



Introduction

The idea of Racial Capitalism has its origins at the intersection of Black Radical Thought and Marxism. Cedric Robinson and his 1983 book, *Black Marxism*, are often credited as its starting point, though as Robinson himself notes in the book, the discussion has earlier origins, including in the writings of Oliver Cox, WEB Dubois, and others.

This short primer is an introduction to the discussion, less with a goal of uncovering its history and more to provide accessible and useful tools to think with.

Recommended Materials

To Read

- Cedric Robinson, “Racial Capitalism: The Nonobjective Character of Capitalist Development” in *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (2000), [link](#).
- Robin D. G. Kelley, “What did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism?” *Boston Review*, Jan. 2017, [link](#).
- Jodi Melamed, “Racial Capitalism,” *Critical Ethnic Studies* (2015), Vol. 1(1): 76-85, [link](#).
- Olúfẹ̀mi O Táíwò, “On Liberty, Security, and Our System of Racial Capitalism,” *aeon*, Oct. 2020, [link](#).
- Olúfẹ̀mi O Táíwò, “The Fight for Reparations Cannot Ignore Climate Change,” *Boston Review*, Jan. 2022, [link](#).
- Nikita Stewart, Ryan Christopher Jones, Sergio Peçanha, Jeffrey Furticella and Josh Williams, “Underground Lives: The Sunless World of Immigrants in Queens,” Oct. 2019, [link](#).

To Listen

- *Kali Akuno: Racism, Jackson's Water Crisis, And The Need For Mass Movements (23 mins)*, The Marc Steiner Show, Sep. 2022, [link](#).

To Watch

- Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Geographies of Racial Capitalism (17 mins)*, Antipode Foundation Film, Jun. 2020, [link](#).



Suggested Materials for Further Learning

To Read

- Excerpts from: W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (1935) (“The Black Worker”; “The White Worker”; “The Propaganda of History.”), [link](#).
- Excerpts from Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (2007) (“Introduction”; “The California Political Economy”), [link](#).
- Excerpts from Nikhil Singh, *Race and America’s Long War* (2017) (“Preface”; “Introduction”), [link](#).
- Stuart Hall, “Race, Articulation, & Societies Structured in Dominance,” in *Essential Essays, Volume 1: Foundations of Cultural Studies* (2019), [link](#).
- Ruth Wilson Gilmore, “Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference: Notes on Racism and Geography,” *The Professional Geographer* (2002), Vol. 54(1): 15-24, [link](#).
- Michael C. Dawson, “Racial Capitalism and Democratic Crisis,” *Items*, Dec. 2018, [link](#).
- Jodi Melamed and Chandan Reddy, “Using Liberal Rights to Enforce Racial Capitalism,” *Items*, Jul. 2019, [link](#).
- Chandan Reddy, “Neoliberalism then and Now: Race, Sexuality, and the Black Radical Tradition,” *GLQ* (2019), Vol. 25(1): 150-155, [link](#).
- Denise Ferreira da Silva, “No-Bodies: Law, Raciality, and Violence,” *Griffith L. Rev.* (2009) Vol. 18(2): 212-236, [link](#).
- Renee Hatcher, “Solidarity Economy Lawyering,” *Tenn. J. of Race, Gender, and Social Justice* (2019), Vol. 8, [link](#).
- Amna A. Akbar, “Demands for a Democratic Political Economy,” *Harv. L. Rev. F.*, Vol. 134(1), [link](#).
- Ed Whitfield, “What must we do to be free? On the building of Liberated Zones,” *Prabuddha: Journal of Social Equality* (2018), Vol. 2(1) 45-58, [link](#).
- Sameer Ashar, Renee Hatcher, And John Whitlow, “Law Clinics and Racial Capitalism,” *LPE Blog*, Nov. 2022, [link](#).
- Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (2002).
- Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (1983).
- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963).



Suggested Materials for Further Learning (Cont'd)

To Read

- Policing the Planet, Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter (Jordan T. Camp and Christina Heatherton eds., 2016).
- Jordan T. Camp and Christina Heatherton, "The World We Want: An Interview with Cedric and Elizabeth Robinson," in *Futures of Black Radicalism* (Gaye Theresa Johnson and Alex Lubin eds., 2017).
- Nara Roberta Silva, "'Defund the Police': Strategy and Struggle for Racial Justice in the US," in *Social movements and Politics during COVID-19: Crisis, Solidarity and Change in a Global Pandemic* (Breno Bringel and Geoffrey Pleyers eds., 2022).
- Lester K. Spence, *Knocking the Hustle: Against Neoliberal Turn in Black Politics* (2015).

To Listen

- Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Robin Kelley, and Olúfẹ̀mí Táíwò, *Interview from the Socialism 2022 Conference in Chicago (96 mins)*, The Dig, Sep. 2022, [link](#).

To Watch

- David Harvey, *David Harvey and the City (13 mins)*, Antipode Foundation Film, Jun. 2020, [link](#).
- Robin D. G. Kelley, *What Is Racial Capitalism and Why Does It Matter? (62 mins)*, Simpson Center for the Humanities, Nov. 2017, [link](#).
- Jordan T. Camp, *Resurgent Nationalisms and the Challenges of the Current Conjuncture (an interview with Gillian Hart) (60mins)*, *Conjuncture* S1 Ep. 2, Jan. 2022, [link](#).
- Jordan T. Camp, *Against Pessimism (an interview with Robin D. G. Kelley) (72 mins)*, *Conjuncture* S2 Ep. 1, Aug. 2022, [link](#).

Selected Sources

- LPE's [Racial Capital Bibliography](#).
- UC Davis' [Selected Readings on Racial Capitalism](#).
- Destin Jenkins' [Histories of Racial Capitalism Syllabus](#).
- Pedro A. Regalado's [Race and Capitalism in American Cities Syllabus](#).

