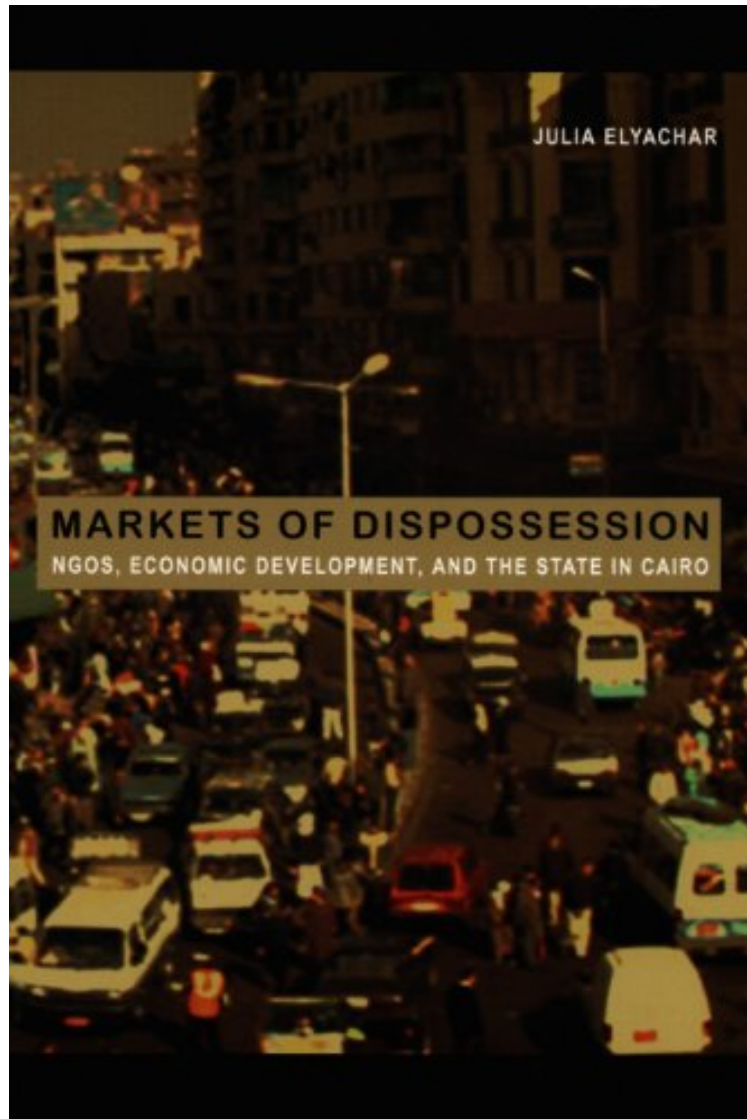


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Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo (Politics, History, and Culture)

Julia Elyachar

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Julia Elyachar : Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo (Politics, History, and Culture) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo (Politics, History, and Culture):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. so close to being a master piece. By Jesper Doepping This is a great book with very large potential theoretical contributions. In the empirical research on how especially the youth

entrepreneurs of Egypt with large support from IMF, governments and other International organization she empirically show how these young entrepreneurs never find the market they learned existed as an almost natural thing. She shows with clarity that the "free market" is a political, practical, social and material accomplishment, and that this construction takes a lot of work, but also certain values, ideas, without which the market fail. The reason for only 4 stars is that the author despite noting Adam Smith's classical problem/claim that "the invisible hand, and increased application of the division of labor, an economy of plenty would overcome the contradiction between property rights and the moral rights of the poor." Empirically speaking is a problematic and one sided conceptualisation. By using her empirical data and deep knowledge on Smith's book on moral sentiments, she does succeed in conceptualizing an "invisible spectator" that ensures that the individual agent in a commercial society acts with an eye to what others might think. however the relation between the self interested in modern sense and this invisible spectator is not really discussed or clarified. For me this make the book deeply inspirational, but lacking in connection with other literature like Albert Hirschman's *The Passions and the Interests*. here it is shown that the first conceptualization of self interest also in the west had this duality of greed and concern for the community. If she had that awareness she would also have been able to more directly discuss this issue in relation the group of craftsman she compares the young entrepreneurs with - in fact I would claim that the craftsmen and workshops seems to exactly have a management of this issue, where the young entrepreneurs only see self-interest as short term profit. But still please read this book, it is an empirical fascinating book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent work of enduring importance. By reviewer This is an excellent ethnography of the use of the "social networks of the poor" by international development organizations who wish to "expand" the free market through microlending and micro enterprises more generally. Given the ongoing political upheavals in Egypt, this is an especially important work that can help contextualize the social and economic conditions of so many Egyptians of the Shaabi or popular classes. Furthermore, it is beautifully written with rich descriptions of life in the workshops of Cairo. Highly recommended.

What happens when the market tries to help the poor? In many parts of the world today, neoliberal development programs are offering ordinary people the tools of free enterprise as the means to well-being and empowerment. Schemes to transform the poor into small-scale entrepreneurs promise them the benefits of the market and access to the rewards of globalization. *Markets of Dispossession* is a theoretically sophisticated and sobering account of the consequences of these initiatives. Julia Elyachar studied the efforts of bankers, social scientists, ngo members, development workers, and state officials to turn the craftsmen and unemployed youth of Cairo into the vanguard of a new market society based on microenterprise. She considers these efforts in relation to the alternative notions of economic success held by craftsmen in Cairo, in which short-term financial profit is not always highly valued. Through her careful ethnography of workshop life, Elyachar explains how the traditional market practices of craftsmen are among the most vibrant modes of market life in Egypt. Long condemned as backward, these existing market practices have been seized on by social scientists and development institutions as the raw materials for experiments in "free market" expansion. Elyachar argues that the new economic value accorded to the cultural resources and social networks of the poor has fueled a broader process leading to their economic, social, and cultural dispossession.

"Markets of Dispossession is a brilliant study of contemporary forms of market ideology and practice. Exploring central questions about value and social resources, debt and dispossession, culture and power, it offers an original and outstanding contribution to the anthropological analysis of the economic." --Timothy Mitchell, author of *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* "[A] masterful description and sophisticated interpretation of the transformation of the social, cultural, and political economy of urban Egypt since the early 1990s." --Donald (Abdallah) Cole, *American Ethnologist* "Julia Elyachar's ethnography...offers a refreshingly critical and historically situated account of microloans and the neopopulist ideologies that have swept the international development industry." --Marina Welker "Markets of Dispossession is an engaging book from the first page. It embodies keen academic analysis with a humanistic touch." --Heidi Morrison, *Digest of Middle East Studies* "[A] hard-hitting, iconoclastic, and deeply engaged work of scholarship." --Jeremy Rayner, *European Journal of Sociology* "Julia Elyachar's superb book arrives at the right moment. . . [A] landmark analysis." --Paul Amar, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* About the Author Julia Elyachar is Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Irvine.