



“It is not with sentiment that one builds a city”:
**Planning and protesting urban development in colonial and
contemporary Hanoi**

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In the late 1930s, colonial Hanoi’s mayor attempted to implement an urban development project involving a French catholic graveyard and a Vietnamese pagoda. In the early 2000s, socialist Hanoi’s People’s Committee attempted several urban development projects in high-profile locations around Hoan Kiem Lake and Reunification Park. All met with some degree of protest, but only some of this protest was successful. In this paper, part of a larger project on the history of public space in Hanoi, I consider the context of these protests and the reasons why contemporary popular protests against development in the city have on the whole been less successful than the colonial-era protest.

Lisa Drummond is Associate Professor of Urban Studies at York University in Toronto, Canada. Her research focuses primarily on urban social life in Vietnam, including analyses of popular culture, women’s roles in Vietnamese society, and the application of concepts such as public and private to the use of space in Vietnamese cities. Her publications include several co-edited books on Vietnamese society, most recently *The Reinvention of Distinction: Modernity and the Middle Class in Vietnam*, with Van Nguyen-Marshall and Danièle Bélanger. Lisa is currently engaged in a project on the fate of socialist urban space in the 21st century (comparing Hanoi, Berlin, and Stockholm, with York colleague Douglas Young), a large international project on Global Suburbanisms, and a new project on community activism around water issues in Hanoi and Bangkok (with Amrita Danière, U of Toronto). Lisa is (still) working on a book on public space in Hanoi from the French colonial period to the present.

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