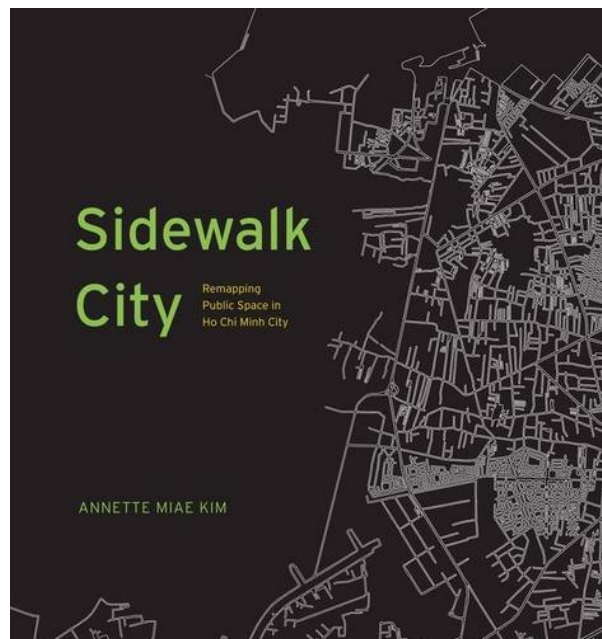
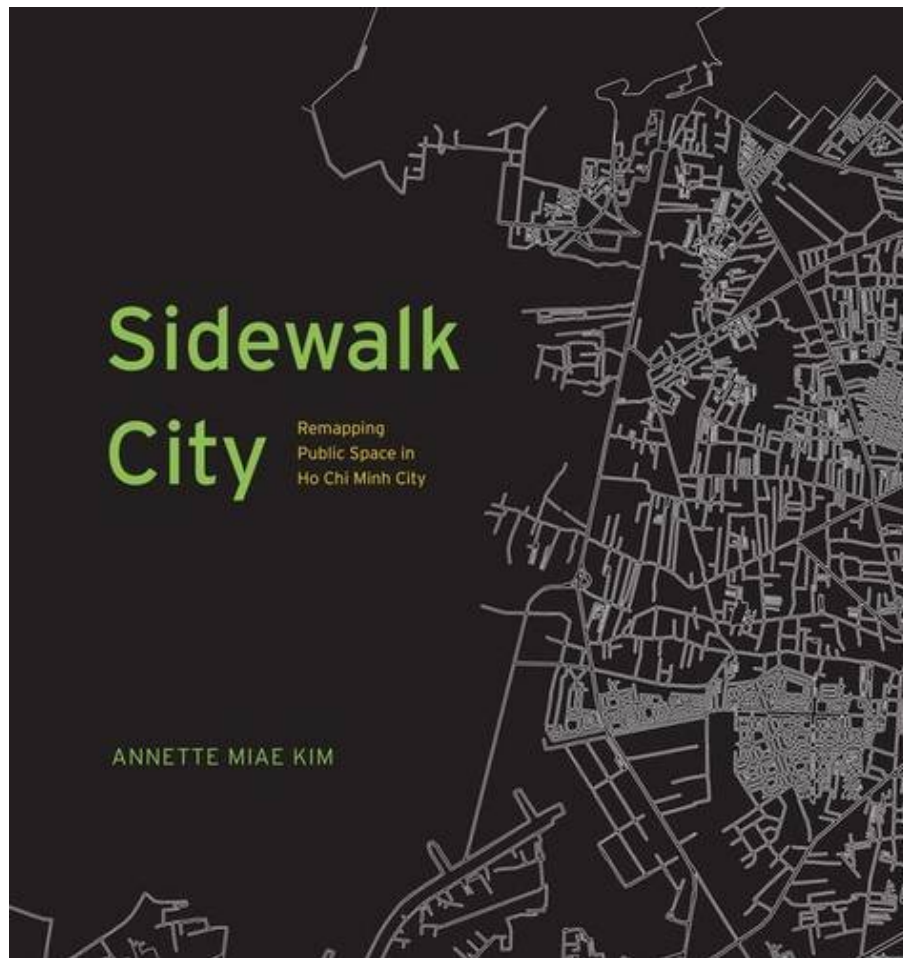


# **SIDEWALK CITY: REMAPPING PUBLIC SPACE IN HO CHI MINH CITY BY ANNETTE MIAE KIM**



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## Review

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"This just-published work flips our usual understanding of public space—large communal swaths of green in the middle of a cityscape—and focuses on its most humble incarnation: the sidewalk. Sidewalk design isn't going to win any prizes. In fact, it is scarcely noticed. But more than ever, Kim suggests, in places of rising urban density, this is where people meet, loiter, exchange information, sell wares and stage neighborhood festivals. Sidewalks are also a kind of urban nervous system, wiring connective paths from one corner of the city to another. But this sort of public space also bumps up against property rights. Who ultimately has power over this public-private space? The beautifully designed *Sidewalk City* examines how this tension is negotiated day to day in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City."

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For most, the term “public space” conjures up images of large, open areas: community centers for meetings and social events; the ancient Greek agora for political debates; green parks for festivals and recreation. In many of the world’s major cities, however, public spaces like these are not a part of the everyday lives of the public. Rather, business and social lives have always been conducted along main roads and sidewalks. With increasing urban growth and density, primarily from migration and immigration, rights to the sidewalk are being hotly contested among pedestrians, street vendors, property owners, tourists, and governments around the world.

With *Sidewalk City*, Annette Miae Kim provides the first multidisciplinary case study of sidewalks in a distinctive geographical area. She focuses on Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, a rapidly growing and evolving city that throughout its history, her multicultural residents have built up alternative legitimacies and norms about how the sidewalk should be used. Based on fieldwork over 15 years, Kim developed methods of spatial ethnography to overcome habitual seeing, and recorded both the spatial patterns and the social relations of how the city’s vibrant sidewalk life is practiced.

In *Sidewalk City*, she transforms this data into an imaginative array of maps, progressing through a primer of critical cartography, to unveil new insights about the importance and potential of this quotidian public space. This richly illustrated and fascinating study of Ho Chi Minh City’s sidewalks shows us that it is possible to have an aesthetic sidewalk life that is inclusive of multiple publics’ aspirations and livelihoods, particularly those of migrant vendors.

- Sales Rank: #1520882 in Books
- Brand: Kim, Annette Miae
- Published on: 2015-05-27
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x 1.00" w x 9.00" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 264 pages

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

but I am happy to report that my review is not just a ...

By David C. Sloane

Annette is my colleague at USC, but I am happy to report that my review is not just a booster one. The book looks at a wonderful set of studies she conducted with students, colleagues, and by herself. If you are interested in the new age of mapping, streets and sidewalks, or public space, a must read.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Sidewalk vendors are part of the Vietnamese tourism attraction.

By Mitchell I. Bonner

The author did a study of street vendors that use the sidewalks of Ho Chi Minh City as a place to do business. The book includes discussion of relations between the sidewalk vendors and the owners of buildings that the vendors are in front of; also relations between the vendors and the local police. The areas studied include Central Ho Chi Minh City and the Cholon District, which used to be Saigon's Chinese district. The author has recommended that the Ho Chi Minh City Tourist Authority include the sidewalk vendors in their tourism promotion as showing tourists that the vendors are part of the local Vietnamese culture and way of life.

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