

[New book, Waste and Wealth: An Ethnography of Labor, Value, and Morality in a Vietnamese Recycling Economy](#)

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Dear List,

I am happy to inform you of the publication of my monograph *Waste and Wealth: An Ethnography of Labor, Value, and Morality in a Vietnamese Recycling Economy* (Oxford University Press).

Here is the book's website:

<https://global.oup.com/ushe/product/waste-and-wealth-9780190692605?cc=us&lang=en&>

Description

Waste and Wealth examines questions of value, labor, and morality underlining the translocal waste trading networks originating from a rural district in Vietnam. Considering waste as an economic category of global significance, this book shows migrant laborers' complex negotiations with political economic forces to remake their social and moral lives. It also illuminates how the waste traders seek to construct viable identities in the face of stigmatization, insecurity, and precarity. *Waste and Wealth* makes an important contribution to global studies of human economies and post-socialist transformations, demonstrating how the forces of globalization blend with local historical-cultural dynamics to shape the valuation of people and things.

Waste and Wealth is a volume in the series **ISSUES OF GLOBALIZATION: CASE STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY ANTHROPOLOGY**, which examines the experiences of individual communities in our contemporary world. Each volume offers a brief and engaging exploration of a particular issue arising from globalization and its cultural, political, and economic effects on certain peoples or groups.

Reviews

"*Waste and Wealth* is an outstanding ethnography brimming with vivid details and insights about the lives of Vietnamese waste traders. Tracing the livelihood strategies, hopes, dreams, and struggles of Spring Village traders, Minh Nguyen takes readers on a riveting series of journeys throughout the nation's capital city, Hanoi, and surrounding areas. It is a story of hard, dirty labor, but also of resilience, social mobility, and economic uplift. The waste traders in this book are not only turning waste into gold, but literally remaking themselves, their village, and Vietnam's new rural economy."--

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<https://networks.h-net.org/node/73374/announcements/3091016/new-book-waste-and-wealth-ethnography-labor-value-and-morality>
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Erik Lind Harms, *Yale University*

"With this compellingly written and highly original ethnography, Nguyen shows how informal recyclers remake themselves, their relationships, and their circumstances, laying to rest the assumptions that waste is inherently worthless and that those who work with it are doomed to abject poverty. The book is clearly written, demonstrating complex entanglements of dirty work, class aspirations, and gender politics in a post-socialist context."--Joshua Reno, *Binghamton University*

"The ethnography is skillfully crafted, drawing readers into people's lives with a keen appreciation of how they juggle competing moralities and demands on their lives. Nguyen's theoretical contribution is deft, efficient, and--as with the best ethnography--lightly and dexterously woven through her material."--Catherine Alexander, *Durham University*

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