# THE FORMATION AND DYNAMICS OF COLONIAL "LIVED SPACES": URBAN SPACE AND SOCIETY IN COLONIAL HANOI, 1883–1916

**NAM KHANH HOANG**
**B.A. in Asian Studies and Economics**
*DePauw University, Class of 2025*

## Abstract

This study examines the nuanced experiences and perceptions of urban space among different social groups in colonial Hanoi in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by analyzing the French colonial agendas, as reflected through modern urban planning and practices, and its reception among the colonial urban inhabitants, as suggested through their responses to the Statue of Liberty—a colonial urban monument. While existing scholarship has often framed colonial cities as stages for consolidating imperial power, introducing Western ideals of modernity, and forming systems of oppression and exploitation against colonial subjects, it has often overlooked the perceptions and experiences of colonial settlers and native communities, who account for the majority of the city's population. To address this gap, this study utilizes Henri Lefebvre's notion of "lived spaces" to explore the multiple layers of experiences of colonial subjects reflected in memoirs, records, and testimonies. A detailed analysis of these sources suggests that colonial subjects were not passive recipients of the colonial agendas but rather active agents constantly challenging and reinterpreting the imposed ideologies according to their interests. Hence, the colonial city, rather than a stage for advancing colonial rule, was a "contact zone" where colonial agendas clashed with subalterns' resistance.

## Introduction

In 1889, the French-led Hanoi Municipal Government installed a statue in the *Square des quatre bâtiments* ("Square of Four Buildings") overlooking Hoàn Kiếm Lake—the heart of colonial Hanoi.[1] The statue, titled *Statue de la Liberté éclairant le monde* ("The Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World"), was a 2.5-meter replica of the Statue of Liberty in New York. By placing such a symbolic monument at the center of the

---

[1] *L'Avenir du Tonkin* [The Future of Tonkin], 1889, JO-5467 (BIS), *département Droit, Économie, Politique, Bibliothèque nationale de France* (hereafter cited as *L'Avenir du Tonkin*), https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/13-juillet-1889/1/cf53e232-8776-4ec2-b8e1-3691d4165419.

colonial city, the French appeared to inculcate and promote this modern idea of "liberty" among their colonial population, seeking to "civilize" and assimilate them into the colonial order. Despite the colonizers' expectations, however, the colonized subjects interpreted the statue differently. Rather than viewing the statue as a symbol of "liberty," Vietnamese memoirs and accounts referred to the statue as *Bà Đầm Xòe* ("Lady in a Flared Dress"), based on the statue's long, loose-fitting garment.[2] This local conceptualization persisted until the statue's removal in 1945, undermining the original meaning and symbolic values the colonizers had intended.[3] This reimagination of a colonial symbol—the Statue of Liberty—suggests that the colonized subjects were not merely passive recipients of colonial narratives and agendas but rather active agents in reinterpreting colonial ideologies to reflect their experiences and perceptions of their living space.

This reconceptualization of a colonial monument among the colonized population reflects an alternate narrative underlying the colonial city that is often overlooked in the studies of colonial urbanism. Existing studies on the topic often interpret the colonial city as an instrument for implementing imperial power, legitimizing colonial rule, and establishing systems of oppression and exploitation upon their colonial subjects.[4] By constructing and remodeling the urban space according to Western modernity, the colonizers transformed the colony into a "familiar" space, while alienating the colonial subjects from their homeland.[5] Historians of colonial Hanoi, including William Logan and Michael Vann, have drawn on French colonial archives and administrative records to show how *mission civilisatrice* ("civilizing mission") was embedded in the colonial city's design.[6] Through urban planning, the colonial government not only highlighted the modernity they brought to the colony but also created a highly segregated space, where colonized subjects

---

[2] Văn Uẩn Nguyễn, *Hà Nội Nửa Đầu Thế Kỷ XX* [Hanoi in the First Half of the 20th Century], vol. 1 (Hà Nội Publishing House, 2016; Originally published in 1985): 653–54. Citations refer to the Hà Nội Publishing House edition.

[3] "Với công cuộc phá tượng đầu tiên sáng hôm qua, thành Thăng Long đã tẩy trừ được 4 vết tích thời Pháp thuộc" ["With the initial demolitions of statues yesterday morning, Thăng Long (Hanoi) has eliminated 4 remnants of the French colonial period"], *Tin Mới*, (1945), Newspaper Archive, National Library of Vietnam, http://baochi.nlv.gov.vn/baochi/cgi-bin/baochi?a=d&d=WMVa19450802.2.5.

[4] Elleke Boehmer and Dominic Davies, eds. *Planned Violence: Post/Colonial Urban Infrastructure, Literature and Culture* (2018), and Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (1994), both cited in Julia C. Obert, "Introduction: Postcolonial Psychogeographies," in *The Making and Unmaking of Colonial Cities*, 1st ed., by Julia C. Obert (Oxford University Press, 2023): 1–2, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198881247.003.0001.

[5] Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (1994), as cited in Obert: 1–2.

[6] Michael G. Vann, "Building Colonial Whiteness on the Red River: Race, Power, and Urbanism in Paul Doumer's Hanoi, 1897-1902," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 33, no. 2 (2007): 277–304; William Stewart Logan, *Hanoi: Biography of a City* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2000).

remained subjugated under their imperial agendas.[7] These studies, while significantly enriching our understanding of how colonial urban spaces were planned and constructed, only reflect the colonial government's narrative. They overlook the daily experiences and perceptions of the urban inhabitants, which in turn limits our understanding of the nuanced ways in which different urban communities engaged with and perceived the colonial city. Hence, what merits further investigation is how other groups in the colonial city, notably colonized subjects and colonial settlers, responded to and experienced these colonial-dictated spaces.

As recent studies on colonial cities around the world have shown, the colonial population, which accounts for the majority of colonial urban residents, contributes significantly to the construction and maintenance of urban space.[8] A study by Danielle Labbé, Caroline Herbelin, and Quang-Vinh Dao has unpacked the key contributions of Western-trained Vietnamese architects in the planning of Hanoi's New Native Quarter in the late 1920s, suggesting active participation of colonized subjects in colonial urban planning.[9] Another study by Jessie Palsetia regarding the Parsi—a native community in Bombay—also emphasizes the influence of the native community over British urban-making and planning decisions.[10] Lisa Drummond, in her analysis of the *L'Avenir du Tonkin* newspaper, also highlights the role and capacity of early French settlers to force change within the colonial city.[11] The case of Hanoi's Statue of Liberty, where the native population created an alternative identity and narrative to a colonial monument, also underscores the capacity of colonized subjects to disrupt colonial agendas, suggesting their crucial role in the operation and maintenance of the city.

Through a detailed analysis on the construction of colonial Hanoi and a case study of the Statue of Liberty from both the perspective of the colonial authorities and the colonial population, this study aims to illustrate how urban inhabitants engaged with and transformed colonial agendas by producing alternative meanings and narratives of their living space. Such engagements and interactions turn the colonial

---

[7] Vann, "Building Colonial Whiteness on the Red River."

[8] In this study, the term "colonial population" refers to the communities/social groups in the colonial city that are not part of the colonial urban government. Specifically, in the scope of this study, it primarily concerns two major groups: the native population and the colonial settlers. This is different from "colonized population" (or "colonized subject"), which refers only to the native communities.

[9] Danielle Labbé et al., "Domesticating the Suburbs: Architectural Production and Exchanges in Hanoi during the Late French Colonial Era," in *Harbin to Hanoi: The Colonial Built Environment in Asia, 1840 to 1940*, ed. Laura Victoir and Victor Zatsepine (Hong Kong University Press, 2013): 251–72, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2854bb.17.

[10] Jesse S. Palsetia, "Parsis and Bombay City: Community and Identity in the Nineteenth Century," in *Bombay Before Mumbai: Essays in Honour of Jim Masselos*, ed. Prashant Kidambi et al. (Oxford University Press, 2019): 35–56, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190061708.003.0003.

[11] Lisa Drummond, "Colonial Hanoi: Urban Space in Public Discourse," in *Harbin to Hanoi: The Colonial Built Environment in Asia, 1840 to 1940*, ed. Laura Victoir and Victor Zatsepine (Hong Kong University Press, 2013): 207–30, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2854bb.15.

city from a stage for imperial power into a dynamic space for resistance and negotiation between the colonizers and colonized subjects.

## Theoretical Framework and Source Selection

To fully explore the colonial city from the perspective of its population, this study utilizes the concept of "lived spaces," a key component in the conceptual triad of space models introduced in Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*.[12] This concept has been previously applied to the study of colonial urban space, notably in Todd A. Henry's *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* and Jini Kim Watson's *The New Asian City: Three-Dimensional Fictions of Space and Urban Form*, which look at the colonial and postcolonial development of Seoul, Taipei, and Singapore.[13] The "lived spaces," according to Lefebvre, are the space of the urban "inhabitants" and "users," formed through the direct experience of the urban population rather than the planning and narrative of the urban administration.[14] They emerge through interactions and experiences among different urban groups, in which the elements of the colonial city are reimagined and reinterpreted according to their particular interests. By focusing on the direct experiences of the urban population rather than the agendas of the city's administration, the "lived spaces" provide a suitable framework for unveiling the interactions and responses of the colonial population that are often omitted from formal colonial archives, but which played an important role in defining the urban identity and its underlying dynamics.

However, as Lefebvre also mentioned, to properly analyze "lived spaces," it is crucial to consider their interconnection with "perceived space"—the material, regulations, and practices imposed upon the space—and "conceived space"—the intentions and visions of the government, the intellectual, and the urban planner behind the space's layout and construction.[15] In that sense, earlier works on colonial Hanoi have clearly laid out the colonial government's planned "perceived space" and "conceived space" of the city.[16] Yet the experiences and perceptions of urban inhabitants, especially the native population, remain relatively obscure. This study aims to illuminate these relatively undefined "lived spaces" and provide insights into the

---

[12] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2013; Originally published in 1974 in French): 38–40. Citations refer to the Blackwell Publishing edition.

[13] Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*, Asia Pacific Modern 12 (University of California Press, 2014): 10; Jini Kim Watson, *The New Asian City: Three-Dimensional Fictions of Space and Urban Form* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

[14] Lefebvre, 39.

[15] Lefebvre, 38–39.

[16] Logan, *Hanoi*; Vann, "Building Colonial Whiteness on the Red River."

nuance and complexity of the colonial space through the previously overlooked but pivotal viewpoint of the colonial inhabitants.

Lefebvre's "lived spaces" suggests that the colonial city, rather than a single space dictated by the colonial authorities, is a nexus for interaction between the culture of the colonizer and colonized, in which the colonized subjects remain active agents of change and city-shaping despite the agendas imposed by colonizers. This understanding further positions the colonial city as what Mary Louise Pratt called the "contact zone," a space where multiple groups, often distinct in origin and culture, co-exist.[17] In the case of Hanoi, the "contact zone" of colonizers and colonized subjects bubbled up from a dynamic stew of factors, including a Western-style landscape, the imposition of French-colonial regulations on everyday life, ideals of modernity, and mission civilisatrice. Within this mix, the colonial agendas were not only implemented but also negotiated, revealing the struggle of the colonizer to implement its vision while balancing subaltern demands, resistance, and collaboration.

This study utilizes a wide range of primary sources produced and circulated in colonial Hanoi from both colonial and colonized agencies. These include government decrees and documents, colonial settlers' newspapers, as well as memoirs of French colonial officials and members of the native population. Recently, scholars have highlighted the value of non-governmental sources in uncovering the complex social and political dynamics of colonial space. Se-mi Oh and George Dutton, for example, examine magazines and cartoons published by colonized subjects to illustrate their anxieties and confusion in navigating the colonial city and modernity.[18] By incorporating a wide range of textual sources produced by the colonial population in my analysis, I aim to uncover and reconstruct how urban communities experienced, navigated, perceived, and defined their "lived spaces" in the colonial city.

In addition to textual sources, I also explore the visual archive, notably colonial photo albums from the *Asie du Sud-Est et Monde Insulindien* (ASEMI) collection currently stored in the Digital Library of the University of Côte d'Azur (hereafter referred to as ASEMI collection), through which I examine the colonial city's "conceived space." Scholars like Se-mi Oh and Joseph Allen have incorporated visual media produced by the colonizers in their studies, which unveil the manifestation of the colonial attempt to showcase and dictate the social memory of the colonial urban space in Seoul and Taipei.[19] Following their path, my study takes a close look at some of the visual media produced by the French colonial government, which I believe

---

[17] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992): 7.

[18] Se-Mi Oh, *City of Sediments: A History of Seoul in the Age of Colonialism* (Stanford University Press, 2023): 147–66; George Dutton, "Lý Toét in the City: Coming to Terms with the Modern in 1930s Vietnam," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 2, no. 1 (2007): 80–108, https://doi.org/10.1525/vs.2007.2.1.80.

[19] Oh, *City of Sediments*:73; Joseph R. Allen, *Taipei: City of Displacements* (University of Washington Press, 2011): 41–67.

provides a glimpse into the intention and vision of the colonial authorities regarding the city. Close analysis of both textual and visual materials will provide a crucial key to unveiling the voice and perception of the colonial population upon their living space as well as reveal the nuanced relationship between the colonizer and colonized subjects within the colonial city—the "contact zone" of the colony.

Building on the framework created by Lefebvre and these sources, the study begins with a brief historical analysis of the French construction and transformation of Hanoi in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to examine how the colonial government embedded its visions and ideas into the colonial city. The study then moves to a case study of the 1916 album *Ville de Hanoi* (City of Hanoi) from the ASEMI collection to examine how colonial authorities utilized controlled media to reproduce and promote their vision of the colonial city—the colonizers' "conceived space."[20] Finally, the study considers the public perceptions and discourses surrounding the Statue of Liberty—one of the first French-installed monuments in Hanoi—between 1889 and 1902 to explore the nuance and dynamics of the city's "lived spaces." By reconstructing Lefebvre's framework in colonial Hanoi, the study highlights the complex interactions and social dynamics that shaped the colonial city, underscoring the capacity of the urban population to challenge, resist, and reshape the colonial urban space and its underlying colonial agendas.

## The Creation of a Colonial City: French Colonial Theory and its Application in the Planning of Hanoi, 1883–1908

Throughout the nineteenth century, the French Empire actively engaged in its colonization projects around the world, establishing colonies across Africa and Asia. This project, according to Pierre Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, a French economist in the late nineteenth century, was "a matter of life and death" for France.[21] As Ambe J. Njoh further analyzes in his work on French colonial urbanism, colonies were crucial for France to maintain its global prestige and meet its needs for raw materials amid rapid industrialization.[22] Within that context, Indochina, with its strategic location in Asia as well as its rich resources, emerged as a potential colony for the French. The colonial project in the region began in 1858, when France attacked Đà Nẵng.[23] Within the first

---

[20] *Ville de Hanoi* [City of Hanoi], 1916, PH04, Fonds ASEMI, BU Lettres Arts Sciences Humaines, Université Côte d'Azur, https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/4898 (hereafter cited as *Ville de Hanoi*).

[21] Pierre Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes* [On colonisation among modern people], 6th ed. (1908), translated and cited in Stephen H. Roberts, *History of French Colonial Policy*, vol. 1 (P. S. King & Son, Ltd, 1929): 18.

[22] Ambe J. Njoh, *French Urbanism in Foreign Lands* (New York: Springer, 2015): 93.

[23] A key port-city in now-central Vietnam. Also known in French and English sources as Tourane.

ten years, France acquired and established a colony in Cochinchina, and throughout the 1870s and 1880s, launched multiple campaigns across Indochina that led to the establishment of protectorates in Cambodia (1863), Tonkin (1883), Annam (1883), and Laos (1893).[24] In 1887, the French government established the Indochinese Union (French Indochina) by incorporating Cochinchina and other protectorates, further consolidating colonial rule in the region. Hanoi, as the capital of Tonkin (1883–1949) and later of French Indochina (1902–1945), served as the seat of the colonial authority and the commercial hub for goods and resources to flow between the colony and the imperial core. As a result, the city served an important role in the consolidation and reproduction of colonial authority.

The city, however, was not an unoccupied space (or "blank slate") for French colonial imagination: inhabited since the second century BCE, Hanoi had, by the time of the French acquisition in 1883, thousands of years of history. The city also served as the capital of precolonial Vietnamese states for almost 800 years before the Nguyễn (1802–1945) relocated the capital to Phú Xuân in central Vietnam—after which it remained a key political and economic center of northern Vietnam.[25] By the mid-nineteenth century, the city was already home to about 50,000 Vietnamese inhabitants with distinct urban organization, society, and practices.[26] Premodern Hanoi consists of two key elements: the citadel to the west, which housed the city's administrative and military offices, and the native quarter to the east, a group of thirty-six neighborhoods specialized in certain products (Map 1).

Living in a foreign and unfamiliar space was a challenging task for the early French colonial settlers in the city, as shown through contemporary records. Gustave Dumoutier, an archeologist and early French settler in Hanoi, compares the neighborhoods surrounding Hoàn Kiếm Lake in the late 1880s to a "labyrinth" in which an urban explorer trying to reach the lakeshore must navigate through "a thousand detours" and "hop among stinking puddles and piles of garbage," only to "[find] himself again at his starting point" after an hour.[27] Anxiety and uncertainty about tropical heat, insects, and disease were frequent themes across French settlers' accounts, especially in contemporary newspapers. In the late 1880s, a news piece in *L'Avenir du Tonkin* reported on a sudden death of a French colonial official, who showed no symptoms except a headache on the previous day and a fever later that

---

[24] Cochinchina: The southern provinces of Vietnam; Tonkin: the northern provinces of Vietnam; Annam: the central provinces of Vietnam.

[25] Between 1010 and 1802, Hanoi served as the capital of the Lý (1010–1225), Trần (1225–1397), Later Lê (1428–1527; 1592–1789) and Mạc (1527–1592).

[26] Logan, *Hanoi*, 57.

[27] André Masson, *The Transformation of Hanoi, 1873–1888*, ed. Daniel F. Doeppers, trans. Jack A. Yaeger, 2nd ed. (University of Wisconsin, 1987; Originally published in 1929 in French): 74. Citations refer to the University of Wisconsin edition.

night.[28] In her analysis of other pieces in *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, Lisa Drummond argues that French settlers considered Hanoi to be a "dangerous" place with mad dogs, crime, kidnapping, and unhygienic conditions.[29] This reality motivated the French to transform the city to better accommodate their needs and facilitate their colonial rule.

In his extensive studies on colonial Hanoi, Ambe Njoh indicates two key motivations driving the French colonial government's urban planning: the improvement of the colony's economic potential, as well as the acculturation and assimilation of the colonial subjects, which consolidate and legitimize colonial rule.[30] These two objectives were in line with the rhetoric surrounding French colonialism. In 1885, then-Prime Minister Jules Ferry delivered a key speech indicating the three objectives of France's engagement in colonial expansion: economically, colonialism brought France new markets and raw materials; politically, colonialism helped increase the grandeur of the French empire; and culturally, colonialism allowed the French Republic to fulfill its "humanitarian" obligation to spread the spirit of French enlightenment ideology throughout the world.[31] This responsibility to culturally enhance the colony, coined in the term "mission civilisatrice," involves the total integration and assimilation of colonial subjects into the French colonial system, reflecting their belief in the universalism of France's Republican values.[32] In light of this, the modernization of Hanoi's urban landscape can also be understood as an effort by the colonial government to "civilize" and assimilate their colonial subjects—the main rationale behind the mission civilisatrice.

French interference with Hanoi's urban layout began in the late 1880s with the establishment of a new French quarter in the area surrounding Hoàn Kiếm Lake. This area, south of the city's native thirty-six neighborhoods, included a swampy area between the Lake and Red River as well as some Vietnamese villages adjacent to the precolonial city. To transform this area into the new center of colonial Hanoi, the colonial authority evicted local residents and demolished existing precolonial structures.[33] They also mobilized locals to fill in the swamps and lagoons.[34] By erasing this precolonial suburb, the colonial government not only eliminated an "unhygienic"

---

[28] Drummond, "Colonial Hanoi," 214.

[29] Drummond.

[30] Njoh, *French Urbanism in Foreign Lands*, 89.

[31] Jules Ferry, speech to the Chamber of Deputies, 28 July, 1885, cited in Timothy Baycroft, "The Empire and the Nation: The Place of Colonial Images in the Republican Vision of the French Nation," in *Empire and Culture: The French Experience, 1830–1940*, 1st ed. 2004 (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2004): 149-50, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230000681.

[32] Baycroft, 149–50.

[33] Văn Huệ Hà and Hoàng Anh Đỗ, eds., *Quy Hoạch Đô Thị và Địa Giới Hành Chính Hà Nội, 1873-1954* [Urban Planning and Administrative Boundaries of Hanoi, 1873–1954] (Vietnam National Archive Center No 1, 2010): 18.

[34] Logan, *Hanoi*, 72–76.

and "chaotic" space—sources of their anxiety—but also created a blank space for their urban imagination. The colonial government then constructed the so-called "French quarter" following modern urban planning techniques and using technology from the French metropole. This involved the formation of wide boulevards, European-style villas, and open public spaces. The colonial authority also invested in a modern sewage and electrical system, reflecting contemporary urban planning in the imperial metropole. To facilitate colonial rule, they also constructed administrative, religious, and recreational infrastructures such as the Hanoi City Hall, the Residence of Tonkin's Superior Resident, the St. Joseph Cathedral, the Municipal Theatre, and the Post Office. These massive European-style buildings appeared to echo major urban landmarks in Paris: the Municipal Theatre (Fig. 1), for instance, was similar in style to Paris Palais Garnier, while the Gothic-style St. Joseph Cathedral (Fig. 2) appeared to take its inspiration from medieval churches in Europe, particularly the Notre-Dame de Paris. Such transformation, which resembled the Haussmann reconstruction of Paris between 1853 and 1870, resulted in the transformation of the area surrounding Hoàn Kiếm Lake from an informal and chaotic settlement to a European-influenced "modern" neighborhood. When he first arrived in Hanoi in late 1908, Dr. Hendrik Muller, a businessman, diplomat, scholar, and traveler from the Netherlands, was impressed by the city's "wide boulevards," "large houses and government buildings," and "gigantic theatres," which led him to characterize it as a "spacious, elegant European city of truly grand design."[35] The striking contrast between Muller's travelogue and earlier accounts in the late nineteenth century, which described Hanoi as an unhygienic and dangerous city, underscores the impact of the colonial government's urban transformation in the area surrounding Hoàn Kiếm Lake.

Development and transformation of the urban layout also occurred in the old citadel—the precolonial administrative center of the city. Previously occupied by the Nguyễn's mandarins, the citadel was turned into French military barracks after the acquisition. During this process, the wall of the former citadel was gradually torn down, and the Long Thiên Hall—the symbol of Nguyễn authority—was replaced by a French artillery command center.[36] During the tenure of Indochina Governor-General Paul Doumern (1897–1902), construction of the new Governor-General Building began on a plot of land adjacent to the former citadel, thereby reproducing the site's role as the new administrative center of French Indochina. In both the case of the French Quarter and the former citadel, the colonial government replaced symbolic buildings from the precolonial period with European-style constructions that

---

[35] Hendrik Pieter Nicolas Muller, *Dr. Muller's Asian Journey: Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Yunnan (1907–1909)*, trans. Carool Kersten (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2005): 153.

[36] For more information on the destruction of Hanoi Citadel, see Thị Diễn Đào, *Hà Nội Thời Cận Đại - Từ Nhượng Địa Đến Thành Phố* [Hanoi in the Modern Era - from Concession to City] (Hà Nội Publishing House, 2024): 54–61; Logan, *Hanoi*, 70–71.

highlight their notion of modernity and progress. This act of destruction and replacement reflects what Edward Said referred to as colonialism's "cartographic impulse" and what Julia Obert coined as "architectural uncanny," where a colonial power purposefully alters the spatial condition of the colonial space to create a replica of their metropolitan center.[37] This consolidates colonial power by establishing familiarity among colonizers while at the same time alienating the colonial subjects from their space.[38] In addition, by placing the modern European political and spiritual structures over the site of its precolonial Vietnamese counterparts, the colonial authorities created a cultural and social hierarchy, which associates "civilization" with the (French) European race, culture, and society, while characterizing the local native society as "uncivilized."[39] This vision is echoed in the words of Paulin Vial, the first Resident-Superior of Tonkin:

> It was a colossal task to renovate an ancient city which had to be improved, made healthy and delivered to the air and light without destroying the most interesting remains of its past.[40]

The destruction of traditional Vietnamese urban layout and its replacement with French urban morphology, planning, and practice are hence justified as the enhancement of urban quality, in which the French "improve[d]" and "made [the city] healthy." By "renovat[ing] an ancient city," they introduced the values of modernity and civilization to their colony—the manifestation of mission civilisatrice that justified their colonial rule over Indochina.

### Representing the Colonial City: Hanoi as Displayed Through a Colonial Photo Album

Through a massive urban renewal project, the colonial authority, by the end of the 1900s, had completely transformed the southern part of Hanoi from a swampy and unhygienic cluster of native settlements into a modern, French-style urban space. As argued above, this spatial transformation had two underlying impacts. First, it turned the city into a familiar space to the French while alienating it from the native population. Second, by replacing the precolonial urban layouts and structures with French counterparts of the same function and meaning, the colonial authority also formed a hierarchy, in which the precolonial urban traditions were considered

---

[37] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), cited in Obert, "Introduction," 1–3.

[38] Obert, "Introduction," 1–3.

[39] Vann, "Building Colonial Whiteness on the Red River."

[40] Paulin Vial, *Nos premières anées au Tonkin* [Our first years in Tonkin] (1889), cited in Masson, *The Transformation of Hanoi, 1873–1888*: 71.

backward and hence were ultimately replaced by French-style, modern urban practices that represent civilization and progress.

With the development of cameras and photography techniques in the late nineteenth century, the French colonial government gained access to a new medium to showcase its activities and progress in the colony through photo albums and postcards. In *Global Photographies: Memory-History-Archives*, ethnologist Hans P. Hahn suggests through his research on archival colonial photos that such photographs were once considered the "documentation of fact" on the life and nature of the space and society they depicted.[41] However, recent studies and models by cultural critic Susan Sontag and art historian Christopher Pinney have challenged such viewpoints: photographs, which only capture a particular moment and space, should be perceived as more of an interpretation of the past than a representation of it.[42] Under such understanding, it becomes evident that photographers and editors can choose what, how, and when to capture the photo that best represents their interests. This understanding of the nature of the photograph makes it an ideal material for analyzing France's vision and manipulation of the colonial space to legitimize and reproduce their colonial ideology. Within that context, the paper provides an analysis of the 1916 album *Ville de Hanoi* (City of Hanoi) in the ASEMI collection to reveal the French "conceived space" embedded in their colonial city.[43]

The album, composed of 72 photos of Hanoi and the surrounding suburb, appears to be commissioned and compiled by a French government entity. First, many of the album's images bear the seal of the *Bibliothèque du Ministere des Colonies* ("Library of the Ministry of Colonies"), suggesting that the album may have been compiled by the French Ministry of Colonies or an associated office. In addition, the majority of photos in the album depict colonial administrative buildings, modern infrastructure, and monuments surrounding the French quarter, further suggesting that it was likely compiled by the colonial government.

At first glance, the album appears to serve as a testimony of French colonial achievements in Hanoi. Featured in the album are wide boulevards (Figs. 3 and 4), open public spaces (Figs. 5 and 6), and modern institutions such as hospitals, schools, post offices, and police stations (Figs. 7 to 10). Besides showcasing the amenities of modern urban life, the album also displays French colonial grandeur through colossal governmental and recreational buildings such as the Governor General Palace (Fig. 11), the Municipal Theatre (Fig. 1), and the Commercial and Industrial Museum (Fig. 12). In all these cases, the photos were taken from afar to show the full extent of the

---

[41] Hans Peter Hahn, "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures: Polyphony and Fragmentation," in *Global Photographies: Memory-History-Archives*, ed. Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels, 1st ed. (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2017), 93, https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839430064-007.

[42] Christopher Pinney, "The Phenomenology of Colonial Photography" (2007) and Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (1973), both cited in Hahn, 91, 95.

[43] *Ville de Hanoi*, 1916, https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/4898.

buildings' structures, which emphasizes their scale. This display of French colonial architecture, when compared with the Brush Temple (Fig. 18)—the only precolonial structure presented in the album—illustrates a sharp contrast. Unlike French-style constructions, which extend beyond the surrounding trees, the surrounding environment hinders the colonized subjects' construction. This contrast reinforces the idea of a hierarchy between France and its colonies, in which the latter appears inferior and is subjected to the former's guidance, further justifying the logic of mission civilisatrice.

In addition to the underlying message of cultural superiority, the French highlight their industrial and technological achievement in the album. After a photographic tour of modern urban space, viewers are invited to see two pictures of the Doumer Bridge (Figs. 13 and 14), the first bridge to cross the Red River. Once thought by Vietnamese colonial subjects as "insane" and "unachievable," the bridge was a clear display of French technological advancement and a symbol of French industrialization.[44] The bridge, which connected Hanoi to the eastern part of Tonkin and southern China, also facilitated the transportation of goods and resources between Hanoi and the rest of Indochina, highlighting the economic achievement of the colony. In addition, the album also features two photos of a power plant (Figs. 15 and 16), underscoring the fact that the city was well-electrified. The electrification of the city, as suggested by social anthropologist Kristen W. Endres, served as one of the most obvious ways to use technology as a means to spread the message of mission civilisatrice, in which the electric lighting bears in it a metaphor of enlightenment against the obscurity of backwardness.[45] The *Ville de Hanoi* photo album, with the majority of images displaying the modern infrastructure and technology in the colonial city, appears to create among its viewers a vision of Hanoi as a totally modern and westernized urban space. This emphasizes the achievements of French civilizing efforts, which in turn consolidate, legitimize, and reproduce French colonial rule.

The seemingly modern and westernized colonial urban space, as presented in the *Ville de Hanoi* album, omits, however, many other aspects and experiences of the colonial city. A quick analysis of the location of photos shows that out of 72 photos, 40 were taken in the French quarter, 8 from the French Administrative Quarter, and only 3 were from the Native Quarter (21 other photos were captured outside of the city or have an unidentified location). Regarding the style of architecture presented in the album, only two photos (Figs. 17 and 18) display Vietnamese traditional architecture. Even within these two featured constructions, the Native Guard Barracks (Fig. 17), whose gate represents that of a traditional Tonkin village, was indeed a

---

[44] Paul Doumer, *Xứ Đông Dương: Hồi ký* [French Indochina: A memoir], ed. Thừa Hỷ Nguyễn, trans. Đình Tuân Lưu et al. (trans., Thế Giới Publishing House, 2017; originally published in 1905 in French), 523–24. Citations refer to the Thế Giới Publishing House edition.

[45] Kirsten W. Endres, "City of Lights, City of Pylons: Infrastructures of Illumination in Colonial Hanoi, 1880s–1920s," *Modern Asian Studies* 57, no. 6 (November 2023): 1173, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X22000555.

modern structure mimicking Vietnamese style architecture in the French quarter. This misrepresentation obscures the actual nature and lived dynamics of Hanoi urban space, where the colonized subjects account for the majority of urban population. The 1916's *Annuaire Général de l'Indo-Chine* (General Directory of Indochina) indicates the European (including French) population of Hanoi was 3,381 inhabitants, roughly 25 times smaller than the native population of approximately 84,500 inhabitants.[46]

As suggested by Hahn, Sontag, and Pinney, one should understand this album not as a "documentation of fact" but rather an interpretation of facts by the commissioners, editors, and photographers.[47] By selecting its preferred representation of their colonial ideology and authority in the album, the French colonial authority created its own interpretation of space in a way that reproduced and justified the mission civilisatrice ideal while excluding the narratives and experiences of the colonized subjects. However, as Henri Lefebvre suggests, the "lived spaces"—the experiences and reception of the city by different urban communities—are not always synchronized with the "conceived space" proposed and implemented by the imperial regime.[48] To further explore that phenomenon, I will consider the case of the Statue of Liberty—a French-installed monument in the city—to highlight the way in which different receptions and interpretations of the space interacted and forced changes in the colonial space as well as colonial ruling strategy.

## Statue of Liberty or Lady in a Flared Dress: Public Discourse and Memory of an Urban Monument, 1887–1902

During their transformation of Hanoi into a modern colonial urban space, the French also constructed multiple monuments and statues. As suggested by urban geographer John S. Adams in his study of monumental architecture in late imperial Russia, monuments can "symbolize" an idea or meaning, which in turn helps authorities deliver their agendas to the people.[49] If one puts it in Lefebvre's framework, the monuments help the urban administrator better channel their "conceived space" to the urban population, hence creating a way to connect it to the inhabitants' "lived spaces."[50] Under that framework, it is understandable that the colonial government

---

[46] *Annuaire Général de l'Indo-Chine* [General Directory of Indochina] (Hanoi-Haiphong: Imprimerie D'Extrême-Orient, 1916), p. 228; 8-LC32-38 (BIS), département Philosophie, Histoire, Sciences de l'homme, Bibliothèque nationale de France, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5606804q/f1.item.

[47] Hahn, "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures," 91–95.

[48] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38–40.

[49] John S. Adams, "Monumentality in Urban Design: The Case of Russia," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 49, no. 3 (2008): 287, https://doi.org/10.2747/1539-7216.49.3.280.

[50] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38–40.

commissioned numerous urban monuments across Hanoi, including the La France monument in front of the Governor General Palace and the Paul Bert monument by Hoàn Kiếm Lake.[51] This study focuses on one of the first French-installed monuments in colonial Hanoi—a 2.5-meter replica of the Statue of Liberty—between 1887 and 1902. First displayed in the 1887 Hanoi Exhibition, the statue was given to the Hanoi Municipal Government, which erected it in the Square of Four Buildings in 1889.[52] Since that first installment, the statue was relocated several times until permanently placed in the Neyret Square to the south of the French quarter. By looking at public discourse and memories surrounding the statue's relocations, this case study aims to reveal the complex and fluid dynamics of the reception of the urban space between different groups in the colonial city that go beyond the colonial state's vision. In addition, by considering the interaction between the colonial government and the urban subjects, this case study also aims to illustrate how such responses from the colonial population shaped change in urban space and colonial discourse.

In 1890, just one year after the installation, the Statue of Liberty faced its first relocation. Earlier that year, the colonial government decided to install a statue of Paul Bert (1833–1886)—the first Resident General of the French Republic in Annam and Tonkin—in place of the Statue of Liberty, prompting the latter's removal.[53] The city later decided to place the statue on top of Turtle Tower, a traditional Vietnamese pagoda on an island in the middle of Hoàn Kiếm Lake (Fig. 19).[54] While the rationale was not explicitly stated, it might bear a symbolic value. By placing the statue—a symbol of French liberty—on top of a Vietnamese-style structure, the colonial government appeared to deliver a message of French superiority over the Vietnamese. In addition, given the position of Turtle Tower at the middle of Hoàn Kiếm Lake, placing the statue at the top of the tower makes it stand out at the heart of the colonial city, further introducing the French message of "liberty" to its colonies. Indeed, the Statue of Liberty was frequently mentioned as a major landmark in descriptions of festivals or celebrations surrounding Hoàn Kiếm Lake during this period.[55] During the 1890s, there were proposals to install a lamp on the statue's torch, which, if implemented, would further highlight it vis-à-vis the surrounding landscape.[56] Overall,

---

[51] For a detailed description of the monuments in colonial Hanoi, see Muller, *Dr. Muller's Asian Journey*, 154.

[52] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, July 13, 1889. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/13-juillet-1889/1/cf53e232-8776-4ec2-b8e1-3691d4165419.

[53] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, December 4, 1886. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/04-decembre-1886/3/b536d78a-ae6c-4c50-aed7-0d3dfb5ee9b4.

[54] Bourrin, *Le Vieux Tonkin, 1890–1894* [Old Tonkin, 1890–1894], 48.

[55] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, July 19, 1893. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/19-juillet-1893/2/169180cc-f949-44d5-805e-d0d0baaa8873.

[56] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, June 21, 1902. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/21-juin-1902/1/4a2f63f3-8037-43b4-92f8-caee2f73eebc.

the relocation of the Statue of Liberty to the top of Turtle Tower, at least through the lens of the colonial government, would further foster the message of "liberty" in the colony—an integral part of their mission civilisatrice.

This relocation of the Statue of Liberty, however, drew objections among French colonial settlers, who viewed the placement of a western-style statue on a traditional Vietnamese-style structure as anachronistic. The *L'Indépendence Tonkinoise*, in one of its columns, satirized this positioning: "Yes, but having placed the statue on the Pagoda [Turtle Tower], what can we put on the statue?"[57] The *L'Avenir du Tonkin* also commented on the relocation: "Liberty on the pagoda [Turtle Tower] is a victory of light over obscurity. And why not place the Grand Buddha on one of the cathedral towers?"[58] By comparing the relocation of the Statue of Liberty with the placement of the Grand Buddha,[59] a symbol of Buddhism (or Daoism), on top of the cathedral—a Catholic site, the comment highlighted the contrast between the statue and the Turtle Tower, making the juxtaposition grotesque. Not only did the statue's location cause controversy among French colonial settlers, but its direction was also criticized. The statue was positioned facing the statue of Paul Bert (Fig. 20), which *L'Indépendence Tonkinoise* commented: "Protector and protected embraced each other even in their architecture."[60] In this respect, the statue of Paul Bert, which depicts him holding a French flag and extending his hand to cover a small colonial subject, represents the protector, while the Statue of Liberty represents the protected value of "liberty." By describing the protector and protected as "embrac[ing] each other," it appears that the columnists of *L'Indépendence Tonkinoise* perceive the two statues as having a romantic relationship, undermining the intended notion of the colonial government.

While criticism among French colonial settlers regarding the Statue of Liberty's position wound down after 1892, new issues soon emerged. On June 3, 1893, a column in *L'Avenir du Tonkin* raised a concern about the maintenance of the statue:

> The Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World, which adorns the Small Lake [Hoàn Kiếm Lake] Pagoda, appears to be in a *chemise* for Europeans and in mourning clothing for Asians. This is because it is entirely covered in a thick layer of bird droppings.
> A wash is required between now and July 14 [French National Day].[61]

---

[57] Bourrin, *Le Vieux Tonkin, 1890–1894*, 49.

[58] Bourrin, 48–49.

[59] Despite the name "Grand Buddha" given by the French, the mentioned statue, currently in the Quán Thánh Temple, Hanoi, features Trấn Vũ (真武)—a Daoist deity.

[60] Bourrin, *Le Vieux Tonkin, 18900–1894*, 49.

[61] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, June 3, 1893. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/03-juin-1893/1679/2970273/1. Quotation translated by author.

Other columns throughout the 1890s also complained about the negligence of the statue, highlighting the hardship of cleaning and maintaining a statue located on the top of an isolated tower in the middle of the lake.[62] It appeared that, unlike the expectation of the colonial government, the French colonial settlers held a negative viewpoint toward the relocation of the Statue of Liberty. As a result, the Hanoi Municipal Government decided to move the statue once again in 1902 to Nayret Square, in the south of the city, where it would stay until the end of the colonial period.[63]

The relocation of the Statue of Liberty to the Nayret Square, while not subject to much discussion among colonial settlers, was embedded in the memory of many Vietnamese colonial subjects at the time. Due to strict press surveillance and a lack of news coverage, Vietnamese accounts of the Statue of Liberty's relocation were recorded primarily through postcolonial oral testimony or memoir. Despite the limitations caused by time and potential biases, such accounts remain valuable as they provide a glimpse into how Vietnamese colonial subjects perceived and experienced their urban space. In his work *Hà Nội Nửa Đầu Thế Kỷ XX* (Hanoi in the First Half of the 20th Century), urban researcher Nguyễn Văn Uẩn interviewed Thành Đức, an old urban inhabitant, who recalled the following anecdote:

> Mr. Paul Bert married Lady in a Flared Dress [Statue of Liberty].
> Lady in a Flared Dress was having an external affair, which Mr. Paul
> Bert's servant witnessed. He came back and told his master about the
> affair. Mr. Paul Bert, enraged by the fact, takes the bamboo cane
> from his foot and kicks Lady in a Flared Dress all the way to the
> Southern Gate.[64]

Furthermore, in his memoir *Nhớ Gì Ghi Nấy* (Wrote Anything I Remembered), famous Vietnamese writer Nguyễn Công Hoan (1903–1977) also echoed the same anecdote with some variation:

> We often joke: Mr. Paul Bert flirted with Lady in a Flared Dress.
> However, Mr. Lê Lợi (statue at the Lê Emperor's Temple) stood at
> the middle, held a sword, saw it, so the Lady in a Flared Dress had to

---

[62] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, May 21, 1898. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/21-mai-1898/1679/2971291/1.

[63] *L'Avenir du Tonkin*, July 14, 1902. https://www.retronews.fr/journal/l-avenir-du-tonkin/14-juillet-1902/1679/3224777/1.

[64] Nguyễn, *Hà Nội Nửa Đầu Thế Kỷ XX* [Hanoi in the First Half of the 20th Century], 1:654. Quotation translated by author.

---

hide.[65]

Both accounts, while slightly different, provide a remarkable approach to examining the Vietnamese perception of the Statue of Liberty. In both accounts, the statue, rather than being called by its French name, is referred to as Lady in a Flared Dress based on its physical attributes. This reconceptualization undermines the French colonial government's embedded value of the statue, reducing it from a symbol of liberty to a French lady in a weird "flared" dress. In both anecdotes, the Lady in a Flared Dress is depicted as an immoral woman who engaged in external affairs, enraging witnesses. Ultimately, in both cases, "liberty" was driven out of the city center by a Vietnamese figure: a servant in the first story, and a Vietnamese historical figure in the second story. The detail that, in the second anecdote, it is Lê Lợi—a national hero who led an uprising against the Ming in the fifteenth century—who frightened the Lady in a Flared Dress and compelled her to relocate underscores the Vietnamese resistance to embracing and assimilating into the French colonial order. This resistance against assimilation was visible even after the Statue was removed to its new location, as suggested through a poem in which its author, upon seeing the Statue of Liberty at Nayret Square, expressed their nostalgia for the old urban setting:

> Pass by Quảng Văn Đình[66] I came to hear,
> Unable to see "Câu Kê,"[67] only see "Flared Dress."
> The sound of Ten Teaching went silenced,
> Dizzied by the squeaky sound of Western trumpet.[68]

In this account, the native author expressed their remembrance of the long lost precolonial urban space while considering the French-designed modern urban space unpleasant, referencing the "Flared Dress" and "squeaky sound." This account reflected a clear attitude of objection and refusal among a group of Vietnamese colonial subjects in the city to demands that they absorb and assimilate into French colonial values and order. By reinterpreting urban monuments and symbols, the

---

[65] Công Hoan Nguyễn, *Nhớ Gì Ghi Nấy* [Wrote Anything I Remembered] (Hanoi: Hội Nhà Văn Publishing House, 1998; Originally published in 1970), 254. Quotation translated by author. Citations refer to the Hội Nhà Văn Publishing House edition.

[66] Quảng Văn Đình (廣聞亭, The Pavilion of Board Hearing): A place for the premodern Vietnamese court to announce decrees and communicate with their subjects, located in the Southern Gate. Following the acquisition of Hanoi, the French demolished the Pavilion and the Southern Gate, replaced them with the Nayret Square.

[67] Câu Kê: a premodern official position in the Vietnamese court in charge of announcing the government policy.

[68] Văn Uẩn Nguyễn, *Hà Nội Nửa Đầu Thế Kỉ XX* [Hanoi in the First Half of the 20th Century], vol. 2 (Hà Nội Publishing House, 2016; Originally published in 1985), 28. Poem translated by author. Citations refer to the Hà Nội Publishing House edition.

colonial subjects alter the "conceived space" pushed forward by the colonial government, undermining the French colonial agendas. This highlights the underlying clash and resistance between the colonizers and colonized subjects that defines the nature of colonial city.

## Conclusion

Through close analysis of textual and visual sources from both colonial authorities and local communities, this study shows that Hanoi, rather than a space of colonial manipulation, assimilation, and oppression, was indeed a dynamic place where colonial agendas clashed with subalterns' interpretation and reimagination. In the first few decades of colonial rule, the French colonial government sought to transform the city—through massive urban transformation, installment of monuments and symbols, and deployment of modern media—into a stage for modernity and progress that advanced their narrative of "civilizing" and assimilating their subjects into the colonial order. Despite such efforts, colonial populations engage with such narratives and agendas in complex and often substantive ways, as suggested through the reinterpretation and appropriation of the Statue of Liberty among the colonial communities. This dynamic underscores the capacity of local communities in engaging, adapting, and reinventing the colonial city, turning it into a "contact zone" where colonial power was not universally accepted but continuously challenged and reshaped through interaction with colonial subjects.

Recognizing this phenomenon is crucial in consolidating our understanding of not only the colonial city but also the colonial period. By recognizing the capacity and agency of non-governmental and local actors in the construction and maintenance of the colonial space, the study challenges the existing assumptions of the top-down and unilateral nature of the colonizers in the construction of the colonial space. The colonial city, rather than a monolithic space, was indeed a diverse and contested site where colonial power was constantly imagined, reinterpreted, and challenged. Recognizing the capacity and agency of the local communities would allow for a more in-depth understanding of the colonial urbanization process that shaped not only Hanoi but also other colonial cities around Asia. For future research, comparative studies between Hanoi and other colonial urban spaces such as Seoul or Hong Kong can help further explore the role of the colonial population in shaping colonial modernization across Asia. Moreover, more comprehensive studies that explore the experience and response of the colonial population to other dimensions of colonial modernity—such as technology, culture and media, and education—would provide a deeper understanding of these communities' role and influence in the colonial period.
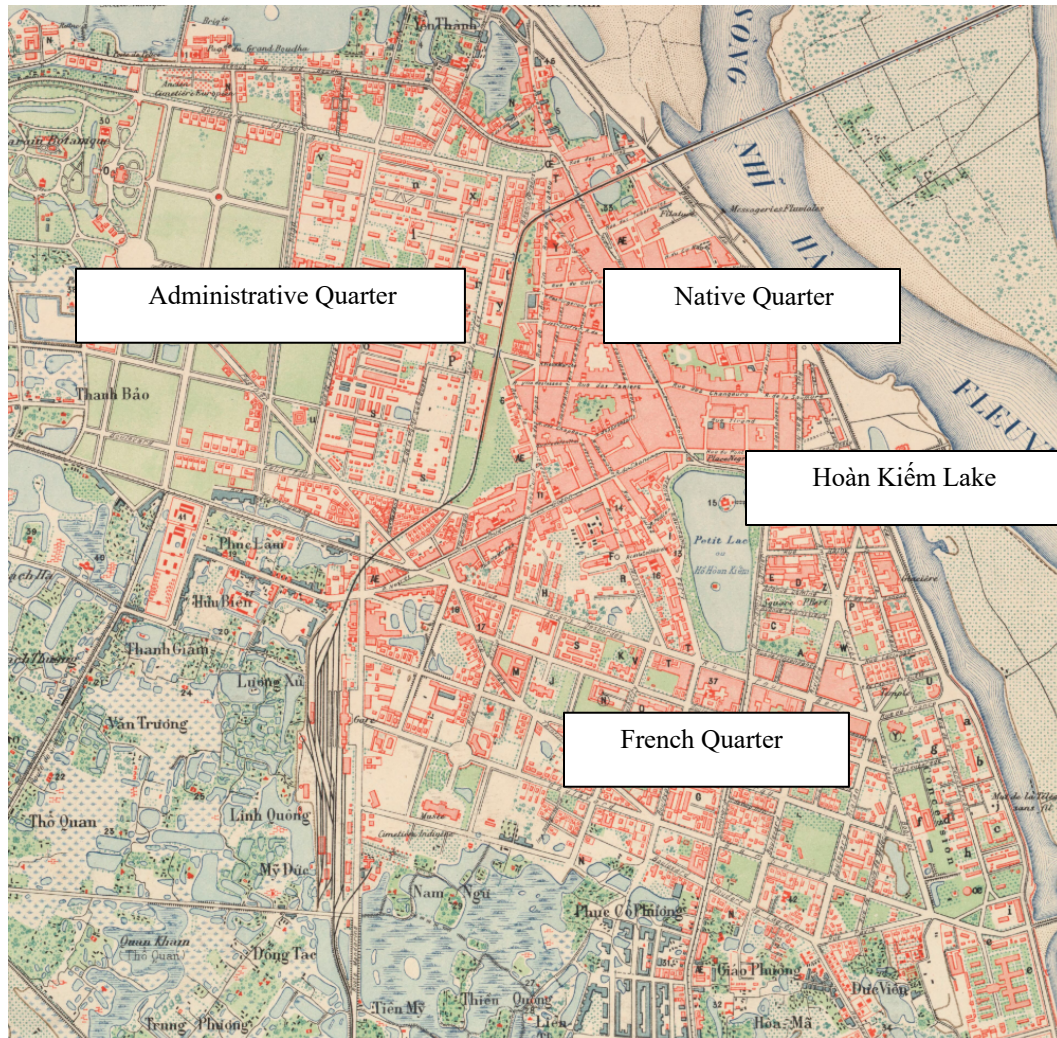
# APPENDIX



**Map 1.** Map of Hanoi in 1873. Source: Pham-Dinh-Bach, Hanoï 1873, 1937, Hanoi: Service géographique de l'Indo-Chine, GE C-15056, Département Cartes et Plans, Bibliothèque nationale de France, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b531213085. Notes added by author.

**Map 2.** Map of Hanoi in 1911. Source: *Plan de la ville de Hanoï*, 1911, Hanoï: Service géographique de l'Indo-Chine, GE C-4260, Département Cartes et Plans, Bibliothèque nationale de France, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53063324v. Notes added by author.

**Fig. 1**. Municipal Theatre. Source: Ville de Hanoi, 1916, PH04, Fonds ASEMI, BU Lettres Arts Sciences Humaines, Université Côte d'Azur, https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/4898.



**Fig. 2.** St. Joseph Cathedral. Source: *Ville de Hanoi*, Photo Album.



**Fig. 3.** Paul Bert Street. Source: Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

**Fig. 4.** Henri Riviere Boulevard. Source: Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.



**Fig. 5.** Paul Bert Square. Source: Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.



**Fig. 6**. Chavassieux Square. Source: *Ville de Hanoi*, Photo Album.

**Fig. 7.** Indigenous and Maternity Hospital. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.
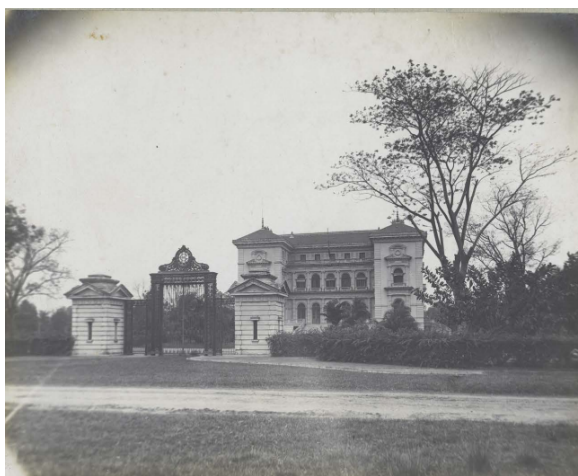


**Fig. 8.** The Protectorate School. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.



**Fig. 9.** Postal and Telegraph Office. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

**Fig. 10**. Special Police Brigade Barrack. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.



**Fig. 11.** Governor General Palace. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.
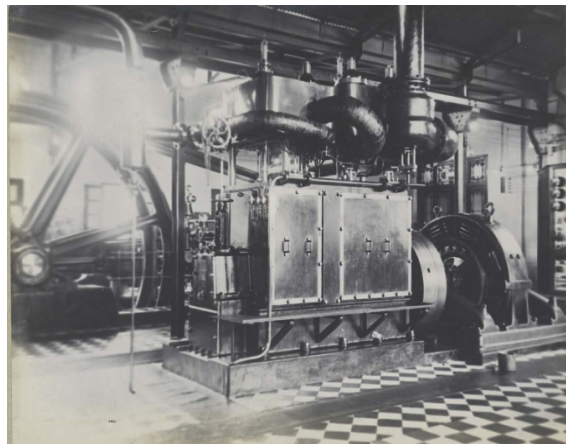


**Fig. 12.** Commercial and Industrial Museum. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

**Fig. 13**. Doumer Bridge from a distance. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.



**Fig. 14.** Doumer Bridge close-up. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.



**Fig. 15.** Electric Plant (Dynamos). Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

**Fig. 16.** Electric Plant (Generator). Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.



**Fig. 17.** Native Guard Barrack. Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.



**Fig. 18.** Brush Temple (Ngọc Sơn Temple). Ville de Hanoi, Photo Album.

**Fig. 19.** The Statue of Liberty on the top of the Turtle Tower. Source: Vietnam – Tonkin: Hanoi, le pagodon du Petit Lac, c. 1890s, photograph, PH45-27, Fonds ASEMI, BU Lettres Arts Sciences, Université Côte d'Azur, https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/8151.



**Fig. 20.** Hoàn Kiếm Lake from the Paul Bert Square. The statue of Paul Bert (front) was facing the Statue of Liberty (on the top of the Turtle Tower). Pierre Dieulefils, Tonkin: album de photographies, c. 1890s, photo album, PH13-35, Fonds ASEMI, BU Lettres Arts Sciences, Université Côte d'Azur, https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/13764.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Primary Sources

*Annuaire Général de l'Indo-Chine* [General Directory of Indochina]. Hanoi-Haiphong: Imprimerie d'Extrême-Orient, 1916. 8-LC32-38 (BIS). Département Philosophie, Histoire, Sciences de l'Homme. Bibliothèque nationale de France. https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5606804q/f1.item.

Bourrin, Claude. *Le Vieux Tonkin, 1890–1894* [Old Tonkin 1890–1894]. Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extrême Orient, 1941.

Dieulefils, Pierre. *Tonkin: album de photographies*, c. 1890s. Photo album. PH 13–35. Fonds ASEMI. BU Lettres Arts Sciences. Université Côte d'Azur. https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/13764.

Doumer, Paul. *Xứ Đông Dương: Hồi ký* [French Indochina: A memoir]. Edited by Thừa Hỷ Nguyễn. Translated by Đình Tuân Lưu, Hiệu Constant, Đình Chi Lê, Long Hoàng, and Thủy Vũ. Thế Giới Publishing House, 2017. Originally published in 1905 in French.

*L'Avenir du Tonkin* [The Future of Tonkin], 1886–1902. JO-5467 (BIS). Département Droit, Économie, Politique. Bibliothèque nationale de France. https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb327087806/.

Masson, André. *The Transformation of Hanoi, 1873–1888*. Edited by Daniel F. Doeppers. Translated by Jack A. Yaeger. 2nd ed. University of Wisconsin, 1987. Originally published in 1929 in French.

Muller, Hendrik Pieter Nicolas. *Dr. Muller's Asian Journey: Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Yunnan (1907–1909)*. Translated by Carool Kersten. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2005.

Nguyễn, Công Hoan. *Nhớ Gì Ghi Nấy* [Wrote Anything I Remembered]. Hà Nội: Hội Nhà Văn Publishing House, 1998. Originally published in 1970.

Nguyễn, Văn Uẩn. *Hà Nội Nửa Đầu Thế Kỷ XX* [Hanoi in the First Half of the 20th Century]. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Hà Nội Publishing House, 2016. Originally published in 1985.

Nguyễn, Văn Uẩn. *Hà Nội Nửa Đầu Thế Kỷ XX* [Hanoi in the First Half of the 20th Century]. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Hà Nội Publishing House, 2016. Originally published in 1985.

Pham, Dinh-Bach, *Hanoï 1873*, Hanoi: Service géographique de l'Indo-Chine, 1937. GE C-15056. Département Cartes et Plans. Bibliothèque nationale de France. https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b531213085.

*Plan de la ville de Hanoï*. Hanoi: Service géographique de l'Indo-Chine, 1911. GE C-4260. Département Cartes et Plans. Bibliothèque nationale de France. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53063324v.

*Vietnam – Tonkin: Hanoi, le pagodon du Petit Lac*, c. 1890s. Photograph. PH45-27. Fonds ASEMI. BU Lettres Arts Sciences. Université Côte d'Azur, https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/8151.

*Ville de Hanoi* [City of Hanoi], 1916. Photo album. PH04. Fonds ASEMI. BU Lettres Arts Sciences Humaines. Université Côte d'Azur. https://humazur.univ-cotedazur.fr/s/Humazur/item/4898.

"Với công cuộc phá tượng đầu tiên sáng hôm qua, thành Thăng Long đã tẩy trừ được 4 vết tích thời Pháp thuộc" ["With the initial demolitions of statues yesterday morning, Thăng Long (Hanoi) has eliminated 4 remnants of the French colonial period"]. *Tin Mới*, August 2, 1945. Newspaper Archive. National Library of Vietnam. http://baochi.nlv.gov.vn/baochi/cgi-bin/baochi?a=d&d=WMVa19450802.2.5.

## Secondary Sources

Adams, John S. "Monumentality in Urban Design: The Case of Russia." *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 49, no. 3 (2008): 280–303. https://doi.org/10.2747/1539-7216.49.3.280.

Allen, Joseph R. *Taipei: City of Displacements*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011.

Baycroft, Timothy. "The Empire and the Nation: The Place of Colonial Images in the Republican Vision of the French Nation." In *Empire and Culture: The French Experience, 1830–1940*, 1st ed. 2004., 148–60. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2004. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230000681.

Đào, Thị Diến. *Hà Nội Thời Cận Đại - Từ Nhượng Địa Đến Thành Phố* [Hanoi in the Modern Era - from Concession to City]. Hanoi: Hà Nội Publishing House, 2024.

Drummond, Lisa. "Colonial Hanoi: Urban Space in Public Discourse." In *Harbin to Hanoi: The Colonial Built Environment in Asia, 1840 to 1940*, edited by Laura Victoir and Victor Zatsepine, 207–30. Hong Kong University Press, 2013. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2854bb.15.

Dutton, George. "Lý Toét in the City: Coming to Terms with the Modern in 1930s Vietnam." *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 2, no. 1 (2007): 80–108. https://doi.org/10.1525/vs.2007.2.1.80.

Endres, Kirsten W. "City of Lights, City of Pylons: Infrastructures of Illumination in Colonial Hanoi, 1880s–1920s." *Modern Asian Studies* 57, no. 6 (November 2023): 1772–97. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X22000555.

Hà, Văn Huệ, and Hoàng Anh Đỗ, eds. *Quy Hoạch Đô Thị và Địa Giới Hành Chính Hà Nội, 1873–1954* [Urban Planning and Administrative Boundaries of Hanoi, 1873–1954]. Vietnam National Archive Center No 1, 2010.

Hahn, Hans Peter. "On the Circulation of Colonial Pictures: Polyphony and Fragmentation." In *Global Photographies: Memory-History-Archives*, edited by Sissy Helff and Stefanie Michels, 1st ed., 76:89–108. Image. Bielefeld, Germany: transcript Verlag, 2017. https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839430064-007.

Henry, Todd A. *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910–1945*. University of California Press, 2014.

Labbé, Danielle, Caroline Herbelin, and Quang-Vinh Dao. "Domesticating the Suburbs: Architectural Production and Exchanges in Hanoi during the Late French Colonial Era." In *Harbin to Hanoi: The Colonial Built Environment in Asia, 1840 to 1940*, edited by Laura Victoir and Victor Zatsepine, 251–72. Hong Kong University Press, 2013. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2854bb.17.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2013. Originally published in 1974 in French.

Logan, William Stewart. *Hanoi: Biography of a City*. Seattle, Wash: Univ. of Washington Press, 2000.

Njoh, Ambe J. *French Urbanism in Foreign Lands*. New York: Springer, 2015.

Obert, Julia C. "Introduction: Postcolonial Psychogeographies." In *The Making and Unmaking of Colonial Cities: Urban Planning, Imperial Power, and the Improvisational Itineraries of the Poor*, by Julia C. Obert, 1–19, 1st ed. Oxford University Press, 2023. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198881247.003.0001.

Oh, Se-Mi. *City of Sediments: A History of Seoul in the Age of Colonialism*. Stanford University Press, 2023.

Palsetia, Jesse S. "Parsis and Bombay City: Community and Identity in the Nineteenth Century." In *Bombay Before Mumbai: Essays in Honour of Jim Masselos*, edited by Prashant Kidambi, Manjiri Kamat, and Rachel Dwyer, 35–56. Oxford University Press, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190061708.003.0003.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London; New York: Routledge, 1992.

Roberts, Stephen H. *History of French Colonial Policy*. Vol. 1. P. S. King & Son, Ltd, 1929.

Vann, Michael G. "Building Colonial Whiteness on the Red River: Race, Power, and Urbanism in Paul Doumer's Hanoi, 1897–1902." *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 33, no. 2 (2007): 277–304.

Watson, Jini Kim. *The New Asian City: Three-Dimensional Fictions of Space and Urban Form*. University of Minnesota Press, 2011.