

gap by specifying some features of the political role of tribes. The study is unique in treating tribes primarily as political or politicized units, rather than merely social and cultural groupings. It moves beyond stereotypical and superficial explanations that often tend to disconnect tribes from their political nature, reducing them to a set of behaviors regulating mainly social and cultural life. The case selection -Kuwait, Qatar, and the UAE- provide a

diverse yet coherent perspective, highlighting differences, such as electoral systems, while sharing key commonalities, like tribal composition. Finally, the book covers a range of relevant and critical topics, offering valuable insights for readers interested in Gulf identity and tribal politics. Its arguments are clear and well-organized, combining academic rigor with accessibility, which makes it suitable for both experts and newcomers to the field.

The Futures of Racial Capitalism

By Gargi Bhattacharyya

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Although capitalism experienced various crises in the 20th century, it overcame each of them. Despite its criticisms, capitalism continues to persist in the 21st century. In the book *The Futures of Racial Capitalism*, Gargi Bhattacharyya offers an ambitious and detailed critique of capitalism. The book consists of six chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusion. The chapters present solid arguments for why capitalism is dangerous and for recognizing it as such. The book's central premise revolves around racial capitalism, a term coined by Cedric Robinson to describe the inherent connections between capitalism and racial exploitation. According to the book, racial capitalism is not simply an economic system that functions in parallel to racism; rather, it is a system that is deeply dependent on racial hierarchies and differentiation to sustain itself.

This differentiation is critical to how capitalism operates. Historically, capitalism has not



been a neutral economic system that exploits all labor equally. Instead, it has always involved the systemic marginalization and exploitation of specific racial and ethnic groups. In this context, race is not merely a social construct imposed by colonialists or slave traders but a critical tool of capital itself. The dehumanization and racialization of African peoples during the transatlantic slave trade, for instance, was integral to the accumulation of capital, as the forced labor of enslaved Africans provided the backbone of early capitalist development.

The book presents a powerful critique of traditional Marxist theories that often neglect the role of race in capitalist exploitation. While Marx's analysis focused on the proletariat (the industrial working class) as the key agent of revolutionary change, racial capitalism highlights how race disrupts this narrative. By dividing workers along racial lines and creating racial hierarchies, capitalism

has managed to avoid a unified working-class revolution. This idea is central to understanding why revolutionary change has been difficult despite widespread and systemic global exploitation.

Another significant aspect of the book's analysis is the concept of *housewifization*, which refers to the process by which certain forms of labor -particularly domestic and care work- are devalued and invisibilized within capitalist systems. The book argues that capitalism has always relied on unpaid and underpaid forms of labor, particularly women's labor, to sustain itself. This form of exploitation is deeply racialized, as women of color have historically been relegated to the most undervalued and exploitative forms of labor.

Housewifization is not just about domestic work; it is a broader concept that refers to how capitalism naturalizes certain forms of labor, making them invisible while still extracting value from them. The author argues that capitalism benefits from this invisible labor by ensuring that social reproduction -raising children, caring for the elderly, and maintaining households- continues without requiring significant investment from capitalists. This allows capitalism to externalize the costs of social reproduction while still benefiting from its outcomes.

The book expands on the idea that capitalism grows and thrives by creating differences and divisions, rather than homogenizing or equalizing labor. This process of differentiation is not accidental but deliberate, as capitalism continually categorizes people into racial, ethnic, gender, and class groups to better exploit them. This is particularly evident in the division between formal waged labor and other forms of labor that are either unpaid or underpaid.

More importantly, the book discusses how this differentiation continues to evolve in modern times. With the advent of platform capitalism (e.g., the gig economy), we see new forms of labor exploitation that echo older forms of racialized exploitation. Workers in platform economies, many of whom come from marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds, are often excluded from the protections of waged labor, yet they remain essential to the accumulation of capital. This differentiation allows capitalists to extract value without providing the same rights, benefits, or wages to all workers.

A significant contribution of the book is its detailed examination of how capitalism extracts value from people beyond the traditional waged labor system. Bhattacharyya argues that capitalism has increasingly turned to non-waged forms of exploitation, especially in the context of racial capitalism. This includes the exploitation of marginalized groups through imprisonment, border control, and indebtedness.

The book also makes a compelling case for the interconnectedness of ecological collapse and racial capitalism. Capitalism's insatiable demand for growth and profit has led to the relentless exploitation of natural resources, often in ways that disproportionately affect racialized populations, particularly in the Global South. This is where the idea of extractivism becomes central.

The ecological destruction wrought by capitalist industries -deforestation, mining, and oil extraction- has had devastating effects on Indigenous populations and other marginalized groups whose lands and livelihoods are destroyed in the process. These communities often bear the brunt of ecological disasters, even though they contribute the least to the

ecological crisis. Bhattacharyya argues that this is not a coincidence but a fundamental aspect of racial capitalism, where certain populations are deemed expendable in the pursuit of profit.

The book also connects state violence to ecological violence, showing how state mechanisms -such as the military and police- are often used to protect capitalist interests at the expense of marginalized populations. This is particularly evident in conflicts over land and resources, where Indigenous and racialized communities are violently displaced to make way for capitalist enterprises.

The book critically examines how modern capitalism has adapted to new technologies, particularly through platform and data capitalism. These forms of capitalism rely on digital technologies, big data, and surveillance to extract value from people in new ways. While traditional capitalist exploitation involved the extraction of surplus value from waged labor, platform and data capitalism extract value through surveillance, data collection, and the commodification of human experiences.

A recurring theme in the book is capitalism's ability to reinvent itself in response to crises. The author critiques the idea that capitalism is a static or unchanging system. Instead, she

argues that capitalism is highly adaptable, constantly finding new ways to exploit people and resources. This adaptability is what makes capitalism so resilient, even in the face of economic, ecological, and social crises.

The author also critiques the idea that ethical critiques of capitalism are sufficient to bring about change. While many people recognize the violence and exploitation inherent in capitalism, the system continues to thrive because it offers compensations, seductions, and promises to those it marginalizes. This is why, despite widespread knowledge of capitalism's harms, the system continues to dominate. Author suggests that if we want to dismantle capitalism, we must understand how it works, particularly how it adapts and reinvents itself in response to resistance.

While proponents of capitalism sought to soften its image by adopting less contentious language, Bhattacharyya intensified the critique by labeling capitalism as "racial" thereby delivering a scathing condemnation of the system. She elaborated on how capitalism transforms human labor into a commodity, treating it as an object of trade within the market system. On the other hand, it can be seen as a shortcoming that the author, while criticizing capitalism in the book, does not mention Karl Polanyi, one of the greatest critics of capitalism in the 20th century.