Securing the Countryside: Varieties of Rural State Building in China, Vietnam, Taiwan, and South Korea during the Cold War

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Abstract

Why do developmentalist-minded states, similarly invested in projects of state-led rural transformations, produce varying levels of domination over rural society? In this paper, I compare the land redistribution and rural reform campaigns of four Asian states - China, Vietnam, Taiwan, and South Korea - in the early years of the Cold War to explain how pathways toward rural state building diverged under reformist authoritarian regimes. I highlight two key Cold War era factors that conditioned these divergent pathways, and left long-term imprints on political control over rural societies: a) mobilizational models for rural pacification and b) initial levels of state infrastructural reach. I further contend that initial endowments in the spatial dimension of infrastructural power do not automatically generate incentives for the state to invest in the 'weight' of infrastructural power (Soifer 2008) in the countryside. Instead, ideological commitments for rural pacification conjointly shape the ability for states to engage in transformative processes of rural state building.

Keywords: land reform, state building, Cold War Asia

Introduction: Rural State Building in Cold War Asia

"[T]he heart of the problem of Asia," as Wolf Ladejinsky stated a decade into the Cold War, "still lies in the countryside." (Ladejinsky 1964, 448) Ladejinsky, a major promoter of agrarian reform as part of U.S. foreign policy (Kapstein 2017) and hailed as the one of the unofficial prophets of the global 'green revolution,' [1] accurately diagnosed that land and agrarian reform was fundamentally a political question: a means to state power and state well-being (Ladejinsky 1964, 446). For both Communist and non-Communist nations alike, the resolution of the land question and the pacification of rural grievances were undoubtedly a critical part of the state building formula, in the context of postwar state building after WWII.

I define this dual challenge to transform rural societies and extend state power deep into the countryside as a process of 'rural state building'. Similar to other familiar state building processes such as the monopolization of authority over violence in a given territory (Tilly 1985; Herbst 1996) and the establishment of centralized fiscal extractive institutions (Levi 1988; Brautigam, Fjeldstad, and Moore 2008), rural state building likewise entails the transformative creation of socially-penetrating political institutions, and provides the state with the infrastructure to transition from indirect to direct forms of rule (Waldner 1999). In replacing tax farmers, local militias, and other traditional social groups (e.g. clans, landlords) as the center of authority in a given territory, the modern state acquires infrastructural power to directly "implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm" (Mann 1984; Soifer 2008). However, given the ideological significance attached to agrarian reform during the Cold War, modern processes of rural state building have often been compressed and expedited in service of the goal of rural pacification.

I argue in this paper that despite similar attempts at rural state building and agrarian reform during the Cold War period, newly-formed states in Asia exhibited varying pathways towards domination over rural societies and their incorporation of rural stakeholders into regime orders. Communist China after 1949 undoubtedly was one of the most successful cases of monopolizing state control over rural society, through the eradication of the landowning class via the National

[1] https://www.nytimes.com/1975/07/04/archives/wolf-ladejinsky-land-reformer-dies-helped-to-break-feudal-system-in.html

Land Reform Campaign (1950-53). In contrast, while Communist Vietnam also similarly implemented an equally transformative and violent land reform campaign in the North (1953-56) inspired by Communist China, the delegitimization of the reform campaign and the unevenness of agrarian collectivization that followed after reunification suggest that the Vietnamese state's control over rural society was uneven and decentralized at best. In the non-Communist camp, Taiwan's land reform under the authoritarian Kuomintang (KMT) party-state regime, under the successful land-to-the-tiller campaign (1953) that aimed to consolidate the party's control at the grassroots level, also saw the rise of an entrenched system of rural clientelist machines that were tenuously allied with the KMT regime. South Korea, through its 1950 reform under the Rhee Syngman regime, was in large part effective in eliminating rural powerholders from the Japanese colonial era, but left no durable rural clientelist structures that synergized with the military junta regimes that followed.

Building on past attempts to overcome the Eurocentric bias of the state building literature (Herbst 1990; Centeno 2003; Hui 2005; Taylor and Botea 2008; Han and Thies 2019), this paper has two broader theoretical claims. First, I suggest that even among similar redistribution-minded authoritarian regimes invested in land reform (Albertus 2015), the impact of such reforms in helping to extend the reach of the state can vary starkly. This is not simply an exercise in parsing excessive nuance, even as all these four cases from Asia are commonly lauded as 'success stories' of developmentalist states (White and Wade 1988; Evans 1995; Vu 2010; Beesom and Pham 2012). Rather, in demonstrating variations within the controlled 'natural laboratory' of Cold War Asia, I aim to highlight the main explanatory factors behind each state's varying pathways towards securing the countryside[2]. Second, I concede that Cold War Asia is also unique in its historical trajectory, since landed elites have rarely captured state power in the region[3] or acted as stalwarts against democratization (Moore 1966; Ziblatt 2008). Instead, the landed class was mainly a target of state expropriation, which allowed new state builders to remove the biggest obstacles toward rural control.

[2] Even within the supposedly Eurocentric bias of the state building literature, within-region comparisons can be illuminating (Downing 1992; Spryut 1994; Ertman 1997); as Charles Tilly has demonstrated, the European experience was far from a monolithic one (Tilly 1990), as state formation followed capital-intensive, capital-coercive, and coercive-intensive paths depending on the preexisting types of social wealth (i.e. capital or land).

[3] With the notable exception of the Philippines (Wurfel 1988; You 2014).

Here is the structure of this paper's core arguments. I argue that the critical antecedent (Slater and Simmons 2010) of the Cold War produced varying ideological and security contexts for Asian states, at the time when both communist and anti-communist regimes seriously considered agrarian reform as a critical component of their rural pacification strategies. The critical juncture of the early Cold War context generated two key factors for divergence: 1) the ideological predilections for rural pacification, which often pitted campaign-based reform mobilization in Communist states against bureaucracy-based state building models in non-Communist ones (Strauss 2020); 2) varying levels of state infrastructural reach (Soifer 2008) prior to agrarian reform, which was conditional on the state formation environment in the immediate postwar period.

In more concrete terms, variance on the two independent variables – ideological models of rural pacification broadly and infrastructural reach prior to rural reform – correspond to the four cases of this paper (China, Vietnam, Taiwan, South Korea) in the following two-by-two table. Communist China represents a case of campaign-based model of rural pacification with broad infrastructural reach, which led to state dominance over rural society in the long run. In contrast, Vietnam, while similarly adopting campaign-style implementation of rural pacification, was constrained by limited infrastructural reach that ultimately led to fractured state control. Taiwan, following a top-down bureaucratic pacification strategy underscored by limited infrastructural reach prior to reform, ended up with autonomous rural clientelist machines that became the unstable partners of the state. Finally, South Korea's bureaucratic enforcement of land reform yet broader infrastructural reach prior to reform eliminated the need to cultivate strong regime-supporting patronage networks in the countryside, ultimately producing a legacy of fragile clientelism.

	Broad infrastructural reach prior to reform	**Limited infrastructural reach prior to reform**

Pacification by campaign mobilization	China (monopolized state control)	Vietnam (decentralized state control)
Pacification by bureaucratic mobilization	South Korea (weak clientelism)	Taiwan (rural clientelist machines)

Table 1. A Summary of Rural State Building in Cold War Asia

The remaining sections are as follows. I first set the scope conditions and the basis for comparison, especially taking into account the agrarian and political contexts in the four cases prior to rural reform. The second section will then spell out the causal chain of the argument in detail, and highlight how my theory differs from several key contributors to state building theory rooted in Asian case studies. The third section will provide a survey of all the four case studies, beginning with China, Vietnam, Taiwan, and ending with South Korea. The fourth and final section explores the durability of these long-term legacies, and asks how rural state building legacies can continue to leave an imprint on contemporary politics.

I. China, Vietnam, Taiwan, South Korea: starting points for a method of comparison

While there are incredible size and geographical differences across the four cases – not to mention the immense subnational variation within China itself – there are still similar starting points of departure that justify this comparative design. In Table 1 in the appendix, I juxtapose the agrarian and political preconditions of land reform of China, Vietnam, Taiwan, and South Korea with other cases found in East and Southeast Asia.

Here I use rural tenancy rates – or the percentage of likely landless farmers who are contracted to labor for the landlord class – to standardize comparisons of historical agrarian conditions, recognizing them as imperfect representations of land inequality but as the next best set of available data considering the paucity of comparable historical data. Here we can see that China (30%), Vietnam (33%), Taiwan (38%), and South Korea (42%) are in the middle of the pack

in terms of tenancy rates, among East and Southeast Asian countries[4] that have undergone major land reform during the Cold War[5].

In terms of the political conditions prior to land and rural reform, we can observe that almost all of these cases from Asia were implemented under the conditions of civil war or systemic domestic repression. Even pre-reform Taiwan, which did not experience an official civil war prior to the land-to-the-tiller campaign in 1953, had just experienced a bloody island-wide repression campaign in 1947 following the February 28 Incident. In addition, with the exception of Myanmar, all of the cases of land reform here were implemented under the supervision of either authoritarian regimes or foreign-installed governments that suffered from democratic deficiencies.

Zooming in closer to the four cases however, we do observe some notable different starting points prior to the processes of rural state building. For one, the non-Communist states (Taiwan and South Korea) had weaker grassroots penetration by political parties compared to Communist China and Vietnam, as Syngman Rhee's rule in South Korea and Chiang Kai-shek's KMT regime in Taiwan both lacked well-developed party organizations at the local level. In addition, we also observe different equilibriums in terms of the balance of power between rural and urban elites, based on the *Varieties of Democracy* measurement[6]. We find that for China and Taiwan political authority was more concentrated in urban centers prior to reform, while for Vietnam and South Korea political power tended to be evenly dispersed in the countryside on the eve of reform.

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[4] The only major omission here is Mongolia, whose land reform began in 1929 under the Communist regime.

[5] However, it is important to recognize here that East and Southeast Asia's overall pattern of land inequality prior to land reform is conventionally understood as being lower than that of Latin America's (Kay 2002). Using land gini coefficients, a perhaps more accurate estimate of land inequality, South Korea (0.73) and Taiwan (0.62) somewhat pales in comparison to gini coefficients in Latin America prior to agrarian reform, which ranges from 0.7-0.9 (Albertus 2021, p. 84).

[6] Original wording of the V-Dem survey: "Is political power distributed according to urban-rural location?"

0: People living in urban areas have a near-monopoly on political power. 1: People living in urban areas have a dominant hold on political power. Those living in rural areas have only marginal influence. 2: People living in urban areas have much more political power but those living in rural areas have some areas of influence. 3: People living in urban areas have somewhat more political power than those living in rural areas. 4: People living in any area have roughly equal political power or people living in rural areas have more access to political power than those in urban areas. 5: People living in rural areas have much more political power but those living in urban areas have some areas of influence.

Potential measurement issues aside, if we take V-Dem's evaluation of rural-urban power distribution during this period seriously, the puzzle of why rural state building in Cold War Asia followed the aforementioned paths becomes all the more pronounced from a class-coalition perspective. For example, why did Communist China's land reform campaign in the countryside lead to much more entrenched rural political control than that of Communist Vietnam's, given that its authority was relatively less rural-based initially? Furthermore, why were rural clientelist machines the end product of Taiwan's rural state building process, despite being more urban-biased than South Korea at the start of agrarian reforms? While we know that state leaders may be incentivized to pursue land expropriation depending on the preexisting structure of their political coalitions, as scholars have shown through the Latin American experience (Albertus and Menaldo 2012), the lack of a consistent explanation based on coalitional dynamics in Cold War Asia suggests the need to examine the political legacies of land reform via institutional mechanisms.

Thus, contrary to other state-building theories in Asia that emphasize class and coalition dynamics (Slater 2010; Vu 2010; Han and Thies 2019), I suggest that prior domestic structural conditions such as levels of agrarian inequality and relative power of the landowning class are imperfect answers to the rural state building puzzle presented. Below, I lay out two key conditions that highlight agential and institutional explanations: ideological predilections toward rural pacification, and infrastructural reach prior to rural reform.

II. The Causal Pathways of Rural State Building

Here I summarize the gist of the causal argument to follow. First*, ideological predilections* at the time of state formation set into motion the model of political mobilization needed for strategies of rural pacification. In the Cold War context, two distinctive models of state-led agrarian transformations emerged: states could either pursue rural pacification through the command of the central bureaucracy (through top-down legal standardization, administrative quotas, and other forms of state directives), or through the mobilization of grassroots and community campaigns to advance reform (through community-based initiatives, localized deliberative policymaking, and

other forms of non-routine mass mobilization).[7] *Bureaucratic-style mobilization*, through a direct yet socially-shallow method of rural transformation, necessitates the establishment of clientelist structures to negotiate policy implementation. *Campaign-style mobilization*, through a diffuse yet socially-encompassing method of rural reform, helps to generate widespread acceptance of state and regime organizations at the grassroots level.

Infrastructural reach at the time of state formation and prior to rural reform created the conditions that either constrained or enabled regimes' reformist ambitions. While infrastructural reach can mean something as simple as the state's territorial control – one of the essential definitions of a Weberian state – here I am referring to how widespread do state institutions at the center emanate from the center to the periphery 'frontline trenches' of the state apparatus (Shue 1988; Migdal 1994; Soifer 2008). States with broader infrastructural reach suggests a higher degree of social integration between the center and the periphery, in that the central state has a stronger normative claim for the intervention of social life in the periphery (Shue 1988, p. 43). In the process of rural state building therefore, regimes with more limited infrastructural reach may be forced to compromise with rural elites in order to implement policy, whereas regimes with broader infrastructural reach are capable to confront rural elites without significant political repercussions[8]. While state leaders' own beliefs and agency may condition their resolve for certain rural pacification strategies, state leaders also take into account what they can actually do, especially by considering their states' own security context at the time of state formation and rural pacification. In short, leaders under security duress and a weaker command of infrastructural power will tend to compromise, while state leaders with a more stable security environment and

[7] This distinction comes from Julia Strauss (2020) and her depiction of state formation in China and Taiwan. Strauss argues that while both of bureaucratic and campaign modalities "radically simplifies complex realities" (p.24), bureaucratic mobilization seeks to "break down complex and interconnected phenomena into constituent and standardizable parts amenable to rules," while the campaign modality "simplifies by fusion, compression, and frontal attack, merging the complex and multifaceted into an organic whole, condensing the time allotted for implementation, and engaging the emotional commitments of those it draws in with explicit appeals to normative goods." My simplification of Strauss's terminology here, especially on the element of normative and emotional appeals, unfortunately reduces the original argument into a purely institutional approach, though has the added benefit of extending broader comparability across cases beyond state formation in China and Taiwan.

[8] This distinction between elite compromise and confrontation is partly inspired by Tuong Vu's identification of confrontation and accommodation-based paths of state formation among ruling elites (Vu, 2010). Vu further categorizes four modes of elite alignment patterns - including elite unity, fragmentation, compromise, and polarization - alongside three modes of elite-mass engagement - mass incorporation, mass suppression, and controlled mobilization. I avoid these nuanced categorizations here given the limited number of cases, but still pay attention to elite-mass dynamics in separating campaign versus bureaucratic forms of rural modernization.

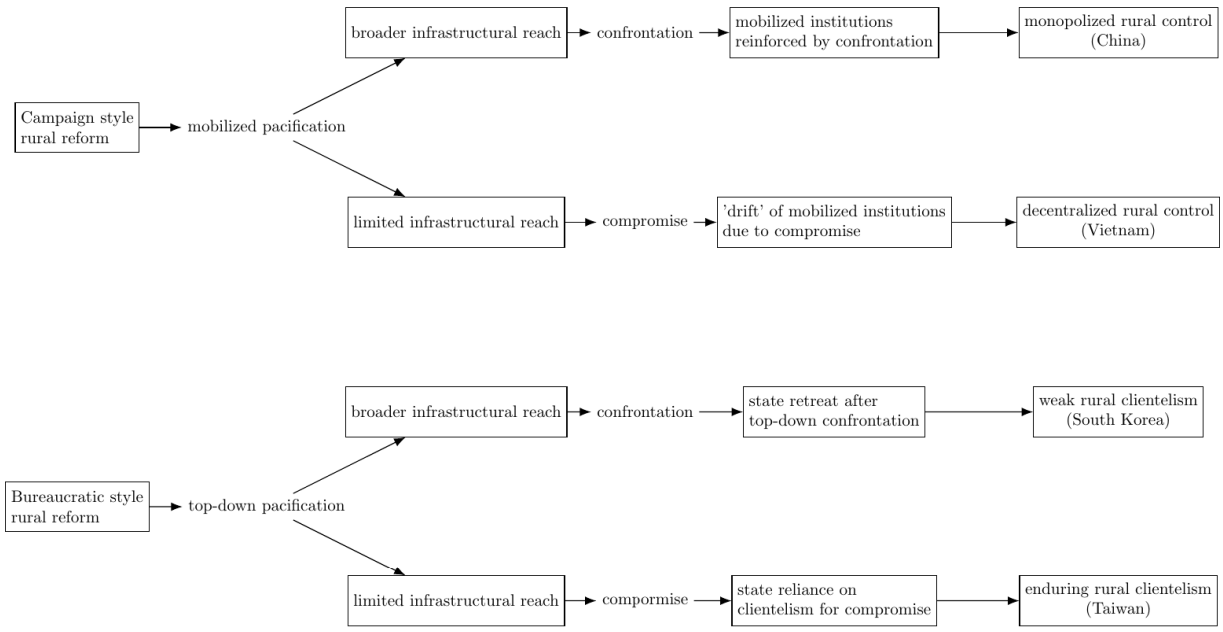
broader infrastructural power will more likely pursue confrontation in state-led projects of rural transformation.

In the long run however, initial endowments in the *reach* of infrastructural power does not naturally translate into state investments in the *weight* of infrastructural power, i.e. the extent to which the state can impose effects on societal power networks (Soifer 2009, p. 235). A broad recognition of the state's mandate to intervene in social affairs does not necessarily equate to the actual imposition of state power through institution building; neither does the limitation in the state's reach prevent leaders from considering investments of state institutions to compensate for the lack of centralized state legitimacy. In a similar vein to arguments of how developmental states emerged in Asia (Doner, Ritchie, Slater 2005; Slater 2012), elite compromise can generate state building incentives even in the context of endowment scarcity.

The structure of the argument therefore relies on the conditional combination of the two independent variables. States with broad infrastructural reach and commitments to campaign forms of rural pacification find a natural synergy: the need to mobilize rural reform campaigns from the bottom up, coupled with a more tightly social integration between the political center and the periphery, allows for a deeper penetration of state institutions into grassroots society (China). States with similar commitments to campaign forms of rural pacification but without the endowment of infrastructural reach, however, are met with the centrifugal pull of decentralization as local state agents 'drift' (Mahoney and Thelen 2009) from prescribed state goals due to the lack of integration between the center and periphery (Vietnam). Perhaps more counterintuitively, however, states committed to more top-town bureaucratic reforms with infrastructural reach are not incentivized to deepen its penetration of society after initial rural pacification success, which render local institutions as empty vessels of policy dissemination (South Korea). Finally, states equally committed to bureaucratic reform but lack in infrastructural reach are compelled to invest in strengthening the state's local presence through the construction of clientelist institutions, though these institutions can remain a perennial threat to state monopoly of authority (Taiwan).

State	China	Vietnam	Taiwan	South Korea
Ideological predilections for rural pacification	Campaign	Campaign	Bureaucratic	Bureaucratic
Infrastructural reach prior to reform	Broad	Limited	Limited	Broad
Cold War & Security context	Communist Relatively strong infrastructural reach as CCP (through PLA) controlled most territories	Communist Relatively weak infrastructural reach as VCP relied on fragmented guerrilla forces	Anti-communist Relatively weak infrastructural reach given KMT's status as a transplant regime	Anti-communist Relatively strong infrastructural reach given strong U.S. backing and seamless takeover of colonial bureaucracy
Accompanying 'institution-creating' efforts	Enduring collectivization after Great Leap Forward (1958-62)	Uneven collectivization after 1956, little collectivization in the South even after reunification	Restructuring of farmers' association campaign (1953) and enduring local factions	Brief institution building during the New Village Movement (1970) and weak local political machines
Long run effects	Monopolized control over rural society	Decentralized control over rural society	Enduring and autonomous rural clientelist machines	Weak rural clientelism

Table 2. The argument in detail



Graph 1. Causal pathways

It is also important to note here that my theory is probabilistic, not deterministic. While ideological predilections are somewhat set in stone for state leaders, they can also shift depending on shifting elite dynamics, new leadership, or changing security contexts. However, I argue that the *initial* limitations of infrastructural reach do have more of a long-lasting impact on states' control over rural society, given that it fundamentally shapes the capacity of the state to either generate grassroots institutions for control, or eliminate crucial opponents from the political arena. As I explore in later sections, the cases of Vietnam and South Korea particularly illustrate the causal power of the initial constraint on eventual state control over rural society, despite later attempts at policy change.

III. Case Studies

Case #1: Communist China and Monopolized Rural Control

For the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), land reform as a political project was built into the very revolutionary strategy on its pathway to power, though earlier visions in the 1920s were rarely realized due to the "social gulf" between educated (predominantly urban) party elites and clan-dominated rural societies (Fewsmith 2022, p. 38). Even as the CCP continued to engage in mass

campaigns of land reform in many of its revolutionary bases during its guerrilla war period, the political objective for doing so was primarily directed at short-term organizational survival and not primarily for long-term rural state building. The oft-cited slogan "strike the local tyrants, and redistribute the land" (打土豪，分田地) during the land revolution period for example was often motivated by immediate needs for ad hoc revenue extraction and military recruitment (Opper 2018; Esherick 2022). While the 1933 Land Investigation Campaign (查田运动) was a notable exception in attempting to register and categorize landlord elements (Huang 2011) throughout the then newly established Central Soviet revolutionary zone based in Southeastern China, the quick disintegration of the guerrilla base after crackdowns by the Chinese Nationalist government prevented the incubation of a campaign-based rural pacification strategy.

By the late 1940s, as the CCP discarded its 'roving bandit' like character (Olson 1993) and began to consider long-term objectives of political consolidation, the challenge thus became an issue of how to 'manage' transformative rural change without suffering through the same of kind of political fallout from the Jiangxi Soviet era. Even as the 1946-47 redistributive campaign around the main Shaan-Gan-Ning base area escalated to a radically violent campaign, the eventual reversal signaled that leaders were aware of deleterious 'left-leaning' policies[9] (Yang 2013) and intended to foster more long-term institution building. And in fact, one begins to see a more comprehensive and deliberate approach towards rural state building during this period. For example, Matthew Noellert's study of Northeastern China during this same period demonstrates how the eradication of old regime agents and local strongmen was followed up by the establishment of a new rural political hierarchy of peasant activists mobilized through the redistributive campaign (Noellert 2020).

By the time that the 1950 National Land Reform Campaign began for newly-liberated areas after 1949, land reform as a political project had emerged as a more mature policy model of campaign-based mobilization, instead of earlier half-hazard attempts at arbitrarily upending rural political structures. Despite its frequent staff shortages during the early days of the Campaign, the

[9] In this context, 'right' and 'left' orientations are not so much diametrically opposed policy objectives (i.e. party-led rural reform), but rather deals with the intensity of enforcing policy. As Andrew Nathan's discussion on post-49 policy oscillations suggest, 'right' and 'left' have more to do "with means, not ends; with pace, not direction". See Andrew Nathan, "Policy Oscillations in the People's Republic of China: A Critique," *The China Quarterly*, vol. 58 (Dec 1976), pp.720-733

CCP was able to mobilize work teams staffed with an organizational patchwork of army veterans, young volunteers, and peasant activists[10] into a mobile "revolutionary bureaucracy" (Luo 2022a) that snowballed as the campaign escalated: as more peasants were mobilized through moral cues and collective violence (Javed 2022), the barriers toward local agent recruitment and expansion of the land reform campaign became much lower. In effect, this sort of campaign-based approach towards rural pacification thus allowed the Communist Chinese regime to secure broader sources of social support, which the Kuomintang administration during the Republican era failed to work around with aside for some occasional instances of institutional success (Strauss 1998).

Another crucial factor of infrastructural reach was also a combination of historical contingencies at the time of state formation. The Party's 'trial by fire' through the Long March, party rectifications, and total war mobilization turned into a capable organizational machine that gradually learned to integrate with the societies it came to govern – as opposed to the roving bandit-like character in the early years of revolutionary warfare. This had a measurable effect on elite attitude shifts toward compromise and confrontation. In the earlier Shaan-Gan-Ning era, the "three-three" representative system was indicative of an effort to generate a united front with the landed class in the face of the Japanese invasion (Selden 1971), at a time when the Party possessed limited prospects as a complete outsider in Northwestern China following the Long March (Esherick 2022). Yet years later in the official National Land Reform Campaign beginning in 1950, party elites justified a confrontational strategy – similarly under wartime conditions, as China had just entered into the Korean War – as Liu Shaoqi admitted that the War gave political cover for the killing of landlords (Yang 2008, p. 105) during the suppression of the counterrevolutionaries campaign (镇压反革命运动). As the new Chinese Communist party commanded a revolutionary apparatus that emerged from the political periphery and were centralized through decades of militarized discipline, its newfound infrastructural reach after 1949 allowed to monopolize control over rural institutions that were gradually consolidated over the collectivization era.[11]

[10] Or as one memoir recalled, a 'melting pot for cadres' (Luo 2022a, p. 91)

[11] Of course, some subnational variations exist; see discussion in Luo (2023) comparing the land reform campaign in Guangdong and Zhejiang province. But in the aggregate, the CCP was able to preempt any decentralization tendencies, as evidenced by the various 'anti-localism' purges of the 1950s.

In short, Communist China's rural state-building campaign was the product of what I term as a campaign mode of rural pacification and a stronger initial command over infrastructural power. These patterns were further reinforced by subsequent attempts to label rural reactionary forces and mobilize rural society through grassroots initiatives, which culminated in the disastrous collectivization program of the Great Leap Forward. Without the earlier state building attempts during the National Land Reform Campaign, however, the CCP's control at the grassroots level would have been unlikely (for an important counterargument, see Shue 1988). As Yuhua Wang (2019) suggests, the consolidation of the Chinese Communist State rested upon the elimination and neutralization of local elites, who had been constant thorns toward state leaders' desire at centralization under imperial times. In the words of Du Runsheng, who played a pivotal oversight role in the Campaign as the secretary of the CCP Agricultural Work Department and would later spearhead China's many rural reforms after 1978, land reform was an absolutely defining moment in unifying and monopolizing control in the contemporary Chinese state:

> "[Land reform] helped China achieve a critical historical mission in the 20th century: the 'reconstruction of grassroots authority' [重组基层], which allowed the upper and lower levels of government, the center and the localities to integrate together. This endowed the central government with a significant amount of mobilization and organizational power, and led to the unification and standardization of policy processes. This is particularly significant for us as a traditionally large agrarian state, previously seen by many as a bowl of loose sand [一盘散沙]. " (Du 2005, p. 20)

Case #2: Communist Vietnam and Decentralized Rural Control

At a superficial glance, the land reform campaign conducted by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) between 1953 to 1956 showcases remarkable similarities with that of Communist China's. Yet the downfall of top party elites, as well significant resistance at the grassroots level (Moise 1983, p. 252), suggested that there exists a key difference in the implementation of rural land reform in Communist Vietnam. I argue here that while Communist Vietnam sought to emulate China's campaign-based mobilization in its state building project, it was operating under a different strategic terrain: that of limited infrastructural reach, which compelled a compromise-based rural state building process at the initial stage of state formation.

Like the National Campaign in China, land reform in Vietnam in the 1950s adopted a mass grassroots mobilization effort to incite class struggle, with the view of installing a new power structure in the villages. Individuals belonging to the poor peasant class, who were employed as the *cốt cán* ("backbone elements") during the local campaigns for deployed land reform cadres, were promoted to positions of power (Moise 1983, p. 232) once "a politically correct class composition" was achieved (Kerkvliet 2004). This came at the expense of targeting former allies who participated in the First Indochina War against France, leading to a reconstruction of local governments (Minh 2004, p.91); cadres who were not sufficiently 'clean' - who were landlords, rich farmers, and bad elements - were prevented from participating in Communist party-led government. Yet the tensions between the new revolutionary state and the remnants of the old regime was much more pronounced than that of Communist China's. As Pham Quang Minh demonstrates in a study of Hai Duong province in Northern Vietnam, "replacing old cadres with new ones caused chaos and political instability in the countryside," and in many documented cases saw villages openly protesting and holding demonstrations in front of district authorities in support of old cadres - to the point that local government was paralyzed (Minh 2004, p.94). This eventually culminated in a massive corrective campaign, and the stunning resignation of party secretary Truong Chinh and public apology from Ho Chi Minh regarding the failure of the land reform campaign.

To the extent that Communist Vietnam during this period adopted the language, practices, and even violence of Communist China's rural state building model, its ideological commitment towards a campaign-style mode of rural pacification was constrained by a limited command over grassroots infrastructural power. Compared to China, the founding of the Democratic Republic Vietnam (DRV) in 1945 was not backed by the same type of organizational capacity that the Chinese Communist Party had come to possess by 1949. "Had less than five thousand members scattered around Vietnam with little centralized communication and a militia of probably a few thousand poorly equipped men and women" (Vu 2010, 108). In short, the command center of the early Vietnamese state possessed limited levels of control over its peripheries.

As a result, the early Communist Vietnam state was compelled to broaden its coalitional appeal, at the cost of weakened party control over local branches (Vu 2010, 117). Outside of the

capital, many local revolutionary groups were organized by local elites or bourgeois groups (Vu 2010, 114). As David Marr suggests, "the administration established by the Viet Minh in Hanoi became as much a prisoner of the thousands of revolutionary committees emerging from around the country as the directing authority." (Marr 1971, p. 402). Further initial corporation of the colonial bureaucracy into the new Northern Vietnamese state (Vu 2010, 119) and petty bourgeois elements[12] also contributed to visible fissures within the supposedly revolutionary state. A clear initial elite strategy of rural compromise and incorporation in the 1940s, instead of rural confrontation, thus laid the structural groundwork that preceded the actual implementation of campaign-style mobilization through land reform in the 1950s.

To be clear, land reform in Vietnam during this period still massively transformed rural Vietnamese society in the North through its campaign-based mobilization of rural society. Many landlords did indeed flee to the Southern provinces, to the extent that no large landed interests remained in the North (Kerkvliet 2005, p.9); agrarian collectivization that followed after land reform was also not met with much resistance, since former landlords and rich peasants in the countryside had been destroyed (Kerkvliet 2005, p. 69). Despite these outcomes, the Vietnamese rural reform experience was restricted in its reform ambitions as the state saw "a subsequent moderation in the Vietnamese socialist course" in the late 1950s and 1960s (Vu 2010, p. 104). For example, the significant policy debates over local autonomy during the collectivization period (Kerkvliet 2005, p. 61-67) stood in stark contrast to socialist escalations in Communist China during the Great Leap Forward.

In addition, the struggle in implementing land reform and collectivization in the South after reunification in 1975 (Dang 2010; 2018) further showed how limited infrastructural reach prevented the further deepening of class confrontation in a post-conflict environment. Villagers in Southern Vietnam have been found to utilize kinship and informal social networks to resist land redistribution, while local cadres sought to lessen the burdensome demands of the center (Dang 2010, p. 73-74). CPV leaders also took a moderated approach in implementing rural reform in the South (Dang 2018, p. 27-28), given that partial land reform had already taken place during the U.S.-backed Republic of Vietnam government, and that leaders were wary of repeating the radical

[12] Despite the rapid expansion of party membership from 1945-50, more than 65 percent of party members came from petty bourgeois backgrounds (Vu 2010, p. 120)

mistakes of the Northern campaigns in disrupting the rural order. But the fact that the Northern-based Party lacked the ability to fully elicit social buy-in from the Southern populace fundamentally prevented agrarian reformist ambitions to be realized on a national scale.

In other words, while land reform in Vietnam successfully allowed for the destruction of the landlord class through campaign mobilization and enabled the monopolization of power by the Communist Party regime in Vietnam, its limited endowment of infrastructural reach within the state building process generated more fractured networks of political control through the party state system. Even with transformative land reform, Vietnam ended with a "divided state leadership, fractured organizations, and a decentralized structure" lacking a cohesive social base (Vu 2010, p. 105). Political decentralization and local policy autonomy remain standard fixtures in contemporary Vietnamese politics, which enable local party-states leaders to be deeply socially-embedded in their native places of origin (Malesky 2023, p.205)[13]. This form of decentralized control[14] has some important benefits for economic experimentation (Malesky and London 2014) and open political competition (Malesky and Schuler 2010) at the local level compared to China, but arguably introduces more veto points within Vietnam's political system.

Case #3: Anti-Communist Taiwan and Rural Clientelist Machines

Shifting gears to rural state building in non-Communist Asian states, I turn my attention here to the case of Taiwan under the rule of the Kuomintang (KMT) authoritarian regime. While the 1953 Land-to-the-tiller campaign and the rural reforms that proceeded it led to a more egalitarian distribution of land assets, these series of rural reforms also gave rise to the KMT rural clientelist machine. While a new cohort of rural middlemen were recruited and co-opted into the local party ecosystem through a series of rural reforms, many of these new rural leaders were themselves

[13] Although this has curiously not led to factional sorting based on localities in Vietnam. See Malesky (2021) and Trinh, Duy. 2020. "Explaining Factional Sorting in China and Vietnam." Problems of Post-Communism 68 (3):171–189.

[14] Students of Chinese politics also often take note of decentralization tendencies within the system (Chung 2019), though it's important to keep the relative scales of decentralization and local autonomy in perspective. From Malesky (2023): "Whereas only 18% of Chinese provincial party and state officials serve in the province of their birth, 70% of top Vietnamese provincial officials do so (Malesky and London, 2014). In fact, if one includes Vietnamese officials who spent the bulk of their career in a province after arriving at a young age, 90% of Vietnamese officials can be considered native to the province they serve (Malesky, 2009b; Pincus et al., 2012)." For discussions on China's decentralization, see Landry (2008)

remnants of traditional factional interests (Luo 2022b). These rural clientelist machines in large part helped to foster a political ecosystem that kept KMT electoral dominance afloat up until the 1980s, and to this day remain powerful political brokers in contemporary Taiwanese politics.

In contrast to China and Vietnam in the previous sections, Taiwan's model of land reform was predicated on what Julia Strauss terms as a bureaucratic modality: "to radically *simplify* complex realities through *depersonalization*" (Strauss 2020, p. 19, emphasis in the original). In more practical terms, land reform in Taiwan entailed a rigorous and mechanistic enforcement of top-down quotas. Compared to campaign-style models in which the scale and target of redistribution was decided at the grassroots collective level, reform targets in Taiwan were decided at the state level. During the land-to-the-tiller campaign, all landlords possessing over 3 *jia*[15] (甲) of paddy fields or 6 *jia* of dry farmland to relinquish the exceeded plots to the government, which was then resold to tenant farmers on a 10-year payment plan. Violence was generally avoided in the requisitioning of farmland from landlords[16], as the entire redistribution process was jointly overseen by civil servants and local tenancy committees composed of former landlords and tenant farmers (Chu 2017, 128-129). Ultimately however, this rural state-building process fundamentally entailed top-down institutional making, instead of bottom-up grassroots mobilization.

This bureaucratic model of rural state building was even more pronounced during the Restructuring of the Farmers' Association (農會改造) Campaign, which was jointly implemented alongside land redistribution (Luo 2022b), under the direction of American consultants from the JCRR (Sino-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, 農復會). In an effort to transform the previously landlord-dominated farmers' association under the colonial era, the KMT began a process of restricting candidate eligibility to peasants of lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Huang 2011, 183). By 1956 the party's full control over the farmers' association was complete. According to internal party records, up to 90 percent KMT-backed candidates assumed top-level executive positions in the farmers' associations, from the national organization down to the most local township level (Huang 2011, 204). While nominally competitive elections

[15] About 29,000 square meters, or 7.2 acres

[16] State violence were not mainly targeted against reluctant landlords, but was instead mainly targeted against a small contingent of leftist activists who advocated for further peasant rights (Strauss 2020).

for the farmers' associations at the local level were kept in place (Looney 2020, 67), the regime essentially sought to control rural Taiwanese society through a bureaucratic model of rural state building, as the farmers' associations became the de facto state institution for disseminating agricultural policy, managing rural credit, and controlling production resources such as fertilizers.

However, similar to the case of Communist Vietnam, limited infrastructural reach compelled a compromised-based arrangement with rural elites and prevented a centralized consolidation of state authority in the countryside. Still reeling from the disastrous defeat at the hands of the Communist Party during the Chinese Civil War, the KMT regime, under party leader Chiang Kai-shek, fled to Taiwan in 1949 and found itself in desperate need to reconstruct its political legitimacy. Recognizing that its failure in peasant mobilization was the key to its defeat during the Civil War, the party-state regime began to make rural and agrarian reform its top priority (Dickson 1993) under the consultation of American advisors (Kapstein 2017). The state ambition to remake political authority in the countryside also had to take into account tensions with the native Taiwanese elites, who had just lived through 50 years of Japanese colonial rule and were dissatisfied with the government corruption that occurred during the Nationalist takeover. These tensions erupted during the February 28th Incident of 1947, a series of riots that led to a bloody crackdown by the KMT Nationalist government and the persecution and execution of many native parliamentary representatives who called for structural political reforms[17]. The lack of social integration between the mainlander-led government and the island population meant that infrastructural reach was in short supply.

While some have read the KMT's rural reforms as a deliberate strategy to rid the native landed class of their political power[18], significant concessions still took place during the process of rural reform due to limited infrastructural reach. The political fallout from the violence of 1947

[17] While the rounding up of political elites were mainly concentrated in urban neighborhoods and did not extend significantly to the countryside, native landlords still felt the pressure of political terror, given the entangled social relations between the rural landed class and native political elites at the time.

[18] See Wakabayashi (2009). This observation is also partly backed up by survey data; for example, Mao-chun Yang's detailed ethnographic survey of one village in Taoyuan county showed that 38 percent of former tenant farmers expressed interest in political participation compared to 6 percent prior to land reform; former landlords showed the opposition trend, with a 32 percent decrease in enthusiasm for political participation (Yang 1970, 111). However, while professed enthusiasm has decreased, the reality of native landlord political participation actually was quite opposite - as I demonstrate through a quantitative analysis of farmers' associations in a different paper (Luo 2022b)

underscored one central weakness of the KMT regime: that as a minority regime headed by party and military elites from mainland China, the regime lacked the political inroads into local Taiwanese society. Given that the KMT, as virtually a 'government in exile,' still had to rely on native cooperation to consolidate its rule on the island, the ambitions and scope for rural reform from the outset was rooted in a negotiated political compromise (Liu 2012, 82). For example, parliament representatives successfully lobbied for a less ambitious national redistribution target compared to Governor Chen Cheng's initial plan, by excluding parts of suburban or urban industry-use land out of the redistribution process (Liao and Chu 2015, 111). Landlords were also compensated with government bonds and stocks from major state-owned enterprises after land expropriation (Amsden 1979), which allowed them to transition into proto-capitalists.

The critical need for a coalitional bargain with native local elites to compensate for weak infrastructural reach, coupled with the bureaucratic model of rural policy implementation, created a political ecosystem in which the state has to permit the functioning of an autonomous grassroots political network to extend its political reach. The creation of rural clientelist machines in Taiwan, by co-opting local elites into regime institutions, became the key mechanism to extend the social base of the party-state regime. To this end, preexisting local factions and strongmen had to be tolerated – or even cultivated – in order to shore up the KMT's local support among the native population (Chen 1995, 150). As Naiteh Wu suggests, "in other developing countries, clientelism is mostly, or seen mostly as, a residual from traditional culture […] Clientelism in Taiwan, however, is a rather modern phenomenon. It was created deliberately on an extensive scale, to an intensive degree and operating bureaucratically in a relatively modern society by a rather sophisticated ruling group for a very clear political purpose" (Wu 1987, 12).

Ultimately, the bureaucratic vision to transform rural power structures in Taiwan was simultaneously undercut by a need to compromise on the extent of rural reform ambitions due to the lack of infrastructural reach. Furthermore, Taiwan's KMT regime lacked an ideological commitment towards campaign-based mobilization compared with Vietnam, which prevented a true 'social embedding' of the entire party-state system. Instead, a later attempt at 'indigenizing' the party (Lin 2022) through the incorporation of native Taiwanese elites into the top echelons of the regime came too little too late. The KMT became susceptible to challengers within the electoral

arena, and was forced to concede to major democratization demands by the opposition, despite the appearance of organizational strength (Slater and Wong 2022).

Case #4: Anti-Communist South Korea and Weak Rural Clientelism

South Korea, similar to Taiwan, also implemented a rather successful land reform by the 1950s, effectively dissolving the landed class (You 2015, p. 69) and transforming landlords into capitalists. Like Taiwan's land-to-the-tiller campaign, a cap was set for the extent of redistribution: the government was to purchase any landholdings over 3 *Jeongbo* (정보)[19] from landlords and resell plots to tenant farmers, with the state essentially acting as an arbiter between landlord and tenants. On the surface, the trajectories of the two cases seemed remarkably similar; periods of high economic growth and development was followed by eras of political contestation and democratization. However, a more grounded view of South Korea's rural state building process reveals a critically different approach: one of repressive confrontation, which was enabled by a stronger endowment of infrastructural reach right after the end of WWII.

Like Taiwan, South Korea's implementation of land reform was for the most part a top-down bureaucratic process. The first phase of land redistribution in South Korea was initiated under the American occupation in 1948 by the ordinance of the USAMGIK (United States Army Military Government in Korea) despite protests from conservative Korean politicians[20]; this was followed by a more extensive plan under the Rhee Syngman regime (1948?-1960)[21], which was conducted beginning in early 1950 and all the way into the outbreak of the Korean War (Park and Han 2018, p.667). Rhee, initially sidelined in the legislative process for land reform within the National Assembly, gradually imposed his own personal will in the process and leveraged the branch offices of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to carry out land reform (S. Kim 2013, p. 60). Government officials, who in effect controlled the land reform committees, also were the enforcers in extracting payment from land recipients to fund the war effort (S. Kim 2013, p. 62).

[19] 9917.4 square meters, somewhat different than the jia system in Taiwan (1 jia = 9699 square meters)

[20] A failed trial was proposed in 1946, under the protest of conservative elites (Kim 2016, p.111).

[21] The American plan redistributed lands formerly owned by Japanese landlords, about 17% of total farmland (Kim 2016)

Furthermore, the emergence of powerful social opposition on the surface should have made compromise a much more compelling pathway for the South Korean state, in comparison to Taiwan. For one, the state - first under USAMGIK and then under the Rhee government - not only faced the resistance of reactionary landed interests[22], but also a much more pronounced leftist communist movement internally (Kim 2016, p.99) compared to Taiwan. An early report to General Douglas MacArthur remarked that the political situation in South Korea was "a powder keg ready to explode at the application of a spark" (quoted in Kim 2016, p. 104), which underscored the social stabilizing priorities of rural state building (Park and Han 2018, p.666).

However, the key in shaping a more confrontational rural state building process had much to do with the state's infrastructural reach prior to and after the tumultuous unfolding of the Korean War. Despite the cacophony of elite dissent in the early years of state formation, the presence of USAMGIK and U.S. support essentially guaranteed the security and reach of the South Korean state. The consolidation of a security apparatus that was mostly coercive in nature – in order to fulfill the U.S.'s desire to create an "anti-communist bulwark" (Im 1987, p. 249; Greitens 2016) – gave the Rhee regime the capacity it needed to pursue more confrontational methods at rural pacification. Lacking the perennial 'outsider' anxiety of the KMT regime on Taiwan, the Rhee administration was free to pursue its agrarian reformist ambitions.[23] At the same time, against the backdrop of anti-communist paranoia in the countryside, rural repression happened at a scale unseen in Taiwan. Perpetrated by the South Korean military against the civilian population, who were being suspected of being Communist conspirators or sympathizers (Kang and Hong 2017), rural violence essentially destroyed much of preexisting rural power structures, as anti-communist combat veterans took over the leadership of rural communities (Hong 2013).

Curiously, this initial endowment of infrastructural reach also eliminated the need for regime to more deliberately foster grassroots institutions in the long run. Compared with the immediate restructuring and institutional endurance of Taiwan's farmers' association, the Korean Farmers' Association "largely fell into oblivion after 1955" (Lee 2011, p. 348). The lack of

[22] A wrinkle in the South Korean case has to do with the fact that Syngman Rhee's main elite rivals - the Democratic Party - were tied with landed interests (Hong, p. 38).

[23] For more on Rhee's leftist tendencies despite being known as a fierce anti-communist, see David P. Fields (2017), "Syngman Rhee: Socialist," Wilson Center Cold War International History Project working paper https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/syngman-rhee-socialist

grassroots penetration can be further evidenced by the patchwork composition of NACF (National Agricultural Cooperative Federation) throughout the authoritarian era. NACF was a semi-repurposed village cooperative with the Korea Agricultural Bank, which represented over 90 percent of all South Korean farmers (Lee 2011, p. 349). However, the branches of NACF had little regular presence in the villages, which starkly differed with the extensive local authority of the farmer's associations of Taiwan (Looney 2022, p. 272). Local NACF branches also did not have democratic elections that chose their leaders (Looney 2022, p. 274), which prevented the development of entrenched clientelist networks through repeated electoral competition. Thus, while the NACF also wielded policy power in terms of "the supply of low-interest credit, and marketing channels for grain, and critical agricultural inputs like fertilizer" (Lee 2011, p. 349), its organizational penetration at the grassroots level was comparatively much weaker than that of Taiwan's.

The lack of a widespread rural clientelist network should not be equated with a lack of rural support for the authoritarian regime. In fact, the term *yeochon yado* (여촌야도, "the countryside for the government, the city for the opposition") is a powerful reminder of the pro-regime tendencies of rural South Korea throughout the authoritarian era, especially under the later military junta regime led by Park Chung-hee (Lee 2011, p. 345). What's clear is that South Korea's rural state building process did not generate a durable and self-sustaining system of rural control at the same scale of Taiwan's clientelist system[24]. Under the dictatorship of Park (1961-1973), a sequel to the earlier rural state building project emerged in the form of the 1970s New Village Movement (NVM, or *Saemaul Undong*), which sought to install penetrating institutions from the political center. Village-level *Saemaul* leaders, trained collectively at the national Saemaul Leader's Training Institute, were given the authority to bypass local village heads and communicate with the upper echelons of government, though this often pitted the leaders at odds with the local leadership (Boyer and Ahn 1991, p. 101-102). Ultimately, while the developmental benefits and patronage benefits delivered during the NVM did in the long run generate positive support for authoritarian candidates (Hong, Park, Yang 2022), the highly centralized and authoritarian nature

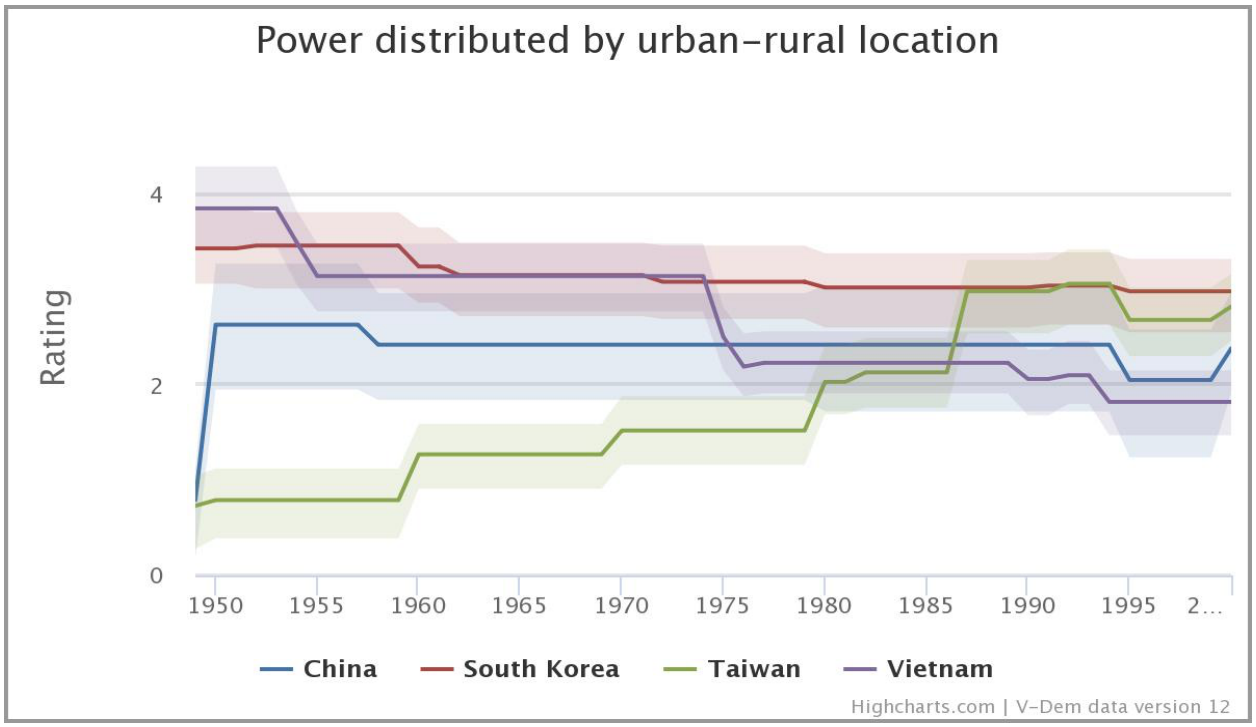
[24] See You (2015) and his comparison of clientelism in South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines after land reform. While I agree with his diagnosis that South Korea and Taiwan both fared better than the Philippines in combating corruption and clientelistic politics, Taiwan's rural clientelist system remains prominently entrenched relative to that of South Korea - considering the paucity of literature on South Korean rural clientelism.

of the NVM (Boyer and Ahn 1991, p.38) failed to produce entrenched rural clientelist machines that were capable of self-sustaining in a political manner after regime turnover[25].

IV. Conclusion: State Domination over Rural Society: at the end of history?

The legacies of earlier rural state building remain stubbornly ingrained in the contemporary politics of the four Asian states covered in this article. Still, demographic shifts have in many ways led to the restructuring, or even the decay, of the state's various forms of control over rural society. A comparison of the rural-urban power distribution index from V-Dem (see below) can give us a better sense of the long-term effects. In the long run, we should expect power dynamics to shift towards an urban bias (i.e. a downward trend), given familiar patterns of rapid urbanization throughout processes of socioeconomic modernization. However, as we can observe here, we can see that while power dynamics in China and South Korea have remained fairly static, there have been noticeable shifts in Vietnam and Taiwan. In other words, initial endowments of infrastructural reach and state penetration helped to 'lock in' distributions of power through rural state building. Lack of infrastructural reach at the time of rural reform, however, opened up the necessity for political compromise and constant reshuffling of coalitional interests over the long run. Vietnam's gradual decline of its early rural bias would seem to suggest that the regime has finally been able to recentralize under an authoritarian system decades after rural state building. Taiwan's curious reversal towards an increase in rural power, however, is a testament towards the enduring political influence of rural clientelism even against the current of urbanization.

[25] In the place of localized clientelistic networks, what occurred instead was the artificial 're-imagining' and electoral coalescing around regional affinities in South Korean politics (Kwon 2004), which continues to play a prominent role until this day. These patron-client networks in South Korea are much more nationalized, in that they resemble more of a regionally-centralized 'cartel' rather than the sort of decentralized and locally autonomous clientelistic machines found in Taiwan.



Graph 2. Power distributed by urban-rural location, four cases compared

While this paper is mainly aimed at disentangling the political legacies of land reform and rural state building in Cold War Asia, I also submit three broader theoretical lessons for the literature on state building and infrastructural power. First, by taking ideological commitments of state builders seriously, I suggest that ideological preferences for the state's role in rural transformation can set up institutional pathways for the state's varying levels of societal penetration. Second, building on the expansion of the infrastructural power literature, I disaggregate the seemingly covaried variables of infrastructural reach and infrastructural weight of the state, and argue that an endowment in the former does not necessarily lead to the latter; or in other words, integration does not equate to penetration. Third, I argue that the conditional sequencing of rural state building pathways matter, and that infrastructural reach prior to early state building efforts enable or constrain elite ambitions in pursuing transformative social projects.

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Appendix
Table 1. Breakdown of major rural reforms in East and Southeast Asia

	Pre-reform tenancy rates	**Land gini post reform**	**Major land reforms during Cold War**	**Origin of regime group**	**Local party organization at the start of reform**	**Civil War or widespread conflict preceding or during reform**	**Rural power prior to reform (0 – rural bias, 5 – urban bias)**
Japan	27%	0.43	1946–1949	Foreign imposed	N/A	No	2.36 (1946)
North Korea	56.7% (‘poor farmers’)	N/A	1946, 1955 (collectivization)	Foreign imposed	Widespread local branches	Yes	4.19 (1945)
South Korea	43%	0.34	1948-1958	Foreign imposed	Absent	Yes	3.46 (1947)
China	30%	0.25 (1954)	1950-1952, 1958 (collectivization)	Rebel insurgency	Widespread local branches	Yes	0.82 (1949)
Taiwan	38%	0.39	1949-1955	Foreign imposed (transplant regime)	Few local branches	Arguable (228 Incident)	0.52 (1948)
North Vietnam	33%	0.53	1954-1965, 1958 (collectivization)	Rebel insurgency	Widespread local branches	Yes	3.95 (1953)
South Vietnam	47%		1956-1973 (under RVN); 1975 (collectivization after reunification)	Foreign imposed	Widespread local branches	Yes	No data
The Philippines	32.5%	0.56	1973-1979 (limited)	Military coup	Absent	Yes	1.5 (1972)
Indonesia	32-60%	0.55	1962-1969 (limited)	Rebel Insurgency	Absent	Yes	2.29 (1961)
Thailand	15.7-36%	0.43	1975 (limited)	Military coup	Absent	No	0.96 (1974)
Myanmar	59%	0.44	1953-1958 (land nationalization)	N/A (democratic elections)	N/A	Yes	1.34 (1952)
Cambodia	25-30%	N/A	1975 (collectivization)	Rebel insurgency	Widespread local branches	Yes	1.37 (1974)
Laos	20%	0.41	1975 (collectivization)	Rebel insurgency	Widespread local branches	Yes	0.6 (1974)

Tenancy data
Japan data from Arimoto et al, "Agrarian Land Tenancy in Prewar Japan: Contract Choice and Implications on Productivity," *The Developing Economies* 48, issue 3 (September 2010): pp.293-318;

China data from Liu Kexiang (刘克翔), "The Change of Tenancy Structure: Pauperization of Tenants and Turning into Hired-hand Peasants in the 1930s and 1940s," (20 世纪三四十年代的租佃结构变化与佃农贫农雇农化) Researches in Chinese Economic History, no.5, p.16–42;

Taiwan and Philippines from Jong-sung You, "Land Reform, Inequality, and Corruption: A Comparative Historical Study of Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines," The Korean Journal of International Studies, vol. 12-1 (June 2014), p.191-224;

South Korea data from Sungjo Kim, "Land Reform and Postcolonial Poverty in South Korea, 1950-1970," *Agricultural History*, vol. 95, issue 2;

Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia from Anne Booth, *Colonial Legacies: Economic and Social Development in East and Southeast Asia* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), p. 41;

Cambodia data from Hu Nim, "Land Tenure and Social Structure in Kampuchea" in *Peasants and Politics in Kampuchea, 1942-1981*, eds. Ben Kiernan and Chathou Boa (Zed Press, 1982), p.81;

Laos data is estimated from the percentage of landless peasants – see Grant Evans, "'Rich Peasants' and Cooperatives in Socialist Laos," *Journal of Anthropological Research*, Volume 44, Number 3 (1988);

North Korea data is inferred from the percentage of 'poor peasants' – see Chong-sik Lee, "Land Reform, Collectivisation and the Peasants in North Korea," *The China Quarterly*, no. 14 (April/June 1963), pp. 65-81

Land gini post reform data
Drawn from the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) data from the 1960 and 1970 agricultural censuses, with the exception of China's (first FAO census in 1988*). Report on the 1960 World Census of Agriculture*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1970; *Report on the 1970 World Census of Agriculture*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1977. China's 1954 gini coefficient data is from Zhang Xiaoling (张晓玲), "Rural land rights after land reform using gini coefficients" (从基尼系数看土地改革后农村地权分配), Researches in Chinese Economic History, no.1 (2014), p.134-141

Major land reforms during Cold War
Albertus, *Autocracy and Redistribution*. Reforms labeled as 'limited' were coded as minor land reforms by Albertus, i.e. only redistributing 10% of total land assets. Collectivization reforms were not identified by Albertus as land reform, hence the omission of Cambodia and Laos in the 2015 dataset.

Origin of regime seizure group / Local party organization at the start of reform
Geddes et al, *How Dictatorships Work*

Power distributed by rural-urban location
Varieties of Democracy database