

# The Catalyst of Social Change: Women in Historical Market Dynamics

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**ABSTRACT :** *The market is the most imperative dynamic in the world history. Market dynamics play a major and vital role in both the growth and collapse of society. Every society survives with the characteristic of its market. Society is classified according to the characteristics of the market. The importance of the market in studying the rise, growth, crisis, and transformation of society has not been given adequate space in academia. However, it is difficult to understand the historical reason for the growth of society, transformation process, and change by neglecting the market dynamics, which is one of the crucial factors for the transformation of society. Thus, this article tries to illustrate the role of the market in the growth and transformation of society.*

**Key Words:** Market, Market Dynamics, Society, Social Change

## Introduction

This article is mainly based on the article *Market Dynamics as the Engine of Historical Change* by Randall Collins. He discusses the role of market dynamics in social change. He gives a broad idea about the role of the market in social change and transformation. Similarly, Collins argues that each society grows, expands, goes into crisis, and transforms due to market dynamics. Various intellectuals have different views about the process of social change. Marx and Engels stated that the transformation in the society with the crisis in a mode of production for which the struggle between two classes in the society plays a role. Discussing the four kinds of society i.e. primitive communism, slave economy, feudalism, and capitalism, they stated that the growth, crisis, and transformation occur due to the struggle between haves and have not in

the society. However, Collins (1990) criticized the idea of Marx and Engels. He argues that Market dynamics have always been a leading factor in social change, both growth, and structural collapse. I also believe that market dynamics play an important role in the rise, growth, and transformation of society. The monopoly of a group in market dynamics in any society increases the struggle and the crisis is experienced in that kind of market. Accordingly, transformation in society occurs with such kind of crisis. Thus, it is necessary to understand the role of market dynamics to understand the change in society.

In this paper, I tried to attempt a quick and preliminary discussion on the role of market dynamics in social change. This article has been developed in four chapters. The first is the introduction. The second chapter discusses the theoretical background of

market dynamics. Similarly, the third chapter is on market dynamics and finally, the last chapter includes a conclusion.

### **The theoretical background of market dynamics for social change**

Marx and Engels thought that the leading sector in each society is a mode of production. They argue that society grows in sequential order. Similarly, the transformation of any society becomes a reason for the class crisis in that society. They have also stated that the class has the most important role in the rise and transformation of society by discussing the Omni-class contradiction. They neglected the role of market dynamics in the social change process.

Most scholars like Marx and Engels have not emphasized market dynamics that is indeed important for the growth, crisis, and transformation of society. Picking this weak point, Collins (1990) has written his article *Market dynamics as the Engine of Historical Change*. Collins argues that the leading sector in each society is not a mode of production and accumulation, but a particular type of market; and that it is because of market dynamics each form of social organization undergoes growth, crises, and transformation another type of society. Similarly, he argues that the transformation process of society grows not due to the class crisis but due to the market crisis, and it grows in multiple ways. He has also included Omni-market. He says that every society has a typically characterized market and the increase of monopoly of certain classes reaches the superordinate level and thus crisis occurs.

Collins (1990) developed the major six principles of market dynamics. First, each form of market exchange is based upon a

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particular kind of property. Second, Markets vary in their openness. There is always some tendency towards unequal exchange and economic inequality. Third, Markets as social structures tend to expand over long periods to include more people or goods or relationships, and especially to become extended geographically. He argues that producers and sellers are against laborers and consumers.

Forth, the structural expansion of markets mentioned above results in economic and organizational growth, by increasing the volume of goods and stimulating innovations in production. He discusses the two types of growth, *extensive growth*, and *intensive growth*. He used the term extensive growth for commodity and materials and intensive growth for per capita production. The important point is there are very long periods in which the upside of the dynamics prevails. Fifth, Markets for a particular item of exchange tend to give rise to super-ordinate markets trading upon terms of trade themselves. Super-ordinate markets may be pyramided upon one another. Collins argues that every market goes into crisis when the market goes to a super-ordinate level from a subordinate level. Such crises include a slowing or reversal of growth of the market's principal form of production, the severe limitation or destruction of the principal form of market exchange, and the transformation of social organization into a structure based on a different form of property. Similarly, scholar Braudel (1977) has also emphasized on market for the rise and crisis of society. Society is characterized by two kinds of markets: first, relatively localized, face-to-face exchanges in which custom and surveillance enforce a "fair price" and exploitation low, and second, long-distance

and future-oriented exchanges, which is the large profit-oriented market. He has taken the first market as a subordinate market while the second as a super-ordinate market. Schumpeter (1939) agrees that market crises occur because super-ordinate markets become increasingly concentrated and ultimately restrict the market to the point of strangulation. He adds that super-ordinate markets as dynamic and to a level, as the sources of growth and change. Weber (1968) noted the tendency for any given market is towards monopolization, but that appropriation on one level (e.g. medieval seigneurs monopolizing land, capitalists expropriating workers from their means of production) makes possible a super-ordinate market with its dynamics (e.g. loans secured by private property in land, stock certificates). By studying the concepts of various intellectuals what we can understand is that every society goes into crisis when the market changes from subordinate to super-ordinate level. Collins (1990) argues that stratifying and cost-accelerating tendencies within markets, particularly in super-ordinate markets at their most politicized pole, periodically bring market systems into crisis. These crises are the turning points of history, bringing about the end of one system of property exchange, and its replacement by another. We can summarize the concept; the rise of super-ordinate markets helps to fuel the crisis.

### **Market dynamics are the core factor of the social change process**

For the growth and collapse of society, market dynamics play an important role. While analyzing historically, in the society from kinship society to the latest capitalist society, market dynamics have been at the core factor of the social change process.

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Collins (1990) deals with the four types of society. First, in kin-based societies, the central market is the kinship system itself: the market for alliances made by intermarriages. The “kinship revolution” destroyed the kinship-based structure and replaced it with the rise of the state. Second, he treats slave markets as a dynamic system. Third, Collins treats the agrarian-coercive markets. This market structure here centers on land rent, typically in the struggle with other structures of taxation. Finally, Collins deals briefly with modern capitalism and its proliferation of super-ordinate markets, including its capacity for undermining socialist enclaves within a capitalist world system. Omni capitalism too contains a built-in trajectory towards its structural crisis and transformation. Collins emphasized the role of the market in the rise, growth, and collapse of all four types of societies stated above is important in all three respects. I think, there is an important role of the market in the transformation of any society. The changes in various kinds of society in different periods in history are discussed in brief including the core role played by market dynamics.

### ***Kinship Markets: Growth and Structural Collapse***

The principal form of property in kinship market in a stateless society is sexual property. Rights of sexual access and all that goes with it are appropriated and exchanged (Collins, 1990). In this society, the only important organizational structure is kinship and marriage alliances. This society is stratified only by age and sex. In its more extreme forms, males hold property in females, and the aged hold property in the young, whom they dispose of in marriage alliances. A wealthy

man, a wealthy family, is rich in daughters or perhaps in sisters; by investing them, he can become richer still in sons and allies, and the material gifts and military support that they can bring to him (Collins, 1990). Men tend to dominate sexual property because they control political/military networks. Examples of such in Nepalese context are marrying Bhrikuti with Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo (“Bhrikuti,” 2022, para. 3) and marriage of Prithivi Narayan Shah with princess of Makawanpur in 1738 AD (Shrestha et al. 1972) were to avoid foreign invasion. In such kinship bond established from marriage, women remained as the trading commodity for men. The expansion of the kinship market tends to trap women increasingly in a male-centered system of sexual property.

In this kind of society women and children were taken as commodities and property. Who married more women and had more children was considered to be a rich man. In my opinion, this kind of subordinate market slowly transforms into a super-ordinate market due to the over marriage, monopoly of marriage, and geographical expansion of marriage. In this type of market, the monopoly of males, marrying more and becoming rich, went on increasing. They went far in search of women to marrying more and more to be rich. The various crises were seen in the market system due to long-distance marriage. After this, the kinship revolution occurred. One who could not get married went on revolting, the crisis occurred in the kinship market and then the society went on historical transformation. After this point, kinship-alliance markets continue to exist, but they are no longer at the leading edge. In state-organized societies, that role is fulfilled by slave markets or an agrarian tax/rent system.

### ***Slave Markets: Growth and Structural Collapse***

Slavery was the leading market dynamic primarily in ancient Greece and ancient Rome. The central form of property in a slave-market system consists of the slaves themselves. Hence it is a mistake to regard the slaves as the primary producers. It is the military who are the producers of this commodity; their productive labor is the fighting that captures the slaves. The dynamic of the military/slave system was expansionary.

The slave market shows a strong pattern of pyramiding superordinate upon subordinate markets. Slaves are first of all commodities, but they are also easily mobile and capable of stimulating other economic activities. Slaves were used in agriculture, especially for market production; in mining, large-scale fishing, and forestry; in crafts, above all in their proto-industrial concentrations; and transport and commerce (Collins 1990).

While studying the issues stated above, what we can understand is in slave markets, those who had more slaves were richer. In slave market, both male and female enslaves were exploited by their masters. Berry (2017, p. 78) writes that “as external values took on new meaning during enslaved men’s and women’s teens and early twenties, these individuals came to understand another aspect of their worth- the price of their reproduction”. In such, women were forced for sexual relationship with their masters and as per Thomas Foster (cited in Berry, 2017) “black manhood under slavery was also violated”. In John Cole’s remembrance (cited in Berry, 2017, p. 78), black men were selected specifically for “raising up strong black bucks” and these black men were taken for a visit to other

plantations and impregnate the women so that master can save actual purchase of new stock. In such, both male and female enslavers used to work for their masters till death and breed for them. In Nepal, the price of female enslaves were much higher than male enslaves (Pande, 2019, p. 159) as such female enslaves were used for sexual pleasure by their master and breeding of new slaves.

A slave market depends upon military conditions and is vulnerable to geopolitical limits. Slavery was the cutting edge of the penetration of a money economy; its spread into subordinate (slave-worked) and super-ordinate (politically speculative) markets constituted the dynamic of economic growth. Morally, slavery broke symbolic barriers; if people could be bought and sold, so could everything else. A crisis occurs in the slave market when it transforms into a super-ordinate market. In this way, especially when slaves stop production then the crisis occurs. Similarly, the labor force gets alienated from work. The crisis in the slave market occurs due to the lack of intensive growth in the slave economy. The property and market system already had been destroyed by its contradictions; the military collapse was merely an aftershock in the superstructure. The successive changes and crises of ancient society were transformations brought about by the military/slave market. The producers in this system, the soldiers, became alienated labor.

The slaves were quickly settled on the land as peasant rent or tax-payers, not resold or circulated in subordinate markets. The structural transformation already had taken place, and a new form of relations, the agrarian-coercive, was now dominant.

### ***Agrarian-Coercive Markets: Growth and Structural Collapse***

Collins (1990) used the term “agrarian-coercive” for the generic type of society based upon agricultural production and a militarized state. Wickham (1984) says that this society has two main subtypes, the first *rent-coercion* and the second one is *tax-coercion*. In both, the major form of property is land and the attached labor. In rent-coercion, landlords with their military mean directly appropriate surplus produce and labor services, and in tax-coercion, this is done by agents of a distant state that monopolizes the means of violence. In general, rent-coercion can be understood as a subordinate form of market and tax-coercion as a super-ordinate form of market. Rent-coercion is the more decentralized form. This impetus towards market dynamics comes primarily from the decentralized, rent-coercion forms. Tax-coercion is the more centralized form of market.

The crisis and downfall of these agrarian-coercive property forms occur against the background of the rival form, tax-coercion by the centralized state. The decentralized agrarian property forms never may have become free to develop in the first place. When the rent-coercion strengthens more than tax-coercion then power in the state gets centralized. Then Agrarian-Coercive markets reach the superordinate stage. When decentralization gets weakened this kind of society goes into crisis. Similarly, when the level of exploitation goes on increasing the ruler starts to raise more taxes. The extension of the absolute state leads to an increase in crisis. Perry Anderson (1974) proposes a crisis of feudalism based on the struggle over rent and on the expansion of the market for land

and its produce. Collins (1990) deals with the two different models for the crisis of agrarian-coercive exchange. First, the feudal-rent crisis in Europe did not lead directly to capitalism but to a transitional form: the absolutist state, which propped up the aristocracy in its struggle to maintain coercive control over the peasantry. The internal conflicts within Absolutism, between the taxation of aristocrats and aristocrats' extraction of rents from their subordinates, had to be resolved by revolution before capitalism could emerge. Second, in the religious capitalism model, capitalism is present even earlier: first in the monastic sector, then permeating secular life. Here the revolutionary transition is the crisis of religious organization.

Although Collins argues specific form of market (agriculture based), how women were treated during feudal stage is hardly described. Despite different form of market in agrarian age, women's role remained in center to spin such new market. Their active responsibilities in the farm and sexual exploitation by male counterpart to reproduce farm work force have been barely mentioned.

### ***Modern Capitalism: Growth and structural collapse***

Capitalism is an Omni-market society that has its most obvious successes in its geographical extension. Around the world, regions and purely local markets have been steadily eroded. So, capitalism is much more powerful than the historically earlier leading market sectors. Capitalism is the strongest example of the proliferation of superordinate markets, and indeed of all the versions of market growth and expansion-laterally in space, in volume, and qualitative innovation.

Capitalism has all the dynamics of markets

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to an especially strong degree. One could describe modern capitalism as the quantitative dominance of market dynamics, such that all other structures are reduced to minor roles. The growth of capitalism is the pyramiding of superordinate markets; hence "penetration" is the degree of connection to various levels of such pyramiding.

Capitals, money, labor, and profits are the main properties in a capitalist society. For increasing this type of property rapid competition between the capitalists occurs. In my opinion, this kind of competition leads to an increase in the extent and speed of globalization. Also, the expansion of transnational corporations, emergence, and influences of multinational organizations like the World Bank, IMF, UN, WTO, etc. transforms capitalism into a superordinate stage. The extent and nature of exploitation go on increasing for the gain. Multinational corporations become stronger than the state. In this, not the struggle between rich and poor but the struggle amongst the rich people for increasing property leads to a crisis in the market system and ultimately leads to the change in society.

One of the nature undescribed by Collins is changing social relations and family structures along with capitalism. In modern and industrial society, people opt conditional love for their relation and pleasure. In such, one of the prime trade of women is still continuing as a commodity. Women are still trafficked and traded in a new form of slavery.

### **Conclusion**

The role of market dynamics seems to be crucial in all kinds of societies i.e. kinship, slave, agrarian-coercive, and capitalism. In every kind of society, the expansion of typical kinds of the property leads to the monopoly

of any one of the groups. Increasing property, increasing the extent of ownership over land, increase in activities of exploitation of other classes or groups is the super-ordinate stage of the market. In this way, when the market reaches to the superordinate stage, various kinds of crises are seen, and not only the market system but the whole social change occurs.

Market systems issue in crises, reversals of growth, and eventually transformation. Kinship markets collapsed when investors in long-term marital alliances consolidated political power and shifted over to the new organization of the coercive state. Similarly, military slave markets mobilized their external opposition, which undermined them when they reached geopolitical limits. Agrarian rent-extractors were squeezed out by the rising costs of domination as markets for weapons and status goods expanded. The religious

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corporations built up from investment of coerced produce became autonomous sectors of proto-capitalist growth, but were brought down eventually through inflation of their cultural currency and were expropriated.

It can be seen clearly that market dynamics always have been a leading factor in social change, both growth, and in the structural collapse while studying the rise, growth, and collapse of four kinds of societies stated above. Historically, markets have been the leading edge of change. Market dynamics have been at the core of the social change process in every society. Notwithstanding, women have remained as a property of exchange and exploitation in all types of markets that Collins have overlooked. Especially, the growing trafficking of women across the world for sex trade and forced servitude in Omni-market (capitalism) confirms this as never ending deal in any types of market.

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