

## Analysing How Marxist Theory May Transform Papua New Guinea's Economy

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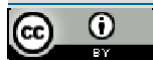
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### ABSTRACT

This present research proposes that the use of Marxist theory could potentially act as a catalyst in assisting PNG's economic revitalization. The objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the core tenets of Marxist economic theory, including the concept of surplus value, with an examination of the historical roots and current condition of capitalism in PNG. This paper aims to thoroughly analyse the economic challenges faced by PNG, a consequence of previous colonial powers' imposition of a capitalist economic system. The ensuing argument asserts that the elimination of capitalism is crucial, and the best strategic approach would include a socialist revolution that would progressively transition into communism. Even though some parts of Marxist ideology can be utopian, especially when it comes to PNG, we argue that the achievement of communalism before colonialism can help socialism and communism come to life in the long run

## INTRODUCTION

PNG is currently facing significant political challenges. There are now problems with the administration of PNG's economy and resources, the provision of enough infrastructures to ensure the well-being of its people, and the maintenance of suitable security standards. These problems were not brought about by random chance but rather by prearranged events. Following the blueprint laid forth by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their 1848 Communist Manifesto, our ideal future would see the workers' revolution in PNG carried out with great success. An essential book for the workers' revolution, the communist manifesto laid forth the fundamental ideas of equality and the abolition of property ownership, which the proletariat deeply revered. This study's overarching goal is to dissect this political treatise in depth to see how it, together with Karl Marx's 1867 opus "Capital," distilled the core ideas that would later become Marxism.

This research project's principal aim is to analyse and clarify Marxism's major concepts, such as the Theory of Values, the Theory of Surplus Value, and the Accumulation of Capital. If we can have a firm grip on this concept, we can learn more about the underlying causes of capitalists' well-documented greed and self-centeredness. If we want to be thorough, we need to find out whether capitalism is a part of the Papua New Guinean system, and at the same time, we need to look at ways **to revolutionise this system and replace it with socialism.**

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Background on Papua New Guinea*

In PNG, like in other postcolonial governments, the state is an essential component of the political economy; it is the force that determines the course of production, distribution, and resource allocation that will follow. This is also true in other postcolonial states. Because of the insufficient productive base of the nation and the social forces of production that have emerged as a consequence of it, any socio-political revolution that would have been able to engineer collective mass action of an engaged people has not been able to gain support. According to Vajda (1981:73), the state has been seen as a component that has not only helped to preserve private bourgeois structures via its activities, but it has also perhaps contributed to the alteration of these structures. This is the view that has been held by many people. This implies that the social compact with the PNG state has failed because it serves to protect the interests of the upper class at the expense of the general populace.

Marx (1852-1963: 35) observed that the state is merely the administration of the bourgeoisie's common concerns. In light of the fact that the interests of the ruling class are the ones that decide the superstructure, state institutions are components of the superstructure. When this happens, the state transforms into a tool for the ruling class to exercise control over the means of production. The individuals in control of power in PNG are determined to maintain their position, not only to continue impoverishing the people but also to dictate and define the methods and directions of politics. This is because they do not have jobs, factories, or industries; the only thing they know how to do well is politics.

### *What is Marxism?*

Marxism is the acronym for the Marxist theoretical framework. Marxism has three major foundational components, namely metaphysics, economics, and ethics. This perspective was primarily influenced by the belief that those who possess the means of production gain the ability to exert control over other social classes and establish ownership over the state through their substantial wealth. People often refer to these individuals as capitalists. Marxism is a comprehensive theoretical framework that encompasses the social and political dynamics of our contemporary world. The theory in question derives its nomenclature from Karl Marx (1818-1883), who, in collaboration with Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), conceptualised and developed it over the second half of the previous century.

Their goal was to investigate the root causes of human civilisation, the mechanisms driving its evolution, and the potential future transformations for humanity. Marx conducted a comprehensive analysis of society from several perspectives. Through his study of the globe, nature, and history, he embarked on a quest to uncover the principles that dictate the development of society and the economy. In a manner akin to Charles Darwin's exploration of the dynamic nature of adaptation and transformation, Marx's investigations delved into the intricate dynamics of societal adaptation and change, as well as the underlying principles that govern such processes. Marx and Engels conducted research that led them to deduce that these transformations, similar to changes in the external environment, are not random but rather follow specific principles. The aforementioned observation enables the development of a scientific framework for understanding society, grounded in empirical observations of individuals, rather than relying on speculative concepts such as religious beliefs, racial and heroic ideals, personal preferences, or utopian aspirations (Burns, 1939, p. 6).

Karl Marx was the pioneer in formulating a theory of modern capitalist society, which functions as a blueprint for economic growth and social progress. Furthermore, he underscored the social and political context in which this phenomenon may function; within this premise, historical and dialectical materialism are relevant (Alubo, 1990). Based on Marxist theory, it is important to look at all aspects of society, especially the economy, because it has a lot of constantly changing social interactions. This phenomenon arises due to the inherent contradictions within the material realm. Marx's theory attributes contemporary society's problem to the tangible mechanisms of production, consumption, and distribution that constitute capitalism's framework. Furthermore, he suggested that the resolution to this issue would be the collective mobilisation of the people driven by their awareness of social classes, which would effectively overturn and deconstruct these systems. The prolonged exploitation of the dominant class in society, who possessed the means of production and thus gained their economic and socio-political authority, ignited this awareness. In a capitalist economic framework, the bourgeoisie retains ownership of the means of production, and the proletariat must exchange their labour power with the capitalists to survive within the system. Marx's theory posits that the proletariat is the focal point of the social change that takes place in

society as a result of widespread agitation. This agitation originates from self-awareness and then manifests as class or group consciousness.

Marx applied this overarching concept to the societal context in which he resided, mostly capitalist Britain, and comprehensively developed the economic theory of capitalism, for which he has gained significant recognition. Nevertheless, he always maintained that his economic ideas were inherently intertwined with his historical and social beliefs. One can initially approach the examination of profits and wages solely from an economic perspective. However, students who aim to study real-world phenomena rather than abstract concepts quickly recognise that a comprehensive understanding of profits and wages necessitates the inclusion of employers and workers. Consequently, this understanding prompts an exploration of the historical context in which these phenomena exist. Similar to other scientific methodologies, the scientific approach to societal evolution relies on empirical evidence, historical data, and observations of the surrounding environment. Hence, Marxism is an incomplete and unfinished theoretical framework. Marxism continues to evolve and adapt in response to emerging evidence as history progresses and human knowledge expands. The most notable advancements in this regard, subsequent to the demise of Marx and Engels, have been achieved by V. I. Lenin (1870–1924) and by Joseph Stalin, who has extended Lenin's efforts in constructing the emerging socialist society in Russia.

Applying a scientific methodology to the study of society yields information that can potentially transform society, just as all scientific knowledge can influence the external world. Furthermore, it elucidates that the fundamental principles that dictate the functioning of society adhere to the same structure as the rules governing the exterior realm. The aforementioned rules, which possess universal applicability to both individuals and objects, are the fundamental principles of Marxist philosophy or worldview. Given the primary emphasis of this study on the economic dimension of Marxism, we will undertake an examination of the fundamental concepts within Marxist economic theory. Within Marx's framework, the concept of value encompasses the economic dimension. The concepts under consideration include the labour theory of value, the theory of surplus value, and the accumulation of capital (Popkin & Stroll, 1993, p. 102).

## METHODOLOGY

### *The Economic Concepts of Marxism*

Marxism is a complex socioeconomic and political ideology that offers a critical analysis of the capitalist system. It is a theory that has been influential in both economics and politics. Conversely, the concept highlights the class struggle that emerges between the bourgeoisie, the property owners of the means of production, and the proletariat, the labouring class. Marxist theory reveals that capitalism, in its most basic manifestation, is primarily accountable for inequality, alienation, and exploitation. Marxism advocates for the elimination of private property, the shared ownership of production means, and the establishment of a classless society that distributes resources based on meeting

needs rather than maximising profits. Furthermore, this concept is important in the domains of sociology, political science, and economics because it greatly influences the composition of the worldwide discussion on inequality and social problems.

It is important to note that Marx's theory places a strong emphasis on the role that material circumstances play in the formation of social relations and ideologies. We view private property and attitudes towards it as the primary variables that impact the foundation of social consciousness, political ideologies, and organisations. This is the most essential aspect of the situation. In addition, Marx criticised the idea that the state and the law are reflections of the dominant relations of production in society. Karl Marx believes that the forces involved in the production of material commodities drive historical development. He also believes that the people significantly contribute to modifying production methods and fostering the growth of the means of production. The worship of individuality is something that Marx condemns, despite the fact that leaders and ideologists play an important role in the supervision of crowds. Marx, on the other hand, places a strong emphasis on the class distinction and the polarisation of society into oppressors (the bourgeoisie) and oppressed (the proletariat) as a result of differences in property ownership.

When examining Karl Marx's works, it is crucial to keep the division of labour in mind. Throughout the Adam Smith book 'Wealth of Nations', he discusses how the division of labour has been the most significant contributor to the increase in overall work output. As an example, if I were in the business of creating papers, I would be able to supply my paper-maker with detailed instructions on how to produce papers. During a single day, how many papers could a single person possibly produce? It may be a couple. On the other hand, if we break down the task into twenty distinct stages of production, a group of workers would probably be able to produce around 20,000 to 30,000 papers in a single day. To ensure that every member of the group does their own thing in accordance with the production plan, it is essential that each person only take on one step at a time. It is only necessary for a single stage of the manufacturing process to be completed for a person to become an expert in that particular phase. Smith asserts that the division of labour removes the lag time that is associated with the maintenance of equipment, the retraining of personnel, and other similar activities. As a result of the division of labour, the productivity of workers is significantly increased.

### ***Private Property***

Private property, according to communist ideology, does not include possessions such as shoes, toothbrushes, or even a home. Both socialism and communism refer to individual possessions as personal property, and they continue to belong to workers in a manner similar to their current ownership (FIST, 2009). According to Marxist ideology, private property under capitalism is defined as the means of production that society should collectively own. This includes stores, mines, factories, lands, and other assets that are either natural gifts or have been developed by many individuals over centuries but are currently being controlled by a small group of individuals. The duration of

human effort in its development doesn't matter to these people, as long as they're the only beneficiaries of legal possession. The objective of socialism is to significantly augment personal property by eliminating private property institutions. Critics of communism argue that communists want to displace small-scale agricultural operations from the diligent efforts of women and men who have sustained them for many years. They also seek to eliminate small-scale grocers, carpenters and tailors, therefore depriving them of the opportunity to earn a sustainably independent livelihood.

The capitalist system has effectively rendered the majority of these small operators economically unviable and reduced them to mere wage labour, thereby shattering their aspirations for self-sufficiency. Courts and steamships frequently render small businesses insolvent. Massive agricultural enterprises systematically eliminate small-scale farmers on a weekly basis. The proliferation of supermarket chains has eradicated the presence of corner grocers, while corporate bookshops such as Theodist have been accountable for the demise of independent bookshops. The limited numbers of small enterprises that persist are in a precarious position, sometimes requiring whole families to labour extended hours in order to vie for success. Capitalist countries limit private ownership of the means of production to a small portion of the population, but it is the result of generations of hard-working individuals who, over centuries, acquired the skills to cultivate the land, extract minerals, and construct structures and bridges using trees, rock, clay, and other natural resources.

In the early stages of capital accumulation, there were a few people who acquired modest private possessions through diligent effort and a frugal lifestyle. However, even at that time, the majority of possessions were acquired through influence, bribery, and deception, namely by stealing the labour of those who were poor and working. It is absurd to believe that any individual or family could have amassed a billion dollars, or even a million dollars, without assuming the role of a large-scale capitalist and resorting to widespread exploitation of labour. The capitalist world has seen a notable growth in personal property. The privileged few have acquired vast estates, mansions, yachts, private planes, and designer clothing, while the personal property of the majority has declined in both quantity and quality. The recent collapse of the housing bubble in 2024 resulted in the most significant depletion of personal wealth for individuals in PNG, as a large number of people were displaced from their houses by a private business conducting land evacuations. Everything they owned was expropriated by banks and mortgage corporations under capitalist law.

The working class will consider it imperative to dismantle the private property system and place all means of production under the authority of a worker-controlled state. They are pursuing the acquisition of personal property, which encompasses essential and comfortable aspects of life. In many regions, the populace has successfully deposed the private property system, and efforts are underway to effectively eliminate it in numerous other areas. Currently, the global capitalist class is facing a significant financial and economic crisis, prompting an increasing number of workers and marginalised individuals to express their dissatisfaction with the situation. Incidents occur worldwide,

ranging from industrial hubs to colonial colonies. Under socialism, personal property, such as houses, nutritious food, cameras, bicycles, books, and other minor goods that enhance the health and cultural well-being of a community, will accrue value annually. However, no individual will own land, factories, or banks.

### *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*

Marx derived his ideas from Hegel's dialectical technique and Feuerbachian materialism, but he modified and scrutinised these notions. These two philosophers' concepts had the greatest influence on his conception of dialectical materialism, which constituted a unique amalgamation of their individual contributions. Marxism regards dialectical materialism as a crucial paradigm. Hegel's philosophical reasoning deeply influenced Marx in the early stages of his scholarly trajectory. Wilhelm Hegel was a renowned philosopher in Germany. He offered a philosophy of history. He explained the process of global evolution using a novel logic he had developed. He formulated the dialectic to articulate the fundamental aspect of logic. Dialectic is the act of engaging in a dialectical discourse. Within intellectual discourse, it is a systematic procedure that leads to the generation of ideas and the elucidation of those notions.

It was Hegel's concept of dialectic in the 19th century that laid the foundation for a contemporary understanding of this notion. For the first time, he demonstrated the integrated realm of nature, history, and spirit as a continuous, dynamic, and evolving process. Hegel views development as a progression from lower quality to higher quality phases, encompassing both spatial and temporal motion. This process can be referred to as improvement. The key improvements in his concept were a result of resolving the inherent contradictions that arose organically throughout the process of creation, since each phrase has its own logical conflict. According to Hegel, the process of synthesising a word and its inherent contradiction relied on the principles of ideological dialectics. Hegel asserts that the concept is the fundamental aspect of global progress, attainable through the involvement of collective human history. In his idealism, Hegel proposed that a spiritual essence, manifesting as objective knowledge and interconnected logical concepts, is the source of reality. He formulated the concept of objective dialectic, which does not serve as a means of elucidating reality or engaging in any kind of contemplation. Instead, it represents a mode of existence for words and their essence, as they exist in reality only in a dialectical manner, as a dynamic and continuous process of growth. Marx used this notion, but because he had a customary practice, he extensively examined and modified the initial idea. Marx dismissed the notion of an objective spirit and instead saw it as a scientific discipline composed of universal principles governing movement in both the external world and the realm of human cognition. Through its synthesis with Feuerbachian materialism, he developed the renowned notion of dialectical materialism.

Class society socialises workers into believing that individual self-interest is the fundamental basis of human nature and existence. If this assertion is accurate, then avarice has driven a perpetual conflict throughout human history. Workers inform that society's resistance to change stems from inherent human avarice. Workers provide the choice to either succumb to such avarice or use religion or mysticism as a means to transcend the physical realm. Each of those alternatives fails to provide a practical alternative or resolution to the issues posed by class society. Marxists acknowledge that individual self-interest and avarice have not consistently motivated previous societies, that avarice is not inherent in human nature, and that society has the potential to undergo positive transformation. All of this may be shown by using dialectical materialism, a scientific approach to analytically assess the reality in which people reside.

In order to enhance comprehension, dialectical materialism may be deconstructed into its individual constituents. Dialectics refers to the specific scientific approach used by Marxists to examine and interpret the surrounding reality. Materialism is the Marxist framework that reflects the understanding of reality that dialectics aims to examine. The analytical approach to dialectics takes into account nature's interdependence, inherent contradictions, the state of ongoing transformation, and the mechanism by which natural quantitative change results in qualitative change. In essence, dialectics posits that all entities are in a perpetual condition of flux, which is a consequence of interactions and conflicts. Furthermore, it asserts that many subtle hidden alterations accumulate until the entity in question undergoes a qualitative transformation into a modified form. The phenomenon of water being converted into steam after being heated to a temperature above its boiling point exemplifies the use of dialectics.

The Marxist perspective on nature is characterised by materialism, which posits the absence of any supernatural or mystical aspects. The philosophy of materialism asserts the existence of an objective world that is apart from human experience and considers matter to be of major importance. Dialectical materialism reveals that the concrete environment's circumstances influence individuals' cognition, personality, and behaviour. Viewing the universe from the perspective of dialectical materialism allows individuals to perceive the systematic progression of beliefs, ideas, acts, events, and even the grand narrative of human history. Historical materialism applies the concepts of dialectical materialism to an examination of contemporary society and its historical development. Historical materialism acknowledges that human history and society evolve in response to material and economic circumstances. Hence, the progress of both philosophical and institutional growth relies on the clashes and exchanges within the tangible realm.

The current understanding of growth and change contests the claim that inherent human avarice forms the foundation of class society. The emergence of class society may be attributed to the material interactions and conflicts that have been experienced by humanity throughout history. The endorsement of dialectical materialism does not justify the subjugation and exploitation of the working class. Marxists contend that this scientific perspective examines the ways in which people and society have evolved in order to facilitate their

transformation. It primarily imparts the understanding of human agency in history, demonstrating that individuals have the capacity to transform the repressive society they inhabit and that society cannot remain unchanged as the material world evolves. Dialectical materialism posits that capitalism, like all other phenomena, encounters a period of inception and evolution and ultimately reaches its demise.

### *The Labour Theory of Value*

The contemporary economic system is capitalism, characterised by competition, private ownership, and profit-driven production. Karl Marx, via his extensive compilation of economic works, which includes the three volumes of *Capital*, took away the enigma surrounding capitalism, revealing and elucidating its internal mechanisms, emerging principles, and inherent paradoxes. Marx further developed the ideas and theories first proposed by his classical predecessors, namely the British economists Adam Smith and David Ricardo. These enlightened intellectuals attempted to scrutinise capitalism from a scientific perspective. They stumbled across the notion that work was the origin of all new value in society. Marx successfully formulated the labour theory of value, which enabled him to elucidate a perplexing phenomenon that had evaded the classical economists: the concept of profit. Essentially, the uncompensated labour of the proletariat provides the capitalists with their profits. However, this reality prompted Marx to reach a more profound inference: that the capitalist system is intrinsically susceptible to recurring episodes of overproduction, when the production forces collide with the severe constraints of the market. This is the current state of affairs we are facing. Equipped with Marxist concepts, it becomes clear that an escape from this crisis is unattainable within the parameters of capitalism. Socialist revolution is the only answer.

Although Karl Marx never used the phrase "labour theory of value" in any of his publications; however, he did use the term "law of value." Based on the previous analysis, it may be concluded that Marx did not conceptualise the labour theory of value as a unique concept. In order to refute the idea that labour has a supernatural force, he highlighted the following points in his argument:

*Rather than the labour itself, the source of wealth is the labour itself. Labour, which is nothing more than the manifestation of a force of nature, human labour power, is just as much of a source of values as nature is, and it is undoubtedly of such that visible wealth is formed. Labour is the expression of a force of nature (wikipedia).*

This theory's primary goal is to address the conceptualisation of monetary value. Marx made a clear distinction between the practical usefulness and financial value of a commodity in his study. The value of an object is determined by its comparative utility. The fundamental essence of wealth, as posited by Marx and Engels (1887, p. 27), remains rooted in useful values, irrespective of the social manifestations of wealth. In an alternate formulation, it is posited that the exchange value represents the monetary value at which two goods are exchanged. In this instance, the concept primarily refers to the ratio or percentage

that exchanges the use-values of one commodity for those of another (Lenin, op. cit. p. 28). The inherent value of a commodity is determined by its ability to be obtained at a certain price. In accordance with Popkin's examination of Marx's economic theory proposed the following essential concepts:

*Even when a commodity serves our purpose, it could be worthless if we attempt to trade it in for something else. Air, for instance, has a utility value as it is necessary for human survival. However, nobody will take it in return for a book if we attempt to swap it. This is due to the fact that anybody who wants it may easily get it (Popkin, op. cit. p. 102).*

This is the concept of economic value as defined by Marx. In the present scenario, the cost of an item is determined by the quantity of labour used in its production. In an attempt to save labour resources, individuals often choose to engage in the trade of goods that need work input for their production. In a capitalist framework, the use of monetary units facilitated commodity transactions. Money, as posited by Marx, represents a kind of pure exchange value. Therefore, given the production circumstances and taking into account the average intensity and skill level of the hired labour, we can infer that the amount of work required for its creation in a given societal context determines its economic value. The incorporation of human labour into a commodity derives value. After acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the labour theory of value and its intended objectives, we will now proceed to delve further into the conceptualisation of the theory of surplus value.

### ***The Theory of Surplus Value***

Upon first acknowledging the presence of money within a capitalist framework, Marx put up two separate mechanisms of circulation. These methodologies were proposed by Marx. Typically, the activation of the CMC circuit, an abbreviation for commodity, money, and commodity, occurs. One kind of capitalist circuit is known as the MCM+ circuit, an abbreviation for money, commodities, and more money. Money functions as the initial catalyst for the capitalist cycle, and the ultimate goal is to acquire a greater amount of money than one initially has. Regarding this situation, it is not about satisfying human desires; instead, the owner's only goal is to achieve a higher degree of profitability than his rivals.

*The original monetary value increases as it progresses through the trade process, resulting in a conversion into capital. The fundamental objective of capitalism is to facilitate the flow of capital in the form of currency. This phenomenon arises due to the inherent nature of capital circulation, which is in a constant state of growth. Thus, capital is inherently self-expanding, implying that it continuously increases in value via the creation of surplus value, thereby augmenting the value of the original investment. This phenomenon stems from the perpetual generation of money (Rockmore, 2002, p.140).*

It is essential to accept that when the monetary exchange value surpasses the utility value, individuals experience adverse consequences. Such is precisely the situation in PNG, where proprietors of the means of production show little or no consideration for the fulfillment of human desires.

To grasp the notion of surplus value, it is necessary to return to the era of feudalism. Under the feudal system, peasants typically dedicated a portion of their time to cultivating their own small plots of land, while also dedicating some time to work on the lord's property. As peasants cultivate their own land, they are engaging in essential activity to sustain themselves and their families. Marx refers to this concept as necessary labour. During their employment under the lord, peasants engage in surplus labour, meaning they generate wealth that exceeds their own survival needs as direct producers. The feudal lords then appropriate the surplus profits.

The distinct spatial and temporal split between the work peasants carry out for themselves and the work they do for the lord makes exploitation in a feudal society conspicuous. Such clarity is, as we will show, entirely absent in the context of capitalism. The extra labour proves to be both advantageous and detrimental to humanity. It is a marvel because it facilitates human civilisation, since humans should generate more than they can consume for subsistence. Furthermore, it is a detrimental phenomenon because feudal lords, slave owners, and capitalists have used it to exploit savings, retaining the advantages of excess labour for their own gain. Upon full utilisation of the worker's essential labour, the capitalist does not compensate the worker for any more labour (surplus).

*During this extra period, the worker produces commodities with significantly higher economic value than what the paid earnings reflect. Surplus value, as defined by Marx, refers to the disparity between the economic value produced and the value received for one's job (Popkin, op. cit. p. 102).*

By allocating such additional time, the worker receives no benefits, while the owner reaps the greatest benefits. To maximise profitability, the owners take all necessary measures. Terminating employees while anticipating increased productivity from those who remain, reducing benefits, and fostering competitiveness among workers all contribute to a downward spiral in wages. All these factors are intended to optimise financial gains, yet they are specifically crafted to make the lives of the workers deplorable. The owners and top-level executives receive the net income, while the workers responsible for its generation receive none of it. How often has a company explicitly announced its intention to terminate people while also granting CEOs incentives or salary increases for achieving cost reductions? An exemplary demonstration of this phenomenon is the crisis that occurred in PNG on January 10, 2024. This tragedy revealed the inadequacy of the government, which fails to effectively fulfil the needs of the people. In the midst of the nation's socioeconomic challenges, including escalating inflation and staggering unemployment, the riots erupted.

After realizing that their salaries had been lowered by up to 50% in their previous pay checks, law enforcement and other public workers launched an outrage strikes outside the parliament, which subsequently ignited the ensuing disorder. Public servants faced deductions of up to K100 (US\$78) from their pay cheques, but the Prime Minister of the nation, who earns an annual salary of approximately K346, 037 (US\$ 97,201), tax-free allowances, and his take-home pay for the fortnight, which amounts to K31, 000 (US\$ 7,906), was not subject to the deductions. Upon the dissemination of the news on the upheaval, the companies' shares saw a surge in value. A significant number of people in the PNG area lack access to clean water, sufficient housing, decent medical care, appropriate clothing, and enough transportation.

However, the supposedly industrialised world is wasting a significant amount of its resources. The constant competition among capitalists is leading to the closure of industries and the collapse of companies. Throughout the process, they are generating an increasing surplus. As their unregulated and chaotic production results in a crisis of overproduction, they distribute the burden onto the workers by decreasing their wages, laying off a significant number of employees, and terminating the employment of other employees. The boom-or-bust nature of this reality stems from the system's inherent ability to consistently generate growing profits, regardless of the actual market needs. Such is the fundamental nature of the system. Capitalists seek new markets, more affordable access to resources, easily exploitable labour forces, and a more cost-effective workforce during times of crisis. This intensifies the motivation to engage in warfare. When one takes into account the cost of war, which is evident not just in financial terms but also in the tragic loss of human life, the waste seems even more illogical. PNG and Bougainville were embroiled in a decade-long civil war, with tribal conflicts in the Highlands leading to the extensive loss of life, including men, women, and children.

However, what is the solution? The solution lies in the complete elimination of the capitalism system and the forcible confiscation of the capitalist elite. A new system rooted in genuine human need and standing in solidarity with the oppressed and workers worldwide must be built to supplant the capitalist system. The socialist system eliminates the profit incentive by ensuring that the means of production are collectively owned and developed for the benefit of all members of society, rather than for financial gain. This method effectively addresses issues as they arise, resolving them through the combination of need and unity rather than through financial gain.

The surplus value is the proportion of the residual profit obtained by the entrepreneur. In Dr. Jegede's 2016 lecture on Surplus Value in Marxist Philosophy defines surplus value as the value generated by the labour of a wage worker that exceeds the worth of their labour power and is subsequently taken by the capitalist. The surplus value surpasses the profit margin and workforce wages, preventing the workers from purchasing the goods. Undeniably, capitalists want to augment the amount of surplus value in order to maximise their profits. The capitalist has the option to either augment the daily working hours (absolute surplus value) or decrease the required working hours (relative surplus value). The generation of surplus value, which depends on the existence of commodities, is a prerequisite for capital accumulation. In a barter economy, where items are only swapped for other products or services without the use of money, it does not generate surplus value. This phenomenon only manifests in an economy that distinguishes between use-value and exchange values, thereby transforming goods into commodities that can be exchanged for currency. In order to convert the excess value into capital, Marx conducted an examination of the process of capital accumulation, sometimes referred to as capital concentration.

#### *The Accumulation of Capital*

Contemporary society's history is characterised by a conflict between two opposing factions: the oppressed socioeconomic group – the labourers – and the exploiting socioeconomic group – the bourgeoisie. Some may view these current times in history as the embodiment of unbridled capitalism. The capitalism system, on the other hand, has not simply deviated from its intended course. The objective truth is unfolding with unparalleled cruelty. Karl Marx argued that capitalism entered the earth heavily influenced by blood and filth, permeating every aspect of society from head to toe. The new rulers in capitalist society were the urban middle class, which included shopkeepers and merchants who desired free markets, democratic rights, religious freedom, and other liberties not provided by the absolute monarchy of Europe. Several European nations had previously enriched themselves by robbing Asia, Africa, and the Americas via widespread massacres, genocide, and the subsequent slavery of the indigenous populations in these regions. Marx referred to this as the "primitive accumulation of capital." This is characterised by its ruthless cruelty and complete indifference for human beings. This historical era, during which certain European nations amassed immense riches, unparalleled in their magnitude, and built their civilisations based on this prosperity, was unparalleled at that time.

*Don't stop accumulating stuff! These are the prophets, including Moses! Industry provides the necessary material for preservation. As a result, it is imperative to save, store, and reinvest the maximum amount of surplus value or surplus product that is feasible into wealth! Using this formula, classical economics represented the historical purpose of the bourgeoisie without ever deluding itself in pursuit of riches. Accumulation for the sake of accumulation, production for the sake of production – this is the recipe (Marx, Capital op. cit. p. 418).*

These are the terms that Marx used in *Capital*, highlighting the demands that capitalists have for increased economic wealth. At this juncture, the conversion of a portion of the excess value into capital occurs, serving not to satisfy human desires but to produce new goods. Capital accumulation will be one of the components of any civilisation experiencing economic growth and development. Other factors include population growth, which will eventually lead to a larger labour force, as well as technological advancement. According to Todaro and Smith (2003, p. 56), capital accumulation occurs when a certain percentage of one's current income is set aside and invested with the intention of increasing productivity and revenue in the future.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Economic Status of Papua New Guinea and its Productions*

Marxian theory highlights the role of economic production in generating wealth, with the state acting as a key agent for societal transformation. In Papua New Guinea (PNG), the country faces economic imbalances, with only a small portion of the population contributing to the economy. The lack of equitable distribution of wealth exacerbates the situation, as the majority is excluded from productive processes and forced into informal sectors, such as the black market. The state's centralized power structure and flawed federalism reinforce this inequality, leading to a rentier state where the dominant class controls production mechanisms.

The socio-political landscape in PNG is marked by intense tribal conflict, which often leads to corruption in public policy. Corporate interests heavily influence policy decisions, and the benefits of such policies tend to favor the elite. While not every policy fails, successful initiatives often stem from opposition groups rather than the government. The post-independence period initially saw economic growth, but by the mid-1990s, the country's economy was plagued by structural problems, including poor governance, corruption, and deteriorating infrastructure. By 1999, PNG faced a severe economic crisis, with high inflation, plummeting currency values, and decreased foreign reserves.

As the economy continued to deteriorate, PNG implemented measures like privatization and deregulation, along with liberalizing commerce. However, these strategies were poorly executed, lacking transparency and coordination, and ultimately failed to reverse the economic decline. The depreciation of the Kina, along with the failure of economic reforms, resulted in a collapsed middle class and worsened social conditions. This crisis led to widespread public unrest, with the population voicing dissatisfaction and a desire for change. The people sought to resist government tyranny and address the pressing issues plaguing the nation.

Marx's concept of social transformation through collective action found expression in PNG's uprisings. However, the lack of understanding and organization among rebel leaders led to the failure of these movements. The state responded with repression, utilizing its authority to crush uprisings, thereby preventing any meaningful shift in power. The ongoing power struggles, such as the 2011 dispute between former Prime Ministers Sir Michael Somare and Peter O'Neill, showcased the instability within the PNG political system. Despite these

challenges, such conflicts served to advance the development of the country's democratic processes, as the struggle for power highlighted the flaws in the political system.

In line with Marxist theory, conflict in PNG plays a dual role, both productive and destructive, in shaping social change. Lewis Coser argues that conflict is an unavoidable and inherent part of social life, with the potential to stimulate innovation and prevent the entrenchment of outdated structures. In PNG, conflict has acted as a catalyst for transformation, leading to the emergence of new social groupings and mechanisms for reform. The evolving society, alongside the efforts of leaders committed to harnessing the country's resources, suggests that the nation is gradually moving toward a more democratic system, influenced by both manifest and latent social functions that guide its progress.

#### *State of Papua New Guinea and its Labour Relations*

Marx believed that the privileged few, who do not contribute to production, seize the wealth that work generates within society. Without production, wealth generation is impossible, and society would not undergo transformation. Both mental and physical creativity are integral components of employment. However, a capitalist system rarely adequately compensates labour for its contribution to the production and distribution processes. Furthermore, labour often experiences estrangement from both their products and themselves. During capitalism's peak, the state employs this exploitation to reduce inter-class mobility. Among the three components of production, Marx identified labour as the most active driving force in the production process: land, capital, and labour. The state, which controls industrial chains, uses government and labour relations as a means to intimidate wage workers and avoid reducing their appropriation bills, leading to an antagonistic relationship between them. One such outcome is a lack of progress in developing the productive forces and social interactions involved in production.

At one level, individual capitalists may oppose certain measures implemented by the state in the interest of the workers, such as regulation of working conditions and wages. However, at a higher level, these measures may be advantageous to capital because they eliminate undesirable forms of competition. For instance, a trade union movement can successfully negotiate significant concessions from the state on behalf of its members and may compel the state to safeguard its interests in relation to capital. Such concessions may be the essential cost that capitalists must pay to protect other, more fundamental interests. Hence, the state exists not to engage in political oppression but to govern the whole society, and yet it functions as a political oppressive entity. The state bureaucracy, driven by its own capacity to exercise political authority, would repress any movement that challenged its authority (Vajda, 1981).

The labour relations under the PNG State are characterised by dialectical dynamics, since the State typically categorises any proactive action by organised labour to effectively advocate for better welfare and working conditions for its members as subversive, radical, or contrary to the national interest. Increases in wages in PNG have exacerbated the impoverishment of the workers and general population due to factors such as inflation and high or heavy taxes. However, if

the government properly maintains the infrastructure, such as PNG Power, refineries, seaports, etc., there would be no need for worker protests to demand increases in wages.

As a rentier state, the PNG relies on revenue from resource projects, especially those of major foreign corporations, and exports for its self-sufficiency. The federal government collects these revenues, which constitute the primary source of about 90 percent of most provinces' income. The nation lacks a production foundation that integrates the production forces and social relations. Hence, the objective circumstances necessary to establish social mechanisms for a productive economy that would initiate a class conflict between the two classes advocated by Marx are absent. The mostly peasantry-based economy, which relies on substantial revenues from oil and gas exploration to sustain the state, may be the reason for the absence of class consciousness in Papua New Guinean society. Therefore, the state influences and directs the collective awareness of the people in PNG for their own survival. This has led to the development of a rentier economy that lacks a working foundation to generate class consciousness, which is a fundamental prerequisite within the Marxian framework for societal change. In their 2002 study of the state and rentier economy, Alan Gelb and colleagues highlighted the collection, allocation, and utilisation of oil rents, particularly to support a policy regime similar to that of PNG. A significant concentrated source of rent in national income can influence the social and political structures of a producing country, commonly referred to as a rentier state.

Nevertheless, this framework originated during the colonial period, when the colonialists intentionally aimed to diminish the creative capabilities of their colonial states in order to facilitate the exportation and perpetuation of capitalism. The intentional suppression of the productive forces resulted in the deprivation of opportunities for constructive activity, hence fostering clientele patronage in government and political ranks. The government's consolidation of dominant positions in the economy has exacerbated PNG's excessive reliance on oil and gas. As the government became the most efficient and cost-effective method of generating rapid profits, a rentier state emerged, exacerbating the politics of distribution rather than production. This development gave rise to a multitude of rent-entrepreneurs, namely influential individuals who lack any constructive means of earning a living apart from their close association with state authority. The majority of Papua New Guinean elites rely only on government patronage for their livelihood, resulting in a distortion of the value system.

Although Marx expressed strong criticism of the modern capitalist system, he saw capitalism as a significant phase of societal development in Louis Bonaparte's Eighteenth Brumaire. Marx believed that capitalism facilitated the growth of productive forces and the ability of capitalists to incorporate technological innovation into production processes, which ultimately resulted in substantial progress in human civilisations. The social dialectics mechanism plays a crucial role in generating a class-conscious proletariat, which is the central focus of Marxist ideologies. In this situation, it has become evident that a thorough comprehension of the state and its connections to the capitalist

production and accumulation process is necessary. Thus, according to Claude Ake (1996), politics may be seen as a kind of warfare, with government being the outcomes of such combat. The dominant political elite becomes the state's exclusive asset, vigorously defending its authority against other factions vying for state control using all available methods. Marx and Engels explicitly expressed Ake's beliefs when they argued that circumstances influence men to the same extent that males shape events. Marx argues that the state, a clearly defined political power system that enables the bourgeois to exert control over the proletariat, is only a subordinate component of bourgeois society and is neither synonymous with nor influenced by it.

### *Capitalism as the Economic Problem in Papua New Guinea*

Karl Marx predicted that capitalist systems would eventually collapse due to the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeois. The capitalist pursuit of surplus value leads to the accumulation of wealth for the elite, while the poor remain destitute. In Papua New Guinea (PNG), the primary economic challenges are underdevelopment and widespread corruption. Poverty, inflation, and unemployment are pushing the country toward a recession, and these issues can be traced back to the capitalist system, which often goes unnoticed in discussions about the country's difficulties.

Colonialism introduced capitalist principles to PNG, subjecting rural farmers to urban market demands while governing them through unfamiliar structures. Rural producers were forced to trade goods under conditions controlled by colonial authorities. The colonial system established infrastructure that included religion, education, and state institutions such as the police, court, and prison systems. Communication advancements in 1900 further enabled colonial powers to extend control by building roads, shipping routes, and other infrastructure.

Education became a tool for enabling PNG's population to engage in the economy and politics. By providing skills for commerce and formal accounting, it facilitated the indigenous population's involvement in local governance. However, education also served as an ideological tool for the colonial state, preparing individuals to participate in the capitalist system. The dual role of education, both as a means of socializing the workforce and as a tool for colonial control, made it difficult to determine whether it benefited the people or merely served colonial interests.

Capitalism in PNG is marked by the replacement of human values with the pursuit of profit. The capitalist elite in PNG prioritize their own wealth accumulation over the welfare of the population, leading to the mismanagement of the country's resources. They lack interest in policies that would use PNG's natural wealth for the benefit of the people. The system has entrenched inequality and corruption, with the elite profiting while the majority of the population suffers.

Since the 1990s, PNG has implemented economic reforms such as privatization of state-owned banks, superannuation reform, and deregulation in telecommunications. The aim was to create a private sector-driven economy. Under former Prime Minister Mekere Morauta, the government pursued

deregulation in key sectors like oil, hoping to boost production. The focus was on privatizing public services and infrastructure, such as electricity and healthcare, shifting them to profit-driven models through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP).

Capitalism has also manipulated religion to maintain control over the population, promising prosperity in the afterlife while exploiting workers. Religious leaders have assumed multiple roles, from political activists to educators, which undermines skilled professions. The system has fostered tribal and regional conflicts, further weakening PNG's social fabric. Capitalism, with its focus on greed and class conflict, perpetuates exploitation and subjugation of the masses, keeping the elite in control of industrial production.

### ***The Way Forward***

Marxists propose the complete eradication of capitalism and the establishment of communism as solutions to the unfortunate state of workers. Marxist ideology dictates that we must make every effort to demolish the capitalist system, akin to a more advanced form of slavery. Upon such accomplishment, it would signify the emancipation of humanity. However, achieving this freedom necessitates action rather than reflection. In contrast to simple reflection, Marxism is a philosophy of action. Karl Marx argues that philosophers have been attempting to analyse the world in different ways, but the essential task is to transform it. Therefore, it is only through action that the oppressed and exploited individual may achieve liberation and have their human dignity restored

To properly manage the economic crisis that is currently taking place in PNG, people must first become aware of the presence of class hierarchies. Marx attempted to differentiate between the numerous classes formations that existed prior to his support of a revolution within the working class in his Communist Manifesto. He did this to gain a deeper understanding of the working class.

*Since the inception of human civilisation till the present, conflicts among different social classes have been an inherent aspect of every civilisation. Individuals such as Freeman and Slave, Patrician and Plebeian, Lord and Serf, Guildmaster, and Journeyman have engaged in a continuous struggle throughout history, characterised by both hidden and open aspects. Each instance of this war, which culminated in its resolution, included either a profound transformation of society in its entirety or the collective annihilation of the antagonistic social classes. Paradoxically, the battle remained unfinished (Geuss & Skinner, 1988, p. 2).*

Awareness of Papua New Guinean society's segmentation into the bourgeoisie and proletariat is of utmost importance. This will help to strategically push the need for a revolution. The revolution in question aims to completely eradicate capitalism, the oppressive system, and thereafter advance towards socialism, ultimately culminating in the establishment of communism. According to Marx, this would represent the cessation of human exploitation, the cessation of alienation, and the cessation of strife and hostility among individuals. All members of society will collectively own and enjoy the societal products, eliminating individual ownership of the means of production. Subsequently, there will be a surplus of material production, ensuring that every individual in the community has an ample supply of material commodities. The

principle of distribution will dictate that each person receives according to their own requirements.

The capitalist system will force some pressure groups to emerge and address the capitalists' cruel practices. They will also exert pressure on the government to regain control over crucial sectors of the economy and provide mechanisms for those remaining under private ownership to improve employee welfare. Furthermore, this group will take extreme measures to combat corrupt officials in many sectors and advocate for a social state characterised by human rights protection and the absence of any kind of coercion.

The fundamental principle of revolutionary socialism is to establish a society where the needs and interests of the majority of the people guide the predominant economic activity and government. The people's needs must drive economic and political policies, not just the potential profits for a select group of capitalist elites. Currently, PNG has a substantial amount of oil products, including gas. These resources, when combined with a people-orientated economic system, have the potential to strongly stimulate the overall growth of PNG's economy. Unfortunately, the "profit-first" system is unable to adequately and satisfactorily develop these resources, primarily due to the poverty of the majority of Papua New Guineans, which the capitalist elites perceive as mere economic waste.

Thus, the socialist component of the required agenda is the establishment of an economic system in which the demands of society and the people form the fundamental foundation of administration. The revolutionary element of the agenda arises from the need for the working class to engage in a struggle and organise politically in order to displace the limited number of capitalist benefactors of the current profit-orientated system from political authority in PNG. Attaining this objective, the working class must be ready to engage in prolonged and resolute collective action until the capitalist exploitative regime is completely vanquished and substituted by a government comprised of working class representatives.

Furthermore, as evidenced by the recent general elections and the subsequent general strike and mass protest on June 2016 and January 10, 2024, the establishment of militant or combative trade unions and a mass political party representing the working people and other oppressed masses has become an imperative need. Only trade unions with class-conscious, militant leadership and a combative approach will understand that, in general, only regular mass actions can secure concessions for better living conditions for the people from profit-driven capitalist elites. Nevertheless, while mass action may achieve short concessions, it is clear that capitalism is unable to sustain such limited concessions for an extended duration. Therefore, the question arises as to the feasibility of such a revolutionary societal transition. The 10th of January, 2024, started with catastrophic consequences for PNG, as the nation was consumed by civil turmoil. What initially began as a demonstration by law enforcement personnel (police, defence force, and correctional staff) over excessive deductions from their first salary of the year rapidly evolved into looting and vandalism of stores as individuals exploited the lack of security in the city (Mako, 2024). The

extensive rioting, looting, and property destruction on a national scale exposed the underlying socioeconomic tensions among the population resulting from the country's exorbitant cost of living, high unemployment rate, crime rates, and corruption. The government found it immobilised, suspended in mid-air. Notwithstanding this, the strike was unsuccessful and escalated into the violence that had originally ignited the conflict. This may be attributed to the absence of a working-class political alternative to capitalism and a lack of resolve among the pro-capitalist union leaders commanding the movement to advocate for change.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

PNG lacks a productive base that could serve as a foundation for the productive forces and social relations of production, thereby hindering the creation of an economy that could transform both the society and its inhabitants. Peasants residing in rural regions make up a significant portion of the population, which has led to a diminished sense of social awareness and class consciousness, both crucial tools for bringing about social change by Marxist standards. In PNG, we don't generate wealth; instead, we allocate the state's accumulated wealth from oil and gas revenue to the political elites. These elites are constantly competing with one another to obtain a portion of the wealth, but they do not do so for production, appropriation, or consumption. This has led to the state transitioning into a rentier state, founded on clientship and patronage. It has led to the formation of jobless militant young agitations throughout the country of PNG, which are functioning as latent roles in moulding social life. This phenomenon can be attributed to the unsustainable nature of the PNG system. If a person is in any way disabled, they cannot fulfil their role as a social change agent, which involves generating and modifying society. The State of PNG needs an institutional framework of policies to address the dysfunctional economic system it operates within. This framework should allow for the development of forces that would ultimately alter PNG's society for the benefit of the majority of the population.

Despite the fact that Marx was not a Marxist himself, he laid the groundwork for the movement through the body of work and philosophy that he generated. Furthermore, we have demonstrated the validity of the Marxist theory of values, as well as its accurate prediction about the capitalist system, which has deeply penetrated PNG's economic affairs. The adoption of socialism will not only improve the economic situation, but it will also bring about the introduction of a new normative framework. A new morality will emerge, one that is founded on human values rather than the ideals of machines or the pursuit of wealth. During this phase of continuous preparation for a revolution, the method by which Marxist theory will ultimately evolve will be dependent upon the manner in which these political changes unfold. This has been the case for quite some time.

## FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations, so further research is needed related to the topic of Analysing How Marxist Theory May Transform Papua New Guinea's Economy in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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