Resisting the lure of the paycheck: Freedom and dependence in financial self-help

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Abstract

Based on two years of fieldwork with fans of financial success best-sellers, this article analyzes the idea of financial freedom, which is the cornerstone of popular financial self-help resources. Fans of the genre train themselves and engage in business and investing with the main goal of reaching something that is at once mathematical and a condition of the self. Financial freedom is a specific equation between income and expenses that makes it possible to quit one's job while maintaining an income. But it is also a condition by which one has freed oneself from one's own fears and limitations in regards to money and investing and the need for security. Therefore, all practices directed at increasing one's wealth are also practices of the self that are directed at combating external and internal forms of dependence. The intellectual roots of the problematization of internal and external dependence are explored. The tension between freedom and security is illustrated through the example of the examination of one's family upbringing.

Keywords

Financial Freedom; Dependence; Neoliberal; Governmentality; Technologies of the self; Ethnography; Self-help

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Resisting the lure of self-publishing. In part one of this three-part series on publishing tips, I wrote about the steps to becoming a published author: choosing a compelling topic, creating a convincing proposal, finding a publisher, signing your contract, and starting the writing process. Now, let's talk about finding a publisher and the critical differences between self-publishing and conventional publishing. Self-publishing can take a number of forms. You can start your own publishing company or you can have your book published by an established subsidy publisher (also known as vanity publish...