

# Marxists views on the family

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Marxists Views on the Family There are three Marxists views of the family, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Eli Zaretsky; they all see all institutions such as education, the media and the family as maintaining class inequality and capitalism. Marxism is a conflict perspective as it describes a form of inequality where groups could potentially compete for power. Modern Marxist agrees that: \* Families socialise children to be obedient and hardworking, which benefits capitalists; \* Wealth is passed down families, perpetuating inequalities; \* Families are too privatised, discouraging wage-labourers from uniting against capitalism. Community living is preferable; \* A communist society in which all means of production, such as farms and factories, are collectively owned and workers receive a fair share of the profits should replace private ownership of businesses. Marxist say the family has three main functions for capitalism: 1. Inheritance of property- Marx called the earliest classless society 'primitive communism' at this stage there was no such thing as family. As society developed private property became important. Engels said the patriarchal monogamous nuclear family emerged (male dominated). In order to ensure the legitimate heir inherited from them. Marx said with the overthrow of capitalism the means of production would be owned collectively so there would be no need for the nuclear family to exist as a means of transmitting private property down the generations. 2. Ideological Function (The idea that family brainwashes us into capitalism)- Marxists say the family persuades people to think of capitalism as a fair, natural and unchangeable system. Families socialise children into thinking that hierarchy and inequality are inevitable. The family prepares people to take orders at work. Zaretsky says people are

encourages to think of the family as a haven from the outside world but this is largely an illusion. As even in the privacy of our home we can subject to state control. 3. A unit of consumption- The family is an important consumer of products and has a major role in generating profits for capitalism.

Advertisers urge us to 'keep up with the Joneses'. They encourage 'pester power' from children. Children who don't have the latest products may be bullied. Thus Marxists see the family as performing several functions for capitalist society: the inheritance of private property, socialisation into accepting inequality, and a source of profit. According to Marxists these may benefit capitalism but not members of the family.