therefore the sorts of interests that are in contention within any given context—figure more prominently in the analysis? Surely the evolution of the Singapore state cannot be explained without understanding the relationship between the state and transnational capital, for example. The discussion provided on state capacity to tax does not compensate for this general absence of a structural dimension. Because of such a lack of attention, the book does not offer much on the material interests that have been at stake in the most bitter and critical social conflicts of modern Southeast Asia, nor to the socio-economic changes that have ensued.

Additionally, there is the factor of historical legacies, which Slater calls “critical antecedents” (56). While he is correct in stating that “conditions preceding a critical juncture” are important in helping explain divergent outcomes, this is certainly no new proposition. The different legacies of the colonial era, for example, will bear on the various cases, and the constitution of “elites” will always be traceable to the outcomes of past social conflict. One could also critique the way that evidence is weighed to fulfil the formal requirements of the framework. Can Indonesia’s New Order really be summed up as a case of “militarization,” for instance, when it gave rise to such complex economic and political alliances, and ultimately a capitalist oligarchy, in ways vastly different to Burma?

Such points aside, this is a challenging and skilfully written book. Moreover, it is encouraging that such a serious qualitative work has emerged from a US-based political scientist of Slater’s generation, many of whom tend to indulge in the kind of hyper-empiricism that relies on sophisticated quantitative analyses of relatively banal political phenomena. By contrast, this is a profound comparative effort, and moreover, one that commendably avoids rigid determinism (291), while intelligently utilizing insights from historical “pathways.”

Murdoch University, Perth, Australia

VEDI R. HADIZ


It is indeed a remarkable research project that lies behind this book, which is a revised and expanded edition of Revolution in the Village: Tradition and Transformation in North Vietnam, 1925-1988 (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1992). The book builds on numerous visits by the author to the village of Son-Duong in North Vietnam throughout the period 1987 to 2006, where interviews and detailed quantitative household
surveys were conducted, supplemented with written historical sources from archives in Paris and Hanoi. Although some of the material in the book is covered in the earlier volume, this book is clearly warranted, not least because it covers the period from early 1990s to 2006. A period of immense transformation for most lives, even on the scale of Vietnam’s turbulent history.

The book centres on the village of Son Duong, located close to the Red River and examines in detail the cultural, socio-economic and political changes that have taken place in the eight decades covered by the book. It is divided into three parts. The first part covers the colonial years from 1883 to 1930, particularly anti-colonial resistance and the structure of village life. The second part analyzes the transformations in the village as a consequence of the rise of communist power and, subsequently, the collectivization of farm land. The third part details the impact of the reform process put in motion in the early 1990s in terms of both economic development—drawing heavily on collected primary household data—and social life.

The main idea, which is well articulated throughout the book, is that local traditions were, if not instrumental, then of major importance to how the villagers of Son Duong were responding to the three main transformations covered by the author: anti-colonialism, the rise of communism and the market reform period. As an example: Dr. Luong documents the local unrest that erupted in 1997-1998 in Son Duong as a response to corruption among civil servants and a perception that not enough was done to punish the perpetrators. This led to a refusal to pay for commune-based services (such as irrigation) among villagers and a crisis of legitimacy for the local Communist Party. While corruption and the level of fees demanded for commune services played a role in stoking the unrest in Son Duong (and other locations in the Red River delta), the book argues that the villagers in Son Duong did not face higher commune service fees and were not more adversely affected by corruption than in many other communes where unrest did not erupt. Instead, “the local socio-cultural framework in the northern lowlands was characterized by a strong discursive emphasis on relative equality” (259), and this was an important force behind the eruption of unrest in Son Duong.

Throughout the three parts, the book teems with details, enhancing the reader’s understanding of Vietnamese society, both in the past and the present. The author also documents how meticulously the Communist Party sought to implement their egalitarian land reform program. In 1954 a land reform team arrived in Son Duong. It specifically did not include a “village member so as to minimize the impact of the extensive village network on the reform process” (166). The inclusion of the “regulations on cultured life” (appendix 1, 279), which details among other things how ceremonies such as weddings and funerals should be conducted in
a cultured manner, shows how omnipresent the Communist Party is in present-day Vietnam. However, the author also emphasizes that these regulations are often adapted to local traditions and customs, and that the Communist Party receives important feedback from local levels for use in the process of governing.

The author makes a point of also discussing related or contrasting events outside the primary village of the study. This highlights how regionally diverse the country Vietnam is and that researchers should be careful when making statements about Vietnam as a whole. However, a reader unfamiliar with recent Vietnamese history and the transformation the Vietnamese society has gone through would likely benefit from a short overview chapter at the beginning of the book which could create the macro context for the rich details provided in the book.

Given the author’s extensive knowledge of Vietnam’s political past and present and the political-economy forces at play in the country, it would have been valuable to hear what he had to say about the future of the Vietnamese nation-state. That said, this is a valuable book, not only from a social science perspective, but for everyone with an interest in past and present Vietnamese society.

Centre for European Policy Studies, Leuven, Belgium  
Mikkel Barslund


People unfamiliar with the dense, precise prose of legal research might be inadvertently turned off this book simply by looking at its thickness, or by having to trawl through 42 pages of case law, legal treaties and statutory instruments before reaching the introduction! Legal practitioners and scholars’ aside, I encourage those interested in criminology, international relations, strategic and security studies, terrorism studies and the like not to be deterred. Every page of this book is meticulously researched (hence its 845 pages) to deliver a clearly written and well-reasoned analysis.

Conte has delivered a comprehensive study of the legislative approaches to counter-terrorism (CT) and their effects on human rights in the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The book substantively examines matters of CT policy rather than strictly legal issues.

The three core areas of law relevant to CT dissected by Conte take in: the law between states including the use of military force (international laws); laws regarding arrest, extradition and prosecution (international/