialism as a state-building ideology and performance legitimacy, and (4) more recent self-proclaimed democratic legitimacy through the operation of the National Assembly.

In the first half of the dissertation, citing many documents and historical facts, the author examines how the CPV has employed these four sources of legitimacy to maintain its political resilience.

In the second half of the dissertation, through his own survey the author tries to answer to the question how the Vietnamese people perceive the CPV's claim on democratic legitimacy.

## **2. Outline of the Dissertation and Summary of the Chapters**

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Sources of Legitimacy of the Communist Party of Vietnam

Chapter 3: The Democratic Claim of the Communist Party of Vietnam

Chapter 4: National Assembly Elections in Vietnam and Vietnamese People's Perceptions of the CPV's Democratic Legitimacy

Chapter 5: Conclusion

### **Ch.1: Introduction**

After describing the background of the research, the chapter starts with the literature review of the major works on the resilience and/or the fall of authoritarian regimes in the world and then the literature review of the major works on the case of Vietnam. The author judges that many works on post-Soviet Vietnam have overlooked the importance of legitimacy as the CPV's political asset. In order to fill this gap, the author puts the hypothesis that the CPV has four main sources of legitimacy (as mentioned above).

In the following section concerning methodology, the author introduces various methods which he utilizes in the dissertation, (1) document analysis (basing on official documents, personal accounts and political pamphlets and posters etc.), (2) observation (in person and through recorded videos), (3) interviewing (with seven informants serving in the military, police, civilian government and journalism), and (4) a survey of convenience sampling.

### **Ch.2: Sources of Legitimacy for the Communist Part of Vietnam**

The chapter starts with the discussion on the definition of legitimacy and the applicability of legitimacy concept to the case of Vietnam. The author chooses four dimensions to analyze the legitimacy sources of the CPV, namely (1)

tradition-based achievements, (2) Ho Chi Minh's Charismatic leadership. (3) socialism as a state building ideology and performance legitimacy, and (4) more recent self-proclaimed democratic legitimacy through the operation of the National Assembly.

In the rest of the chapter, the author argues the first three dimensions of legitimacy sources. The last dimension (democratic legitimacy) will be separately discussed in the next chapter.

In the section of tradition-based achievements of the CPV, the author analyzes two main factors: the influence of Confucianism and the long tradition of struggle against foreign invaders. In the section of Charismatic leadership of Ho Chi Minh, the author cites many related documents and statements as well as his own observation, and analyzes the sources of his popularity among the Vietnamese.

In the section of Socialism as a state building ideology and performance legitimacy, the author points out that prior to the Doi Moi period, socialism was the guiding ideology of the CPV to obtain various achievements (good performance) such as the victory against French colonialism and American imperialism, the land reform etc.. However, since the start of Doi Moi, performance legitimacy has mainly stemmed from new economic policy and open-door policy, which basically contradict with anti-capitalist and anti-Western ideology of socialism. In order to fill this ideological gap, the CPV has finally adapted the concept of "socialist -oriented market economy".

### **Ch.3: The Democratic Claim of the Communist Party of Vietnam**

In this chapter, the author first analyzes the changes in the international and domestic environments during the 2010s which have shown the signs of the expanding domestic dissatisfaction with the present government. The important factors behind these changes are the enhanced linkage with the West, the more openly reports about corruption and bad governance of the ruling elite, the inadequate response by the leadership toward the South China Sea territorial disputes, and the proliferation of internet.

In order to cope with this emerging situation, the CPV has started some efforts to utilize the existing political institution to claim its democratic legitimacy.

In the second half of the chapter, after briefly discussing the definition and concept of democracy, democratic legitimacy and procedural legitimacy, the author analyzes the CPV's concept of democratic centralism.

### **Ch.4: National Assembly Elections in Vietnam and the Vietnamese People's Perception of the CPV's Democratic Legitimacy**

The most illustrating example of the recent CPV's efforts to claim its democratic legitimacy is the improvement of the National Assembly (NA)'s functionality in its decision-making mechanism, debate sessions, and more communication with the voters and the press.

Despite some changes in its appearance, however, the fundamental

characteristics of the NA have not been changed. Through analyzing the legal documents on the NA elections and the actual outcome of the most recent election in 2016, the author concludes that the AN is always dominated and controlled by the CPV.

The author then introduces the outcome of his survey of convenience sampling (1,005 answers through phone calls and social networks), in order to investigate the people's perception of the CPV's claim on democratic legitimacy. The author concludes that the majority of respondents show apathy and distrust toward the results of the election. The findings disprove democracy as a source of the CPV's legitimacy. Despite this, most of the respondents are tolerant or indifferent to the party's rule.

### **Ch.5: Conclusion**

After briefly summarizing the findings of preceding chapters, the author claims that he has raised his original hypothesis about the sources of legitimacy of the CPV based on the models of legitimation raised by other scholars and review, analyze, and translate various documents to prove his hypothesis. His dissertation is perhaps the most comprehensive and up-to-date study about the topic of legislative elections and the operation of the National Assembly in Vietnam. His finding about the Vietnamese people's perception to the democratic claim of the CPV is unique. In the meanwhile, the author confesses that he has not successfully explained the contradiction between public perception towards the rule of the CPV and the tolerance it has enjoyed. His survey has some shortcomings due to the disproportional representation of the Vietnamese population as the result of the convenience sampling method. A comparative approach, especially a comparison with the case of China, would be a challenging topic with which he has to tackle in the next stage.

### **3. Discussions of Oral Defense Examination**

The dissertation committee members carefully read the dissertation, and held an oral examination from 16:30 to 19:15 on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

The main comments raised by the committee members are:

- (1) In some places, especially in Chapter four, the sequence of arguments is not well organized.
- (2) Inconsistency in wording in various places.
- (3) The author claims that he utilizes official documents (and personal accounts), but the citation of official documents is not well visible in the chapters.
- (4) In Chapter 3, especially the argument concerning the relationship between socialist ideology and performance legitimacy, the development of Ho Chi Minh's charismatic leadership, and the recent complaints among the people against the political elite's corruption and bad governance, the original version of the dissertation has not well developed the historical dynamism.
- (5) The political regime is sustained by various factors, not only by legitimacy.

Other factors, such as profit and rent-seeking, tolerance and indifference are also important.

- (6) The original version of the Conclusion is not sufficiently developed. The author should rewrite it to show more clearly what is the originality of the dissertation.

#### **4. Evaluation and the Result of Examination**

The committee members required the author to submit the revised version of dissertation together with the reply sheets to the comments by the end of November 2019.

After reviewing them, the committee members have judged that the revised version is well written, and makes contributions to the literature on the political legitimacy of the Communist Party of Vietnam Party and the related issues. His argument on the four sources of legitimacy of the CPV is well organized and especially the fourth source of the legitimacy, i.e. the more recent self-proclaimed democratic legitimacy through the operation of the National Assembly, has not been discussed fully by the existing literature. Furthermore, as a Vietnamese, he cites various precious observation based on his personal experience, to which the foreigners can hardly get access. The personal interviews with seven informants and the survey of convenience sampling (1,005 answers) are also good efforts to shed more light on the topic.

After careful assessment of the submitted dissertation, the oral presentation of the dissertation, subsequent discussions and revisions made to the dissertation, the committee members came to a unanimous decision that Nguyen Hoang Thanh Danh, the author of the dissertation, should be granted a Ph.D.

申請者名： Nguyen Hoang Thanh Danh

博士論文審査委員会

主査 Chief Examiner:

氏名 Name: 村嶋英治 (印)(Signature)  
所属 Affiliation: 早稲田大学大学院アジア太平洋研究科  
職位 Title: 教授  
学位 Degree: 取得大学 Conferred by:  
専門分野 Specialty: 東南アジア地域研究

副査 Head Deputy Examiner:

氏名 Name: 白石昌也 (印)(Signature)  
所属 Affiliation: 早稲田大学  
職位 Title: 名誉教授  
学位 Degree: 博士(学術) 取得大学 Conferred by: 東京大学  
専門分野 Specialty: 東南アジア研究

副査 Deputy Examiner:

氏名 Name: 五島文雄 (印)(Signature)  
所属 Affiliation: 静岡県立大学  
職位 Title: 名誉教授  
学位 Degree: 取得大学 Conferred by:  
専門分野 Specialty: 現代ベトナム研究

副査 Deputy Examiner:

氏名 Name: 見市建 (印)(Signature)  
所属 Affiliation: 早稲田大学大学院アジア太平洋研究科  
職位 Title: 教授  
学位 Degree: 博士(政治学) 取得大学 Conferred by: 神戸大学  
専門分野 Specialty: 東南アジア政治

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