

UNIVERSITY OF LODZ
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

Hoang Phuong Thao

Dissertation (Summary)

**From the mission to the protectorate. Vietnam towards the
French colonial expansion in the second half of the 19th
century**

Supervisor: **prof. dr. hab Jolanta A. Daszynska**

Assistant Supervisor: **dr. Piotr Robak**

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of this thesis underscores Vietnam's significant geographical and strategic position within Southeast Asia, particularly its advantageous location facilitating transportation and regional connectivity. The study examines the political backdrop starting from the Nguyen Dynasty, emphasizing features of authoritarian governance, economic challenges, stringent trade policies, and intricate social structures.

Additionally, this section outlines the historiography, highlighting abundant source material and noting the substantial scholarly interest in the history of Vietnam during the French colonial period, both domestically and internationally. Nevertheless, there remains a gap in the comprehensive analysis of the French context, strategies, and the responses of the Nguyen Dynasty and the Vietnamese populace. This gap serves as a catalyst for my deeper exploration of these issues.

Furthermore, the introduction clearly defines the objectives and scope of the research. It poses specific research questions and provides a synopsis of each chapter comprising the five-chapter dissertation.

CHAPTER 1

THE PARTICIPATION OF FRANCE IN VIETNAMESE POLITICS AND NGUYEN DYNASTY'S CHRISTIAN PROPAGANDA IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1.1 Changes in Government in France and French Participation in Vietnamese Politics under the Nguyen Dynasty

1.1.1 Changes in the Ruling Government in France

During Louis XVIII's reign (1814-1815), France pursued a more assertive foreign policy under Prime Minister Richelieu, aiming to strengthen trade relations with Vietnam. Catholic missionary activities, supported by Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (1848-1852), were instrumental in restoring the church's influence. The revival of organizations like the Missions Étrangères de Paris (MEP) from 1820 and the Oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi (OPF) from 1822 solidified France's role in Asian missionary work. In Vietnam, under Minh Mang, religious debates and assimilation policies led to Catholic persecutions, drawing financial support primarily from the OPF.

1.1.2 The Participation of the French in Vietnamese Politics under the Nguyen Dynasty

Early French engagements in Indochina, including Bishop Pigneau de Béhaine's efforts, emphasized Vietnam's strategic importance. Despite territorial expansions during Napoleon I's rule, France's internal instability limited its global influence. French naval expeditions to initiate trade with Vietnam faced resistance or indifference from rulers like Gia Long and Minh Mang. Multiple diplomatic efforts, including the presence of French consuls like J.B. Chaigneau, failed to establish formal relations with Vietnam. In the 1840s, French naval interventions in Da Nang aimed at protecting missionaries escalated conflicts under rulers such as Thieu Tri, prompting a shift in Vietnamese policy towards Westerners and missionaries. The French Revolution heightened nationalism among French missionaries, aligning religious duties with patriotic fervor. Tensions culminated in the 1847 French naval bombardment of Da Nang, prompting strict measures against Catholic influence by the Vietnamese court under Tu Duc.

1.2 French Missionary Activities and Preparation for the Invasion of Vietnam

1.2.1 Missionary Activities of the French before the Invasion of Vietnam

French missionaries faced initial resistance but received support from organizations like the OPF, facilitating the spread of Catholicism and laying the groundwork for deeper involvement.

1.2.2 The Process of French Preparation for the Invasion of Vietnam

France strategically prepared for military engagement, undertaking diplomatic maneuvers and collaborating with sympathetic local entities. This preparation culminated in direct military conflict, initiating a prolonged struggle for control over Vietnam.

1.3 The Nguyen Dynasty's Policy Towards Catholic Propaganda

Examining the Nguyen Dynasty's stance on Catholicism reveals fluctuating policies, from repression to occasional accommodation. These policies shaped French-Vietnamese relations and contributed to the broader context of colonial conquest.

Conclusion, Chapter 1 provides a detailed exploration of early French-Vietnamese interactions, emphasizing the dynamic interplay of political strategies, religious

influences, and strategic ambitions. These interactions laid foundational groundwork for subsequent colonial developments and the complex history of Vietnam under French rule.

CHAPTER 2

THE NGUYEN DYNASTY'S COMPROMISE AND THE RESOLUTE RESISTANCE OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE

2.1 French Invasion of Vietnam: An Analytical Exploration of Motivations and Factors

This section analyzes the factors and motivations behind the French invasion of Vietnam. It delves into the geopolitical, economic, and cultural incentives that drove France to pursue colonial expansion in Vietnam. The discussion includes the global context of 19th-century imperialism, highlighting how Vietnam's strategic location and resources made it an attractive target for French ambitions colonization.

2.2 Vietnam during the Joint Invasion by the Franco-Spanish Alliance: A Scholarly Exploration

2.2.1 The Vietnamese Armed Forces and Civilian Population in the French Offensive on the Son Tra Peninsula

This subsection examines the initial French offensive on the Son Tra Peninsula, detailing the responses of the Vietnamese armed forces and civilians. It highlights the strategic and tactical measures taken by the Vietnamese to counter the invasion, emphasizing their resilience and resourcefulness.

2.2.2 The Resistance of the Vietnamese Military and People on the Gia Dinh Front (late 1860 to early 1861) and the Expansion of French Occupation in the Three Eastern Provinces of Cochinchina

This part explores the prolonged resistance on the Gia Dinh front, illustrating the determination of the Vietnamese military and civilians. It also discusses the subsequent French occupation of the three eastern provinces of Cochinchina, analyzing the implications for Vietnam's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

2.3 Attitudes and Policies of the Vietnamese Feudal Dynasty towards French Colonial Aggression

This section provides an in-depth look at the Vietnamese feudal dynasty's Nguyen policies and attitudes towards French colonial aggression. It critiques the diplomatic and military strategies adopted by the Nguyen Dynasty, highlighting their failures and miscalculations. The section discusses how these policies impacted Vietnam's ability to resist and ultimately led to concessions that facilitated French control.

2.4 The Reaction of Vietnamese Society to the French Invasion Activities

2.4.1 The Anti-French Movement of the People in Cochinchina

This subsection documents the grassroots resistance against the French in Cochinchina. It details various uprisings and the role of local leaders and communities in organizing and sustaining the anti-French movement. The narrative underscores the widespread and persistent nature of the resistance.

2.4.2 The Popular Uprising in Tonkin and Central Vietnam (Annam) following the Signing of the Nham Tuat Treaty (May 1862)

This part covers the uprisings in Tonkin and central Vietnam following the Nham Tuat Treaty. It analyzes the socio-political triggers of these uprisings and their outcomes, providing insights into the broader nationalistic sentiments driving the resistance.

2.4.3 The French Annexation of Cochinchina's Western Provinces and the Indigenous Resistance Movement in Cochinchina

This subsection discusses the annexation of Cochinchina's western provinces by the French and the corresponding resistance movements. It highlights the strategies employed by local resistance groups and the challenges they faced against the backdrop of increasing French consolidation of power.

Conclusion, the chapter concludes by summarizing the key points discussed, reflecting on the lessons learned from the initial period of French invasion and Vietnamese resistance. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the dynamics of colonial aggression and local resistance in shaping Vietnam's historical. The conclusion also draws parallels to contemporary issues of sovereignty.

CHAPTER 3

VIETNAM TOWARDS THE FRENCH COLONIAL EXPANSION IN THE PERIOD 1867-1874

3.1 Vietnam within France's Strategy of Expanding the Scope of Colonization

3.1.1 The Situation of Vietnam since 1867

This section discusses the political and social conditions in Vietnam following the French conquest of southern Vietnam (Cochinchina) in 1867. It describes the destabilization and weakening of the Nguyen Dynasty's control, which left the country vulnerable to further French expansion.

3.1.2 Regarding the Schemes and Policies of France

Here, the dissertation outlines France's strategic plans and policies for expanding its colonial rule in Vietnam. The French aimed to consolidate their control over Cochinchina and extend their influence into northern Vietnam (Tonkin), using both military force and diplomatic pressure.

3.2 The Response of the Nguyen Dynasty Military and the Vietnamese Population to the French Colonial Expansion Process

3.2.1 The Reaction of the Nguyen Dynasty Court's Military to the Initial French Invasion of Tonkin

This subsection analyzes the military strategies and responses of the Nguyen Dynasty to the French incursion into Tonkin. It highlights the initial defensive measures and battles, emphasizing the difficulties faced by the Vietnamese military in resisting the well-equipped French forces.

3.2.2 The Struggle of the Nguyen Dynasty Military and the People of Northern Vietnam against French Colonialism

This part covers the broader resistance efforts by the Vietnamese people and the Nguyen Dynasty's military in northern Vietnam. It details various uprisings and military engagements, showcasing the persistent but ultimately ineffective resistance against the superior French military technology and tactics.

3.2.3 The Diplomatic Concessions of the Vietnamese Feudal Dynasty to French Colonial Expansion: The Giap Tuat Treaty of March 15, 1874

This section describes the diplomatic negotiations and concessions made by the Nguyen Dynasty, culminating in the Giap Tuat Treaty. The treaty marked significant territorial and political concessions to the French, effectively acknowledging their control over parts of Vietnam and paving the way for further colonial expansion.

The conclusion of this chapter synthesizes the discussions, emphasizing the complex interplay of military resistance and diplomatic efforts in Vietnam's struggle against French colonial expansion during 1867-1874. It underscores the persistent but ultimately unsuccessful attempts by the Nguyen Dynasty to defend Vietnamese sovereignty against the encroaching French colonial forces.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROCESS OF FRENCH COLONIZATION OF VIETNAM WAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED

4.1 France's Activities in Completing the Colonization of Vietnam

4.1.1 Colonialism Strengthened in France and There Were Intentions to Invade Tonkin

This section discusses the strengthening of colonialism in France during the late 19th century and the intentions to invade Tonkin, Vietnam. Between 1874 and 1880, Europe saw significant capitalist growth, leading to intensified competition among colonial powers. France, recovering economically after the Franco-Prussian War, sought to expand its colonies. French authorities viewed Tonkin as strategically important for economic exploitation. Various pretexts justified military interventions in Tonkin, leading to the 1882 expedition led by Henri Rivière, who successfully captured Hanoi despite the Nguyen dynasty's passive resistance.

4.1.2 The Second Time the French Army Captured Hanoi City

After 1873, Hanoi underwent extensive fortifications. Upon Henri Rivière's arrival in 1882, he demanded Hanoi's surrender, leading to a bombardment and capture on April 25, 1882. Governor Hoang Dieu's defense was valiant but unsuccessful. The French then dismantled Hanoi's fortifications and coerced Emperor Tu Duc into granting military and economic privileges.

4.1.3 The Response of the Nguyen Dynasty and the Attitude of France Following the Conquest of Hanoi

CHAPTER 5

FRENCH COLONIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLICIES IN VIETNAM AFTER 1884

5.1 The structural arrangement of the colonial governmental apparatus

5.1.1 Organization of the government apparatus and administrative units of the Nguyen Dynasty

This section discusses the transformation of Vietnam's governance under French colonial rule. The Nguyen dynasty's traditional structure gave way to a dual system where the French Resident Superior held centralized authority in Annam. Pre-colonial governance included provincial General-Governors overseeing administrative roles down to the village level.

5.1.2 The organization of the government apparatus and administrative units established by French colonizers

Cochinchina was divided into three provinces under a Governor-General, with administrative roles such as Canton chiefs and councils. In Tonkin and Annam, the Resident General managed administrative subdivisions and French-appointed governors in key cities. Reforms integrated local elites into governance under French oversight.

5.2 French colonial policy in Vietnam

5.2.1 The establishment of a financial and taxation system by French colonialists to foster military pacification campaigns and organize colonial administration in Vietnam Following the Treaty of Patenôtre in 1884, French policies reinforced traditional Vietnamese taxes and introduced tariffs favoring French goods. Monopolies on commodities and the establishment of the Indochina Bank enhanced French economic control, while agricultural policies exacerbated local poverty and resistance.

5.2.2 The French protectorate in Vietnam was formed

French military actions in 1885 facilitated the installation of a compliant monarchy in Hue, marking the establishment of a puppet government. Administrative reforms centralized control over taxation, diplomacy, and military affairs, solidifying French authority despite ongoing resistance.

5.3 The movement for struggle and the socioeconomic transformation of Vietnam

5.3.1 The Can Vuong edict of King Ham Nghi and its Implications for Popular Resistance in Vietnam

The Can Vuong movement emerged in response to French colonialism, spurred by King Ham Nghi's 1885 edict calling for resistance. Despite initial successes and widespread uprisings, internal conflicts and French military supremacy led to its decline by the late 1890s, laying the groundwork for future nationalist movements.

5.3.2 The transformation in Vietnamese society

French colonization brought significant changes, including educational reforms favoring French-language institutions, economic shifts towards European-owned plantations, and the emergence of new social classes. Intellectual and labor movements arose amidst resistance to colonial exploitation, shaping Vietnam's societal landscape under French rule.

In summary, Chapter 5 explores how French colonial policies and structures reshaped Vietnam's governance, economy, and society from 1884 onward, fostering both resistance and socio-economic transformation amidst ongoing colonial dominance.

CONCLUSION

The dissertation explores the intertwining of French efforts to spread Christianity and pursue economic interests in early 19th-century Vietnam. These efforts, driven by missions advocating for French intervention, clashed with the Nguyen Dynasty's anti-Christian stance aimed at preserving Vietnamese cultural values and sovereignty. This ideological conflict highlighted the dynasty's strategic missteps, weakening resistance to French expansion. The Nguyen court's cautious approach prioritized self-preservation over national sovereignty, culminating in treaties like the 1884 Treaty of Patenôtre formalizing French colonial rule and diminishing the dynasty's legitimacy.

French colonial rule marked a significant shift in Vietnamese governance and societal dynamics, despite the Nguyen Dynasty retaining some autonomy in the Central region. French authorities intensified exploitation through stringent controls, exacerbating economic hardship, social unrest, and neglect of essential services. This oppression fueled widespread resistance, exemplified by movements like Can Vuong,

which, though ultimately ineffective, laid groundwork for future struggles against colonial oppression and underscored Vietnamese aspirations for autonomy and self-determination.

In conclusion, the dissertation emphasizes the profound impact of French colonial expansion on Vietnam in the 19th century. It illustrates how religious, political, and socio-economic dynamics shaped responses to imperialist aggression, influencing Vietnamese identity and the quest for sovereignty. This period's enduring legacy highlights the complexities of colonial encounters and the resilience of Vietnamese nationalism in the pursuit of freedom and self-governance.

GLOSSARY

BIBLIOGRAPHY