

Postcards, tourism, and control in Lào Cai, Tonkin: a critical analysis of colonial archives from French Indochina

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2023

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This thesis aims to offer a critical contribution to the ongoing discussions on the power dynamics and colonial legacies inherent in postcards. Analyzing a corpus of colonial postcards from the region of Lào Cai (upland northern Vietnam) through the lens of visual studies, postcards studies, and cultural geography, I intend to demonstrate that postcards represent a significant source of knowledge on the visual and textual construction of the colonial-tourist identity of the region. By exploring the production context, pictorial and textual content, as well as the postcards' circulation and reception, I provide a critical insight into the role of postcards in the construction of the colonial hegemony. Throughout my thesis, I demonstrate the role of visual culture in the construction of colonizer and colonized identities. Studying forms of transgressions in colonial imageries, I argue that the postcards of the region of Lào Cai also constitute visual archives of resistance, and thus have a significant potential for contemporary reinterpretation and reappropriation.



Postcard depicting four Yao women in Sa Pa (Lào Cai, Vietnam). Publisher: Jeanbin.

Source: <https://www.cartacaro.fr/spip.php?article165>