

Research on Public Political Trust in Public Crisis Management in Laos

Sithileuxay Vatsalaphone Abstract

School of Public Administration,
Hunan Normal University,
Changsha, China.

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The public's trust in the government is related to its legitimacy, social stability, and legal effectiveness. As an objective result of the government's administrative ability and an objective criterion for the authority, democracy, and rule of law of government work, government credibility also reflects the government's service capacity to a certain extent. In recent years, with the frequent occurrence of crises, many countries have faced the dilemma of decreasing public trust in their governments. After years of development, Laos has achieved good progress in politics, economy, and society. However, in the current context of economic globalization, increasingly complex social environment, and continuous deterioration of natural environment, public crisis events have changed from occasional occurrences to frequent occurrences, becoming an unavoidable problem for the Laotian government in social management. "Crisis" includes both risks and opportunities. If the government can handle these crises well, it will also be an effective way to enhance the government's image in the people's hearts and enhance public trust in the government. Based on the above, this article explores the issues of public behavior, public trust in the government, and the reasons that lead to these problems, and proposes relevant suggestions to enhance the credibility of the Lao government. I hope it can play a promoting role in improving the ability of the Lao government to manage public crises.

Corresponding Author:

Sithileuxay Vatsalaphone

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Background to the Study

The Connotation of Public Crisis

As the 21st century wears on, society is becoming increasingly complex and its components become ever more interdependent (Alexander, 2018). Public crises have become intricate and complex due to various intertwined relationships. Among many definitions of crisis, American scholars Rosenthal and Pienberg generally agree on the definition of crisis. They believe that a crisis is an event that poses a serious threat to the fundamental values and behavioral norms of a social system, and requires critical decision-making under time pressure and high levels of uncertainty. In addition to “public crisis”, relevant scholars and practical departments also use concepts such as “sudden events”, “sudden public events”, “public safety events”, “emergency states”, etc. to describe the critical and unbalanced states that cause society to deviate from the normal track, but their emphasis is different. This article uniformly uses the term “public crisis”.

The Connotation of Government Credibility

The academic research on government trust as an independent concept began in the 1950s and 1960s in the West. Scholars have begun to introduce the issue of trust into the field of political science, and the issue of government trust is increasingly receiving attention from domestic scholars. At present, the widely accepted government trust in the Chinese academic community refers to the objects involved in the execution of state power by state administrative institutions, including individual citizens, social groups, and administrative organizations at all levels, that is, administrative objects, reasonable expectations for the overall administrative system, as well as for the various elements of the administrative system, their relationships, and their movement status, as well as an interaction based on the response of administrative institutions A cooperative relationship. In a sense, government trust contains two-way expectations. On the one hand, society and the public believe that the government and its administrative personnel can meet their needs; On the other hand, the government and its administrative personnel also believe that his administrative management activities can bring back cooperation from society and the public. In addition, government trust also includes mutual trust between different departments and levels of government institutions.

The government trust described in this article only refers to the one-way expectation of society and the public that the government and its administrative personnel can meet their needs, that is, the trust psychology of the public towards the government and its administrative personnel in exercising administrative power and engaging in public management and service activities. People believe that the government's actions are to safeguard the public's interests, and the results of their actions can meet the needs of the general public, thereby generating trust in the government and its administrative personnel.

The Significance of Government Trust in Government Crisis Management

Firstly, government trust can to some extent prevent the occurrence of public crises. To strengthen its own trust, the government will naturally govern in accordance with the

law, eliminate government vacancies and corruption, and thus ensure supervision in areas such as building seismic performance and mine safety operations. On the contrary, citizens, out of the trust of the government, will actively communicate with the government, timely reflect on real-life problems, facilitate the government to penetrate into the public, and take precautions against potential crises.

Secondly, government trust can enhance the efficiency of the government in dealing with public crises. A government with good government trust often adopts democratic measures when dealing with public crises, communicates and consults with the general public, solicits social opinions, and obtains public recognition and support, effectively and properly resolving crises. A government lacking trust in the government works alone in dealing with crises, without the understanding and assistance of the people, and can only resort to coercive measures, even intensifying conflicts with the people and triggering greater crises. The COVID-19 pandemic clearly highlighted the importance of effective crisis management and its relationship with citizens' willingness to cooperate with the government in such turbulent times (Mizrahi et al., 2021).

Finally, government trust affects media participation in public crisis response. In reporting on the government's handling of public crises, the media's reporting tendency is nothing but two choices: political tendency and interest tendency. With the continuous improvement of the market economy, while the media is being pushed into the market, they will also attach importance to interest orientation in their reporting. For governments lacking government trust, this undoubtedly exacerbates the negative impact, while for governments with good government trust, the media's interest orientation will shift towards trust and support for the government. Therefore, the government can only stabilize the public's mentality and guide the public to respond to crises by having good government trust and cooperating with objective and fair media reporting.

Summary

Social trust is very important, but for a considerable period of time, the Laotian government has not given it the attention it deserves. The fear, anxiety, and anger triggered by public crises have cast a shadow over social trust, leading to an increase in the cost of social communication. Therefore, as an important part of social construction, the government's social credibility after public crisis events has gradually become an inherent need to maintain good social order. It is related to the happiness of the public and the development of the country, and has important practical value.

Through the study of sudden public relations crisis events, it can be found that the establishment and consolidation of government credibility after public crisis events are actually closely related to the establishment of effective coordination mechanisms, information emergency response management systems, and government social mobilization capabilities. The government should actively guide crisis related parties to participate in the process of public relations crisis handling, further standardize the

public relations response attitude of the responsible parties involved, ensure information symmetry between the government and the public to guide healthy social public opinion, strengthen the prevention and early warning capabilities of public crises, improve the punishment efficiency of the responsible parties involved, and improve the social trust restoration system after public crisis events, ensure the sustained, stable, and healthy development of Laos' economy and society.

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