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The legacies of Marx and Lenin in Vietnam: a historical and regional perspective

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ABSTRACT

In conversation with other essays in this collection but with a focus on Vietnam within a regional East Asian perspective, this essay explores the great significance of Marxist and Leninist legacies by reviewing the historical contexts in which Marxist and Leninist movements emerged as contenders in national politics, and the creation and evolution of socialist institutions where communists took power. Those institutions helped communist regimes dominate their societies for decades and remain important today. Yet how long these regimes can survive in the face of rapidly growing demands for political freedom is an open question.

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On 19 December 2018, about two weeks before 2019 rang in, a group of Vietnamese intellectuals published their online open letter ‘Eight Demands of the Vietnamese People in 2019.’¹ The letter was addressed to the Vietnamese government, Vietnamese people at home and abroad, the United Nations, and foreign diplomatic missions in Vietnam. Within a week, the letter was endorsed by nearly 1000 individuals, including numerous intellectuals, academics and professionals in and outside Vietnam. Among the 18 organisations that endorsed the letter, many were based in Vietnam and led by political dissidents. The letter began as follows:

A hundred years ago, in 1919, a group of Vietnamese patriots under the collective name Nguyen the Patriot [Nguyen Ai Quac] sent a letter to the Versailles Peace Conference organized by the victorious Allied Powers in the First World War. The letter was entitled ‘Eight Demands by the Vietnamese People [Revendications du Peuple Annamite]’. Those eight demands included:

1. *General amnesty for all indigenous political prisoners*
2. *Legal reforms in Indochina so that indigenous people enjoy the same protection as Europeans; the closing of all special courts that have been used as a tool for terrorizing and oppressing the most outspoken Annamese*
3. *Freedom of press and freedom of expression*
4. *Freedom of association and organization*
5. *Freedom to travel and reside abroad*

6. *Freedom to study; establishment of technical and vocational schools in all provinces for the indigenous people*
7. *Rule by law, not by decrees*
8. *Elections for representatives of the indigenous at the French National Assembly*

In the last 100 years, millions of the best sons and daughters of the Vietnamese nation have sacrificed their lives in the struggle for the above demands.

The Vietnamese Communist Party, the ruling party in Vietnam today, has claimed that Ho Chi Minh, its founder, was the Nguyen Ai Quoc who signed the demands of 1919. However, a hundred years have passed [and the country is now] under the totalitarian rule of the Vietnamese Communist Party. The constitution of an independent Vietnam and the many international treaties the Vietnamese government has solemnly signed now incorporate most of the above demands. In reality, however, the rights and freedoms demanded in 1919 have been denied, sharply curtailed, manipulated, and even deliberately violated.

The letter went on to list updated versions of the eight demands that also included more specific contents, such as ‘university autonomy’ (Vietnamese universities are kept on a tight leash by the authorities), ‘private newspapers’ (not permitted today), and ‘free elections’ (current elections for the National Assembly are carefully staged events).²

The letter was one of numerous acts of public criticism directed towards the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) in recent years (Kerkvliet 2019). Yet this act was uniquely controversial for its claim that, despite the passing of a century, independent Vietnam is not much different from colonised Annam as far as political rights are concerned. In support of its claim, the letter brought up the ghost of Ho Chi Minh who claimed to be ‘Nguyen Ai Quoc’ and whose mummified corpse is still on display in a grand, Soviet-built mausoleum in the heart of Hanoi, Vietnam’s capital.³ The letter also invoked the spirits of millions of Vietnamese who had sacrificed their lives in the three wars of the previous century, led by Ho and the VCP.

The essays in this special issue focus on the legacies of socialism and communism in Asia and Africa,⁴ which are arguably most conspicuous and significant in Vietnam where communist rule has been around the longest (since 1945) among the four or five remaining formally communist countries. Even though critics of the VCP are correct about this party’s dismal record of political freedom, it is my view that contemporary Vietnam is quite different from colonised Annam. In that regard, the enduring legacies of socialism need to be reckoned with – and the dismal status of political freedom today is a case in point. Vietnamese did enjoy a brief period of openness between the March 1945 Japanese coup that overthrew French rule and the violent crackdown on the opposition by the Viet Minh government in mid-1946. Southern Vietnamese lived under the Republican regime from 1955 to 1975; this regime was not a liberal democracy yet it allowed them far more political freedom than did the communist North.

In conversation with other essays in this collection but with a focus on Vietnam, this essay offers a perspective informed by my research over nearly two decades on East Asian and Vietnamese politics. In my reflections here on the broad themes of the issue, I explore the great significance of Marxist and Leninist legacies in Vietnam and East Asia by first reconstructing the historical contexts in which Marxist and Leninist parties emerged as anticolonial movements and subsequently served as political contenders in postcolonial politics. These

contexts built up so much pressure and released so much violence that their impacts often lasted for decades and spilled across national borders. The second part of the essay turns to the creation and evolution of socialist institutions over time in countries where communists took power. I argue that these institutions, or ‘technologies of rule’ as Verhoeven (2020) calls them in his essay in this collection, helped socialist regimes dominate their societies for decades.

Although I do not have space to go into detail on the post-Cold War period, I maintain that the power of those socialist institutions, however corrupted and delegitimised they were following market reforms, explains why socialist regimes have tried to retain these institutions in their quest for survival after the collapse of the Soviet bloc. When they will finally abandon those legacies is hard to predict. Scholars have debated intensely about how firmly socialist regimes still retain control over their fast-changing societies as new challenges to their authority continue to surface.⁵ Unlike cases such as Somalia (see Yordanov 2020), Yemen or Mali (Siracusano 2020), but similarly to Mozambique (Sumich 2020), Ethiopia and Tanzania (Verhoeven 2020), *politically* disentangling from the socialist past is a challenge for the surviving communist regimes in East Asia today.

The past is not yet the past: the enduring salience of socialism in Asian states

To get a nuanced sense of what decades of socialism have actually amounted to, one needs to look under the surface. Western visitors to Vietnam today may be fooled by the economic hustle in its cities and quickly jump to the conclusion that the country has ‘gone capitalist’. It is true that a vibrant private sector has emerged after market reforms in the late 1980s. The economy, much of which was once controlled by the government, is now largely fuelled by foreign investment and private entrepreneurship. At the same time, it is easy to overlook the fact that the government continues to hold onto strategic industrial sectors that together account for about a third of national output.

But there is more than the unusually large size of the state-owned sector (Fujita 2020). The VCP maintains a lucrative patronage network which latches onto socialist institutions, including state ownership of all land and tight government control over society (Vuving 2013). Party leaders offer foreign investors cheap and long-term access to Vietnam’s human and natural resources in exchange for a portion of profits that pay for the bloated party–state bureaucracy and keep afloat the inefficient state-owned sector.⁶ The institutional structure of socialism thus remains in place but is mostly hidden from casual observers, in part so that Vietnam can request Western trading partners for preferential trading privileges reserved only for recognised ‘market economies’. To be sure, the structure has deteriorated due to decay from within, but the fact that it has for three decades survived the collapse of world communism and its Soviet benefactor speaks volumes about the enduring legacies of socialism and its continued appeal to elites and important societal constituencies.⁷

To appreciate the depth of socialist legacies in Asia and Africa, one also must realise that they are not the product of socialist and communist movements alone. Rather, these movements evolved in a dynamic and polarising environment of decolonisation and Cold War during which revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces battled colonial powers, extra-regional enemies and each other (see Sumich 2020 on Mozambique and Verhoeven 2020, both in this special issue).⁸ The struggle for national independence was of paramount importance for all colonised peoples. Nevertheless, even before colonial rulers were out of

the picture, the competition for power among the colonised elites had already begun. All groups sought to capitalise on nationalist sentiments among their people while maintaining their own ideological agendas. They cooperated as well as fought each other. By 1948, as the Cold War began in Europe, lines were also drawn in East Asia. While communist movements mobilised mass support and foreign assistance from the Soviet bloc, their ideological enemies countermobilised and appealed to the West for help. Ultimately, bloody showdowns took place across East Asia, including China, Korea, Indochina, the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma and Malaya.

Whether communists or anticommunists won, the losers did not sail peacefully into historical memory. Consider first the contexts where counterrevolutionary forces triumphed. Whether the communists fought in alliance with an outside power, as in South Korea before and during the Korean War, or were defeated and annihilated by the hundreds of thousands, as in Indonesia during 1965–1966 (see Fogg 2020 in this collection on the omnipresence of the Left before genocidal violence), the effects of such tragedies would continue to terrorise and polarise people for decades. Enforced social amnesia aimed to completely cover up and erase the conflict. Anticommunism filled in the blank memory and became the official doctrine or the source of legitimacy for the new regime (see Hadiz 2020 in this collection).

While many communists and their sympathisers were killed immediately, more were imprisoned and would later be released. They and their families would continue to live under surveillance by the anticommunist state. Within the broader society the memory of the event, however ruthlessly suppressed, lingers on. Despite the seemingly complete erasure of communism from politics, this social memory of state violence may have contributed to the popularity decades later of other protest ideologies, from *minjung* (in South Korea) to anticapitalism and Islamism (in Indonesia).⁹

Where communist revolutionaries won the struggle, the trajectory was no less bloody. Following the communist victory in Indochina in 1975, Cambodia experienced genocide. Khmer Rouge soldiers typically killed members of the fallen regime on the spot. Extreme violence was directed, oftentimes indiscriminately, against ethnic, cultural and class enemies of the new regime, resulting in perhaps a million deaths (Locard 2005). In Laos and South Vietnam, hundreds of thousands who had served the Vientiane and Saigon governments were imprisoned in ‘re-education camps’ – many for as long as two decades. Their families also lived permanently in fear and under state surveillance long after the Cold War had ended. A social amnesia, similar to the sanctioning of one version of history in South Korea and Indonesia, was imposed. Most people in Vietnam today, especially those under fifty, have little knowledge of the Republic of Vietnam and the infamous re-education camps.

What distinguishes Indochina from South Korea and Indonesia was that communist states soon alienated most people as their poor economic management and their draconian transformation policies produced severe economic crises (Vu 2014a). Amid hunger and despair, millions of Vietnamese fled their country. If they chose to walk to Thailand rather than crossing the ocean to Malaysia and the Philippines, they would be joined by Cambodians fleeing the Khmer Rouge and by ethnic Hmongs in Laos who had assisted (and were extensively armed by) the United States during decades of war. Those who escaped by boats travelled with many ethnic Chinese in Vietnam who were sent into exile by the Hanoi government. Hundreds of thousands of these ‘boat people’ perished along the way, but those who survived the trip were deeply traumatised and naturally keep the memory of those historical events alive.¹⁰

From exile these refugees from communist states continue to be active in politics and exert influence on their homelands. For instance, French Cambodians returned and played a major role after the peace accord brokered by the United Nations in 1992. These include Prince Ranariddh who was the First Prime Minister of Cambodia during 1993–1996, and Sam Rainsy who served under Ranariddh and later founded the Cambodia National Rescue Movement, which came close to defeating the ruling (post-)socialists of Hun Sen in the 2013 and 2017 elections (Un 2019, 4–5). Vietnamese refugees' remittances to the tune of billions of dollars annually helped Vietnam survive the economic crisis caused by radical policies in the mid-1980s.¹¹

Thus, the legacies of Marx and Lenin in East Asia must be assessed within the context of an entire age in which communist movements emerged, embraced nationalism and fought their rivals to the death – not just in Eurasia as extensively documented (Snyder 2011), but across the Global South where the Cold War was never really 'cold' (Saul 2011). The era bequeathed deep social cleavages between winners and losers, bitter memories of trauma and violence, and repertoires of protest and experiences in political organisation. Existing scholarship commonly confers limited agency to Asian and African socialists and dismisses their ideological commitments as shallow or, post-1989, that they have sold out on them (Wiegatz 2010). The enduring legacies of the confrontations between communist movements and their opponents across the continents pose a serious challenge to such views.

On the one hand, East Asian disciples of Marx and Lenin in China, North Korea and Indochina came to power thanks in no small part to their ability to mobilise popular nationalist sentiments in support of their movement. Their efforts earned them significant legitimacy when they established their rule or when they waged wars to reunify their countries. On the other, nationalism did not offer a specific action programme and was less useful than Marxism–Leninism to communist leaders once their power was firmly consolidated and they were deeply committed to class struggle. Leninist and Stalinist-inspired institutional and economic experiments brought vast changes to the socio-political landscape beyond the large number of dead, imprisoned and exiled people. Traditional institutions such as monarchy and village councils were forever destroyed. So were Western-educated elites and small but growing urban middle classes. Through the Communist party and its nomenklatura, peasants were now placed in charge of uniformly poor but highly mobilised and militarised societies.¹²

Political control and the Cold War: instituting the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'

Where communist or communist-inspired rule was established, as in China, Vietnam, North Korea and Laos, socialist ideology was institutionalised as an official religion and embedded in the institutional structure of the new state. As I have argued for the Vietnamese case, ideology played three roles in that country's communist revolution (Vu 2017, 20–23). It offered a vision of the future and a model in the form of the Soviet Union. It brought with it a network of socialist parties and countries that shared the same vision and that offered crucial assistance. And, finally, the ideology provided useful concepts and strategies for effective state-building, or what Verhoeven (2020) in this collection calls the 'technologies of rule'.

In the East Asian cases, these technologies followed the example set by Lenin and Stalin in the Soviet Union in instituting a 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. This included the cult of the personality of the leader; a single party (from here on: Party) governed by 'democratic

centralism'; a totalitarian surveillance of the entire society through state control of all productive assets in the country and state-controlled mass organisations that served as the 'transmission belts' linking the Party and the government to the people; a 'people's army' that was loyal solely to the Party; a massive propaganda apparatus; and an economy that operated under bureaucratic direction rather than market principles (McAdams 2017).

These technologies shaped the institutional and organisational structure of the socialist state. How elaborate and stable that structure was varied. China, Vietnam and North Korea, whose communist parties received personal, direct guidance from Stalin, were the first generation of socialist states founded after the Soviet Union, together with the Eastern European communist states. Vietnam and North Korea were also deeply influenced by China. The institutional structure of these three communist states was uniformly closest to the Stalinist model (although they would later evolve in response to particular historical contingencies). Communist states on other continents, such as Cuba, South Yemen and Mozambique, emerged later and under different conditions. As a result, their socialist-inspired institutional structure displayed greater variations and less similarity to the Stalinist model, even if Lenin's recipes were (and are still) identifiable in all (see Verhoeven 2020 in this collection).

In the structure of the most Stalinist states, the supreme leader (Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, Kim Il-sung, Kaysone Phomvihane) was transformed gradually into a popular deity of sorts (Leese 2011; Myers 2011; Dror 2018; Evans 1998, 36–40). These leaders all oversaw bloody purges of 'class enemies', but their images – either standing alone or surrounded by children and young women – filled public space and gave a human touch to the faceless bureaucratic control and coercive transformation of society. Below the leader, the Party was organically and thoroughly integrated into the state apparatus at all levels. Analytically the two performed different functions, but in daily activities they were closely intertwined. The mass organisations – the 'people's army', the security and propaganda apparatus, and the state-owned enterprises – were tightly bound to that party–state core. These institutional pillars spanned all social realms and had a wide and deep geographical reach, approaching the totalitarian ideal.

Yet in East Asia, the various elements of the structure did not always work well together and often produced inconsistencies that threatened the system's very foundation. The cult of the supreme leader, for instance, overshadowed other elements of totalitarian control. For example, the cult of Mao nearly destroyed the Chinese state as Mao's abrasive leadership style resulted in conflict with his comrades, who were brutally purged during the Cultural Revolution (MacFarquhar 1993). Kim's cult turned the North Korean state into his household fief which he could pass on to his son and grandson (Suh 1988), to the extent that the end of the Kim dynasty will likely also mean the end of North Korea itself. Ho's more collaborative style did not create conflict within the Vietnamese state, and his ghost continues to be mobilised in service of the Party today. Kaysone's cult was created by his successors only after his death, but the cult serves the same purpose as that of Ho (Pholsena 2006, 10–16).

As these personality cults exemplify, socialist technologies of rule took at least a decade to develop and continued to evolve. In the late 1940s and early 1950s when Stalin was still alive, he was revered as a secular Pope in China, North Korea and North Vietnam, while leaders in these countries were merely 'his students'. Marx, Engels and Lenin were at first treated as prophets, and later as gods – as the iconography of the time made clear, often fusing old religious motives with the worship of socialist deities (Donham 1999, xvi–xvii). It took a massive purge during the land reform for the VCP to have full control over its

bureaucracy, especially at the local level (Vu 2010, ch. 6). North Korea began to distance itself from Moscow and Beijing as early as the mid-1950s, as Kim Il-sung purged the leadership of pro-Soviet and pro-China rivals following the Korean War (Nam 1974). It is important to note that the class categories used in Ho Chi Minh's land reform, Kim's show trials of his rivals as traitors to the nation, and Mao's mass mobilising techniques in the Cultural Revolution were all socialist-inspired tools of political struggle.

On the whole, however, socialist-inspired technologies helped the communist states in East Asia dominate their society, economy and culture for decades. They survived containment by the West, and North Vietnam actually defeated anticommunist South Vietnam. Despite their conflict, Moscow and Beijing competed in supporting Hanoi in this war, bringing communist rule to all of Indochina by 1975. By that time, Chinese leaders had quietly abandoned the quest for world revolution. Following the Cambodian–Vietnamese and Sino–Vietnamese wars in 1979, a new regional order took shape in the next decade, with China as an ally in the US-led camp to isolate the Soviet Union and its allies in Vietnam, Laos and the Vietnam-installed government in Phnom Penh.

The new regional order coincided with the crisis of communist rule in East Asia. Following Mao's death and Deng Xiaoping's return to power, China embarked on market reforms in the early 1980s. As China was slowly recovering from the Cultural Revolution, and Cambodia from the Khmer Rouge's killing fields, Vietnam and Laos sank into crisis when their forced marches to socialism destroyed already fragile war-ravaged economies in both countries (Vu 2017, ch. 7). Both would take a similar course to China in the late 1980s by abandoning collectivised agriculture, legalising private trade and industry, and opening up to foreign investment (Vo 1990; Vasavakul 2019; St John 1997, esp. 177–79, 181–82).

North Korea flirted with economic opening in the early 1980s, not by domestic reform but by borrowing money from the West. This strategy quickly led to a ballooning foreign debt on which Pyongyang eventually defaulted (Kim 1991, 34). The experiment ended there and then. By the early 1990s, as Kim Il-sung was dying, famine killed nearly a million North Koreans as a result of the state's failure to provide food rations to its people. Under the rule of his son, Kim Jong-il, the government invested in developing nuclear weapons and rocket technologies while quietly letting local markets emerge (Smith 2015).

As Verhoeven (2020) argues in this collection, socialist-inspired technologies of rule are critical legacies that help the Ethiopian, Rwandese and Mozambican regimes to stay in power in the post-Cold War world – and to thrive. For East Asia's ruling socialist regimes, this certainly remains true too. The institutional structure of these states and their domination of economy, society and culture over decades have continued long after the shock from the collapse of world communism was overcome. The liberal moment of the 1990s and early 2000s came and went – and the Party remains in charge.

As in Mozambique (see Sumich 2020 in this collection), the Party in China, Vietnam and Laos survived the death of the Soviet bloc even though its legitimacy was seriously damaged. Its leaders remained loyal to socialist ideals and to the Party's revolutionary past, which they all had devoted their entire careers to. This is a key difference between these East Asian regimes and their African counterparts. Their natural choice remains to tinker with the economy but not to abandon socialism or undertake political reforms. Practically, organisationally and perhaps even emotionally, full transformation cannot be countenanced.

After three decades of market reform, old socialist methods have been adapted to new demands in divergent ways. All surviving communist regimes have now sought alternative

or additional bases of ideological legitimacy. North Korea has quietly dropped Marxism–Leninism from its constitution, leaving ‘Kim Il-sungism’ and his concept of ‘juche’ (self-reliance) as the sole state doctrine (Armstrong 1998). Lao leaders remained loyal to socialism but replaced the gold star in the national emblem with a Buddhist symbol. Reusing a past tactic that helped it take power, the Chinese Communist Party has promoted a virulent nationalism to bolster regime legitimacy (Chen 2016, ch. 5). In contrast, Vietnamese rulers have thus far suppressed popular calls for a closer relationship with the United States as a counterbalance to China, because such demands are often coupled with calls for democratisation (Vu 2014b).

Not being able to count on nationalism as in the past, the VCP may face stronger headwinds than its Chinese comrades. Securing regime survival through the tried and tested socialist technologies of rule remains paramount. The VCP still retains effective control over domestic entrepreneurs and workers to prevent the rise of autonomous capitalist and working classes who could challenge it. State enterprises in alliance with foreign capital dominate the economy, and no independent labour unions are tolerated. The VCP has not freed the press, publication houses or universities from its grasp even if there is more wiggle room for journalists, writers, teachers and students today than under ‘the dictatorship of the proletariat’. That wiggle room is constantly monitored by Vietnam’s unusually large military and security forces.¹³ This may represent continuity with the revolutionary practice of ‘armed propaganda’ when guns and grenades accompanied the pamphlets and the loud speakers, but to what extent these methods are still relevant today is debatable.

Conclusion: 1919 redux?

While their adaptability has helped socialist regimes to survive, changes such as liberalising markets and opening up the economy to foreign investment have unleashed dynamics of their own. These economic changes have generated growth and – ironically – boosted the party’s legitimacy. At the same time, the deepening of capitalist dynamism also corrupts officials, erodes the internal cohesion of the system, and further isolates the government from society.¹⁴ Leaders have found their authority eroding as reform continues.¹⁵

The dilemma of socialists in power in East Asia has always been how much to change, but this dilemma is arguably particularly acute today. This reluctance to embrace too much novelty is clearly manifest in Vietnam where leaders of the party have repeatedly warned its members about the danger of ‘peaceful evolution’, an imagined conspiracy of the West to subvert communist countries by using propaganda to cause their people to reject socialism and adopt capitalism peacefully, as in the case of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies (Vu 2017, 219). This fear of ‘evolution’ may sound ironic for a party proud of its revolutionary past, but it reflects a siege mindset and motivates an aversion to any politically risky reforms.

The greatest irony, however, is the fact that a century has passed since 1919, yet those political freedoms demanded back then are still elusive, long after Vietnam has gained independence from France. This irony suggests that, for Vietnam and perhaps for other case studies in this collection, Marxism–Leninism as interpreted and implemented by Mao, Kim, Ho, Kaysone or Pol Pot was a false doctrine of liberation – it merely imposes on society a self-proclaimed revolutionary state, which possesses greater capacity and resources to suppress freedom than did the colonial regime it replaced. Nevertheless, like the French who were the target of the ‘Eight Demands of the Vietnamese People in 1919’, and who ended up being expelled from Indochina, the VCP is ignoring the people’s demands of 2019 at its own peril.

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Notes on contributor

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Notes

1. The letter can be found at <https://baotiengdan.com/2018/12/19/yeu-sach-tam-diem-nam-2019-cua-nguoi-dan-viet-nam/>
2. On Vietnamese elections, see Malesky and Schuler (2009).
3. On the controversy over the identity of the true Nguyen Ai Quoc, see Duiker (2000, 59).
4. 'Socialism' and 'communism' in this essay are understood not as abstract ideals but as political movements and regimes inspired by the doctrines of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin and applied in real historical contexts. The terms 'communism' and 'socialism' are used interchangeably here, with their subtle differences acknowledged. In line with the goals set out in the introduction to this collection on Marx and Lenin in Africa and Asia, I focus on the formative role of colonial institutions and post-colonial nation-building and the ways these have intersected with various understandings of socialism.
5. For the debate on China, see Shambaugh (2008) and Gilley (2004); for Vietnam see Kerkvliet (2019), Vu (2014a, 2014b) and Fforde (2013); for North Korea see Smith (2015, esp. ch. 1).
6. According to the former economic advisor to the Vietnamese Prime Minister, Pham Chi Lan, there are 2.8 million government officials and employees, accounting for about 3% of Vietnam's total population, compared to the ratio of 2.8% in the much wealthier China. See <http://viet-times.vn/viet-nam/thoi-su-chinh-tri/can-khoan-10-de-giam-ganh-nang-11-trieu-nguoi-an-luong-nha-nuoc-60790.html>. On loss-making state-owned enterprises, see Vu Quang Viet, "Nhin lai chu truong lay quoc doanh lam chu dao," February 16, 2016, <http://www.diendan.org/viet-nam/nhin-lai-quoc-doanh>.
7. For a comparison with the North Korean case: Byman and Lind (2010).
8. These processes were theorised and evidenced in Halliday (1999) and Roessler and Verhoeven (2016).
9. On *minjung* (common people), see Lee (2007). Hadiz (2020) highlights the emergence of radical Islamist groups from the old strongholds of the Indonesian Communist Party; see Vu (2009) on Indonesian anticapitalism.
10. For testimonies by survivors, see Freeman (1989).
11. For the transnational movement of the Vietnamese diaspora to promote democracy in Vietnam, see Duyen Bui (2020). On diasporic groups' philanthropic activities in Vietnam, see Small (2020).
12. On peasant mobilisation in North Vietnam, see Holcombe (2020).

13. In 2014, Vietnam's security forces accounted for 0.6% of the population; the ratio for China was 0.55% and for the US, 0.34%. Soldiers accounted for 0.47% of Vietnam's population, which was the same as the US but twice the ratio for China. Vietnam's security forces consumed 12% of the annual national budget (compared to 2% in the US), while its spending on education accounted for 16%. Vietnam's military spending was 9% of its annual national budget (the same as in the US). See Vu Quang Viet, "Tai sao boi chi ngan sach qua lon va keo dai trong nhieu nam o Vietnam," *Thoi Dai Moi* no. 16 (September 2017), 219, 232, 242, available at http://www.tapchithoidai.org/ThoiDai36/201736_VuQuangViet.pdf
14. This is clearly reflected in the rise of public criticisms, including mass protests, in recent years, as analysed by Kerkvliet (2014). For China, see O'Brien (2008).
15. See Fforde (2013) on Vietnam and Shirk (2007, esp. ch. 3) and Yuen (2014) on China.

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