

What are beyond the boundaries of an individual's mindsponge?

Minh-Hoang Nguyen

Centre for Interdisciplinary Social Research

Phenikaa University

Yen Nghia, Ha Dong, Hanoi 100803, Vietnam

January 13, 2021

Last update: May 19, 2024

* *
*

“– Wherever there is food, there is freedom! This cage room is my dream. It is here my happiest moment has arrived.”

In “Dream”; [The Kingfisher Story Collection](#) [1]

When I wrote a review of Chinh and Hoang's book to express my affection after reading the first chapter [2], an idea popped up in my mind. It is whether I can explain economic activities using the Mindsponge mechanism [3,4].

In the first chapter, I could see the distinction between Chinh and Hoang's book and other similar books. While other books' first chapters explain Vietnam's economic contexts or economic terminology, this book provides a broad overview of the global economy at the time. The overview helped me realize that what I think enormous is just a small part of a more enormous and complex system. In other words, Vietnam's economy is a component of the global economic system, so it cannot be explained solely by the entities within the economy itself and by the interaction with other economies within the global economic system.

The Mindsponge mechanism's primary function is to explain the learning and unlearning processes of an individual. It assumes that the external environment surrounds a sponge comprising of a mindset and a comfort zone. The external environment can be interpreted in many forms, but to me, it is a multi-layered system. Within that system, there are myriad individuals with dissimilar mindsponge processes. Those individuals can gather and form entities with higher hierarchical order, such as institutions, organizations, or teams. All the individuals and institutions/organizations/teams within a certain boundary continue forming a country. Thus, not only can the external environment change an individual's values, but an individual's values can also affect the surrounding environment because the individual is a part of the system.

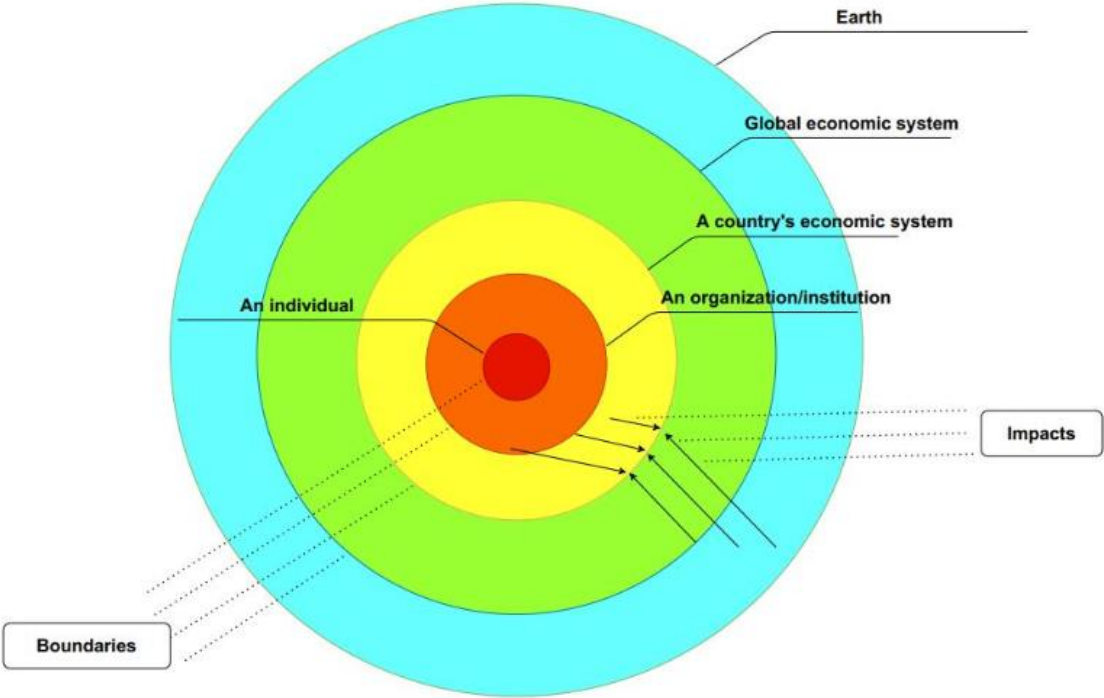


Figure 1: The sponge for economic activities

Based on this interpretation, I assume that the global economic system (green zone) is a part of the Earth system (blue zone) since all the economic activities are performed and fueled by the Earth's resources. There are national economic systems (yellow zone) of countries participating in the global trading network within the global economic system. Such economic systems will interact through trade and investment, which eventually impacts each other through tariffs, trade, and investment policies. I call these impacts a national economic system's external impacts. Each national economic system comprises many economic organizations (orange zone) and individuals (red zone), with each individual's and economic organization's action creates a certain impact on the system. I call these impacts a national economic system's internal impacts (see Figure 1).

The size and shape of any national economic system are simultaneously affected by both internal and external impacts. Specifically, the size is the total economic capacities and capabilities of all the organizations and individuals within the system. In contrast, the shape represents the production system, resource allocation, and distribution of goods and services within the country. Both of them are affected by multifaceted aspects (e.g., culture, technological and educational attainment, etc.) of institutions/organizations, individuals, and environmental resources within the system and other actors beyond the system.

I completely acknowledge that there are still many limitations with the proposed concept and my interpretation, but it is better to have a start than to keep it as zero. Hopefully, I can make the idea more transparent and concrete in the future so that it can be used to explain many contemporary phenomena, such as COVID-19, climate change, and other socio-economic and environmental issues [5-10]. I welcome constructive comments from all colleagues for improving the idea.

Last few words, all my thoughts here come after I read only the first chapter of the book. I am so excited to learn and be inspired more in the next few chapters.

* Thanks to these thoughts, my colleagues and I have developed the ecomindsponge framework, which attempts to explain the nature–human relationship with conceptual frameworks of system boundaries, selective exchange, and adaptive optimization [11]. I think that beyond an individual's mindsponge is not only the mindsponge of the organization, country, and humanity's mindsponge, but also the mindsponge of the natural systems. Thus, the humanistic values should also include the natural values as humanity is a component of nature [12].

References

[1] Vuong QH. (2022). *The Kingfisher Story Collection*.
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0BG2NNHY6>

[2] Chinh PM, Hoang VQ. (2009). *Kinh tế Việt Nam: Thăng trầm và đột phá*. Nxb Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội.

- [3] Vuong QH & Napier NK. (2015). Acculturation and global mindsponge: an emerging market perspective. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 49, 354-367.
- [4] Vuong QH. (2023). *Mindsponge Theory*. Walter de Gruyter GmbH. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/8367405145/>
- [5] Chinh PM, Hoang VQ. (2008). Bối cảnh tài chính Việt Nam 1997-1998 và 2007-2008: Khoảng cách và biến đổi. *Nghiên cứu Kinh tế*, 48(7), 3-24.
- [6] La VP, et al. (2020). Policy response, social media and science journalism for the sustainability of the public health system amid the COVID-19 outbreak: The Vietnam lessons. *Sustainability*, 12(7), 2931.
- [7] Vuong QH, et al. (2018). Cultural additivity: behavioural insights from the interaction of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in folktales. *Palgrave Communications*, 4(1), 143.
- [8] Vuong QH, Ho MT, Nguyen THK, Nguyen MH. (2019). The trilemma of sustainable industrial growth: Evidence from a piloting OECD's Green city. *Palgrave Communications*, 5, 156.
- [9] Vuong QH. (2021). The semiconducting principle of monetary and environmental values exchange. *Economics and Business Letters*, 10(3), 284-290.
- [10] Vuong QH, et al. (2020). On how religions could accidentally incite lies and violence: folktales as a cultural transmitter. *Palgrave Communications*, 6(1), 82.
- [11] Nguyen MH, Le TT, Vuong QH. (2024). Ecomindsponge: A Novel Perspective on Human Psychology and Behavior in the Ecosystem. *Urban Science*, 7(1), 31.
- [12] Nguyen MH. (2024). Five principles to leverage the humanistic values for biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation. <https://mindsponge.info/posts/307>