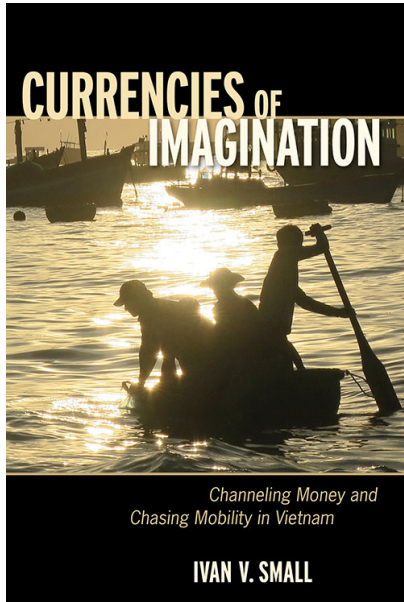


Currencies of Imagination: Channeling Money and Chasing Mobility in Vietnam”



Ivan V. Small

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In Vietnam, international remittances from the Vietnamese diaspora are quantitatively significant and contribute important economic inputs. Yet beyond capital transfer, these diasporic remittance economies offer insight into an unfolding transformation of Vietnamese society through the extension of imaginations and ontological possibilities that accompany them. Ivan V. Small's latest book, *Currencies of Imagination* (Cornell 2018) examines the complex role of remittances as money *and* as gifts that flow across, and mediate between, transnational kinship networks dispersed by exile and migration.

Long distance international gift exchanges and channels in a neoliberal political economy juxtapose the increasing cross-border mobility of remittance financial flows against the relative confines of state bounded bodies. In this contradiction Small reveals a creative space for emergent imaginaries that disrupt local structures and scales of desire, labor and expectation. Furthermore, the particular characteristics of remittance channels and mediums in a global economy, including transnational mobility and exchangeable value, affect and reflect the relations, aspirations, and orientations of the exchange participants.

Small traces a genealogy of how this phenomenon has shifted through changing remittance forms and transfer infrastructures, from material and black market to formal bank and money services. Transformations in the affective and institutional relations among givers, receivers, and remittance facilitators accompany each of these shifts, illustrating that the socio-cultural work of remittances extends far beyond the formal economic realm they are usually consigned to.

Ivan V. Small is a cultural anthropologist and assistant professor at Central Connecticut State University, and an affiliate of the Yale Southeast Asia Council. He holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology and Southeast Asian studies from Cornell University. Prior to arriving in Connecticut in 2014 Dr. Small was a postdoctoral scholar at the University of California Irvine, and a field study director with the The New School's India China Institute. Dr. Small's latest book is *Currencies of Imagination: Channeling Money and Chasing Mobility in Vietnam* (Cornell 2018, released January 2019), the subject of today's presentation. In it, he investigates the social, spatial and material dimensions of diasporic remittances, drawing on interviews with remittance receiving and sending households in Vietnam and California. The book examines changing economic capacities and forms of remittances, as well as shifts in local and transnational social and political relations from 1975 to present. Dr. Small's work in the field of economic anthropology also extends to mobile money and other recent cashless financial technologies, topics that he considers comparatively as co-editor of *Money at the Margins: Global Perspectives on Technology, Financial Inclusion & Design* (Berghahn 2018). In addition, Dr. Small has examined transportation consumption and mobility patterns afforded by remittances and other new financial capabilities, and how emerging economies in Asia are framed by culturally targeted design and marketing research. Alongside his books, Dr. Small's work has been published in a variety of anthropology, area studies, and interdisciplinary journals and volumes, including *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *Limn*, *Mobility in History*, *Visual Anthropology*, *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, and *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*.

Wednesday, April 17
12:00 Noon
Room 203, Luce Hall, 34 Hillhouse Avenue