

Entrepreneurial Families in Việt Nam

Controversial Symbols of Moral Dilemmas in Changing Times

By Ann Marie Leshkovich

In late 1990s Việt Nam, urban areas such as Hồ Chí Minh City (formerly known as Sài Gòn) bustled with private entrepreneurship, and the ranks of conspicuously consuming middle classes swelled. As desirable as this development may have been, it made many urbanites, cultural critics, commentators, and government officials profoundly uneasy. Would markets, individualism, consumerism, and globalization wreak havoc with traditional moral values and family relationships? Would middle class parents give children lots of things, but neglect them in other ways? What would happen to family relationships as parents worked longer hours? Would unsupervised children get drawn into sex, drugs, and other aspects of urban street culture? Would the extended Vietnamese family disappear, taking with it values such as filial piety?

Thanks to such questions, the status and future of the family became a lightning rod in a broader discussion about morality in the market economy that had emerged, with a sweeping series of economic reforms known as *Đổi mới* (Renovation). Although containing features specific to Việt Nam, family life anxieties were strikingly similar to those raised elsewhere, such as American discussions of “family values” or “culture wars.” As with US debates, these concerns were sparked by rapid transformation, but in ways that transposed anxiety about economics or politics into uncertainty about culture and morality. In both places, claims about mothers became central to family values debates, but with a key difference. While Americans have tended to focus on poor, single mothers, criticism in Việt Nam coalesced around the female entrepreneur who was said to neglect her family in a relentless pursuit of profit and whose alleged dog-eat-dog competitive sensibilities contaminated family relationships and morality.

Precisely because questions of family values and morality can arouse intense passion and seem of pressing personal and social importance, it is difficult to take a step back and consider why these issues have come to the fore at a particular moment in a community’s experience. Learning about family values debates in a different cultural and temporal context—in this case, 1990s Việt Nam—can provide students and educators with an opportunity to think together about how claims about individual behavior or morals might be connected to broader economic or social processes. A comparative perspective may also prompt students to reexamine their experiences and attitudes toward family and to consider the often significant gaps between emotional rhetoric and complicated familial realities.

Understanding the family values debate in Việt Nam involves considering three issues:

- (1) Why did the family become a pressing concern to many Vietnamese?
- (2) Why were female entrepreneurs in particular decried as symbols of moral decay?
- (3) How did female entrepreneurs respond to these accusations? What were their daily family life experiences? How did they perceive morality and relationship questions?

This essay addresses these questions by analyzing assumptions about family morality that underpinned 1990s government policies. I then elaborate on how traditional historical depictions of Vietnamese women in the home and marketplace influenced attendant controversies about their new roles. Finally, I consider the experiences of women entrepreneurs involved in the Hồ Chí Minh City cloth and clothing trade as they tried to balance family and work, while reacting to larger government and societal concern about the morality of their trade-offs. Their daily lives suggest, on the one hand, that attention to family life can be empowering: one cannot do much about the balance of trade, but one can cook a family dinner or supervise a child’s homework. On the other hand, the state and other powerful actors are relieved of responsibility for current conditions. Individuals can be scapegoated and their struggles ascribed to their own moral inadequacies.

WHY WAS THE FAMILY OF CONCERN?

In 1986, as part of the first *Đổi mới* reforms, the Vietnamese government drew attention to the status of the family, particularly in rural areas, by declaring that the country would shift from socialist collective farming to a system based on long-term private household land use. Officials touted the policy as consistent with the naturally collectivist, pragmatic, and flexible character of indigenous farming households. Rather than seek profit at all costs, families sought to promote the welfare of their members, including the weak and dependent. They would mobilize and pool labor efficiently, but with the goal of providing sufficient income to support family members’ affective and psychological needs.

This rural household production policy was a radical shift in both economic organization and attitudes toward the family as a social institution. Although the Vietnamese revolution never engaged in a wholesale effort to dismantle the family through collectivizing childcare in crèches, throughout the 1980s socialist policies condemned traditional families. Officials described them as trapped in backward, feudal, patriarchal, and foreign Chinese Confucianism. The traditional family was also a site where men economically exploited women and other dependents. Divest the family of the power to distribute the means of production, the logic went, and equality would result, particularly between the sexes.

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In the 1990s, it was precisely economic power that was handed back to families. They were expected to respond, not as hotbeds of oppression, but as “cozy nests” or “cradles,” combining nurturance with rational economic decision-making. Academics and officials resuscitated “backward” values and now celebrated them as an indigenous folk ethos and a locus of stability in the midst of change and foreign influence. Traditional values instilled respect and obligation in children, who in turn cared for their parents. Some commentators, including leaders of the Vietnamese Women’s Union of the Communist Party, urged a revitalization of Confucian values to confront contemporary workplace and domestic challenges. One academic suggested that if class and mystical elements were removed, Confucianism could offer an instructive moral foundation for modernity.¹ Regional celebrations of neo-Confucian “Asian Values,” most notably by Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, bolstered these claims.

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, research suggested that state officials had been overly optimistic. The “cozy nest” contained internal tensions. In particular, household production appeared to have increased gender inequalities. Women came to bear disproportionate responsibility for both productive and reproductive tasks. The revitalization of Confucian-oriented kinship activities and rituals valorized the patriarchal values that socialism had formerly sought to combat.² But government rhetoric tended to label these issues as bad individual behavior, rather than as broader social or structural problems.

Less noted by critics was a rhetorical effect of this policy. While productive and virtuous traditional rural families were symbols of the positive potential of market-oriented reforms, urban families provided cautionary tales of the dangers. The media and some academics described urban households as privileged and sophisticated, lacking a moral core. Adrift and pathological, they were hotbeds of selfishness and immorality. Middle-class parents, concerned more with possessions and profits than with scruples, produced unruly, disrespectful, and delinquent children seduced by drugs, sex, and crime. The traditional family seemed to be fading away in the onslaught of urban industrialization, an impression reinforced by comparative accounts in popular newspapers and magazines that depicted the Asian family as struggling amidst Westernization in Japan and South Korea. The Minister of Culture and Information called on Vietnamese to make their families a bulwark against “the flow of garbage from foreign degraded, reactionary culture which is strange to our tradition of humanities and benevolence.”³ With its growing economic importance prompting an inspection of its personal relationships and moral values, “the Vietnamese family” thus became a potent symbol of the fate of Vietnamese culture in a time of rapid transformation.

THE DANGEROUS FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR

With money and materialism threatening families, it is not unsurprising that the most imperiled families were those directly involved



A *Tuổi Trẻ* (Youth) newspaper cartoon shows a man struggling under the burden of debt (nợ) and interest (lãi) imposed by a female money-lender.

Courtesy of Ann Marie Leshkovich.

in commerce. In pre-colonial Việt Nam, there was a tendency, often ascribed to Confucianism, to view trade as inherently immoral. Traders did not produce anything directly, yet somehow had to convince buyers to pay more for a good than they spent to acquire it. Trade ranked last in occupational status, below scholarship, farming, and artisanship. Socialism reinforced this logic. As one journalist wrote when the government cooperativized large markets several years after the north-south reunification: “There’s no way a trader can be an honest person.”⁴

Resuscitated as a key to prosperity under Đổi mới reforms, entrepreneurship bore the moral stigma of a necessary evil. For example, smaller scale trade entails vigorous bargaining, a practice in which a trader can often dupe a buyer about an item’s fair value, quality, or provenance. Critics argued that this familiarity with deception carried over into family relations. One social scientist depicted trading families as inevitably losing their moral compass: “The business families cannot but leave a negative mark on the minds of their children, who come into daily contact with trading, hustling, and even cheating activities.”⁵

Because women perform most child rearing and educational tasks, female market traders became prime scapegoats for the urban family’s moral degeneration. Marketplace trade in Việt Nam is considered a woman’s domain. At times, women’s trade has been glorified as evidence of Vietnamese resourcefulness and determination in the face of financial hardship. Part of the celebration, however, is the assumption that by engaging in unsavory market activities, women must subordinate individual purity to the family’s economic interests. Markets are also alluring places that can seduce morally vulnerable women into forgetting their other responsibilities. This was precisely the danger unleashed by Đổi mới, and it provoked social scientist To Duy Hop to pen a scathing indictment of market women:

Women apt for commercial activities virtually neglect the care, upbringing and education of their children, that is, do not fulfill the tasks of mothers . . . [M]others having babies breastfeed them as quick as possible then leave them to the care of their husbands or grandparents to engage in commercial affairs, without bothering about what would happen to [the] small creatures. Returning home at night fall overtired, they finish the evening meal, make the profit-loss account then lie down and fall asleep. Early next morning, they begin the day similarly. . . . Yet, this group of women has high fertility. Why the birth rate is high among these rich women is an issue to be studied specifically to find the cause so that appropriate solutions can be devised to reduce fertility.⁶

Rapacious female images also captured the popular imagination. A 1995 cartoon in the popular Hồ Chí Minh City newspaper *Tuổi Trẻ* [Youth] showed a corpulent female moneylender literally crush-

ing a gaunt male under the weight of a loan swollen by usurious interest to ten or more times its original size. Celebrated novelist Nguyễn Huy Thiệp used artistic license to provide an even more harrowing depiction of female greed. In his short story “The General Retires,” a mother supplements the family income by using aborted fetuses from the clinic where she is a doctor to feed guard dogs that she raises and sells to the newly rich.⁷ Human life is less important than profit, and a mother sinks into the moral quagmire with nary a concern about her depravity.

Commonly, women stand as symbols of a country or people’s fate, but the rhetoric about Vietnamese women during the 1990s was particularly urgent. The *Women’s Newspaper* [*Báo Phụ Nữ*], published by the Hồ Chí Minh City Women’s Union, sometimes profiled model female entrepreneurs, whose arduous self-sacrifice had lifted their families out of poverty or even, in a few cases, allowed them to become wealthy.⁸ Despite differences in content, stereotypes of the virtuous and the rapacious female entrepreneur represent two sides of the same coin: a tendency to debate the morality of the market through hyperbolic gendered images. In both cases, women’s dual roles as financial and emotional providers dramatized the presumed conflict between these tasks under *Đổi mới*.

Women also could be managed, and, by doing so, the state could appear proactive in addressing the moral dilemmas of rapid change. State organs, such as the Women’s Union of the Vietnamese Communist Party, organized campaigns to promote the “Happy Family” (*Gia Đình Hạnh Phúc*) and the “Cultured Family” (*Gia Đình Văn Hóa*). Educational pamphlets, billboards, courses, and recreational activities taught women how to handle family planning, manage households, and emotionally nurture husbands and children. State programs promoting ideal families and actively training women to embody appropriate family values might rightly be interpreted as the Communist Party’s bid to maintain moral and practical control in the midst of economic policies that threatened its authority. More cynically, official rhetoric absolved the state of responsibility for the dilemmas of rapid economic change by turning them into problems of individual moral character. If young people are addicted to drugs, the fault lies with their greedy mothers.

However, it is incorrect to view these policies as merely repressive. People were not forced en masse to conform to something touted as the ideal family. This rhetoric continued to circulate because it resonated deeply with many Vietnamese who worried that



Photo captions, top to bottom, left to right:

A bargaining transaction reaches a critical point. Buyers often accuse sellers of being dishonest about the quality, price, or origins of their merchandise.

A fabric stall specializing in silk and brocade for *áo dài*, Việt Nam’s national costume.

Although most market stalls are run by women, some, like this one, are owned and operated by a married couple.

Daughters often help their mothers with market stalls and eventually may inherit the business.

A fabric seller makes a payment of several hundred thousand *đồng* (\$18 to 36 US) to a supplier. Market traders typically acquire their merchandise on credit and must pay off their debt in regular installments.

Photos courtesy of Ann Marie Leshkovich.

The women I know who were accused of abandoning a familial morality in favor of an individualist concern with money and material pleasures countered by arguing that their money better enabled them to honor family relationships.

their families were in danger. Concerns were widespread enough to include even members of a group directly vilified by the rhetoric: female marketplace traders. Although many traders distrusted the government's motives, they too believed family to be a matter of economic and emotional importance. Exploring their responses illustrates how anxieties about national policy and economic transformation can become rationalized into matters of popular culture and individual morality in ways that can seem to empower families, while obscuring the government's role in shaping family life's form and content.

THE FAMILY LIVES OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

Dung, a woman in her forties, sold evening gowns and casual wear from a stall in a large marketplace in downtown Hồ Chí Minh City. She joked with me that she came from one of the market's "big families." Her mother and three siblings each owned clothing stalls elsewhere in the market. Dung's closely-knit family helped her to expand her business, and she in turn helped them to manage theirs. During the busy season before the Lunar New Year (*Tết*), Dung relied on rural relatives to send her a young female "niece"—the kinship relationship likely more fictive than real—to assist with customers. With this kind of familial support, she told me, it should be obvious why her stall could prosper.

Dung's family may have been particularly well represented in the market, but family relations were crucial to the operation of many stalls. Sisters might sell fabric together. Daughters were recruited for full or part-time work and, later, would inherit the stall. Poor rural relatives might be given room, board, and a small wage for work. Husbands, sons, and brothers would commonly assist daily by delivering merchandise, packing orders, providing transportation, or making stall repairs. Generally speaking, the more successful a stall, the larger the network of family members involved.

Traders' reliance on family ties did not surprise most Vietnamese whom I interviewed. Even as female traders are derided for money-grubbing immorality, they are assumed to lack resources, so dependence on family labor was logical. This was consistent with the notion that Vietnamese are naturally family-oriented and that kinship relations rest on trust and discipline, a claim similar to the assertion that "Asian Values" explain the prevalence and success of Asian family firms.

Female market traders' family relationships, however, departed from these expectations in several ways. First, businesses were often larger than they appeared. Many traders invested tens of thousands of dollars in their stalls, produced wholesale goods, and enjoyed such middle-class niceties as motorbikes, vacations, and renovated homes. Second, many hired labor. While such growth might seem positive, traders tended to conceal it by continuing to rely on kin or trying to make their employees appear as if they were relatives—Dung's distant rural "niece," for example. Third, in contrast to traditional patriliney (descent and property pass through the male line), the kin ties that traders mobilized were matrilineal (centered on kinship between women), as in the case of Dung's "big family."

In explaining their families, traders challenged the logic of a natural link between the family as an affective and productive unit, arguing that rather than merely passively acknowledging family

production, the state had forced them to assume this form. The immediate cause might be the shift to the market economy, but traders also explained that their family businesses were a legacy of a longer history of war. In 1975, Việt Nam's civil war ended with the defeat of the American-allied southern regime (the Republic of Việt Nam) by the northern Democratic Republic of Việt Nam, led by the Vietnamese Communist Party. The country was reunified as the Socialist Republic of Việt Nam. The victors punished their political opponents and reorganized the southern economy along socialist lines. Many traders came from solidly middle-class families. The men worked as civil servants for the southern government or did business with foreigners. After 1975, the government confiscated much of their property and sent many of these men to re-education camps. Some families left the country as boat people or, later, through the UN-run Orderly Departure Program. Among those who remained in Việt Nam, the women often turned to black market trade to support their families. Twenty years later, their situations had clearly improved. Men who survived re-education had returned to their families, and women's businesses were doing well in the newly legalized private market sector. But the stigma remained. Most of the traders' fathers, husbands, or brothers were unable to find steady employment in the state-dominated economy and consoled themselves with odd jobs or assisting with women's market stalls.

Traders worried that their family histories might cause recriminations if officials noticed their recent success. They thus claimed they had to depend on kin, or at least to appear that they did so in order to make their businesses seem smaller. Traders engaged in practices that I conceptualized as "performing" family ties. For example, in the midst of a bargaining session with a customer, traders repeatedly referred to the younger women helpers as sisters or nieces in ways that emphasized they were relatives, not paid employees. Traders might exhort customers to buy an item to help out their families, a phrase accentuating the importance of the stall to family welfare. Or they might have small children present. Such arrangements were practical in terms of childcare, but they also advertised a trader as a hardworking, caring mother. All these tactics represented the stall as a struggling family's means of subsistence, rather than an impersonal business for generating wealth. Nervous about images of traders as affluent cheats, consumers were more likely to buy if they felt the stallholder deserved their help—much like some US consumers might patronize a family-run corner store rather than Wal-Mart.

Contrary to images of urban market women neglecting families, market traders I know described stallholding as a form of maternal self-sacrifice, itself a key component of the accepted notion of femininity and Confucian values celebrated in the "Happy Family" campaign. In Việt Nam, morality extends beyond abstract principles to become embedded in networks of familial and social relationships. When faced with a moral challenge, one does not look inside to see what one deep down believes to be right, but tries to involve others in the decision. The anthropologist Tine Gammeltoft makes this point clearly in her discussion of women and their male partners making the decision to terminate a pregnancy after ultrasound has detected fetal abnormalities. The couples consult their parents, who in turn seek counsel from grandparents or others of high status within the

family. One grandfather told Gammeltoft, “. . . I cannot decide about this on my own, nobody can make this decision alone.”⁹ Such consulting may be a strategy to distribute responsibility for the decision, particularly should something go awry. It may be done because elders possess power over younger family members, or it may be a symbolic gesture of respect. The direct reasons vary according to family circumstances, traditions, relationships, and personalities. But in every case that Gammeltoft studied, moral personhood was relationally defined within a family context. This is particularly true for women, who are charged with responsibility for ensuring that needs of family members are met and are in many ways key family providers.

The women I know who were accused of abandoning a familial morality in favor of an individualist concern with money and material pleasures countered by arguing that their money better enabled them to honor family relationships. Their incomes provided educational opportunities for children, such as study abroad, and allowed the entire family to engage in pleasurable leisure activities celebrated in the “Happy Family” campaign: watching television, trying new foods, traveling, or taking in the city sights (*đi chơi*) on a new motorbike.¹⁰

Traders did worry that long days on the market floor might harm their families. Many said husbands took over household roles of childcare or running errands. One stallholder praised her husband:

*He reduces my load by shouldering the responsibility for the hard jobs in our family. For example, when I've been selling until late at night and come home tired . . . he deals with a lot. Many times at night my daughter has already gone to sleep but wakes up crying, she has wet the bed and her pants are soaked. I have to change them. But there are also many times when she cries and he takes care of everything, he doesn't even call me. If I hear, then I get up and the two of us do it together, only very rarely does he let me get up and take care of our child by myself. If not, he tells me to go to sleep and let him take care of it, that's so lovable.*¹¹

Again, we see morality expressed through human relationships. This married couple seemed to have precisely the companionate marriage valorized as a “cultured family,” yet I knew of only one market family who participated in campaign activities. Traders' exclusion reflected both their disdain for state policies and officials' assumptions that traders could not represent the ideal.

Of course, traders' families were not all harmonious and happy. Many women reported dissatisfaction with their husbands, such as marital infidelity or minimal contribution to household finances. They worried about their children's behavior and complained about burdens exacted by distant kin who wanted a share of the prosperity. Overall, however, their experiences belie a facile connection between increasing wealth and declining family feeling. For many, trade was the only way that they could provide the material comfort that they all said was a necessary precondition for family happiness.



Photo captions, top to bottom, left to right:

A market seller's family greets the New Year (*Tết*) in their recently renovated home.

Men often help their wives, sisters, or mothers by packing up merchandise, minding a stall, cleaning, or making repairs.

A girl spends the afternoon at her mother's jeans stall.

Photos courtesy of Ann Marie Leshkovich.

CONCLUSION: CONNECTING RHETORIC AND REALITY

The family emerged in 1990s Việt Nam as the mythic locus of traditional cultural values and a production mode worthy of governmental support. Such celebrations were tempered by concerns that, culturally and socially, family values could change, and that quintessential Vietnamese-ness would be lost. Caught up in this rhetoric as key symbols of “bad” families, female marketplace traders mobilized kinship connections not only out of convenience, but also out of political and economic necessity. They also self-consciously performed and narrated their identities as parts of family businesses. Such strategic performances of family-ness assuaged customer fears of being cheated by allowing traders to depict themselves as morally virtuous mothers and wives.

The family was just one domain where people grappled with the morality of economic changes, entrepreneurship, and a society based on market rationales. Religion was another outlet for expressing and coming to terms with uncertainty. A wide range of popular spiritual activities included increased attention to ancestral tombs and commemoration ceremonies, study of Buddhist texts about virtue and fate, and pilgrimages to shrines of goddesses of fortune to request protection from the vicissitudes of market forces. As with family, religion became a way that people came to terms with economic, social, and cultural pressures. Piety was also an aspect of self that could be displayed to others in ways that might enhance one's economic position.

Female marketplace traders certainly resented their demonization by officials, academics, and the press in Việt Nam, but they shared the sense that their children's fate, and hence the country's fate, rested on their careful management of family finances and emotions.

Like other urbanites, many of the female market traders I know were experiencing a sense of anxious excitement at the possibility of making money. Moreso than non-entrepreneurs, however, they were skeptical of the hyperbolic tone of public discourse that pitted tradition against change, family against material prosperity, or business against morality. Family relationships, emotional values, and concepts of morality provided a means of combating these stereotypes. They were also means to display that traders were not the pariah entrepreneurs described in the press, but virtuous, loving women trying to do the best for their families.

Ironically, trader's experiences, attitudes, and behavior both challenged and reinforced government-sponsored claims about family values. The women's explanation of their economic activities as resulting from a political situation that forced them to do business by working with family members suggested that what the government claimed to be the natural economic behavior of families was not natural at all, but a response to particular economic, political, and social conditions. Some of these stemmed from the new market economy, while others could be traced to the political and economic disruptions following the end of the war in 1975. To put it another way, the particular characteristics of "the Vietnamese family" that the government depicted as the impetus for new economic policies may in fact have been the result, at least in part, of those policies, as well as of earlier socialist economic and political measures.

At the same time, family values rhetoric is not simply a smoke-screen for what are in truth economic or political problems. In Việt Nam as elsewhere, talk about families' dilemmas as due to culture or morality can deflect attention from political or economic factors. It also places responsibility on individuals, rather than policymakers. But this rhetoric resonates precisely because people feel global dilemmas on an intimate level. Employment problems are family relationship problems. It is on an intimate level, as well, that people often feel empowered to address their circumstances. Female marketplace traders certainly resented their demonization by officials, academics, and the press in Việt Nam, but they shared the sense that their children's fate, and hence the country's fate, rested on their careful management of family finances and emotions. They, too, wanted to be part of a "Happy Family." ■

RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER READING

Lisa Drummond and Helle Rydstrom, eds., 2004, *Gender Practices in Contemporary Vietnam* (Singapore: Singapore University Press). A collection of essays on gendered images and experiences in a time of socioeconomic transformation. Includes discussion of the government's Happy Family and Cultured Family campaigns.

Tine Gammeltoft, 1999, *Women's Bodies, Women's Worries: Health and Family Planning in a Vietnamese Rural Commune* (Richmond: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies/Curzon). An ethnographic account of women's experiences of family planning campaigns, particularly the physical and emotional trials of IUD use.

Ann Marie Leshkowich, 2006, "Woman, Buddhist, Entrepreneur: Gender, Moral Values, and Class Anxiety in Late Socialist Vietnam," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 1 (1-2): 277-313. An analysis of the role of Buddhism in the life of a model female entrepreneur profiled by the *Hồ Chí Minh City Women's Newspaper*.

Ashley Pettus, 2003, *Between Sacrifice and Desire: National Identity and the Gov-*

erning of Femininity in Vietnam (New York: Routledge). Analyzes government-produced images of femininity during the 1990s and the experiences of female market traders in Hanoi.

Pham Van Bich, 1999, *The Vietnamese Family in Change: The Case of the Red River Delta* (Richmond, England: Curzon). Chronicles changing family forms, practices, and values in the rural north.

Helle Rydstrom, 2003, *Embodying Morality: Growing up in Rural Northern Vietnam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press). A detailed study of family life and the socialization of children.

Jayne Werner and Danièle Bélanger, eds., 2002, *Gender, Household, State: Đổi mới in Việt Nam* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University). A collection of essays on the impact of economic policies on gender roles and household forms.

NOTES

1. Cao Xuan Pho, "Some Issues Relating to Culture and Development in Southeast Asia," *Vietnam Social Sciences* 4, 1993, 27-40.
2. Issues explored in recent scholarship include: changing family or household gender roles, divisions of labor, and relationships; employment patterns; impact of patriarchal values; transformations in family forms or household structures; revitalization of kinship rituals; effects of family planning; and rising rates of divorce and single parenthood.
3. Nguyen Khoa Diem, "Some Problems of Culture and Urban Lifestyle in our Country at Present," *Vietnam Social Sciences* 6 (62): 1997, 50-58.
4. Thạch Trúc, "Nghề Buôn Bán và Sự Hủy Hoại những Giá trị Đạo Đức." [Trade and the Ruination of Moral Values], *Tuổi Trẻ* [Youth] 1978, 136:11.
5. Le Ngoc Lan, "The Question of Family and the Realisation of the Functions of the Family in the Present Society," *Vietnam Social Sciences* 2: 1994, 70-78.
6. To Duy Hop, "Higher Capacities for Rural Women to Increase their Role in the Course of Renovation," *Vietnam Social Sciences* 2 (58): 1997, 14-20.
7. Nguyễn Huy Thiệp, *The General Retires and Other Stories* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, [1988] 1992).
8. For an analysis of the life story of one of these model women entrepreneurs, see Ann Marie Leshkowich, "Woman, Buddhist, Entrepreneur: Gender, Moral Values, and Class Anxiety in Late Socialist Vietnam," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 1(1-2): 2006, 277-313.
9. Tine Gammeltoft, "Prenatal Diagnosis in Postwar Vietnam: Power, Subjectivity, and Citizenship," *American Anthropologist* 109 (1): 2007, 153-163.
10. Literally, "to go play," *đi chơi* is a popular urban pastime, particularly on Sunday evenings. Families of four often pile onto a single motorbike to drive around downtown.
11. Interview with clothing trader, March 22, 1997.

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