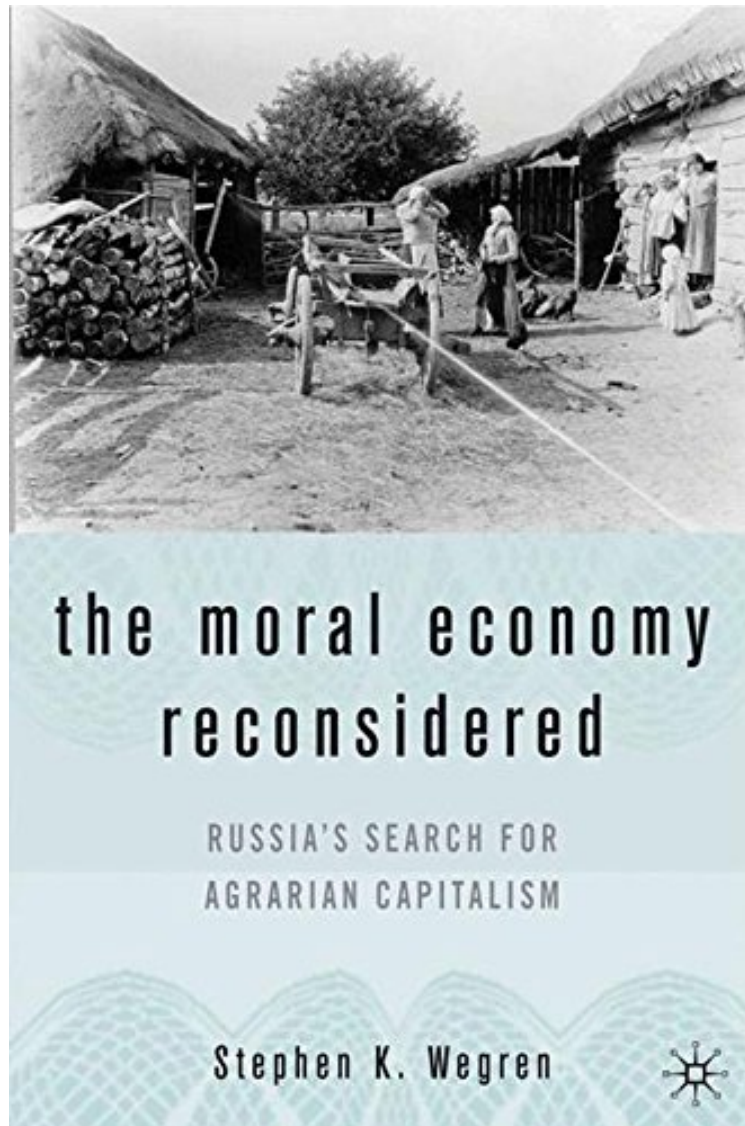


(Mobile pdf) The Moral Economy Reconsidered: Russias Search For Agrarian Capitalism

# The Moral Economy Reconsidered: Russias Search For Agrarian Capitalism

S. Wegren

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**S. Wegren : The Moral Economy Reconsidered: Russias Search For Agrarian Capitalism** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Moral Economy Reconsidered: Russias Search For Agrarian Capitalism:

Sure to be controversial and spur debate, this book presents a powerful analysis of rural change to marketization and globalization. Using Russia as a case study, it examines the how the rural population responded to reform policies during the transition away from communism. Wegren draws upon extensive field work, survey data, interviews, and wide-ranging Russian language source material to investigate adaptive behaviours by different groups of the rural population. The differentiated and nuanced analysis sheds considerable light on debates over whether actors are motivated mainly by rational or moral considerations.

"Contrary to the doomsayers, Wegren finds a great deal of social change in the Russian countryside. This in-depth and very carefully crafted research project, covering more than fifteen years, shows that if we look at the actual behavior of farm managers and ordinary rural residents they are reacting to reform much like we would expect rational actors to do. This work provides us with some genuine hope for the future of rural Russia." - David J. O'Brien, Professor of Rural Sociology, University of Missouri-Columbia "This is an ambitious and critically important reconceptualization of traditional theories of rural change and overturns our understanding of agrarian reform in Russia today. Rejecting conventional views of peasants and rural dwellers as isolated, conservative, collectivist, and anti-market, Wegren finds them to be individualistic, "rational," adaptive, even opportunistic, and, when historical circumstances or government reformers have offered economically realistic alternatives and incentives, very willing to take advantage of market-oriented possibilities. He demonstrates not only that contemporary reform has produced significant, market-oriented changes in the contemporary Russian countryside but also that actual outcomes have diverged markedly from the expectations of both government and observers, so much so, indeed, that he considers Russia's future agricultural development to lie with the reconstructed collective and state farms. All subsequent students of these subjects will, perforce, have to take notice of this compelling work." - David A.J. Macey, Middlebury College "A major virtue of this volume is the comparison of Russia's rural economy with other transition countries. At the heart of the book, however, is an examination of the fundamental character of peasant economy and polity. Wegren frames this question as a conflict between the age old "moral economy" of the peasants and commercial market farming. Karl Polanyi described the same phenomenon many years ago as a clash between economies that were embedded in local social relations and rational peasant responses to "price making markets." This volume will generate some welcome controversy again in the general field of rural studies. Wegren makes a very strong case for his view and backs it with solid empirical data." - James R. Millar, Professor of Economics and International Affairs, George Washington University

From the Inside Flap "Contrary to the doomsayers, Wegren finds a great deal of social change in the Russian countryside. This in-depth and very carefully crafted research project, covering more than fifteen years, shows that if we look at the actual behavior of farm managers and ordinary rural residents they are reacting to reform much like we would expect rational actors to do. This work provides us with some genuine hope for the future of rural Russia."-- David J. O'Brien, Professor of Rural Sociology, University of Missouri-Columbia "This is an ambitious and critically important reconceptualization of traditional theories of rural change and overturns our understanding of agrarian reform in Russia today. Rejecting conventional views of peasants and rural dwellers as isolated, conservative, collectivist, and anti-market, Wegren finds them to be individualistic, "rational," adaptive, even opportunistic, and, when historical circumstances or government reformers have offered economically realistic alternatives and incentives, very willing to take advantage of market-oriented possibilities. He demonstrates not only that contemporary reform has produced significant, market-oriented changes in the contemporary Russian countryside but also that actual outcomes have diverged markedly from the expectations of both government and observers, so much so, indeed, that he considers Russia's future agricultural development to lie with the reconstructed collective and state farms. All subsequent students of these subjects will, perforce, have to take notice of this compelling work."--David A.J. Macey, Middlebury College