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Vietnam's New Middle Classes: Gender, Career, City. By Catherine Earl. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2014. 312 pp.

The growing ranks of Ho Chi Minh City's middle class include young women who have migrated to the city in search of education and employment. Catherine Earl's welcome monograph explores the ways in which the lifeworlds of upwardly mobile migrants compare to those of similarly positioned southern Vietnamese women in the past and to new middle classes throughout Asia. Arguing that neither the Vietnamese government nor scholars have paid sufficient attention to the gendered dimensions of middle-classness, Earl offers a cogent account of women's navigation of the shifting valuations of the cultural capital embodied in their educational and professional credentials. She demonstrates the negotiations about status and identity that occur within and across the domains of work, family, housing, mobility, leisure and consumption.

The book's introduction emphasizes the importance of gender and lifeworld analysis for understanding a new middle class created by the post-reform expansion of non-state sector office jobs that are particularly attractive to women. In Chapter Two, Earl then compares the upwardly mobile women of today to earlier migrants to Saigon during the 1955–75 period. Memoirs penned by members of that generation of women, often following a second migration abroad, stress education and family culture in what might otherwise seem a permissive social environment. To supplement the helpful insights derived from those memoirs, Earl might also have interviewed older middle-class women still living in Ho Chi Minh City, some of whom have recouped aspects of their former status. Their experiences might have provided even more direct evidence of the relationship between gendered forms of selfhood and class, both today and in the past. A similar focus on life histories might have been helpful later in the book, in illuminating the multi-generational trajectories of the families of the current generation of upwardly mobile women migrants.

Chapter Three introduces the central figures of the book: rural–urban women migrants with salaried jobs. Earl’s vivid account of alleyway life and the women’s stories demonstrate that, while the women may now have higher status than their relatives back home in the provinces, their educational attainments and ability to migrate have clearly depended on family support. Chapter Four provides a fascinating overview of narratives about the effect of the gendering of office work as inherently feminine in making embodied femininity a form of cultural capital. The story of a male manager suggests that men, too, can perform versions of femininity as an advancement strategy. Earl’s analysis of such provocative narratives might also have drawn on participant observation to illustrate the embodiment and negotiation of these gendered dynamics in the workplace.

Earlier discussions of new middle classes have paid what Earl, rightly, views as disproportionate attention to consumption. Nevertheless, engagement with commodities is an important arena for negotiating gendered and classed identities. Earl’s discussion of leisure culture in Chapter Five focuses on how mundane daily acts, such as snacking, reflect dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. She considers “street food” consumed in upscale indoor locations and regionally specific dishes that, depending on the context, can demonstrate either a diner’s origins or her cosmopolitan sophistication. However, Earl pays less attention to fashion and shopping, activities that are also central to urban women’s sociality.

Chapter Six considers other forms of aspirational consumption, such as ownership of motorbikes, cars and houses, and concludes with an interesting exploration of the ways in which remittances change lifestyles back home. As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, migrants’ financing of rural kinfolk’s status signals both their symbolic and spatial distance and their ongoing immersion in intergenerational circuits of emotion and resources.

Chapter Seven focuses on migrants’ tendency to delay marriage. While some women consider transnational marriage as a strategy of upward mobility, others view the emotional capital that might be acquired through domestic marriage as outweighed by the greater

cultural capital that single working women can accrue. These women negotiate a charged landscape of ideas about women's roles, Vietnamese tradition, "Western" individuality and romantic love.

Earl's richly detailed study of the lives of migrant women in Ho Chi Minh City contributes important insights to a growing literature on new Asian middle classes that has moved beyond bewilderment at spectacular consumption to focus on their members' anxieties, pleasures and heterogeneity. In persuasively highlighting the need to attend to connections between gender and class, Earl may overstate the "gender blindness" (p. 240) of prior class analysis, particularly given decades of scholarship emphasizing intersectionality. That such intersectionality is vividly apparent throughout the ethnography suggests a missed opportunity to theorize the ways in which gender and class are co-constructed through individual agency and experience.

Vietnam's New Middle Classes effectively illuminates the everyday realities and diversity of middle-class women's experiences. It will become required reading for scholars and students of contemporary Vietnam and offers instructive comparison for readers interested in gender, urban culture and class in Asia and beyond.

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Women on the Move: Hanoi's Migrant Roving Street Vendors. By Rolf Jensen, Donald M. Peppard, Jr. and Vũ Thị Minh Thắng. Hanoi: Women's Publishing House, 2013. 164 pp.

Based on over a decade of research, *Women on the Move* provides a comprehensive examination of the lives of female migrant street vendors in Hanoi. The book is divided into three main sections: "Village Life", "The Decision to Migrate" and "Life in Hanoi". Taken together, these sections provide a detailed description of the sociocultural and economic contexts of these migrants' lives, their