In his 2016 book *Owners of the Sidewalk: Security and Survival in the Informal City*, Rutgers University’s Daniel M. Goldstein writes at an electric juncture of human geography, legal anthropology, and urban studies. At Bolivia’s well-known Cancha market in Cochabamba as the site of his ethnography, Goldstein maps the relationship between *fijo* (fixed) and *ambulante* (mobile) vendors to raise questions about social and spatial contestation amid nebulous legal landscapes. His key collaborators Don Silvio, Don Rafo, and Nacho (pseudonyms) assist Goldstein in making sense of the market’s oft-blurred physical boundaries and shifting social assemblages. Goldstein ultimately produces two requested “scientific” studies for his collaborative informants and advocates for sitting in the discomforting entanglements of being a “professional stranger”—a nod to anthropologist Michael Agar. Goldstein’s book is at times as much a powerful reflection on the complex value(s) and exchanges of ethnographic work as it is an ethnography of similar complexities in the Cancha.

*Owners of the Sidewalk* builds on Goldstein’s earlier writings about the structural production of (in)security, (in)formality, and symbols of disorder to which the state can selectively position itself as a necessary remedy. He offers his previously developed term “disregulation” as a framework for thinking about how such state-driven chaos and fluid public-private structures manifest in the Cancha. Goldstein weaves ideas about disregulation together with a brief history of social-scientific thinking on state management of labor—all while reflecting critically on his “situated node,” as feminist scholar Donna Haraway might say, in that discursive web. Goldstein similarly draws on canonical urban studies texts to understand Cochabamba’s colonial-era spatial planning as working in tandem with its postcolonial socioeconomic stratification to render certain laboring bodies as more “civilized” and “moral” than others. The Cancha’s *fijo* population may be classified as “legal” and enduring relative to the “illegal” and unstable ambulante vendors, though Goldstein emphasizes that these renderings, too, remain subject to change alongside the state’s shifting mechanisms of intervention. It is in this exploration of state-prescribed morality in public space that Goldstein opens important conversations about economic and social value(s) and exchange(s) in quasi-public, quasi-regulated markets. Goldstein ultimately takes seriously the mechanisms by which Cancha’s vendors articulate value(s) and engage in exchanges that at times uphold and at times radically resist the state’s ambivalent paternalism. Why Goldstein appears to advocate for state legitimation and visibility on behalf of the *fijos* while speaking with local stakeholders toward the end of his fieldwork remains unclear but merits further reflection.

Goldstein’s thirty-seven short, narrative chapters offer readers a simultaneously broad overview of—and impressively deep dive into—the themes and frameworks undergirding his work. At various points such structure led me to imagine that I
was actually flipping through sections of Goldstein's proverbial field-notebook—it’s somewhat-fragmented nature reflecting that of the market itself. Goldstein's explicit attempt to write accessibly to and for those who may not share his academic and/or spatial context manifests in his clear and relatively jargon-free writing style. His vivid imagery pulls readers into the Cancha’s social and physical “frenetic vortices” (70), wherein an occasional lack of Spanish translation may allow readers who do not speak the language to dwell in an in-between space akin to those discussed in his ethnography. These stylistic components derive from Goldstein's larger framework of activist anthropology, which seeks to critique extractive practices and reimagine epistemological futures. Goldstein invites readers into the processes of self-interrogation that he understands as necessary to work in solidarity with those most marginalized by certain structures of power. Exploring the occasionally blurry line between contemporary agents and objects of violence, Goldstein precisely identifies the roots of (in)security and (in)formality in the Cancha: European colonization and ongoing oppression.

Goldstein’s evocative descriptions of the market space are enhanced by his attention to what he perceives to be hauntingly absent: the Bolivian state, which takes on a phantom-like quality in *Owners of the Sidewalk.* Goldstein considers the ghostly ways that state regulation and surveillance appear and disappear in the Cancha’s everyday operations. He draws on writings by Michel De Certeau and Jacques Derrida to illustrate how the people and institutions moving through the Cancha leave substantial traces of themselves behind, and how they embed place-based meaning into its hazy geographical bounds. I was particularly struck by Goldstein’s reckoning with the city’s lack of official “memory” of the Cancha—though he perhaps misses the opportunity to draw parallels between such ambiguous institutions of preservation and his own spectral “flash” (brief, semi-structured, hyper-focused) interviews, often conducted by Goldstein while walking with the ambulantes. His meditation on how images and descriptions of the Cancha reflect fleeting, “particular moment[s] in its development to which it never

again actually corresponds” (90) aff/effectively unsettled me.

*Owners of the Sidewalk* would serve as an asset to introductory and/or methodological anthropology courses at undergraduate and graduate levels for its intertwining analysis and form. I was gleefully reminded of Jack J. Halberstam’s *The Queer Art of Failure* as I made my way through Goldstein’s reflective epilogue where he again identifies power in the frictions and disjunctures that challenge normative ideas of categorical conclusion and analytical progress. By leaning into the limitations of his own work, Goldstein encourages readers to attend to the possible alternatives that emerge from the “slippage” (23) between murky ethnographic landscapes and ethnographic practice itself.