

oversimplified. Ultimately, the critical aim of the book—"to expose various forms of power" (p. 29)—is realized. However, the normative task of exploring "how and to what extent the process of modernization and globalization need to be transformed in ways that promote environmental protection and environmental justice" (p. 29) remains elusive in the face of multinational "corpocracy."

Zink, Eren. 2013. *Hot Science, High Water: Assembling Nature, Society and Environmental Policy in Contemporary Vietnam*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.

*Reviewed by Jennifer Wallace*  
University of Maryland, College Park

Vietnam is among the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change, based on its predicted land losses from sea-level rise and the population density within these areas. Given the magnitude of this problem, conventional wisdom suggests that a coordinated effort to address this threat to Vietnam's population and economy is in the best interest of both local and global actors. If the interests of Vietnamese citizens, the national government, and international development practitioners fail to align on this issue, what hope is there for these actors to make inroads on more contentious global issues such as democratization or human rights? Eren Zink's *Hot Science, High Water* demonstrates that despite years of sustained international assistance, the politics of climate change in Vietnam are used to reinforce existing political, social, and cultural structures as much as—or perhaps more than—to achieve the objectives needed to address it.

Vietnamese and international actors approach the subject of climate change with divergent perspectives on its causes, impacts, and solutions, despite agreement on the scientific facts that confirm its existence. Zink's fundamental argument is that scientific work is inseparable from the social, cultural, and historic relationships in which it is embedded. Indeed, these observations can be applied beyond the politics of climate change, as he explores more broadly "what it means to be a scientist and to do science in Vietnam" (p. vii). Zink begins by tracing the history of higher education in Vietnam to demonstrate the roots of pedagogical traditions and hierarchical relationships between educators and students that continue to shape contemporary behaviors. Within this context, he traces the careers of several Vietnamese climate scientists using an ethnographic approach that reveals how climate change politics reached the agenda in Vietnam, as well as how externally driven policies to address global warming failed to translate to a new political, cultural, and economic setting. He observes multiple instances in which both Vietnamese officials and donors benefitted from the "slippery spaces" between policy and practice. The concept of slippery spaces—spaces that facilitate collaborations among actors trying to achieve different and sometimes contradictory goals—is central to the observation that the meaning and context of an initiative that originates in one context may be completely different when it arrives at another, such as the local level.

This book demonstrates effectively how historical, cultural, and economic practices are sticky fixtures that will not easily disintegrate as a result of knowledge transfer, technical training, or development aid. Universities, for example, have their own economies, in which grant kickbacks to higher-level administrators and promotions based on kinship ties are a traditional way of conducting business. These common local practices undermine the effectiveness of donor initiatives that are intended to increase capacity-building among a new array of actors or to facilitate innovative research. Anecdotes in the book include a workshop in which the participants were acquaintances of the organizer, who was helping members of his network supplement their formal income through the honoraria offered; research funds that were eaten away by informal costs or corruption; and the recycling of findings or doctoring of project reports to hide these realities from donors. These practices provide a damning account of the disconnect between perceived and actual project accomplishments: donors pride themselves on moving money toward locally owned projects, which reinforce rather than challenge Vietnamese social, cultural, and economic structures.

Zink's book reveals a high level of familiarity with the personal connections between scientists and their career trajectories that can only be achieved through close, sustained contact. The strength of Zink's argument is nonetheless based on the anecdotal nature of his ethnographic studies, and personal experiences do not necessarily represent dominant societal trends. Zink devotes one chapter to five personal vignettes of scientists who earned doctorates abroad and struggled to find work upon their return. In each case, the social and professional hierarchies in Vietnam failed to reward their formal training and expertise over customary methods of establishing status. These cases represent a challenge toward Vietnam becoming part of the modern knowledge economy. However, in an earlier chapter the author reveals how Vietnamese scientists used their connections with external scientific communities to achieve objectives that would have been impossible in the purely local context. The scientists who worked to have Xuan Thuy designated as a Ramsar-protected site are described as having seen "an opportunity to expand their environmental goals with the assistance of prestige and money from abroad that could in turn be used to garner more allies domestically for their conservation objectives" (p. 102). Juxtaposing these cases reveals that while there are societal obstacles in Vietnam that hinder the advancement of science or scientists based on merit, connections with external scientific communities can still influence policy and priorities locally.

Zink's contribution is an important critique of development models that narrowly focus on the transfer of knowledge or capital between developed and developing countries. Such models obfuscate the strategic decisions made by actors on both ends. In the case of climate politics in Vietnam, Zink observes how slippery spaces enable both development practitioners and Vietnamese officials to achieve narrowly defined objectives that end up having little direct impact on the environment. While it may be easy to focus on the pathologies

of a one-party state that limit the effectiveness of global initiatives, resistance to taking steps to achieve more dramatic societal change to combat climate change unfortunately is not limited to Vietnam.

Bridger, Rose. 2013. *Plane Truth: Aviation's Real Impact on People and the Environment*. London: Pluto Press.

*Reviewed by Alden Griffith*  
Wellesley College

Rose Bridger's *Plane Truth* examines and critiques the environmental and social impacts of the aviation industry. This topic is timely and relevant, given the industry's recent surge in growth globally and its energy-intensive nature. Although filled with information, *Plane Truth* ultimately disappoints, due to a lack of substantive analysis and structure. This missed opportunity is unfortunate, given that the full impacts of global aviation are complex and interwoven with many other factors that beg for a comprehensive and cohesive analysis.

*Plane Truth* covers a lot of ground, including the growth and future of aviation, energy demands and sources, local and regional impacts of airports, air cargo and global trade, and economic issues and policies. The book's strength lies in its abundance of information, which may make it a useful reference for some readers. It is particularly effective at highlighting the many social and environmental injustices linked to airport construction and expansion, mainly through land seizures, local pollution, and/or altered hydrology. Examples from around the world reveal local impacts that are largely invisible to the travelers and global consumers who are often the main beneficiaries of these projects. However, excessive information without a strong analytical framework often becomes a drawback. This may stem from the author's approach, stated in the opening paragraph: "When I began writing about aviation it was obvious that visiting airports would not be enlightening. So I didn't go anywhere. Instead, I used the internet to research operations and expansion plans all over the world" (p. 1). Indeed, Bridger draws heavily from Internet news sites and press releases to populate the book with facts, events, and statistics.

Such dense detail sometimes becomes questionable and distracting. For example, Bridger discusses a single overturned jet fuel tanker truck that leaked its contents as evidence of the environmental effect of aviation. Yet one could probably find the environmental equivalent of an overturned tanker truck linked to almost any activity, regardless of its overall impact. While some aviation-related fuel spills have indeed been quite large, several pages on the subject fail to reveal a clear sense of the relative magnitude of the overall impact, giving the impression that the author was mining for anything negative to report. This issue recurs throughout the book, often leaving readers without a sense of scale or the relative/cumulative impacts of individual events. As another example, while reporting that a takeoff by a DC-10 emits "the same amount of