CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-42664-0 — State Building in Cold War Asia
Qingfei Yin
Excerpt
More Information

Introduction

Internationalism, Nationalism, and Transnational Localism at the Sino-Vietnamese Border*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the international boundary between China and Vietnam became legally impermeable to most people for the first time since the end of the Sino-Vietnamese border conflicts (1979–1991). On February 1, 2020, Vietnam closed the 1,300-kilometer land border to its northern neighbor and main market, becoming the first Southeast Asian country to adopt such a measure to fight against the coronavirus.[1] As the Lunar New Year holiday in late January had already delayed cargo transportation, this precipitous shutdown soon caused a backlog of Vietnamese products at the border. A week later, Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc had to issue a remedial directive asking for "uninterrupted import and export activities via the two countries' border" while continuing the ban on international travelers.[2] Even as the growth of domestic COVID-19 cases slowed down in China, community infections increased in more countries; China thus decided to tighten its own border control. On March 31, the provincial government of Yunnan, which neighbors Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam, required its border authority to restrict "unnecessary travel across the border."[3] Three days later, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified the Vietnamese Embassy of its decision to reduce the number of ports of entry and proposed a joint pandemic control mechanism chaired by provincial authorities on both sides of the border.[4] By the end of May, seven out of the nine border entries in Guangxi were closed.[5]

* A few paragraphs in the introduction on the historical border trade have been developed from my earlier publication "The Mountain Is High, and the Emperor Is Far Away: States and Smuggling Networks at the Sino-Vietnamese Border." Copyright © 2018 Institute for Far Eastern Studies, Kyungnam University. This article first appeared in *Asian Perspective* 42, no. 4 (October–December 2018). Published with permission by Johns Hopkins University Press.

[1] Pham and Murray, "Behind Vietnam's COVID-19 Response, Deep Distrust of China."

[2] Vietnam News Agency, "Border Gates with China Start to Reopen."

[3] Zhuang and Wang, "Zhiji Yunnan bianjian diyixian."

[4] Minh Chiến, "Trung Quốc siết nhập cảnh tại biên giới Việt-Trung do dịch Covid-19 diễn biến phức tạp."

[5] Li, "Guangxi guanbi qige lulu kou'an, yu Yuenan sisheng dingqi hutong yiqing."

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-42664-0 — State Building in Cold War Asia
Qingfei Yin
Excerpt
More Information

Under draconian measures ranging from increasing checkpoints and vigilant patrols to robust tests and government supervised quarantine hotels to curb imported cases, the daily lives of people living on the border were increasingly subject to state scrutiny. Truck drivers, who were among the very few allowed to cross the border legally, had to wait significantly longer than usual for customs clearance and to comply with quarantine requirements.[6] Five months after Hanoi suspended travel from China, the border guard leader of Quảng Ninh province acknowledged that stopping illicit entries was a complicated and sometimes thankless task. Among the more than seven hundred people detained and put in quarantine by the border authorities from February to July 2020, over six hundred were Vietnamese citizens who crossed the border just to return home, including those who swam across the border river (named Beilun River in Chinese and Ka Long River in Vietnamese) from Dongxing to Móng Cái after all the bridges were blocked.[7] After the more contagious and deadly Delta variant hit the region, several Chinese and Vietnamese border checkpoints established joint commands and dispatched squads consisting of officers from both sides to strengthen the state presence at previously less patrolled mountain trails.[8] Two Chinese provinces, Guangxi and Yunnan, also geared up to accelerate vaccinations in border counties by dispatching roving vaccination vehicles and helicopters to remote villages.[9]

During the pandemic, China sped up the construction of border fences – an ambitious and costly project that started in 2018 to combat smuggling, drug dealing, and human trafficking – to prevent border jumpers that might circumvent medical inspection and quarantine measures.[10] Smuggling at the Sino-Vietnamese border had long concerned Beijing and Hanoi because it drained customs revenues for both governments;[11] it became an even more salient security issue after COVID hit. Frozen meat smuggled from India and Brazil and entering the Chinese market via Vietnam had been one of the most profitable goods of the cross-border shadow economy as the rising Chinese middle class created a soaring demand for high-end beef. After clusters of COVID cases were widely reported in slaughterhouses overseas, this

[6] Minh Chiến, "Trung Quốc siết nhập cảnh tại biên giới Việt-Trung do dịch Covid-19 diễn biến phức tạp"; Zhuang and Wang, "Zhiji Yunnan bianjian diyixian."
[7] Lã Nghĩa Hiếu, "Quảng Ninh duy trì 74 chốt kiểm soát dọc biên giới Việt-Trung để phòng Covid-19."
[8] An Kiên – Trung Dũng/VOV-Tây Bắc, "Lực lượng biên phòng Việt Nam và Trung Quốc tuần tra phòng chống dịch."
[9] Liang, "Guangxi xinguan bingdu yimiao jiezhong wancheng 2000wan jici"; Han, "Yunnan bianjing diqu mubiao renqun xinguan bingdu yimiao diyiji jiezhonglü yu 97%."
[10] Thu Hằng, "Trung Quốc tính gì khi tăng tốc xây tường biên giới với Việt Nam, Miến Điện?" Also see Huang, "Chinese Authorities Take a Leaf from the Trump Playbook and 'Build the Wall' as Part of Covid-19 Curbs."
[11] See Yin, "The Mountain Is High, and the Emperor Is Far Away."

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-42664-0 — State Building in Cold War Asia
Qingfei Yin
Excerpt
More Information

contraband was also labeled as a vexing public health threat.[12] In a global health crisis, the state buttressed the border with coercive institutions or physical barriers, not against military invasion but against an invisible virus.

While the Sino-Vietnamese confrontations over overlapping sovereign claims in the South China Sea are often thrust in the spotlight, security challenges at the border that are not disputed, such as infectious diseases, rarely attract much public attention.[13] The confrontation between the state and non-state actors (bandits, smugglers, human traffickers, dissidents, and border jumpers) reflects one of the most profound political changes China and Vietnam experienced in the second half of the twentieth century – the complete territorialization of the state.[14] To derive power from "the control of bordered political space," modernizing states extended their authority to the far corners of their territories.[15] In the ruins of the Chinese empire, European colonial empires, and the short-lived Japanese empire, the Chinese and Vietnamese communist leaders, like the ruling elites of many other postcolonial countries, strived to transform borderlands, where no single authority had previously gained supremacy, into real "borders" where stateness has to be marked, performed, and defended to reduce the ambiguities of power.[16] As Christian Lentz demonstrates in his study of Vietnamese state building at the Black River borderlands, later becoming Northwest Vietnam, during the First Indochina War, territory "is an ongoing social process, a ruling strategy, and a contingent outcome." State formation was not simply a result of war making; it largely accompanied mundane logistics work such as the mobilization of

[12] Ibid., 552; Cui, "Zousi dongrou, weihe changqi lüjin buzhi?"

[13] Not all border disputes are about demarcation. Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly categorizes border disputes into (1) territorial – "those that threaten the very existence of a state"; (2) positional – those about the location of the boundary line or cross-border resources; and (3) functional – those about conflicting interpretations of the function of a certain border (*Global Encyclopedia of Border Disputes*, xxi–xxii).

[14] George Gavrilis provides a theoretical discussion on how a state copes with security threats that are not disputed with another state but posed by non-state actors at the border (*The Dynamics of Interstate Boundaries*, 1–4).

[15] Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History," 808. Tongchai Winichakul argues that "Territoriality involves three basic human behaviors: a form of classification by area, a form of communication by boundary, and an attempt at enforcing" (*Siam Mapped*, 16).

[16] This development toward exclusive dominions of states is also characterized as the transition from borderlands to "*bordered* lands," where the political autonomy of local people was narrowed. Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders," 816 (emphasis in original). Except in a proper noun, the words "communist" and "communism" are mostly spelled with a lower case "c" in this book to refer to the policies and programs of communism pursued by the state. In specific occasions of borderlands state building, these policies and programs might emphasize different elements of the broadly defined Marxist-Leninist ideology, ranging from internationalism, anti-imperialism, collectivism, to a disciplined party. Because the weakness of party organization in the borderlands is a recurring theme in both Chinese and Vietnamese government documents, this book avoid overusing capital "C" as the words "Communist" and "Communists" imply formal party membership or affiliation.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-42664-0 — State Building in Cold War Asia
Qingfei Yin
Excerpt
More Information

labor and food.[17] Territorialization was often coupled with the "securitization" of the border, namely the state project of transforming spontaneous cross-border connections into matters of security in order to allow for the use of extraordinary measures to keep enemies out, potential escapees in, and cross-border activities visible.[18]

In comparison with state building in other parts of Asian borderlands in the second half of the twentieth century, the formation of new political configurations featuring the dominion of states was a particularly intense process at the Sino-Vietnamese border. The rise and fall of the Sino-Vietnamese Cold War partnership and the revolutionary social programs in the two countries created highly dynamic inter-state relations at the border. Chinese and Vietnamese authorities encountered a fundamental paradox: the borderlands where the two states interacted on a daily basis were crucial for constructing and performing their socialist brotherhood as well as for mobilizing resources to support the continuous military conflicts in Indochina. Historically, though, these borderlands were among the places under the least centralized control, the least cultural uniformity, and with the greatest regional autonomy. The relatively dense population in the region also created a complicated social fabric that was incompatible with the exclusive dominance of state power and their nationalizing policies. Nonetheless, although the unprecedentedly coercive capacity of government institutions heightened the potential for conflict during state building at the Sino-Vietnamese border, and some friction was unavoidable, the result was not always violence. Instead, the borderlanders themselves frequently maneuvered to maintain the permeability of the often arbitrarily imposed international boundary through compliance and negotiation.

The Cold War and Joint State Invasion

This is a book about how the Cold War magnified and distorted the process of state building in places where political authority had been historically flimsy. The consolidation of the Chinese and Vietnamese states at the border between Guangxi of the People's Republic of China (PRC), formally known as the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (GZAR) since 1958, and the three northeastern provinces of Cao Bằng, Lạng Sơn, and Quảng Ninh, part of the region commonly referred as Việt Bắc (Northern Vietnam), of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) from 1949 to 1975, right before the collapse of their Cold War partnership, provides a piquant example of the development of territoriality, as well as the challenges to it, against the background of drastic

[17] The quote and paraphrasis are from Lentz, *Contested Territory*, 3.
[18] For the definition of "securitization," see Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, 23–25.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-42664-0 — State Building in Cold War Asia
Qingfei Yin
Excerpt
More Information

political contests in the second half of the twentieth century.[19] This geographically, economically, and ethnically diverse border region includes highlands, lowlands, and access to the Gulf of Tonkin ("the Northern Gulf," Beibu Wan in Chinese and Vịnh Bắc Bộ in Vietnamese) (Map I.1). Departing from the conventional narrative that views borders exclusively as a source of hostility in inter-Asian relations due to their arbitrary demarcation by imperial powers and postcolonial nationalists,[20] this book is not about how the two sides disputed or settled their boundaries.

Instead, I tell a story of how two revolutionary states launched movements and pursued policies that echoed each other and collaborated in extending their authority to the border to temper the transnational tendencies there – a process that I characterize as "joint state invasion." At the same time, this book also reveals how the border people responded to such unprecedentedly aggressive state building, especially how they appropriated the language of socialist brotherhood to negotiate with the authorities. I argue that the Cold War partnership between Beijing and Hanoi did indeed strengthen the presence and authority of the Chinese and Vietnamese states in the border area; yet it did not do so in a coherent or linear manner because of the concurrent trends of nationalism, internationalism, and

[19] These border provinces experienced administrative changes during the period examined. Present-day coastal Guangxi was historically part of Guangdong and under the administration of Guangdong from 1955 to 1965. Between 1951 and 1955, the central government put the area under the administration of Guangxi. State Council of the PRC, "Guowuyuan guanyu jiang Guangxisheng de Qinxian, Hepu, Lingshan, Fangcheng sixian he Beihaishi huagui Guangdongsheng lingdao de jueding," 370. For details, see Chapter 4.

The Việt Minh created five inter-zones (*liên khu*), which were "combined military and administrative unit[s]," in 1948: Inter-zone I, III, and X in northern Vietnam; and Inter-zone IV and V in central Vietnam. In 1949, Inter-zone I and X were merged into Northern Vietnam Inter-zone (Liên khu Việt Bắc), which included the region to the north of Hanoi: Cao Bằng, Bắc Kạn, Lạng Sơn, Thái Nguyên, Hà Giang, Tuyên Quang, Lào Cai, Yên Bái, Sơn La, Lai Châu, Bắc Giang, Bắc Ninh, Phúc Yên, Vĩnh Yên, Phú Thọ, Quảng Yên, Hải Ninh, Hồng Gai Special Zone, and the Mai Đà District of Hòa Bình. In 1953, Northwestern Inter-zone (Liên khu Tây Bắc) was detached from the Northern Vietnam Inter-zone to include Lai Châu, Lào Cai, Yên Bái, and Sơn La. Goscha, *Historical Dictionary of the Indochina* War, 231–33.

In July 1956, in response to the central government's decision to establish autonomous regions for ethnic minorities, the Northern Vietnam Autonomous Region (Khu tự trị Việt bắc) was established to include "Cao Bằng, Bắc Cạn, Lạng Sơn, Tuyên Quang (except for Yên Bình District), Thái Nguyên (except for Phổ Yên and Phú Bình districts), and Hữu Lũng district of Bắc Giang." Chủ tịch Nước, "Sắc lệnh số 268/SL về việc ban hành bản quy định việc thành lập Khu Tự trị Việc Bắc do Chủ tịch Nước Ban Hành."

In 1963, the DRV merged Hồng Quảng district into Hải Ninh province to form Quảng Ninh. "Đảng bộ Khu Hồng Quảng và Đảng bộ tỉnh Hải Ninh hợp nhất thành Đảng bộ tỉnh Quảng Ninh [The Party Committee of Hồng Quảng Region and the Party Committee of Hải Ninh Province merged to form the Party Committee of Quảng Ninh Province]," December 19, 1963, in Ban Nghiên cứu lịch sử Đảng tỉnh ủy Quảng Ninh, *Những sự kiện lịch sử Đảng tỉnh Quảng Ninh* (hereafter *SLDQ*), 187–88. For details, see Chapter 4.

[20] In the field of South Asian history, for example, borderlands history has intersected with partition studies. See Leake and Haines, "Lines of (In)Convenience," 963–65.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-42664-0 — State Building in Cold War Asia
Qingfei Yin
Excerpt
More Information

transnational localism. The state project of the "nationalization" of territory, resources, and people sometimes reinforced yet was often at odds with the party's cause of the "internationalization" of socialism. Transnational localism, namely the border people's endeavor to preserve local family, cultural, and economic connections across the state perimeter dampened and even undermined both the nationalist and internationalist agenda. In this border space, China and Vietnam were, simultaneously, comrades in pushing revolution forward, collaborators in overcoming state weakness, and competitors for limited resources.

Recent scholarship on borderlands history has a problematic tendency of throwing the state into the dustbin while focusing exclusively on identity, language, and culture; this book reemphasizes the role of the state in the study of borderlands because territorialization has largely been a state project, even though it inevitably had to navigate and adapt to the social and cultural landscape of the locality. A purely cultural approach to borderlands also tends to prioritize continuity while downplaying the enormous changes caused by the ebb and flow of political powers.[21] The scholarship on state power at the border pivots between two extremes. At one end there is James Scott's narrative of state evasion as he elaborates in *The Art of Not Being Governed*, that the people of the Asian highlands moved around and between states.[22] At the other end is Charles Tilly's model of "War made the state, and the state made war."[23] This volume offers a third perspective: "joint state invasion." When two revolutionary states collaborated at the border and launched social political campaigns that mirrored each other (land reform, collectivization, and crackdown on private commerce, among others), it became more difficult for borderlanders to elude the state in all its forms, including taxation, conscription, and political participation. The process of securing the border in this region thus challenges both the Scottian narrative of state evasion and the Tillyan model of state formation. This joint state invasion reflects the idiosyncrasies of state-society relations at the Sino-Vietnamese border as well as broader patterns of bordering practices.

Tilly's compelling argument on how war gave rise to bureaucratization, defined citizenship, intensified coercion, and accumulated capital, therefore creating and strengthening the state, gives the Tillyan thesis a seemingly "transhistorical" explanatory power.[24] Yet state building since the second half

[21] Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders," 815.
[22] In his classic study of relations between highland society and lowland state, James Scott shows how state evasion and state prevention permeate the highland people's "subsistence routines, their social organization, their physical dispersal, and many elements of their culture." Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 8.
[23] Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State Making," 42.
[24] For the applicability of the Tillyan thesis to ancient Chinese history and modern Vietnamese history, see Hui, "How Tilly's State Formation Paradigm Is Revolutionizing the Study of Chinese State-making," 272–75.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-42664-0 — State Building in Cold War Asia
Qingfei Yin
Excerpt
More Information

of the nineteenth century entered a phase when states expanded and enhanced its presence to the peripheral space of its power in pursuit of uniformity and coherency. Borderlands state making thus had distinctive characteristics, often comprising a "shared binational experience," as Rachel St. John analyzes in her study of the Western US-Mexico border.[25] The sustainability of the development of states on the borderlands has been subject to what Enze Han describes as a "neighborhood effect" in his research into the history of borderlands state building of Burma.[26] The nature of the Cold War as "a conflict between the two versions of Western modernity that socialism and liberal capitalism seemed to offer" blurred the distinction between peace and war.[27] "Joint state invasion" thus illuminates some unique features of the everyday aspect of state building on the borderlands during the second half of the twentieth century. Political institutions established upon a clear ideational blueprint, deep binding military alliance or ideological partnership, and postcolonial countries' aspiration to catch up with the modernization projects yielded a particularly strong binational effect of borderlands state building. It invigorated both inter-state cooperation and competition and reduced the ambiguities inherent to frontier societies. From the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, the capacity of both the Vietnamese and Chinese states increased significantly at the border as they doubled down and collaborated in turning communities inward, that is, away from the borderlands and toward the political center.

While Scott notes that his argument on "Zomia" as an anarchist refuge does not apply to the post–Second World War political landscape due to "the power of the state to deploy distance-demolishing technologies," Sarah Turner's historical and contemporary analysis of the highland trade at the Sino-Vietnamese border shows that "remote upland mountainous terrain" could still negate state power thus retain "Zomia like" space.[28] The analytical framework of "joint state invasion" demonstrates that technology and terrain were not the only factors, let alone the most decisive ones, in shaping whether and how borderlanders could out maneuver state control. The intensity and sustainability of the *joint* state-building projects were of fundamental importance. Collaborative and competitive efforts to establish the exclusivity of the respective Chinese and Vietnamese states up to the mid-1960s did not place borderlands state building on a preset trajectory. Countering the argument that communist states were especially effective in tightening social control during

[25] St. John, *Line in the Sand*, 64.
[26] Han, "Neighborhood Effect of Borderland State Consolidation," 305; Han, *Asymmetrical Neighbors*, 20–35.
[27] Westad, "The Cold War and the International History of the Twentieth Century," 10.
[28] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, xii; Turner, "Borderlands and Border Narratives," 265, 286.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-42664-0 — State Building in Cold War Asia
Qingfei Yin
Excerpt
More Information

wars, I contend that the Vietnam War reversed the process of state consolidation despite the two states' mounting investment in transportation technology and infrastructure in the region. The war generated new momentum for spontaneous cross-border flows of people and goods that the modernizing states had to accommodate while diverting state resources toward militarization and away from other functions it had to play at the border to sustain the joint projects of state invasion. These dynamics affected the highlands, lowlands, and maritime societies alike.

This book also complicates the traditional narrative of Sino-Vietnamese relations during the communist era, namely, that the inter-party relations between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Workers Party of Vietnam (WPV) "formed the core of the relationship" and the inter-state interactions between the PRC and the DRV simply "provided the public form."[29] Predominantly presenting the two countries as unitary actors, historians and political scientists have seen the American-Sino-Soviet strategic triangle and factional struggles among the top leadership in Beijing and Hanoi as determining the relationship between the DRV and the PRC.[30] Acknowledging the significance of the party-to-party dynamics, this book nevertheless emphasizes that state building was an under-addressed dynamic in Sino-Vietnamese relations. Building upon primary sources beyond the central-government level diplomatic record, I argue that the Sino-Vietnamese relations during the Cold War era could and should be studied primarily as the relations between two neighboring states ruled by revolutionary parties instead of one between two communist parties that acquired their respective state. Departing from the conventional understanding of the Sino-Vietnamese relations during 1949–1979 as a process of nationalism gradually replacing internationalism as the dominant driving force of the bilateral relations due to the breakdown of ideological bonds, this book demonstrates that internationalism, nationalism, and transnational localism were of equal importance and it was the tension between these three forces that shaped the Sino-Vietnamese Cold War partnership from its inception.

Bridging borderlands history and international history, this book challenges the purely diplomatic history approach to bilateral relations and shows that the Sino-Vietnamese border was significant during the Cold War not simply

[29] Womack, *China and Vietnam*, 162.

[30] Important earlier works include Chen, *Vietnam and China, 1938–1954*; Guo, ed., *Zhong-Yue guanxi yanbian sishinian*; and Ang, *Vietnamese Communists' Relations with China and the Second Indochina Conflict, 1956–1962*. Recent works benefit from the limited declassification of Chinese and Vietnamese diplomatic documents. See Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*; Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950–1975*; Yang, "Changes in Mao Zedong's Attitude toward the Indochina War, 1949–1973"; Roberts, ed., *Behind the Bamboo Curtain*; Khoo, *Collateral Damage*; Nguyen, *Hanoi's War.*

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-42664-0 — State Building in Cold War Asia
Qingfei Yin
Excerpt
More Information

because of the territorial disputes that later emerged. Except for a sometimes brief acknowledgment of the two countries' resolution to shelve territorial disputes in the 1950s,[31] the writing of the history of the Sino-Vietnamese border has been overshadowed by the political history of the rise and collapse of the Sino-Vietnamese alliance, which resulted in the resurfacing of territorial disputes.[32] The general writing on border issues meanwhile reflects a narrow understanding focused on demarcation and disputes, while ignoring other functions borders perform.[33] Providing substate and non-state actors greater agency, this book presents a history of state-society relations at the Sino-Vietnamese border against the broader geopolitical context. In doing so, it elucidates how ideology shaped the rationale, priorities, and strategies of revolutionary state building, a process that transformed both China and Vietnam. The obstacles the two centralizing states encountered along their shared borders also reveal that Sino-Vietnamese relations were driven, at least in part, by efforts to tackle the legacy of empires and colonialism.

By dissecting the ostensibly unitary state into its multiple "layers," this book offers a fresh look at the agency of the "local state" in shaping foreign relations, which has been a less explored subject in the writings of international history.[34] While economists have underscored how the local state – namely the provincial, municipal, county or district government, and their functionaries – lent momentum to the economic transformation of China and Vietnam in the reform era, historians have paid scant attention to how officials at the lower echelon of state bureaucracy interpreted, carried out, and sometimes obstructed the central government's foreign agenda and how the local state interacted with the outside world more broadly in the post-1945 period.[35] The grassroots

[31] Duiker, *China and Vietnam*, 37.

[32] Two important works that trace the dormant border disagreements during the heyday of the Sino-Vietnamese partnership and the reemergence of the issue during the 1970s are Path, "The Sino-Vietnamese Dispute over Territorial Claims"; and You, "Zhanhou Zhong-Yue ludi bianjie wenti de lishi kaocha ji zaisikao."

[33] A few notable exceptions to this trend mostly focus on cross-border trade and migration. Dinh Quang Hải, "Vấn đề di cư xuyên biên giới của cư dân khu vực biên giới Việt Nam-Trung Quốc giai đoạn 1954–1975"; Fan and Liu, *Zhong-Yue bianjing maoyi yanjiu*; Turner, "Borderlands and Border Narratives."

[34] Judd C. Kinzley studies the layered model of state formation in modern China in his writing of Qing and Russian competition in Xinjiang (*Natural Resources and the New Frontier*). He focuses on multiple layers of national interests, ranging from control over geographical knowledge to development of transport. This book uses the term "layer" to describe the not necessarily coherent bureaucratic levels of state.

[35] Jean C. Oi coins the term "local state corporatism" to characterize the local government officials' role in China's rural industry ("The Role of the Local State in China's Transitional Economy," 1132). For a long-range study of Vietnamese state and its local economic governance, see Dell et al., "The History State, Local Collective Action, and Economic Development in Vietnam." Charles Kraus points out that it was mainly the Chinese border provinces that bore the responsibility of assisting Vietnam during the First Indochina War, thus Beijing often had to

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-42664-0 — State Building in Cold War Asia
Qingfei Yin
Excerpt
More Information

state apparatus examined in this book – county-level administrations, state-run border trade companies, armed units at the border checkpoints, among others – were all part of a hierarchical system and, whenever possible, led by party members to ensure ideological coherency. None of them attempted to invade or usurp central prerogatives, yet none of them were simply an arm of the centralized state that championed the interests of political centers either. Bestowed with little resources yet required to fulfill various functions, financial viability, instead of either internationalist or nationalist missions, often topped the street-level state representatives' agenda. In addition, at the lowest extremity of bureaucracy, the line between state and society blurred, and the state representatives eventually became part of the transnational local networks. Rather than toppling the state-building project, however, the local state sometimes moderated the most radical, impractical programs.

Zooming in on Asian borderlands, this book also highlights the uniqueness of Asian Communism and the idiosyncrasies of the Cold War in Asia. Soviet Communism was built upon the idea of "socialism in one country"; the Soviet border system, as Andrea Chandler argues, was thus an "institution for isolation" that aimed to maintain "airtight, impermeable boundaries."[36] Most Soviet satellite states in Central and Eastern Europe, while sometimes coordinating policies to encourage mobility within the bloc in the form of state sponsored and supervised tourism, still placed severe restrictions on cross-border movement of people and goods largely because they adopted from the Soviet Union "a deep, if not paranoid, suspicion of the outside world, and strong isolationist and autarkic tendencies, especially towards the capitalist West."[37] Deeply troubled by internal "socio-economic cleavages and ethnic rivalries," the "Sovietization" of the borderlands in these countries involved not only military conquest but also forced demographic changes through deportation and population exchange.[38] In Asia, by contrast, the idea of internationalism and socialist brotherhood served as a new discourse or norm on which to build a political community, replacing the Chinese, European, and Japanese empires. The Chinese and Vietnamese states made determined efforts to integrate the borderlands into their respective economic and administrative system through socioeconomic restructuring such as collectivization, which was similar to the Soviet practice. Instead of completely interrupting cross-border ties, however, the two governments imposed from above a contrived

"contend with the interests of" local institutions ("A Border Region 'Exuded with Militant Friendship,'" 496).

[36] Chandler, *Institutions of Isolation*, 3; also see Matthews, *The Passport Society* for the Soviet passport and immigration systems.

[37] Keck-Szajbel and Stola, "Crossing the Borders of Friendship," 92–93.

[38] Prusin, *The Lands Between*, 4, 202.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org