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Anke Schwittay

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ANKE SCHWITTAY

New Media and International Development Representation and Affect in Microfinance



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Anke Schwittay : **New Media and International Development: Representation and affect in microfinance (Rethinking Development)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised New Media and International Development: Representation and affect in microfinance (Rethinking Development):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A more nuanced look at MicrofinanceBy Rachel TallonThis book is

an unusual and interesting observation on the operations of one of the development industry's fashionable modes of wealth distribution, microfinance. Not a critique in the usual sense of the word, nor a detailed recommendation for good practice, the book is slightly more unusual and a very good read. The arguments put forward in the book are at a more conceptual and nuanced level and take the reader further than just looking at say, a binary of good and bad things to do with microfinance. Schwittay presents two aspects of microfinance and argues that they need to be examined as part of the very structural and powerful elements of the development industry. The first area of concern is the idea that affective relationships between lender and borrower are forged through the cyberspace connections of microfinance. Emotions can be powerfully leveraged to change policy and shape international opinion and this emotional space needs greater examination: precisely who is being 'empowered' through microfinance - the lender or the borrower, or both? The second concern is that microfinance does not really upset the structural inequalities between North and South, and may reinforce them through certain rules that need to be played. Throughout this book, Schwittay draws upon current anthropological ideas about development: what it is today and how microfinance sits within a broader set of practices. For those interested in how relations across the North-South divide are instituted and maintained through development and how people become part of this scheme for deep, almost intimate reasons, then this book will shed light on this complexity of involvement. Structured in six chapters over three parts, the book takes interesting twists and turns to present its argument that while microfinance appears to free many from poverty, some basic structural inequalities remain the same; the Southerner has less voice in the relationship and the Northerner is also constrained. Critique of practice or representation is not encouraged and often the purpose of the story is to present a good story. Representing success is paramount. Schwittay begins the book along the ordinary lines of presenting the nature of microfinance and detailing Kiva.org as a case study and discussing the critiques in the literature. Then in Chapter 5, the roller coaster ride begins as the academic becomes an (almost) undercover researcher and an everyday humanitarian herself by joining a microfinance tour group. With sharp similarities to visits to orphanages and sponsored children, the Northern academic becomes part of the journey, part of the voyeuristic gaze to see how the poor spend their loans. This book is not merely a considered critique of a mode of development, but a questioning of the representational powers that despite advances in communication remain unequal. Extremely useful for those interested in exploring subjectivities and power within our unequal world.

New Media and International Development is the first in-depth examination of microfinance's enduring popularity with Northern publics. Through a case study of Kiva.org, the world's first person-to-person microlending website, and other microfinance organizations, the book argues that international development efforts have an affective dimension. This is fostered through narrative and visual representations, through the performance of development rituals and through bonds of fellowship between Northern donors and Southern recipients. These practices constitute people in the global North as everyday humanitarians and mobilize their affective investments, which are financial, social and emotional investments in distant others to alleviate their poverty. This book draws on ethnographic material from the US, India and Indonesia and the anthropological and development studies literature on humanitarianism, affect and the public faces of development. It opens up novel avenues of research into the formation of new development subjects in the global North. This book will appeal to researchers and students of international development, anthropology, media studies and related fields, as well as practitioners and professionals in the field of international development.

"*New Media and International Development* offers a novel account of the ways that people in the Global North are moved to give their money and time to microfinance initiatives in the Global South. The book brings readers up-to-date with attempts to extend financial services to the world's poor and focuses attention on the power of social media to produce feelings of humanitarian support for 'distant others'. This book takes anthropology of development into new arenas and is set to become an important reference point in debates about poverty alleviation and entrepreneurship." ndash; Jamie Cross, University of Edinburgh, UK "Anke Schwittay's original and engaging study of digital micro-financing as a panacea to global poverty not only offers new insights into the relationship between technology, development and affect but also provides a succinct problematisation of the neo-liberal assumptions that drive development today. A valuable resource for all those concerned with the critical study of global governance." ndash; Lilie Chouliaraki, London School of Economics, UK "Speculation and sentiment, reality tours and self-reinvention: *New Media and International Development* captures the technologically-mediated labor of mustering and managing affective investments?emotional connections to the world's poor?in the business of aid in the 21st century. Focusing on the financial and information apparatuses animating international development today, Schwittay shows that perhaps the most important contribution of new techniques of aid is to the emotional economy of the global North which, despite the obvious critiques, presents openings for political change." ndash; Bill Maurer, University of California, Irvine, USA "New Media and International Development takes us on a journey across the emotional, social, technical and financial landscapes of 'everyday humanitarianism'. From photography competitions to person-to-person loans on Kiva.org and the growth of microfinance tourism, Schwittay offers a fresh and

compelling analysis that moves anthropology and development studies in exciting new directions." ndash;Heather A. Horst, RMIT University, Australia "New Media and International Development provides a grounded and critical examination of the management of affect in North-South relations. Schwittay demonstrates how the branding of caring is most effective when the Western self is actually the product on offer." ndash;Lisa Ann Richey, Roskilde University, Denmark "This book brings together two sets of development questions usually considered separately: the affective investments in humanitarian and development aid and the latter's use of visual representation and digital media. The author interweaves analysis of both to directly address young peoplersquo;s investments in charitable giving, mediated through websites and tours." ndash;Meena Khandelwal, University of Iowa, USA "Increasing global interconnectivity facilitated by new media has spurred the fantasy that we can each individually alleviate global poverty and redress economic inequality one person at a time. Anke Schwittay explodes this myth by incisively revealing the neoliberal principles and practices that undergird this illusion. In so doing, New Media and International Development shows us that problems of global injustice are far more complex than can be resolved through the click of a mouse." ndash;Daromir Rudnyckyj, University of Victoria, Canada 'How do people in the affluent global North come to care about - and more important - provide money and time to people far away in the poor global South? Schwittay (anthropology and international development, Univ. of Sussex, UK) follows the road less traveled by arguing that the everyday humanitarians of the North are an important development subject in their own right; with her approach, the author takes a truly novel tactic to studying international development by analyzing its affective dimension. Summing Up: Recommended'nbsp;-R. S. Rycroft, University of Mary Washington, CHOICE April 2015
nbsp; About the AuthorAnke Schwittay is Senior Lecturer of Anthopology and International Development at the University of Sussex, UK.