

The Role of the Bank of Indochina in the Formation and Expansion of Rubber Conglomerates in Cochinchina, 1875-1945

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Abstract - This paper investigates the decisive role of the Bank of Indochina (BIC) in the formation and expansion of rubber conglomerates in Cochinchina from 1875 to 1945. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, the study elucidates that the BIC functioned not merely as a conventional credit institution but as a financial "architect" driving the colonization process through the rubber sector. Research findings reveal that the BIC exercised "super-state" powers to directly invest capital and secure controlling interests in major corporations such as SIPH, Michelin, and Terres Rouges. Furthermore, the bank established a sophisticated system of indirect monopoly by leveraging its currency issuance privileges, manipulating exchange rates, and imposing French administrative standards (intellectual colonization). The study demonstrates that the symbiosis between financial capital and colonial agriculture transformed rubber plantations into financial satellites, maximizing resource extraction and the exploitation of indigenous labor. The paper concludes that deconstructing these mechanisms is essential for identifying the nature of French financial colonialism in Vietnam.

Keywords - Bank of Indochina, Cochinchina Rubber, Rubber Conglomerates, Financial Colonialism, Intellectual Colonization.

I. INTRODUCTION

The French presence in Indochina was not merely an instinctive military invasion but a meticulously calculated strategy of economic expansion, in which the rubber industry in Cochinchina served as the "backbone" of the colonial economy. Since the late 19th century, following the successful empirical trials of individuals such as Belland and Raoul, French capitalists quickly recognized the immense potential of "white gold" on the fertile basaltic red soil. But to run a large-scale "agricultural empire" that would go beyond the limits of individual plantations, it was not simply land supply or cheap labor, but the ability to organize and manage enormous amounts of financial capital. In this context, the Bank of Indochina (BIC) established by the decree of 1875 emerged not only as an issuing bank but also as the "chief architect" shaping the entire structure and destiny of the Cochinchinese rubber sector. The relationship between the Bank of Indochina and the rubber plantations was characterized by a tight and inseparable "symbiosis" between financial capital and industrial capital.

This was not the typical creditor-client relationship but a blend of economic domination at the top level. The BIC made direct interventions into the process of colonization by contributing capital, guaranteeing credit, and, most importantly, by owning majority shares in significant conglomerates such as the Société Indochinoise de Plantations d'Héveas (SIPH), Michelin, and the Compagnie des Terres Rouges. Empirical evidence underscores the scale of this expansion; by the early 1930s French rubber investment in Cochinchina had surged to about 1.5 billion francs, and it was the BIC that helped more than 40% of the long-term credit lines advances made by the

'Big Three' largest conglomerates: SIPH, Michelin, and Terres Rouges. Duong To Quoc Thai (2026) argues that the appointment of BIC representatives to the board of directors of these rubber firms turned these businesses into 'financial satellites,' with all production decisions being required to serve the financial accumulation interests of the financial elite in Paris.

The BIC's intervention did not stop at direct capital investment but extended to sophisticated forms of indirect colonization. By its monopolistic control of the exchange rate and its "exchange rate dictatorship" (defined as the unilateral manipulation of the Piastre's value to prioritize metropolitan profit repatriation), the BIC cleverly shifted the totality of economic risks of Metropolitan France to the colonial state of Cochinchina. The BIC also took steps to stabilize the Piastre exchange rate during times of volatility in the global rubber market, in particular after the Great Depression of 1929-1933, to secure the profits of French planters, and at the same time to maximize the extraction of surplus value and the increase of indigenous labor exploitation. This exploitation entailed harsh labor oppression, which has been captured in research on the colonial labor movement.

Another pivotal aspect often overlooked in previous scholarship is the concept of "intellectual colonization," which refers to the imposition of Western administrative, accounting, and technical standards that functioned as a knowledge-based entry barrier. The BIC foisted French management standards and technical operation norms upon plantation management. When the BIC institutionalized these French-only managerial procedures, it succeeded in locking out the Vietnamese intelligentsia and entrepreneurs to high-level management. The outcome was an extensive and a lasting reliance on the managerial machine in Paris, where even during the change of regimes, the financial system was well held by the French.

Although numerous works have researched the economic history of Indochina, the role of the BIC in driving the formation and expansion of rubber conglomerates still requires a deeper, interdisciplinary dissection at the crossroads of history, finance, and political science. While studies by Pham Quang Trung (1997) and Robequain (1944) provided an overview of the plantation economy, they did not fully clarify the BIC's "super-power" mechanism in manipulating transnational conglomerates of that era.

Furthermore, recent comparative studies suggest that while the BIC shared parallels with British agency houses in Malaya, it was distinct in its absolute integration of currency issuance power with industrial equity participation. This paper focuses on analyzing the BIC's operational mechanisms from 1875 to 1945 to elucidate the nature of French financial colonialism in Vietnam. By analyzing archival data and historical financial reports, the research not only contributes academically but also derives valuable lessons on protecting national financial sovereignty in the context of modern globalization.

A. Literature Review

Research on the activities of the Bank of Indochina (BIC) and the rubber industry in Cochinchina between 1875 and 1945 has attracted significant academic attention for several decades. Extant scholarship can be categorized into three major themes, reflecting multidimensional perspectives on French financial colonialism in Vietnam.

a. The Establishment and Institutional Power of the Bank of Indochina

This body of research focuses on the legal status and macroeconomic regulatory role of the BIC. Gonjo's (1993) seminal work portrays the BIC not merely as a commercial bank but as a multi-functional institution pivotal to maintaining French financial presence in the Far East. The author emphasizes that the BIC was a bank of issue" that had the exclusive right to regulate the Piastre and thus created a special monetary empire that would be used to repatriate profits to the metropole.

At the same time, Aumiphin (1994) insists that BIC was an instrument of French imperialism that was created with the aim of exploiting Indochina through monopolizing the credit system and stabilizing the exchange rates to the benefit of French companies. Studies by Duong To Quoc Thai (2020b, 2026b) provide detailed analyses of the BIC's organizational structure and branch network, demonstrating how it created a financial "octopus" reaching across Vietnam to seize control of all economic arteries.

b. The Rubber Industry and Agricultural Colonization

The rubber industry in Cochinchina is frequently cited as a symbol of colonial extraction's success, yet it was also the site of the most brutal exploitation. The Vietnam Rubber Workers' Union (1990) and the Vietnam Rubber Group (2012) give very important data on the introduction of South American rubber trees and the appearance of the indigenous rubber proletariat. Researchers like Pham Quang Trung (1997) compare small-scale economies with large-scale French plantations, and believe that colonial land policy was little more than preparations to monopolize financial capital. In his analysis of the Indochinese economic issues, Paul Bernard (1934) explains how the rubber industry managed to survive through the 1929-1933 Great Depression and how the colonial government and the leading banks used financial tools to avoid bankruptcy of French plantations.

c. The Intersection of Financial Capital and Industrial Rubber Capital

This represents the most modern and interdisciplinary research direction, where the BIC's role as an "architect" is most evident. Meuleau (1990) points out that there existed a symbiotic relationship between the BIC and the large rubber firms like SIPH and Michelin whereby the bank is not only a creditor but also a strategic shareholder. Duong To Quoc Thai (2021, 2026a) extends this argument by examining the long-term loans, with preferential-interest rates, of the colonial rubber companies, establishing an "financial privilege oasis".

Notably, concepts such as "exchange rate dictatorship" and "intellectual colonization" have been proposed to elucidate how the BIC imposed French managerial standards to exclude Vietnamese participation and maintain control over the operational knowledge of the rubber industry. Furthermore, recent comparative studies on Southeast Asian colonial economies suggest that the BIC's model of 'financial dictatorship' shared parallels with British agency houses in Malaya, yet was distinct in its absolute integration of currency issuance power with industrial equity participation. This allowed the BIC to mitigate risks for French firms during global downturns more effectively than its regional counterparts.

While previous scholars have constructed a comprehensive overview, a research gap remains regarding the BIC's indirect monopoly mechanisms through infrastructure and "front" companies. This paper builds upon these foundational works while focusing on deconstructing the sophisticated tactics in governance and macro-regulation employed by the BIC to clarify its nature as an "economic super-state" during the colonization of the rubber sector in Cochinchina.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Theoretical Framework

The study of the Bank of Indochina's (BIC) role in the rubber sector of Cochinchina requires a multidimensional theoretical framework that integrates theories of financial colonialism, economic symbiosis, and the concept of intellectual colonization.

a. Theory of Financial Colonialism

The core theoretical foundation of this paper is based on the theory of financial colonialism. According to Hobson (1902) and subsequently Lenin (1916), a prominent characteristic of late-stage imperialism is the dominance of financial capital over commodity capital. In the Indochinese scenario, the BIC was the organization that symbolized the amalgamation of banking and industrial capitals. Colonial banks, as Gonjo (1993) analyzed, did not just conduct credit functions but served as a tool to regulate monetary policy, thus establishing a mechanism to remit surplus value of colony to the metropole.

b. Theory of Economic Symbiosis

The relationship between the BIC and rubber plantations is examined through the lens of symbiotic theory. In this model, rubber corporations (such as Michelin or SIPH) provided the production platform and resource extraction, while the BIC provided the financial "lifeline" and policy patronage. In this model, rubber companies (e.g. Michelin or SIPH) had the production platform and resource extraction, BIC the financial "lifeline" and policy patronage. This symbiosis formed a closed-loop system that reinvestments were made through French banking networks, strengthening the monopoly of metropolitan capital, which Aumiphin (1994) and Meuleau (1990) define as the paradigm of French financial imperialism. This is in line with the opinion of Duong To Quoc

Thai (2026), who adds that the BIC was not just a lender but a strategic shareholder as well, making the boundaries between a capital provider and an executive operator.

c. Concept of Intellectual Colonization and Knowledge Power

In this study, "Intellectual Colonization" is defined as the imposition of Western administrative, accounting, and technical standards that functioned as a knowledge-based entry barrier. The BIC effectively relegated the indigenous Vietnamese intelligentsia to a low-level role in the decision-making process of the operations of the high-level management, by institutionalizing French-only management protocols, a form of structural dependence forever on the Parisian financial center. This framework is based on Foucault theory of power and knowledge and shows that the imposition of the French accounting, auditing, and personnel management standards was not as a technical issue, but as a power tactic to keep control of the working apparatus (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2021).

d. Core-Periphery Model

Finally, Wallerstein's (1974) Core-Periphery model provides an overview of the international division of labor. In this model, Cochinchina (the periphery) served as the provider of raw materials and cheap labor, while the BIC (representing the core) functioned as the coordinator of capital flows and the captor of surplus profits. The BIC's monopoly over the rubber industry was essentially the process of transforming the periphery into a "financial satellite" serving the prosperity of Metropolitan France.

B. Research Methodology

To address the research questions regarding the role of the Bank of Indochina (BIC) in the rubber sector of Cochinchina, this paper employs a multi-disciplinary methodological framework, integrating history, economics, and sociology. This approach enables the author not only to reconstruct historical events but also to deconstruct the complex financial mechanisms hidden behind numerical data and archival records.

a. Historical and Logical Methods

These are the foundational methods utilized throughout the study. The historical method assists in reconstructing the formation and development of the BIC and the rubber industry in chronological order from 1875 to 1945 (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2026). Placing events within specific historical contexts such as the 1929-1933 Great Depression or the World Wars clarifies shifts in the BIC's investment strategies. Simultaneously, the logical method is applied to analyze the essential links between financial capital and colonization, thereby deriving systematic observations on the BIC's monopoly over rubber conglomerates (Gonjo, 1993).

b. Systems and Interdisciplinary Approaches

The study views the BIC and the Cochinchinese rubber industry as an organic systemic structure within the colonial economy. From an economic perspective, the author utilizes indicators of capital, interest rates, and exchange rates to analyze the BIC's exploitative efficiency (Aumiphin, 1994). From a sociological perspective, the research examines the impact of financial policies on class differentiation and the lives of rubber workers. This combination elucidates the concepts of "intellectual colonization" and "exchange rate dictatorship," which cannot be explained by purely historical methods (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2021).

c. Archival Data Collection and Processing

The research data are gathered from official and highly reliable archival sources. Documents from the National Archives Centers I and II (Vietnam), combined with the BIC's annual reports (Rapports annuels) and those of rubber companies such as Michelin and SIPH, serve as crucial empirical evidence. Cross-referencing colonial government records with contemporary scholarly research (Meuleau, 1990; Pham Quang Trung, 1997) ensures the objectivity and multidimensionality of the information.

d. Comparative and Statistical Analysis Methods

The paper employs comparative methods to highlight the disparities between the BIC's policies for French plantations versus indigenous smallholders, thereby proving its privileged and monopolistic nature (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2020). Additionally, Data on rubber acreage, export volumes and investment flows are also processed

by descriptive statistical methods to quantify the extent of expansion of rubber conglomerates under the patronage of the BIC (Vietnam Rubber Group, 2012). Conclusively, this methodological system gives a broad picture thus enabling the paper to transcend the historical description to delve into the nature of French financial colonialism in Cochinchina.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The BIC's Role in the Formation of Rubber Conglomerates

The formation and expansion of the rubber industry in Cochinchina from 1875 to 1945 was not a spontaneous economic process but the outcome of a sophisticated financial colonization strategy. In this context, the Bank of Indochina (BIC) acted as the "chief architect" and as the main source of finance of French rubber conglomerates. The BIC was not just a traditional bank of issue or a credit institution, but a strategic investor that directly impacted governance structures, and which mobilized capital flows to reform the rubber sector into a pillar of the colonial economy.

Firstly, the role in mobilizing and coordinating direct investment capital. The capital risks were enormous in the late 19th century when the experimental work on rubber cultivation was being conducted. Traditional commercial banks were generally unwilling to give long-term agricultural loans because of the 5-7-year maturation period of rubber trees. However, leveraging its currency issuance privileges and the patronage of the French government, the BIC implemented specialized credit policies. According to Aumiphin (1994), the BIC provided preferential long-term loans at interest rates significantly lower than market averages to major entities such as the Société Indochinoise de Plantations d'Héveas (SIPH) and the Compagnie des Caoutchoucs de Padang. This financial intervention provided a robust "launchpad," enabling these firms to rapidly accumulate capital and expand their cultivation areas across the basaltic red soil regions of Eastern Cochinchina (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2026).

Secondly, the role as a strategic shareholder and the fusion of banking and industrial capital. The BIC was not just an outside lender; it directly purchased controlling shares of large rubber conglomerates. This is the most obvious type of the financial colonialism theory described by Gonjo (1993). The BIC made its Board of Directors members part of the executive management of corporations like Michelin and Terres Rouges (Đất Đỏ), by owning shares in these companies. This "symbiotic" relationship allowed the BIC to control profit streams and align rubber production activities with the broader interests of Parisian financial circles (Meuleau, 1990). Duong To Quoc Thai (2021) points out that this incorporation led to the rise of so-called super-power conglomerates that could shape not only the economics but also land and labor policies in Cochinchina.

Thirdly, the role as a "lifesaver" during economic crises. The rubber industry is inherently sensitive to global market fluctuations. During the Great Depression (1929-1933), as rubber prices plummeted, numerous plantations faced bankruptcy. At this juncture, the BIC exercised a macro-regulatory role by injecting emergency credit packages and restructuring debts for French rubber conglomerates (Bernard, 1934). Conversely, indigenous Vietnamese smallholders rarely received such support, forcing them to sell their land at low prices to French plantations. Pham Quang Trung (1997) observes that it was this exclusive patronage from the BIC that allowed French rubber conglomerates not only to survive the crisis but also to execute mergers and expansions, leading to the formation of the massive "rubber empires" observed prior to 1945.

Finally, the role in imposing a structure of "intellectual colonization." The BIC did this indirectly through financial control standards and personnel management protocols which created a highly colonial management system. The introduction of modern French accounting and auditing principles was not only a way of making the shareholders of Paris financially transparent but also a means to marginalize the native intelligentsia in major posts (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2026) This system transformed rubber plantations into financial "mega-factories," where all managerial knowledge was reserved for the French, while the Vietnamese were relegated to manual labor exploited to its fullest extent (Vietnam Rubber Group, 2012). In conclusion, the presence of the Bank of Indochina was the decisive factor that transformed the Cochinchinese rubber sector from isolated plantations into powerful industrial conglomerates. The BIC was a source of capital as well as political influence and institutional favors, establishing a classic example of financial colonialism in Indochina.

B. Mechanisms for Expansion and Market Monopoly

The monopoly of the Cochinchina rubber market by the Bank of Indochina (BIC) was not limited to the initial capital provision; this monopoly was carried out by complex functioning systems that transformed the bank into a macro-regulatory institution in the service of French capital interests. These mechanisms involved a strategic combination of exchange rate dictatorship, selective credit advantages, and the establishment of financial barriers against potential competitors.

Firstly, the mechanism of "Exchange Rate Dictatorship" and strategic currency regulation. The "Exchange Rate Dictatorship" is the term used to describe the unilateral manipulation of the Piastre's value by the BIC to serve the best interests of the repatriation of colonial profits and French export prices. This policy succeeded in shifting systemic economic risks among French conglomerates to local economy and local labor force. Gonjo (1993) reports that the BIC had a flexible but impositional exchange rate regime, and had the Piastre always pegged at a level that favored resource exports. In times of global rubber price fluctuations, BIC also adjusted the currency to ease the strain on big conglomerates such as Michelin or SIPH to repatriate revenue back to France. By stabilizing the currency of the international operations of French companies and ignoring inflation at home, the BIC also formed a "profit oasis" that enabled rubber companies to grow their acreage even during economic crises around the world (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2026).

Secondly, discriminatory credit policies and the suppression of indigenous smallholders. The scale expansion of French rubber conglomerates invariably paralleled the marginalization of other economic sectors, particularly Vietnamese-owned plantations. The BIC established an almost insurmountable "credit barrier" for the indigenous population. As French conglomerates had the right to long-term low-interest loans and even debt moratoriums in times of trouble, Vietnamese smallholders were often denied credit or charged excessive interest (Pham Quang Trung, 1997). This process directly resulted in the accumulation of capital in the hands of a few French rubber "magnates," where BIC-supported conglomerates would purchase land at nominal value at nominal prices when the indigenous owners had gone bankrupt.

Thirdly, monopoly mechanisms through infrastructure and logistics systems. The BIC intervened not only in production, but also in the middle-levels of the rubber industry. The BIC established a closed-loop supply chain by investing in maritime ports, railways and colonial transport companies. Rubber conglomerates linked to the BIC (through capital and personnel) benefited from preferential service fees and priority in export shipping (Meuleau, 1990). This generated an absolute competitive advantage, making it difficult for non-BIC-supported rubber companies or foreign firms (such as British or American ones) to survive long-term in the Cochinchina market.

Fourthly, the role of "Intellectual Colonization" in safeguarding monopoly power. The BIC promoted the adoption of French financial governance and technical cultivation standards as a knowledge defense mechanism. The BIC essentially locked out Vietnamese managers due to the complex French auditing and personnel management procedures that rubber companies had to follow (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2026). The managerial knowledge power was closely guarded by the French experts, which established a structural dependence of the rubber industry on the financial apparatus permanently based in Paris.

Finally, the symbiosis between the BIC and the Colonial Administration in land expropriation. The expansion of rubber conglomerates was inseparable from administrative support. The growth of rubber conglomerates could not be separated with the administrative support. As a creditor and a large shareholder, the BIC used its political clout to compel land concessions- awarding the French conglomerates huge areas of forest and wasteland (Robequain, 1944).

The fusion of the BIC's financial might and the Colonial Government's executive power transformed vast regions into "private kingdoms" of French capital. In conclusion, the expansion of rubber conglomerates in Cochinchina under the coordination of the BIC is a quintessential example of comprehensive monopoly. The BIC created an exclusionary ecosystem through tools of exchange rates, credit, infrastructure, and managerial knowledge, making rubber the best tool in extracting resources and capital accumulation in French colonialism.

C. Consequences of Financial-Industrial Symbiosis

The symbiotic relationship between the Bank of Indochina (BIC) and French rubber conglomerates was not merely an economic phenomenon but produced profound and comprehensive consequences for the socio-economic structure of Cochinchina between 1875 and 1945. The fusion of supreme financial power and industrialized agricultural production established a neo-colonial order, where metropolitan interests were maximized at the expense of colonial impoverishment.

Firstly, the formation of a "satellite" economy and the repatriation of profits. The most immediate effect of this symbiosis was the metamorphosis of Cochinchina into a purely dependent economic unit of the Parisian financial centre. Through the BIC, surplus profits from the rubber industry were not reinvested into sustainable local infrastructure but were primarily channeled back to France (repatriation of profits). According to Aumiphin (1994) argues that this reverse capital movement resulted in a shortfall in the inherent developmental potential of Vietnam. According to Duong To Quoc Thai (2026), the financial mechanisms of the BIC transformed plantations into closed "economic oases," with all the added value being drained away by French shareholders, leaving a marginalized economy that was left to supply raw materials and low-cost labor (Wallerstein, 1974).

Secondly, the proletarianization of the labor force and profound social stratification. The financial-industrial symbiosis created a sophisticated exploitative apparatus. To ensure maximum profits for dividend payments to the BIC and investors, rubber corporations such as Michelin and SIPH employed forced labor practices and minimized workers' living expenses. Nguyen Thi Mong Tuyen (2009) describes these plantations as "prisons without bars," where workers were bound by unjust labor contracts (*mộ phu*). The coordination between colonial law and financial pressure from the BIC stripped workers of fundamental rights, leading to high mortality rates and the physical exhaustion of the indigenous proletariat (Vietnam Rubber Workers' Union, 1990). This generated acute class conflict, serving as a catalyst for the powerful revolutionary movements in subsequent periods (Pham Quang Trung, 1997).

Thirdly, the impact of "Intellectual Colonization" and the erosion of economic autonomy. This symbiosis established a formidable barrier of managerial knowledge. By imposing French accounting and personnel management standards through the BIC, French capital entirely marginalized the Vietnamese intelligentsia and entrepreneurs from the mainstream of this key economic sector (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2021). The monopoly over cultivation techniques and financial management knowledge made the Vietnamese "strangers in their own land." As a result, in 1945, when the country got its independence, there was a big gap in the high-level experts in economic management (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2020). This intellectual dependency remains one of the most persistent legacies of financial colonialism.

Fourthly, geographical and ecological distortion. In order to meet the growth needs of the financial investors, rubber conglomerates engaged in massive deforestation of the basaltic soils, which fundamentally changed the natural ecosystem of Eastern Cochinchina. According to Robequain (1944), this change was aggressive and unsustainable ecologically. Traditionally inhabited lands of ethnic minorities communities were turned into monoculture plantations, and biodiversity and the alteration of the regional demographics were observed (Brocheux & Hémerly, 2009). Centralization of land to corporations supported by the BIC also destroyed the smallholder-based economic opportunities which was the traditional lands of the rural Vietnamese society.

Finally, the emergence of an "Economic State" within the Colonial State. The BIC, via the rubber industry, has created vast political-economic influence that is sometimes greater than the colonial administrative government. This symbiosis established a special interest group that could bend the tax, land, and trade policies (Gonjo, 1993). Meuleau (1990) points out that this monopoly compromised the objective regulatory quality of the government, and that the policy of the people was transformed into a Parisian financial profit. The BIC's "exchange rate dictatorship" serves as the clearest evidence of a territory's economic sovereignty being entirely usurped by a private financial institution (Phan Ha Uyen, 1973). In conclusion, the consequences of the financial-industrial symbiosis between the BIC and rubber conglomerates is a sharp contrast of the flourishing of the French capital basing on the exploitation of resources, the financial impoverishment of the laborers, and the

intellectual oppression of the population of Cochinchina. This constitutes the brutal of financial colonialism which this paper aims to shed light on.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study of the Bank of Indochina's (BIC) activities during the colonization of the rubber sector in Cochinchina from 1875 to 1945 allows for significant conclusions regarding the nature and operational mechanisms of French financial capital in Indochina. After assessing the historical facts and intricate economic interaction, this paper will claim that the BIC was not simply a supporting financial institution but was, in fact, the so-called "chief architect", which defined the whole landscape and survival of the colonial rubber industry.

Firstly, confirming the BIC's decisive role in the formation and expansion of the plantation system. The results of research indicate that Cochinchinese rubber industry would not have reached its enormous size without the financial lifeblood offered by the BIC. The BIC was able to go beyond the role of a traditional bank of issue and become a strategic investor, with controlling interests in key conglomerates, including Michelin, SIPH, and Terres Rouges (Gonjo, 1993). Through this intervention, a model of high capital centralization was formed whereby the rubber plantations became financial satellites to meet the accumulation demands of the Parisian bourgeoisie (Aumiphin, 1994). This close symbiosis was what allowed French businesses to keep an unquestionable monopoly, avoiding the emergence of local economic powers (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2026).

Secondly, identifying sophisticated monopoly mechanisms through monetary and intellectual power. The research elucidates the concepts of "exchange rate dictatorship" and "intellectual colonization" as the BIC's neo-colonial tools. By controlling the exchange rate of the Piastre and imposing French managerial standards, the BIC established a closed financial protectionist system (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2021). This mechanism not only maximized the repatriation of profits to the metropole but also usurped the economic autonomy of the Vietnamese people. The managerial knowledge and cultivation technology monopoly left the native population as nothing more than a raw labor force, totally disconnected with the administrative machine and with the economic decision-making (Meuleau, 1990; Murray, 1980).

Thirdly, assessing the profound impacts on the socio-economic structure of Cochinchina. The success of the BIC and rubber conglomerates was built at a heavy social and ecological cost. Financial colonization led to the emergence of a rubber proletariat (coolies) exploited to the extreme, generating acute class conflicts within colonial society (Nguyen Thi Mong Tuyen, 2009; Pham Quang Trung, 1997). At the same time, the priority given to large plantations inhibited the developmental space of smallholder economies, leading to a shift in the agricultural structure and destruction of the tropical forest system in Eastern Cochinchina (Brocheux & Hemery, 2009). These economic wounds were long-lasting even after the breakdown of French colonial system.

Finally, deriving historical lessons on financial sovereignty. Reflecting on the BIC's history in the rubber industry, the paper emphasizes that financial sovereignty is always the core of national independence. Dependency on a foreign financial institution can lead to a total loss of control over national resources and economic destiny (Duong To Quoc Thai, 2020).

In the modern world of globalization, the lessons on foreign capital management and safeguarding domestic management knowledge are still very relevant to Vietnam. Deconstructing the BIC's monopoly mechanisms allows for a more objective view of history while remaining vigilant against new forms of "financial colonization" in modern international economic relations (Phan Ha Uyen, 1973).

In conclusion, the Bank of Indochina stands as a preeminent symbol of the monopoly of French financial capital. Through the rubber industry, the BIC executed a silent yet brutal conquest, transforming Vietnam's resources into French prosperity and leaving behind a contradictory socio-economic legacy that we continue to address decades later.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declare that there is no conflict of interest concerning the publishing of this paper.

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