



## VIETNAM'S AGE OF ANXIETY: THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH

In less than half a century, people in Vietnam have gone from fearing bombing raids, political persecution, and starvation to worrying about decisions over the best career path or cell phone plan. This shift in the landscape of people's anxieties is the result of economic policies that made Vietnam the second fastest growing economy in the world and a triumph of late capitalist development. Yet as much as people marvel at the speed of progress, all this change—even for the better—can be difficult to handle. According to many people in Ho Chi Minh City, the epicenter of Vietnam's economic boom, now that the country is modernizing so rapidly, they have more to worry about than ever before. What accounts for the simultaneous rise of economic prosperity and anxiety among Ho Chi Minh City's rising middle class? The social context of anxiety in Vietnam is layered within the development of advanced capitalism, the history of the medical and psychological sciences, and new ways of drawing the line between self and society. At a time when people all over the world increasingly turn to the pharmaceutical and wellness industries to soothe their troubled minds, it is worth considering whether or not the social and political dynamics that make them an appealing balm to begin with may be part of the problem.

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**For the UCSD Psychological & Medical  
Anthropology Seminar Series**

**Monday, October 17th, 2022,  
10:00-11:30**

**Public Engagement Building  
Room 520**