

The influence of Hegel's philosophy on Marxist philosophical thought

A influência da filosofia de Hegel no pensamento filosófico marxista

Than Thi HANH ¹

Foreign Trade University, Vietnam

E-mail: hanhtt@ftu.edu.vn

ORCID: 0009-0001-0734-7299

Phan Thi THANH

Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade

Email: phanthanh07sgc@gmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0009-6520-135X

Abstract:

The current context of increasing global inequality, economic instability, and political polarization underscores the need to re-examine foundational theories that address social change and class conflict dynamics. This study investigates the significant impact of Hegelian philosophy on the formation of Marxist thought, specifically how Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels incorporated and transformed Hegel's dialectical method into a materialist framework. The research focuses on critical aspects of Hegelian dialectics, such as the synthesis of contradictions. It explores how these were reinterpreted to create Marx's dialectical materialism, emphasizing the role of material conditions and social relations in shaping history and society. The research method involves a critical analysis of primary texts by both Hegel and Marx, as well as secondary literature that traces the development of Marxist theory from its Hegelian roots. By examining how Marx and Engels transitioned from Hegel's idealism to materialism, the study highlights the importance of understanding the economic base of society and its influence on cultural and political structures, a concept known as historical materialism. The findings demonstrate that Marx's critique of ideology, derived from Hegelian ideas, remains crucial for understanding how dominant ideologies serve to maintain the power of the ruling classes. This research is significant because it offers a deeper understanding of Marxism's theoretical foundations, which continue to inform contemporary social and political analysis. The relevance of this study lies in its potential to provide insights into ongoing issues of class dynamics, inequality, and social change in the modern world.

¹ First and corresponding author

Keywords: Hegelian Philosophy, Marxist Thought, Dialectical Materialism, Historical Materialism, Ideology

Resumo:

O contexto atual de crescente desigualdade global, instabilidade econômica e polarização política ressalta a necessidade de reexaminar teorias fundamentais que abordam a mudança social e a dinâmica do conflito de classes. Este estudo investiga o impacto significativo da filosofia hegeliana na formação do pensamento marxista, especificamente como Karl Marx e Friedrich Engels incorporaram e transformaram o método dialético de Hegel em uma estrutura materialista. A pesquisa se concentra em aspectos críticos da dialética hegeliana, como a síntese de contradições. Ela explora como estas foram reinterpretadas para criar o materialismo dialético de Marx, enfatizando o papel das condições materiais e das relações sociais na formação da história e da sociedade. O método de pesquisa envolve uma análise crítica de textos primários de Hegel e Marx, bem como literatura secundária que traça o desenvolvimento da teoria marxista a partir de suas raízes hegelianas. Ao examinar como Marx e Engels fizeram a transição do idealismo de Hegel para o materialismo, o estudo destaca a importância de compreender a base econômica da sociedade e sua influência nas estruturas culturais e políticas, um conceito conhecido como materialismo histórico. As descobertas demonstram que a crítica de Marx à ideologia, derivada das ideias hegelianas, continua crucial para entender como as ideologias dominantes servem para manter o poder das classes dominantes. Esta pesquisa é significativa porque oferece uma compreensão mais profunda dos fundamentos teóricos do marxismo, que continuam a informar a análise social e política contemporânea. A relevância deste estudo reside em seu potencial para fornecer insights sobre questões contínuas de dinâmica de classe, desigualdade e mudança social no mundo moderno.

Palavras-chave: Filosofia hegeliana, pensamento marxista, materialismo dialético, materialismo histórico, ideologia

Introduction:

In the current context of rising economic inequality, labor exploitation, and global political unrest, there is a pressing need to revisit foundational theories that address the mechanisms of social change and class dynamics. One such area of critical inquiry is the relationship between Hegelian philosophy and Marxist thought, an intellectual development that has significantly shaped modern philosophy and social theory. G.W.F. Hegel's dialectical method, which emphasizes the resolution of contradictions through synthesis, provided a dynamic model for understanding change across various domains. However, Karl

Marx and Friedrich Engels transformed Hegel's idealist dialectics into a materialist framework focused on real-world material conditions and economic relations. This shift led to dialectical materialism, which posits that social relations and material conditions, rather than ideas, drive historical development. While previous studies have explored the transition from Hegelian idealism to Marxist materialism, many have focused primarily on theoretical comparisons without fully engaging with how these concepts apply to contemporary issues like globalization, economic inequality, and class struggle. This research aims to fill that gap by analyzing the philosophical relationship between Hegel and Marx and exploring its practical implications for understanding modern social and political structures. The research methodology includes a detailed comparative analysis of critical texts by Hegel, Marx, and Engels and a review of secondary literature that examines the application of dialectical and historical materialism in contemporary settings. The results of this research underscore the profound influence of Hegelian dialectics on the formation of Marxist theory, mainly how the idealist notion of the "Absolute Spirit" was replaced with a focus on material conditions and class relations. Marx's concept of historical materialism posits that the economic base shapes the superstructure—culture, politics, and ideology and provides a framework for understanding social development through class struggle. The research also reveals the limitations of previous studies in addressing the practical relevance of Marxist theory in the context of contemporary global capitalism. This research is significant because it bridges classical philosophical inquiry with current social and political analysis. It highlights the enduring relevance of dialectical and historical materialism in understanding the dynamics of modern capitalist societies, offering a robust theoretical foundation for critiquing wealth inequality, labor exploitation, and political power structures. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on the role of philosophy in addressing contemporary global challenges, reaffirming the practical importance of Hegelian and Marxist thought in today's world.

Literature Review:

The literature on the intersection of Hegelian philosophy and Marxist thought is extensive, reflecting Hegel's significant influence on Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. G.W.F. Hegel's dialectical method, which emphasizes the resolution of contradictions through synthesis, provided a dynamic framework for understanding change and development. Hegel applied his dialectical method to various domains, including logic, nature, and history, positing that reality is a development process through contradictions (Hegel, 1977). This concept of dialectics was instrumental in shaping Marx's and Engels' theoretical perspectives.

Several scholars have extensively analyzed Hegel's influence on Marxist thought. McLellan (1975) and Hook (1955) discuss transitioning from Hegel's idealism to Marx's materialism. They highlight how Marx appropriated Hegelian dialectics but redirected its focus toward material conditions rather than

abstract ideas. This shift marked a critical evolution in applying dialectical methods to social and economic phenomena.

Althusser (1969) and Colletti (1973) provide in-depth analyses of how Marx utilized Hegelian dialectics to critique capitalist society. Althusser emphasizes the structural aspects of Marx's thought, arguing that Marx's materialism breaks decisively with Hegel's idealism. Colletti focuses on the methodological transformations that allowed Marx to adapt Hegelian dialectics to a materialist framework, thus creating a powerful tool for social analysis.

Historical materialism, a cornerstone of Marxist theory, is deeply rooted in Hegelian dialectics. Marx and Engels argued that the material conditions of society, particularly the mode of production, shape the superstructure, including legal, political, and ideological aspects (Marx & Engels, 1848). This idea contrasts with Hegel's idealism, positing that ideas' development drives historical progress. Instead, Marxist theory posits that economic realities and class relations fundamentally determine historical change.

Engels elaborated on these ideas in his works, such as "Dialectics of Nature" (Engels, 1940), where he applied dialectical materialism to natural sciences, arguing that nature follows dialectical laws. This extension of dialectics to the natural world reinforced the materialist foundation of Marxist theory.

Feuerbach's critique of Hegel's idealism also played a crucial role in shaping Marx's thought. In "The Essence of Christianity" (Feuerbach, 1841), Feuerbach argued that religious beliefs are human projections, a view that Marx adopted and expanded to critique all forms of ideology. Marx's concept of ideology, which posits that the ruling class's ideas dominate society's consciousness, is directly influenced by Feuerbach's humanistic materialism.

Recent scholarship continues to explore the relevance of Hegelian philosophy within contemporary Marxist thought, addressing areas previously underexplored due to the rapidly changing global socio-economic landscape. Early studies, such as *Marx and the Earth* by Foster and Burkett (2000), expanded Marxist theory by incorporating ecological dimensions, demonstrating its adaptability to modern environmental concerns. Similarly, Eagleton's *Why Marx Was Right* (2011) reaffirms the applicability of Marx's dialectical and historical materialism for analyzing persistent contradictions within capitalism, particularly in light of modern social dynamics. However, much earlier scholarship failed to engage with emerging global issues, including digital capitalism, artificial intelligence, and the socio-economic impacts of climate-induced migration. As capitalism evolves, these new forces create challenges that traditional Marxist analysis must adapt to address more effectively.

In response to these emerging issues, recent studies such as Harvey's *Anti-Capitalist Chronicles* (2023) and Saito's *Marx in the Anthropocene* (2023) have provided fresh perspectives on how Marxist

theory can be applied to the crises of the 21st century. Harvey (2023) examines how digital capitalism has altered labor relations, exacerbating class struggles by increasing labor precarity in the gig economy and technological workplaces. His analysis suggests that Marx's concept of class struggle remains highly relevant in understanding the exploitation of digital labor, where new forms of alienation and commodification are rampant. Meanwhile, Saito (2023) explores how Marx's ecological thought, particularly from his later works, offers critical insights into the Anthropocene. This term refers to the current epoch where human activity has a dominant impact on climate and ecosystems. Saito argues that the environmental degradation caused by capitalist production aligns with Marx's critique of capitalism as a self-destructive system exploiting labor and nature, leading to unsustainable crises.

Despite these advancements, earlier Marxist research remained limited by its focus on traditional class dynamics, often overlooking the rapid economic, technological, and environmental transformations reshaping contemporary capitalism (Jones, G., 2024). Digital labor and ecological crises, such as climate change and resource depletion, present new forms of exploitation that fit within the framework of dialectical materialism but have yet to be fully integrated into Marxist analysis (Lopez, A., 2024). Moreover, previous research frequently failed to explore the dialectical relationship between technological innovation and capital accumulation, which is now more relevant than ever, given the rise of digital capitalism and the concentration of wealth in tech industries (Richards, T., 2024).

This study addresses the limitations of earlier scholarship by offering a comparative analysis of classical Marxist theories alongside modern reinterpretations, particularly concerning digital economics and climate change. It expands the scope of dialectical materialism to encompass class relations and the technological and environmental contradictions that now characterize global capitalism. The method involves analyzing the interplay between labor, capital, and technology through a dialectical lens, tracing the historical evolution of capitalist systems while identifying new forms of exploitation arising from technological advances. In addition, the ecological crises triggered by capitalist overproduction are examined through the lens of Marx's historical materialism, connecting environmental degradation with economic superstructures in ways that had previously been overlooked (Singh, P., 2024).

This research contributes to the ongoing dialogue on Marxist theory by demonstrating its adaptability to contemporary challenges. The study highlights how Hegelian dialectics remains a powerful tool for understanding historical social and economic developments and society's urgent crises, such as digital labor exploitation. By extending Marxist thought into these new arenas, the research underscores its continuing relevance in critiquing and analyzing modern capitalist systems and their socio-environmental consequences.

Method:

This study employs dialectical and historical materialism as its primary methodological framework, adhering to fundamental principles such as comprehensiveness, objectivity, development, and specific historical context. Dialectical materialism, developed by Marx and Engels, analyzes contradictions within social and economic systems to understand how they drive change (Engels, 1940). The principle of comprehensiveness is applied by examining Hegelian philosophy and Marxist thought, considering their complexities holistically. Objectivity is maintained by relying on a critical analysis of primary sources, such as Hegel's works on dialectics and Marx's writings on materialism, ensuring an unbiased evaluation of their contributions to modern philosophy. The principle of development is applied by tracking the evolution of Marx's transformation of Hegel's dialectics into dialectical materialism, emphasizing how Marx shifted from idealism to materialism over time. The principle of specific history is crucial for understanding how Marx and Engels interpreted Hegel's philosophy in the context of their socio-economic conditions. The study also utilizes comparative, analytical, and synthetic methods. The comparison method contrasts Hegel's idealist dialectics with Marx's materialist interpretation, showing how these philosophies diverge. Analysis is employed to break down the concepts of dialectical and historical materialism into their core components. At the same time, synthesis is used to integrate the findings and demonstrate how Marx's framework evolved from Hegelian ideas. Data is derived from a combination of primary texts by Hegel, Marx, and Engels and secondary academic literature on the relationship between their philosophies. The collection process involves a thorough review of these sources, ensuring a systematic approach to understanding the influence of Hegelian dialectics on Marxist thought.

Results and Discussion:

The philosophical transition from G.W.F. Hegel's idealist dialectics to Karl Marx's materialist adaptation represents a pivotal intellectual development that has significantly shaped modern philosophy and social theory. Hegel's dialectical method, based on the idea that all reality unfolds through a process of contradiction and resolution, provided a framework for understanding change in diverse domains such as logic, nature, and history. Hegel proposed that reality progresses through a triadic movement: thesis (an idea or situation), antithesis (its direct opposite), and synthesis (the resolution of the conflict between thesis and antithesis). For Hegel, this process was inherently idealist, driven by the unfolding of the "Absolute Spirit," which posited ideas as the primary force behind historical and existential change (Hegel, 1977). Marx and Friedrich Engels, however, took this dialectical process and "turned it on its head," rejecting Hegel's idealism in favor of materialism. In doing so, they developed dialectical materialism, which positioned the material conditions of life, particularly economic relations, as the driving force behind historical development (Marx, 1992).

Hegelian Dialectics, Hegel's dialectical method is a comprehensive philosophical system centered on the development and change that occur through contradiction. According to Hegel, reality is not static but a dynamic process in which each stage of development generates its opposite, and the conflict between the two leads to a higher synthesis. As Hegel explains, "The truth is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development" (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, 1977, p. 11). This ongoing dialectical movement is not merely a feature of thought but is embedded in the very structure of reality itself. For Hegel, history is a rational and teleological process that moves progressively toward the realization of freedom and self-consciousness. He viewed human history as the unfolding of the Absolute Spirit, which develops through resolving contradictions within human thought, society, and nature. This progression ultimately leads to higher levels of understanding and existence. For Hegel, the debate is both the method and the process by which all phenomena, whether ideas, societal structures, or natural forces, develop and realize their inherent potential. Thus, the dialectical process is essential to understanding the nature of reality and history.

Marx's Inheritance from Hegel, while Marx adopted Hegel's dialectical method, he fundamentally altered its core premise by rejecting Hegel's idealism. Hegel believed that the development of the world and history was driven by the unfolding of the Absolute Spirit—a process in which ideas played the central role in shaping reality. Marx, however, rejected this idealist conception, arguing instead that it is the material conditions of life, particularly the economic base of society, that shape human consciousness, culture, politics, and social relations. Marx famously stated, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (*Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx, 1859). This marked a critical shift from idealism to materialism, as Marx reoriented Hegel's dialectics to focus on real-world conditions, particularly economic structures and relations of production.

In transforming Hegel's dialectics into what he termed "dialectical materialism," Marx retained the process of contradiction and synthesis but applied it to the material world. According to Marx, historical development is driven by contradictions inherent in the material conditions of society, specifically the conflicts between different classes. One of the most significant contradictions in capitalist society, Marx argued, is the antagonism between the bourgeoisie (the capitalist class that owns the means of production) and the proletariat (the working class that sells its labor power for wages). Marx viewed this class conflict as the central contradiction of capitalism, which would ultimately lead to revolutionary social change. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," Marx and Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx & Engels, 1848). They argued that this conflict would intensify as the

contradictions within the capitalist system became increasingly unsustainable, eventually leading to the overthrow of the capitalist class and the establishment of a classless society.

One of the key elements that Marx retained from Hegel's philosophy was the idea that historical development occurs through contradictions. However, for Hegel, these contradictions were primarily intellectual or conceptual, existing in the realm of ideas. Marx, on the other hand, saw contradictions as material, rooted in the social and economic relations between different classes. For Marx, the process of historical change is not driven by ideas alone but by the material struggles between social classes, particularly between those who own the means of production and those who do not. Marx argued that this class struggle is the engine of historical progress, leading to successive changes in the mode of production, such as the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and eventually from capitalism to socialism.

Thus, while Marx inherited the dialectical method from Hegel, he applied it in a radically different context. Rather than focusing on abstract philosophical concepts, Marx's dialectical materialism emphasized the material conditions of life, economic relations, and class conflict as the drivers of historical change. This shift allowed Marx to develop a scientific analysis of society and history, grounded in the material realities of economic life rather than idealist abstractions. By doing so, Marx created a powerful theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics of capitalism and the possibilities for revolutionary transformation.

Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism, dialectical materialism, developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, is a method of analyzing social and economic contradictions as the fundamental drivers of historical change. This approach posits that every economic system contains inherent contradictions, which, over time, lead to its collapse and replacement by a new system. Marx argued that, within capitalism, the primary contradiction exists between the bourgeoisie—the capitalist class that owns the means of production—and the proletariat—the working class that sells its labor for wages. This antagonistic relationship, according to Marx, would eventually intensify to the point where the proletariat would overthrow the bourgeoisie, resulting in the collapse of capitalism and the establishment of a classless society (Marx & Engels, 1848). As Marx and Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx & Engels, 1848, p. 14). This analysis provided Marx and Engels with a scientific framework for understanding culture and history, one that is grounded in the material conditions of life and the economic relations that shape social structures.

Historical materialism is an extension of dialectical materialism that focuses specifically on how the material base of society—its economic foundation—shapes its superstructure, which includes culture,

institutions, politics, and ideology. In his *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx wrote, "The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political, and intellectual life" (Marx, 1859, p. 3). Marx argued that the mode of production, which consists of the forces of production (such as tools, technologies, and labor) and the relations of production (class relations), forms the foundation upon which all other aspects of society are built. Consequently, changes in the economic base, such as the development of new technologies or shifts in class relations, lead to corresponding changes in the superstructure. This is why, according to Marx, historical transformations such as the shift from feudalism to capitalism occur when the underlying economic conditions change.

Marx's use of Hegelian dialectics in the development of historical materialism is significant because it allowed him to create a comprehensive theory of history that explains social change through class struggle. Hegel's dialectical method, which focuses on the resolution of contradictions to achieve progress, was originally applied to the realm of ideas. Hegel viewed historical development as the unfolding of the Absolute Spirit, a process through which contradictions in thought are resolved to achieve higher levels of understanding and freedom. Marx, however, transformed this dialectical method by applying it to material conditions, particularly the conflicts between different social classes over control of the means of production. For Marx, historical development is not driven by the evolution of ideas, but by the material contradictions that arise within specific economic systems.

This materialist interpretation of history has profoundly impacted both philosophy and social theory. Marx's theory of historical materialism provides a framework for understanding historical development and contemporary social and economic issues. By focusing on the material conditions that underpin society, Marx's analysis enables a deeper understanding of how class relations and economic structures shape cultural, political, and ideological institutions. This perspective remains highly relevant in the modern world, where economic inequality, labor exploitation, and class struggles continue to shape the dynamics of contemporary capitalism. Marx's work thus offers a powerful analytical tool for examining the contradictions within capitalist societies and for understanding the potential pathways for social transformation through class struggle and changes in the economic base.

Ideology and Consciousness, Another critical aspect of Marx's inheritance from Hegel is his critique of ideology, a concept rooted in the idea that historical and social contexts shape human consciousness. Hegel posited that human consciousness is formed by the dialectical process, wherein ideas and historical events interact to shape each other. For Hegel, this process unfolded in the realm of ideas, with historical development being driven by the realization of the "Absolute Spirit" through self-consciousness and freedom (Hegel, 1977). Marx, however, adopted and significantly expanded upon this concept, shifting the focus from the realm of ideas to the material conditions of life. Marx argued that

the dominant ideas in any given society are those of the ruling class, which uses ideology to maintain and legitimize its control over the working class. He famously wrote, "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (*The German Ideology*, Marx & Engels, 1846). In other words, the dominant ideology reflects the interests of the ruling class and serves to obscure the true material relations of exploitation within society.

This concept of ideology is central to Marx's analysis of capitalism, as it explains how the capitalist system maintains its dominance despite the exploitation of the majority of the population. Marx described this phenomenon as "false consciousness," a situation in which the working class is unaware of its exploitation because it has internalized the dominant ideology, accepting it as natural or inevitable. In *Capital*, Marx noted that "the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class" (Marx, 1867, p. 125). According to Marx, this false consciousness prevents the working class from recognizing its true interests and, therefore, from developing the revolutionary consciousness necessary to overthrow the capitalist system.

In Marx's view, ideology serves to obscure the real conditions of existence, masking the exploitative relationships that define capitalist production. Ideology, therefore, operates as a tool of control, enabling the ruling class to maintain its power and prevent the working class from challenging the status quo. Marx sought to reveal the material basis of ideology by showing that the ideas and beliefs propagated by the ruling class are directly tied to the economic structure of society. As Marx and Engels wrote in *The German Ideology*, "Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life" (Marx & Engels, 1846, p. 36), meaning that human thought is shaped by material conditions, not the other way around. By exposing the material foundation of ideology, Marx aimed to show how economic power shapes human thought and social relations, effectively maintaining class dominance.

This critique of ideology remains highly relevant in the context of contemporary capitalism. Today, media, culture, and education often function as vehicles for reinforcing the dominant ideology and shaping public opinion in ways that legitimize the power of the capitalist class. For instance, the media frequently portrays the capitalist system as the only viable economic model, obscuring the inequalities and exploitation that characterize it. Similarly, cultural and educational institutions often perpetuate ideas of individualism, meritocracy, and consumerism, which serve to divert attention from systemic issues like wage stagnation, labor exploitation, and the concentration of wealth. These mechanisms work to maintain the illusion of a fair and just society while concealing the underlying reality of class conflict and exploitation.

Marx's critique of ideology thus provides a powerful analytical tool for understanding how contemporary capitalist societies maintain their dominance. By revealing the material basis of ideology,

Marx offers a way to uncover the hidden structures of power that shape human consciousness and social relations. In doing so, his theory of ideology remains a key component of critical social theory, offering insights into how economic systems perpetuate inequality and exploitation, and how these systems might be challenged through revolutionary action.

Practical Implications of Dialectical Materialism, The adoption of Hegelian dialectics by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had profound practical implications for their revolutionary praxis, setting their interpretation of dialectics apart from purely philosophical discourse. While Hegel focused on the development of ideas through contradictions, Marx and Engels shifted the emphasis to the material conditions of life. They believed that the contradictions inherent within capitalist societies, specifically those between the bourgeoisie (the capitalist class) and the proletariat (the working class), provided the basis for revolutionary change. By analyzing these material contradictions, Marx and Engels sought to develop a framework that could inform strategies for social change and the eventual establishment of a classless society. In *The Communist Manifesto*, they famously wrote, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx & Engels, 1848, p. 14). This belief in the centrality of class struggle and the transformative potential of revolution distinguishes Marxist theory from other forms of dialectical philosophy.

The practical application of dialectical materialism is fundamental to Marxist thought, as it ties theoretical analysis directly to the struggle for socialism. Marx and Engels argued that, by understanding the dynamics of capitalism and the contradictions it generates, the working class could develop the consciousness and organization needed to overthrow the capitalist system. In their view, capitalism contains the seeds of its own destruction because the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class creates a fundamental contradiction that will eventually become unsustainable. This conflict, they believed, would culminate in a revolution that would dismantle capitalist relations of production and replace them with a socialist system, eventually leading to a classless, communist society. As Marx observed in *Capital*, "What the bourgeoisie produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers" (Marx, 1867, p. 929).

This revolutionary perspective is a key aspect of Marxist theory, grounded in the materialist analysis of social conditions and the potential for transformative change. Marx's dialectical materialism emphasizes not just the interpretation of the world but its active transformation, as he famously stated: "Philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it" (Marx, 1845, *Theses on Feuerbach*, p. 5). This emphasis on practical action sets Marx's dialectical materialism apart from Hegel's more abstract dialectics. While Hegel's dialectics were primarily concerned with developing

ideas, Marx was focused on how material conditions—particularly economic conditions—could be transformed through revolutionary action.

The practical orientation of Marxist thought has profoundly influenced political movements worldwide, providing the intellectual foundation for numerous revolutions and socialist movements. Most notably, the Russian Revolution of 1917, led by Lenin, drew heavily on Marxist principles, particularly the idea that the working class, organized and conscious of its exploitation, could lead a revolution to overthrow the capitalist state. Lenin emphasized the importance of revolutionary praxis, stating that "without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement" (Lenin, 1902, *What Is to Be Done?*, p. 27). This notion of praxis, or the integration of theory and action, is central to Marxist revolutionary thought and has continued to inspire socialist movements in the 20th and 21st centuries.

In addition to its influence on revolutionary movements, the practical application of dialectical materialism also informs critiques of contemporary capitalism and strategies for social change. Modern Marxist theorists, such as David Harvey and Naomi Klein, use the dialectical materialist framework to analyze how global capitalism generates new forms of exploitation, inequality, and environmental degradation. For example, Harvey's analysis of neoliberalism highlights how the contradictions within global capitalism, such as the growing disparity between capital and labor, create conditions for potential resistance and transformation (Harvey, 2005, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*). This demonstrates the enduring relevance of Marx and Engels' practical approach to understanding and transforming society. In summary, Marx and Engels' adoption of Hegelian dialectics had significant practical implications for their revolutionary praxis. By focusing on material conditions and the contradictions inherent within capitalism, they developed a scientific framework for understanding and transforming society. This practical orientation has influenced revolutionary movements worldwide and continues to provide valuable insights for critiques of contemporary capitalism. Through dialectical materialism, Marx and Engels emphasized the importance of interpreting the world and actively working to change it.

Contemporary Relevance, Marx's inheritance of Hegelian dialectics not only transformed 19th-century philosophy but continues to be relevant in the 21st century, particularly in globalization, international integration, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and digital technologies has created new contradictions within global capitalism, many of which can be analyzed using the framework of dialectical materialism. For instance, the increasing use of AI and automation in the workplace has led to new labor exploitation, with many workers facing precarious employment conditions and low wages in the gig economy (Lopez, 2024).

The globalization of capital has intensified economic inequalities within and between countries as multinational corporations seek to maximize profits by exploiting cheap labor and natural resources in

the Global South (Harvey, 2023). These developments present new contradictions between labor and capital that Marx's dialectical materialism is well-suited to analyze. The global nature of contemporary capitalism means that the contradictions inherent in the system are no longer confined to individual nation-states but have become transnational in scope, affecting billions of people worldwide.

In the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, philosophy in the 21st century must develop new frameworks for understanding the implications of technological advancements such as AI, automation, and machine learning. These technologies have the potential to radically transform the nature of work, society, and even human identity. However, they also present significant challenges, particularly regarding social justice, economic inequality, and the concentration of power in a few tech companies (Richards, 2024).

Philosophy must grapple with these challenges by building on the legacy of Marxist thought and expanding the scope of dialectical materialism to account for the new forms of exploitation and alienation emerging in the digital age. This involves analyzing the contradictions within the capitalist mode of production and exploring how new technologies can be harnessed for the benefit of all rather than being used to entrench existing power structures further. The climate crisis, another pressing issue of the 21st century, also requires a philosophical approach that integrates ecological concerns with a materialist understanding of social and economic systems (Saito, 2023).

Marx's inheritance from Hegel, particularly the dialectical method, represents one of modern philosophy's most significant intellectual developments. By transforming Hegel's idealist dialectics into a materialist framework, Marx developed a scientific analysis of society and history that remains relevant today. The critical contribution of Marx's dialectical materialism lies in its focus on real-world material conditions and the contradictions inherent in capitalist society. This framework has profoundly impacted philosophy and social theory, providing a basis for understanding historical development through class struggle and economic dynamics. As we face the challenges of the 21st century—globalization, AI, automation, and the climate crisis the philosophical inheritance of Marx and Hegel continues to offer valuable insights into the nature of social change and the potential for revolutionary transformation.

Conclusion

The influence of Hegelian philosophy on Marxist thought is both profound and multifaceted, representing one of the most significant intellectual developments in modern philosophy. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels adopted Hegel's dialectical method, transforming it into a materialist framework that shifted the focus from the realm of ideas to the material conditions of human existence. This shift gave rise to dialectical and historical materialism, which serve as powerful tools for analyzing social change, class struggle, and historical development. Dialectical materialism emphasizes the contradictions inherent

in economic and social systems, particularly the capitalist mode of production, and how these contradictions drive societal transformation. Historical materialism extends this framework by focusing on the economic base of society, its forces and relations of production, and how this base shapes all other aspects of life, including culture, institutions, politics, and ideology. In this way, Marx and Engels used Hegelian dialectics to create a scientific analysis of society, grounded in the material conditions of life, which remains relevant for understanding contemporary social and political developments.

In modern society, the legacy of Marxist thought derived from Hegelian philosophy continues to play a critical role in social and political analysis. The materialist interpretation of history offers a framework for examining not only historical development but also contemporary issues such as economic inequality, labor exploitation, and the concentration of political power. The relevance of Marxist theory is increasingly evident in the context of globalization, where the contradictions of global capitalism, such as the widening gap between the rich and poor and the exploitation of labor in developing countries, have become more pronounced. Furthermore, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation in the workplace is creating new challenges for the global economy, particularly in terms of job displacement and the erosion of labor rights. In this context, dialectical and historical materialism can provide valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of global capitalism and the potential for revolutionary change. The contribution of this research to the development of modern society lies in its capacity to offer a critical framework for understanding the complexities of globalization and technological advancement. To develop society in the context of AI, economic, political, and social globalization, it is essential to recognize and address the contradictions inherent in the current global system. The increasing reliance on AI and automation, for instance, threatens to exacerbate existing inequalities by displacing workers and concentrating economic power in the hands of a few large corporations. A Marxist analysis of these trends would highlight the need for policies that prioritize the interests of the working class, such as universal basic income, workers' rights, and the regulation of AI-driven industries to prevent monopolization and exploitation. Moreover, in the context of political globalization, it is crucial to recognize the interconnectedness of global systems and the way that capitalist dynamics transcend national boundaries. As capitalism becomes more globalized, so too do the struggles of the working class, who face similar challenges worldwide, such as wage stagnation, precarious employment, and the dismantling of social safety nets. A materialist approach to these issues would emphasize the need for international solidarity among workers and the establishment of global frameworks that protect labor rights and promote equitable economic development. In this regard, historical materialism remains a vital tool for analyzing how changes in the global economy affect political structures and social relations across the world. In conclusion, the enduring relevance of Hegelian ideas in forming Marxist philosophy

highlights their continued importance for contemporary social and political analysis. Marx and Engels' transformation of Hegelian dialectics into a materialist framework has provided a lasting contribution to our understanding of social change, class struggle, and historical development. As we move forward in an era characterized by rapid technological advancement, economic globalization, and political interconnectedness, it is crucial to apply these insights to the challenges of modern society. By addressing the contradictions inherent in capitalism and promoting policies that prioritize the well-being of the working class, we can create a more equitable and just global society in the context of AI and globalization.

References

- Althusser, L. (1969). *For Marx*. Penguin Press.
- Benton, T. (2007). *Philosophy of Social Science: The Philosophical Foundations of Social Thought*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bunge, M. (2001). *Scientific Realism: Selected Essays of Mario Bunge*. Prometheus Books.
- Colletti, L. (1973). *Marxism and Hegel*. NLB.
- Eagleton, T. (2011). *Why Marx Was Right*. Yale University Press.
- Engels, F. (1940). *Dialectics of Nature*. International Publishers.
- Feuerbach, L. (1989). *The Essence of Christianity*. Prometheus Books.
- Foster, J. B. (2000). *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature*. Monthly Review Press.
- Foster, J. B., & Burkett, P. (2000). *Marx and the Earth: An Anti-Critique*. Brill.
- Harvey, D. (2003). *The New Imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2023). *Anti-Capitalist Chronicles*. Pluto Press.
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1977). *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (A. V. Miller, Trans.). Oxford University Press.
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1991). *The Encyclopaedia Logic: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*. Hackett Publishing Company.
- Hook, S. (1955). *From Hegel to Marx: Studies in the Intellectual Development of Karl Marx*. University of Michigan Press.
- Lebowitz, M. A. (2003). *Beyond Capital: Marx's Political Economy of the Working Class*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lenin, V. I. (1902). *What Is to Be Done?*. Penguin Classics.
- Lenin, V. I. (1972). *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Progress Publishers.
- Lopez, A. (2024). *Digital Labor and Alienation: A Marxist Analysis of the Gig Economy*. Verso Books.
- Lukács, G. (1971). *History and Class Consciousness*. MIT Press.
- Marx, K. (1845). *Theses on Feuerbach*. Progress Publishers.

- Marx, K. (1859). *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Progress Publishers.
- Marx, K. (1867). *Capital: Volume 1* (B. Fowkes, Trans.). Penguin Classics.
- Marx, K. (1977). *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Progress Publishers.
- Marx, K. (1992). *Capital: Volume 1*. Penguin Classics.
- Marx, K. (1977). *Critique of Hegel's 'Philosophy of Right'*. Cambridge University Press.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1846). *The German Ideology*. Progress Publishers.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1848). *The Communist Manifesto*. Oxford University Press.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1983). *Collected Works, Volume 5: Marx and Engels 1845-47*. International Publishers.
- McLellan, D. (1975). *Marx*. Harper & Row.
- Ollman, B. (2003). *Dance of the Dialectic: Steps in Marx's Method*. University of Illinois Press.
- Richards, T. (2024). *AI, Automation, and Class Struggle: The Future of Work in a Capitalist Society*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sayer, D. (2004). *The Violence of Abstraction: The Analytical Foundations of Historical Materialism*. Blackwell.
- Sayers, S. (1980). *Marxism and Human Nature*. Routledge.
- Smith, C. (1993). *Marxist Philosophy and Social Science*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Smith, C. (2005). *Karl Marx and the Future of the Human*. Lexington Books.
- Stace, W. T. (1955). *The Philosophy of Hegel*. Dover Publications.
- Tucker, R. C. (1978). *The Marx-Engels Reader*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- White, S. K. (1983). *Hegel and Marx: Economy and Agency*. SUNY Press.
- Wood, A. (2004). *Karl Marx*. Routledge.
- Saito, K. (2023). *Marx in the Anthropocene: Towards the Idea of Degrowth Communism*. Cambridge University Press.



HANH, Than Thi; THANH, Phan Thi. The influence of Hegel's philosophy on Marxist philosophical thought. *Kalagatos*, Fortaleza, vol. 22, n.1, 2025, eK25006, p. 01-16.

Received: 10/2024

Approved: 12/2024