



# Invested Interests: Capital, Culture, and the World Bank

*Bret Benjamin*

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Despite the World Bank's profound impact on economic, political, and social conditions during the post-World War II era, cultural critics who rigorously theorize other institutions of colonialism and globalization have largely ignored the institution. Working to correct this blind spot, Bret Benjamin's *Invested Interests* presents the first extended cultural analysis of the World Bank.

In *Invested Interests*, Benjamin contends that the World Bank has, from its inception, trafficked in culture. From the political context in which the Bank was chartered to its evolution into an interventionist development agency with vast, unchecked powers, Benjamin explores the Bank's central role in the global dissemination of Fordist-Keynesianism, its conflicted support for nationalism and the nation-state, and its emerging awareness of the relationships between economics and culture. Benjamin argues that the Bank shapes, and is in turn shaped by, historical pressures of the age—most significantly the rise of third world national liberation movements. Reading a broad array of midcentury archival materials, Benjamin examines not only the Bank's own growing attentiveness to cultural work but also its prominent place in the thinking of such anti-imperialist intellectuals as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and Richard Wright.

Benjamin maps the Bank's contemporary rhetorical maneuvering in the wake of ever-intensifying protests, offering close readings of the World Bank's corporate literature, the activities of the antiglobalization World Social Forum, and the writings of prominent Bank critic Arundhati Roy, including her novel *The God of Small Things*.

Deftly investigating the World Bank's ideological struggles over six decades, *Invested Interests* develops a conceptually and politically nuanced critique of the Bank as a cultural institution deeply enmeshed in the last century's historical transformations of imperial power and anti-imperial struggle.

Bret Benjamin is associate professor of English and director of undergraduate studies at the University of Albany, SUNY.

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