

Jörg Goldberg: Die Emanzipation des Südens. Die Neuerfindung des Kapitalismus aus Tradition und Weltmarkt, Köln: PapyRossa Verlag 2015, 326 S.

Rezensiert von
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After completing the reading, I was left wondering. The emancipation of the 'Global South' is a highly relevant topic, yet what exactly is the book's aim, and for which audience?

In a dense presentation of figures, historical developments, and interpretations of capitalism, it is not always evident what the author's intentions are. At the start of the book (p. 9), Goldberg rightly points to the fact that current forms of modes of production are facing their limits, due to an increasing pressure on the globe's capacities. In the book's last paragraph (p. 314), he comes back to it and, again rightly, argues that a larger say of the 'Global South' in global regulations does not automatically lead to a stronger focus on sustainability and human rights instead of on efficiency and private property. With his central focus of capitalist modes of production throughout the book, this is a very worthwhile investigation – even without including the 'Global South'. Yet in between the first and last pages of the book Goldberg does not treat the question in much detail. It is symbolic one of the book's limitations: the author opens up too

many (relevant) thoughts and leads, which eventually harms the book's coherence.

More closely resembling the book's actual content appears Goldberg's intention to better understand the integration of 'Global South' countries into global capitalism that occurred over the last decades. A very worthwhile investigation. He also lives much more up to it. Notwithstanding, it probably depends on the audience whether his analysis of the integration offers much new. If the intended audience is academic, certainly the ones with already a substantial knowledge about global capitalism and/or the 'Global South', book may not offers sufficient new insights though, it still contains several interesting thoughts. For an audience that wants to better understand the latest developments, however, the book may serve its purposes. With an abundance of figures and illustrations of historical developments, it provides a wide overview about how regions like Asia, Africa, and Latin America have adapted to the latest expansion of global capitalism. In the first part Goldberg discusses the changing position of the 'Global South' and the relevance of European institutions within the development of modern capitalism. With among others the illustration of a number of tables, he convincingly demonstrates that (compared to fifty to hundred-fifty years ago, depending on the table) contribution of Western countries to the world economy has shrunk substantially. Countries within the 'Global South', conversely, have increased their part. This is in itself a good start to indicate that we are witnessing a significant global shift within the world economy. Subsequently, Goldberg includes a historical analysis of capitalism as a European invention. Al-

though I share his opinion that a strong historical foundation helps to understand the developments he investigates, I also started to have some reservations about how the book exactly hangs together.

Goldberg's prose is very dense and structural, and with a lot of (additional) questions the coherence of the argument becomes somewhat obscured. The depth of his argument rather comes from discussing known theories and developments than that he links this to new insights. Whether this matters, as said, may depend on the reader. Yet for me it would have been a more convincing read if the book had included tangible and telling examples that would have supported and exemplified Goldberg's argument. I would probably have easier followed what he was after, while these examples at the same time might have provided the reader with new insights. For example, with author's treatment of (capitalist) modes of production, Marx could certainly not have failed. References to Marx also help to point to the tensions between the unifying tendencies of capitalist structures and local and historical specificities. Yet Goldberg never really drifts off with interesting (new) findings and illustrations of how exactly Marxian thought is helpful in understanding these developments.

When the intention of the book is to provide the reader with a better understanding of how countries within the 'Global South' successfully reinforced their position within the global economy, then I would have been keen to learn more about why a treatment of modes of production is of key relevance to understanding this integration – or lack thereof. Goldberg seems to implicitly start from the assump-

tion that many people/readers/thinkers/academics consider the 'Global South's' changing position not self-evident, because many countries within these regions were until recently characterised by non-capitalist modes of production. There may well be people who still start from this assumption, though (in my own bubble) I encounter few who still support this idea. Yet even if this had been the case, it would have been helpful to explicitly include tensions between different modes of production from the historical overview of European capitalism onwards. On page 60, for example, Goldberg states that the institutions we in Europe associate with modern capitalism are in reality much older. From a comparative perspective, it would have been insightful to learn how these institutions exactly adapted to the (gradual) introduction of capitalism. What were the struggles? What were the tensions between non-capitalist modes of production (which were also very much present in Europe) and capitalist modes of production? How did people (gradually) embrace capitalist thinking? Plenty of examples demonstrate that also in Europe this was not self-evident, yet now we learn comparatively little about it. For the coherence with the second part of the book, however, this would have been helpful.

There a number of regions in the 'Global South' are discussed. As the author had already mentioned on page 28, there are too many varieties to speak of 'the' ascent of the 'Global South'. To demonstrate some of these varieties, he discusses China, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America in more detail. China, the book's fourth chapter, is of course central to the book's quest, since it nowadays is a global economic power-

house. The reasons why China, economically at par with Europe two hundred years ago, lagged behind have received plenty of attention over the years. Also, there has been much scholarly work devoted to how the country managed to catch up over the last decades. Goldberg's intention, it seems, is to illustrate China's changing position through its institutions, such as a central state (and decentralisation), kin and family, and private property. In his discussion on the role of institutions in the ascent of capitalism, this is important. It helps to counter the assumption that countries with remarkably different institutions than the ones central to capitalist development in the West cannot also embrace capitalist modes of production. Though this analysis is not very new, for readers without a good knowledge of China the chapter in itself provides a concise overview.

Sub-Sahara Africa, Goldberg's main terrain of expertise, subsequently deals particular with the role of natural resources and the continent's informal economy. Contrary to the doom scenarios about Africa, the author also sees a number of hopeful developments (p. 172), such as the diversification of African economies, the fact that African countries may increase their say in international treaties, and better control over multinational firms operating within their boundaries. The chapter contains relevant information, but coming back to the coherence of the book, it would have been helpful to have a more explicit analysis of why and how developments within the continent can be compared to China, both for their similarities and differences. With Goldberg's longstanding relationship with the continent, I would equally have been pleased to learn more about particu-

lar cases – apart from South Africa – and how within these, for example, diversification took shape, an important element of a more mature economy after all. What exactly is different today than say thirty years ago, and why? And how have African institutions contributed to this change? Also, what about the role of the alleged increase of middle classes on the continent as well as the role of mobile money, a development in which a number of African countries are at the global forefront – especially compared to Germany.

In chapter 6, Goldberg moves on to Latin America. Central themes here are class and skin colour, which have been important characteristics of economic exclusion in the region. Goldberg again provides a concise overview of (historical) developments on the continent, including the dominance of family conglomerates. But with his treatment of the relevance of nation building and nationalism (in line with Benedict Anderson), it also adds another layer to the confusion about the book's coherence and intentions. I am not against including nationalism and ethnicity, as in actually all cases these phenomena may play important roles, yet by including them only in this chapter they somewhat obscures the book's comparative aim. It is another example of the fact that though many of the themes Goldberg include are relevant in their own right, they also distract the reader from what the main argument is – at least, this reader.

In part three, Goldberg finally intends to all bring it together. In light of what seems to be his main argument, he presents a number of relevant observations, such as the fact that the variety of forms and institutions does not prevent the spread of

capitalist modes of production. We may, according to him, actually witness a growing differentiation, since countries in the ‘Global South’ will more and more emancipate from a capitalism dominated by European and North-American countries (p. 276). This, he probably rightly points out, does not contradict an increasing integration of global markets for commodities, services, information, and capital. Yet participation within global markets is, in the end of the day brokered by nation states. Nation states, accordingly, remain important, and thus also the varieties of institutions between them. I think these are very valid observations, yet I would have hoped to learn more about what the differences and similarities are and how exactly these matter in the (un)successful integration into the global economy. Following from the successful ascent of ‘Global South’ countries, moreover, it also begs the question whether particular institutions in the West contribute to its descent. For most of the world’s inhabitants this probably matters little, because as Goldberg (correctly) highlights, capitalism in the ‘Global South’ is not more sympathetic as in the West and the other way around. Why this is exactly the case, however, probably deserves another investigation.

Hennie van Vuuren: Apartheid Guns and Money. A Tale of Profit, Auckland Park: Jacana Media 2017, 624 p.

Reviewed by
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The book we have here at hands fills a significant gap in the understanding of how the South African state, during the years of Apartheid, was engaged in criminal arms deals, thereby ensuring the minority regime’s survival. It also shows how South Africans secretly managed to influence international opinion in favour of Apartheid in many ways, when things turned against them following campaigns by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and international sanctions and embargoes.

Illuminating insights into how sanction-busting under successive heads of government and the private sector flourished are provided in this important book. Important corruption is still a major issue in South Africa today and can be traced back to Apartheid days and must be considered a lasting continuity. While demonstrating in detail how sanctions were broken and secret funds spent to obtain state of the art weapons, the author cautions that more research needs to be done to bring to light Apartheid’s well-kept secrets.

The book counts 624 pages and is divided into 13 chapters, preceded by an introduction. In the latter, van Vuuren discusses seven “myths”, which serve as underlying reference points in the remainder of the