

matter” (p. 198), Simmons offers a theoretical discussion that weaves together market liberalization, social movements, and threats to subsistence goods as a category of grievances, coupled with detailed and well-narrated case studies of movements around corn and water. The book also creates an opening for a broader discussion about the cultural dimensions and impacts of subsistence threats. *Meaningful Resistance* will be an important resource for scholars and students of social movements, especially protests around subsistence goods in Latin America.

Freedom from Work: Embracing Financial Self-Help in the United States and Argentina. By Daniel Fridman. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2017. Pp. x+236. \$90.00 (cloth); \$27.95 (paper).

Laura Doering
McGill University

Economic sociologists have a vibrant tradition of connecting macrolevel economic shifts with their microlevel instantiations. By revealing how changing economic policies and ideologies become manifest in quotidian experiences, scholars elucidate the lived experience of global economic transformations. Books like Kimberly Hoang’s *Dealing in Desire* (University of California Press, 2015) and Saskia Sassen’s *The Global City* (Princeton University Press, 2001) connect large-scale economic shifts to mundane experiences in work, leisure, and home life. Researchers advancing this macro-to-micro approach often seek out nontraditional research settings for in-depth explorations of how individuals embrace and resist major economic change in their everyday lives.

Daniel Fridman’s *Freedom from Work: Financial Self-Help in the United States and Argentina* is a welcome addition to this body of work. Fridman explores financial self-help groups in Argentina and the United States to examine how the neoliberal project of self-governance becomes manifested in the writings, ideologies, and even board games of a financial self-help community. Fridman’s work stands out in the existing literature, in part, because he shows how one community enthusiastically *embraces* neoliberal ideals. Whereas most research documents resistance to neoliberal policies at individual and state levels, Fridman’s book reveals how some communities have an almost religious fervor for applying the principals of neoliberalism to their financial lives. Moreover, drawing on ethnographic observations in two countries, Fridman demonstrates how ideas and practices originating in the United States become “actively adopted” in the Argentinian cultural context. In this way, he further shows how neoliberal economic principles exported to new contexts are neither protested nor adopted writ large but instead are amended and massaged to fit their particular environmental circumstances.

Fridman conducts an in-depth, qualitative study of communities organized around Robert Kiyosaki’s financial self-help books and board games.

He demonstrates that financial self-help is neither a “get rich quick” scheme nor an emotional self-help program. Rather, financial self-help as promoted by Kiyosaki is a mind-set for managing the end of corporate capitalism and prospering in an age of declining job security. Adherents of Kiyosaki’s approach emphasize that one must undergo a personal transformation to truly embrace the message of “financial freedom.” One way that members of financial self-help communities practice the principals of financial freedom is by gathering to play Kiyosaki’s “Cashflow” board game, where they adopt a learning-by-playing approach to investing. Through books, conversations, and games, individuals in the financial self-help groups that Fridman studies work to shift their mind-set and financial practices away from dependence on the state or employers and toward a financial arrangement that allows them to be economically—and personally—free.

The greatest strength of *Freedom from Work* is its fascinating case setting. Fridman is at his best when describing community meetings, hours-long board game sessions, and adherents’ loyal devotion to Kiyosaki’s teachings. Moreover, he writes respectfully and carefully about his research subjects, even when their beliefs appear illogical or bizarre. Such careful ethnographic and interview work is admirable and makes for a crisp read.

Yet in providing such a close description of the case, Fridman devotes less attention to exploring how financial self-help stretches or challenges existing theories. He draws extensively on Michel Foucault and Michel Callon in providing a theoretical frame for the project. Although Fridman shows how his case aligns with major theories, he does not go far enough in demonstrating how the case encourages us to amend, rethink, or impose boundary conditions on such theories. As such, the book offers a lively application of major sociological theories without challenging or critiquing these approaches. The lack of theoretical expansion is a missed opportunity, as the case is ripe with theoretical possibilities. For instance, in the conclusion, Fridman hints at—but does not systematically examine—the implications of his findings for theories of financialization, an area where his findings have great theoretical potential.

Yet, overall, *Freedom from Work* has much to recommend it. Fridman provides a well-written exploration into a fascinating community of persons whose enthusiastic support for neoliberalism adds important variation to our understanding of how individuals respond to shifting economic conditions. General readers curious about unique financial cultures will enjoy the rich ethnographic description and international case comparisons. And because the book documents theories of governmentality and performativity in interesting and unusual contexts, it will make a useful addition to undergraduate and graduate courses in economic or cultural sociology.