

Racial Capitalism

Cedric Robinson & Satnam Virdee



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- According to Satnam Virdee, how is the production of difference intrinsic to the workings of capitalism?
- Why is thinking about slavery and racialization necessary to understand capitalism?
- Is racialization always based on color?



IRISH IBERIAN.



ANGLO-TEUTONIC.



NEGRO.

The Iberians are believed to have been originally an African race, who thousands of years ago spread themselves through Spain over Western Europe. Their remains are found in the barrows, or burying places, in sundry parts of these countries. The skulls are of low, prognathous type. They came to Ireland, and mixed with the natives of the South and West, who themselves are supposed to have been of low type and descendants of savages of the Stone Age, who, in consequence of isolation from the rest of the world, had never been out-competed in the healthy struggle of life, and thus made way, according to the laws of nature, for superior races.

Constable, H. Strickland. From *Ireland from One or Two Neglected Points of View*. Liberty Review Pub. Co., 1899. This material is in the public domain.

Theories to help us understand contemporary transformations in capitalism (David Harvey, Guy Standing, Vanessa Ogle, J.K. Gibson-Graham):

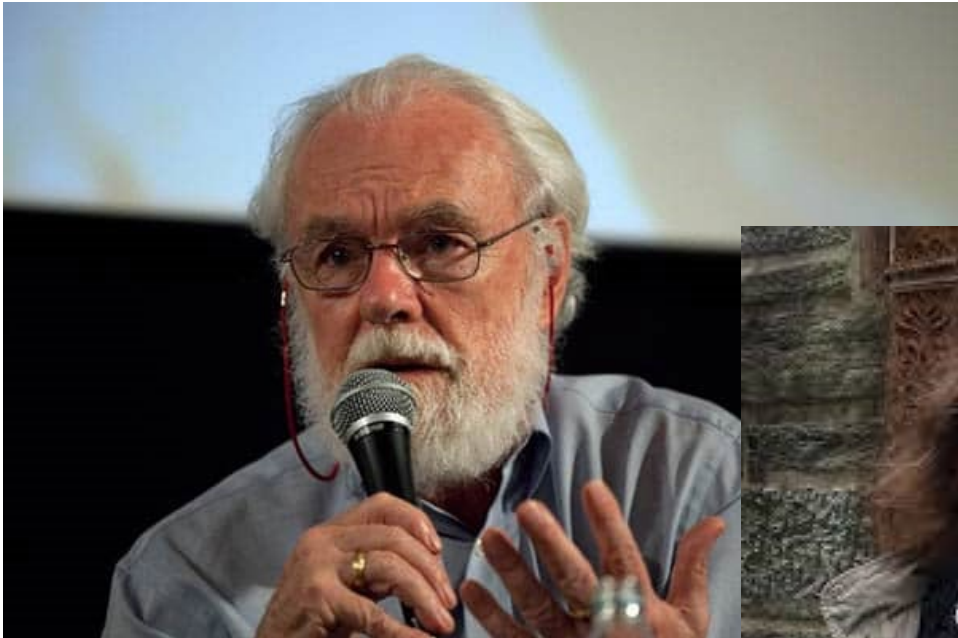


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David Harvey,

Condition of Postmodernity, 1989:

argues there has been a shift from a post WWII
FORDIST/KEYNSIAN regime to one of FLEXIBLE
ACCUMULATION beginning in 1973



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Fordist/Keynsianism WWII - 1973

- **Economy oriented around manufacturing**
- **social contract - model of worker lack of control over work process but high wages and more social time**
- **long term commitment between workers and employers**
- **Keynsian welfare state – where government programs to cushion social impacts of capitalism**
- **macroeconomic or state monitoring of economy**

Flexible Accumulation 1973 to ?

- **Emphasis on work flexibility and cutting labor costs (temp, contract, part-time work, off-shoring)**
- **Shift to emphasis from manufacturing to service economy**
- **State- pull back and deregulation**
- **Speed up in products, faster turn over rates**
- **Growing importance of knowledge**
- **Paper entrepreneurialism (increasing centrality of finance)**

WHY THE SHIFT TO FLEXIBLE ACCUMULATION?

Is There a New Class Structure in Place?

Guy Standing – *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (2011)

- rethinks conceptions of classes putting increased “precariousness” at center
- precarity doesn't break down simply along lines of educated/uneducated (affects refugees as well as well-educated contract workers)
- those made economically precarious can swing politically right or left and follow demagogues

TAX HAVENS – What about the Money that Gets Hidden?

From Vanessa Ogle, Archipelago Capitalism, American Historical Review, 2017

- Since 1990s 30% of all foreign direct investment happens in or passes through tax havens
-
- 60% of world's fleet tonnage registered under flags of convenience
-
- 7.6 trillion or 8% of total global wealth more than half of what the poorer half of world's population owns
-
- 55% of US foreign corporate profits “earned” in low-tax countries, i.e. loss of \$130 billion in corporate tax dollars for US budget
-
- Revenue earned from corporate taxes in US has gone down from 33% in 1950s to 10% even though record profits

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