



ASEAN, Food Security, and Land Rights: Enlarging a Democratic Space for Public Services in the ASEAN*

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Abstract

The paper revisits and elucidates the relevance of Development Administration and its scion, Comparative Public Administration (CPA) in diagnosing organization and management implications of development problems, specifically landlessness and food security in the Southeast Asian region. Intrinsic to the CPA approach is the need for maintaining relevant connectivity among countries to extract knowledge that can more or less lead to theory. The paper presents a cursory briefing on the ASEAN and a possible multistakeholder approach in tackling the hitherto land and food security problems in the region, with the view of connecting the different perspectives by various scholars and practitioners of public administration, including academic / research alliances in the member countries, to carry out a regional engagement. The paper presents a possible regional framework of action for engaging the ASEAN as possible analytical framework in tackling development issues using the lenses of Development Administration and Comparative Public Administration

Keywords: Development Administration/ Comparative Public Administration/
Food Security/ Landlessness/ Globalization/ Postmodern Organization
and Management Theory/ ASEAN/ Civil Society Organizations

Introduction

Food security is an important component of poverty reduction, especially with the new post-2015 Millennium Development Agenda of eradicating extreme poverty by 2020. According to a United Nations hunger report (FAO-UN, 2012), nearly 870 million people, or one in eight, were suffering from chronic undernourishment in 2010-2012. In its 2012 State of Food Insecurity (SOFI) report, the UN said that the vast majority of the hungry during the period 2010-2012 (870 million people), 852 million live in developing countries -- around 15 percent of their population -- while 16 million people are undernourished in developed countries.

The number of hungry people fell based on the State of Food Insecurity (SOFI) in the World Report in 2014, which posted that about 805 million people are estimated to be chronically undernourished. Despite overall progress, the UN also said that marked differences in the achievement of food security across regions persist. Latin America and the Caribbean are reported to have made the greatest overall

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progress in increasing food security with modest progress in sub-Saharan Africa and Western Asia, which have been afflicted by natural disasters and conflict.

The same UN Report (2014) also stated that “hunger reduction requires an integrated approach, and needs to include: public and private investments to raise agricultural productivity; better access to inputs, land, services, technologies and markets; measures to promote rural development; social protection for the most vulnerable, including strengthening their resilience to conflicts and natural disasters; and specific nutrition programmes, particularly to address micronutrient deficiencies in mothers and children under five.”

The theory and practice of Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) has evolved significantly during the last few decades. According to InWent’s *Achieving Food and Nutrition Security* (Klennert, ed., 2005, p. 149), small and subsistence farmers “still constitute a-- or even *the* – major vulnerable and food insecure population group in many countries.” There is need to enhance their capacity to increase agricultural and food production to mitigate problems of access, availability and stability, according to InWent. Consistent with the UN recommendation above, one of the main actions to improve the availability of food according to InWent is the improvement of access to land (i.e., among others. land and land tenure reform), the improvements of productive assets as well as targeted support for production are still the predominantly known agricultural support mechanisms. Even for food production in urban areas, one of the basic components pointed out to improve urban agriculture is to secure access to land and land use rights (p.153).

However, compounding the issue of poverty and food security is the problem of landlessness or lack of land rights among the poor in Asia. Essentially Poverty is a rural problem in Asia, According to the Rural Poverty Portal of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (2009), in the major countries in Asia, 80 to 90 per cent of poor people live in rural areas. IFAD reports that many poor rural people in Asia share a number of economic, demographic and social characteristics, the most common of which is landlessness or limited access to land. In developing countries, many of the poor are landless¹. Some do have access to land, but according to the Asian NGO Coalition (ANGOC, 2006), these “landed poor” remain poor, not just because they are deprived but because their landholdings are small. More unfortunately however, their land rights are weak and insecure.

Because of this uncertainty, the land-poor’s incentive to make long-term investments in their land or use it sustainably is undermined. Moreover, the economic value of their land is limited because they cannot transfer ownership legally. Still, the weak tenure of land for the land poor limits their political power and they become dependent on landlords for continued access to land, and their political participation is beholden to those who hold power over them.

¹ To cite some examples, in 1999, Cambodia had 20% of its rural population who were believed to be landless (Cambodia Development Review 1999 cited in IFAD, *Whose Land?* 2001) and 10% of households in survey villages held 33% of farmland (Murshid 1999 cited in IFAD, *Whose Land?* 2001). Indonesia and the Philippines had 15% and 34% of their rural population who were landless, respectively, in 1988. Although data is old, patterns of landholding revealed that in 1976-77 Indonesia had landholdings of only 3%, and the Philippines 3.2% in 1981, for the lowest 20% of the agricultural households of both countries.



The author has been involved in development issues in Asian countries such as land and food issues working with civil society organizations in the region, primarily through the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC)². Land Watch Asia (LWA), a main partner of ANGOC, is an advocacy group among organizations working on access to land in six Asian countries, namely Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines. ANGOC spearheaded this initiative with the original intention of establishing a mechanism for CSOs working towards better land rights for the rural poor in Asia. One of the institutions examined was the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for its policy and legal environment which can possibly influence a regional advocacy not only on land rights and issues, but also as land rights and issues would impinge on food security issues.

While the study was meant to be an action research towards a pragmatic regional advocacy program led by CSOs on land, this author thinks there is also a need for a framework or lens to study public administration and the governance of regional development issues, such as land and food issues, and a more concerted effort if regional organizations such as the ASEAN were to be sustainably engaged. In this regard, the opportunity for theory-building can be couched on the wealth of experience in the Southeast Asian region on engagements in development issues by various actors, especially civil society organizations as well as the academic sector in the region.

In Public Administration, one such framework that encompasses on the ground experiences by states or national governments in the management of development issues is Comparative Public Administration (CPA). This paper is contextualized in such significant subfield of Public Administration. The paper also discusses CPA's precursor Development Administration (DA) as an important foundation of CPA.

Objectives of the Paper

In the attempt to highlight the significance of public administration models in addressing development issues, the objectives of this paper are:

1. Within the context of land and food issues in the Southeast Asian Region, revisit Development Administration (DA) and Comparative Public Administration (CPA) in the light of finding connectivity using postmodern thinking.
2. Present a regional issue where “fresh CPA” could be applied.

² The Asian NGO Coalition (ANGOC) was established in 1979, among national NGO networks in Asia following a series of consultations leading to the World Conference for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD). ANGOC has since engaged national governments, Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) on the issues of greater civil society participation and the pursuit of agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture and rural development in the region. Currently, ANGOC has a membership of 21 national and regional networks of non-government organizations (NGOs) from 10 Asian countries. It also seeks to address the key issues related to sustainable agriculture, participatory governance and food sovereignty in Asia. The author was Deputy Executive Director of ANGOC in 2008-2009 and Senior Program Officer in 1991-1994.



Passing Review of Relevant Public Administration Concepts

1. Revisiting Development Administration

Before the 1960s, government agencies were preoccupied with productivity and efficiency, the values promoted in the classical Weberian bureaucratic model. As economies expanded, administrative systems had to cope with complex problems brought about by industrialization and with national development. The new concerns then shifted to the pursuit of development goals. As one scholar describes this pursuit of new development goals by the administrative machinery in the late 1970s: With the awakening issues of human rights and basic human needs, and a changing international order, development administration can and must address equity and redistributive issues with a focus on the implementation problems that these issues raise (Bryant, 1978, p. 215).

From the classical model of public administration, scholars then turned to ‘development administration’ as the newer paradigm, which basically focused on nation-building as well as socio-economic progress. Some definitions of development administration may be quoted. For instance, John Montgomery (1966) defines development administration as “carrying out planned change in the economy (in agriculture or industry, or the capital infrastructure supporting either of those), and, to a lesser extent, in the social services of the state (especially education and public health).” Moreover, Fred W. Riggs (1970) has defined development administration as “organized efforts to carry out programs or projects by those involved to serve development objectives.” For Sapru (1994), whose seminal book **on Development Administration(2nd edition)** will be cited in this section to a large extent, the primary objective of development administration is to “strengthen the administrative machinery which would bring about socio-economic development” (p. 81).

Thus, in the early 1960s, the central concern for politics among American scholars was “development for developing countries”. Back then the students of Public Administration looked at the problem of development from the lens of administration. In a study by David Stone (1965, cited by Sapru, 1994, p. 92), an observation was that “the primary obstacles to development are administrative rather than economic... Countries generally lack the administrative capability for implementing plans and programs.”

However, while development administration became a popular approach to studying public administration in the 1960s especially among American scholars, Sapru (1994, p. 96) contends that the scholars then were “more interested in building theories and coining words...but were not familiar with the culture of the developing countries in which they findthemselves”. Sapru further argues that the theories employed by the development scholars then were not grounded on empirical and research insights.



Furthermore, Sapru (1994, p.97) opines that the American scholars at the time gave too much attention to administrative reform and less to political reform. He therefore exhorts political reform to precede administrative reform or for both reforms to go alongside each other, “if the goals of development are to be achieved”. Sapru adds that “how to make the administrative state accountable and responsible is the crux of the problem in developing countries” (p.97).

The above arguments point to the importance of public administration systems to respond to national development goals and bring about development, while recognizing public administration systems' intrinsic link with political and social institutions.

The attempt towards theory-building in public administration was prominently emphasized by Robert Dahl in his essay, *The Science of Public Administration* in 1947. To quote Dahl (1947):

No science of public administration is possible unless...there is a body of comparative studies from which it may be possible to discover principles and generalities that transcend national boundaries and peculiar historical experiences.

2. Comparative Public Administration: Renewing its Relevance

Consequently, the challenge of theory-building and coming up with a science of administration independent of their peculiar national setting was taken up by the school of Comparative Public Administration (CPA) in the United States of America. Though interest on this approach to public administration has somewhat waned, it is perhaps time to revisit CPA, especially with the quagmire in development efforts societies around the globe are commonly coming to grips with, such as wanton destruction of forests and other natural resources for different types of industries, conversion of large tracts of land that were once rice lands for real estate, lack of access to education or non-functional literacy in many developing countries, hunger and malnutrition, and spread of communicable diseases such as the deadly Ebola virus in recent months. While practical solutions to such problems may be state or country-specific, it is also possible that generalizations can be made from studies on public administration aimed at generating knowledge from the diagnosis of such problems.

Foremost among the scholars identified with Comparative Public Administration has been Fred W. Riggs (1976) who defined the areas for comparison to include studies on foreign administrative systems, methodology, and the generalized or global framework for thinking about problems. In short, one of the main objectives of the school of comparative public administration is to build a theory of ‘public administration for development’ through an analysis or through propositions about administration of different nations.

In the attempt to build theories of administration for development using comparative public administration, some authors have endeavored to outline some guidelines which may be considered in designing researches. Chandler and Plano



(1982, p.11, cited by Sapru, 1994, p.101) for example summarizes five motivating concerns for Comparative Public Administration as follows: (1) the search for theory; (2) the urge for practical application; (3) the incidental contribution of the broader field of comparative politics; (4) the interest of the researchers trained in the tradition of administrative law; and (5) the comparative analysis of ongoing problems of public administration. These motivations point to the problem-orientation focus and a preference for an orientation towards pragmatism of public administration in CPA researches.

As already pointed out, traditional studies on public administration systems have been descriptive in nature. Aside from their lack of handles by which to make generalizations for theory-building, traditional studies were non-ecological in approach and had little if no analysis on the environment in which public administration systems functioned (Sapru, 1994, p.102). In adopting the ecological approach, Riggs and other scholars urge researchers to examine the interactions between an administrative system and its external environment. For Jain (1991), comparative public administration allows public administration systems to widen their horizon in order to offer relevant and practical solutions to the problems faced by mankind. Thus, an outward-orientation of public administration systems has characterized studies in this field especially as public administration systems respond to their environment and to development goals in most developing countries.

Because of problems confronting a large portion of the global population, comparative public administration as a subfield of study becomes all the more expedient. Sapru (1994, p.104, para. 1) has given us basis for this imperative as he alludes to CPA's problem-solving orientation. In his book, *Development Administration*, Sapru contends that CPA's central theme is that of "development" (1994, p.111). Since the scope of CPA is quite vast, CPA studies can span across different levels of institutions and examine relations among public administration institutions. It suggests that both national and international institutions be strengthened, "in order to forge new modalities for concerted action to improve public administration for development," to which he adds, "for this purpose, it will be quite useful to establish a network of these institutions to enable flow of information and provide opportunities for collaboration on projects" (Sapru, 1994, p.103). This is an implication of the importance of the idea of connectivity for civil society in general.

Further, as organizational networks search for solutions to common problems confronting states today, we also see the importance of these networks' management information systems (MIS) as an area of research in comparative public administration. An MIS should be part of capacity building and strengthening of organizational networks as they carry out development work. Connectivity through MIS will be very significant in studies on collaborative governance especially among countries in regional blocs such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The international and cross-cultural nature of comparative public administration is succinctly described by Jong S. Jun (1976, cited by Sapru, 1994, p.103) who says that, "comparative administration has been predominantly cross-



cultural or cross-national in orientation”, adding that Comparative public administration can be pursued also in a cross-institutional or case-study approach in a single country – what Riggs called ‘ideographic studies’. Comparative methods will allow us to engage in comparative studies of domestic programs or urban policies across boundaries of state and local governments.

Sapru adds that the scope of comparative public administration is international as it is concerned with problems currently confronting public administrations of different countries. In terms of scope and nature therefore, comparative public administration studies can be macro, meso or micro level in nature and can also be inter-institutional, cross-national, cross-cultural and cross-temporal.

With the advent of globalization as well as with the rise of regional blocs, the relevance of CPA studies in the analysis of country-level public administration systems and their responses to development situations cannot be overemphasized. In the Southeast Asian region alone, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been enunciating regional integration by the year 2015. This paper attempts to re-examine the relevance of comparative public administration studies in the light of globalization, regionalization, or other phenomena beyond national boundaries. Specifically, this paper discusses the problem of landlessness and food insecurity among Southeast Asian countries and what might possibly be a public space for dialogue between and among national public administration systems, civil society groups, with the ASEAN as a regional organization represented by heads of states of member countries, plus other dialogue- member countries.

This paper offers an agenda or a framework for ASEAN and the key players in the region towards addressing such pervasive problems of landlessness and food insecurity as key poverty alleviation interventions. Public administrative structures or arrangements as well and other important dimensions of public administration at the regional level are deciphered as part of the agenda. However, in line with the prescriptions offered by comparative public administration scholars partly mentioned in this study, the nuances of such a framework for a regional action towards addressing landlessness and food insecurity and their particularistic features in specific countries will have to be studied at length, although these studies will have to be done in future researches as these are not included in this paper. Riggs (cited in Sapru, 1994, p.102) calls the latter *ideographic studies*, which attempt to focus on a single country or single agency (such as an agricultural administrative unit).

Trans-border Issues and Public Administration

1. Connectivity Implications in a Globalizing World Order

The concept of global forces impinging on the discipline of public administration has been taken up by scholars (Riggs in Garcia-Zamor and Khator, eds., 1994), some of who have attempted to globalize the theory and practice of public administration (Caiden 1991). Others envisioned a new world of public administration



in a “globalized village” (Garcia-Zamor 1992; Khator 1992, cited in Garcia-Zamor and Khator, eds., 1994). Still, other authors have implied the need to use all subfields of public administration especially development administration, not to search for new ideas to solve international problems but to fundamentally shift or adjust ways of thinking about such problems.

In the light of the New World Order, public administration academics have used different lenses to find relevance in adjusting frameworks, structures and processes of administration. The New World Order is sometimes considered a rhetorical device, which is actually not a new concept. The term was made more popular in the mid-1980s to early 1990s, especially by the frequent use of then Vice President George Bush of the term. For James Rosenau (1990, p. 419, cited by Farazmand, p.65) who gave a more vivid description of the New World Order in his book, *Turbulence in World Politics*, this new world system carries with it constant change and challenges and which for him would enjoy more stability and peace than ever before. He predicted that ideology would decay, governments would narrow in competence, people would demand more and that ‘an emergent global culture’ would be characterized by global interdependence.

Other scholars have viewed comparative public administration using a postmodern lens enunciating a critical discourse especially towards adjusting organization and management theory (Boje, Gephart, Jr., and Thatchenkery, eds., 1996). These authors provide an agenda as well as critiques on organization and management, exploring social as well as organizational changes management may encounter in an era of postmodernism. Clegg and Gray (1994, p. 307) see globalization as one of the more significant challenges for management and organization theory because of its tendency to be simultaneously a process of compression of space and time and, consequent upon this, an exacerbation of relativities between narratives of self, society, the globalizing world, and the increasingly transparent ways of being human, one to the other, that this complex of compression and relativization presents.

The roles and active participation connecting different actors in society is of high premium for postmodernist scholars who offer to rethink organization and management theories. The reduction of these different actors of society to “economies” instead of “societies” is one threat that globalization brings as implied by Clegg and Gray (1994, 301). They further cite the threat of globalization towards denigrating the value of different forms of life as cautioned by Robertson (1992, p. 27):

In an increasingly globalized world, there is a heightening of civilization, societal, ethnic, regional, and indeed, individual, self-consciousness.

Hence, Robertson offers a model that captures these different forms of life relating national societies, the world system of societies, selves, and human kind. However, Clegg and Gray propose a slight revision of this model to insert the centrality of organizations as circuits of production and consumption. The figure below depicts this slightly revised model which is relevant for organization theory.

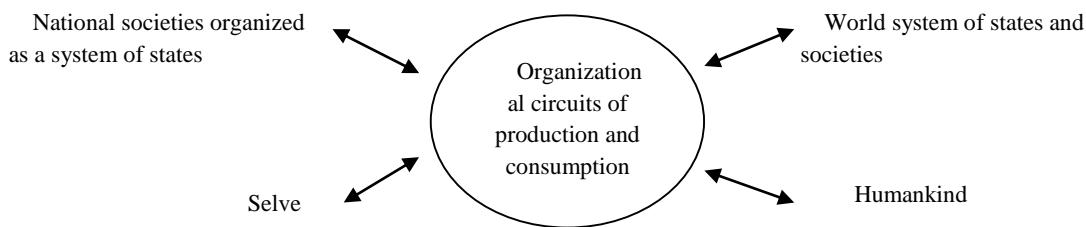


Figure1. A Proposed Revision of the Model of Globalization by Robertson

Source: Clegg and Gray, in Boje, et al., eds., 1996, p. 305

2. Towards Mobilizing Stakeholders in a Regional Alliance: A Postmodernism Approach

In particularistic and postmodern studies, the voices of different actors -- and perhaps of different forms of life -- are of paramount value. Jerry Calton and Nancy Kurland (cited in Boje, et al., 1996, p.154-177) offer a theory of stakeholder enabling, which primarily aims to give voice to an emerging postmodern praxis of organizational discourse. Their theory pursues a decentralization of organizational discourse by putting at the center multi stakeholder dialogues to replace privileged managerial monologues. Following this trajectory, this paper shall place at the center perspectives of civil society groups and other non-state actors in analyzing loopholes and weaknesses in land distribution and food security programs focusing on the ASEAN as a regional institution.

Boje et al. (1996, p.155) cite Freeman's (1984, p.25) landmark book on the stakeholder concept, which defines stakeholders as "those groups and individuals that can affect, or are affected by, the accomplishment of organizational purpose". For landlessness and food security issues, other stakeholders who might be included in the list of stakeholders are farmers groups; nongovernment organizations working on food security, land or agrarian reform, and rural development; private firms engaged in food supply, marketing and distribution; credit institutions and other financing institutions that have credit programs for farmers; and other members of the community who want to make a difference regarding the problem of land and food security.

As mentioned earlier, a postmodern theory of stakeholder enabling in organization and management studies is that of decentralizing or decentering discourses from managerial monolithic narratives to the plurality of voices that have a stake in the organization. This act of decentering is crucial as it begs to "empower 'silent voices' of marginal groups by 'deconstructing' the hidden meaning within the predominant organizational text" (Freeman & Gilbert, 1992; Rosenau, 1992, cited by Boje et al., 1996).



For such authors who subscribe to the decentering approach, the epistemology may be found in what Rorty (1989) calls “affirmative” postmodern epistemology, which is also based from the philosophy of liberal pragmatism (cited by Boje et al., 1996, p.164). These authors aim to enable a participatory process for a marginalized community’s previously silenced voices to be heard. Another author cited by Boje et al is Rosenau (1992, pp. 169-173) who reserve for postmodern authors an interpreter role for “multiple voices in local community dialogues or conversations.”

Some of the metaphors drawn from the feminist “ethic of care” and “connected knowing” from theories of Gilligan (1982, 1988) and Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberg, and Tarule (1986) are recommended by Wicks, Gilbert, and Freeman (1994 in Boje et al., 1996), and we cite two of such metaphors:

Metaphors of conflict and competition are replaced with those of communication and collective action...

Wicks et al. are said to have valued the relational benefits of communication or the connectivity among agents and stakeholders as they note (cited by Boje et al, 1996, p.166):

Communication provides a mechanism for persons to interact with and learn from one another, to build trust, to find points of agreement and disagreement, to discover how a relationship can enrich each party involved, and to sculpt a form of interaction that fits them (Wicks et al, 1994, p.47).

The other metaphor recommended by Wicks et al. (1994) stresses on solidarity with stakeholders:

Strategy as “objective” analysis becomes strategy as solidarity in relations between agents and stakeholders.

Kegan (1982, p. 244, cited in Boje et al., 1996) says an implication of the above metaphor is the importance of the “institutional capacity for intimacy” where the meaning of the relationship among stakeholders is jointly crafted and regularly negotiated. The other implication Boje et al. (1996) point out is that the “rules of the game” are defined through an interactive process of organizational discussion.

Emerging organizational forms in stakeholder enabling are described as interactive and encompass various forms of connectivity including international strategic alliances. In this paper, we outline a series of steps to be done but initially among civil society organization members, which could also be carried out in connectivity with other actors, as they are in the process of engaging the ASEAN with regard to the problem of land and food security.



Enlarging the Democratic Space for Food Security and Land Rights in the ASEAN: Conceptualizing a Regional Academic Alliance for Food Security and Landlessness in Asia

As mentioned above one of the regional organizations engaged in land and food security issues is Land Watch Asia (LWA) and the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform (ANGOC). In 2008, a research was carried out by this author as commissioned by Landwatch Asia³ to:

1. Assess the policy and legal environment on access to land and tenurial security.
2. Assess the past contributions and existing efforts of different sectors (government, private sector, donors, social movements and civil society) in addressing land issues
3. Identify opportunities & strategies in effectively addressing existing issues and gaps and advancing access to land and tenurial security.

One of the institutions examined by ANGOC and LandWatch was the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for its policy and legal environment which can possibly influence a regional advocacy not only on land rights and issues, but also as land rights and issues would impinge on food security issues.

In terms of methodology, the case study used mainly secondary data review, focus group discussions with civil society groups, and a key interview with a former high-level official at the ASEAN. The case study looks at two major aspects of ASEAN policies, framework and approaches: (1) *first*, at the *conceptual* level, the paper looks at ASEAN's basic understanding and perspectives on agriculture, food security, poverty eradication, sustainable development, and social justice or the socio-political dimension of development where possible discussions on land can be dovetailed; and (2) *second*, at the *operational* level, the study examines ASEAN's openness to engagement with civil society organizations by asking critical questions that beg for answers and clarity on the part of the ASEAN and even on the part of ASEAN member country senior officials.

This paper revisits the bases for extracting ASEAN's important declarations, agreements, policies, principles and approaches, contained in ASEAN documents acquired from the public domain by ANGOC and Landwatch and further explore implications for longer term regional engagement on the ASEAN. At the same time, the paper highlights relevant features of a regional framework as basis to further research and advocacy on particularistic conditions of public administration / organization and management towards building theories for comparative public administration.

³ This was contained in an unpublished report prepared by this author for the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) in June 2008.



1. ASEAN's Perspectives on Social Development, Rural Development and Poverty Eradication, Agriculture and Food Security, Environment and Sustainable Development

Although ASEAN has positive statements regarding social development, rural development, poverty eradication, agriculture and food security, environment and sustainable development, the details are not clear. Several points need to be threshed out and clarified, as can be gleaned from the set of questions we ask below under each item related to land rights and food security.

First, at the 10th ASEAN Summit, the *Vientiane Action Program for ASEAN* was formulated and signed by the Heads of States of the member countries, highlighting the “Building a Community of Caring Societies”:

The hallmark of a strong and resilient community of caring societies is its commitment and capability to address the core issues of poverty, equity and health. National initiatives will fundamentally drive the manner and extent to which these issues are addressed. However, the Member Countries can gain significant leveraging of political commitment and goals at the national level through regional advocacy.

We discern that ASEAN has slowly become outward-looking in its orientation. Does this mean that ASEAN is ready to support a regional movement in trying to solve core issues of poverty, equity, etc. in the aspect of food security and land rights and issues for the land-poor in the region? Although as ASEAN declares “national initiatives will fundamentally drive the manner to which (these) issues are addressed”, can ASEAN give the push to national governments to support such cause on land issues and food security? Nevertheless, the above statement is a strong base for engagements with national governments and in monitoring such commitments, verifying whether public administrative systems in various sectors are operational.

Second, although ASEAN has produced a document on the *Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Rural Development and Poverty Eradication*, there is no explicit definition for Rural Development (RD) and Poverty Eradication (PE). The concept of social justice, though espoused in the Ministerial Understanding, is also not defined in depth. The Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Rural Development and Poverty Eradication declares:

Reaffirming the Declaration of ASEAN Concord signed in Bali, in February 1976 which noted that the elimination of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy is a primary concern, and resolving to intensify cooperation in economic and social development, with particular emphasis on the promotion of social justice and on the improvement of the living standards of the people in ASEAN, and

Recalling the decision of the Fifth ASEAN Summit Declaration of 1995 to improve the quality of life of the peoples of ASEAN by ensuring social



justice, improving the quality of and access to social services and working towards the reduction of poverty...

How does ASEAN in the context of the above statements define elimination of poverty? What aspects of development in the ASEAN region is social injustice prevalent? Also, how can social justice for landless and land-poor farmers be ensured? Such questions need to be operationalized within ASEAN.

Third, Food security is recognized by the ASEAN Ministers; however, landless farmers and their rights to land do not seem to be explicitly recognized in the Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Rural Development and Poverty Eradication. Thus, an advocacy for their rights should all the more be pursued with ASEAN. Notice the following statements:

Recalling that the 1996 Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action stated that poverty eradication is essential to improve access to food and that equitable access to staple food supplies should be ensured as poverty, hunger and malnutrition are some of the principal causes of accelerated migration from rural to urban areas in developing countries.

Furthermore, food security is espoused in the *The Hanoi Plan of Action*, which states that ASEAN aims to: “enhance food security and global competitiveness of ASEAN’s food, agriculture and forestry products...”. How does ASEAN define food security and food accessibility in this regard? ASEAN’s analysis on factors affecting food security in the ASEAN region would also help provide the foundation of agendas for engagement on land issues.

Fourth, what about access to land? Does ASEAN see this connection between food security and the lack of access to land, poor or unequitable land allocation and the lack of secure land tenure? The final statements below need to be checked with national governments to validate the perspectives and plans of government officials:

Recognizing that empowerment and active participation of rural population, particularly of the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, plays a critical role in rural development within the framework of national development strategy, structure and system of ASEAN countries.

...Do hereby declare our agreement to strengthen and coordinate ASEAN collaboration in rural development and poverty eradication by adopting the following as the Framework of the ASEAN Plan of Action on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication.

Fifth, connectivity among the ASEAN nations has been definitely enunciated as ASEAN recognizes the importance of databases and information sharing and in addressing transboundary issues, including food and agriculture. For instance, *The Hanoi Plan of Action* declares that ASEAN shall:



Enhance food security statistical database and information by establishing an ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS) which would allow Member States to effectively forecast, plan and manage food supplies and utilization of basic commodities...

Also, the same Plan of Action states that it will: “Strengthen ASEAN’s cooperation and joint approaches in addressing issues and problems affecting trade in the region’s food, agriculture and forestry products including environment and labor issues”.

However, what needs further validation is what the source of database for food security in the region is. Does ASEAN also use databases of farmers’ profile in the region from CSOs? Has there been an attempt to use as reference data on farmers who are landless or are land-poor in the ASEAN region? Are there statistics on landlessness or ownership of agricultural land distribution in the region? How may ASEAN’s database management be improved for better connectivity among the ASEAN member countries and partners especially on land issues and food security and on a broader sphere, on rural development issues?

Lastly, among the fundamental perspectives ASEAN ministers, we note the seemingly high premium they seemingly confer on civil society and in combating global or transboundary issues. At the 13th ASEAN Summit Meeting in 2007, the Summit declared:

We agreed that ASEAN, as a region, must do its part in addressing these issues. Through the ASEAN Declaration on Environmental Sustainability, we pledged to deepen cooperation in a wide range of activities, including combating transboundary environmental pollution, and ensuring the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources....

We noted the reports from the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, ASEAN Foundation and the ASEAN Civil Society Conference 2007 which was held in Singapore in October 2007. We renewed our commitment to build a people-oriented ASEAN that is responsive to the needs of its peoples, and welcomed the ongoing efforts to institutionalize a genuine process of dialogue between the Leaders and all quarters of society, with the ASEAN Secretariat playing a key role as facilitator. We noted the comments and suggestions made by the civil society groups, including the need to deepen economic integration and community-building efforts, pay attention to well-being and livelihood of vulnerable groups in society, promote democracy, good governance and human rights, effectively resolve the transboundary environmental pollution...

The declarations do not however specify how civil society organizations can participate in such discussions. In the promotion of sustainable management and use of soil, forest, coastal and marine environments, what premium does ASEAN put on access to land?



2. Important Mechanisms for Long-Term Engagement with ASEAN on Poverty Reduction, Rural Development, Food Security and Land Issues

Based on the analysis of available documents, among the mechanisms / structures listed below, Track II appears to be the most feasible and strategic entry/ window for a regional civil society-led, specifically for academic think tanks or research groups' engagement with ASEAN on land issues. The ANGOC-LandWatch study (2008) however identified the Ministerial Meeting as the mechanism to eventually engage with as verified initially with Ambassador Rosario Manalo, a member of the High Level Task Force on the ASEAN Charter, a key informant for the case study. The Ministerial Meeting may still be a point of engagement after a regional academic think tank or research group has been accredited with Track II.

Further, other structures and mechanisms at the ASEAN may also be explored by regional civil society organizations for conducting possible high or medium-level policy dialogues with ASEAN to which they may bring forth issues on land, poverty eradication and rural development in general, and engage on a in particular. However, these structures have to be further studied in depth to identify the focal points or coordinators at the member-country level. Below is a list of some of these mechanisms and structures.

2.1 ASEAN Summit

This is the highest decision-making organ of ASEAN is the Meeting of the ASEAN Heads of State and Government. The ASEAN Summit used to be convened every three years, with informal meetings in between, but since 2001, the Summit meetings have been conducted annually.

2.2 ASEAN Ministerial Meetings (AMM)

An annual meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers is regularly scheduled. The other ministerial meetings which are held regularly: agriculture and forestry, economics, energy, environment, finance, higher education, information, investment, labor, law, regional haze, rural development and poverty alleviation, science and technology, social welfare, transnational crime, transportation, tourism, youth, as well as meetings of the ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) Council, and the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) Council.

2.3 Committees of Senior Officials, and Technical Groups

Supporting these ministerial bodies are 29 committees of senior officials and 122 technical working groups. The committees of senior officials are called Senior Officials Meetings (SOM), meeting regularly during the year or on an ad hoc basis preparing for events or other higher-level meetings.

Pertinent to the work on social development and poverty eradication has been the Senior Officials Meetings on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (SOMRDPE) and the Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Social Welfare (AMRSW) or SOM on Social Welfare. Are these two mechanisms still functional? How can civil society groups engage in a dialogue with these two? How can civil society make inputs or contributions? These should be further investigated.



2.4 The Areas of Cooperation

While these areas of cooperation have been mentioned in the past, their functionality, mechanisms, policies and structures need to be deciphered and reassessed. Furthermore, it should be determined why these are called Areas of Cooperation. How are they different from the other working groups with ASEAN? What are their functions? Do these ‘areas of cooperation’ still exist?

There are four major areas of cooperation under ASEAN framework, namely:

1. Political and Security Cooperation;
2. Economic Cooperation;
3. Functional Cooperation; and
4. Development Cooperation.

Since the articulation of the ASEAN Vision 2020 in 1997 and the adoption of the Hanoi Plan of Action (HPA) in 1998, ASEAN had entered into more systematic process of development through cooperation planning and programme implementation. The HPA is the first of a series of plans of action building up to the realisation of the goals of the Vision. It contains further articulation of ASEAN development objectives and listed more specific goals to be attained within the HPA’s effective period of 1998-2004. According to the website of the ASEAN Secretariat (downloaded in 2006), “with such a structure in ASEAN development direction, more systematic achievement of these development goals can now be pursued through coordinated implementation of ASEAN cooperation activities”(<http://www.aseansec.org/14418.htm>)

Some of the questions worth probing are the following: What does each of the areas of cooperation cover? Where would discussions / agenda on land issues fall in the cooperations mentioned above? More importantly, the effectiveness of formulating such types of cooperation in terms of implementing the Vision 2020 of ASEAN based on officially documents will have to be assessed.

2.5 The Functional Cooperations

The ASEAN leaders resolved in 1995 to elevate ‘functional cooperation’ to a ‘higher plane’. The ‘Framework for Elevating Functional Cooperation to a Higher Plane’ was adopted in 1996 with a theme: “Shared prosperity through human development, technological competitiveness and social cohesiveness”. Among others, the Areas of Functional Cooperation include:

- I. Poverty Eradication (Committee on Poverty Eradication guided by the Plan of Action on ASEAN Rural Development and Poverty Eradication)
- II. Social Development: (Committee on Social Development guided by the Plan of Action on Social Development and the Hanoi Plan of Action)

Again, it is important to determine whether the two areas under the Functional Cooperation Division still exist. Who are the focal points in the mentioned Committees for each of these two (i.e. Poverty Eradication and Social Development)? What is the governing body composed of?



2.6 The ASEAN-Bilateral Aid Track supportive of Agricultural and Rural Development

ASEAN has Dialogue Partners, supportive of agricultural and rural development, which can also be windows for engagement through a bilateral ODA-link, such as the ASEAN-Japan Dialogue and the ASEAN-Australia Dialogue.

3. Possible Mechanisms for Civil Society Engagements with the ASEAN

As of 2001, there were a total 56 NGOs accredited to ASEAN (ICSW Briefing paper 2001). Many of the NGOs are technical-oriented or special-interest groups. Only a few are directly related to the work on social development. ASEAN as an organization has yet to set a track record of working with civil society organizations, especially in the development of plans of action and decision-making at all levels. The number of accredited NGOs could have already increased as of today. ASEAN has an existing system of accreditation of civil society organizations. For a regional advocacy on land rights, the lead organization needs to first acquire accreditation with ASEAN (details on system mentioned above).

3.1 Parallel or advisory structures in the ASEAN: Possible Civil Society Engagements with the ASEAN

3.1.1 TRACK II

A second level of work and discussions has been in effect within ASEAN in the form of TRACK II organisations composed of mostly of academics, think tanks and scholars, media, business people and government officials in their private capacity. Most of the works of track II officials are on foreign affairs policies, regional peace and security issues and the promotion of confidence building measures. One of the initiatives of Track II related to civil society is ASEAN People's Assembly, which is described further below.

3.1.2 Eminent Persons Group (EPG)

The ASEAN Eminent Persons Group (EPG) is a group of prominent citizens from the member countries, tasked to create the charter of the ASEAN community. The group was formed on December 12, 2005, through the 11th ASEAN Summit Declaration in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The mandate of the group was to examine and review the ASEAN structure, areas of cooperation, principles and goals contained in agreements, treaties and declarations over the last 38 years; and to provide the ASEAN leaders with policy guidelines on the drafting of the ASEAN charter. Future research could explore the possibility of the EPG as a venue for CSO contributions and inputs, if it is still functional.

3.1.3 ASEAN Engagements with Civil Society

In 2000, ASEAN had initiated a limited engagement with civil society organizations, in the form of the annual ASEAN People's Assembly (APA). Initially conceived and promoted in the early 1990s, the APA was meant to allow CSOs to participate in the work of ASEAN. After the idea for APA had received the approval at both Track One and Track Two levels, the 1st ASEAN People's Assembly (APA1) was organized by institutes affiliated with ASEAN. During the 4th Informal ASEAN



Summit held in November 2000 in Singapore, about 300 CSO/NGO representatives participated in this inaugural ASEAN meeting of civil society groups. APA1 was organized on the basis that community building in ASEAN must include all sectors of society. The first Assembly was, therefore, perceived as the starting point for ASEAN to increase its transparency and relevance to the citizens of the region.

The APA was an annual assembly convened by the Track II members of the Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) network from 2000 to 2007. The ISIS through the APA, envisioned their role of bridging civil society/Track III on the one hand, with ASEAN and its member governments/Track I on the other. The annual APA process brought together delegates from these three sectors (governments, academe, civil society) from the ten member countries of ASEAN, dialoguing on a range of issues such as human rights, peace, Burma, agriculture, labor, migration, among others (Lopa, 2012). However, the growing discontent among CSOs in APA processes led to APA's hiatus in later years. Apart from ASEAN-ISIS led activities, such as the now defunct APA, it must also be noted that the Working Group on ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism was established to forward the cause of human rights protection and promotion in the region. Some of the issues to deal with may include determining the level at which NGOs/CSOs may be more effective in engaging the ASEAN? An in-depth future study needs to address how ASEAN fundamentally perceive its engagements with the civil society.

3.2 Parallel Meetings, Regional Working Groups and Other Initiatives by Civil Society Organizations for Engaging the ASEAN

The ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC), also known as the ASEAN Peoples' Forum (APF), is held independently by the ASEAN Chair country in advance of, and parallel to, the official ASEAN Summit, which is attended by ASEAN and regional leaders. The first ACSC/APF took place in Malaysia in 2005, upon the initiative of Malaysia, which served as head of the ASEAN Standing Committee.. Since then it has taken place in the Philippines (2006), Singapore (2007), Thailand (2009), Vietnam (2010), Indonesia (2011), Cambodia (2012), Brunei (2013) and this year in Myanmar (2014). The 10th ACSC/APF took place on 21 – 23 March 2014 at the Myanmar Convention Center in Yangon, Myanmar. The ACSC became an alternative to the APA.

It was also during the chairmanship of Malaysia that the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the ASEAN Charter was adopted, with an encouragement of CSOs in the region to participate in crafting the regional grouping's Constitution. The Solidarity for Southeast Asian Peoples' Advocacies (SAPA) was then established in 2006. SAPA is a network of CSOs, trade unions, and grassroots organizations led by Focus on the Global South, the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM- ASIA), South East Asian Committee for Advocacy (SEACA), Third World Network (TWN), and the Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (AsiaDHRRA). It is "an open platform for consultation, cooperation, and coordination between ASEAN social movements and civil society organizations including NGOs, people's organizations, and trade unions that are engaged in action,



advocacy, and lobbying at the level of intergovernmental processes and organizations” (Rillorta 2007, p.15). Other mechanisms on the part of CSOs to engage the ASEAN include SAPA’s various working groups and task forces, along with other regional groups working on thematic issues, such as human rights, labor and migrants, trade, extractive industries, environment/climate change/ climate justice, gender and child rights, indigenous peoples, disabled people, freedom of information, and others.

Outside SAPA and the ACSC/APF, other civil society organizations-initiated engagements with the ASEAN are the South East Asia People’s Center (SEAPC), a regional center which conducts briefing on various themes (such as human rights, the issue in Burma, trade, agriculture and rural development, peace and conflict, extractive industries) for the ASEAN Committee for Permanent Representatives, the ASEAN diplomatic community, and the ASEAN Secretariat (Lopa, 2012). Other CSO initiatives include secondments, such as Oxfam International’s staff secondment to the ASEAN Secretariat for Disaster Management and Preparedness,

4. Summary of Issues, Agenda, and Institutions to Engage at ASEAN on Land Rights and Issues

The fundamental issues with regard to ASEAN’s perspectives and views on land, food security and rural development in general that need to be clarified with ASEAN are the following:

4.1 Respect for property rights as fundamental recognition of human rights

Human rights and fundamental freedoms should include right to own property, such as land. Are land rights considered a fundamental right by ASEAN?

A declaration or statement safeguarding the rights of landless or “land-poor” farmers needs to be formulated at ASEAN.

4.2 Rural development, poverty reduction and social justice: how ensured?

Although ASEAN has produced a document on the Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Rural Development and Poverty Eradication, there is no explicit definition for Rural Development (RD) and Poverty Eradication (PE). The concept of social justice, though espoused in the Ministerial Understanding, is also not defined in detail. At the same time, there is no official documentation on whether RD and PE efforts by ASEAN have been effective. Thus, there is need to closely monitor the status of implementation of the Plans of Actions on RD and PE and assess ASEAN’s capacity to monitor such Plans.

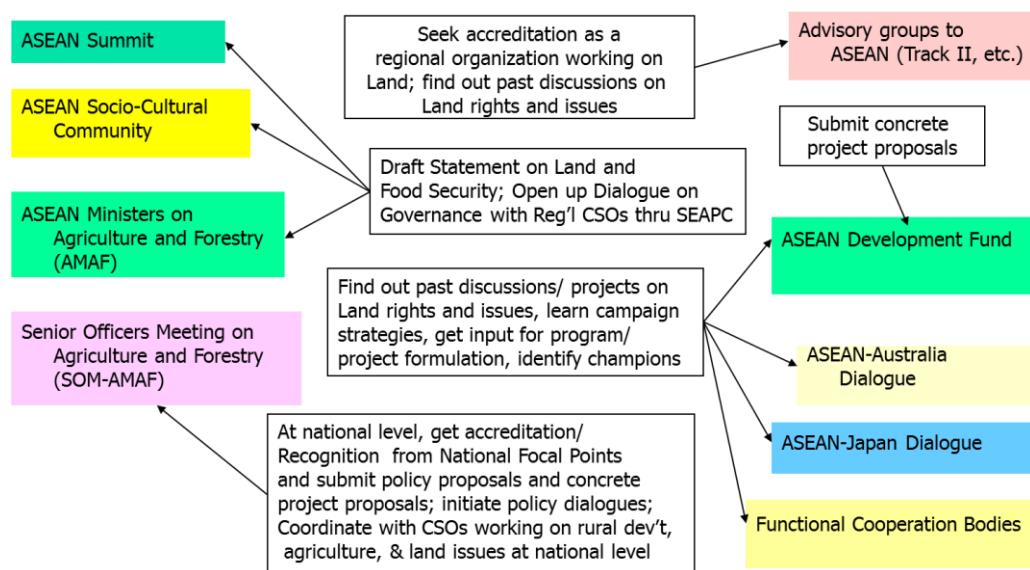
4.3 Food security as fundamental to poverty eradication: can farmers be ever secure themselves? Food security is recognized by the ASEAN Ministers; however, landless farmers and their rights to land do not seem to be explicitly recognized in the Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Rural Development and Poverty Eradication. Thus, an advocacy for their rights should all the more be pursued with ASEAN. At the same time, there is also need to strengthen information and database management in the region. For instance, operationally, what is the source of database



for food security in the region? More fundamentally, the dominant economic growth framework surrounding ASEAN's concepts of Energy, Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development at the ASEAN needs to be challenged in order to ensure safeguards for marginalized groups such as the landless poor and the food insecure groups in the Region.

4.5 Key Structures / Focal Points to Engage at ASEAN and Proposed Practical Steps and Talking Points at ASEAN for an Advocacy on Land Issues and Food Security

The diagram below (Figure 2) shows the convergence of the practical activities to be undertaken with each key focal point at the ASEAN for a regional advocacy on land rights and issues to be led by an academic regional alliance of public administration and governance scholars in collaboration of a regional community of practitioners.



Source: Adapted from the diagram constructed by F.L. Diola for ANGOC's Scoping Study on Land Rights and ASEAN. June 2008

Figure 2. Activities that may be Pursued with Each Focal Point at ASEAN

Way forward: Harnessing CPA for Food Security and Land Issues

The discussion above, especially the relevance of Comparative Public Administration and Development Administration to our community of scholars and community of practitioners, points to the importance of forming an alliance of researchers in ASEAN to do the following:

1. Agree on priority development issues to study in the Region.
2. Agree on possible country framework and indicators to study the priority development issues in the context of public administration and related disciplines.
3. Agree to conduct a Regional Conference in the future to present country



studies on idiosyncratic features of public administration and governance of programs and projects pertaining to identified development issues, which can be the bases for a comparative public administration study towards theory-building and policy recommendations or possible intergovernmental treaties in the Southeast Asian Region.

Summary

In this paper, Development Administration and Comparative Public Administration (CPA) are revisited and their relevance in the light of impinging development issues beyond national boundaries faced by societies are elucidated in this paper. DA and CPA are essential when analyzing development issues beyond national borders and how public administration systems will respond to such issues as land and food insecurity. As recognized earlier, the primary objective of development administration is to strengthen the administrative machinery which would bring about socio-economic development. The case study presented in the paper illustrates how a regional framework may help establish connectivity among civil society groups including academic think tanks in the region for engaging the ASEAN to improve governance on land and food security programs or projects and how agendas for engaging national focal points may be shaped.

Through regional connectivity among academic think tanks, other civil society organizations with active engagement with ASEAN and the general public, generalizations may be made regarding organization and management theories spanning different boundaries, using land and food security as development context in the Southeast Asian region. Other priority development issues may however be identified as contexts for future researches.

Following the essence of Comparative Public Administration and to advance this subfield, the aim of these future researches is to get a good grounding on national system and other life forms' idiosyncrasies (based on Clegg and Gray's configuration of postmodernism in organization and management theory) to discover the dynamics and mental models of collaborating for action on the key development issues mentioned here. Some generalizations or emerging theories may thus generally point to connectivity and collaboration, perhaps in the areas of institutional arrangements, information and exchange mechanisms, and rules of engagement. Hence, we are resolved that one of the main objectives of the school of comparative public administration is to build a theory of 'public administration for development', which can be pursued through an analysis or through propositions about organization and management or administration of public agencies of different nations using different development contexts.

In future studies we want to see how Chandler and Plano's motivations for CPA can be adopted in the field as we pursue action-oriented researches. The motivations mentioned by these scholars are especially on the search for theory; the urge for practical application; the incidental contribution of the broader field of



comparative politics; enthusiasts and practitioners of administrative law; and the comparative analysis of ongoing problems of public administration.

Again, since the scope of CPA is quite vast, spanning across different levels of institutions, a “helicopter view” should be taken pointing to the imperative for both national and international institutions to be strengthened. In line with this, as suggested by Sapru in his *Development Administration* book, new modalities can be forged for concerted action to improve public administration for development -- at both the theoretical and practical dimensions. We wish to abide by Sapru’s exhortation that it will be quite useful to establish a network of these institutions to enable flow of information and provide opportunities for collaboration on projects. As enunciated early on in this paper, this in a nutshell is the idea of connectivity among civil society organizations in general, a potent sector in governance of development.

As support organization and management infrastructure, a sound management information system (MIS) should be part of capacity building and strengthening of organizational networks as they carry out development work. Connectivity through MIS will be very significant in studies on collaborative governance especially among countries in regional blocs such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

At the pragmatic level, the purpose of CPA is to elucidate learnings and best practices from experiences in several countries regarding a development issue. We envision that such learnings will also aid legislation and serve as bases for treaties and agreements. At the theoretic level, we aim to contribute fundamentally to the formation of a ‘science’ (body of knowledge) of administration from which to draw ideas for ways of doing things. The crux of this ‘science’ is to initially come up with a common framework for analyzing a particular development by which scholars can come to understand and connect with each other both in theory and practice.

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