

## **Evaluating the Nghệ-Tĩnh Soviets of 1930-1931 in Vietnam using a Historical GIS: the Case of Thanh Chương Districts**

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Over the past fifty years, a rebellion against colonial authority in north- central and central Vietnam known retrospectively as the Nghệ-Tĩnh Soviets of 1930-1931 has received ample treatment by scholars both inside and outside of Vietnam. Most scholars have come to the conclusion that immiseration and the presence of pro-communist, anti-colonial organizers motivated the peasants and workers of Nghệ An, Hà Tĩnh, and Quảng Ngãi provinces to rebel, but a few scholars have favored examining questions of political dissatisfaction and local empowerment as underlying motivations for revolt. Until recently, examining the rebellion on a regional scale in order to test either view has proven difficult, with a surfeit of qualitative and quantitative information available but no easy way to process it into a coherent form. The Nghệ-Tĩnh Soviets GIS has permitted a regional analysis of the economic, political, and cultural situation of Vietnamese peasants and workers in order to reexamine conclusions made about the Nghệ-Tĩnh Soviets movement on a grand scale. In particular, the GIS reveals – against the dominant historiographic tendency – both the correlation of relative prosperity with anti-colonial protests and friction between Catholic and non-Catholic communities as essential factors in encouraging the start of the 1930-31 Nghệ-Tĩnh Soviets. Such region-wide observations would be difficult to make without a GIS. This presentation uses the communes of Thanh Chương district in Nghệ An province – a commune with a wide range of cultivars, different kinds of rice production, and a number of different religions - as its illustrative example.