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Presentation and Interpretation of Colonial History in Vietnamese and French History Textbooks

The colonial period in Vietnamese history (1858-1945) has been presented and interpreted very differently by Vietnamese historians and by historians in France and other countries. This paper is aimed to carry out a comparative survey on the different ways, in which various topics of the colonial history of Vietnam are presenting and interpreting in history textbooks using in Vietnamese and French schools. Firstly the paper examines some key factors that influences the writing history textbooks and teaching colonial history in Vietnamese and French schools, including the ideological, methodological issues that impact the outlook and attitude of the authors of the textbooks and the history teachers. The relationship between Vietnam and France in the post-colonial period and some political actualities, including the "LOI n° 2005-158 du 23 fevrier 2005 portant reconnaissance de la Nation et contribution nationale en faveur des Français rapatriés" which approved by the French Assembly in February 2005, will be examined.

Secondly, the paper will examines a number of important topics that are presented and interpreted differently in Vietnamese and in French textbooks. Lastly the author suggests some initiative towards a reconciliation in teaching colonial history in Vietnam and in France.