

The Cultural Politics of Markets

'Katharine Rankin distills important debates in anthropology and geography as they relate to planning in a way that is accessible yet intelligent. ... I know of no other book which so effectively addresses the question of culture and development in the contemporary global scene and speaks to both planners and anthropologists alike.'

David Holmberg, Chair, Department of Anthropology, Cornell University

'With this careful unpacking of the neo-liberal tenet that market access equals social opportunity, Katharine Rankin makes a significant contribution to the vibrant growth of new research on diverse economic practices and their implications for imagining alternative futures.'

Katherine Gibson, Department of Human Geography, The Australian National University

'An outstanding study of the impact of economic liberalisation in Nepali society.'

Professor John Harriss, Director, Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics

'A classic study of the interaction between market and non-market relations, one that has the added advantage of analytically, empirically and normatively confining neo-liberalism to the dustbin of vulgar apologetics where it belongs.'

Ben Fine, Professor of Economics, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

This book is a study of the social embeddedness of markets, in an era when the ideology of the 'free market' governs community development as much as international trade.

Using a wide theoretical framework that encompasses both anthropology and geography, Katharine Rankin critiques neoliberal approaches to development, showing that the capitalist market will always be linked to local social structures and cultures of value. Market-led development, therefore, does not necessarily expand opportunity; rather it can deepen existing injustice and inequality.

Using the example of a 'traditional' Newar market town located in the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal, Rankin explores how the 'value' ascribed to social prestige relates to economic opportunity. Showing how those in subordinate social positions are well-placed to critique inequality, Rankin argues that planners should pursue progressive notions of development that recognise the critical resources within culture.

Katharine Rankin is Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto in Canada.

Anthropology, Culture and Society

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Katharine Neilson Rankin

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Economic Liberalization and Social Change in Nepal

