Review of: "Policy-Based Water Management Challenges at the Local Level Under Non-traditional Security Perspective: The Case of Hanoi City, Vietnam"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I am commenting on the paper as a water scientist which previously worked in the nuclear safety area. First there are so many acronyms that some sentences are very difficult to follow, I would suggest to be more parcimonial about their use and to remind the reader about their meaning (especially when used in a sub-title).

Second, the first part of the paper goes incrementaly, from the definition of water security, the description of the related research field field and its assessment by practitioners. Then the case study is presented and the objectives are well described. While the reader clearly understand the lacks that motivated this study (cause-and-effect, effectiveness, and a more circular perspective), some parts of this first part could be improved. For example it appears not clear if water is here considered as a production factor (first sentence of the introduction), and the notion of “non-traditional” is blurred.

Third, the second part of the paper describes the methodological scheme for data collection and analysis. While the conceptual references could be enriched, the assessment system is understandable (Figure 1, but need a better version of this figure): what you try is to combine, or “integrate”, different concepts to make sense and quantify water security, which in my perspective if a huge challenge. The fact that you need to make many hypotheses may limit the explanation power of the study. For example you suppose that : “everything has a “price”, which represents both measurable and immeasurable value”, “the NTS concept refers to the highest level or broadest sense of security, which includes safety (S1), stability (S2), and sustainability (S3)”, “sound management of risk is the prerequisite to preventing crisis from occurring and subsequently achieving the desired NTS state of a referent object”, “MNS cost includes the cost invested for risk management (C1) and the cost lost for crisis (C2) and post-crisis recovery (C3) management”… Finally, the overall semi-quantitative procedure appears difficult to follow and the result seem not so surprising.

Finally, I want to question the way of managing which such tool that you propose (for example “controlling decisive variables of the WSM equation to achieve an improved level of WSM”). I suggest that understanding the social realm cannot be reduced to quantification. You may for example expand some lines of thought about security (cause-and-effect), “combine” with other areas of research (industrial security for example, which has developped many approaches to study accidental sequences) and reflect on what would be the most useful for managers to deal with water security (for example dangers and vulnerabilities).