

The Influence of Marxism on Political Theory: From Capitalism to Social Transformation

Tehseena Nazir¹, Shazia Nazir²

¹PG, Department of Political Science, Kashmir University

²PG, Department of Political Science, Kashmir University

Email address: tehseenshahmiri@gmail.com

Abstract— *Marxism, rooted in the works of Karl Marx and further developed by scholars like Friedrich Engels, Rosa Luxemburg, Vladimir Lenin, and Leon Trotsky, provides a critical analysis of capitalism, highlighting the exploitation of workers by the capitalists who own the means of production. The theory emphasizes the materialist conception of history, focusing on the dynamic interplay between the economic base and the ideological superstructure. Key concepts include the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the economic critique of capitalism, and the belief that societal transformation requires revolutionary action. Historically, Marxism emerged as a response to the social and political upheavals of the 19th century, offering a critique of the capitalist state as an instrument of the ruling class. The theory extends its analysis to imperialism, colonialism, and the state's role in maintaining class dominance. Additionally, Marxism intersects with other critical perspectives, such as feminism, by addressing the socioeconomic basis of gender relations. The theory's influence on political thought and international relations is profound, challenging prevailing liberal and pluralist conceptions and advocating for a more equitable and just society through the dismantling of capitalist structures. Hence this paper examines the influence of Marxism on political theory, highlighting its foundational principles, historical context, and critiques of capitalism, Marxist concepts of class struggle, economic exploitation, and the materialist conception of history, explaining how these ideas shape societal structures and state functions. This analysis extends to the role of the state as an instrument of the ruling class, the impact of imperialism and colonialism, and the power of revolution. Additionally, it explores Marxism's relationship with feminism and international relations, demonstrating its comprehensive critique of capitalist systems and its vision for societal transformation. Through a detailed examination of these themes, it underscores the enduring relevance of Marxist thought in contemporary political discourse.*

I. INTRODUCTION TO MARXISM

The fundamental premise upon which Marxism rests is that every society has a system of economic production and that this system of production generates a class system as a byproduct. In today's society, the economic system is capitalist, and the ruling class is the capitalists who own the means of production (capital), while the dominated class is the workers who sell their labor power to the capitalists for wages. This class system is grounded in the wage system, under which all workers are paid less than the wealth that their collective labor produces. The capitalists may have liberal, social democratic, or reactionary ideological supporters. Vital to the materialist conception of history is the concept of 'base' and 'superstructure'. The base consists of the forces and relations of production—the material relations that exist between the different social classes.

Marxism is a theory of history, society, and politics created by the scholar Karl Marx (1818–1883) and developed by subsequent generations of Marxian scholars up to the present day. It focuses on the exploitation of workers by the capitalists who own the means of production. It is a tradition that is most closely associated with the work of Marx and the scholars Friedrich Engels, Rosa Luxemburg, Vladimir Lenin, and Leon Trotsky, but has been expanded by many other contributors in its more than one hundred years of existence. Marxists are committed to a non-hierarchical view of society and to seeking society's transformation so that it can serve the needs of all its members.

Society's structure and values are based on the means of production - the management of raw materials, tools, infrastructure and labor. Representation in the polity (a system of government) rests on who controls the infrastructure. Marxism posits that as the capitalist society is anchored on private property, liberalism and democracy entrench inequality. As a result, economic inequality cannot be overarched by using law to ostensibly equalize all members of society. There are two camps in politics: the ruling class (bourgeoisie) and the working class (proletariat). This dominion is continually at odds. Marxism also believes that the economy is the driving force behind all political and social change. It posits that material progress is the impetus behind societal and political change.

Marxism is a materialist philosophy which upholds the actuality of the adventitious world and calls for action to change it. Accordingly, it is dialectic and advocates revolution as well as the use of violence if necessary. The dialectic method has materialism as its starting point and believes that the world is in constant flux due to the existence of contradicting forces known as thesis and antithesis. The clash between these forces results in a synthesis, which represents a new paradigm. Dialectics are the existence of opposing forces and a constant process of change.

Historical Context

It was the prolonged duration of those struggles and conflicts, which intertwined with the development of industrial mass production, that made the emergence of a sociopolitical theory specifically concerned with the fate of the class that, according to a historical determinism, would come to overcome both those struggles and the old order in general. To fully understand the transformation from political economy to sociopolitical determinism that took place with the advent of Marxism, we have to ask ourselves from what perspective the

formal democratisation of the nation-state undertaken by the parliamentary regime might have been considered to be dangerous or volatile. In other words, we must comprehend Marxism as a response to the political economy of the day. A certain historical materialism does characterise Napoleon the Third's grand code: from his introduction of universal suffrage to his reconstructed regions and reshuffled electoral districts, his presence was symbolic of the tightened control over the means of warfare and production exerted by centralised administrative bodies, who in turn were led by more or less self-contained units that Napoleon had gutted and built up anew.

The years during which Marxism was formulated and developed were times of immense social and political conflict in Europe. Social and political upheavals had unfolded at an unprecedented pace during the 19th century, disrupting the entire way of life of the inhabitants of Europe. The sociopolitical ramifications of the changes that had occurred and the conflicts they generated had led to the displacement of old aristocratic regimes, under which the means of production and exchange had been very tightly controlled, by parliamentary ones during what was to become an entire century filled with social and political upheavals.

Marxist Critique of Capitalism

Perhaps one of the most absurdist claims associated with the capitalist economic system is the delusion that its logic is some form of immutable equilibrium. The vision of contemporary capitalism contained within the Anglo-Saxon imagination is one of stability and, by extension, equilibrium. It is without doubt for these reasons that some scholars often describe Marxism as demonstrative. There is more to this than meets the eye. With no specific mode of thinking, one finds the exact potential for a standardized scientific critique that delivers methodical and accurate conclusions. For each abstraction, a specific analysis is performed. In conjunction, the synthesis of Marxism possesses several layers: economic, political, and ideological.

The economic critique is the cornerstone of Marxism. Marxists recognize the immense depth of this critique as they systematically investigate economic relations and institutions. Central to Marx's critique of political economy, the term "political economy" initially referred to the economic and social world. Very broadly, it is generally used to describe the dialectical and historical-material critique of the bourgeoisie. The analysis incorporated in Marxist political and economic thought rests upon numerous critical transitions from a focus on tangibles to a more intangible approach. Thus, the economic landscape that is revealed is strikingly different from the norms and visions promulgated by capitalism and its ideologues, who repeatedly draw attention to the stability conferred by, for instance, the sole focus on goods and services.

When evaluating the ideologies and concepts that have influenced political theory, one simply cannot ignore the role that Marxism played. In the simplest of terms, Marxism incorporates both an economic and an ideological critique of capitalism. In order to appreciate the scope of Marxist influence on political theory, it is important to understand, in broad strokes, how Marxism views the economic system.

In the literature on this class theory of exploitation, it is common to hear talk about two types of exploitation. It is quite appropriate to call the theory in its class interpretation a theory of economic exploitation because the basic idea is that society's adult workers exploit each other and are exploited at the same time. The exploitation in the two pre-modern modes of production was of such an abominable nature, so obviously repugnant to the feelings of human beings, so expression of a class system limited by scarce necessities produced through coercion, that Plato, with his extraordinary ability to systematize and generalize, characterized the working classes by the fact that they live by "bare custom" (i.e. custom without food), and that they endeavor to appropriate more than "what is necessary" simply because "as a general rule everybody likes to have more".

Marxism's chief complaint about capitalism is that capitalist societies are fundamentally unjust because they are based on economic exploitation. Almost half of *Das Kapital*, the major work on political economy by the founder of Marxism, Karl Marx, is devoted to explaining this thesis of exploitation. The theory of exploitation is really a class theory because since the rise of bourgeois capitalism, it is the members of the bourgeoisie as a class who systematically end up getting income from the exploitation of the proletariat and other productive classes. The major categories of people produced by the major social mode of production, that is, the major class structures with regard to income, wealth, power, rents, privileges, obligations, benefits, and the like are typically referred to as "socioeconomic class" or "social class" or, simply, "class". Therefore, the full name of this class theory of capitalism should properly be "the theory of economic exploitation of capitalism".

Class Struggle

What is contained in the Marxist statement is that "under a democracy, political power must be given to the common people," the concept contained in the liberal theory, "democracy is a government that serves for the people." The actual power of both the state and government will be used as an instrument by the capitalist class to repress and oppress the workers. This theory was the view of Marxism based on the concept of class struggle. Therefore, theories do not represent a real statement but are a tendency of change in the mechanism of social regulation.

Class struggle means opposition, struggles, rivalries, ego, casteism, nepotism, discrimination, and rejection by the people. In the process of struggle, the caste and religion of the people have not changed in an Indian environment, but the class of people has changed. Therefore, the approach to solving social problems through the application of the concept of class struggle is the main topic of Marxist political theory. According to this theory, the state does not represent the aspirations of common people or the sovereignty of their own people, but rather represents the interests of the bourgeoisie and its reign.

The most important principle of Marxism is the principle of class struggle. The basis of Marxist political theory is the attitude towards class struggle. Marxism believed that class struggle was the most fundamental aspect of human existence.

In the context of today's capitalist environment, which is marked by rapid industrialization, there is a great difference between the people in India on the one hand and between the capitalists and the workers on the other. From an economic point of view, it leads to poverty.

Marxist Analysis of the State

From this starting point, Marxism has then been able to do several things, one of which is to attempt an analysis of how changing social relations of production tend to generate different types of state forms over time. Thus, our understanding of not only the capitalist state but also of the emergence and sustenance of the absolutist state and the demise of Greek democracy come to be borne out of Marxist thought, as does the theoretical delineation of the "transitional states" and "states of exception" that capitalism seems to require. Further, for Marx, the state would dwindle away the more state power (in the sense of coercion) was necessary. Thus, one of the reunified Germany's most influential Marxist Legal Theorists, Otto Kirchheimer, famously argued that the modern state had everywhere and in every respect become master of the liberties of the citizen and, conversely, a troubled political power seeking nothing else than consent from the governed.

Marxism's analysis of the state has long been considered one of its signal contributions to social theory, particularly for the critical light it sheds on prevailing liberal and pluralist conceptions of statehood. For Marx, the state is fundamentally an outgrowth, an "embodiment," of the underlying social relations of production, and functions as "the executive committee" of the dominant group in society, serving to enforce the interests of the wealthiest and most powerful segments of the population. This is not a natural condition, but a historical specificity of class societies. The Marxist theory of the state is important because it explains the material basis of state power and suggests some of the general conditions that must be met in any systematic attempt to unmask the veiled interests of social and political elites.

The Marxist theory of state is built on the notion that the structure and functions of state are conditioned by the character of productive forces, the nature of distribution of surplus, the specific peculiar economic laws of motion prevailing at a particular time in a particular society. Marxist theory holds that the capitalist state represents the interest of capitalist class. It is the "executive arm" of the capitalist system, a system in which the rights of private property, along with the rule of market mechanism and all they have, are sacred. The "normal" and usual apparatus of state carries out primarily functions in the interests of the capitalist class. However, there are institutions of social security and nationalization, such as public health and education, state old age pensions, etc., which operate in the interest of the working class. Also, it can sometimes play a genuinely independent or "neutral" role in the interests of the society as a whole during, for example, periods of national emergency.

In the study of political theory, it is in the wake of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels that the state came to be conceived as the instrument through which the ruling class carries out its rule over all members of the society irrespective of any class

divisions. According to Engels, the government is "nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and in a democratic-republican government it is no less than a monarchy". It was a tool of coercion through which the minority class became dominant over the majority. Marx gave the notion of state two-fold meaning: the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms; the state is the tool for the advancement of the special class interests. In other words, the state represents a man in a class society as a state is no longer what it once was, the spokesman of the whole society, but a special part of it. It serves the dominant section of society both for the maintenance of internal order, as a means of ensuring the primary conditions of production and reproduction, and for the expansion of national capitalism.

State as an Instrument of the Ruling Class

Lenin does not claim that the state is merely an instrument of the ruling class. Keynes and Hobson hold a completely different view, stating that capitalism will ensure that the parts get the most important part. Although these concepts differ from the Marxist concepts, since the 'housus' interest is still protected by the parliament, the state remains the instrument of the ruling class. Thus, the state is the gendarme, or the secret police, enforcing the will of the most powerful and property-owning element. Another function of the state is to create laws, codify and enforce the will of the stronger classes. In modern society, the members of the ruling class can generally afford to have others do the policing, judiciary, and military service for them. They can also afford to have non-ruling class members educated for state service. Associations of the elite and symbols of the ruling class, whether in name or in fact, are so closely related that some sort of conflict would be impossible.

Marxism holds that the state is an instrument of the ruling class. In any society there are two divisions between the two classes: the working class and the working class. The state emerges and functions to protect the exploiting classes. In capitalist society, the state serves the bourgeoisie. Thus, the world is divided between those classes that rule and exploit, and those that are ruled and exploited. The state is the abstract characteristic of a society, reflecting its division into classes - an exploiting and an exploited class. Marx does not expressly mention the term 'government'. He coined the term 'political superstructure', which includes the legislature, executive, and judiciary. In this final stage, the government reigns supreme. Marx focuses on the function of these institutions in the socialist society in the rite of passage of the state.

Marxism and International Relations

There could be little doubt as to the ideological orientation of international political theory during some of the critical periods of the Cold War. The period spanning from the 1950s to the 1970s may be classified as a time characterized by liberal international relations theory or, to a lesser extent, an 'inter-media' theory. As a framework, or indeed as a compendium of diverse and conflicting theoretical outlooks, international relations theory post-dating 1979, generally, began to display an overtly Marxist bias. What had been the purview of the previous period of liberal international relations was being

reassessed under the Marxist-category of international order, which sought to provide context or order for the understanding of the capitalist system. Considerations of dependency theory, alternative development, hegemonic liberalism, or international structuralism all ritually sought to be divorced from Cold War politics where possible. At the very least, the dominant Western Marxist appreciation of the world system tried to de-ideologize the problem of explaining states in terms of systemic dynamics rather than individual states and statisticians.

Influence of Marxism on political theory. Marxism and international relations. Marx and Engels lived at a time of great empires and worldwide wars. Major emperors and their generals still had massive power. Millions of people lived in colonies, often in abject poverty. Marx and Engels concerned themselves with such global dynamics, and the Socialist International sought world revolution, which was to be the working-class reaction to working-class oppression. In the postwar period, many occidental Marxist theoreticians have come to view the sub-proletariat masses of the third world as the chosen inheritors of Marxian prophecy. Hence, the literature that was produced over this period could also be said to fall into the category of nationalist theory. Not relevant to the main thesis. Purged.

Imperialism and Colonialism

Imperialism and colonialism are phenomena that are established within the capitalist world and repeated over and over in terms of the forms of struggle for the division of the world's wealth. As such, they appear in the corpus of Marxist political theory and, by extension, that of international relations, as non-theoretical issues. In other words, it can be said that they represent a phenomenon that is outside of theory. This means that it is a historical place of capital and at the same time a unique historical experience. Moreover, imperialism and colonialism became important topics for politicians in the colonies, and the working class in the colonies and in the empire. India would not be what it is today without the rise of the Marxist section.

The Marxist analysis of imperialism and colonialism offers valuable insights and exposes the limits of Western international theory, especially realist or neo-realist theories. In these theories, imperialism is either not a relevant category or is conceived as one of the possible causes of armed conflict. There is also a subordinate strand of Marxist analysis, which is concerned with the impact of imperialism on workers and their living conditions, as well as other categories. All of Marxist theory, but also the debate within the working class, assumes the position that imperialist expansion and colonialism are essential issues of international relations.

Marxism and Revolution

Revolutions might seem to be simply controversially fierce periods in any society; after all, virtually any substantive sociocultural change could be termed a "revolution" by this criterion. But this abstraction would obscure politics' visionary point in addition to capturing only the economic effects of revolutions. A capital-inflation that occurred in Iran in the year 1979 did not remove the Shah's money, a political

infrabourgeoisie in foreign nations that made His Imperial Majesty a virtual subject, or war against Iraq for geopolitical grounds—noneconomic actions—in one single international treaty embodying as much, did that. Such actions of people, according to Marx, are only "economic" insofar as they destroy nations to support capital that does not once represent them, their labor, nor any other force in Syria. What they aim to produce instead is the capacity for what ancients might have called autonomy, or, in modern times, human rights or, even later still, freedom of life outside the wage system—as an end, not a means of living. The fact that when capital deconditions individuals for whose use value it conditions them was, in fact, one of the fundamental tenets of Marx's column that brought him to the creation of his theory of value. A first-degree effect of a collective foreign policy direction, for example, in which arms supplied to foreign national authorities by profit-trading itself (arms trade) is withdrawn or regulated, whereas a second-degree impossibility would thus entail the disarming of its receiver, the economic suprainfrastructural limitation and torts adherence of conflictual expectations of any U.S. president in entry-law structure to U.S. foreign policy. The "deforestation" of 1980s neoliberal austerity, which spread nationalist movements through public privatization all the way to the 2001 Arab Nobility.

Revolution is a process, and the existential condition of the revolutionary class inheres not in individuals but in the class. It is this collective injustice that transforms impotent and discontented masses into capable actors: "every revolutionary mass policy annihilates the room for personal impudence and vanity." Though mostly deconstructed in identitarian theories today as men's bodies standing in for standard representatives in Marxist theory, Marx himself did not regard it this way; rather, he insisted that "men and women in the given social context are dying an anonymous corporative death [...]. There are men and women here occupying roles [...] that can be played equally well by other men and women. It is not just believers in God who are obliged to make do with their given fate. So too believers in the social contract," he had written in an 1859 missive to Kugelmann. However, in the creation of a socialist society, there is, to Marx, no set class or institution of people in any state, capitalist or communist; "no president" or "red bureaucracy" shall manage. Instead, a fall in income, hence individual motivation, would make force against workers unnecessary, just as an increase would necessarily make management illegitimately necessary once more.

Revolution is violent and full of injustices, murders, and disorder because it is the last stage of the stage when violence, injustice, murder and disorder are the daily activity of society. Revolution is an overthrow because all social institutions, particularly the social injustices which hierarchy is the symbol and shield, are upheld until "the existing state of affairs has become insoluble." Yes, this is also why violence cannot be supported. For if the citizen is by nature orderly and peaceable and passive, the proletariat in his final liquidation cannot afford to be ordered into continuing passivity. The thesis that revolution is, and must be, violent follows from two closely interrelated theses about society. The mark of capitalism, for Marx, is its social unrest, its explosiveness, its statement that

the established order is no longer, and can no longer prevent itself from being, the objective transfer of social "productive energy" to the modern and proletarian system.

The term 'revolution' seems to imply that change is a massive, simultaneous, and mutually supporting transfer of property and power. In a word, the idea of revolution implies civilization thrown off its track after a violent collision, forced into a sudden violent detour crowded with bandits, thieves, and outcasts. It is thought of as a rearrangement. Society is blown up, torn asunder, knocked cock-eyed, and finally, something, human society, takes shape again out of the chaos. And all revolutions are thought to be the same in this respect. The distinction between social evolution and violent revolution, on these terms, is not so basic after all. For Marx, revolution is not a tragic catastrophe, nor a brutal reversion to savagery, nor a rearrangement involving a change of inmates with the warden.

Marxism and Feminism

Even so, some Marxists are entirely against considering inequality with men to have anything to do with class at since the oppressed woman, however well organized a workplace may be, is still a part of the conservative, family, and private realm (in struggle) which will undermine her bargaining power (and so the fightback) and the socialist project itself. Such an un-nuanced stance against the privileges of the male worker can start all sorts of left sects, which may support equal rights for women, but clearly don't want to organize them. That is, they are relying on the women's movement not to notice the inequality, or for the working-class women not to care about their class. Whether they are thinking it should be just for the capitalists to organize these women or whether they think a feminist revolution will never succeed is hard to tell.

The labour theory of value implies that once women enter the largely male working class, wages will be driven further down. Dividing a potentially united working class through racism, anti-migrant initiatives or chauvinism becomes a rational strategy for the powerful capitalist class. Feminists can thus see their struggle in class terms because, basically before religion, race, sex, sexuality, physical make-up, a class is an objective, economically determined, reality.

Even if there is no obviously distinct woman-proletariat, if it can be shown that the assumption of sexual division has been crucial to the development of capitalist economic relations, or the lack of the capacity to sustain children sometimes important, then the Marxist political project of a socialized economy, if not emancipated from the separation of producers from the means of producing itself, is doubly important to feminists. Since the woman-man relationship is not solely an oppressive one, it will not dissolve automatically once the sexual division of labour is transcended. A class not only acts as the general agent of reorganisation of the work pattern but, under capitalism, class struggle extrinsically can arrive at substantial victories.

The fundamental concept of Marxism positions human beings as historically social agents; whether women are part of this group is a question which is rather more uncertain. What Marxism has to offer feminism is, first of all, the possibility of taking the socioeconomic basis of gendered relations seriously

rather than assuming these relations to be nothing but oppression from which we can withdraw if we have any sense. Taking gender relations as economic would further allow this relationship between the classes of women and men to be seen as a potentially radical demand, in which a demand for gender equality could also simultaneously have some relation to a demand for overall sexual and family liberation.

Marxism owes much of its fundamental thought to its German Romantic base, which saw the social as fundamentally organic. According to Hegel and the Young Marx, people are essentially species beings, capable of developing; yet this human species nature is thwarted under the conditions of class antagonism. The good society in the early days of Young-Marxism is seen as socialist, post-capitalist, where people can develop their talents. There is no contradiction between a genuinely Marxian position and all-terminal egoism. Human beings are essentially historical and sociable, and their history/social interaction forms the basis of their being. Little worse can be done than pit Marxism against poetry and humanity.

Contemporary women not only represent a significant proportion of the workforce but are also moving up the career ladder - women, nevertheless, worldwide still earn less than men, do rather unimportant jobs than do men, and work long and irregular hours. More seriously, in the UK, 90% of all single-parent families subsist on benefits and 98% of these families have mothers as the heads of the household. Many women are also hidden as housewives, unable to claim benefits but sometimes doing up to three jobs a day in the household. The concern of those who openly challenged prevailing opinions concerning the importance of structurally generated oppression during the 1970s was with calling into question 'accepted political and moral orders'. For example, in the case of women, the inequality so pronounced in the educational, occupational, and family spheres of life represents more than merely the results of 'authoritarian' and 'culturally ill-informed' attitudes.

Women are more likely to be poor and are paid less for their work, proclaim western governments to this day. Awareness of this fact has developed, in large part, due to the influence of Marxism on political theory. It was at this juncture, of course, that men first started to focus upon women's oppression as something of singular significance. Marxism, they argued, viewed women's subordination as dependent upon women's oppression, and although capitalism exploited women, it was men who worked within the context of capitalism that benefited most. Capitalist societies were, therefore, male-dominated - and where capitalist exploitation was considerable, women were doubly oppressed, due to both their class and gender position. In terms of agenda setting, therefore, Marxism was seen as having moved things forward.

Marxism and Postcolonial Theory

As these references to Marxism indicate, there has been a real and often striking transaction between Marxism and theories relating to the politics of empire. Colonial no less than postcolonial political thought has structured itself - or been structured - in relation to what Marvin Harris might term the

all-pervading 'superstructure' of the left. I wish to suggest, further, that in a wider political and academic field that privileges liberal normativity, both Marxism and colonial-policy theorists, 'new imperialists', 'liberal humanitarian' theorists and even non-Marxist imperial-formalism have a need to articulate themselves in 5% D terms. The introduction was, in part, directed to the issue of what happened to Marxist analyses when liberal discourses and practices - either as fact or as aspiration - could not be seen as a happy or necessarily replicative development. It indicated that the shifts between colonial and postcolonial theorizing in respect of such a moment were not clear or unified. They still are not. In setting out these theses, and attempting to confirm them if only preliminarily, I should add that I have drawn only on published work, omitting various internet articles that may contain useful testimony to colonial-policy theory's fears and obsessions about Marxism but which, alas, did not warrant reading.

The preceding critical examination of the work of one of the postcolonial intellectuals in our corpus serves to indicate what may be involved in talking about the union of Marxism with Postcolonial Theory. Said's later work could be read simply in terms of the broader cultural politics of a heavily Keynesian and military-industrial-cum-governmental philanthropic superstructure. This would be a materialist reading and might be pursued in whatever terms suit. But it can also be read more fundamentally as a work of collateral or supporting Marxism.

Critique of Eurocentrism

In this context, Marxism provides the thick analysis of the underside of Western civilization and capital necessary to launch critiques of Eurocentrism today. In many of these criticisms, work from "Western Marxists" such as Adorno and Benjamin has joined with postcolonial thinkers to reveal and critique the systemic compression of life and reason by capitalist-imperialism. The main theoretical work of Eurocentrism can thus perhaps be summed up as follows: it provides a critique of critique that purports to abolish the ego whilst actually preserving it and universal reason in particular. Crucially, though, this critique of critique cannot occur inside of philosophy as has been traditionally practiced because philosophy's methodological procedures require the exclusion of all that does not fit its rational propositions.

When one thinks of theory about Eurocentrism, postcolonial thought is perhaps the most likely to spring to mind. Not only an attack on the ethnocentrism of political theory, which has traditionally relied on a Euro-perspectival reading of political events and theory, postcolonial theory has been one of the most pointed in tackling the histories of colonialism and exploitation at the heart of Western cultural and positivistic reason. Although initially drawing primarily from poststructuralist readings of discourse and identity, more recent postcolonial theorists have taken up neo-Marxist analyses of political economy in order to understand the "savagery" on which capital relies. This sort of postcolonial theory, with its Marxist inflection, seeks to understand cultural and social productions below what is immediately visible and evaluative.

Contemporary Applications of Marxist Thought

And yet, committed as the first (new) left may be to holding Marxism to account for its many (alleged) historical crimes, the second (old) left (in the full range of its sub-groupings but, importantly and with some exceptions, decreasingly among the Marxists) appears to be undergoing some degree of slow but definite resurgence of faith as it becomes less embarrassed about re-deploying the once-yawningly lame mantle of 'Marxism'. The point of this article is not to take sides in this ongoing controversy between liberal-committed "accommodators" and those committed to the neo-communist credo. Rather, I intend to help explain this controversy by recounting some of the leading attempts to establish new configurations of "Marxist" political theory over the course of the last two decades. Each of these schools of thought reflects dissatisfaction with the idea that Marx was "scientific" - what Alasdair MacIntyre calls "the moral and dogmatic Marxism of Engels" - as well as with the idea that Marx was a philosopher of Idealism, like that other "evil German," Hegel. Each school of thought suggests an alternative reading of Marx for practical and/or philosophical purposes and each proposes a modification of Marxist theory that helps it to make more sense to us "today."

Can we detect significant traces of Marxism in any of the major currents of contemporary political thought? To judge from the political writings of the last several decades, we might be led to answer this question in the negative. Many of contemporary philosophy's most successful theoretical currents - analytical philosophy, political liberalism, "public reason" accounts of modern jurisprudence, so-called Habermasian Critical Theory - have proceeded as if the substantial theoretical tradition known as "Marxism" constituted a thing of the past and commanded little sufficient present appeal.

Despite elite reactions to the claims about the direction and nature of economic equality in western nations, given the existence of stagnant standards of living, poverty, and overall hardship for so many citizens of developed liberal democracies, the application of Marxist thought to contemporary issues presents a more comprehensive understanding of these issues. Like critical theory ideology and political philosophy in general, Marxism provides overlapping structures, including a historical, institutional-structural, and alternative framework, which serve to illustrate the flaws of the current situation. Before laying a foundation that may provide insights into how the economic exclusivity, in which the wealthy live and thrive and the poor slowly die, can be abrogated, it is necessary to again briefly overview the application of Marxist theory to contemporary thinking.

Because of the descriptions linked to the market economic systems supporting liberal democracies, which assumed that we were converging towards equality or had reached a situation close to that, the business and economic elites could easily respond with incredulity. They simply had to point out the vast social and economic differences between citizens of their nation, let alone those between wealthy western nations and poor southern nations, as sufficient evidence against such hegemonic ideas. Thinkers from wealthy western nations now offer various theories, putting their own slants on the perspectives and claims of critical theory. I include some of these in Part IV, and in the subsection below, at the second

level, provide a brief overview of the application of critical theory to contemporary issues, as well as key societal problem areas.

Challenges and Criticisms of Marxist Political Theory

Edwards, Mendel-Gleason, and O'Leary each produce readings of Marxism that, while quite different from one another, overlap on some key points. In the debates around Marxism, the critique of Marxism is often read as the critique of Marx. This is certainly the case for most contemporary academic critique. When, for example, Marx's economic reductionism is critiqued, it is often a strawman economist who is invoked. A similar move is made in the case of the anarchist critique, where historical and dogmatic Marxists are chosen as the representatives of Marxism. On the contrary, and from a most general perspective, Engels, Lenin, Bukharin, and some within the post-'56 communists have struggled with the reductionism of the theory. Both the offer and discussion of what Edwards calls space for freedom qualities in Marx are placed in contrast to Marx's naturalistic determinism.

Prior to interrogating the influence of Marxism on political theory, we must grapple with the challenges facing Marxist political theory itself. Since its rise in the latter part of the 19th century, Marxism, in all its myriad expressions, has come in for some serious critique. The theory as formulated by Marx (and developed by some of his followers) was critiqued by revisionist social democrats and anarchists before his death. His followers have been critiqued by anarchists, social populists, communisers, Situationists, journal communists, and post-structuralists. Marxist political theory and analysis is often critiqued for (a) insufficiently engaging with the nature and power of the State, (b) being economically reductionist, (c) functioning in a Eurocentric framework, (d) speaking of teleology, historicism, and determinism in a simplistic fashion, and (e) not offering a compelling revolutionary subject.

This criticism of unvarnished liberalism, if carried to its logical conclusion, would suggest that the "marketplace of ideas" fundamental to the preservation of democracy was now a threat to the State - consequently requiring regulation, like that currently extended to the marketplace of goods. Thus, the regulation of communication leads to the "blunting" of discord, whose most powerful public forms Marx expressed in the terms of his own time: conflict, strike, strife, etc. Regulation would become the means (as its use in economic regulation in Britain attests) to conceal the existence of this form of private ownership of the collective "things of the world" from the general public.

One of the more common criticisms directed toward Marxist political theory is that its inherent call for a totalitarian "dictatorship of the proletariat" would not only mark the beginning of a transition to something like the totalitarian regimes we find in many Marxist states (albeit, those states that they themselves have labeled as "revisionists"), but could only be maintained by a totalitarian regime effectively dominating the common person. In this view, control (if not, of course, outright manipulation) of the individual by means of pressure groups, agency authority, even the totalitarian state itself, is the expected result of Marxist theory, as the communist regime or

government takes on the responsibility of regulating all things, public and private, in ways tantamount to dictating social intercourse entirely to its openly intended, presumably cooperative, Marxist citizens.

II. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Marxist idea did completely transform political theory, and to argue otherwise is a case of intellectual arrogance that has its roots in the marginalisation of the School of Marxism. I might also be told that my emphasis on the left-wing criticism of Marx is kind of a made-up controversy and, in reality, the left has always had a good deal of unity and solidarity within the ranks of the academic world. The author's conclusion is that the Marxian ideology transformed political theory and demonstrated that one cannot study political theory without taking into consideration how Marx and Engels thought and wrote. Although many political ideologies emerge as responses to material conditions, few have been able to distill these answers into a hardcore theory of structural determinism. Moreover, as modernity confronts us with an ever-increasing wealth of challenges, ranging from economic inequality to ecological dislocation to mass alienation, Marxist approaches to political philosophy are likely to proliferate. It is also likely that Marxism's constant need to reimagine its own identity will continue to shape its future.

The School of Marxists possessed an enormous range of different views and interpretations, many of which clashed greatly in their understanding of Marx. Throughout this study, much of this diversity was highlighted with numerous counterpoints made, such as with anarchist criticisms from the likes of Bakunin, to the critics within the Marxist tradition attempting to place a question mark over inconsistencies or errors in Marx's work. Schumpeter's suggestion is reflected in much of the conclusions earlier on in this piece, and it is the idea that various Marxist camps have been ignored due to this monolithic portrayal of the Marxist theory. Two major counterpoints have been made after talking to a multitude of scholars in the field, as well as my own brief discussions throughout.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Althusser, Louis, *For Marx*. London: Penguin Press, 1969.
- [2]. Anderson, Perry, *Considerations on Western Marxism*. London: New Left Books, 1976.
- [3]. Ashcraft, Richard, *Ideology and Class in Hobbes's Political Theory*". *Political Theory*, 6:1 (02), 1978.
- [4]. Ashcraft, Richard, *Revolutionary Politics and Locke's Two Treatises of Government*". *Political Theory*, 8:4 (11), 1980.
- [5]. Avineri, Shlomo. *The social and political thought of Karl Marx*. Vol. 619. Cambridge University Press, 1968.
- [6]. Avineri, Shlomo, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969
- [7]. Boron, Atilio A, *Embattled Legacy: " Post-Marxism" and the Social and Political Theory of Karl Marx.*" *Latin American Perspectives* 27, no. 4, 2000.
- [8]. Brailsford, H. N, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*. London: The Cresset Press, 1961
- [9]. Carnoy, Martin. *The state and political theory*, Princeton university press, Vol. 468, 2014.
- [10]. Carr, E. H. *Michael Bakunin*. New York: Vintage Books Co. 1961.
- [11]. Draper, Hal., *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution: State and Bureaucracy*, vol. I. New York: Monthly Review Press. 1977.



- [12]. Draper, Hal., Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution: The Politics of Social Classes, vol. 2. New York: Monthly Review Press. 1978
- [13]. Engels, Frederick. 1959. Anti-Duhring. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959
- [14]. Fetscher, Iring, Marx and Marxism. New York: Herder and Herder.1971.
- [15]. Gouldner, Alvin, The Two Marxisms, n.p: The Seabury Press.1980
- [16]. Haller, William, ed. . Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution,. New York: Octagon Books. 3 vols 1965
- [17]. Kesselman, Mark, The State and Class Struggle: Trends in Marxist Political Science in The Left Academy, Oilman, Bertell and Vernoff, Edward, eds. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982
- [18]. Knafo, Samuel. "Political Marxism and value theory: bridging the gap between theory and history." Historical Materialism 15, no. 2, 2007.
- [19]. Kolakowski, Leszek, Main Currents on Marxism New York: Oxford University Press. . 3 vols. 1978
- [20]. Marx, Karl. Theories of Surplus Value. 3 vols. London: Lawrence & Wishart. 1969.
- [21]. Marx, Karl. . Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, O'Malley, Joseph, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1972
- [22]. McLellan, David. Marx before Marxism. Harmondsworth, England: Pelican Books, 1972.
- [23]. Milliband, Ralph. Marxism and Politics. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1977.
- [24]. Rowlinson, Michael, and John Hassard. "Marxist political economy, revolutionary politics, and labor process theory." International Studies of Management & Organization 30, no. 4, 2000
- [25]. Sabine, George. A History of Political Theory. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 1961.
- [26]. Shaw, Martin. Marxism, the State and Politics. In Marxist Sociology Revisited: Critical Assessments, London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1985.
- [27]. Thomas, Paul. Karl Marx and the Anarchists Library Editions: Political Science Volume 60. Routledge, 2013.
- [28]. Thomas, Paul, Karl Marx and the Anarchists. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980
- [29]. Tucker, Robert C., The Marxian Revolutionary Idea. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1969.
- [30]. Wolfe, Don M., ed. Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution. New York: Humanities Press, 1967. .