



The Intimate Economies of Bangkok: Tomboys, Tycoons, and Avon Ladies in the Global City

Ara Wilson

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Bangkok has been at the frontier of capitalism's drive into the global south for three decades. Rapid development has profoundly altered public and private life in Thailand. In her provocative study of contemporary commerce in Bangkok, Ara Wilson captures the intimate effects of the global economy in this vibrant city.

The Intimate Economies of Bangkok is a multifaceted portrait of the intertwining of identities, relationships, and economics during Bangkok's boom years. Using innovative case studies of women's and men's participation in a range of modern markets—department stores, go-go bars, a popular downtown mall, a telecommunications company, and the direct sales corporations Amway and Avon—Wilson chronicles the powerful expansion of capitalist exchange into further reaches of Thai society. She shows how global economies have interacted with local systems to create new kinds of lifestyles, ranging from "tomboys" to corporate tycoons to sex workers.

Combining feminist theory with classic anthropological understandings of exchange, this historically grounded ethnography maps the reverberations of gender, sexuality, and ethnicity at the hub of Bangkok's modern economy.

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