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ATENEO STUDENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE ON EUROPEAN & INTERNATIONAL STUDIES CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

EDITED BY

DR. MANUEL R. ENVERGA III



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Foreword

Dr. Manuel R. Enverga III

Director, European Studies Program

As the anthropologist and ethnologist Claude Lévi-Strauss once observed, “The scientist is not a person who gives the right answers, he is one who asks the right questions.” This insight perfectly captures the spirit of this conference, which is designed not merely as a venue for presenting research but as an academic forum where students are encouraged to engage critically with ideas, ask new questions, and refine their work through meaningful dialogue.

This volume marks a significant milestone in the development of student research in European and international studies in the Philippines. For the first time, the Ateneo European and International Studies Student Research Conference has welcomed student researchers from universities beyond Ateneo de Manila University. We are honored to have hosted participants from institutions across Metro Manila and other regions of the country, with one presenter traveling from Taipei to join us. This expansion reflects a growing interest in European and international studies and the importance of fostering inclusive spaces for academic exchange.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Miriam College, whose students contributed several thought-provoking presentations and whose faculty members served as panel moderators. We also thank all participating universities for supporting their students in this endeavor, and we are grateful to the European Studies Association of the Philippines for their assistance in making this event possible.

The vision of this conference is to provide a supportive academic environment where students can share their research and receive valuable feedback from experts outside their own institutions. Opportunities for this kind of engagement remain limited in the Philippines, especially in European and international studies, making this conference a vital platform for nurturing emerging scholars.

The publication of this proceedings volume serves as a lasting record of the conference. It affirms the distinctiveness and importance of this event, and we are proud to share the work presented here. We thank all the students, faculty, organizers, and support staff whose efforts made the conference a success, and we look forward to continuing this important initiative with the second edition in 2026.

1st Ateneo European and International Studies Student Research Conference Program

March 22, 2025, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Metro Manila

Schedule of Panels

09:30-10:00 - Registration

10:00-10:20 - Opening

10:30-11:30 - Panel 1 & 2

11:30-12:30 - Panel 3 & 4

12:30-13:30 - Break

13:30-14:30 - Panel 5 & 6

14:30-15:30 - Panel 7 & 8

15:30-16:00 - Closing

Panel 1: Student Mobility (Moderator: Manuel R. Enverga III) Berchmans Hall 105

“Education as a Soft Power Source: The Role of International Education in Promoting Australia’s Influence in India”

Samantha Louise Yoingco (Miriam College)

“Shaping Perceptions: Erasmus Mundus Program’s Influence on its Filipino Students’ Views of the European Union’s Education, Culture, and Global Affairs”

Reignmay P. Aragon (De La Salle University)

“From Croissants to Careers: How Sojourns in France Shape Students' Job Aspirations and Migration Decisions”

Kassandra Deguito and Katarina Vengco (Ateneo de Manila University)

Panel 2: Globalization and Popular Culture (A) (Moderator: Aron L. Garchitorena) Faber Hall 302

“The Normative Power of SINGOs (Sports International Non-Governmental Organizations)”

Nathaniel Nicolai Bermoy and Mishaël Montaner (Ateneo de Manila University)

“...let us both learn together. All things can be conjoined.”: The Cross-Cultural Prominence of European Representation in Video Games

Levi Tirona (Ateneo de Manila University)

“Taste of Home Abroad: Jollibee's Glocalization in Europe”

Sofia Carballo and Vida Misa (Ateneo de Manila University)

**Panel 3: Economic Migration (Moderator: Ma. Vhiktoria V. Siva)
Berchmans Hall 105**

“The Othering of Non-European Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers in Europe”

Dominique Althea L. Policarpio,
Bianca Ferrer,
Danielle Noche (Miriam College)

“Return Migration of Filipino Migrants from Italy: Impact on Economic Stability and Post-Return Livelihood”

Erin Cariaso and Kezia Martinez (Ateneo de Manila University)

“Halo-hallo! Identities: A Comparative Analysis of Diaspora Identity and Subsequent Assimilation Among Overseas Filipino Workers and Permanent Filipino Residents in Germany”

Juan Egie Follero and Jose Lorenzo Villaroman (Ateneo de Manila University)

**Panel 4: Public Policy and their Implications (A) (Moderator: Javier Rico Israel R. Tionloc)
Faber Hall 302**

“Unveiling Ngenger: Tradition's Grip on Indonesia's Domestic Workers and the Debate Surrounding the 2020 Domestic Workers Bill of Rights”

Khrissarah Charlize M. Yap (Miriam College)

“Philippines vs. EU: A comparative Analysis on the Influence of Social Class on Career Pathways and Support Networks In the Career Progression of Elite Golfers”

Maria Fianza and Enzo Samson (Ateneo de Manila University)

“Rethinking Human Security as an Explanatory Tool to Understand a ‘Failed State?’: A Case Study of the Shan People in Myanmar”

Ma. Angelica Therese B. Boquiren,
Irish Shayne M. Francisco, and
Maureen R. Rosario (Miriam College)

Panel 5: Public Policy and their Implications (B) (Moderator: Kurt Benjamin M. Abalos)

CTC 105

“Seeing the Unseen: A Vision for Accessible Pharmaceutical Information in the Philippines”

Nicole Calisang and Anci Tanking (Ateneo De Manila University)

“The Impact of Traffic Calming Measures on Urban Traffic Accidents and EU Sustainable Transportation Policies”

Anya De Los Santos (Ateneo de Manila University)

“Putnam’s Two-Level Game and Democratic Backsliding: A Comparative Study of Poland and Hungary’s Article 7 TEU Proceedings”

Eunice G. Dapitan (Far Eastern University)

Panel 6: Peace and Conflict in a Multipolar World (A) (Moderator: Vincent Carlo L. Legara)

Faber Hall 302

“Changes to France’s Defense and Security Context: Concerns, Challenges, and Responses of the French Government, 1991 to 2024”

Alejandro Gabriel D. Espino (De La Salle University)

“A Case Study on the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework’s Accord on Vietnam’s Foreign Economic Policy vis-à-vis the People’s Republic of China from 2021 to 2023”

Germaine T. Gonzales (University of Santo Tomas)

“The Role of the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) and its 2017 Jeddah Amendment (DCoC/JA) in Shaping the Maritime Regional Security Complex of the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden”

Danielle M. Noche,
Dominique Althea Policarpio,
Zoe Nicola Verzo (Mirriam College)

Panel 7: Peace and Conflict in a Multipolar World (B) (Moderator: Ian Niccolo Tobia)

Faber Hall, 302

“The Growing Role of ASEAN-EU Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific amid Increasing US-PRC Tensions”

Kurt Benjamin M. Abalos (National Tsing Hua University)

“The EU’s Shift from Normative Power to Connectivity”

Phoenix Anne Margarete L. Beronio (Ateneo de Manila University)

“The Unilateral Import Ban of Poland and its Implications to Ukraine’s Accession Application to the European Union”

Cesar Ian Alfara Quiñones (Xavier University)

Panel 8: Globalization and Popular Culture (B) (Moderator: Aron L. Garchitorena)

CTC 105

“Protest Music in France and the Philippines”

Dyne Julia H. Tribunal and Julia R. Solomon (Ateneo de Manila University)

“K-Pop and European Brands”

Blessie Anne V. Arellano (Ateneo de Manila University)

“A Comparative Analysis on the Tourism Policies of Italy and the Philippines and their Implications on Local Sustainability”

Dreibee Criste and Aliana Solis (Ateneo de Manila University)

Shifting Approaches to Global Actorness: Analyzing the 2016 Global Strategy and the Joint Communication on the Global Gateway Project to See the Shift from Normative Power to Connectivity

Phoenix Anne Margarette L. Beronio

European Studies Program, Dr. Rosita G. Leong School of Social Sciences, Ateneo de Manila University

Introduction

By applying thematic analysis to the 2016 Global Strategy and the Joint Communication on the Global Gateway Project, the paper looks at how the EU's approach to achieving global actorness has begun to shift from normative power to connectivity, which is primarily concerned with navigating the networked nature of global politics. Following Bretherton and Vogler's (2006) framework for global actorness, the paper shows that the 2016 Global Strategy is where the EU first began articulating its intention to respond to the demands of connectivity, which is often expressed by allusions to the increasing complexity and networked nature of global politics, as well as managing interdependence. Furthermore, it showed that the Global Gateway Project is the policy instrument created to operationalize the objectives stated in the 2016 Global Strategy, specifically "reaching out to new players and exploring new formats." These documents show how the EU is assessing its opportunities and adjusting its capacity, which are pillars of global actorness, according to Bretherton and Vogler. Examining the shift from normative power to connectivity shows how the EU is reshaping its approach to global actorness and thereby its approach to its external relations.

Challenges to EU Normative Power

2016 was the year when the pitfalls of globalization became evident. Globalization is operationalized, not merely by the volume of connections, but by the nature, quality, and scale — i.e., the breadth and depth — of those connections. This is encapsulated by the concept of connectedness. Some links are assets, while others are vulnerabilities. Furthermore, connectedness was gaining primacy in global affairs, and this was poised to make the EU's prevailing approach to external relations, normative power, inadequate. Three years after the launch of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, it became clear that value alignment through norm diffusion does not always facilitate partnerships. Beyond accessing the advanced economies comprising the single European market, states also want to optimize access to neighbouring markets and gain access to the wider global market, objectives to which the BRI's invocations of the Silk Road appeal. Furthermore, it purports to offer this without conditionality and does not hinge third states' participation upon the

convergence of their norms with those of China. For the BRI, optimum and maximum market access is the value. (Anwar, 2019; Cai, 2017; Schneider, 2021)

This represents a displacement of norms in the process of facilitating partnerships. If conditionality, measured by the convergence of norms, is no longer a prerequisite for the attainment of development assistance or participation in development cooperation, then how suitable or adequate is the EU's normative power for navigating the emergent state of global affairs? The BRI's self-drawn comparison to the Silk Road reveals an intention to ease and control the path for doing business (Khanna, 2018). This becomes apparent in the ensuing preoccupation with dispute resolution among participants in the BRI (Gu, 2019; Wang & Sharma, 2021). In addition to locating accountability in such a sprawling project, it also forces the identification of an arbiter. The BRI's objective of optimizing market access signifies China's response to a new phase in globalization and the interdependence that perpetuates it.

This new phase of globalization challenges the EU's existing instruments for navigating global politics. In the 2016 Global Strategy (European Commission, p. 7), the EU paints a "more connected, contested and complex world," obliging it to strengthen its partnerships by connecting to "new players and exploring new formats." It also concedes that, in such a fragile world, soft power is insufficient, all while the steady stream of disruptive technology, such as artificial intelligence, heightens the importance of developing and upholding rules to ensure security and "sustainable access to the global commons" (European Commission, 2016, p. 8). Also in the 2016 Global Strategy, the EU expresses its interest in optimizing and maximizing market access by stating that the prosperity of the Union relies on "an open and fair international economic system and sustainable access to the global commons." It must therefore manage interdependence by engaging with the wider world.

The EU's Response

These assessments of global politics and concerns about reaping the benefits of interdependence, while mitigating its pitfalls, show the EU's growing cognizance of connectivity. Some definitions of connectivity focus on infrastructure, mostly physical and digital, and how these are increasingly shaping international relations because they facilitate the flow of goods, services, people, and ideas (Khanna, 2016). This definition emphasizes the importance of supply and value chains to shaping global politics, which hearkens to the BRI's focus on building a network of trade routes to improve the ease of doing business and maximize market access. Moreover, this definition implies that interdependent states constitute a networked world where successful states are those that are capable of governing or influencing the supply chain (Leonard, 2021; Leonard & European Council on Foreign Relations, 2016). Meanwhile, there are definitions of connectivity that focus on the relationship between states. Connectivity refers to the coexistence of multiple orders in an international system. (Bull, 1977; Hurrell, 2007; Flockhart, 2016) These two definitions show

that connectivity is ultimately the deep interdependence and interconnectedness between nations and regions (Gaens et. al., 2023). Thus, connectivity is not merely the collection of links between polities, nor is it simply the interdependence between polities, because it also accounts for the nature, quality, and scale of these links and interdependencies. The study by Gaens et. al. shows this along two axes: the first is the sphere of connectivity, which essentially refers to the policy areas involved, while the second is the manner or style of conducting connectivity, which they call logic.

Connectivity, however, is not merely the end but the means. Connectivity can be situated within the broader objective of reshaping global actorness. Defining the EU's global actorness, or its capacity to demonstrate the deliberate nature of its political behaviour (Cosgrove & Twitchett, 1971; Rhinard & Sjöstedt, 2019; Sjöstedt, 1977; Guske & Jacob, 2019), otherwise simply known as agency, reveals something about the status of the integration project, given the complex history of the EU's approach to foreign affairs. Connectivity is one of the ways through which the EU can reshape its global actorness, and this is demonstrated by Bretherton and Vogler's (2006) framework for global actorness, which asserts that there are three pillars required for attaining this: opportunity, presence, and capacity. Opportunity refers to the external environment that a polity must navigate. The prevailing state of external affairs triggers an assessment of a polity's existing capabilities, which they call presence, and which subsequently forms the basis for the formulation of new policy instruments, which they call capacity.

Bretherton and Vogler's Framework for Global Actorness

The importance of changes in global politics to the EU's efforts to build its competence for external relations is at the core of Bretherton and Vogler's framework for global actorness. (Hague Summit Declaration, 1969; Bindi, 2010; Freire et. al., 2022) This is because changes in the external environment trigger assessments of existing capabilities and force a polity to reflect on whether they are capable of addressing the demands arising from the changes in global politics. Bretherton and Vogler call the existing capabilities undergoing reassessment a global actor's presence. Both opportunity and capacity form the basis for the formulation of new policy instruments, which are called capacity.

This builds on Sjöstedt's (1977) definition of actorness as "the capacity to behave actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in the international system." Whereas Sjöstedt's definition focuses on a polity's behavior relative to other actors, Bretherton and Vogler's framework focuses on a polity's capability of being deliberate and strategic relative to the international system and the changes therein. The importance of the external environment to determining the strategy for doing so means that it is crucial to understand how the EU perceives global politics. By applying thematic analysis to the 2016 Global Strategy and the Joint Communication on the Global Gateway Project, the EU's focus on connectivity reveals the pressure exerted on its existing normative power, requiring it to reshape its rule-setting capabilities to attain global actorness in the connectivity-driven

international system. An interpretative form of analysis, thematic analysis is based on the identification of recurring themes or patterns in data (Clarke, Braun & Hayfield, 2015). This process was conducted using the software Atlas.ti, which facilitated the identification and tabulation of themes salient to Bretherton and Vogler's framework.

The Shift from Normative Power to Connectivity

The 2016 Global Strategy

The 2016 Global Strategy makes it clear that the EU is responding to the emerging challenges arising from a “more connected, contested and complex world.” The foremost challenges involve infrastructure and supply chains, which hearken to definitions of connectivity that focus on the structures and arrangements that facilitate trade. The EU articulates the links between trade and investment, value and supply chains, and secure sea routes.

First, the EU notes that most of the economic growth in the global marketplace, which relies on intricate global value and supply chains, is projected to occur outside of the Union. Second, it points out that the global nature of the marketplace is made possible by the efficient transportation of various goods and services through ocean and sea routes that are critical for the continuity of global trade and access to natural resources. This is why it becomes even more important to engage in multilateralism to secure an open and fair economic system. (European Commission, pp. 14-15)

Securing ocean and sea routes will require advanced intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities, in which the EU must invest. Furthermore, the digitalization of nearly every sector means that the EU must also “invest in its digital capabilities to secure data, networks, and critical infrastructure” within the Union's digital space (European Commission, 2016, p. 45). These concerns are reflective of Khanna's (2016) and Leonard's (2016, 2021) definitions of connectivity. For them, connectivity is what enables and comprises global trade and investment. They are preoccupied with how the connections between polities that have made globalization possible ultimately amount to the global value and supply chains passing through the ocean and sea routes comprising global economic activity.

The Global Gateway Project

The previous section shows that the EU is responding to a new era in global politics. According to Bretherton and Vogler's (2006) framework, the assessment of opportunity and presence, or existing capabilities, must be accompanied by the development of capacity. By this, they mean a corresponding policy instrument to meet the demands arising from the operative assessment of global politics. The Global Gateway Project (GGP) is the capacity developed by the EU to address its aforementioned concerns involving infrastructure, supply chains, and gaps in its normative power.

Whereas the 2016 Global Strategy points out the vulnerabilities or the gaps in existing infrastructure, the GGP will facilitate the financing of projects designed to improve the infrastructure in developing economies (European Commission, 2021, p. 7). These also address the EU's concerns about the changing structure of the international system. Its preoccupation with the opportunities, vulnerabilities, and challenges arising from the deepening and increasingly complex interdependencies among polities shows that its assessment of global politics has gone beyond balance of power concerns. The EU is more concerned with overlapping interdependencies and how they affect the pursuit of interest, rather than competition. As such, it becomes clear that it seeks to navigate the connectivity-driven global politics that it perceives. By improving the infrastructure of its neighbors and partners, the EU improves their capacity to respond to the pressures exerted by connectivity on their economies.

Conclusion

These documents show how the EU is assessing its opportunities, building on its presence, and adjusting its capacity, which are pillars of global actorness, according to Bretherton and Vogler (2006). Examining the shift from normative power to connectivity shows how the EU is reshaping its approach to global actorness and thereby its approach to its external relations. Bretherton and Vogler's framework for global actorness can explain how understandings of the external environment catalyze or inform strategies for obtaining global actorness. Furthermore, their framework is an instrument that allows for the consistent profiling of the EU's behavior in global politics. Whereas other frameworks for global actorness focus on whether the EU hits its marks or accomplishes its relevant objectives, Bretherton and Vogler's framework focuses on tracing the process of how the EU decides on a strategy for global actorness.

Connectivity captures the complexity and the depth of the problems that it seeks to address when it raises concerns about the adequacy of infrastructure and how it can facilitate the flow of goods, services, people, and ideas (Khanna, 2016). The EU's focus on improving its capacity to influence regulations involving the construction of infrastructure to improve and preserve value and supply chains, not only builds on its character as a normative power, but also aligns with Leonard's (2016, 2021) assertion that a networked world requires networked powers, i.e., those that are capable of governing or influencing the supply chain. In addition, making connectivity an operative factor in the EU's conduct of external relations also addresses the EU's anxieties about the more apparent challenges arising from a multi-order world (Flockhart, 2023). Furthermore, responding to the demand of connectivity by enabling the EU's neighbors and partners to enhance their capacity to build and manage adequate infrastructure is an adequate response to assertions that normative power is coercive (Karjalainen, 2023; Lenz, 2013; Merlingen, 2007) and slows down or impedes norm diffusion, such as competition or localization (Romanova, 2016; Hoang, 2016).

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Holding the world together: EU's support for ASEAN's 'Centrality'

Kurt Benjamin M. Abalos

Introduction

Amid increasing tensions between the United States of America (USA) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the Indo-Pacific and around the world, it is important to note that the international order does not revolve around them alone. The study highlights the role of major regional organizations in keeping stability and order around the world. Similar to some elements of the Cold War, it is worth asking how does the increasing cooperation of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU) counter the dividing effects of increasing tensions between the world's top two economies. Through the lens of Bandyopadhyaya's (1977) understanding of the *Non-Aligned Movement*(NAM), the study will analyze statements and publications of either regional organization's position on the Indo-Pacific.

In 2022, both major regional organizations celebrated 45 years of official diplomatic relations and have since become "Strategic Partners" (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2019; European Union External Action, 2020; Binder, 2020; Nicolas, 2021; Son, 2017). The ASEAN-EU relationship continues to deepen as both regional organizations seek to strengthen their development and institutions with each other's support, but in the shadow of hegemonic competition. For the EU, the regional bloc uses its Open Strategic Autonomy (OSA) as its framework to counter foreign interference (Akgüç, 2021; Black & Morrison, 2021). Likewise, ASEAN continues to be a friend to all and has strongly advocated its 'Centrality' in the region. Hence, it is worth noting that both ASEAN and the EU have a similar position on approaching the increasing tensions of the US-PRC rivalry.

Literature Review

From the ashes of WWII, the world entered the ideologically charged Cold War (Westad, 2000). As the USA and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) sought to promote their respective ideologies, the hegemons were bound to compete against one another. Consequently, smaller states were left with little room to exercise their agency and sovereignty as supposed equal stakeholders (Nehring 2012; Westad 2000). Although the NAM was meant to hedge against the influence of either hegemon, the movement would eventually fail as many countries aligned themselves.

Nowadays, there is much focus on the *Balance of Power* between the world's two largest economies over various issues. However, unlike the decades of the Cold War, the world is in a different setting of intricate economic interdependence. Acharya (2017a) stressed that the Liberal World Order empowers smaller states to influence global matters, creating the notion of multiplexity. In essence, despite the current rising tensions between the USA and the PRC, Acharya (2017a) framed uniquely that

The world today is culturally and politically diverse, yet more interconnected and interdependent. Its main players - both the makers and breakers of order - are not just states and the great powers, but also international and regional bodies, non-state groups, corporations, and people's movements and networks...

Frameworks and Methodology

The paper notes a positive relationship between the EU and ASEAN amid the context of the US-PRC geopolitical rivalry in the Indo-Pacific. As seen in Figure 1, the region is represented by the sphere. USA-PRC tensions are represented by the broken line in the middle as it rallies states to their side. On the other hand, ASEAN and the EU, as seen as the whole circle over the cracks, may be the glue that prevents further regional division through multilateralism.

For the majority of the second half of the 20th century, dozens of countries used the NAM to attempt to distance themselves from hegemonic competition. By 1976, more than half of the world were part of a third front using multilateral institutions expressing their opinions and practicing their influence in global governance (Bandyopadhyaya, 1977). For Bandyopadhyaya (1977), non-alignment was the counterargument to a *Balance of Power* act. Many non-aligned states saw the Cold War as a neo-colonial expansion competition between the USA and the USSR. Hence,

Non-alignment upholds the right of all peoples to freedom and self-determination and of all nations to pursue their respective independent strategy for development and for the participation in the resolution of international problems. It strengthens resistance to the policies of pressure and domination from whatever quarter. (Bandyopadhyaya, 1977)

According to Bandyopadhyaya (1977), NAM countries emphasize on being nonpartisan in competing hegemons and prioritize their respective interests. Multilateral institutions were particularly highlighted as a power equalizer among small and major powers (Ikenberry, 2019). Although the NAM was unsuccessful in maintaining neutrality between either global hegemon, its ideology continues to be valued by other global players in the current global political economy.

Data and Analysis

ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific

ASEAN's outlook on the Indo-Pacific embodies the spirit of ASEAN 'Centrality' as it stresses to "maintain its central role in the evolving regional architecture in Southeast Asia and its surrounding regions." (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2021b). Acharya (2017) noted that ASEAN 'Centrality' became most prevalent in the post-Cold War context to maintain its relevance in the region's security and diplomatic institutions. Despite the many economic benefits and achievements, the organization has been managing risks from many competing interests that ultimately jeopardize the region's prosperity (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2021b). Consequently, ASEAN's outlook on the Indo-Pacific seeks to emphasize its role as the "honest broker" over external actors to address the region's external threats of instability through its mechanisms (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2021b). Driesmans (2019) agreed that ASEAN has a special role in supporting the region's stability and must build dialogue for stability, peaceful coexistence, and cooperation amid tensions (Yeo, 2017).

EU Indo-Pacific Strategy

The EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy has significantly advanced throughout the decades as the region became "the world's economic and strategic center of gravity" for producing 60% of the global GDP (Borell, 2022; China Power Team, 2021). As a result, the EU updated its strategy amid the wave of European companies looking towards Southeast Asia (Casarini, 2020; Driesmans, 2021). The EU's former foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, stated that European security is closely linked to ASEAN's security and that "the EU-ASEAN partnership is no longer a luxury but a necessity." (Driesmans, 2021; European Union, 2020). According to the European Commission (2021),

The EU's approach is designed to foster a rules-based international order..., promote an open and rules-based regional security architecture..., intensify its dialogues with partners on security and defence.

ASEAN-EU Plan of Action 2023-2027

The ASEAN-EU POA for 2023 to 2027 emphasizes the notion of ASEAN 'Centrality' regarding security matters in the Indo-Pacific. Both organizations acknowledge the primacy of ASEAN-led institutions and mechanisms in the region and pledge support for ASEAN's authority. The EU has agreed to abide by the ASEAN-led process when engaging with the region (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2020). Likewise, the European supranational organization has pledged to enhance the ASEAN Regional Forum's capacity as an action-oriented mechanism and other similar ASEAN institutions. Both have also affirmed each other's complementary strategies for the region and have pledged to find areas of cooperation to achieve their goals (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2022a). With all

things considered, both regional blocs have agreed to support one another in maintaining stability in the region by emphasizing ASEAN 'Centrality'.

Analysis

From a region of undeveloped economies to rising economic tigers, the Indo-Pacific has greatly benefited from the globalized world and continues to develop in the dynamic global political economy. However, amid brewing hegemonic tensions, the region fears another divisive dynamic that may endanger the status quo. Drawing back from Bandyopadhyaya's (1977) analysis of the NAM, many former colonies sought to hedge against greater powers. Still, in stark contrast to the past, the Indo-Pacific has grown stronger to withstand some of the pressures of larger powers. Decades of globalization have galvanized countries to participate in the global economy and exercise their varying influences, making them stakeholders. ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific embodying ASEAN 'Centrality' is an example of the NAM as it seeks to establish a non-aligned policy among major powers by staking its authority. In light of the EU's support for ASEAN, there is a resurgence of the NAM, which may be used as a counter argument for the increasing divisive influences of the USA and the PRC.

According to the NAM theory, there is great emphasis on multilateral institutions in addressing disputes brought about by major powers. In ASEAN's case, the regional organization presents and establishes itself as an "honest broker" in the geopolitical rivalry, which may showcase ASEAN's non-aligned position (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2021b). Acharya (2017b) indicated that great powers have confidence in ASEAN's institutions and mechanisms in dealing with various disputes and situations. Huy (2022), similar to Bandyopadhyaya's (1977) assessment, agreed that ASEAN 'Centrality' is the most effective way of managing rivalries among major regional powers. The paper notes that the EU's support for ASEAN 'Centrality' bolsters the NAM amid the increasing tension between the USA and the PRC. Like the EU and its OSA, ASEAN seeks to distance itself from major power influences in the region. Hence, the EU could be ASEAN's best partner against the USA and the PRC rivalry as it does not associate itself with either major power (Lin & Seah, 2022). Borrell (2020b) stated that

ASEAN – like the EU – wants to ensure that trading systems and security are governed by rules and based on international agreements, not on the idea that 'might makes right'... We share responsibility to uphold the global multilateral order... ASEAN does not want to be forced to align to any one partner.

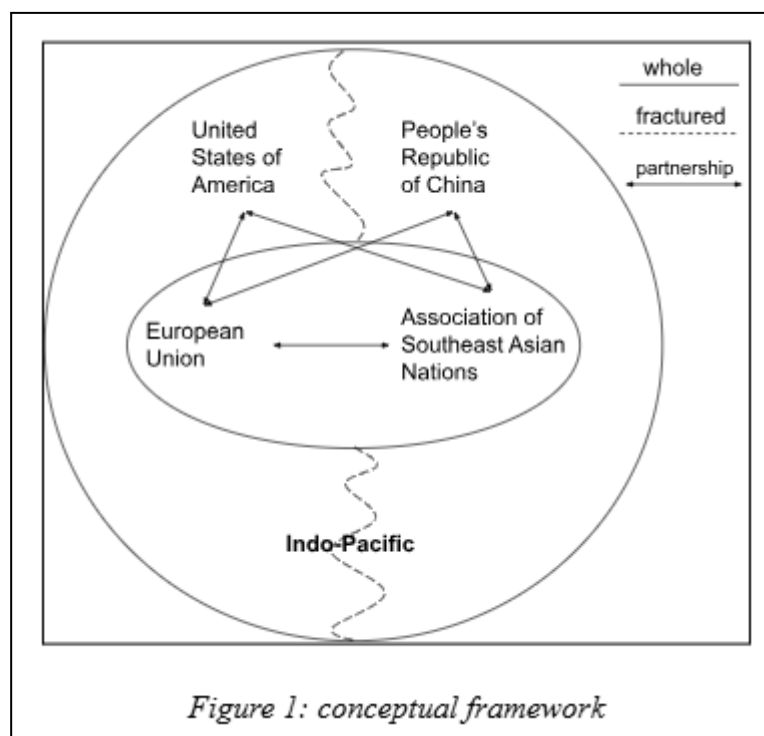
In the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy, Driesmans (2021) stated that "ASEAN is at the centre of the Indo-Pacific and it will come as no surprise that it is at the heart of the EU's strategy.". Hence, the EU applies its non-alignment strategy at home and supports the strategy abroad by pledging to strengthen ASEAN's normative power in the region.

The implication of such a development introduces a new perspective on international relations in the contemporary context. Smaller states have built their capacities and influence

in the globalized world by participating in the intricate network of supply and value chains. Given that different global actors have more to lose they have begun to strengthen their resiliency against the possibility of becoming pawns of greater powers. Altogether, instances like the ASEAN-EU may be a uniting factor that prevents the world from breaking apart after decades of interdependence and globalization.

Conclusion

ASEAN and the EU attempt to distance themselves from the US-PRC geopolitical rivalry by adopting non-aligned positions. They have called for a return to multilateralism in addressing disputes and conflicts as the USA and the PRC revert to a Cold War mentality, especially in the Indo-Pacific. ASEAN maintains its ‘Centrality’ in the region concerning its issues and emphasizes its role as the “honest broker” (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2021b). Similarly, the EU’s OSA seeks to establish its interests and preferences over other foreign influences in its relations with the rest of the world (Black & Morrison, 2021; Lippert et al., 2019). Hence, ASEAN and the EU share the same sentiment of being non-aligned amid the brewing conflict between the USA and PRC. The study looks into the EU’s pledge of support for ASEAN ‘Centrality’ as it strengthens non-alignment in the region amid the rising tension between the world’s top two economies. As ASEAN strengthens its ‘Centrality’ in the Indo-Pacific, the EU has outlined its strong support for its Southeast Asian counterpart (Driesmans, 2021; European Commission, 2021). Bomassi (2022) said, "The EU and ASEAN need each other to counterbalance the geopolitical rivalry between China and the United States.”.



Appendix

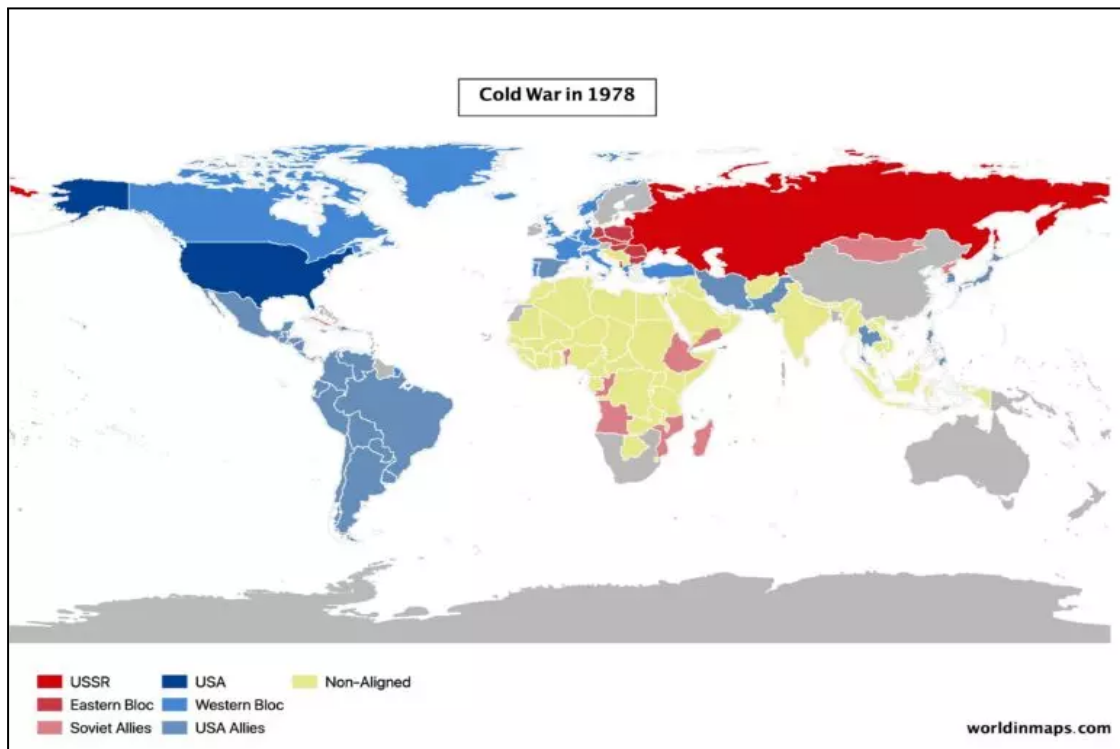
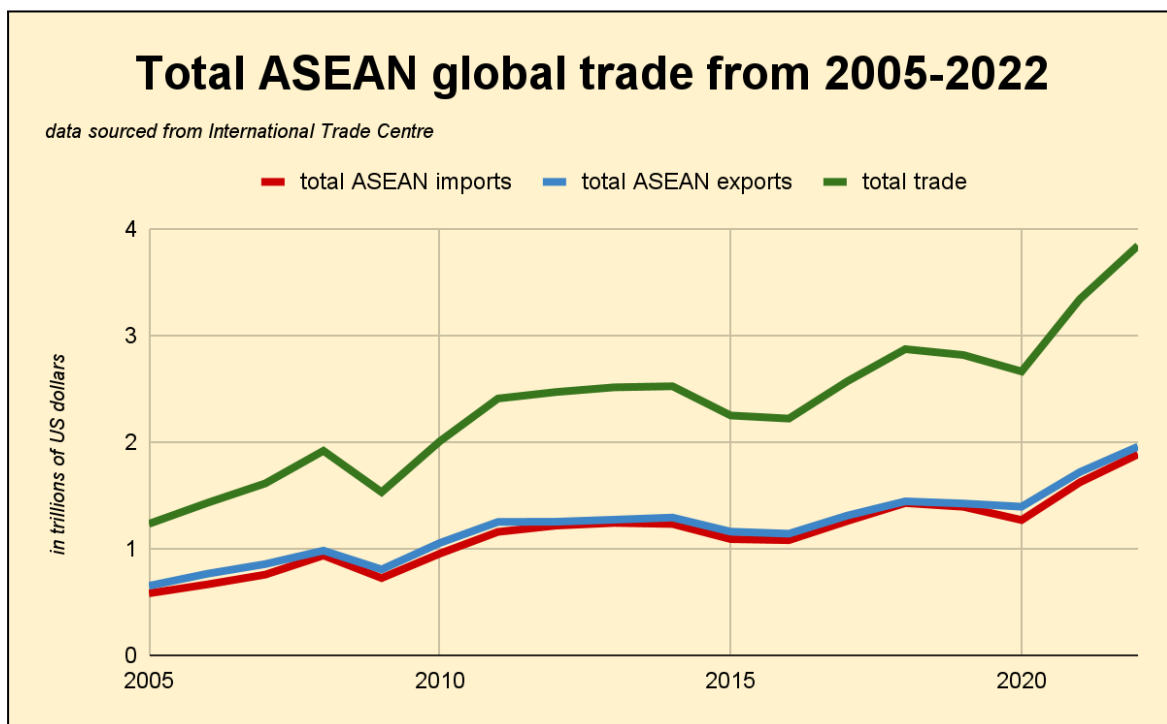
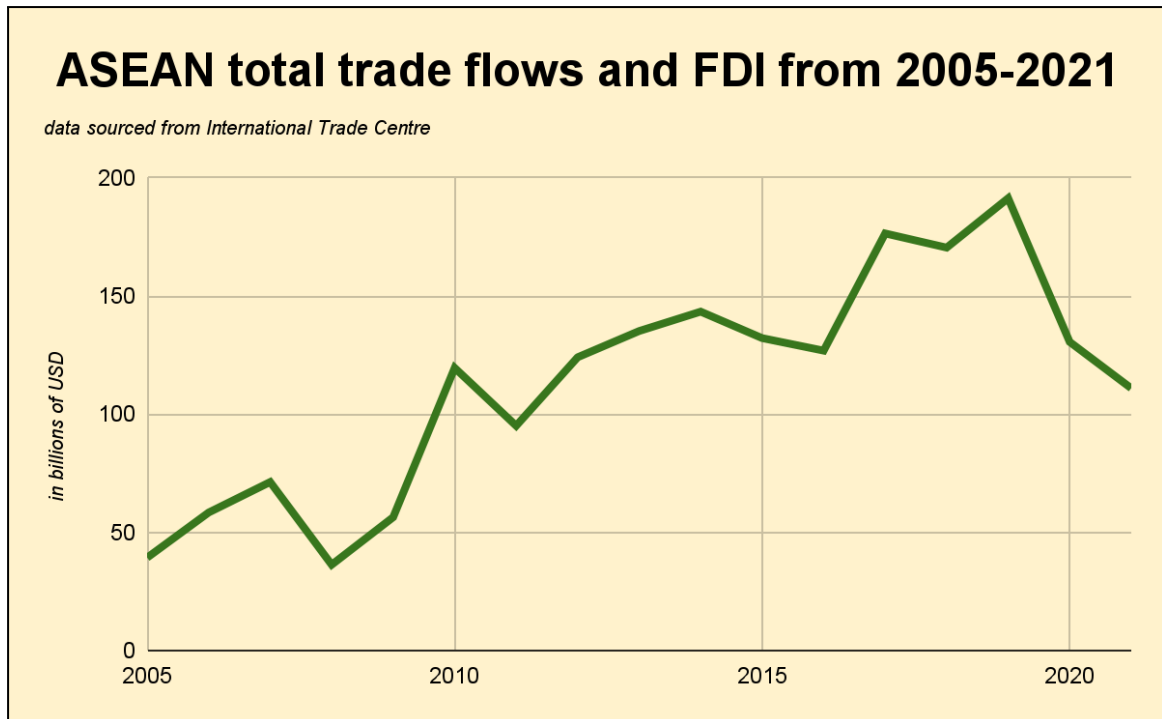


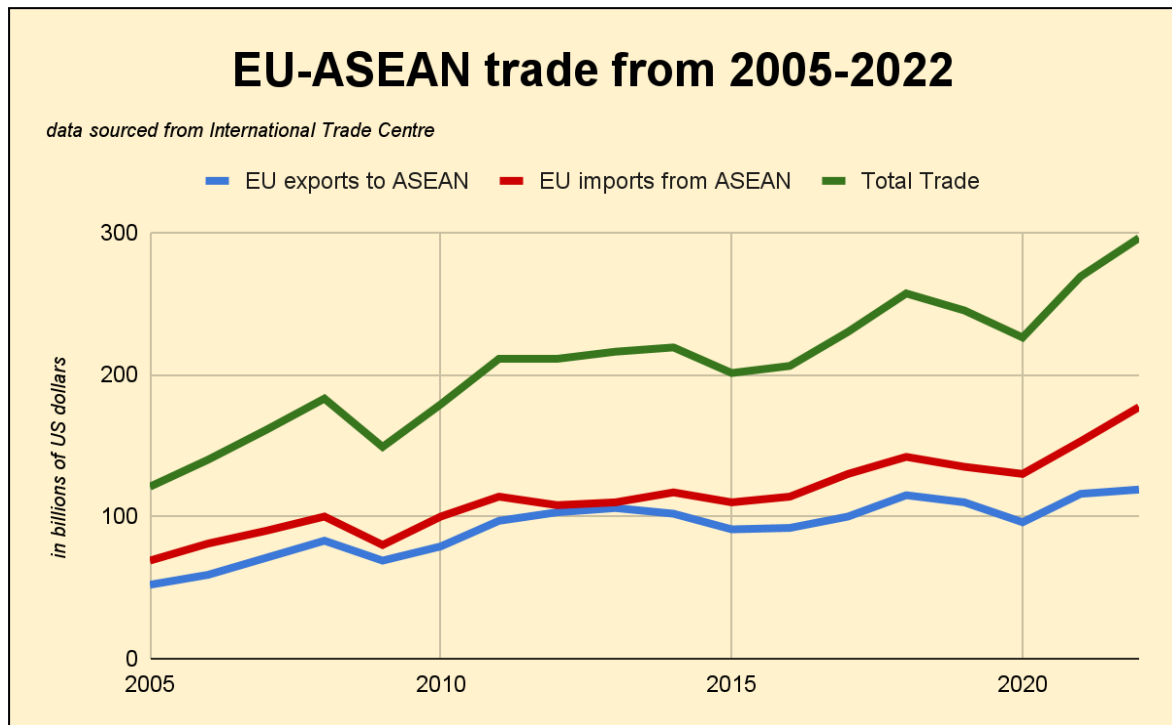
Figure 2: Map of Cold War alliances during 1978 sourced from worldinmaps.com



Graph 1: ASEAN trade situation with the rest of the world from 2005-2022



Graph 2: ASEAN FDI from the rest of the world from 2005-2021



Graph 3: Total EU-ASEAN trade from 2005-2022

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Shaping Perceptions: Erasmus Mundus Program's Influence on its Filipino Students' Views of the European Union's Education, Culture, and Global Affairs

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Abstract

The Erasmus Mundus Program is an international study program funded by the European Union (EU) that has attracted over 47,000 students worldwide since its inception. This study examines its influence in shaping Filipino students' perceptions of the EU across education, culture, and international affairs. Drawing on qualitative data from current Filipino participants and alumni, the findings reveal significant shifts in perceptions. Participants identified the EU as a global leader in academic innovation, praised its multicultural inclusivity, and developed a nuanced understanding of its global role. While the program fostered positive impressions, challenges such as language barriers, cultural biases, and academic mismatch surfaced. Notwithstanding these complexities, participants emerged as advocates for the EU, thereby bridging cultural divides and reinforcing EU-Philippines relations. This research contributes to the discourse on international education as a tool for soft power diplomacy and underscores the potential of the Erasmus Mundus Program to foster the advancement of education and global

Keywords: *Erasmus Mundus, European Union, Filipino students' perceptions, multiculturalism, higher education, global affairs*

Introduction

Education has emerged as a cornerstone of international diplomacy (Safitri, no date), advancing intercultural dialogue and global cooperation in a connected world. A central mechanism of this is the Erasmus Mundus Program, the European Union's (EU) flagship educational initiative that promotes global academic mobility and multicultural integration. Since its inception, the program has attracted over 47,000 scholars globally, including growing numbers from the Philippines. In 2024 alone, 63 Filipinos were granted Erasmus+ scholarships (Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines, 2024). More than just an academic opportunity, Erasmus Mundus enables Filipino students to immerse themselves in

the EU's educational, cultural, and political milieu, shaping their perceptions of the EU's global identity and soft power.

This study explores how the Erasmus Mundus Program influences Filipino students' perceptions of the EU in three key domains: education, culture, and global affairs. It argues that participation in Erasmus Mundus not only enhances academic and intercultural competencies but also transforms students' views of the EU from a distant geopolitical entity into a dynamic, multifaceted global actor. In doing so, it contributes to broader discussions about education as a vehicle of soft power and intercultural diplomacy.

Literature Review and Framework

Studies show that Erasmus enhances international academic networks, employability, and intercultural competencies (Granato et al., 2024; Marques, Zapp and Powell, 2020). However, much of this literature remains Eurocentric or quantitative, lacking qualitative insights from students in the Global South, especially the Philippines. While EU-Philippines relations date back to 1964, little has been written about how Filipino students experience the EU through Erasmus, particularly how their perceptions evolve across cultural and academic domains (Vătăman, 2023; Monzon, 2023).

This study adopts two core frameworks: Nye's concept of soft power (2004) and Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory (1991). Soft power highlights the EU's ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce, using tools like education to shape preferences. Erasmus Mundus exemplifies this through cultural exchange, institutional credibility, and values promotion (Lee, 2011). Complementing this, Transformative Learning Theory explains how critical reflection and intercultural encounters reshape deeply held assumptions, leading to perspective transformation. Four components structure this process: disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection, rational discourse, and transformation. As such, this study connects these theories through the concept of perception, illustrating how Filipino Erasmus students internalize and reconstruct their views of the EU.

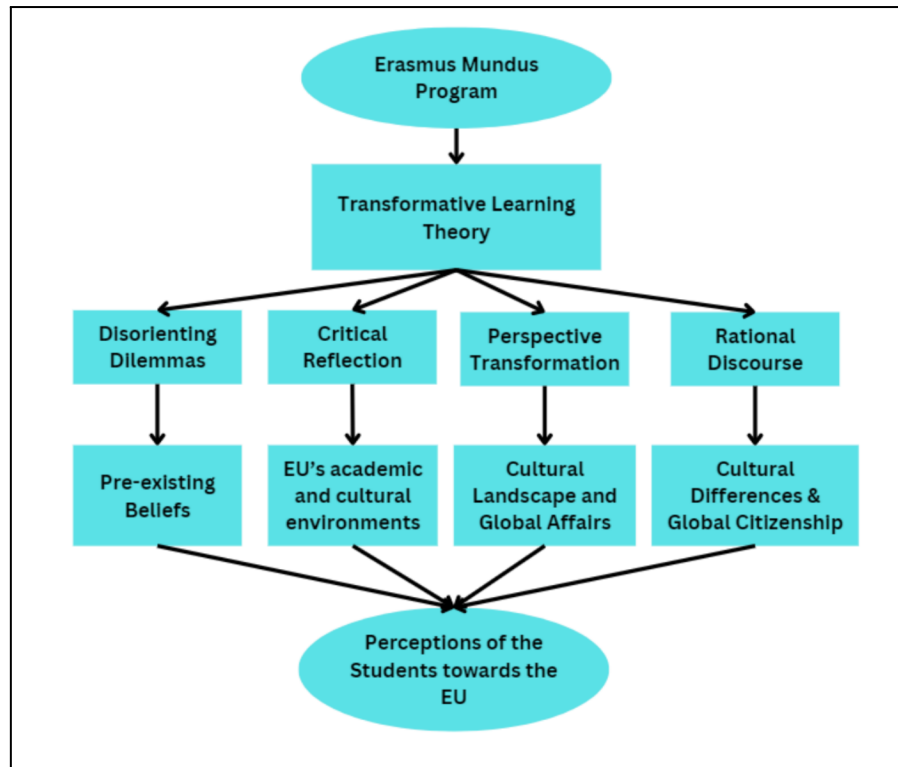


Figure 1. Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1991)

Importantly, this study defines perceptions as the cognitive, affective, and evaluative understandings individuals hold about an entity (Belanche, Casaló and Flavián, 2017; Nowak et al., 2007). In this case, the EU is the entity, and the Erasmus participants become agents of shaped perceptions formed through direct experience, cultural exposure, and reflective engagement.

Methodology

Through an exploratory qualitative research design, this study examined the perceptions of Filipino Erasmus students on the EU's education, culture, and role in global affairs. The study focused specifically on Filipino students who completed their undergraduate degree in the Philippines and pursued postgraduate studies in the EU through the Erasmus Mundus program, either self-financed or through an Erasmus scholarship. A total of 70 participants (54 alumni, 16 current scholars) were recruited through purposive sampling via alumni networks and social media.

Data collection was conducted via a mixed-method online survey administered from October to November 2024. It included structured (Likert-scale) and semi-structured open-ended questions designed to gauge pre- and post-program perceptions of the EU in education, culture, and global affairs. Ethical protocols were followed, with informed consent obtained and anonymity assured.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), emphasizing emergent patterns. Quantitative patterns (e.g., percentage ratings) were complemented by narrative synthesis of participants' qualitative insights. Intercoder consistency was maintained through collaborative coding sessions.

Presentation of Findings

This study involved 70 participants with diverse backgrounds. Gender distribution was relatively balanced, and ages ranged from 21 to 49 years old. Most participants were Erasmus Mundus Alumni, while others were current students. They primarily pursued fields in STEM across key Erasmus Mundus countries such as Spain, France, Italy, and Belgium, with program durations ranging from one to five years.

I. Perceptions of EU Education: Pre-Erasmus and Post-Erasmus Experience

The students' pre-perceptions of the EU's education system were shaped by media, educational systems, personal research, social influence, and personal experience. They believed that the system was supported by various EU industries and governments. Furthermore, diversity plays a role as it is expected that the program will provide students with access to global experts and multicultural learning. They also viewed that the program has a good reputation on the global stage and is capable of offering robust academic skills that will equip them for their careers. Overall, key themes emerging from pre-program perceptions included institutional reputation, research-oriented pedagogy, and cultural and linguistic diversity. Post-program reflections affirmed many of these expectations but revealed deeper insights, ranging from neutral to very positive, with most reporting having a positive experience.

Four key themes were identified: (1) pedagogical approachability, (2) balanced curriculum, (3) advanced facilities, and (4) lenient system. One participant described their experience: *"Since all of the Professors I had were already highly specialized, they were able to share a lot of their knowledge and expertise. The level of guidance they provide is top-notch and it just certainly shows how passionate they are with their chosen fields and this attitude somehow positively influences their students."* Additionally, the academic environment was characterized as both rigorous and lenient, allowing room for independent thought and creativity. However, challenges included limited English-taught courses and language barriers, unstructured teaching styles, and instances of discrimination. Nonetheless, the overall trajectory showed a positive shift in perception through a diverse environment, high academic standards, and strong support systems, which led to the students' nuanced yet critical appreciation.

II. Perceptions of EU Education and EU Culture

Before the program, participants had a positive perception of European culture due to their advanced and organized policies in social services and transportation. During the

program, participants reported that their perceptions of European culture remained positive due to their interactions with locals, living with international peers, and their academic environment.

As they immersed themselves in EU life, students experienced cultural transformation. Living with international peers and participating in academic and civic life reshaped their views. Thematic clusters that emerged include (1) intercultural openness, (2) liberal social values, and (3) cultural dissonance and integration challenges. Despite moments of alienation due to individualistic norms or language gaps, students described the EU as culturally rich, politically liberal, and socially structured. They also appreciated the efficient transport systems and civic norms like recycling and inclusivity. Erasmus Mundus was credited with cultivating cultural awareness and sensitivity.

III. Perceptions of the EU's Global Role

Pre-Erasmus, most respondents held neutral or vague perceptions of the EU's role in global affairs. The EU was largely viewed as a development partner or "alternative superpower," but knowledge of its specific policies or influence was limited. Geographical distance and limited media coverage of its diplomatic relations were the common themes identified from the responses. Post-program, these perceptions matured. Participants' Erasmus experience was noted to be instrumental in increasing their awareness of the EU's ability to act on international and social issues and aided in fostering positive views on its policies.

In terms of the EU's influence on the Philippines, Erasmus Mundus was viewed by most of the participants as positively contributing to stronger ties between the EU and the Philippines. Main themes in their responses involved how knowledge transfer, cultural exchange, and networking opportunities gained from participating in the Erasmus program contribute to improving the workforce capacity of the Philippines. Many of the participants also stated that the program enhances the image of the European Union among Filipinos due to its generosity in providing scholarships. However, criticisms were also identified, raising points on how the program can contribute to further brain drain and reduced immediate benefits for the Philippines due to a perceived lack of direct involvement in Philippine development. These criticisms highlight a key issue: the lack of support from the Philippine government for returning Filipino Erasmus Mundus participants, underscoring the need for increased support.

The program's role in shaping global knowledge was identified to be very effective by the participants in the promotion of global cooperation and knowledge sharing, primarily through its research and academic collaborations and facilitation of cross-cultural networks and cultural exchange. Although responses highlighted its benefits, the participants also identified gaps emerging from a dearth of opportunities for further collaboration post-Erasmus, the program's focus on EU affairs, and unalignment of Erasmus Mundus-related opportunities to global cooperation efforts. Consequently, many participants expressed a more realistic view of the EU as a soft power actor: capable, yet self-interested. The program shifted perceptions from distant admiration to engaged critique.

IV. Overall Impact of the Erasmus Mundus Program

The Erasmus Mundus program catalyzed transformative learning experiences. Thematic analysis reveals five major areas of impact: (1) personal growth, (2) professional development, (3) intercultural competence, (4) active citizenship, and (5) global awareness. It has positively influenced its Filipino students' views on European identity and deepened their appreciation for European values due to civic engagement with European people and exposure to diverse peers, which also promoted mutual understanding and openness towards collaboration. Not only was the program able to foster a deeper appreciation for the EU's culture and values, it provided Filipino students with practical skills and equipped them with profound knowledge and experience, allowing them to be globally competent. This, in turn, shifted the Filipino students' perspectives on the EU from being a distant geopolitical entity towards being a vital partner of the Philippines in its national growth.

However, five main areas for improvement were identified by the participants: 1.) necessity for increased visibility of the program, 2.) improvement and streamlining of the application process, 3.) enhanced student support, 4.) increased community engagement, and 5.) stronger ties with host countries and local chapters of the Erasmus Mundus Associations.

In sum, the Erasmus Mundus reshaped Filipino students' perceptions of the EU by grounding abstract ideals in lived experiences, transforming participants into critical observers, cultural intermediaries, and engaged citizens.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study finds that Erasmus Mundus functions as both an academic opportunity and a soft power mechanism, transforming Filipino students' perceptions of the EU across education, culture, and global affairs. Using Mezirow's lens, the Erasmus experience constituted a disorienting dilemma that prompted critical reflection and ultimately perspective transformation.

The study adds to literature by presenting student perceptions not as monolithic or uniformly positive, but as complex and evolving. It affirms that education abroad can foster critical cosmopolitanism, simultaneously deepening appreciation while encouraging scrutiny. To maximize Erasmus Mundus' impact, the EU and Philippine stakeholders should consider: (1) Enhancing alumni engagement to sustain collaboration; (2) addressing language barriers and integration support; and (3) promoting awareness of Erasmus beyond elite academic circles.

Lastly, future research could explore long-term civic and professional impacts among returnees. Ultimately, the Erasmus Mundus program not only fosters intercultural learning, it also subtly recalibrates how emerging leaders from the Global South perceive the EU's role in a contested global order.

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Welcome to the Big Leagues: The Genealogy of Women's Participation in the Modern Olympic Movement

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Introduction

As a timeless representation of human brilliance and global solidarity, the Olympic Games have long mirrored their respective eras' social and cultural ideals. With the expected interaction between politics and sports (Bairner and Molnar, 2010, p. 3), the Olympics and the IOC are then shaped by societal norms and are always within the confines of the sign of the times. Baron de Coubertin may have founded and started the modern Olympic Games, but he was also sexist. He promoted the elevation of male athleticism and questioned women's participation in sports; he thought that, rather than pursuing personal records, a woman's success comes from motivating her son. (Boykoff, 2019, p. 3-4). Understanding the historical underrepresentation of women in sports and the Olympic Movement requires an understanding of women's participation in the Olympics. It offers factual information that may be utilized to examine patterns in representation, performance, and involvement.

Through its three primary organizations, the IOC, International Sports Federations (IFs), and National Olympic Committees (NOCs), the Olympic Movement's Olympic Charter, which serves as its ultimate legislation, is established. It is a crucial document that shaped and institutionalized gender norms, policies, and exclusions. It also serves as a discursive tool that validates particular values, hierarchies, and exclusions in addition to outlining the rules of competition. The regulation of women's participation has changed over time which this study categorizes through the following: from the Introduction of the Modern Olympic Movement (1920s-1940s), the Olympics in the Cold War (1950s-1960s), The Period of Testing and Verification (1970s-1980s), Into the New Millenium (1990s), the Age of Inclusivity (2000s), and Contemporary Olympics (2010s-2020s). As the first modern Olympics did not include women, it is of interest as to how the Olympic Charters changed its discourse to include women in the games, and what factors outside of its *bubble* influenced such changes.

Literary Review

Literature on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is mostly centered around its role as an international actor that defines international sporting laws. Other studies focus

on the politicization of the Olympic Games, where international figures have used the competition as a battleground for their ideologies. Lastly, there are also studies examining the economic implications of the Olympics, noting how it is capable of solving unemployment issues, improving public transit services, etc (Lenskyj, 2000, p. 96).

Meanwhile, literature on women's participation in the Olympic Games discusses the slow but steady progression concerning women's involvement in the Olympics. In contrast to the Ancient Games, where they were prohibited, women's participation in the contemporary Olympics has steadily expanded since its inception (Zheng, 2021). The establishment of distinct female categories recognized physiological differences, notwithstanding the opposition of early Olympic leaders such as Coubertin to women's admission. The concept of fair play changed over time, and after cases like Caster Semenya's, contentious sex testing techniques shifted toward testosterone-based qualifying requirements, posing moral and scientific questions (Davis and Edwards, 2014). By questioning gender stereotypes and advocating for equality, female athletes have emerged as symbols of social change. Disparities still exist in leadership positions, despite the Tokyo 2020 Olympics achieving nearly gender parity in athlete representation. Addressing underrepresentation and revealing gender-based participation statistics that reflect broader societal shifts are essential for the IOC to achieve true inclusion.

Discourse refers to a study in the field of social science concerning the study of communication. Subjects of discourse analysis can be the direct speech of a notable figure, an ideology, or a community's response towards a specific societal context. But beyond that, discourse analysts look at not just the words being used by actors, but of "who uses language, how, why, and when" (van Dijk, 1997, p. 2). This study shall employ van Dijk's (2008) Discourse and Context framework. However, it is not enough to study discourse and context in a vacuum, for the concept of communities of practice is introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991). It is where discourse between actors is said and done to further a goal or purpose (van Dijk, 2008, p. 113). This becomes relevant especially when Olympic Charters, which are a set of rules that aim to further the Olympic Movement with each iteration of the Games, are made by an organization: the IOC. Language on its own does not have power; it comes from how powerful people would use it (Reisigl and Wodak, 2017, p. 88). Within the framework of the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), the concepts of intertextuality and interdiscursivity are introduced, and both are affected by socio-political contexts (Reisigl and Wodak, 2017, p. 90). Interdiscursivity is when certain ideas would bring up the mentioning of other ideas (Reisigl and Wodak, 2017, p. 90). This research will be using a Discourse-Historical Analysis (DHA) to understand how discourses both influence and are influenced by power dynamics, ideologies, and critique, by critically examining language use in its social, political, and historical settings. It highlights that language is not neutral; rather, it is a tool used by those who use it to acquire and preserve power (Reisigl and Wodak, 2017).

Methodology

This research will be a qualitative description methodology with an empirical approach to investigation that aims to describe the informant's view and experience of the world and its phenomena, following the tradition of qualitative research. This is an appropriate methodological approach as the paper will explore the Olympic Charters from the Olympic World Library from 1908 up until the latest charter. To identify what is relevant to the study from the charters, a database of quotes from the rules, regulations, and bylaws of the charters was made, and those that had any mention of the keywords related to women, female, gender, and female athletes were included. The database was divided into different decades (1908-1940, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, 2010s, 2020s). Artificial Intelligence (AI) was used to hasten the process of searching for relevant discourse using the prompt: "Give quotes from the charter that mention anything related to gender, women, and female athletes and officials. Include the page number." To ensure that the AI's results were not fabricated, they were manually corroborated and authenticated before placing them in the database. The discourse will then be analyzed within the larger socio-political and historical context that led to the justification for institutional policy changes. These would include sports media, scholarly literature, and historical narratives.

Findings and Analysis

Introduction of the Modern Olympic Movement (1920s-1940s)

From 1920 to the 1940s, women's participation in the Olympics gradually evolved despite strong opposition from Pierre de Coubertin. Although women first competed in 1900, it wasn't until the 1924 Olympic Rules that the IOC formally acknowledged their presence, stating: "Les femmes sont admises aux Jeux Olympiques. Le programme fixera les épreuves qu'elles pourront disputer" ("Women are admitted to the Olympic Games. The program will determine which events they can compete in") (Leigh, 1974, p. 107). This marked the beginning of limited but official recognition. The IOC and IAAF were under pressure to take women's sports seriously after the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale (FSFI) was established. The Charters' wording evolved over time to reflect continuing discussions among the IOC, NOCs, and IFs. Some progress was made by 1949, when the Rules designated particular sports that women might participate in. The procedure did, however, uncover enduring opposition and a nuanced power structure that influenced the boundaries of women's inclusion.

The Olympics in the Cold War (1950s-1960s)

During the Cold War, the Olympics became a global stage for ideological rivalry, especially after the USSR's entry in 1952. The Soviet Union promoted women's participation as a symbol of socialist superiority, challenging Western gender norms and pushing the IOC to reconsider women's roles (Riordan, 1991). However, IOC policies remained inconsistent.

The 1950 Charter stated, “*Women are allowed to compete in certain events and in the Art Exhibitions*” (Olympic Charter, 1950, p. 13), reflecting restricted access. The IOC opposed Soviet plans to increase the number of women's events, despite the fact that women were participating in more sports over time, including equestrian and team sports like volleyball in 1964 (Chase, 1992). Additionally, shared housing was required by the 1955 Charter: “*Olympic Villages for both men and women...*” (Olympic Charter, 1955, p. 27). Despite these advancements, women could only participate in a small number of sports, and IOC charters from 1956 to 1966 maintained gender-specific participation requirements, indicating a lagging institutional shift in the face of political pressure.

The Period of Testing and Gender Verification (1970s–1980s)

The 1970s–1980s introduced gender verification to ensure only “biological” women competed in women’s events, based on assumptions of male physical advantage. The 1971 Olympic Charter first stated: “*Female athletes may be subjected to medical proof*” (Olympic Charter, 1971, p. 47), initiating intrusive testing practices (Rupert, 2011). These rules intensified, with the 1987 Charter requiring all female competitors to undergo verification: “*Competitors in events for women only must comply with the prescribed tests for gender verification*” (Olympic Charter, 1987, p. 45). Many athletes' mental health suffered as a result of these practices, which ignored intersex problems and perpetuated negative binary gender stereotypes (Schultz, 2012). In the meantime, the IOC increased the bar for women's sports participation, requiring practice in 25–35 nations as opposed to 40–50 for men (Olympic Charter, 1973, p. 18). Despite the rise in women's sports, the time was characterized by intense concerns over gender identity, underscoring the limitations of equity when predicated on strict conceptions of sex.

Into the New Millennium (1990s)

Femininity control persisted within the charter until the 1995 Olympic Charter, when any mention of it completely disappeared. An important aspect to note is that the IOC was not the first international sporting organization to forgo gender verification tests, as it was proposed by the International Association of Athletics Federation in 1992. However, the IOC ignored this proposal (Ljungqvist et al., 2006, p. 229), which was met with condemnation within the international community to the point that the Norwegian medical community refused to cooperate with the IOC in gender verification during the 1994 Lillehammer Olympics, deeming it illegal and unethical (Elsas et al., 2000, p. 251; Ljungqvist et al., 2006, p. 229). Hence, the exclusion of femininity control within the 1995 Olympic Charter. This period was also when the IOC formally adopted inclusivity regarding mentioning individual actors, whether athletes or organizational personnel, within the charter. This coincides with updating the Olympic Movement to include the protection of a woman’s right to participate in the Olympics. This update to the charter is largely influenced by the significant growth experienced by the feminist movement in the decade prior.

The Age of Inclusivity (2000s)

Entering the 21st Century, the IOC made one considerable change, where it got rid of the number of countries required for a sport to be considered. The 2007 Olympic Charter puts forth an assumption that the International Olympic Committee no longer expects there to be fewer women than men who would participate in the Games. The choice of sport for both men and women falls under the competency of the IOC, so long as it follows the World Anti-Doping Code. This happened partly due to the steady increase in women's participation in sports in general. In 1996, women's participation was at 34.0%, 38.2% in 2000, 40.7% in 2004, and it was 42.4% in 2008 (International Olympic Committee, 2024, p. 6).

Contemporary Olympics (2010s-2020s)

The 2010s and the 2020s Olympic Charter serve as the culmination of every change that has been made towards the charter with regard to women's participation in the Olympics. This can be summarized by the following quotes:

"[The Mission and Role of the IOC is] to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women" (Olympic Charter, 2011, p. 14).

And;

"The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Olympic Charter shall be secured without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" (Olympic Charter, 2014, p. 12).

But with the growth of conservatism in global politics, former IOC President Thomas Bach's insistence on political neutrality would be unsustainable, noting how discourse on femininity is intertwined with discourse on the LGBT community. The binary concept of gender affects how those who do not conform within that framework are perceived and treated. In the face of growing concerns of conservatives regarding the participation of transgender athletes in contrast to the accepting nature of progressive outlooks, the IOC would now have to politically identify itself when it defines its rules on the participation of transgender athletes.

Conclusion

This study looks at how larger socio-political and historical factors have influenced the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) discussion of women's Olympic participation. The Olympics, one of the most important international athletic events, have gradually moved toward gender inclusiveness thanks to initiatives for women's rights, important laws, and the support of athletes and other interested parties. Six distinct periods in Olympic history are

identified by the study as reflecting these developments: the early 20th century under Coubertin's exclusionary vision; the political pressures for women's inclusion during the Cold War; the contentious period of gender verification in the 1970s and 1980s; and the modern era, which is characterized by growing inclusivity and near gender parity.

The study adds to discourse analysis by tracking revisions to the Olympic Charter and reveals how internal IOC policies have addressed external social campaigning. It contends that although the IOC and International Federations continued to have authority over official regulations, independent voices had a big impact on changes in Olympic rhetoric. The study admits its shortcomings despite its contributions, including the absence of examination of regional variations, media depictions, and informal conversation. Ultimately, it emphasizes that Olympic discourse continues to evolve alongside global conversations on gender equality and inclusion.

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Putnam's Two-Level Game and Democratic Backsliding: A Comparative Analysis of Poland and Hungary's Response to EU Rule of Law Mechanism

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Introduction

Established democracies all over the world are exhibiting a decline in the overall quality and effectiveness of their democratic institutions (Carothers & Press 2022; Repucci & Slipowitz 2022). Various scholars have rung the bell on the breakdown of democracies, with democratic backsliding becoming a key research issue over the recent years.

Democratic 'backsliding' (or "retrogression", "erosion") is a process often characterized by the erosion of judiciary independence, undermining rule of law, and restrictions on civil society and political association (Ginsburg et al, 2018). Backsliding, depending on how rapid and radical the changes are to institutions, can lead to the serious weakening of democratic norms or all-out democratic breakdown and regime change (Bermeo, 2016). This is supported by the findings of Bermeo (2016) that while direct and blatant forms of backsliding—such as military coups and election fraud—have declined, indirect attacks on democracy—such as executive aggrandizement and strategic electoral manipulation—are on the rise. Executive aggrandizement manifests in democratically elected incumbents attempting to simultaneously disable both horizontal (other branches of government) and vertical (electoral and political opposition) accountability mechanisms. As these two accountability mechanisms are foundational features of democracy, such an attack undermines the whole democratic regime.

In the context of Poland and Hungary, backsliding must be critically examined as it occurred in states that were once championed as democratic successes in post-communist Europe. Backsliding in the EU takes place in a sui generis multi-level political system. The organization was founded on the concepts of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law as espoused in Article 2 TEU. Being members of the EU, Poland and Hungary have the duty to uphold these concepts, which has been sidetracked due to its backsliding. To protect the core values of the EU, Article 7 TEU was set up as a formal process for serious breaches by member states. Under this mechanism, sanctions may include the suspension of certain rights,

such as voting rights in the Council of the EU. To further reinforce rule of law in the union, the Rule of Law (ROL) Conditionality Mechanism was put into effect in 2021 – wherein it allows the EU to take measures in cases of breaches of the rule of law principles that affect or seriously risk affecting the sound financial management of the EU budget or the EU’s financial interests in a sufficiently direct way (Rubio et al., 2022).

The literature sets the context of how democratic backsliding occurs and its effect on domestic and international politics. While studies have been conducted on how democratic backsliding occurred (Bermeo 2016; Carothers & Press 2022) in Poland and Hungary (Gora & de Wilde 2020; Wonka et al., 2023) and the actions of the European Union to address them (Blauberger & van Hüllen 2020; Blauberger & Sedelmeier 2024), there still exists a gap in literature that coalesce analysis of the phenomenon in both the domestic and EU level. There exists a need to understand how the Fidesz and PiS governments acted in response to the European Union’s actions to address democratic backsliding and whether it achieved a win-set—wherein the state managed the pressures from the EU in Level I with the interests of domestic actors in Level II. Analyzing the intersection of domestic interests and EU pressures allows for a more well-rounded and comprehensive explanation of why the states responded as such to the EU rule of law mechanism and how it impacted their democratic backsliding.

Statement of the Problem

The study seeks to address the gaps in the literature through the main question: **Under the same EU Rule of Law Mechanism, why did Poland start to recover democratically while Hungary continues to backslide?**

1. How does the Law and Justice Party (PiS) in Poland navigate the two-level game vis-a-vis democratic backsliding and EU Rule of Law Mechanism?
2. How does the Fidesz Party and Victor Orban in Hungary navigate the two-level game vis-a-vis democratic backsliding and EU Rule of Law Mechanism?

Objectives of the Study

This study will apply Putnam’s two-level game to compare how the differences in the interactions of Level I and Level II in Poland and Hungary led to differing win-set outcomes vis-à-vis the EU’s Rule of Law mechanism.

Specifically, the study intends:

1. To analyze how the Law and Justice Party (PiS) in Poland navigates the

two-level game vis-a vis democratic backsliding and EU Rule of Law Mechanism;

2. To examine how the Fidesz Party and Victor Orban in Hungary navigate the two-level game vis-a-vis democratic backsliding and EU Rule of Law Mechanism.

Framework of the Study

The two-level game theory by Robert Putnam is a theoretical approach to the question of when and how domestic politics determine international relations or the reverse (Putnam, 1988, p. 433). The levels were defined as how “at the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favorable policies, and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups, while at the international level, national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments” (Putnam, 1988, p. 434).

The study will employ Putnam’s two-level game to analyze the interactions among domestic and international actors in Hungary and Poland vis-à-vis the European Union’s rule of law mechanism. Therefore, Putnam’s two-level game theory offers a more accurate framework for this study as it aims to explain the differing reactions of Poland and Hungary’s “win-sets” to EU-led institutional reforms and democratic backsliding.

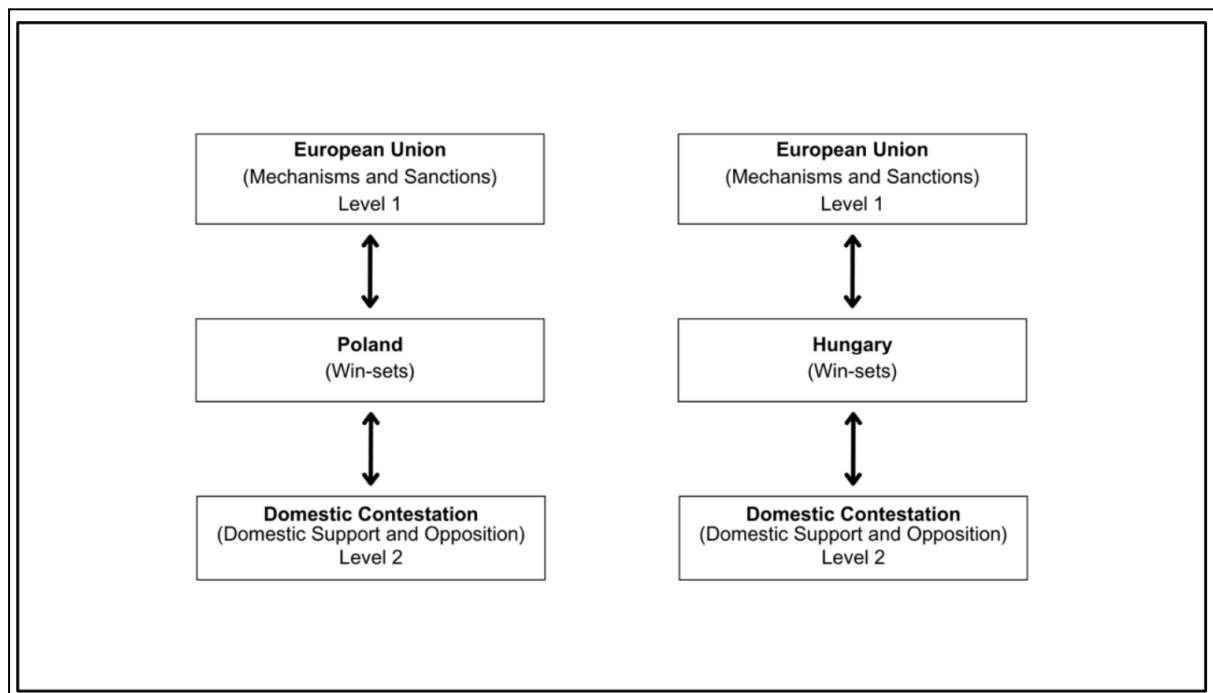


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Review of Related Literature

The chapter presents five key themes: (1) Populism and the Rise of Illiberalism in Europe, (2) Democratic Backsliding in European Union, (3) EU Rule of Law (ROL) Enforcement and Article 7 TEU Proceedings, (4) Domestic Pressure via Opposition and Civil Groups, and (5) State Compliance to EU ROL Mechanism and Article 7 Proceedings. The synthesis highlights the identified gaps in the cited literatures.

Synthesis

There are multiple studies on democratic backsliding that highlight how the European Union relied on the ROL mechanism to safeguard the democratic values outlined in Article 2 TEU and ensure compliance among its member-states, particularly in the cases of Poland and Hungary. However, the existing literature does not fully account for the interactions between Level I and Level II as factors that influence state compliance to EU's ROL mechanism enforcement.

Huber and Pisciotta (2022) posited that Orbán's centralization of power and populist rhetoric posed a difficult challenge to the EU in imposing sanctions; however, their study primarily focused on domestic factors and overlooked how Hungary engaged with international actors to minimize imposed sanctions. Similarly, Coman (2024) emphasizes illiberalism in the EU and the obstruction it brings to EU decision-making, but it does not explore how the member states leverage these institutional weaknesses to its advantage. In contrast, Vásquez et al. (2023) show a divergence in democratic trajectories between Poland and Hungary and opened the route for further research on the role of domestic and international pressures on states to address backsliding.

Additionally, Gherghina and Bankov (2023) explored that the EU has previously taken a passive role in promoting horizontal accountability leading it to have limited effect on Bulgaria's democratic recovery, which can be interpreted as a gap in the EU's mechanism for addressing democratic backsliding in general. This is particularly relevant as a case example for analyzing Hungary and Poland's democratic recovery in this study. This is further supported by Bugaric (2016)'s previous assertions that the EU's failure to enforce meaningful sanctions against Hungary despite clear evidence of breaches have weakened the organization's ability to enforce democratic values.

However, in recent years, the EU has shown a significant shift in policy and started strengthening ROL conditionality and applied material sanctions against backsliding states. Blauburger and Sedelmeier (2024) attributed this shift to transnational salience, wherein public awareness puts pressure on the government of other member states, and negative intergovernmental spillover, wherein backsliding states affect EU cooperation and forces other member states to intervene. The two factors that Blauburger and Sedelmeier (2024) identified supported the study in emphasizing why it was crucial to look at both Level I and Level II in analyzing state response to EU ROL mechanism and how that affected

democratic backsliding. Further, the EU's policy shift highlights the need for further studies to determine the lasting impact of this shift and how this policy shift also changed the status quo within the EU.

Hence, the gaps identified in the existing literature supported the study's purview of conducting a systemic level analysis of how Level I and Level II interactions in Poland and Hungary affected democratic backsliding leading to differing win-set outcomes vis-a-vis the EU ROL mechanism.

Methodology

This chapter tackles the techniques and procedures the researchers will utilize to collect and analyze data to address the gaps in existing literature and answer the research questions.

Research Design

The study will adopt a qualitative research design, specifically comparative case study design, to analyze the complexity of the role of the EU and domestic actors in Poland and Hungary's democratic backsliding and how it led to different outcomes for each country. Comparative analysis is crucial to the execution of this study as it allows the researchers to examine the intersecting interests of the domestic and the EU in each country and how they influenced state action and response to democratic backsliding. A case study design will be applied to effectively interpret the intricacies of the issue and conduct a comprehensive analysis of the data gathered from KIIs and literature review.

Research Methods

As the study aimed to further investigate the democratic backsliding of Poland and Hungary and their response to the EU ROL mechanism, this study employed comparative case study with Putnam's two-level game theory. In line with this, the researchers aim to collect data using desk analysis that would be the first basis of this process. Second, the researchers intended to gather data from the key informants. Third, the literature review will serve as a foundation for systematically collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing scholarly works related to the issue and the studies research question.

The triangulation method will also be used in the study to examine the responses of key informants, and the literature review itself. This will be done by cross-validating findings from the initial data gathering process, including desk analysis, key informant interview, and literature review.

Data Gathering Procedure

In gathering the information for this study, the researchers will utilize semi-structured interviews through key informants from the academe, representatives of civil organizations in Poland and Hungary, and EU policy analysts. To ensure the reliability and accuracy of the data that will be gathered from the key informants, the researchers will be cross-checking the information through different sources including EU, Poland and Hungary's websites and journal and news articles related to the study.

Semi-structured Interviews

The study will employ purposive sampling focusing on key informants that are knowledgeable in democratic backsliding in EU, Article 2 TEU, and Article 7 TEU proceedings. This will inform the key informants that the interview will be recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy in analyzing the data. The researchers will utilize open-ended questions based on the questionnaire for the collection of data in this study.

Literature review

The researchers will employ document review, including government documents, journal articles, as well as news reports to determine the accuracy of the data gathered from the key informants. However, if the language that was used in the literature is in Polish and Hungarian, the researchers will utilize online tools such as google translate.

Data Analysis Techniques

Initial codes are generated using open, axial, and selective coding. Open coding involves gathering key informants' statements that answer the research questions. Next, themes are searched through axial coding that establishes the connection between the identified codes, and selective coding consolidates a list of the meaningful themes. Third, themes are reviewed through the triangulation of data that ensures that the identified themes are reliable and validated through the cross-checking of different data sources. Fourth, defining and naming themes includes the process of organizing the extracted data into a consistent and meaningful structure. Fifth, the conclusion and recommendations are presented in the phase of writing a report.

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Jollibee's European Expansion: A Case Study in Glocalization Strategies

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Extended Abstract

This paper examines the strategies used by Jollibee, the Philippines' most popular fast-food brand, in expanding to Europe. While Jollibee is widely known and loved across the Philippines and among Filipino communities abroad, its entrance into Western markets, particularly in Europe, has come with many challenges. Europe's fast food industry is already dominated by big names like McDonald's and KFC, and consumers across the continent have different food preferences, expectations, and cultural norms. This study investigates how Jollibee used glocalization—meaning the practice of adapting a global business to fit local conditions—to make its brand more appealing in three European countries: Italy, the United Kingdom, and Spain.

The study draws on Ronald Robertson's Glocalization Theory and the Standardization vs. Adaptation debate. In doing so, it positions Jollibee as a unique case: a Global South brand trying to break into Western markets. Usually, it's Western companies entering Asian markets and adjusting their branding accordingly. In this case, it's the other way around. This paper is built on a combination of qualitative research methods, including a thematic and comparative analysis of 1,487 Facebook posts from Jollibee Italia, España, and UK pages, along with five interviews with Jollibee executives working in marketing, operations, and management roles. It also uses publicly available reports, articles, and press releases to support its analysis.

The findings of the study are presented through six areas where Jollibee's glocalization strategy is most evident: menu, promotions, trademarks, restaurants, service, and employees. These categories follow the structure of similar research done on McDonald's global expansion and are used here to see how Jollibee adapts its identity without completely letting go of its Filipino roots.

In terms of the menu, Jollibee's European operations have gone through several changes. While the brand keeps its flagship items like Chickenjoy and Jolly Spaghetti, it also tailors offerings to suit local tastes. For example, the Jolly Spaghetti is made less sweet and less red in color to appeal to European customers, especially in countries like Italy where pasta is part of the national identity. Chickenjoy is fried in rapeseed oil instead of coconut oil

in the UK due to food regulations. Jollibee has also added European-style items such as chicken wraps, tropical burgers, and rice bowls with sauces like sriracha and barbecue. While the company's goal is to introduce its core Filipino flavors to new markets, it makes sure to tweak these items to win the local palate. According to interview data, Jollibee's Sriracha Chicken Loaded Fries and Chicken Sandwich became local favorites in the UK, accounting for a significant portion of sales.

In promotions, Jollibee has gradually shifted from a Filipino-centered messaging strategy to a more local and youth-oriented approach. When Jollibee Milan opened in 2018, social media content mainly focused on nostalgia and community, appealing to Filipino migrants. As the brand expanded, it started working with local marketing agencies and changed its strategy to include pop culture references, memes, and content that resonated with young people in each country. Each Jollibee Facebook page now posts in the local language—Italian, Spanish, or English—and also engages users through seasonal gimmicks, influencer collaborations (like with UK chef Whyte Rushen), and occasional giveaways. Rather than relying on aggressive price discounts, Jollibee emphasizes brand storytelling and emotional connection to build loyalty and attract new customers.

When it comes to trademarks, Jollibee maintains a visual identity consistent with its global image but adjusts the messaging and product labels for each region. For example, the UK used “Asia's Favourite Fried Chicken” and “Home of the Famous Chickenjoy”, and later changed to a more straightforward “Chicken, Burgers, Spaghetti” to encourage unfamiliar customers to try their food. Spain uses “Chicken, Sandwich, Spaghetti.” Meanwhile, Italy still uses “Home of the Famous Chickenjoy” and occasionally *Il Pollo Fritto Piu Croccante Che Ci Sia* meaning “The Crunchiest Fried Chicken There Is.” The brand's messaging balances its cheerful, family-friendly Filipino tone with a modern, urban feel to match the fast-paced lifestyle in Europe.

Jollibee's physical restaurants in Europe are another key part of its strategy. The brand intentionally designs its spaces to be more modern and stylish compared to typical fast food outlets, using sleek interiors, neon lighting, and open dining layouts. This helps position the brand as “elevated fast food,” which is important in Europe, where consumers tend to value quality and ambience even in quick-service dining. The emphasis on high design and comfort also allows Jollibee to stand out in a market that is not as fast food-saturated as the U.S. or Asia.

Service is also a key part of Jollibee's glocalization strategy. The company trains its staff to align with local customer service norms while still delivering what it calls 'Alagang Jollibee'—a warm, caring approach rooted in Filipino hospitality. While styles of interaction may differ across countries, the brand consistently emphasizes friendliness, attentiveness, and genuine care to create a consistent experience of joy and comfort for all customers.

Employees themselves also become carriers of glocalization. Local staff make up the majority of workers in each branch, and are trained not only on operations but also on the

cultural significance of the Jollibee brand. Interviewees mentioned that having a mix of Filipino and local staff helps in creating a welcoming atmosphere for both diaspora communities and new customers unfamiliar with the brand.

Through the six dimensions of glocalization (menu, promotions, trademarks, restaurants, service, and employees), this study shows how Jollibee has been able to enter and grow within competitive Western markets while preserving its cultural identity. The findings suggest that Jollibee's success lies in its ability to maintain its Filipino roots while adapting just enough to appeal to a broader European audience. Instead of presenting itself as entirely foreign or entirely localized, Jollibee has positioned itself as something in between: proudly Filipino, but responsive to the tastes, trends, and expectations of local consumers.

This success did not happen overnight. When Jollibee first entered the European market, much of its strategy was directly lifted from its Philippine operations (i.e., campaigns emphasized nostalgia, emotional storytelling, and community, primarily targeting the Filipino diaspora). Over time, however, the company recognized the need to localize its approach more intentionally. This shift from copy-pasted campaigns to culturally tailored strategies has been key in helping the brand reach beyond its initial base. Today, Jollibee sees a growing share of non-Filipino customers, with the UK market reporting over 70% local patronage. This transition reflects a broader move from ethnic niche branding to mainstream cultural participation..

Jollibee's experience demonstrates that glocalization for Global South brands is not just a creative decision, but it is often a matter of necessity. Unlike Western brands that benefit from cultural familiarity and global media power, brands like Jollibee must exert extra effort to be understood, accepted, and embraced in the West. This includes not only changing product offerings, but also rethinking communication strategies, marketing tone, and physical space design. Glocalization becomes a way to overcome the structural disadvantages faced by emerging market brands, helping them carve out a place in highly competitive and culturally distant markets.

This study makes several key contributions. First, it expands the academic discourse on glocalization by highlighting a non-Western brand's entry into Western markets, reversing the typical "West-to-East" narrative that dominates most literature. Second, it offers practical insights for Filipino and other Global South businesses seeking to globalize. The case of Jollibee demonstrates that successful international expansion is not about abandoning one's brand identity, but about skillfully adapting it to resonate with local markets. Importantly, the study also shows that brands from the Global South often face an uneven playing field. Unlike Western corporations that benefit from cultural dominance and historical familiarity, emerging brands must work harder to earn trust, visibility, and cultural relevance in the West. This makes glocalization not just a strategy, but a necessity—a tool for overcoming the structural disadvantages embedded in global market dynamics.

In conclusion, Jollibee's case shows how a brand from the Global South can make space for itself in the competitive landscape of European fast food. By being strategic, adaptable, and culturally sensitive, Jollibee is not just serving food; it is also building bridges between cultures, representing a new wave of global business that is both proudly local and globally ambitious.

The Unilateral Import Ban of Poland and its Implications to Ukraine's Accession Application to the European Union

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Introduction

Grain exports remain fundamental to the economy of Ukraine and the food security of import-dependent countries. Ukraine is the fifth largest wheat exporter in the world (FAO, 2022) with its grain exports for the year 2021 accounting for 41 percent (€26.2 billion) of its €62.2 billion annual export revenues (FAS-USDA, 2022). These exports are crucial for lower-middle-income countries such as Egypt, Turkey, and Yemen (Liu et al., 2023) with Ukraine feeding three times more people than its population by exporting three-quarters of its grain production (Teixeira da Silva et al. 2023). However, after the closure of Black Sea ports due to Russia's war in Ukraine, the export of approximately 22 million metric tons of grain (Bullock et al., 2023) was blocked, adversely affecting the trade networks between Ukraine and import-dependent countries (Liu et al., 2023). The ongoing war has also resulted in a steep 29% drop in Ukraine's overall grain production (Council of the European Union - European Council, 2024a), affecting a critical sector that employs 14% of the country's population (FAS - USDA, 2022).

To prevent further decline, the European Union introduced the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes which allowed for overland transport of Ukrainian grain through the European Union's "frontline five" Eastern states, namely, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania. Through the plan, around 54% of Ukraine's grain since the start of the war has been exported through the European Union (European Commission, 2024a). However, this caused internal market distortions within the said countries, as the overabundance of Ukrainian products lowered prices for locally produced agricultural items and reduced farmers' profits (European Commission, 2023a). In Poland, protests erupted resulting in the government imposing a unilateral import ban on Ukraine's grain imports within its borders. The Polish government has also halted its supply of weapons to Ukraine (Shangkar & Wingard, 2023).

Akhvlediani & Movchan (2024) examined Ukraine's existing and potential economic impact on the European Union's economy, suggesting that the EU economy will absorb many benefits and shocks from closer integration with Ukraine before its accession. However, Poland's unilateral import ban raises significant concerns regarding the effect of Ukrainian grain on the European Single Market and the extent of future cooperation by

Poland and the European Union in addressing Ukraine's accession application. This study, therefore, aimed to determine the implications of the unilateral import ban imposed by Poland on Ukraine's accession application to the European Union.

Background of the study and Theoretical Framework

Ukraine is an important exporter of grain globally, specifically wheat, barley, and maize (Liu et al., 2023) exporting around 6.5 million tonnes of grain overseas every month. Under the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes, Ukraine managed to export 42 million tonnes of grain resulting in approximately €46 billion of export revenues (European Commission, 2024a). However, in Poland, the export created an influx that affected the prices of grains with Polish wheat selling for around 1,200 zlotys per ton (Deutsche Welle, 2022). To address the situation, the European Union imposed a temporary import ban on Ukrainian grain imports to stabilize the European market which was lifted six (6) months later on September 15, 2023 (Liboreiro, 2023).



Figure 1. Map of EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes

Source: European Commission (2023b). Solidarity Lanes Adriatic Corridor state-of-play and outlook



Figure 2. Inland Grain transport routes through Poland

Source: Sadlowski et. al. (2023). The Transport of Ukrainian Grain Through Poland and The Domestic Grain Market.

However, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovakia, despite supporting Ukrainian product transit, declared a joint extension of their ban - a unilateral import ban - on domestic sales of key Ukrainian grain products. The situation escalated when Ukraine lodged a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO) against Poland, after determining that its unilateral actions were unacceptable (Vinogradoff, 2023). As a result, Poland halted its arms transfers to Ukraine (Deutsche Welle, 2023).

Ukraine formally applied for membership in the European Union shortly after Russia invaded key Ukrainian territories of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia in February of 2022. The country was granted candidate status in June of 2022, with a subsequent decision by the European Council of the commencement of the accession negotiation between the Union and Ukraine at the ministerial level following on December 14, 2023 (European Commission, 2024b). Preceding the application, in 2014, Ukraine and the European Union entered into an Association Agreement outlining political and economic commitments to integrate Ukraine into the European Union gradually. The agreement resulted in the creation of the Deep Comprehensive Trading Area (DCFTA) where the Union would progressively remove customs tariffs and quotas and in return, Ukraine would gradually harmonize its laws, norms, and regulations of various trade-related sectors with the European Union (European Commission, n.d.).

This study focuses on the long-term implications of the ongoing import ban on Ukraine's accession application to the European Union. Poland's unilateral import ban may complicate Ukraine's integration into the European Single Market, especially its compliance with the free movement of goods chapter in the accession process. The ban contravenes Union rules prohibiting unjustified trade barriers, a key requirement for accession. Poland's

turn of Presidency in the European Council in January 2025 also raises a question on its support for Ukraine and its accession (Government of Poland, 2023). More specifically, the unilateral import ban raises questions about Poland's willingness to further cooperate on Ukraine's accession application.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Neo-functionalism, as an integrative theory, revolves around the basic premise that states, in the process of problem-solving, engage in specific tasks that usually involve cooperation with others. If such tasks are satisfactorily accomplished, cooperation persists and may even become institutionalized (Niemman et al., 2019). In the context of regional integration, interdependence is a byproduct of mutually recognized problems that states address through cooperative decision-making, leading to a shared understanding of common agendas. In this process, when actors recognize the benefits of cooperative decision-making in one area, they create conditions and motivations to further cooperate in other areas — a process known as *spillover*.

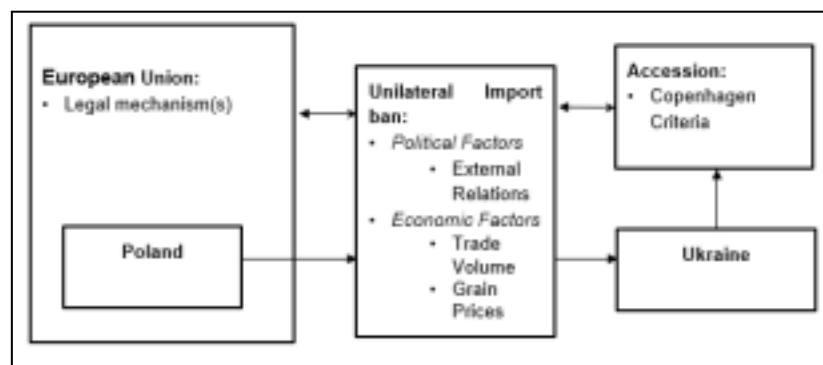


Figure 3. Conceptual framework

This study applies neo-functionalism to identify the conditions the European Union must meet to prevent Poland from hindering Ukraine's accession. As shown in Figure 3, the theory examines the factors behind Poland's imposition of the unilateral import ban and explores the circumstances that may encourage Poland to cooperate on Ukraine's accession; not to mention the dynamics between the European Union, its member states, and their relationship with candidate countries. Additionally, it addresses broader concerns about the EU's enlargement policy, such as Ukraine's alignment with the European Single Market, and how the import ban may spill over other areas of EU jurisdiction.

Research Design and Methodology

To determine the factors and the wider implications of the ban on Ukraine's accession application to the European Union, the researchers applied qualitative content analysis to evaluate data that was derived from multiple secondary sources (i.e., Official EU repositories, scholarly journals, news articles) where patterns of consistency were identified from each text with researchers consequently generating themes that represented each of the research objectives.

To complement and support data gathered from the content analysis, researchers used Key Informant Interviews (KII) to interview experts in the field, which in this study were (a) government officials, (b) university professors, and (c) related experts within the specified categories. The KII was conducted using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods. One (1) key informant was selected from each of the three categories, which in this study were (a) the European Union, (b) Poland, and (c) Ukraine, totaling three (3) key informants overall. Researchers adopted the framework created by Hicks et al. (2023), to create an Interview Protocol for Key Informant Interviews (*Refer to Appendix A: Protocol for Key Informant Interviews*). Informed Consent was obtained through the provision of Informed Consent Forms, and upon transcription of the interviews, researchers applied a verbatim transcription method to ensure that respondents' responses are captured accurately and completely (Hill et. al., 2022).

Presentation of Findings

Factors behind the unilateral import ban

The first step of the methodological framework involved the identification of the factors behind Poland's decision to impose the import ban (*Refer to Appendix B. Step-by-step process of the Methodological Framework*). Findings revealed that three (3) interrelated factors are behind the unilateral import ban imposed by Poland: logistical bottlenecks, the lifting of tariff duties for Ukrainian grain exports, and political skepticism. Poland's unilateral import ban is influenced by infrastructural and logistical challenges in handling the sudden surge in Ukrainian grain exports (European Commission, 2023a; Lepiarz et al., 2023). Rail transportation through Poland became congested due to the incompatibility of rail gauges between Ukraine and the EU, which increased reloading and transport costs. Moreover, storage facilities in Poland and neighboring countries quickly reached maximum capacity, leaving little room for both local and imported grain (EUR-Lex, 2023). The lifting of tariff duties under EU Regulation 2022/870 exacerbated these issues, leading to a glut of cheaper Ukrainian grain in the Polish market. This surplus, combined with high logistical costs and insufficient infrastructure, created a significant political divide among Polish farmers who complained of increased competition from Ukrainian imports (Bill, 2023; Ciobanu, 2023; EUR-Lex, 2023; Henley, 2023; Koper et. al., 2023; Nivievskiy, 2024; Ilie & Strzelecki, 2023; Wageningen, 2022;).

Consequences of the unilateral import ban

The second step of the methodological framework aimed to assess the long-term consequences of the unilateral import ban on Ukraine's accession application process, particularly its integration into the European single market (*Refer to Appendix B. Data collection procedures*). The findings revealed that the import ban has no direct consequences for Ukraine's accession into the Union, with Grieveson (2024) and Nivievskyi (2024) noting that Ukraine's current GDP is only around 1% of the Union, with its agricultural products amounting to only 1-2% and total trade in goods with the Union accounting to only 0.5%. However, the findings showed that the ongoing import ban bears significant implications for the fulfillment of Ukraine's negotiation chapters in the accession application process.

Poland's ongoing unilateral import ban on Ukrainian grain exports has since been reconciled by the renewal of the Autonomous Trade Measures (ATMs) by introducing safeguarding provisions obligating the European Commission to institute an 'emergency brake' on sensitive products which has expanded to include poultry, eggs, sugar, oats, maize, groats, and honey should they exceed export levels at a reference period of years between 2023 and 2021 – the year when Ukraine's exports to the Union were significantly lower (European Commission, 2024c). Concurrent with this development, Ukraine and the European Union have also reached an agreement to extend the EU-Ukraine Transport agreement securing Ukraine's 'transport visa-free regime' and eliminating the necessity for Ukrainian truck operators to travel within the Union with special permits. Also important is the fact that, in terms of overall trade competition, Ukraine's ongoing Autonomous Trade Measures (ATMs) with the European Union have not caused drastic changes in the EU's imports or the functioning of the single market in general (Akhlevediani and Movchan, 2024). Additionally, on October 11, 2024, Ukrzaliznytsia and the European Railway Agency (ERA) signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to establish a technical interoperability cooperation framework aligned with Ukrainian railways to Union standards (European Union Agency for Railways, 2024a; Pamela, 2024).

Furthermore, Poland has resumed exporting weapons to Ukraine after entering into a Bilateral Security Agreement on July 8, 2024. More importantly, on March 20, 2024, Polish farmers ended the two-month protest after the government had committed to maintaining the current import ban. In July 2024, Polish checkpoints resumed the regular passage of trucks between border crossings allowing for visa-free transit for bilateral transport (Brovko, 2024).

Legal mechanisms for Solving Union disputes

In May 2023, the European commission announced additional financial support of €100 million and introduced temporary preventative measures limiting imports of Ukrainian wheat, maize, rapeseed, and sunflower seed to five (5) frontline member states (Kleimann, 2023). These measures sought to stabilize local markets but drew criticism for disproportionately affecting Ukrainian farmers, who relied heavily on EU markets (Vos and Glauber, 2023). The European Commission also established a Joint Coordination Platform to address trade disruptions and streamline cooperation between Ukraine and the EU (Dodd and

Welsh, 2024). By February 2024, the European Commission proposed renewing the Autonomous Trade Measures (ATMs) for Ukraine introducing an ‘emergency brake’ to address future potential disruptions. Finally, in April 2024, a deal was reached to extend Ukraine’s ATM benefits until 2025, balancing the EU’s support for Ukraine’s integration with the need to protect its Member States’ agricultural sectors (Kleimann, 2023; World Trade Organization, 2023). To this end, the European Union employed its Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) framework by engaging in negotiations with Poland and offering a compromise in terms of providing farmer subsidies to offset the difficulties faced by farmers due to the surges of Ukrainian grain.

Discussions and Conclusions

The results seem to affirm that Poland’s unilateral import ban has significant implications on Ukraine’s accession application process. The findings further validate the hypothesis of Niemann et. al. (2019) that inter-institutional cooperation after Poland’s imposition of a unilateral import ban have created the conditions and opportunities conducive for Poland, Ukraine, and the European Union to further cooperate on Ukraine’s accession.

A key observation from the consequences of the import ban is the fact that both countries have engaged in cooperative decision-making after recognizing the potential to align Ukraine into Union standards for both transportation systems and infrastructure. In such a case, the import ban is considered as the benchmark that created the opportunity for a process of spillover from one policy area (trade) into other interconnected areas (infrastructure development and transportation).

This spillover is clearly observable in terms of the agreement between JSC Ukrainian Railways (UZ) and Polish State Railways (PKP) to develop a strategic partnership for the alignment of Ukrainian railways to European standards (ERRIN, 2024; Kolisnichenko, 2024). This is supported by Ukraine’s institutionalization of ePhyto certificates arising from the logistical bottlenecks of truck transport across Polish-Ukrainian border terminals. In the case of the European Union, the recent railway harmonization support agreement between

Ukraine and the Union Ministry of Communities, Territories & Infrastructure Development and the EU Agency for Railways also show a spillover of Union support in areas such as safety, interoperability, and train-driving legislation (European Union Agency for Railways, 2024; Railway Gazette International, 2024). This is supported by further harmonization agreements under the Twinning programs and the expansion of the European TEN-T Network towards Ukraine and Moldova (ERRIN, 2024; Council of the European Union - European Council, 2024c).

In conclusion, while the import ban has revealed the inefficiencies of Ukrainian grain transport through the alternative export routes, it has provided opportunities for Poland, Ukraine, and the European Union to improve interoperability and legislative harmonization

crucial to the Ukrainian alignment with Union standards for accession. This benefits Ukraine from a long-term perspective as the issue addresses key gaps which the Union and Ukraine can mitigate by stimulating inter-institutional cooperation in the form of various initiatives and harmonization agreements.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Protocol for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

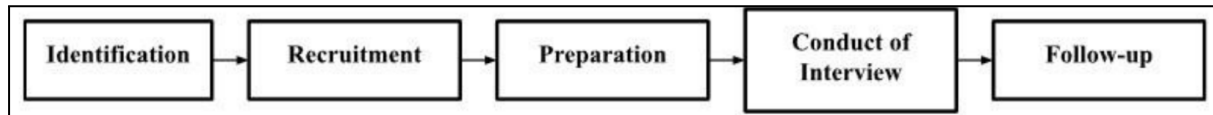


Figure 4. Five-step Key Informant Interviews Framework

Hicks et. al. (2023). Conducting Virtual Qualitative Interviews with International Key Informants: Insights from a Research Project

This paper adopts the five-step framework of Hicks. Et. al. (2023) and the strategies introduced by Betrthet et. al. (2023) to administer the Key Informant Interviews for the study. The process will be as follows:

Identification. The participants for the Key Informant Interviews (KII) will be identified based on their expertise and involvement with the academe, institutions, or organizations relevant to the objectives of the study. Through purposive sampling, one (1) key informant will be identified per category area, which is (a) Poland, (b) the European Union, and (c) Ukraine. This identification process shall be administered through literature review and networking. Snowball sampling will also be adopted to identify additional participants based from the recommendation or referrals of existing participants.

Recruitment. Recruitment will be conducted primarily through email. Email read receipts will be used during the recruitment process to provide certainty that the email was received. Participants of the study will be guaranteed that interviews will be of voluntary informed consent, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity. These shall be stated within the consent forms that participants should complete upon agreement to take part in the interviews.

An activity log and a general master list will be created to monitor the acceptance of identified participants for the interviews. Likewise, scheduling of interviews will be made through google calendar. Should the participant refuse, researchers shall also apply snowball sampling to encourage the prospective participant to recommend or refer alternative participants for recruitment.

Preparation. Researchers will prepare a semi-structured interview guide whose authenticity will be validated by faculty researchers within Xavier University - Ateneo de

Cagayan. A pilot testing of the interviews will be conducted to ensure the relevance and reliability of the questionnaire and interview guide created including the credibility of the research protocols. Participants will be given a copy of the interview guide or the questionnaire in advance to prepare for the interview. This shall be provided promptly upon the completion of the consent forms.

Conduct of Interview. The interviews will be conducted either in-person or virtually via Zoom. The researchers will provide the meeting link through the scheduled meeting option, consistent with the Google calendar schedule of the interviews. One (1) research member will act as a moderator, which will guide the participants in questions and make sure that the conversation will have a smooth flow. Through informed consent, the interview shall be recorded to have an accurate record of the information shared by the participants. Should the participants refuse, researchers shall instead document the interview. Participants through the consent form shall be informed in advance of the duration of the interviews, arranged in a maximum time frame of not less than thirty (30) minutes and not exceeding one (1) hour. Should the interview begin later or earlier than the proposed schedule, adjustments to the timeframe shall be introduced upon agreement of the researchers and participant/s.

Key informants will have several opportunities to ask questions and receive clarifications throughout the interview process:

1. **Before the Interview:** Key informants will receive a brief overview of the study objectives. This will be followed by a 5-minute question-and-answer period allowing key informants to seek any initial clarifications.
2. **During the Interview:** If key informants encounter confusion or need further understanding of a question, they can request either (a) an explanation to clarify the question or (b) a paraphrased version tailored to their understanding. The participant may also exercise the right to not disclose any sensitive information when responding or decline to answer the question overall.
3. **After the Interview Questions:** Once all formal questions have been addressed, any remaining time within the 1-hour session will be available for key informants to either (a) ask additional questions related to the study, or (b) provide further details or insights pertinent to the study objectives. Such a time limit may be extended upon the request and approval of either the moderator or the interviewee during the discussion.

This structured process ensures that key informants are fully informed, comfortable, and able to contribute meaningfully throughout the interview. Should the participant seek to withdraw in the middle of the interview, the participant may request to remove all information shared from the researchers' database. Such also applies after the interview, should the participant request to withdraw from his/her participation in the study. Researchers shall find a new interviewee in substitution of the withdrawn participant.

In terms of personal and sensitive data gathered from both the interviews and the preceding procedures, researchers shall maintain compliance with the Data Privacy Act of

2012 and the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (EU-GDPR) conditionally processing gathered data pursuant to consent acquired from participants. Data gathered shall be securely stored in the university google drive of the research leader and shall not be shared to third parties without the consent of the participants and approval of the thesis adviser. The retention period shall only be until the completion of the said study, archived and deleted upon instruction by the research adviser. Furthermore, anonymity shall be ensured by coding the responses of participants based on their area category.

Follow-up. After the interview, participants will be acknowledged through email. To ensure that any inquiries during and after the interview are responded to promptly, a dedicated point of contact will be established. Certificates shall be given to the participants for their participation in the study. Recordings shall be stored using a google drive folder using the university email of the research leader. Participants may request partial access to data gathered but shall not have access to data gathered from other participants to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of their participation in the interview. Likewise, participants will not have access to data gathered through content analysis of the study. Participants will have access to their data until the duration of the data gathering procedures of the study, the duration of which is subject to the timeline created by the research adviser.

In terms of results sharing, researchers shall make it clear in the consent forms that the study shall be submitted or shared to publications upon or in the process of completion of the study. Participants may request a copy of the study only upon the approval of the research adviser and the resident ethics evaluator of the History and International Studies Department of Xavier University - Ateneo de Cagayan.

Below is the prospected timeline of the Key Informant Interviews:

Deliverable/s	Month															
	September				October				November				December			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Identification & Preliminary listing of Key Informants																
Invitation & Response window																
Pilot testing of Interview Procedures																
Conduct of Key Informant Interviews																
Post-interview procedures																

Table 1. Original Timeline for Key Informant Interviews (KII)

Appendix B. (Step-by-step process of the Methodological Framework)

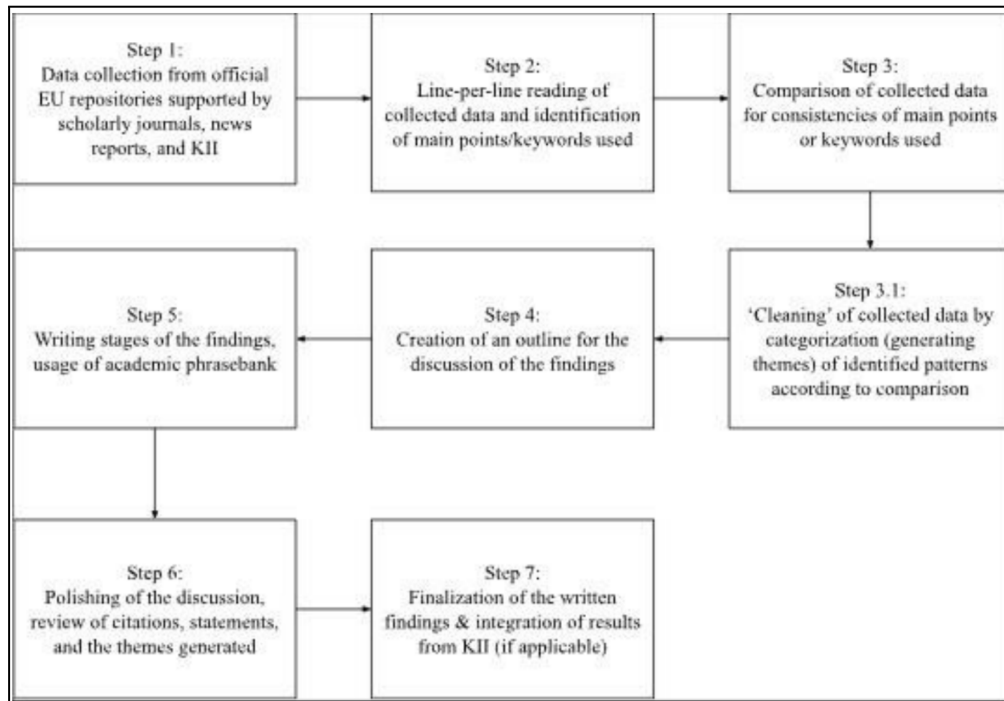


Figure 5. Data collection process for Objective I: The factors behind the unilateral import ban

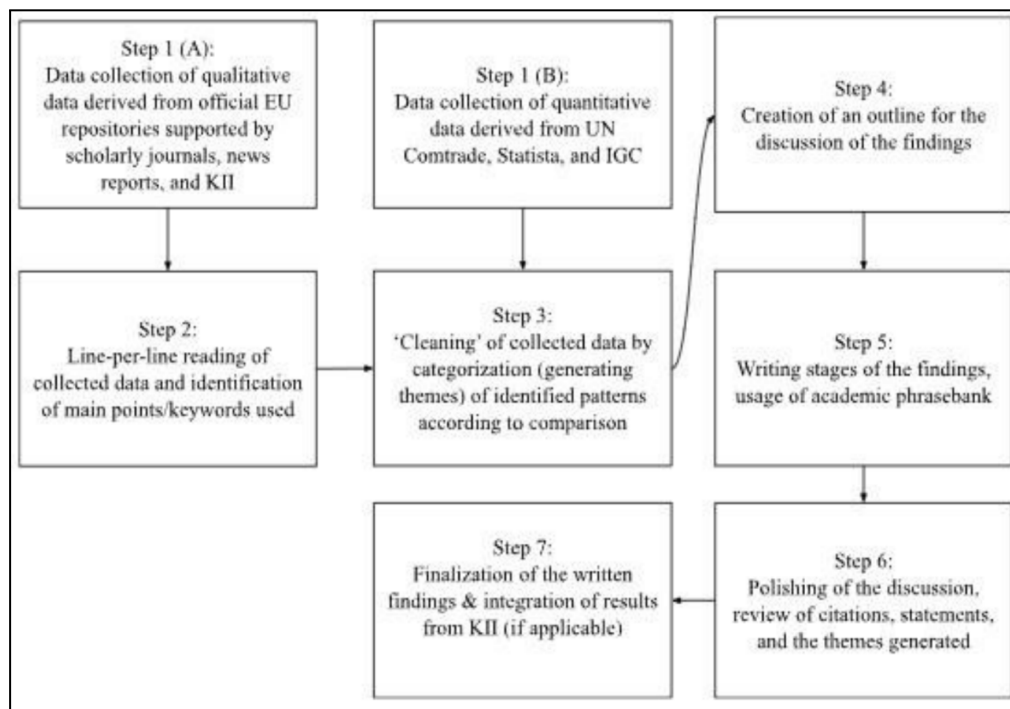


Figure 6. Data collection process for Objective II: Consequences of the unilateral import ban

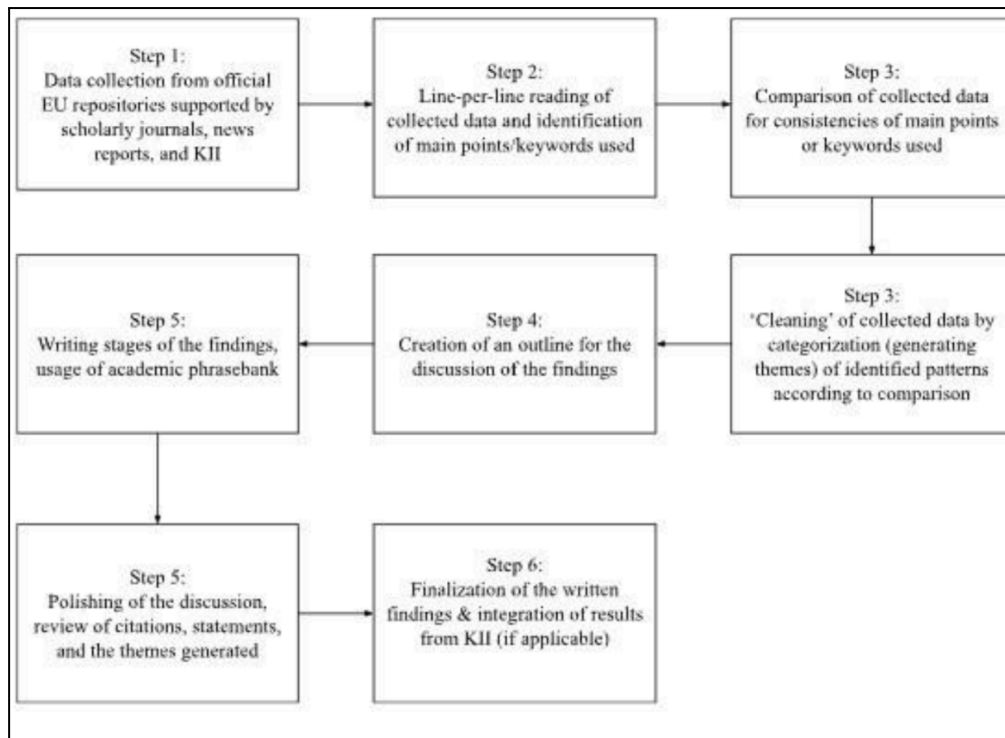


Figure 7. Data collection process for Objective III:
Legal mechanisms in dealing with disputes between member states and candidate countries

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Palio, Pottery, and Policy Pitfalls: A comparative analysis of the cultural tourism policies of Siena, Italy, and La Union, Philippines and their implications on local sustainability

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Introduction

Cultural tourism emerged as a branch of tourism that focuses on the transformation of cultural heritage assets in an area into products that can be consumed by tourists. Though there are contentions on the exact definition of “sustainable tourism”, sustainable cultural tourism upholds itself as a growing concern in the tourism industry, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted systemic issues and challenges such as overtourism, climate change, and the displacement of local communities.

As a major player in the global cultural tourism industry, the European country of Italy holds a vast number of cultural tourist attractions, yet it also possesses untapped potential in terms of sustainable development. On the other hand, the Southeast Asian archipelagic country of the Philippines has an abundance of natural areas for attraction, a rich history, and a diverse cultural heritage that make it an ideal destination for cultural tourism. However, its sustainable tourism policymaking and implementation processes are also not maximized.

Using Italy and the Philippines as cases for comparison, the study therefore sought to underline the developments in sustainable cultural tourism policy in both countries. More specifically, it aimed to answer the following main questions: (1) What are the differences in the sustainable cultural tourism policies of Italy and the Philippines? (2) How do these policies affect sustainability in the local communities of their respective countries? And (3) Based on the current policy landscape, what tourism policy initiatives can be implemented in the local community to improve its sustainability in a realistic and effective manner?

Literature Review and Framework

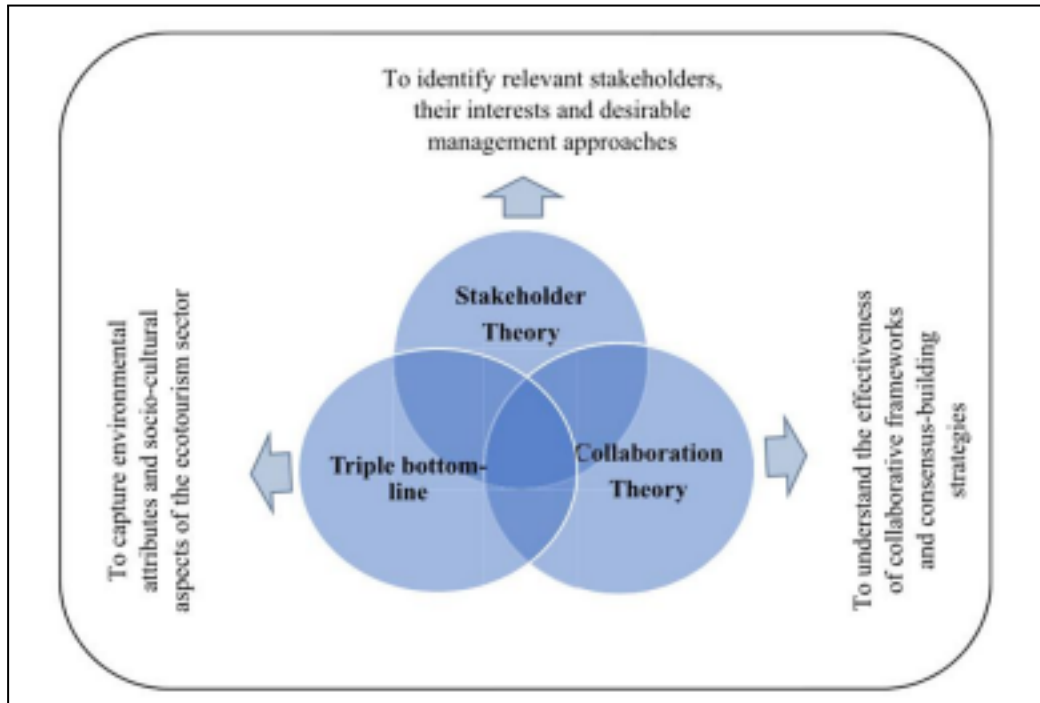


Figure 1. Wondirad, Tolkach, and King (2018). Guiding theories of the study.

This study was guided by the framework established by Wondirad, Tolkach, and King (2020), which integrated the Stakeholder Theory, Collaboration Theory, and the concept of TBL. Previous studies have only used one or two theories in combination. On the contrary, Wondirad, Tolkach, and King (2020) combines all three approaches to capture multiple facets of sustainable tourism development: stakeholder consideration, consensus-building frameworks, and the environmental and socio-cultural aspects of tourism, which cannot be fully explored by stakeholder theory alone.

Stakeholder theory, as elaborated by R. Edward Freeman (1984), is grounded on the premise that organizations operate in an ecosystem of stakeholders that have different interests, values, and expectations (Gutterman, 2023). In the context of tourism, stakeholders include government units, agencies, communities, enterprises, tourists, and the like. Studies on sustainable tourism policy explicitly used a variation on stakeholder theory (see Song, Zhu, and Fong, 2021; Mondoñedo, 2021; Plichta, 2019; Loverio, Chen, and Shen, 2023; Lapuz, 2023), or at least applied the fundamentals of the theory in their analyses (see Sapuay, Dimalanta, and Asilum, 2020; Maguigad, 2013; Alejandria-Gonzalez, 2016; Mudana, Ernawati, and Voda, 2021; Bahamonde Rodríguez, García-Delgado, and Šadeikaitė, 2022; Dodds, 2007). Hence, the stakeholder theory is used in this study to identify the relevant cultural tourism stakeholders, their expectations, and their roles in tourism planning and development.

Collaboration theory is premised on the understanding that goals can be better achieved when individuals and organizations collaborate in problem identification, direction setting, structuring, and enactment (Colbry, Hurwitz, and Adair, 2014). This approach is also used by scholars in the field of tourism, specifically in planning and policy development (see Loverio, Chen, and Shen, 2023; Jamal and Getz, 1995; Okazaki, 2008). Hence, this study applies the collaboration theory to understand the effectiveness of stakeholder collaboration efforts.

Lastly, TBL is employed to provide a holistic evaluation framework of the cultural tourism landscape of Siena and La Union. It involves considering the environmental, social, and economic aspects of decision-making (Buckley, 2003). This approach has been applied to various tourism settings (see Stoddard, Pollard, and Evans, 2012; Tyrrell, Paris, and Biaett, 2013; Gutierrez, Rivera, and Soler, 2021; Gupta, Kumar, and Thakkar, 2023) because of how the industry is consistently interconnected with the natural and social environments in which it operates (Faux and Dwyer, 2009).

In applying the three theories, this study posits that the success of cultural tourism policy developments is dependent on the effective and holistic integration of the stakeholders, their collaboration efforts, and socioeconomic and environmental factors.

Methodology

This study aimed to use Siena, Italy, and La Union, Philippines, as valuable points of interest. The countries and their respective regions were selected in terms of their growing cultural tourism sector and the nature of their cultural tourism policy landscape.

A qualitative approach was used to determine the similarities and differences between the sustainable cultural tourism policies of both regions. To support these context-rich comparisons, the study was guided by a multi-theoretical framework that integrates key concepts from the Stakeholder Theory, the Collaboration Theory, and the TBL approach.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the chosen participants to gather the primary data. They also had the option to answer a questionnaire in case of limitations in the oral interview setup. Participants were selected using the convenience sampling method due to limitations in geographical proximity and participant availability. Each region had representatives belonging to either of the following stakeholder groups: local government unit officials, operators in the tourism industry (business or enterprise owners), local community members who do not own any tourism-related businesses, and tourists.

Email requests with all necessary attachments (Informed Consent Form, research proposal, and letters of request) were provided to ensure that the participants knew how their data would be treated throughout the study. The researchers recognized the importance of safety and confidentiality, ensuring that the procedures complied with the ethical standards for research of the Ateneo de Manila University.

The researchers also looked at data from existing tourism policy documents available for public perusal on official websites and archives. They used data from the websites of La Union (Legislative Information System), Siena (Comune di Siena and Provincia di Siena), and Tuscany (Raccolta Normativa Della Regione Toscana).

Data from the interviews and policy documents were first organized in preparation for inductive coding. This method allows themes to emerge naturally from the data, rather than being imposed by predefined categories. Generated codes were then grouped into sub-themes based on certain similarities. Afterwards, broader main themes were formed to reflect the overarching subjects.

Main points of analysis include policy planning, policy implementation, its effects on sustainability, and how this affects stakeholders. Once properly sorted, relationships between the emerging themes will be established to formulate recommendations on how tourism policy initiatives in both regions can be implemented in the local community to improve its sustainability in a realistic and effective manner.

Presentation of Findings and Discussion

An analysis of tourism-related policies identified nineteen ordinances in La Union, with a notable presence of regulatory, community development, and institutional policies. Siena possesses a significantly larger portfolio of sixty tourism-related policies, with many grouped around themes like the Palio, vehicle regulations, and festivals. These policies strongly emphasize environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, and infrastructure development.

Table 1.
Emerging themes from interviews and policy data

Major Theme	Sub-Themes	Codes
Cultural Sustainability	Cultural Heritage Preservation	Restoration/Preservation of sites and artifacts Authentic Experiences Cultural Transmission Cultural Education
	Cultural Erosion	Over-commercialization Inauthentic Experiences
Economic Sustainability	Economic Growth and Development	Infrastructure Development Technology and Innovation Investments Tourism Revenue Job Creation
	Economic Disruptions	Rising Living Costs Difficulty Capitalizing on Local Products Seasonal Tourism Trends
Environmental Sustainability	Environmental Preservation of Assets	Overcrowding Improper Waste Disposal/Management Exploitation of Resources
	Environmental Degradation	Eco-friendly Tourism Waste Management Protection and Management of Natural Resources
Cultural Tourism Assets	Cultural Activities	Customs and Traditions Workshops Museum Trips Tours Festivities
	Cultural Products	Gastronomy Architecture Other Heritage Sites Cultural Artifacts
Branding and Recognition	Marketing Regional Identity	Promotional Campaigns Developing Branding & Identity
	Unfamiliarity and Branding Inadequacy	Weak Marketing and Promotion Undiscovered Places and Activities

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the chosen participants to gather the primary data. They also had the option to answer a questionnaire in case of limitations in the oral interview setup. Participants were selected using the convenience sampling method due to limitations in geographical proximity and participant

From both interview data and policy documents, eight major themes emerged. Across both locations, interview data most frequently highlighted "Active Government Involvement," "Cultural Heritage Preservation," and "Cultural Products" as key sub-themes. In contrast, policy data emphasized "Active Government Involvement," "Cultural Heritage Preservation," and "Economic Growth and Development," with themes implying negative cultural tourism impacts being absent from policy documents (see Tables 1, 2, and 3)

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	No. of Mentions (IT)	No. of Mentions (PH)	% Mentions (IT)	% Mentions (PH)	No. of Mentions (IT and PH)	% Mentions (IT and PH)
Cultural Sustainability	Cultural Heritage Preservation	52	39	13.76%	8.72%	91	11.03%
Economic Sustainability	Cultural Erosion	5	11	1.32%	2.46%	16	1.94%
	Economic Growth and Development	26	35	6.88%	7.83%	61	7.39%
	Economic Disruptions	2	10	0.53%	2.24%	12	1.45%
Environmental Sustainability	Environmental Preservation of Assets	14	35	1.06%	3.80%	21	2.55%
	Environmental Degradation	4	17	3.70%	7.83%	49	5.94%
Cultural Tourism Assets	Cultural Activities	24	19	6.35%	4.25%	43	5.21%
	Cultural Products	38	39	10.05%	8.72%	77	9.33%
Branding and Recognition	Marketing Regional Identity	13	21	3.44%	4.70%	34	4.12%
	Unfamiliarity and Branding Inadequacy	4	5	1.06%	1.12%	9	1.09%
Governance and Regulation	Active Government Involvement	37	63	9.79%	14.09%	100	12.12%
Stakeholder Dynamics	Lack of Government Presence	18	22	4.76%	4.92%	40	4.85%
	Community Involvement in Tourism Initiatives	15	43	3.97%	9.62%	58	7.03%
	Friction-Causing Dynamics	17	15	4.50%	3.36%	32	3.88%
	Positive Tourist-Local Engagements	29	17	7.67%	3.80%	46	5.58%
	Local Inaccessibility to Tourism Initiatives	2	5	0.53%	1.12%	7	0.85%
	Collaboration Between Organizations	11	18	2.91%	4.03%	29	3.52%
Tourism Pull Factors	Openness to Tourists	25	7	6.61%	1.57%	32	3.88%
	Uniqueness of Experience	35	19	9.26%	4.25%	54	6.55%
	Aesthetics	7	7	1.85%	1.57%	14	1.70%
Total		378	447	100.00%	100.00%	825	100.00%

Table 3.
Identified Themes from Policy Data

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	No. of Mentions (IT)	No. of Mentions (PH)	% Mentions (IT)	% Mentions (PH)	No. of Mentions (IT and PH)	% Mentions (IT and PH)
Cultural	Cultural Heritage	26	3	11.76%	6.00%	29	5.35%
Sustainability	Preservation						
Economic	Economic Growth and	18	9	8.14%	18.00%	27	4.98%
Sustainability	Development						
Environmental	Environmental	17	0	7.69%	0.00%	17	3.14%
Sustainability	Preservation of Assets						
Cultural	Cultural Activities	10	0	4.52%	0.00%	10	1.85%
Tourism Assets	Cultural Products	6	0	2.71%	0.00%	6	1.11%
Branding and	Marketing Regional	12	6	5.43%	12.00%	18	3.32%
Recognition	Identity						
Governance	Active Government	75	24	33.94%	48.00%	99	18.27%
and Regulation	Involvement						
Stakeholder	Community	20	5	9.05%	10.00%	25	4.61%
Dynamics	Involvement in Tourism						
	Initiatives						
	Positive Tourist-Local	2	0	0.90%	0.00%	2	0.37%
	Engagements						
	Collaboration Between	16	2	7.24%	4.00%	18	3.32%
	Organizations						
Tourism Pull	Openness to Tourists	5	0	2.26%	0.00%	5	0.92%
Factors	Uniqueness of	8	1	3.62%	2.00%	9	1.66%
	Experience						
	Aesthetics	6	0	2.71%	0.00%	6	1.11%
Total		221	50	100.00%	100.00%	271	100.00%

Stakeholders and policies in Siena both emphasized Cultural Heritage Preservation and Active Government Involvement. The transmission of culture through tourism is viewed as vital for preserving Siena's heritage, with historical sites often integrated into commercial activities. While government regulation, such as strict waste management, was acknowledged, some tourists reported a lack of perceived government presence and weak enforcement. Local stakeholders, although more aware of government activity, expressed concerns about inadequate communication and a misalignment between community needs and policy implementation. Negative aspects included tourists disregarding local norms and limited interaction between tourists and locals, partly because Siena is often considered a destination for short day trips, with tourism heavily influenced by seasonal events like the Palio (see Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4).

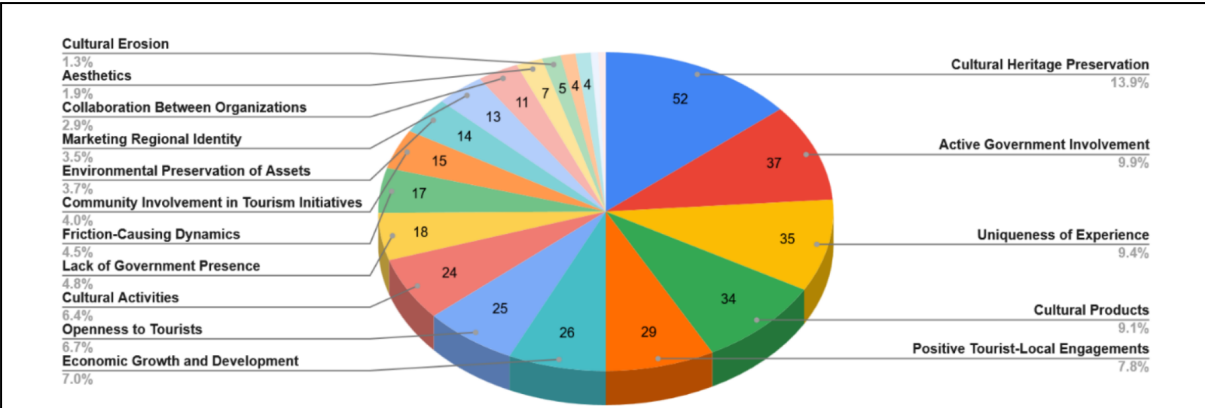


Figure 1. Distribution of Sub-Themes, Siena’s Stakeholder Interview Data

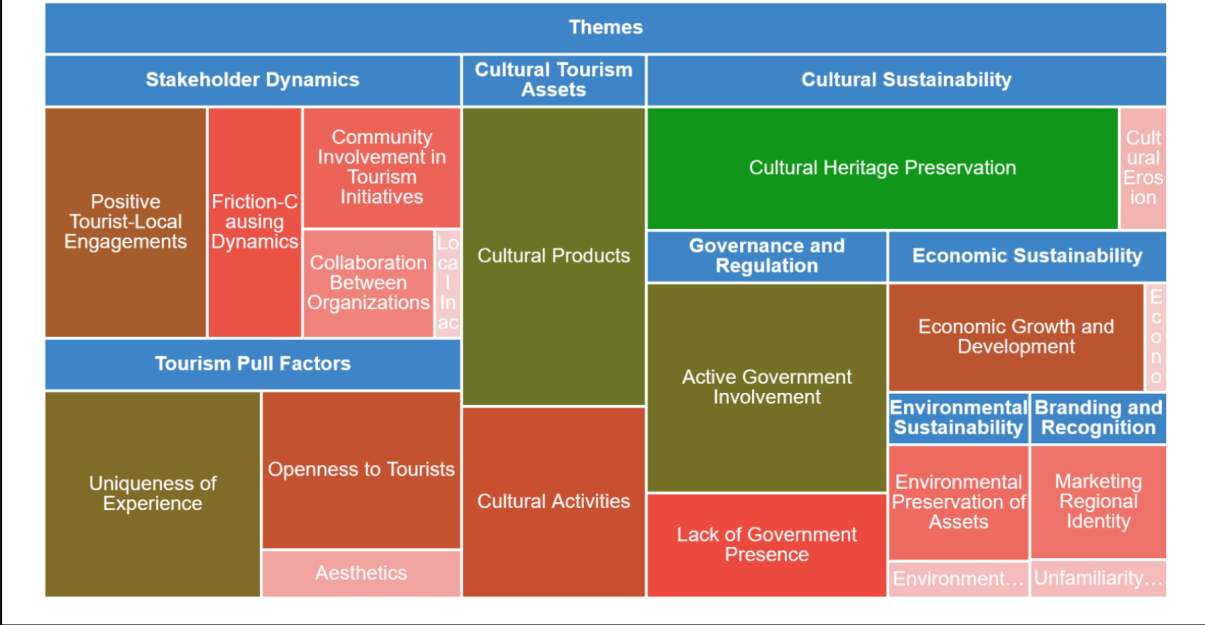


Figure 2. Distribution of Sub-Themes per Major Theme, Siena’s Stakeholder Interview Data

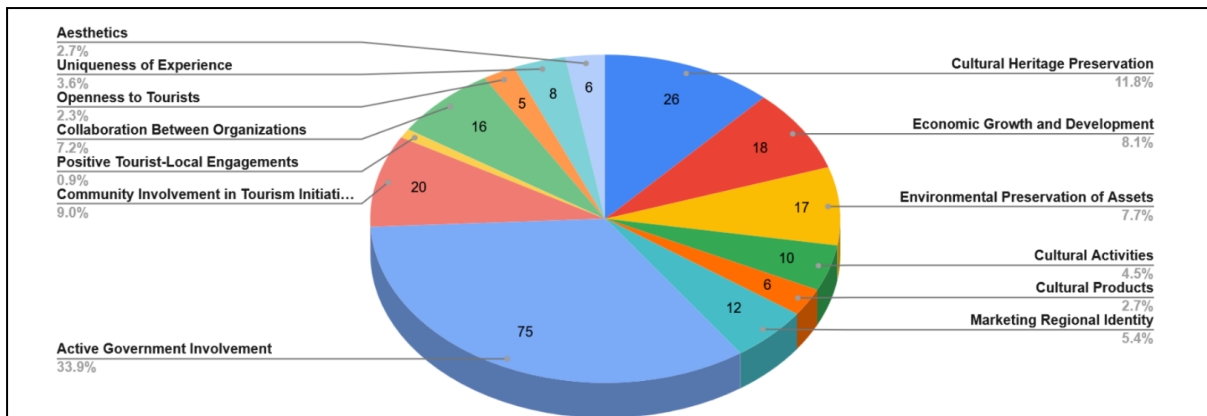


Figure 3. Distribution of Sub-Themes, Siena's Cultural Tourism Policy Data.

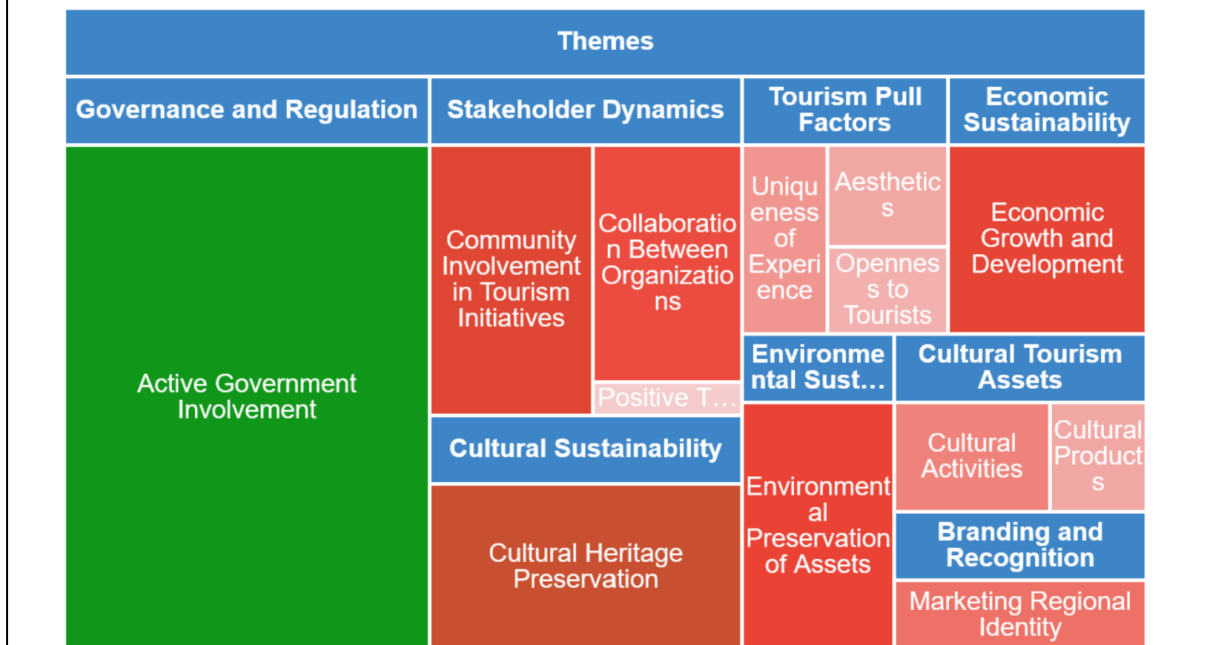
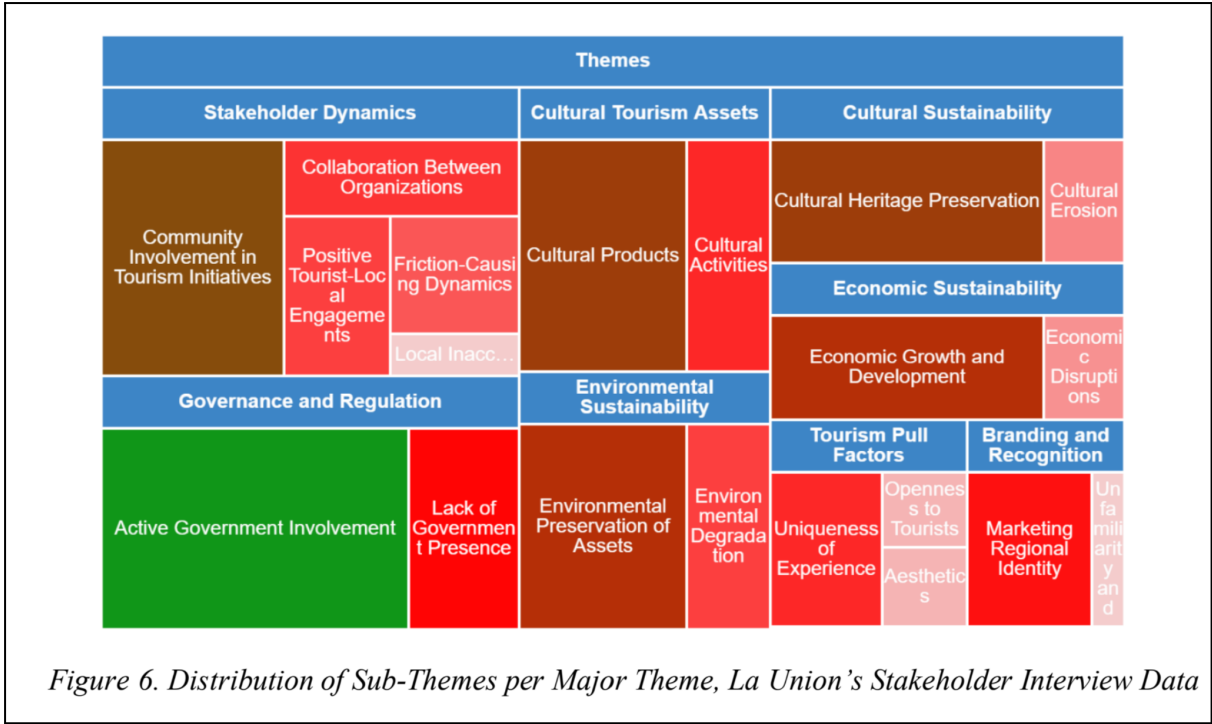
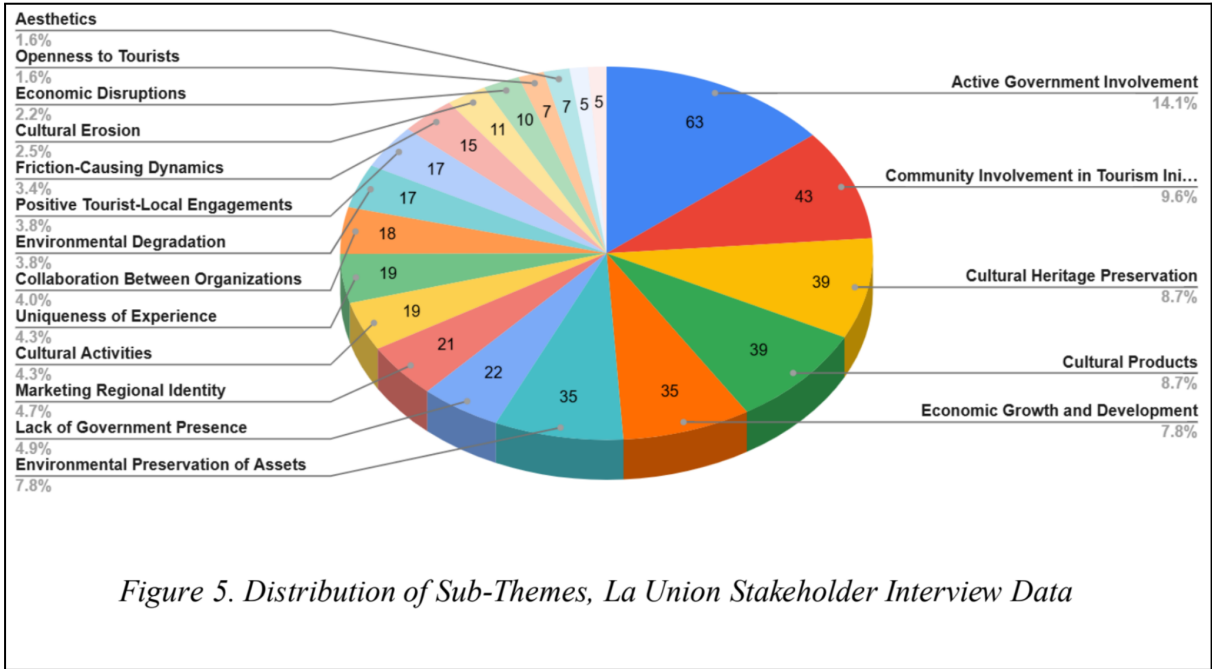
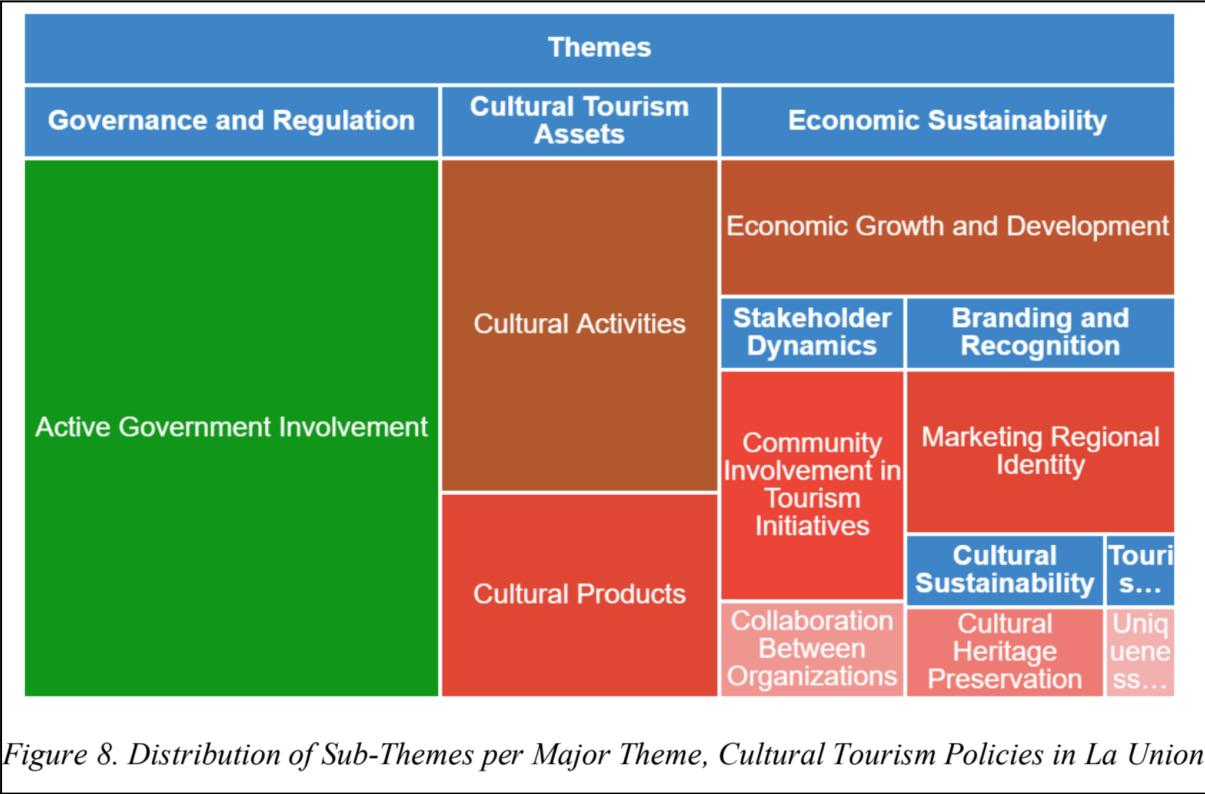
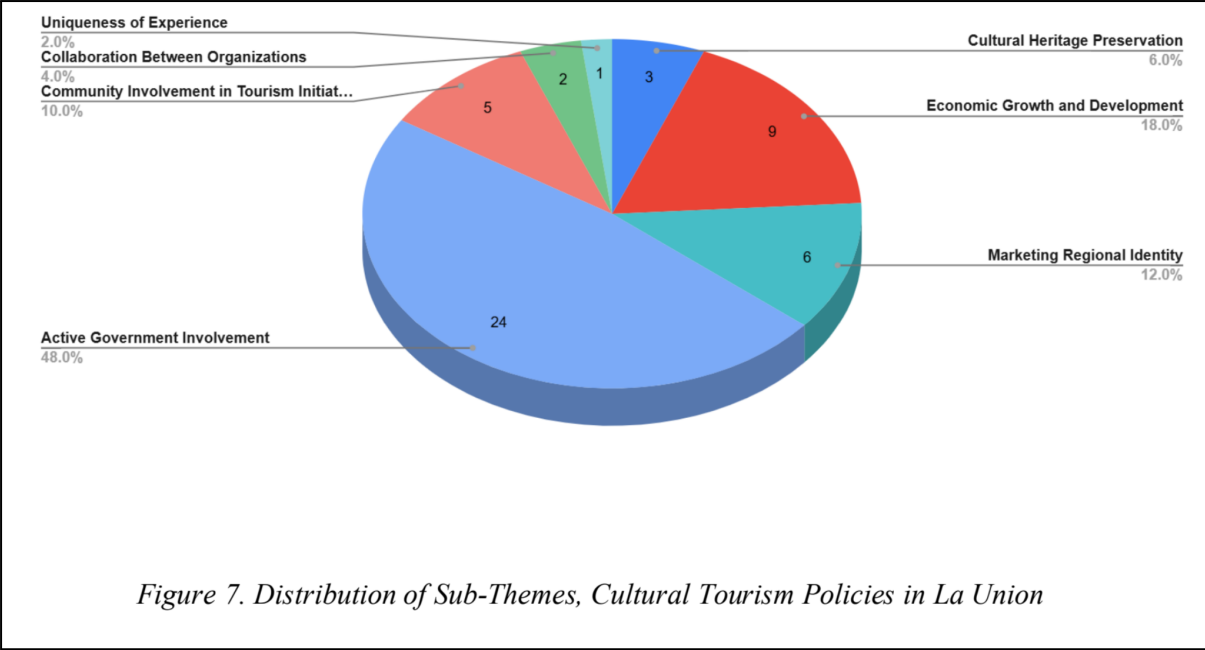


Figure 4. Distribution of Sub-Themes per Major Theme, Siena's Cultural Tourism Policy Data.

In La Union, stakeholder interviews revealed "Active Government Involvement," "Community Involvement in Tourism Initiatives," "Cultural Products," and "Cultural Heritage Preservation" as the most prominent sub-themes. However, existing tourism policies prioritized "Active Government Involvement," "Economic Growth and Development," and "Marketing Regional Identity." This highlights a disconnect: while policies focused on ordinance enforcement, interviewees emphasized implementation challenges. Community involvement was highly valued by stakeholders but appeared less of a priority in regional policies, despite LGU officials stating community-based initiatives were encouraged. This suggests current mechanisms for engagement are not effectively reaching all stakeholder

groups. Policies in La Union tend to prioritize economic gains, potentially overshadowing cultural preservation efforts-a concern less prominent in stakeholder interviews, which showed strong appreciation for cultural aspects (see Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8).





The two locations differ significantly in their policymaking structures. Siena's policies are subject to the broader framework of the Tuscany region, whereas La Union's provincial government has more direct jurisdiction. Siena's tourism strategy focuses on sustainable development, including stakeholder collaboration and mitigating negative impacts. La Union's strategy concentrates on attracting tourists and investment, partly due to the considerable difference in tourism sector size (Siena: ~2.2 million tourist arrivals in 2023; La

Union: 539,824 in 2024). Grassroots policymaking appears more evident in La Union, though it requires further development; Siena stakeholders, conversely, indicated a lack of local feedback mechanisms. Cultural heritage preservation efforts are more visibly integrated in Siena, leveraging its medieval history, while La Union faces challenges regarding the authenticity of its cultural heritage assets.

Despite these differences, both Siena and La Union show similarities. Their policies strongly focus on regulation and tourism governance, yet both encounter issues with effective implementation and translating stakeholder interests into sustainable practices. Stakeholders in both regions value their cultural heritage and are aware of the economic benefits of tourism. Both areas have growing cultural tourism sectors that are still striving to thrive. In La Union, cultural tourism is often secondary to beach and surfing attractions. In Siena, cultural tourism is largely tied to pilgrimage routes and historical sites, often resulting in short visits. Recognizing these limitations, stakeholders in both regions are attempting decentralization efforts by promoting lesser-known, authentic cultural tourism assets.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and interpretations gathered, the following conclusions were made:

Italy has implemented policies such as tourist taxes, landscape planning, and decentralized tourism through the *albergo diffuso* model. The Philippines developed the National Tourism Development Plan (NTDP), emphasizing community-based initiatives and economic resilience, though implementation faces challenges due to local government fragmentation.

Siena's policies focus on cultural heritage preservation and managing overtourism due to its large number of historical sites and cultural landmarks. La Union's policies, on the other hand, focus on economic development through tourism while incorporating cultural preservation to promote national identity and social cohesion.

In terms of Siena's cultural tourism policy landscape, their policies ensure the long-term conservation of historical and cultural sites, but they face challenges related to overtourism and seasonal tourism trends. La Union, on the other hand, aims to boost economic growth through tourism, but challenges in governance and limited community involvement hinder long-term sustainability.

Siena's policies promote economic sustainability by balancing heritage conservation with tourism revenues, including taxes and controlled tourist flows. Whereas La Union prioritizes economic gains, reflected in prominent promotional efforts. However, the lack of strong regulatory enforcement sometimes leads to over-commercialization.

Regarding environmental sustainability measures, Siena has well-established policies to regulate tourist influx and prevent cultural degradation. Meanwhile, in the province of La Union, environment-related policies do exist but are less emphasized compared to

economic-driven tourism initiatives. This has led to challenges like pollution and resource exploitation.

Policies on cultural heritage are evident in Italy's policies through strict regulations on historical sites and the promotion of traditional arts and festivals like the Palio. Whereas integrating cultural tourism into national identity-building efforts, data implies that inadequate policy enforcement threatens authenticity and long-term cultural preservation.

Finally, policy recommendations were outlined for both Siena and La Union based on their existing challenges. For Siena, the researchers recommend improving community engagement by establishing Cultural Councils at the municipal level to ensure local participation in tourism decision-making.

For La Union, the recommendations revolved around the need to deepen cultural tourism initiatives. First is prioritizing heritage preservation through cultural research and cultural education. Additionally, incentives for social enterprises that follow sustainability standards can promote economic development while safeguarding cultural and environmental resources.

For both Siena and La Union, measures to regulate tourist behavior, such as a Responsible Tourism Code of Conduct, are proposed. To address the need for better transparency, accountability, and feedback mechanisms, both regions are recommended to invest in having a digital transparency platform. With these strategies, both regions can create a more sustainable and inclusive cultural tourism landscape.

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Unveiling *Ngenger*: Tradition's Grip on Indonesia's Domestic Workers and the Debate Surrounding the 2020 Domestic Workers Bill of Rights

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Abstract

This study investigated diverse views on *ngenger* and how it has shaped the conversation surrounding the passage of the Protection Bill of Domestic Workers of 2020 in Indonesia. Given that domestic workers are yet to be recognized as a formal part of the labor force, this study aimed to: 1) Describe the evolving and diverse views on *ngenger* held by key representatives from the Indonesian government, local domestic workers' rights advocates, and children involved in the practice of *ngenger*; 2) Determine how *ngenger's* tradition continues to shape the Indonesian political landscape in the passage of the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights (2020) and; 3.) Examine the implications of the diverse views on *ngenger* on policies intended for the protection of domestic workers. This is a qualitative study that operationalized Carol Bacchi's 'What's the Problem Represented to be' (2012) that investigated how traditions such as *ngenger* shape Indonesia's policy environment and perspectives on domestic work. The study also conducted two key informant interviews; a labor lawyer to represent the state's perspective and an advocate from *Jaringan Nasional Advokasi Pekerja Rumah Tangga* (JALA PRT) as counter perspective. Supplementary sources from past studies and testimonies from policymakers, non-government actors, and children who partake in *ngenger* were also utilized in enriching the findings. The study's findings show that domestic work and *ngenger* have similar qualities but have distinctions, the compensation in particular. A *ngenger* seeks for education and basic necessities whilst domestic work seeks monetary compensation. But since a lot of the obligations and procedures are similar, this leaves t)3 discretion that one is the other. Since *ngenger* is informal, domestic work is also seen as such. This lack of representation is not only rooted in Indonesia' deeply-embedded values of preserving traditions such as *ngenger* but also is deeply gendered. The researchers recommend that this study should be used as a base for future research further understanding how customary law continues to shape Indonesian national laws.

Key words: Domestic Work, *Ngenger*, Indonesia, Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, What's the Problem Represented to Be?

