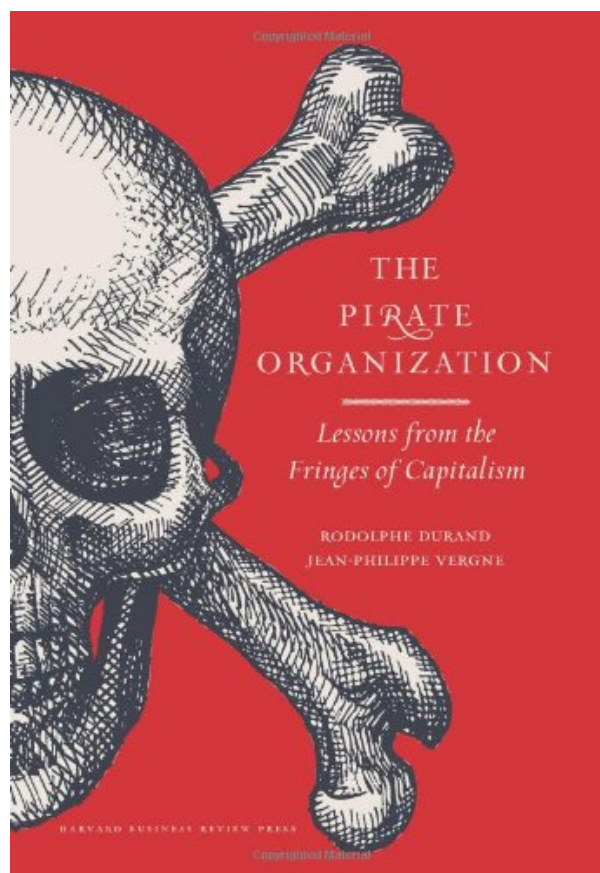
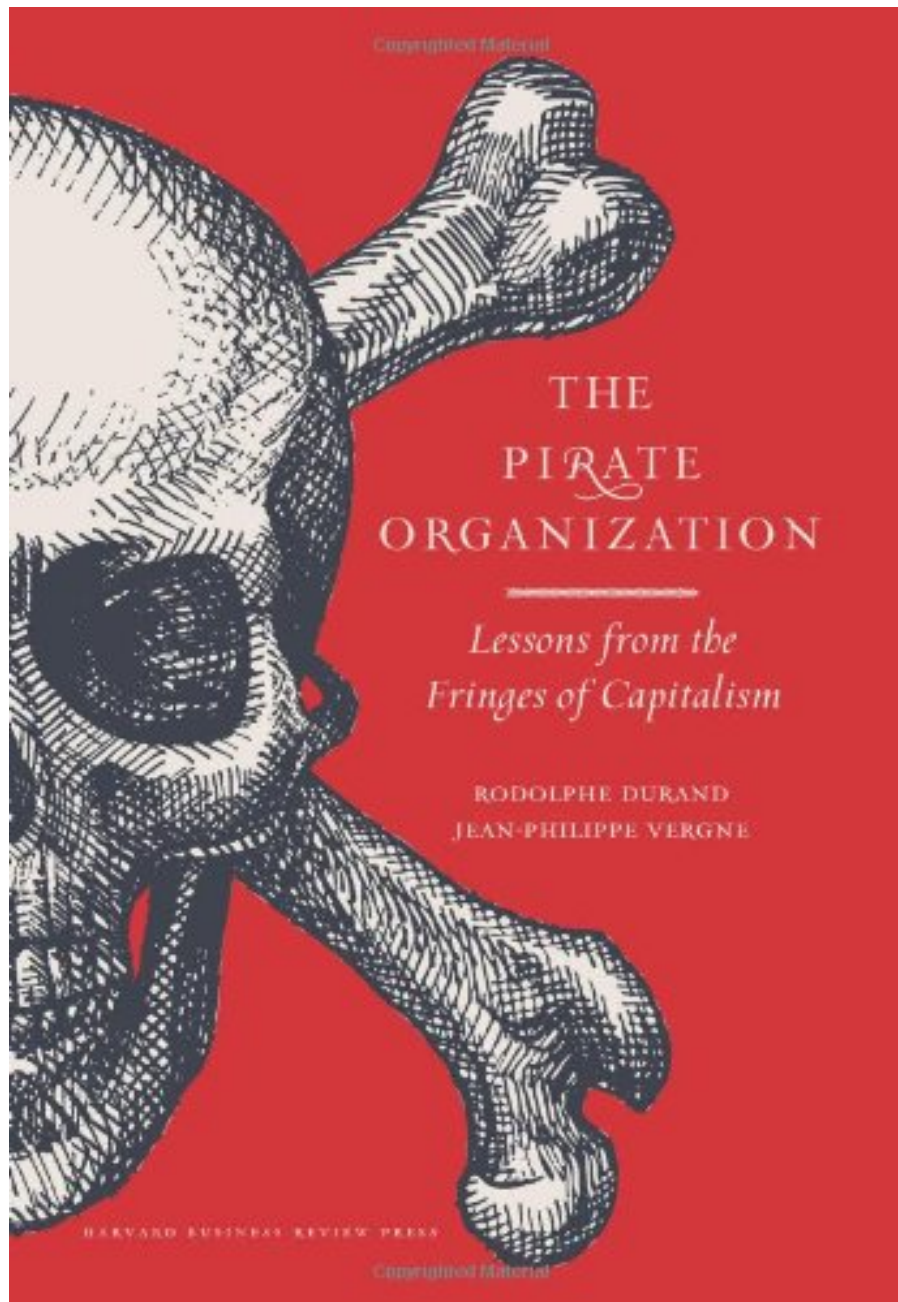


**THE PIRATE ORGANIZATION: LESSONS
FROM THE FRINGES OF CAPITALISM BY
RODOLPHE DURAND, JEAN-PHILIPPE
VERGNE**



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Review

"...this is a stimulating book filled with new ideas. Philosophically minded land-lubbers will enjoy it just as much as barnacle-backs." — The Economist

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About the Author

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THE PIRATE ORGANIZATION: LESSONS FROM THE FRINGES OF CAPITALISM BY RODOLPHE DURAND, JEAN-PHILIPPE VERGNE PDF

A short history of piracy and capitalism

When capitalism spread along the trade routes toward the Indies...when radio opened an era of mass communication . . . when the Internet became part of the global economy...pirates were there. And although most people see pirates as solitary anarchists out to destroy capitalism, it turns out the opposite is true. They are the ones who forge the path.

In *The Pirate Organization*, Rodolphe Durand and Jean-Philippe Vergne argue that piracy drives capitalism's evolution and foreshadows the direction of the economy. Through a rigorous yet engaging analysis of the history and golden ages of piracy, the authors show how pirates form complex and sophisticated organizations that change the course of capitalism. Surprisingly, pirate organizations also behave in predictable ways: challenging widespread norms; controlling resources, communication, and transportation; maintaining trade relationships with other communities; and formulating strategies favoring speed and surprise. We could learn a lot from them—if only we paid more attention.

Durand and Vergne recommend that rather than trying to stamp out piracy, savvy entrepreneurs and organizations should keep a sharp eye on the pirate space to stay successful as the game changes—and it always does.

First published in French to great critical acclaim and commercial success as *L'Organisation Pirate: Essai sur l'évolution du capitalisme*, this book shows that piracy is not random. It's predictable, it cannot be separated from capitalism, and it likely will be the source of capitalism's continuing evolution.

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- Used Book in Good Condition

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6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Timid and tame

By Eric Traub

I expected more of a book about piracy as pertains to economics and capitalism, especially with such a splashy cover, and supposedly embracing ideas from Deleuze, Guattari, and Sloterdijk. Instead, the authors seem to almost want to reassure State-run capitalism that any naughty pirates out there are actually a beneficial force and will soon be happily absorbed into the system. It's ironic that the spirit of the Outlaw is precisely what's missing from this book. A few nice ideas scattered amidst a whole lotta text. Intelligent writing for the most part, but timid and tame. This probably made for an interesting paper once (downloadable through their website) and became a book by adding useless filler. Too bad. Not the worst

thing I've read recently, but nothing significant gained by the effort in this case.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

How non-conformists influence capitalism

By John Gibbs

Piracy could very well be one of the drivers of capitalism's growth and evolution, according to Rodolphe Durand and Jean-Philippe Vergne in this book. Pirates have appeared at major turning points in the history of capitalism: when capitalism began to spread along the trading routes towards the West Indies, when radio opened an era of mass communication, when the Internet became part of the global economy, and when the biotech revolution began.

To support their argument, the authors have adopted a special definition of "pirate". Humble Somali pirates who rake in mere tens of millions of dollars with their banditry do not qualify. Instead, true pirates have the following characteristics:

- * they enter into a conflictive "relationship" with the state, especially when the state claims to be the sole source of sovereignty;
- * they operate in an organized manner on uncharted territory, from a set of support bases located outside this territory, over which the state typically claims sovereign control;
- * they develop, as alternative communities, a series of discordant norms that, according to them, should be used to regulate uncharted territory; and
- * ultimately, they represent a threat to the state by contesting the state's control and the activities of the legal entities that operate under its jurisdiction, such as for-profit corporations and monopolies.

The authors draw a distinction between pirates, who operate as enemies to all states, and corsairs, who are sponsored by one state but regarded as pirates by other states. Thus Sir Francis Drake was part pirate and part corsair, and Chinese hackers who steal information from Western companies are sometimes corsairs.

According to the authors, the pirates of the Caribbean and Madagascar pioneered a number of important institutions. A pirate captain was elected on the democratic vote of all members of the pirate organization. The captain was in charge of maritime operations, but the quartermaster was in charge of distributing rations and booty and managing conflicts, so that a form of separation of powers existed. Pirate captains did not get preferential treatment; equality prevailed. The wounded were given extra pay, an early form of social insurance. Thus pirates pioneered democracy, separation of powers, equality and social insurance.

The book provides interesting ideas about pirate radio stations and anti-copyright activists, but when Wikileaks and patent trolls are referred to as pirates, the analogy seems to have been stretched a bit too far. Pirates are portrayed more as Gilbert-and-Sullivan-style do-gooders than as the violent aggressors that they always have been and Somali pirates still are. Nonetheless the book contains plenty of thought-provoking discussion about the impact of non-conformist organizations on the evolution of capitalism.

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Fun Read with a Few Caveats....

By David S. Wellhauser

This is a book for people who already have a firm grounding in the history of piracy. If you do, then you are in for a treat as the reader gets an enjoyable analysis of piracy past and present. This reading of piracy is from France so it has less to do with the objective world than it does the world of textuality and endlessly defining and re-defining this textuality.

If you are familiar with post-structuralism the reader will get more out of the book than if they weren't. There

is also a left of center reading of piracy and its relationship to capitalism. This part of the text is less convincing, but still fascinating.

Rating: 3 out of 5 Stars.

Worth a look if you are a critic of capitalism but still see a future for and if you enjoy late capitalist post-structural thought without the jargon.

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