

A Critique of Karl Marx's Political Economy Examined in Light of Nigeria's Quest for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

One of the problems of contemporary human society is the problem of class struggle and the inherent contradictions that are inherent in socio-economic and political society. Marx attempts to address the contemporary issues of class struggle. There are certain concepts that are closely associated with Marx's political economy such as class struggle, alienation, historical materialism, dialectical materialism, and political economy. Marx's conception of political economy cuts across his ideological reconstruction and theoretical templates of politics, religion, law, literature, the state, ideology, and culture. The objective of this paper is to reveal that Marx's conceptualization of society reveals the theory of class struggle, theory of revolution, theory of political economy and the theory of history. This paper is robust, timely and imperative because it reveals the interconnectedness between political reality and economic reality. Marx's conception of political economy reveals the critical importance of human liberation and emancipation from the shackles of poverty and alienation. Marx could be referred to as a social emancipator because he vehemently believes in the socio-economic and the political freedom of the individuals in society. This paper adopts the method of analysis and hermeneutical methodology in discussing the interconnectedness between political reality and economic reality in Marx's theoretical reconstruction. Findings, however, revealed that Marx's conception of political economy is a practical demonstration of human condition and socio-economic and political existence. This paper, however, concludes that Marx's conception of society with regards to his theoretical reconstruction on political economy aims at addressing the fundamental problems of humanity.

Keywords: *Class Struggle; Freedom; Human Condition; Political Economy; Society*

Contribution/Originality: This study contributed to existing scholarship by providing a comprehensive synthesis of Marx's theories of class struggle, revolution, political economy, and history within a unified conceptual framework. It offers a fresh interpretation of the interconnectedness between political and economic realities, emphasizing Marx's enduring

relevance to human emancipation, social justice, and the understanding of contemporary challenges of inequality, political domination, and socio-economic development.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the problems of contemporary human society is the problem of class struggle and the inherent contradictions that are inherent in socio-economic and political society. Marx attempts to address the contemporary issues of class struggle. There are certain concepts that are closely associated with Marx's political economy such as class struggle, alienation, historical materialism, dialectical materialism, and political economy. Marx's conception of political economy cuts across his ideological reconstruction and theoretical templates of politics, religion, law, literature, the state, ideology, and culture. Carver (1991) therefore argues that Marx's critique of political economy supplies the foundation for his analyses of politics, the state, law, ideology, religion, and culture, all of which are understood with respect to the material organization of society. Milward (2000) went ahead to say that Marx's political economy is not restricted to economic relations but serves as a system for understanding political institutions, legal systems, ideology, social organization, and cultural development. The objective of this paper is therefore to reveal that Marx's conceptualization of society reveals the theory of class struggle, theory of revolution; theory of political economy and the theory of history.

Despite the extensive literature on Marx's political economy, existing studies focus largely on its critique of capitalism and class struggle, with meager focus to its contemporary relevance for governance, national development, and socio-economic challenges, particularly in developing societies. This study addresses this gap by examining the relationship between political and economic realities in Marx's political economy and its relevance to contemporary society. This paper is robust, timely and imperative because it reveals the interconnectedness between political reality and economic reality. Marx's conception of political economy reveals the critical importance of human liberation and emancipation from the shackles of poverty and alienation. Marx could be referred to as a social emancipator because he vehemently believes in the socio-economic and the political freedom of the individuals in society. Furthermore, this paper adopts the method of analysis and hermeneutical methodology in discussing the interconnectedness between political reality and economic reality in Marx's theoretical reconstruction. Marx's conception of political economy is a practical demonstration of human condition and socio-economic and political existence. This paper, however, concludes that Marx's conception of society with regards to his theoretical reconstruction on political economy aims at addressing the fundamental problems of humanity.

Karl Marx's Conception of Political Economy

Marx concentrates principally on the problem of class struggle and the philosophy of social change, as well as economic development. Marx's political thought envisages the theory of society. Marx's political thought focuses on the global scale of capitalism as a means of the production of goods and services. For Marx, capitalism as the private ownership of the means of production of goods and services is said to be deeply rooted in exploitative tendency. For Marx, capitalism is exploitative and it is defective. However, the idea of exploitation is found to be a fundamental problem in our global society. Marx believes that the solution to capitalist ideology rests on the

prevalence of communism. Marx refers to is the prevalence of Communism: the collective ownership of the means of production of goods and services. Marx's postulation of the prevalence of the communist stage resonates within the socialist arrangement and the utopian ideals. Thus, Paresh Chattopadhyay (2020) argues that Marx envisioned communism as the culmination of socialist transformation, where free and equal individuals collectively govern production.

Furthermore, Marx's critique of political economy envisages the philosophy of society, revolution, class struggle, social change, politics, and religion. Marx's political economy demonstrates the critique of philosophy, politics, society, history, revolution, and religion. In addition to the foregoing, Marx's conceptualization and contextualization of political economy is a practical demonstration of the workings of economic society. Marx's conception of political economy reveals the real danger to the human world but the problem is really in the misapplication of human and natural resources. Marx's political economy aims at the practical demonstration of democratic consolidation and the economic sustainability of world democracies. In addition, Marx's conception of political economy reflects the theoretical framework for the enhancement of awareness of human socio-economic and political existence. In addition to the foregoing, this theoretical discourse reflects the navigation Marx's conception of human contemporary society. Milward (2000) says Marx's conception of political economy contains myriad of contemporary issues such as class struggle, alienation, historical determinism, and dialectical materialism, the theory of society, social emancipation, social integration, economic development, socio-political mobilization, and democratic stability.

Nonetheless, the conceptualization and conceptualization of Marx's political economy is characterized by mental abstraction launched against Hegel's objective philosophy. Marx has been one of the most prominent philosophers in the history of political economy alongside Adam Smith. Marx's conceptualization and contextualization of capitalism as the internationalization of human labour is a practical demonstration of what Marx calls "a deceptive object"; in which there is a discrepancy between its 'essence' and its 'appearance'. Marx's political economy encapsulates the transition from the capitalist stage to the communist stage. Buttressing his theoretical position further, Jary and Jary (2000), argued that Marx envisaged the emergence of socialist societies in which the state played a significant role; only with the radical transformation of all property relations and the withering away of the state would communism emerge. Worthy of note is that Marx is devoted to a radical political and economic emancipation. According to Michael Rosen, "Marx came to be dissatisfied with the normative assumption that the critique of religion alone would be sufficient to produce human emancipation". Rosen argues that that "although the exploiting classes have special access to the means of production, exploitation is not generally a matter of the use of force. In capitalism, for example, exploitation flows from the way in which the means of production are owned privately and labour is bought and sold just like any other commodity". In addition to the foregoing,

Furthermore, the Marxist thought is grounded on the socio-political and economic conception of class struggle; social change and socio-economic development of contemporary society. Marx's conception of political economy reflects the practical demonstration of the opposition between the social classes of contemporary society. According to the "Advanced Learner's Dictionary", "Marxism is the political and

economic theories of Karl Marx, which explain the changes and development in society as the result of opposition between social classes". Marx's conception of political economy revolves around the theory of the state as one of the elements of the superstructure. For Vladimir Lenin, "the state is a machine for maintaining the rule of one class over another". Worthy of note is that the state is oppressive and exploitative. Worthy of note is that Marx's theoretical reconstruction of political economy reflects the critique of philosophy, ideology and religion which envisages a radical reaction to the continuous inherent contradiction in society caused by the irreconcilability of class struggle. Marx opines that man must be liberated from these shackles of poverty, ignorance and oppression by the state.

According to Rosen (1998), society with its inherent contradictions and internal conflict must begin to undergo development for the sake of economic emancipation. Nevertheless, this theoretical discourse attempts to launch a philosophical investigation on Marx's critique of philosophy, ideology and religion and the contextualization and conceptualization of ideology from the points of view of an "interest model". Marx's philosophy of religion and his critique of philosophy and ideology is another dimension of his critique of Hegel and Feuerbach's conception of idealistic philosophy. Moreover, religion reflects on a form of oppression and a continuous philosophy which is found among all classes of people in any society. Rosen argues that religion is an intense loyalty and devotion to whatever it is that one regards as most worthwhile in human life. A religious person is one who feels himself in the presence of some extraneous forces or powers that is greater than himself and in cooperation with which he can devise values that would otherwise be relevant to his life.

Nevertheless, religion is a multi-faceted and a worldwide phenomenon which includes what is known as Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion. Worthy of note is that Marx argues that we must look at religion from a social, economic, political, cultural, intellectual and psychological life of man. Marx argues that religion gives objectivity to moral values and it puts human beings in perpetual slavery. However, religion reveals the need for moral consciousness. It serves as a form of a moral constraint and a moral restraint serves as solid bedrock for normative peace and human existential relationship. Habermas in agreement with Marx argues that this moral consciousness derives primarily from the way reality is perceived by human beings in their communicative political action. According to the Marxian standpoint, human beings tend to treat this moral consciousness as something independent of the substructure, which is constituted by the superstructure – the sum total of a natural and socio-economic reality of contemporary society. For Engels and Marx

The rise of organized and institutionalized religion has compounded and ossified or obfuscated issues.... For as long as the human condition which gives rise to religious consciousness, ignorance, poverty, exploitation, repression, bigotry, and general human social intercourse remains, religious ideas will continue to dominate human consciousness (Engels and Marx, 1848:263).

Moreover, religion has given rise to Islamic fundamentalism and fanaticism. However, religion has been regarded as an ethos of constraint to use the words of Samuel

Sheffler. In addition to the foregoing, without religion, the life of man would have been meaningful because man is a rational person. For Rousseau (1792), human beings were orderly and naturally good but he was corrupted by society. Man has certain good qualities despite his animalistic nature. However, religious tolerance does not mean absolute absence of human disagreement in contemporary human society. However, disagreement is part and parcel of our humanity. Consequently, Christians and non-Christians have equal rights or access and many things in common. Sometimes, religious belief is subjective. Religious belief provides some solace to human beings. Religious beliefs bring about some personal idiosyncrasies. Marx was absolutely right in arguing that religion is essentially a social consciousness in its entire entirety and it is vehemently instrumental and oppressive. In this connection, Marx's political thought was a radical response to the theoretical reconstruction of Hegel. Hegel's theoretical position is an embodiment of the rational order of things in the physical world.

Karl Marx's Political Economy Examined in Light of Nigeria's Quest for Sustainable Development

Marx conceded that religion is an expression of the content of philosophy in immediate form. Rosen posits that "the chief task of philosophy, he asserts, in all ages of the illusions of religion, the Young Hegelian philosophy provide "the sufficient conditions for human emancipation and the achievement of a rational state". Rosen maintains that "Marx presents the implication of these criticisms for the critique of religion. Marx's theoretical reconstruction on the "Communist Manifestos" is a philosophical masterpiece of vehement rhetoric, seething with thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Moreover, the notion of religion as exemplified by Marx's political thought according to Carver (1991), reflects on the era of any particular society. However, religion produces an inverted world system as far as the Marxist tradition is concerned. The Marxist tradition, however, holds that despite the increase in religious consciousness, human oppression is increasing in an alarming proportion. Religion has resulted in the prevalence of genocide, and untold economic oppression and hardship to the whole of our humanity.

For Rosen (1998), in Marx's critique of religion, religion connects religion back to its unacknowledged origins in social existence. Marx holds that the criticism of religion and philosophy guarantees the categorical imperative to overthrow the bourgeois political theory in which man is debased, enslaved, and neglected. Worthy of note is that Rosen further holds that: "Marx maintains that the illusion of religion is exposed by the critical role philosophy plays in guaranteeing the affirmation and the establishment of an ideal human fulfillment or human emancipation". However, the proletariat, Marx admits, ought to break the chains of economic enslavement and socio-political oppression masterminded by the state's ideological reconstructions. According to Marx, once the criticism of religion has done its work, philosophy must move on 'to unmask human self-alienation in its secular forms'. The critique of religion ends, Marx says, "in the doctrine that man is the supreme being for man; thus, it ends with the categorical imperative to overthrow all existential/politico-economic conditions in which man is a debased, enslaved and neglected as contemptible being. Man is a specie-being 'because he looks upon himself as a universal being. Worthy of note is that Marx's economic theory connects to political theory.

Lawhead (2002:53) asserts that, "Marx is always caught between his theory of dialectical materialism, historical determinism and his call for political economy. The

Marxist tradition is an ideological reconstruction that hinges on the interests of the proletariat by distorting the facts of social reality". Marx's postulation demonstrates the fundamental question of man's inhumanity to man which will eventually transform into an era of unacceptably individualistic tradition to the socialist arrangement which will eventually culminates at the communist stage. Marx's conception of class struggle, dialectical materialism, and historical determinism showcases that Marx's political economy becomes a socio-existential imperative for his concern for human condition and existence. Worthy of note is that Marx's attitude towards contemporary society showcases the fact that human existence, political and economic reality, however, becomes more fundamental in society. Marx makes several negative comments against philosophy and religion, and especially, the Hegel's idealism. Marx's negation of the Hegelian idealism reflects the assertion that idealism is pivotal just like materialism. Worthy of note is that Hegel and Marx both stressed the critical importance of human freedom.

For Rosen (1998), "Marx's political writing is the recipe for society. Marx and Engels maintain that Hegel's philosophy stop at the abstraction of man". However, Marx and Engels (1848:262) argued that "they turned Hegel's hands upside down". Rosen (1998) went on to say that the alternative that Marx and Engels propose is, of course, also a theory, but it is a theory, they claim, of a quite different kind. In direct contrast to German philosophy, which descends from 'heaven to earth', their purpose is to present an account which will 'ascend from earth to heaven'. The German ideology is filled with polemical assertions of the priority of material life over the world of religion, thought and speculation. Nonetheless, since the ancient world, political thinkers had been concerned with the role that 'false' or irrational forms of consciousness play in political life. To this extent, the Young Hegelian critique of religion represented the latest manifestation of a very long tradition. However, the originality of Marx's concept of ideology lies in the way that it brings the idea of false consciousness together with a distinctively modern conception of society.

Marx and Engels (1844:3-4) claim that "the class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it". Marx's theory of dialectical materialism represents a radical transformation of society as exemplified by Hegel's theory of history and freedom. Marx's conception of political economy represents the purview that capitalism is deceptive and it represents the appropriation of the surplus values in a capitalist society. Labour represents the essence of human existence and it represents a special form of a commodity that could be bought and sold like every other commodity in the market.

Furthermore, the Marxian perspective is a thinking of political activism, economic liberalization and radical social change. His socio-political and economic liberalization is the product of practical social activity in human historical/material world. However, ideology is the most generic term, because the science of ideas also contains the study of their expression and deduction. Ideology has historical reconstruction. Eccleshall (1992) maintained that "ideologies share two principal characteristics: an image of society and a political programme. Marx's critique of philosophy, religion and ideology reveals that human beings are fully determined by their material circumstances, and therefore, to bring about an emancipated global society, it is logically necessary and sufficient to make the right changes to those material

circumstances. Also, “the transition from capitalism to the Communist society, a society where there is collective control of resources or collective ownership of the means of economic production, is one of the motivating grounds and sustaining elements of Marx's socio-political and economic analysis. Marx believes that money has become a god as far as society is concerned. Worthy of note is that Marx holds that the normative foundation of real philosophical import or bearing could be epistemological, metaphysical and ethical. Dialectical materialism and historical determinism are two basic concepts or basic strands of Marxist theory but the main consideration of this discourse is based on Marx's critique of philosophy, religion and ideology. Marx's evolutionary notion of society is merely a socialist thought; and it is governed by some level of abstraction, which he accuses Hegel. Marx's notion of private property and feminist thought remain very unclear.

According to Kersting (1992:342-343), "the right of reason grounded in freedom demands private property. Marx's critique of philosophy and religion is predicated on the critique of society. His notion of society is communism; “it is a form of society which approximates to the socialist ideals”. Marx's critique of philosophy and religion is aimed at fostering the normative framework of the common good in human society. Marx toed the line of the Hegelian notion of the dialectical method of the philosophy of history. However, ideology, for instance, creates the platform for effective institutional functioning, social mobilization, image and social integration of society. In conceptualizing and contextualizing Marx's theoretical analysis and dialectical variation, this discourse attempts to navigate through the materialistic framework of his political philosophy or his conception of human nature and society.

Also, human society has become very complex and it has grown beyond the 19th century era of simple society in which Marx finds himself in his theoretical analysis. However, capitalism is still very prevalent in this contemporary world; its excesses could be regulated by any effective government. Marx's critique of capitalist ideology and philosophy aimed at human emancipation, social integration, economic development, socio-political stabilization and the effective institutionalization of human society at large. Marx is also guilty of the "abstract mental labour" he launches against the Hegelian idealistic philosophy of consciousness. He is of the view that Hegel's philosophy was apologetic. Marxism is all about the theory of society and it is the powerful force used in shaping society. Broadly speaking, Marxism is simply a social movement and it has to do with radical social change premised on the need for economic progress and political development of society. It is the theory of society and social change. It aims at historical world political order, economic liberalization, or globalization. Marx's political theory and economic liberalization is a communalistic movement as the end of history. For Martin Cohen assert that:

Communism is the ‘end of history’. All history is the history of class struggle, in a society shaped by the prevailing mode of production of goods and services”. It is invariably the philosophy of communist revolution. The concept of revolution has always been a misguided, confusing and a controversial one. The fundamental historicity of human affairs is based on the fact that human society has evolved over time from primitive r simple ones to more complex and highly developed societies (Cohen, 2008:32).

2. METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative research method based on documentary analysis and hermeneutical interpretation to examine Karl Marx's conception of society and its implications for political economy. The qualitative method is appropriate because the study seeks to generate an in-depth understanding of Marx's theoretical propositions rather than to measure or quantify empirical phenomena. Data for the study were obtained from secondary sources, including Karl Marx's original works, scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, historical documents, and other relevant academic publications on Marxian political economy, class struggle, revolution, and historical materialism. The documentary materials were subjected to content analysis to identify recurring concepts, themes, and patterns relevant to the study's objectives. Furthermore, the hermeneutical approach was employed to critically interpret Marx's texts within their historical, philosophical, and socio-economic contexts, thereby uncovering the underlying meanings and contemporary relevance of his theoretical reconstruction. The combination of documentary analysis, content analysis, and hermeneutical interpretation enhances the credibility and depth of the study by providing a systematic and contextual examination of Marx's conception of society and political economy.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Marxism is a process of social change, process which has no ground culminating moment or climax. Socialism as a pre-liberalism, on the other hand, negates liberal values by introducing a system that imposes despotic controls upon the population at large (whatever it claims to speak in the name of the workers), because according to Marx and Engels (1844), it hurts traditional anathemas against liberalism and representative government. Furthermore, many scholars have asked this pertinent question that can Marxism be rescued. The idea of Marxism can actually be rescued and could serve as the impetus for understanding the political economy of our modern state. The idea of Marxism brings to the foreground the dynamic interplay or the inextricable nexus between politics and economy. The theory of Marxism is the theory of the State, the theory of class struggle, the theory of history and the theory of revolution. The characteristics of Marxism embrace the idea of communism. Marx's conception of political economy hinges on his idea of communism.

For Hoffman and Graham (2009) the idea of communism as a scientific socialism does, indeed, lead to authoritarianism, but this is not because communism aims to create a classless and stateless society. Rather, it is because Marxist theory embraces elements that make it impossible for the state to wither away. The state remains a power force and instrument in organizing and understanding the dynamic interplay and interface between political reality and economic reality. One of the weaknesses closely associated with Marxism is that it downplays the state as a mystical being. The state plays a critical role in galvanizing political reality and economic reality. For Drucker (1999) the final fundamental on which to base strategy in the period of worldwide structural change and uncertainty is the growing incongruence between economic reality and political reality. The world economy is increasingly becoming global. The concept of revolution is closely associated with Marx's concept of the state. Hoffman and Graham (2009) went ahead to note that the concept of revolution as a dramatic element focused around a seizure of

power is problematic. Marx uses the term revolution in different ways. Accordingly, Marx and Engel (1967:83) speak in the communist manifesto of the constant revolutionizing of production under capitalist ideology and in that sense, revolutions are occurring all the time. The concept of revolution is also used to denote a transformation of state and class power – an event in which the character of society as a whole change. It is true that Marx was to argue that such an event did not have to be violent, and he even puts the view in 1882 that if in Britain ‘the unavoidable evolution’ turns into a revolution that would not only be the fault of the ruling classes but also of the working class. Every peaceful concession has been wrung out through pressure, and the workers must wield power and use their liberties, both of which they possess legally. Based on this theoretical subscription, John Hoffman (1975, 211) succinctly asserts that every peaceful concession in a transformation of society suggests that each step forward is a kind of revolution in its own right and that the notion of revolution as a dramatic event that inevitably changes the character of society, is redundant.

Accordingly, John Hoffman and Paul Graham (2009) further argued that this is not typical of Marx’s view. The notion of revolution as a dramatic event linked to a seizure of power, was, it seems to us, inherited uncritically from the French Revolutions of 1789. It creates a polarization that makes the assertion of common interests and consensus more, not less, difficult. Marxism demonstrates a scathing attitude towards morality that can only aggravate the problem, but it does not follow from this that all elements of Marxism are authoritarian in orientation. The notion of Marxism as the theory of society brings about the inevitability problem and the liberal tradition. Marxism is embedded in liberalism according to Hoffman and Graham (2009). To transcend here the attitude towards liberalism is crucial. Not only did Marx begin his political career as a liberal steeped in the ideals of the European Enlightenment, but when he becomes a communist, he seeks to go beyond rather than reject, liberal values. Worthy of note is that there is a great connection between socialism and liberalism. Marx’s political thought presupposes a utopian ideal. For instance, his notion of socialist arrangement presupposes a Utopian demand.

According to Subrata Mukherjee and Sushila Ramaswamy (2007) socialism is deeply rooted in a utopian demand. For Leon Baradat (2008, 145), Marx thought that people’s ideas are conditioned by their economic environment and that economic change stimulates a dialectic conflict between those ruling and those ruled in society. Eventually, the social class controlling the new dominant means of production will win the struggle to create its own political and social conditions. Also, Leon Baradat (2008), rightly observed that to Marx, the final conflict will find the Capitalist and proletarian classes engaged in a struggle that the Proletariat will win because, although the capitalist system is productive, it is also exploitative and parasitic. He went on to asserts that when the Proletariat class comes to power, it will establish a dictatorship, which, in turn, will create a socialist economy and eliminate all non-proletarian classes. This development will lead to greater productivity and the elimination of poverty. As each country becomes Socialist in its turn, national boundaries will disappear and eventually a single utopia will replace the divided, exploitative and cruel world of capitalism.

Subrata Mukherjee and Sushila Ramaswamy (2007) in agreement with Leon Baradat (2009) argued that capitalism is international or global in nature and it cuts across all borders. It goes beyond all rational boundaries and it is exploitative. For John Hoffman and Paul Graham (2009), capitalism is a system of production that divides

society into those who can hire and fire the services of others, and those who are compelled to work for an employer. Capitalism is a political and economic ideology that is aimed at solving fundamental human problems. For John Burr and Milton Goldinger (2008), capitalism is an economic system in which ideally the important decisions of how to spend their time and money. Reveling in this liberation from the darkness of irrationalism, many nineteenth-century thinkers, philosophy of Marx, Habermas, Giddens and Piere Bourdieu is the moral issues of contemporary times. Marxist doctrines are not mere rhetorical flourishing. For Iain Mackenzie, "it is necessary to reconstruct Marx's political philosophy with some care; all the while, though, maintaining a focus on his remarks about the power of the state". Marx always had a more socio-political, economic, cultural and critical theory. Marx employs a transformative approach in its anthropological explanation of economic, socio-political, legal, cultural, scientific, historical reality. Marx argues that the state is actually determined by forces within civil society. Marxism has been regarded as a science, not as a pursuit of facts rather than values, but simply as coherent and systematic thought. Why then was Marxism seen as scientific? Marxism, Marx and Engels argued, is a scientific socialism, because it is a theory of society, history, revolution, and class conflict. It holds that there are incompatible social interests that lead to exploitative tendencies.

This is why class is both an economic and a political reality, since between classes there is war. Marxism is also seen as a theory of revolution; such is the incompatibility of class interests. Change can only come through revolution. Change takes place through the human agent, change cannot take place itself and reforms keep the pillars of the building intact. Hoffman and Graham (2009) argued that because classes are political, as well as economic entities, they seek to control the state in their own interest, so that the state has a class character. Marxism was also seen as a theory of history. All societies are basically moulded but the conflict between the forces of production (which embrace science and technology) and the relations of production (the system of ownership). Hoffman and Graham (2009) believed that "these two elements form a basis upon which arises a 'superstructure' that incorporates political institutions, educational systems, culture and ideas. Marxism makes revolution inevitable. After this revolution, class divisions disappear, and with the disappearance of these divisions, the need for a state itself withers. Marxism is also a theory of society. Huffman and Graham posited that "central to this theory of history is the theory of society. The central theme of Marxism, in the "Communist Manifesto", is the fall and the victory of the proletariat and which is equally inevitable. This has become a central theme of Marxism in general, and Engels was to argue that revolutions are the necessary outcome of circumstances, quite independent of the will. According to Hoffman and Graham, "Marxism is scientific because it arises from the real movement of history that compels people to do things whether they like it or not. He believed that revolution is (in some sense of the term) a 'natural process driven by the antagonistic conflict between the forces and relations of productions at the heart of society.

Furthermore, the communists will fight with the bourgeoisie by acting in a revolutionary way. According to Hoffman and Graham (2009, 227), further opined that "this notion is of the utmost importance, for it explains the attraction of Marxism in colonial countries or autocratic regimes of a feudal or semi-feudal kind. Marxism embraces a polarizing-concept of class war, and this can only reinforce its authoritarian consequences. Michael Foster (2001) believed that "political actions are according to

Marx, irrational, they are not uncaused; they are themselves the product of something more fundamental still, namely, of economic forces; it is a necessity of his condition upon earth that man must produce to supply his wants. Marxism is a theory of social change and the theory of class war. For Michael Foster, “throughout history, men have struggled with one another to control the means of production. When one body of men succeeds in acquiring this control to the exclusion of the remainder, a distinction of economic classes is introduced; there is the dominant class, which controls the means of production, and the class which labours under the control of the former. It is therefore pertinent to note that Marxism presupposes socialism. According to Leon Baradat (2008), “socialism asks individuals to produce as much as they can and, in the spirit of social consciousness, to share their product with the society at large”. Socialism is much more than an economic system. It is both a social, economic and political ideology. Socialism is an economic relation and political relations. It is a state’s intervention of production of goods and services. Michael Foster argues that:

Marxism is not a kind of an encyclopedic sweep. Marxism is not an ideal but a practical demonstration of human reality and social practice. Marxism is not an account for some vagary of doctrine. The preponderance of economic power, is followed by, and reflected in, a political change, whether by way of reform or by way of revolution; so that the economic change is the original spinning of the movement of history. Political theory, finally, being itself, dependent upon political fact, is thus the reflection of a rejection (Foster, 2001:64)

Furthermore, Marxist doctrine presupposes the problem of morality. Morality is the basis of normative ideal social order. John Hoffman and Graham (2009) argued that “socialism to be concerned with state reforms, not revolution-not simply a part of it- and socialism must be realistic, attained through piecemeal reforms and in a manner that works with, and respects, the liberal traditions. By contrast, social democracy sees itself as everything that Marxism is not; democratic, reformist, realistic, open-minded and concerned with the moral case for socialism. Social democracy to use the words of Hoffman and Graham (2009), can turn into its degenerate forms, which is election; a concern to win elections without worrying about principles at all. Socialism as a form of political, social, and economic ideology is a form of utopianism. Hoffman and Graham (2009) argued that “socialism is vulnerable to the change of utopianism: but a forthright rebuttal of utopianism of any kind may mean that the transformative element in socialism is lost and socialism degenerates. The theory of Marxism presupposes the theory of revolution. The concept of revolution is described as a dramatic and a fundamental element focused around a seizure of power. This notion of revolution as a dramatic element centered on the seizure of power is problematic in terms of its definitional difficulty.

Marx uses the term revolution in different ways. Revolution is also used to denote a transformation of state and class power- an event in which the character of society as a whole change. Hoffman and Graham argued that “the notion of revolution as a

dramatic event linked to the seizure of power, was, it seems to us, inherited uncritically from the French Revolution of 1789. It creates a polarization that makes the assertion of common interests and consensus more, not less difficult; revolution is seen as the inevitable problem which negates the liberal tradition. Here the attitude towards liberalism is crucial. Liberalism involves freedom, individualism, economic and political stability. Revolution can be seen as anti-productive and it disrupts social structural conditions. Revolution does not simply connote armed struggle. It means the radical transformation of society politically, economically, culturally, socially, scientifically, technologically and historically.

4. CONCLUSION

Having critically examined Marx's critique of political economy this paper, however, concludes that one of the fundamental problems of contemporary human society is the problem of class struggle, economic exploitation and the inherent contradictions that are inherent in socio-economic and political society. Marx attempts to address the contemporary issues of class struggle and economic exploitation that has been on a global scale. There are certain concepts that are closely associated with Marx's political economy such as class struggle, alienation, historical determinism, dialectical materialism, and communism. Marx's conception of political economy cuts across a global perspective. Marx's conceptualization of society reveals the theory of class struggle, revolution, history, and society. Marx's thought is robust, timely and imperative because it reveals the interconnectedness between political reality and economic reality in Marx's political thought. Marx's political thought is impracticable.

The study recommends that governments should develop and implement policies aimed at minimizing poverty, unemployment, and socio-economic inequality. Such policies should boost equitable connection to economic opportunities and social welfare, thereby tackling the conditions that give rise to exploitation, alienation, and social exclusion. Furthermore, policymakers should identify the inseparable connection between political and economic institutions by embracing governance systems that promote responsibility, social justice, equitable resource distribution, and inclusive involvement in the development process. The study also recommends that universities and other institutions of higher learning should urge greater engagement with Marx's political economy as part of the study of political philosophy, economics, and governance. This would provide students and researchers with a broader analytical framework for understanding contemporary socio-economic and political challenges.

Finally, further scholarly research should access the importance of Marx's political economy to contemporary issues such as inequality, governance, globalization, digital capitalism, and national development, particularly within developing countries. Such studies would expand existing scholarship and provide practical insights into addressing present-day socio-economic challenges.

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