

Racial Capitalism: Marxism Meets Postcolonial Studies

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After decades of academic neglect, racial capitalism has advanced as a much-discussed concept. In recent years the “Black Lives Matter” movement has raised awareness for the complex relationship between racism and capitalism which is again debated in both activist and academic discussions. Meanwhile, the concept is gaining impact on numerous social fields and disciplines of critical social sciences. However, the frequent use of the concept is accompanied by unclear or even contradictory lines of argument, such as the following problems: Is the entanglement of racism and capitalism contingent or does it follow a line of causations? How are racism and capitalism defined and how have they been historically classified? How does the relationship between racism and capitalism differ in different world regions and time periods? And how can the domination nexus of racism and capitalism be overcome?

These questions are admittedly not new and date back to intense debates already fought the 1980s; furthermore they are closely connected to strategic struggles within anti-colonial movements. Against this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that the classical works of the “Black Radical” tradition (WEB Du Bois, Eric Williams, CLR James, Claudia Jones, Frantz Fanon, Walter Rodney, Angela Davis and others) are being re-read and reinterpreted in order to understand, criticize and overcome current conditions. These authors have worked out the relevance of racism and (post-)colonialism for capitalist societies based on Marxist categories and as a critique of a Eurocentric Marxism. Moreover, beyond the concept of racial capitalism, these debates are of utmost relevance for a critical social theory and practice.

Since the 1990s at the latest, the tension between Marxism and postcolonial studies has overshadowed corresponding discussions in academia and in social movements. At times, the fronts have hardened to such an extent that the two critical perspectives see each other as antagonists and theoretical, methodological and political differences seem unbridgeable. Most recently, this was evident in the heated debate that Vivek Chibber’s *Postcolonial Theory and the Spectre of Capital* has triggered. In contrast, current discussions on racial capitalism provide promising starting points for research that does justice to both perspectives.

We invite contributions which engage with the following topics and issues:

Marxism and Postcolonialism

- Which ontological, epistemological and politico-strategic tensions arise from historical-materialist and post-structuralist explanations of the relationship between racism and capitalism? How can they be overcome?

Racism and Capital Accumulation

- How is the relationship between racism and capitalism articulated in contemporary social relations?
- What role do state organs (e.g. the police, border and migration regimes, authoritarian-racist governments) play in securing the racist-capitalist (re)mode of production?
- What role does racist oppression play in processes of capital accumulation and vice versa (using historically and geographically specific analyses)?
- How do trends of financialisation and digitalisation change patterns of racist oppression and exploitation?

Neo-colonialism and imperialism in international relations

- To what extent are geopolitics, imperialism and neo-colonialism shaped by and through racism today?
- How does this interconnectedness manifest itself in international cooperation/development policy?
- What is the significance of counter-hegemonic forums of international political economy (e.g. in the tradition of Bandung or the struggle for a New World Economic Order)?

Global value creation and the international division of labour

- How do global value chains reflect racist structures?
- How does the international division of labour simultaneously reproduce economic (over)exploitation as well as racist oppression and challenge social forces?

Race, class and gender

- To what extent are regimes and crises of social reproduction, gendered labour division, and patriarchal domination permeated by racism?
- How is racism experienced in everyday life and what role do class and gender play in this experience?
- What perspectives do feminist political economy approaches offer for intertwining Marxist and postcolonial research perspectives on an intersectional scale?

Climate justice

- How are the climate crisis, fossil infrastructures, strategies of a green economy, and struggles for climate justice shaped by and through (anti-)racism and (anti-)capitalism?

Political strategies of social movements

- What questions and insights does the political practice/organisation of emancipatory struggles offer for engaging with race, class, and capital?
- What practical consequences result from the synthesis of historical-materialist and postcolonial research?
- What contradictions and possibilities arise for international solidarity, labour struggles and social movement strategies (identity politics, unifying class politics, etc.)?

The editorial deadline for articles is
25 April 2024.

Manuscripts, feedback on possible contributions and further questions should be sent to info@zeitschrift-peripherie.de. Further instructions for authors are available for download on our website at <https://www.zeitschrift-peripherie.de>.