

## **Abstract**

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### **Health insurance in Vietnam: The political rationale of welfare development**

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Over the last two decades, scholars from around the world have debated what kind of welfare regimes might develop in the emerging economies of Southeast Asia. Focusing on the Vietnamese case, I will argue that the most recent changes in health insurance policy of the national government – such as the introduction of the health care fund for the poor and the voluntary health insurance as well as the end of co-payment – can best be explained by the need of the government to bolster its image amongst threats from different societal groups, the institutional setting (especially the level of decentralisation) and the controversies among the policy network.

In the paper, I will put a special emphasis on a political institutionalist explanation instead of socioeconomic, international, or power-resource based approaches. Secondly, I utilize policy-network analysis to show how decision-making and implementation of health insurance policy has become a multi-layered process which includes various governmental and non-governmental actors at both the national and local levels in Vietnam.