

somewhat confusing period in the history of development” (p. 127). New actors came into play. The (capitalist) world economic order was no longer fundamentally questioned only by the states of the Eastern Bloc, but also by numerous actors in important international organisations and the Non-Alignment Movement; ultimately, it did not change – at least not in favour of the Global South. Rural development came back into focus. In this case, Unger sees “a notably similarity” to “development approaches of the first half of the twentieth century” (p. 140). Since the 1980s, things have become even more confusing. The rise of approaches that rely on market mechanisms is unmistakable. The collapse of the socialist world system further discredited the planning of economic development. The West tried to transfer its models through the Washington Consensus, as well as with the demand for “good governance”. At the same time, NGOs were intensifying their activities. This applies all the more to China and other former recipients of aid, which had turned into providers of aid. Finally, a debate was emerging not only about the meaning of development policy, but also about the limits of development itself, especially taking into account the global ecological crises. Unger mentions these problems without analysing them more deeply. She herself states that “comparative historical studies” on development policy of the last four decades “are scarce” (p. 151).

The book’s strength therefore lies primarily in its balanced analysis of development policy from the 1920s to the 1970s. Due to its broad range of topics, it contains some information and makes connections visible that are new and interesting even

for specialists. Above all, however, the book is very suitable as an introduction for students of global studies or similar courses, where it can be a good supplement and sometimes also an important correction to economic and social science literature.

Binhong Shao (ed.): Political Economy of Globalization and China’s Options, Leiden/Boston: Brill 2018, 241 pp.

Reviewed by
Matthias Middell, Leipzig

This volume is both a research treatise and a contemporary document. Published at the end of the first year of Donald Trump’s presidency in the USA as well as half a year after President Xi Jinping’s unlimited mandate in office made it into the constitution and after the China Dream as a programme of future development for the country had been formulated, the contributors – all prominent scholars from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the leading research universities with leadership responsibilities in China’s strategic knowledge production – take the occasion to assess current developments and to look ahead. The tone of the volume is set by the Academy’s vice president Cai Fang, who, with great optimism about globalization, sees the developed industrialized countries in a political crisis. He pinpoints that this crisis is the result of insufficient management of the enormous global dynamics

during the past two decades, which China has successfully harnessed for its further development.

China is therefore expected to become the pole of globalization winners, while the West is increasingly dragged down by the resistance of globalization losers. Between the reforms beginning in 1978 and continuing up to 2014, China reduced the proportion of its population living from agriculture from 70 to 19 per cent and created jobs in the manufacturing sector through a labour-intensive export industry and, at the same time, systematically increased its technological level through its own and foreign investments and thus reduced its dependence on relatively simple export products. Its position in the global economic cycle has therefore changed tremendously, which is why one should not be deceived by the continuously high export rates. China's strategic position would therefore be best strengthened by a straightforward continuation of its globalization policy, which would now have to be flanked by a greater political embeddedness, say in the shaping of international relations and organizations. In such an undertaking, China would increasingly act as a mouthpiece for developing countries seeking to free themselves from the captivity of entanglements with the West.

The following essays offer further facets of the same discourse. Throughout their texts, the authors address the question of how China can profit from the current situation and what strategic options seem appropriate in this regard: Long Guoqiang argues for technological upgrading and securing a peaceful environment in which this transformation can proceed without the additional cost of military adventures;

Ye He argues for a new understanding of globalization in which financial capital should play a lesser role and labour a greater role in the future, which certainly resonates with those parts of the world where labour feels exploited by external actors. Li Xiangyang argues strongly against China simply filling the vacancy left by the USA in global governance but also sees the need for a reformulation of a globalization project that is distinctly different from that of the USA. Yao Zhizhong follows this up and identifies as challenges that the (on average since 1945 very) high investments in research no longer translate into corresponding growth rates and that profits from global economies of scale in production and transregional division of labour must be used more to reduce a rapidly growing domestic and international inequality. In contrast, Huang Qunhui focuses on the entirely new nature of China's industrialization through its intertwining with processes of informatization, and therefore the use of this potentially different quality of the Chinese economy should be reconsidered for the future.

Further essays then follow by offering proposals for China's upgrading in global value chains, while another series of contributions comment on the uncertainty of how the world would likely evolve under Trump's aegis and whether this would change the strategic environment for all the planning that the volume reflects. As is well known, in the meantime that has happened to the point of a trade war, and the US president has identified China as the central challenge to the hegemony of the US economy and policy, which has earned him accusations of underestimating Russia and treating it too kindly. However, one

can question whether Trumps policy was actually sufficiently profound and long-term to be perceived in Beijing as a change in what the authors of this volume would address as a strategic environment.

The volume offers an interesting insight into how China's top scholars view "the globalization" and propose to align their country's policies with it. Interestingly, while there is a contribution on nuclear safety in the volume (Fu Xiaohu), there is effectively not a word on the challenges of climate change or global resource justice. China's most prominent institutions in the social sciences still seem quite caught up in observing the US as the current hegemon whose replacement is in the offing and which one wants to support with the tools of nationally underpinned analysis. The question of what problems the new world order is supposed to solve, apart from a bit of criticism of the West's cyclical crisis-ridden capitalism, still remains pretty much in the dark.

Mark Thurner (ed.): *The First Wave of Decolonization*, New York: Routledge 2019, 162 pp.

Reviewed by
Matthew Brown, Bristol

The First Wave of Decolonization is an important book in many ways. It brings together a stellar collection of historians – Mark Thurner, Francisco Ortega, Lina

del Castillo, Marixa Lasso, James Sanders, Barbara Weinstein, and Federica Morelli. Their chapters are all well-written engagements with the central questions: what does decolonization look like if its history begins in the nineteenth century rather than the twentieth century and if it is decentred from the British and French empires and their historiographies?

First of all, this was a great idea for a book. It will chime with any historian of Latin America who has ever grumbled their way through a book or conference on decolonization, chuntering that the experiences of the Iberian empires and the people who resisted and dismantled them were constantly ignored or marginalized by dominant understandings of decolonization. It is the first book in a new series, Routledge Studies in Global Latin America. It is to be hoped that many future publications will be stimulated and that they can keep up the high standard set here.

In his introduction, Thurner proves a splendid, informed guide through the semantics of decolonization, identifying the early use of the term *colonialje* – the colonial system – in 1820s Peru and showing how this usage and the experiences it emerged from have been routinely neglected by subsequent global historians. Francisco Ortega picks apart the understandings of "colonia" amongst Spanish speakers in the Americas, revealing how it developed meanings of internal division and guardianship that implied future "emancipation" (p. 18).

Lina del Castillo's fabulous chapter on "Inventing Columbia/Colombia" has gone straight into the key reading section of the course I teach: "Colombian History and Culture since Independence". The chapter