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Chinese-Cambodians in the Vietnam War: an oral history of the 'other' soldiers in the Vietcong

Abstract:

Existing studies of the Vietnam War have been written mostly from Western sources and through Western eyes, although there are increasing accounts from the North Vietnamese as archives open up (Ang Chen Guan 2004). Missing however, are accounts from other actors in the region involved in the war including Laos and Cambodia. This paper will present an oral history of my father's experiences as a Chinese-Cambodian in the Vietnam War as part of the National Liberation Front, otherwise known as the Vietcong. The oral history incorporates interviews with my father and will provide insight into the motivations, desires and fears during this period that were rooted in particular local contexts and specific social needs, as well as highlight some of the underlying local conflicts that existed underneath the global Cold War confrontation (Masuda 2015). Using an analytical lens of the 'local' to rethink the 'global' (Mooney and Lanza 2013), it will demonstrate the ways in which individuals and communities were critical in the creation of the 'reality' of the Cold War world.