

# Challenging Marxism

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The German philosopher Karl Marx provided the world with a new and challenging way to think about social and economic systems. This new social system was called Communism and Marx's theory on Communism was, and continues to be, referred to as Marxism. The concepts of Marxism are most famously detailed in his book "Communist Manifesto", first published in 1848. The book discussed the issue of social structure and the problems of a Capitalist society. From the time Karl Marx first presented his concept of Marxism many objections have been presented by Philosophers and Political Scientists which argue that the idea of modern western Communism is not a viable social structure and would not work in the world we live in. In this essay I will outline Marx's theory of modern Communism and will then discuss some of the leading objections to the theory. I will conclude that modern Communism is not a viable theory and would never work in practice.

Marxism is a sociological and economic worldview developed by Karl Marx and Frederic Engels. An aspect of Marxism is a belief that throughout human history there have always been strongly defined levels of social class. As a consequence this has always caused a struggle between the different levels of class and the exploitation of people who are of a lower class. According to Marx this class structure has existed throughout all of recent human society and is the prevailing theme throughout history.

Another aspect of Marxism is the belief that a Capitalist system does not serve to better present day society. In a Capitalist society the ownership of industry

and means of production are held by a tiny percentage of the population. Marx holds the belief that the power and wealth is held by a few select people who willingly exploit the lower “working” class citizens to further increase their wealth and power. Furthermore Marxism argues that the strong separations of the upper and lower social classes do nothing to further better the development of human society.

Another important component of Marxism is the belief that the only way to further progress human society is for the working class to cause a social revolution and expropriate the Capitalist System and thus put all means of production into public ownership, controlled by a Government with no private corporations. As a consequence, every human would be equally entitled to the exact same standard of living as each other and by living in a classless system; all humans would be free from inequality.

My first objection to Marxism is a common one. In practice a Communistic Government system would slow down the growth of Science and Technology. In the present Capitalist system private companies and investors give funding based on a few factors, the main factor being financial viability. This is without doubt the biggest motivator in the creation of Technology at present. An example of this is the advanced medical discoveries such as various anti-biotic products which have been discovered purely to fill a niche and generate wealth. This is not a perfect system but it has been proven to provide results.

In a Communist system every development would have to be funded and supervised by a Government system with a single goal of the betterment of all human kind, not just specific niche areas. I would predict that under a Communist system, the systems and processes to get access to funding and resources would be severely limited and slowed down, thus slowing down the current exponential growth of today’s world.

I believe Marx would reply to this by saying that in a perfect Communist world, the motivation for creating new technologies would purely be the idea of creating something new in itself and not the financial gain. The Government would have systems in place which would allow any person with an idea to be given the resources they would need based purely on their ideas. Furthermore, the new ideas which would be allocated resources would be the ones which would appear to have the clearest possible benefit for human society, thus increasing the general standard of living of everyone, because every new technology would be created with this being the motivating factor.

But Marx is wrong; switching to government control is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, a switch from a Capitalist system to a Communist system would not change human nature. Money is the number one motivator for almost all new developments and this would not change overnight. A switch from creating for profit, to creating for pure interest would take a long time to become the accepted norm. This would slow down many current projects and prevent future projects from happening; human nature does not change overnight.

Secondly, under a Communist society the number one goal is the betterment of everyone. The creation of niche ideas and technologies would surely be affected by this. These niche markets, while being small, are very important to many people's lifestyles and health. Many of these industries would cease to exist/ stop being developed in favor for more widely reaching developments.

Finally the micro management required by the Government over all these projects would be immense and the bureaucracy would act as a deterrent and increase the time for which technologies could be created. The companies in a Capitalist society often work on a single area of expertise and have systems set

up just for that. If a new Government was to take control, it would take many years for it to return back to previous speeds of growth in development.

A second commonly used argument against Marxism is that of human nature. It is human nature to want to work to improve one's position and personal wealth by working against other people instead of working, together, for everyone. Communism would not work as the switch to working for the collective population would be against human nature. Throughout history societies positions of power and influence have been regarded above all else, including personal wealth. In a Communist system there would be no higher positions to aim for.

Furthermore, people rely on people who are in higher power to control many aspects of their lives for them. An example of this is a Government in which, a President or a Prime Minister of a country is given a great deal of power so that they can make the major decisions for the country (control taxes, set laws and so forth). It is human nature for people to rely on a strict social structure and without one, many people would be lost and without the ability to support themselves.

It is important and fair to state that Marx considered this objection to his theory and answered it in his book "Communist Manifesto". Marx said that human nature was a constantly changing and evolving thing and that it was able to adapt to whatever the political and economic climate was at the time. An example provided in the book was that in earlier refers to times when simpler hunter gatherer humans relied on cooperation rather than competition (Marx & Engels, 2002). I think that in saying this Marx was trying to explain that even though at the present we may heavily rely on certain social structures and the figures within them, along with the fight against others for power and

influence, that humans could easily break this “human nature” and readapt to what the economic and political climate presents.

However, the problem with Marx’s reply is that while human nature can change, there will always be some who hold onto the old ways and will refuse to change. In addition to this, our current human nature has, for the most part, been the same for thousands of years. Changing this hardwired system of thinking would be difficult and would leave many people angry and dissatisfied with the new way of living. The change would take too long to become normal and until then there would be potential for widespread corruption with people who are unable to adapt trying to further their inbuilt selfish desire to better themselves.

In conclusion, the arguments I have presented have outlined flaws within the principles of Marxism. The fact that Communism would dramatically affect the development and growth of many of the things the western world has been working towards is already enough to not risk a switch to this system. Furthermore the shift in human nature would not be completely possible and would lead to major conflicts and potential exploitation by some people towards others. Therefore to consider making a change to a Marxist based social and economic structure seems deemed to fail.

## References

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