*Race in the Americas* is a compelling account of how a hemispheric lens reframes our approaches to the study of race and black political thought in new and unexpected ways. Taking the hemisphere as a space and frame of analysis reveals the convergences that structure the discourses of race in both the United States and Latin America and promises an alternative orientation to the resurgence of authoritarian populism in both Americas.

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NOTE


The re-publication of Cedric Robinson’s 2001 *An Anthropology of Marxism* arrives at a specific historical moment in which misery, exploitation, and the death of Black, Indigenous, and other racialized and poor communities are becoming more visible. Yet, like Robinson’s previous work, *Anthropology* is a rigorous critique of the terms of order justified from the fabrications and myths of and by a bourgeois strata as much as it is also about the actions of ordinary people (as in our present) who recreate their worlds amid oppression and exploitation. Similar to his other work, whether in stateless societies like that of the Ill-Tonga people in Zambia or in the Black maroon communities of the Americas, Robinson’s commitment that domination is only one part of our condition is unwavering; we have always been more than just these conditions. Thus, *Anthropology*’s argument is straightforward: Robinson rejects the claim by Marx and Engels (historical materialism) that bourgeois society and its material contradictions is a necessary precondition for socialism. Through meticulous analysis of what Lenin underscored as the three pillars of Marxism (French socialism, German philosophy, and English political economy), Robinson highlights the vestiges of a socialist tradition prior to capitalism by the practices and rebellions of peasant communities in medieval Europe, which were later appropriated by the Catholic Church. As he argues, this was not as a result of class hegemony “but of a dialectic between power and resistance to its abuses” (123). Central in *Anthropology*’s thesis is to highlight that if a socialist impulse existed prior to the scientific socialism Marx and Engels prescribed, then it is unmistakable that other forms of socialism can and do exist outside the purview of Marxism.

Through the use of anthropology as a method for historical inquiry, Robinson’s approach interrogates the ways in which Western socialism and historical materialism were the expressions of “the ferment of a civilization” and not the product of events, a specific era, or a select intellectual cohort (2). As Robinson argues, Marx and Engels’s
predecessors of classical materialism were implicated in the expansion of the Absolutist State. Their form of materialism was tied directly to their position as agents of the State. For instance, they manufactured what Robinson identifies as bourgeois historiography—the logics, assumptions, and epistemological groundings and creations that justified this strata as a transcendent group within a stadial understanding of history. By analyzing these processes, Robinson exposes how these privileged classes in relationship to the Absolutist State were implicated in nationalistic thinking and practices that rested upon racialism, imperialism, and “an inferior, more ambiguous, and misogynist consciousness of female liberation to that constituted in medieval radicalism” (115). While the book is organized around extensive examination of materialism and socialism (chapter 2), German philosophy (chapter 3), and political economy (chapter 4) similarly to Lenin’s declaration of the three pillars of Marxism, Robinson makes clear in chapter 1 that the conceptualization of these as French, German, and English were marked by a historical imaginary of the modern bourgeoisie. It was a seduction “by the notion of national culture as a basis for intellectual development,” and as such each chapter’s analysis does not rest on these national conceptions, but rather interrogates its genesis (5). What Robinson shows us then is a wide range of cultural practices and intellectual exchanges (economic and philosophies) from monasteries in Ireland to commercial classes in Italy, but also underscoring massive peasant movements and socialist impulses.

Marx’s materialist interpretation, in which all human consciousness and experience is a result of our encounter with the objective (material) world, was entrenched within empiricism, positivism, and historicism that were central to thought in the nineteenth century. This interpretation, as Robinson notes in chapter 2, was formed earlier by those whom Marx termed the “classical materialists” from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They were a commercial strata emerging in Germany, France, and Britain and closely tied to the commercial revolutions of the period. Marx’s predecessors (Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach) reinvented materialism from its earlier iterations (pre-classical and Greek materialism that influenced medieval Europe) to situate themselves and their class at the helm of social advancement. They saw themselves as the class that made the state possible through means of diplomacy, war, social regulation, and commerce, which drove their nations forward. In the words of Robinson, their “reformulation became an expression of their class’s interests” (22). However, this form of materialism had roots in medieval Europe as well as sprung from the socialist impulses that it appropriated. In the wake of the Church and the Absolute State’s accumulation of wealth, property, and commitment to war, peasant communities of women and men, pious women like the Poor Clares, mystics, and heretics, were crucial in the attack upon this violent social order.

The introduction of pre-classical and Greek materialism about the dualities between good and evil (material wealth, property, and earth) as well as the extraordinary actions of peasant communities, their rebellions, and an impulse for an alternative world became incorporated within the Church. From the actions to abolish private property and the destruction of the propertied classes, to the push for social equality and the “reconceptualization of the social and spiritual role of women,” these popular impulses and heresies, Robinson argues, were co-opted by the mendicant Catholic orders (59).
Through the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and then the Jesuits, Robinson argues these socialist impulses and variants appeared in the French Revolution, inspired the bourgeoisie of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and eventually were visible in Marxism.

In chapter 3, Robinson examines the idealist philosophies formed by German intellectuals influenced by a teleological understanding of history. As Robinson notes, Germany had been a locus of war, famines, epidemics, and peasant rebellions. Germany in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was led by a militarist ruling class invested in wars and standing armies. The militarism in Germany “nurtured a bureaucratic bourgeoisie in the stead of capitalist bourgeoisies” (65). This middle and upper class of intellectuals and university-trained technocrats in Protestant and Catholic state universities were agents of the state and reconceptualized, through philosophy, their own role as a universal class suited to administer the Rational State. Although not specific to Germany, this body of discourse was available for Marx and Engels to draw from.

Similarly, in chapter 4, Robinson explores the body of economic work (and socialist impulses) that existed prior to Marxism economics and concludes that Marxism “was not a radical political economy” and “occluded with the same discursive rules of formation and power/knowledge relations which nurtured and were the conditions for being of ‘bourgeois’ political economy” (113). Marxism’s and classical materialists’ roots could be traced back to Greece and medieval Europe. For example, in the process of democracy, upper-class Greek men relegated women of their own rank out of the public sphere. Fearful of renegade women, Greek men conceptualized them as inferior like the slaves they managed, though Greece was dependent on a slave economy. What Robinson shows here then is like the bourgeoisie strata of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries building on the conceptualization of history through stages (domestication of animals, domestication of plants, hunting, agriculture, and commerce) and their class as the universal class, Marx and Engels incorporated these conceptualizations into a scientific theory of socialism. Marxist interpretation of socialism could only be born from capitalist societies.

Robinson’s Anthropology is an important proposal for the study and struggles of ordinary people in the face of racial capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and settler colonialism. As in his previous scholarship, Robinson expands the notion that the basis of revolutionary changes stems not from specific leaders or ideologies, but from the impulse of ordinary people to make history on their own terms. Through this approach, Robinson’s “anthropology” discerns the ways bourgeois elites’ justification for their positions was consistently based on the co-optation, appropriation, and utilization of socialist impulses by European peasant communities. Whether from the Greek thinkers, the mendicant and penitent orders of the Catholic Church, or the classical materialists, socialist impulses survived in certain variations that would be appropriated for a specific class’s interests. Robinson’s Anthropology makes clear that Marx and Engels’s radical political project, their version of socialism and critique of political economy, was intentional. It was a moral conviction “and not, as they insisted, a historical dialectic” (111). And in their deliberate attempt to relegate women and enslaved people to inferior positions by emphasizing the urban proletariats, historical materialism, and prioritizing historical acts over mental ones, they rid themselves of alternative possibilities. Robinson notes that Marx had argued that...
the liberation of slaves in [racial] slavery required the introduction of technology. Robinson disagrees, as slave rebellions were “sutured from the ideological and social practices of slave and free Blacks and non-Blacks . . . which had their own history” (119). In the revolutions of Haiti, Mexico, and Russia, among others, Robinson suggests that they did not adhere to the claim that liberation could only be “brought about by historical conditions, the [development] of industry, commerce, [agri]culture, the [conditions of intercourse]” (119). As Robinson points out, each had a mix of slaves or peasants, farmers, and noncapitalist laborers, which “could inspire creative and imaginative thought” (123). Although Robinson does not reject Marxism’s contributions, An Anthropology of Marxism ultimately allows us to see, as in his previous scholarship, that there has existed and continues to exist other forms of socialism—of ordinary women and men who proposed alternatives to the world they faced.

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Given the strands of conservatism that are present among blacks in the United States, why don’t more black people identify as Republican? In Conservative but Not Republican, Tasha S. Philpot tackles this question head-on. The book explores the factors that predict ideological self-identification and the relationship between ideology and partisanship. Building upon her groundbreaking work on race and partisanship, Philpot provides an explanation for why black ideological conservatism does not translate into more black Republicans. The book offers two key arguments. First, black people uniquely conceptualize the liberal-conservative continuum in a way that does not neatly overlap with the general electorate. This black-specific conceptualization of liberal and conservative leads to a weaker correlation between black people’s ideological self-identification and party identification. Second, for blacks, the expression of ideology is conditional on group consciousness.

The arguments of the book are built upon a multi-method analysis of a range of data. Conservative but Not Republican includes a quantitative analysis of data from the American National Election Study, along with the 2010 Post-Midterm Election Study and the 2012 Religious Worldview Study. In addition to the survey data, the book draws on semi-structured in-depth interviews. Finally, to show how ideological labels are deployed in elite discourse, the book calls upon content analysis of 1,600 New York Times articles and 679 articles from the New York Amsterdam News. Utilizing these data sets together allows Philpot to provide rich theoretical arguments.

The book is organized in two parts. Part I breaks out the factors that people use to determine their ideology. For Philpot, ideological identification is structured multidimensionally. As she puts it, “people have a diverse set of policy preferences that enable them to categorize themselves as liberal or conservative across several domains. Based on some