

Dialectics of Tradition and Modernity in the Architectural Landscape of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Nam Thanh Tran¹, Huy Quang Ngo^{1*}, Duc Minh Tran¹ & Ty Quang Ngo²

¹University of Architecture Ho Chi Minh City, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

²Van Hien University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Corresponding author*: huy.ngoquang@uah.edu.vn

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Abstract

This paper investigates the historical progression and architectural landscape evolution in Ho Chi Minh City, a key economic center in Vietnam. It focuses on the interplay of traditional and modern influences shaping its unique urban architecture, notably influenced by its riverine city heritage.

It applies a dialectical perspective to understand the relationship between traditional and modern elements in the architecture of Ho Chi Minh City. It ascertains this relationship, through the examination of the current state of architectural developments in the city,

It proposes strategies for sustainable architectural growth. It seeks to ensure a balanced integration of traditional and contemporary elements, essential for fostering a distinctive and culturally enriched national architectural identity that aligns with global architectural progress. It identifies challenges arising from globalization and a market-driven economy, particularly how these factors may eclipse architectural functionality with market demands, potentially undermining the fundamental role of architecture in serving people's needs. It argues that the continual exposure of Ho Chi Minh City to various external architectural cultures raises concerns about preserving the delicate equilibrium between its traditional and modern architectural aspects.

Keywords: Architecture, Dialectical relationship, Ho Chi Minh City, Modernity, Tradition.

Introduction

Ho Chi Minh City, a vibrant metropolis formerly known as Saigon, stands at the crossroads of tradition and modernity, particularly in its architectural expressions (Harms, 2016; Ngo, 2020; Pham, 2021). This article embarks on an explorative journey through the architectural landscape of the city, unraveling the intricate balance between its historical roots and contemporary influences. As the bustling economic hub of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City showcases an urban architecture deeply reflective of its riverine heritage, yet is not immune to the challenges posed by globalization and market-driven economies. These challenges often

manifest in the form of architectural functionality being overshadowed by market values, potentially undermining the very essence of architecture as a service to user needs.

Moreover, the exposure of the city to diverse external architectural cultures raises concerns about maintaining a delicate balance between traditional and modern elements in its architecture. This paper aims to adopt a dialectical perspective on this relationship, seeking to enhance Ho Chi Minh City's cultural richness in its architectural identity. By dissecting the concept of this dialectical relationship in architecture, analyzing the current state of this interplay in the city, and identifying future growth directions and solutions, the paper endeavors to ensure a harmonious integration of traditional and contemporary aspects. This approach is pivotal for establishing a distinctive national architectural identity while embracing the progressive spirit of global architectural advancements.

However, there are certain gaps that can be identified, which lead to the formulation of specific research objectives. The study thus aims to address these gaps and contribute to a deeper understanding of the city's architectural dynamics.

Its objectives are:

- To deepen understanding of the historical and cultural foundations of Ho Chi Minh city's architecture
- To examine the contemporary challenges and opportunities in architectural development
- To develop and propose sustainable architectural strategies

These objectives build on the initial findings by providing a deeper understanding of architectural dynamics of Ho Chi Minh City addressing contemporary challenges, and outlining a sustainable path forward for the city's architectural development.

Theoretical Perspectives on Tradition and Modernity in Architecture

Traditions in architecture: a multifaceted perspective

Tradition in architecture is a rich tapestry woven from the historical, cultural, and societal threads of a community or nation. It embodies elements that have evolved over time, becoming intrinsic to a people's identity and way of life. This concept of tradition encompasses a vast array of components including ideas, emotions, habits, customs, lifestyles, and behaviors. These elements, as outlined by esteemed Vietnamese cultural researcher Professor Phan Huy Le in 1996, are “a collection of thoughts and emotions, habits in thinking, lifestyle, and behavior of a certain community of people that have been formed historically and have become stable, transmitted from one generation to another” (Phan, 1996).

Architecture, a significant facet of culture, mirrors the evolution of a nation's identity through its historical context. As Pham and Truong (2017) suggest, the architectural style of each nation is not only a reflection of its history but also an indication of human adaptability and mastery over nature. Different geographical and cultural contexts give rise to diverse architectural forms, each unique to its nation.

The spiritual and behavioral culture in architecture, or architectural tradition, highlights values that have been honed and crystallized over time in a community or nation's architecture. These traditions, as advocated by Frampton (1996) must be continuously updated to stay relevant and passed down through generations. Architectural tradition, therefore, is not only a repository of historical and cultural values but also an evolving dialogue that adapts to contemporary needs and contexts.

From an artistic standpoint, architecture is an expression of human creativity, where the outcome is a blend of culture, society, and art. This perspective, resonating with the views of Ching (2023) suggests that architectural identity is deeply tied to the aesthetic philosophy of its creators. It reflects the creative spirit of a nation, adapted to its unique living conditions like geography and climate.

The shaping of architectural tradition is a testament to a nation's long history, as it negotiates the relationship between nature, humans, and architectural constructs. This relationship is manifest in various aspects of architecture, such as spatial layout, material usage, proportions, and decorative elements, which collectively contribute to the unique identity of a

nation's architecture. As elucidated by Venturi (2002), tradition in architecture is a dynamic process that involves encoding and decoding information, with the user's involvement being pivotal.

Thus, tradition in architecture is not static but a living, evolving entity. It is constantly supplemented and refined to suit new circumstances and conditions, as noted by scholars like Kraas et al. (2023). It represents a value hierarchy where architectural works are not just physical structures but embodiments of lifestyle, aesthetic philosophy and the ethos of a nation.

Modernity in Architecture: A Global and Diverse Perspective

Modernism in architecture represents a shift towards elements that are reflective of the present era, characterized by the integration and refinement of traditional values to align with contemporary times. As Frampton (1996) highlights, modernism is not just a stylistic movement but a response to evolving historical, social, and technological contexts. It symbolizes progress, aiming to bring benefits to humanity while being rooted in a specific space and time. This process of modernization, an inevitable path for all nations, is uniquely tailored to each culture's history and trajectory of development.

Architecture, as a part of culture, is deeply influenced by modernism. This influence, as discussed by Botti (2023a), involves the augmentation of traditional values with new, innovative approaches. Modern architecture must organize contemporary life in a globally relevant manner while respecting and harmonizing with each community's established ideologies and lifestyles. This process involves gradual changes that preserve the deep-rooted identity of communities and nations, as seen in the works exploring Vietnamese modernist architecture by Pham (2021).

In the context of communication, architecture involves encoding and decoding messages. Modernism in architecture, therefore, represents a distinct process where architects, construction engineers, managers, and consumers all play critical roles. The encoding process, as described by Venturi (2002), involves architects translating client needs and regulatory standards into designs, followed by construction engineers transforming these designs into physical structures. The consumer's role in decoding the architectural message is pivotal. The involvement of the consumer from the initial encoding stage ensures a smoother decoding experience and greater satisfaction with the end result.

Professor Truong Quang Thao, in his 1983 report at the first national conference on scientific and technical activities in the construction industry, emphasized the impact of material technology on architectural concepts (Truong, 1983). This view is echoed in the works of Kraas et al. (2023), showing how modern materials and techniques allow for innovative architectural designs that challenge traditional forms and structures.

Modernism in architecture, therefore, is about creating spaces that are convenient, humane, and reflective of the current era. It incorporates modern construction technology but does not lose sight of the traditional values that form each nation's architectural identity. The architectural communication process, involving multiple stages of encoding and decoding, underscores the importance of consumer involvement throughout the process. This holistic approach ensures that modern architecture is not just a physical manifestation but a responsive and inclusive dialogue between the past, present, and future of architectural design.

Dialectics of Tradition and Modernity in Architectural Evolution

The dialectical relationship between tradition and modernity in architecture, as explored in Frampton's "Modern Architecture: A Critical History" (1996), represents a dynamic interplay, underscoring the cultural evolution of a nation. Tradition serves as a foundation, adaptable and receptive to modern influences, continually shaping and reshaping the architectural landscape. This process reflects a historical and developmental perspective, where traditional values are not only preserved but also enhanced to align with contemporary needs.

In architectural discourse, as Pham (2021) elucidates, tradition and modernity coalesce to forge new aesthetic values that resonate with the times. This evolutionary journey from tradition to modernity sees architecture as a societal and historical product, constantly seeking

new expressions, needs, and styles. The greatest architectural works often result from the assimilation of multiple cultural layers, a concept echoed in Ngo's (2010: 41) insights on traditional Vietnamese culture.

The role of tradition in architecture, as posited by Le (2003) in “What is called tradition,” is not static but dynamic, evolving with the aesthetic preferences of a nation. Architects may draw upon traditional elements, but it is their understanding of a nation's lifestyle, benefits, and aesthetic choices that enables the creation of widely accepted and identity-rich architectural works.

The harmonious yet contradictory relationship between tradition and modernity in architecture is multifaceted. Tradition offers a certain stability, but as Botti (2023a) suggests, this stability can sometimes obstruct the integration of modern elements. The widespread cultural exchanges facilitated by globalization introduce new architectural styles, often met with initial skepticism before gaining acceptance. The Architectural Research Institute (1999) underscores the importance of recognizing the core values of national architectural tradition to assimilate new and positive values effectively.

The interplay between modern architectural trends and traditional values is delicate. As discussed in Kraas et al. (2023), modern architecture aims to create functional living and working spaces but can sometimes impose aesthetic values that do not resonate with traditional norms. This clash can lead to architecture that lacks identity and disconnects from its cultural roots.

Further, the advancement in material science and construction techniques, as observed by Professor Tuong Lai, can sometimes struggle to convey traditional values in the face of rapid modern developments (Architectural Research Institute, 1999: 134). This situation calls for a balanced understanding of the dialectical relationship between tradition and modernity, ensuring that architecture does not swing to extremes but maintains a coherent and meaningful identity.

In conclusion, the dialectics of tradition and modernity in architecture is a nuanced interplay, where traditional elements, despite their stability, must adapt and evolve to incorporate modern advancements without losing their fundamental essence. It's a process that demands an understanding of each era's cultural, social, and aesthetic context, ensuring that architecture not only serves functional purposes but also reflects the evolving identity of the people and the times.

Literature Review

Ho Chi Minh City embodies a distinctive architectural melange, merging traditional Vietnamese elements with modern design. This reflects a tapestry of the city's rich historical lineage, cultural depth, and economic progression. This review critically examines the interplay of these traditional and modern elements within the city's architectural realm, drawing insights from a diverse range of academic sources.

Historical Foundations and Urban Evolution. The transformation of Ho Chi Minh City's architecture is deeply embedded in its historical and urban development narratives. Bousquet's (2015) exploration of Vietnam's urbanization journey lays a critical historical foundation, while Harms (2016) delves into the socio-economic influences mirrored in the contrasting opulence and decay within the urban landscape.

Modernist Influence and Architectural Development. The city's architectural identity, as studied by Schenck (2016; 2020) and Pham and Truong (2017), is significantly shaped by its unique interpretation of modernist principles. Schenck's analysis uncovers Vietnam's distinct modernist approach, diverging from Western standards and integrating local features. The discussion by Pham and Truong centers on whether Vietnam's modern architecture is a native innovation or an adaptation of global modernist currents.

Globalization's Role and Architectural Blending. The impact of globalization is unmistakable in Ho Chi Minh City's architecture, as evidenced in Botti's (2023a; 2023b) examination of emerging market trends, including the proliferation of skyscrapers and hybrid

structures. Frampton (1996) broadens this perspective, providing a global context to the architectural shifts seen in the city.

Cultural Heritage and Preservation: The works of Dao et al. (2024) and Hữu Ngọc et al. (2016) stress the critical balance between preserving traditional Vietnamese architectural heritage and adapting to modernity. This equilibrium is vital for maintaining the city's cultural identity amidst rapid urban changes.

Contemporary Architectural Trends: Current architectural dynamics in the city are highlighted by Jamme (2024) and Liu and Shen (2023). Jamme's focus is on the influence of urban mobility, particularly the distinctive motorbike-centric urbanism, on architectural styles and urban commerce. Liu and Shen discuss the role of infrastructure in shaping inter-Asian architectural and urban development strategies.

Socio-Economic Influences and Urban Planning: Kraas et al. (2023) provide an analysis of mega-urban development and transformation in Vietnam, emphasizing the susceptibility of the architectural landscape to socio-economic trends and urban planning policies. Hahn (2017) investigates the interaction between modernism and traditional elements, notably the softer forms and rounded edges prevalent in the city's architecture.

Architectural Future Outlook: Looking ahead, Viganò et al. (2023) and Ching (2023) present perspectives on the future trajectory of Ho Chi Minh City's architecture. Viganò et al. discuss the design of human-environment interactions in urban contexts, a critical element for the city's future architectural direction. Ching anchors this forward-looking perspective with an essential understanding of architectural fundamentals – form, space, and order, crucial for the amalgamation of traditional and modern styles.

The architectural landscape of Ho Chi Minh City is a dynamic fusion of tradition and modernity, continually evolving under the influences of its historical roots, cultural heritage, global trends, and socio-economic dynamics. This literature review highlights the multifaceted nature of the city's urban transformation, influenced by historical legacies, cultural imperatives, global influences, and socio-economic developments. The city's architectural identity is thus not a battleground of tradition versus modernity, but rather a harmonious blend that forms its unique character.

Research Methodology

The primary objective of this research is to analyze the dialectical relationship between traditional and modern elements in the architectural landscape of Ho Chi Minh City. This study aims to understand how this interplay influences the city's urban architecture and identify strategies for harmonizing these elements to foster a culturally rich and sustainable architectural future.

The research adopts a mixed-method approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the architectural dynamics in Ho Chi Minh City. Quantitative data is gathered through a systematic analysis of urban development records, architectural trends, and demographic statistics of Ho Chi Minh City. This includes data from government urban planning documents, architectural development reports, and statistical databases. A comprehensive qualitative analysis forms a core component of this research, utilizing a wide array of sources to enrich our understanding. This entails a detailed examination of existing literature encompassing academic journals, authoritative books, insightful architectural critiques, and valuable historical records. The focal point of this literature review is to trace the evolution of architecture in Ho Chi Minh City, delving into how cultural and economic transformations have influenced architectural developments. Moreover, significant attention is given to understanding the impact of globalization on the city's urban landscape, exploring how international trends and interactions have molded and reshaped Ho Chi Minh City's architectural identity over time. To ensure the integrity and objectivity of the research findings on Ho Chi Minh City's architectural landscape, the authors actively engage in bias mitigation strategies.

This research methodology provides a thorough and balanced investigation into the architectural landscape of Ho Chi Minh City, highlighting the complex interplay between

tradition and modernity. The mixed-method approach ensures a holistic understanding, essential for proposing informed strategies for the city's future architectural development.

Findings

Intersection of Tradition and Modernity in the Architecture of Ho Chi Minh City

Ho Chi Minh City, as Vietnam's hub of economic and cultural activities, epitomizes the intersection of tradition and modernity, particularly in its architectural landscape. This evolving urban space, especially since the reforms post-1986, showcases a dynamic blend of architectural styles, deeply influenced by its geographical, climatic, and historical context. As Botti (2023a) observes, understanding the dialectical relationship between traditional and modern elements is key to creating architecture that is both contemporary and culturally resonant.

Geographically, Ho Chi Minh City's position, nestled between Southeast and Southwest Vietnam, has been pivotal in its architectural evolution. This unique location has facilitated cultural exchanges, impacting the city's architectural character. The transformation from a centrally planned to a market economy, as explored in Harms' (2016) *"Luxury and Rubble: Civility and Dispossession in the New Saigon"*, has led to a surge in commercial and high-rise constructions, reflecting a qualitative shift in the city's skyline.

Climatically, situated in a tropical savanna zone, the city experiences a climate conducive to diverse architectural innovations. As per Kraas et al. (2023), the architectural design must resonate with these climatic features, balancing traditional techniques and modern advancements.

The city's topography, straddling highlands and swampy lowlands, offers a unique canvas for architectural development. This is complemented by its positioning along the Dong Nai - Saigon river system, which, as noted in Hahn's work (2017), contributes to its distinctive architectural identity.

Historically, Ho Chi Minh City boasts a rich history that spans over three centuries. Back in 1623, Lord Nguyen set up tax collection stations in what is now known as District 1 and District 5, in the areas of Ben Nghe and Saigon. Later, in 1679, Lord Nguyen founded a central headquarters at Tan My, located in the current vicinity of Cong Quynh and Nguyen Trai. The pivotal year of 1698 marked military commander Nguyen Huu Canh's exploration of the South (Vo, 2011: 1), where he noted the region's significant expansion, covering thousands of miles and housing more than 40,000 households. Recognizing the need to formalize the burgeoning settlements, Nguyen Huu Canh established the Gia Dinh government to oversee two districts: Phuoc Long (present-day Bien Hoa) and Tan Binh (encompassing the area from the Saigon River to the Vam Co Dong river). So Ho Chi Minh City's rich 300-year legacy, traversing various names (*Phiên Trấn Dinh*, *Gia Định* citadel, Cholon (*Chợ Lớn* - Fig. 1), Saigon and Ho Chi Minh City from 1976) and cultural influences, has created a diverse architectural fabric (Ngo, 2020). Saigon rose to prominence as the loyal capital from 1788 – 1802 (Vo, 2011: 28), then capital of the French colonial region of Cochinchina in 1883 (Vo, 2011: 59). This period was part of the larger French Indochinese Union, which endured until 1945. Following this era, Saigon served as the capital of the Republic of Vietnam, commonly known as South Vietnam, up until 1975 (Ngo, 2023). On July 2, 1976, along with the Resolution unifying the name of the country as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the first session of the 6th National Assembly also passed a Resolution renaming Saigon as Ho Chi Minh City. This diversity, as discussed in Ngo's article (2020), reflects in the city's current architectural profile, where modern buildings coexist with, and often overshadow, historical structures.

The city's demographic diversity, including numerous foreign nationals, as mentioned in Bousquet's (2015) book, enriches its cultural identity. This diversity is mirrored in its architecture, where religious buildings play a significant role in the urban landscape. The integration of religious architecture, while preserving national cultural identity, is crucial in developing a modern yet culturally grounded cityscape.

To foster an architecture that is both modern and imbued with national identity, a theoretical framework for Vietnamese architectural characteristics is essential. This sentiment

echoes Pham's (2021) call in "*Decoding the Language of Vietnamese Modernist Architecture*" for heightened awareness among architects and the public about the direction of modern Vietnamese architecture.

The pivotal role of state management in guiding the architectural transformation of Ho Chi Minh City is underscored by the Architectural Research Institute (1999). Through the implementation of well-crafted government policies and strategies, the development and preservation of the city's architecture are directed towards a seamless integration of traditional and modern elements. This strategic approach is vital in steering the city to achieve a balanced and harmonious architectural identity.

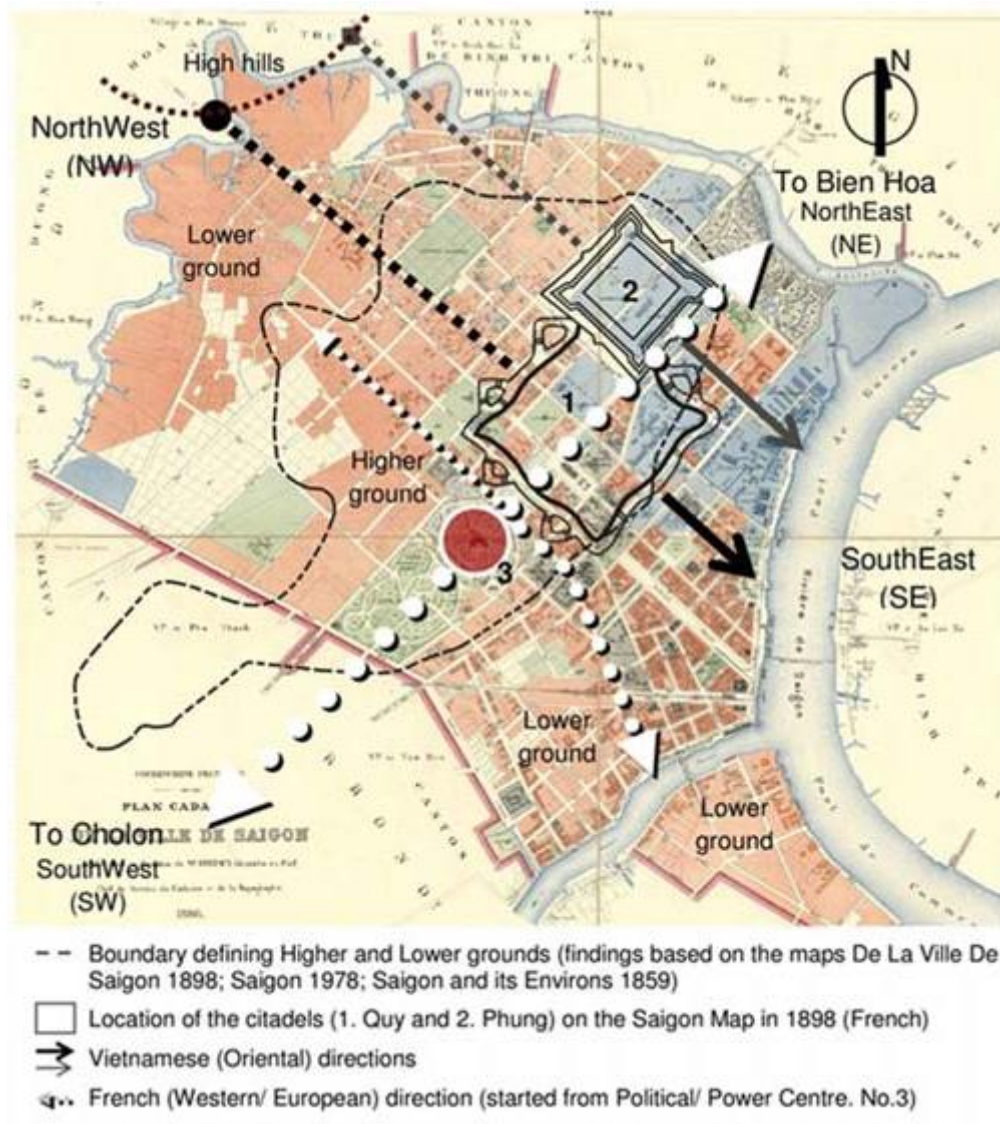


Fig. 1: Cholon (Chợ lớn)

Source: Ngo, 2020

Ho Chi Minh City, as Vietnam's primary economic and cultural nucleus, has evolved into a diverse and vibrant metropolis (Fig. 2), attracting people from around the globe. This diversity has shaped a unique cultural tapestry within the city, profoundly influencing its architectural landscape. Religious and spiritual beliefs, integral to this cultural mosaic, significantly impact the development of architectural structures. The design and placement of religious buildings are crucial in urban planning and must be approached with sensitivity. These structures should not only be visually appealing but also embody the national cultural ethos,

enriching the urban environment and promoting a healthy and harmonious living space, reflective of a modern city deeply rooted in its national identity.

The evolution of modern architecture that resonates with Vietnam's national identity necessitates establishing a theoretical framework defining its modern and national characteristics. Educating architects and the public about the importance and direction of modern Vietnamese architecture is essential in fostering a sense of national identity within the architectural domain.

In this context, the role of governmental oversight is instrumental. State management influences the intricate balance between traditional and modern architectural elements, utilizing administrative authority and comprehensive management strategies to steer architectural development. Government actions play a decisive role in setting the direction for architectural progress, ensuring the alignment of development objectives with conservation efforts. This involves formulating and executing policies and strategies aimed at fostering architectural growth in both urban and residential sectors. The state's role is thus critical in creating an environment conducive to architectural preservation and innovation, ensuring that Ho Chi Minh City's architectural future is a reflection of its rich historical heritage, seamlessly blended with modern design paradigms.



Fig. 2: A view of downtown HCM City
Source: VNS, 2023

Blending Tradition and Modernity in the Architecture of Ho Chi Minh City

Throughout its history, Ho Chi Minh City has experienced a dynamic evolution in its architectural landscape, with each period imprinting its unique characteristics on the city's appearance. The city skillfully integrates diverse architectural styles, assimilating new and foreign elements into its distinctive cultural architecture. This blend reflects the city's multicultural population, manifesting in a variety of architectural styles. However, this richness in diversity also brings challenges of inconsistency and disorganization in the architectural design, underscoring the need for strategic planning and oversight in contemporary times.

Since Vietnam's shift to a market-based economy in 1986, as Jamme examined (2024), Ho Chi Minh City has seen a remarkable transformation in its architectural sector. The emergence of numerous commercial centers, towering skyscrapers, and infrastructural developments underscores the city's prominence as the country's economic epicenter. The introduction of modern structures, utilizing cutting-edge technologies and materials, has lent a vibrant and modern aesthetic to the city's skyline.

Positioned at a crucial confluence of rivers and encompassing a vast network of canals, the city's geographical features significantly influence its urban landscape. Initiatives like the

restoration of the *Thị Nghè - Nhiêu Lộc* and *Tàu Hủ* canals, as Ngo (2020) discussed in his paper, highlight key efforts in urban renewal while honoring the historical importance of these waterways in the city's development.

Moreover, the architectural heritage of Ho Chi Minh City is heavily influenced by Western styles, marking a long history of cultural exchange between the East and West. This aspect, in Harms' exploration (2016), is evident in the Indo-French and Sino-French architectural styles developed by French architects who adapted their designs to the local tropical context. This fusion is visible across various buildings – from administrative centers to cultural institutions, banks, and religious buildings like temples, pagodas, churches, and communal houses. These diverse architectural elements are testament to the city's rich traditional values, portraying a harmonious intermingling of historical influences and modern innovation.

Current Architectural Challenges in Ho Chi Minh City

The profit-driven nature of the market economy has adversely impacted the balance between tradition and modernity in Ho Chi Minh City's architecture. The market's influence not only dictates the city's architectural direction for profit but also hinders sustainable urban development. Architectural creations, driven by investor profitability, risk becoming mere commodities, overshadowing their utilitarian value. This dynamic jeopardizes the city's architectural integrity, threatening the balance between traditional and modern elements, and compromising sustainable societal development.

Additionally, Ho Chi Minh City's rapid integration into the global economy has led to an influx of foreign architectural styles and preferences, often adopted hastily without careful consideration of their compatibility with the city's natural environment and cultural heritage. While modern elements can powerfully meet societal space demands, their unfiltered adoption can dilute the city's traditional architectural essence. To maintain a distinctive architectural identity, there is a need for a deep understanding of both traditional values and modern advancements, enabling architects to create sustainable designs that resonate with Ho Chi Minh City's unique character.

Moreover, the city's rapid urbanization poses significant challenges to the architectural harmony of tradition and modernity (Vietnam News, 2023). Urban expansion has led to environmental degradation, loss of green spaces, and increased pollution, affecting the traditional aspects of architectural design. These environmental changes inevitably influence the dialectical relationship between traditional and modern architectural elements.

To navigate these challenges, there is a need for clear strategies and solutions that foster architectural development that is modern yet retains the city's unique cultural identity. Balancing economic growth, cultural integration, and urbanization while preserving the nation's architectural heritage is crucial for the sustainable development of Ho Chi Minh City's architecture.

Strategies for Architectural Development in Ho Chi Minh City

The current direction for Ho Chi Minh City's architectural development aims to harmoniously combine traditional and modern elements. To achieve a balanced integration of these styles, the city aspires to develop a sustainable, advanced architecture rich in national character, aligning with the overall direction of the country while also catering to its unique characteristics.

As outlined in Vietnam's architectural vision for 2030, the overarching goal is to continue developing modern, sustainable architecture with a strong identity, meeting the cultural needs and supporting the nation's modernization and industrialization. For Ho Chi Minh City, this involves comprehensive urban planning that respects economic, natural, societal, and historical aspects, ensuring a unified architectural approach. This plan should emphasize urban design that integrates architecture with natural landscapes, creating a distinctive and cohesive urban image. The city's architecture must meet economic development needs and modern trends without losing touch with its traditional roots. A harmonious blend of

traditional and modern elements will create architectural spaces that connect the past and present, ensuring the city's architectural facade is modern yet retains its inherited identity and character.

The architectural development should align with socio-economic progression, industrialization, modernization, and international integration while fostering green and sustainable architecture. Reviving traditional architectural wisdom is essential for addressing the relationship between humans and nature, maintaining and enhancing it. Advanced technology should support renewable energy, clean energy applications, and environmental protection. Preserving traditional architecture while harnessing modern advancements can create ideal spaces for physical and spiritual well-being.

In the context of global integration, Ho Chi Minh City's architecture is continuously exposed to foreign cultural influences. To maintain a balance between traditional and modern architecture, it is crucial to preserve and promote traditional values while selectively adopting global advancements.

Specific solutions for harmonizing tradition and modernity in Ho Chi Minh City's architectural development include:

Recognizing the importance of the relationship between tradition and modernity in architecture. To sustainably develop the city's architecture with a strong national identity, awareness of this dialectical relationship is essential across various sectors: architectural management authorities, architects, and the city's residents. For management authorities, the principle of harmonizing tradition and modernity should be a fundamental guideline. For architects, promoting architectural theory and criticism will help distill cultural values and express them through modern architectural methods and tools. For residents, understanding this relationship enhances public awareness of architectural art, elevating appreciation for architectural values and encouraging criticism of negative development aspects.

Improving mechanisms and policies to facilitate the city's architectural goals. The principle of harmonizing tradition and modernity should be a universal rule for all architectural movements in Ho Chi Minh City. Legal regulations regarding urban planning, construction investment, landscape architecture, and land management should be coherent and robust, enhancing architectural management. Interdisciplinary collaboration is vital in urban architectural development, encompassing architecture, construction, land, finance, economics, planning, culture, and society.

Enhancing the quality of architectural professionals. The capability of architects is crucial for achieving modern yet culturally rich architecture in Ho Chi Minh City. This requires architects to master advanced architectural science and technology for creating modern structures and deeply understand traditional values and socio-cultural aspects to design buildings that resonate with the city's inhabitants.

Strengthening inspection, supervision, and monitoring of architectural development. Effective inspection and supervision in construction and architecture contribute to ensuring adherence to the principle of harmonizing tradition and modernity. Besides government agencies, the role of citizens and professional architects in monitoring is vital, as they are the direct creators and beneficiaries of architectural values.

Conclusion

In this comprehensive study, we have delved into the complex interplay between traditional and contemporary architecture in Ho Chi Minh City, providing an extensive analysis of how these contrasting elements coexist and influence each other. The intricate relationship highlighted in this research reveals the multifaceted challenges and opportunities faced by the city as it navigates the pressures of a market-driven economy and the myriad influences of global culture. Our investigation has shown that these external forces are not only reshaping Ho Chi Minh City's physical landscape but also profoundly impacting its architectural heritage and future direction.

The findings underscore the indispensable role of strategic urban planning and architectural evolution in safeguarding and enriching Ho Chi Minh City's unique architectural

identity. We emphasize that this evolution should be sensitive to the city's historical context while simultaneously embracing the possibilities of modern innovation. The research has explored various dimensions of urban development, including the socio-economic drivers of architectural change, the influence of global trends on local design preferences, and the critical balance between preserving historical authenticity and integrating modern design.

A key recommendation from this study is the implementation of sustainable development strategies. Such strategies are vital for Ho Chi Minh City to successfully mediate the relationship between tradition and modernity. These strategies call for an inclusive approach that encompasses active community engagement, policy reform, and the promotion of architectural designs that are both environmentally sustainable and culturally sensitive. By adopting this comprehensive framework, the city can more effectively manage the delicate equilibrium between preserving its rich architectural heritage and adapting to contemporary architectural advancements.

This research also highlights the collaborative role of architects, urban planners, policymakers, and the community in determining the future of Ho Chi Minh City's architecture. It stresses the need for a synergistic approach that ensures the city's architectural development reflects its cultural identity and addresses the needs of its residents. This collaborative model is crucial for creating an architectural landscape that is not only visually appealing but also functional, sustainable, and emblematic of the city's diverse historical and cultural stories.

In conclusion, this article has provided an in-depth analysis of the dynamic and occasionally challenging interaction between traditional and contemporary architecture in Ho Chi Minh City. By illuminating the various factors that influence this relationship and proposing strategies for balanced and sustainable architectural development, this study offers valuable insights for urban architectural evolution in the modern world. The insights and recommendations presented herein are not only pertinent to Ho Chi Minh City but also provide a valuable framework for other cities worldwide grappling with similar architectural challenges in the face of rapid modernization and globalization.

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