

# **Marx's Theory Of Alienation**

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In sociology, alienation is when humans feel disconnected or estranged from some part of their nature or from society. Individuals can be alienated from themselves and from others, often resulting in feeling powerless or without control over their own lives.

- ▶ **The term alienation was conceptualized by Karl Marx when he used alienation to describe the effects of capitalism on the working class. Before this, the meaning of alienation changed over the centuries.**



- ▶ In **Marx's Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844**, he presented alienation as the phenomenon through which the labor product confronts labor 'as something alien, as a power independent of the producer.'

## **WHAT CAUSES ALIENATION?**

**According to Marx, the economic system itself is what causes alienation. The introduction of machines increases the division of labor within society; the worker's task becomes less skilled, capital is accumulated, and thus workers become increasingly fragmented (Boudon & Bourricaud, 1989).**

# Marx`s 4 Types Of Alienation



Alienation From the Product of  
Labor

Alienation From the Process of  
Labor

Alienation From the Self

Alienation From Other Workers



## Alienation From the Product of Labor

*In the capitalist mode of production, a person (whether a worker, an engineer or some other physical or intellectual laborer) is neither the inventor nor designer of a product nor does that person receive any benefit from the existence of that product beyond what the capitalist is willing to pay him in wages. The product, whatever it is, is not made for the worker's own use but made for the purpose of producing a profit for the capitalist. The worker is alienated from what he makes.*



## **Alienation From the Process of Labor**

**Closely related to alienation from his product, the worker in an industrial capitalist society is separated from the very act of production itself through the division and specialization of labor. Reduced from being the designer and creator of a product, a worker is confined to performing a series of repetitive acts with no sense of creating anything as an expression of himself. As Marx wrote in Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844: "the external character of labor for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs, not to himself, but to another."**

## **Alienation From the Self**

**The species-essence or “Gattungswesen” of an individual comprises all of his or her innate potentials. Under a capitalist mode of production, an individual loses identity and the opportunity for self-development as he or she is forced to sell his or her labor-power as a market commodity.**

# Alienation From Other Workers

The reduction of labor to a mere market commodity creates the so-called labor market in which a worker competes against another worker. Labor is traded in a competitive labor market instead of considering it as a constructive socioeconomic activity characterized by collective common effort

## Conclusion

**From the perspective of Karl Marx and within the context of capitalism, alienation is the surrender of control and the separation of an essential aspect of the self. A society based on a capitalist economic system promotes norms and standards that reduces an individual worker to a mere commodity or instrument of production who lacks control over his or her vocation. Simply put, for Marx and his adherents, capitalism involves the objectification and commodification of the experiences and activities of workers.**

## **How To Overcome Alienation According To Marx**

In a communist society, there would be shared resources, wealth, and no social classes. The accumulated labor would widen and enrich the laborer's existence rather than exploit it.

# Source:

<https://simplysociology.com/author/olivia-guy-evans>

<https://profoluscom/topics/four-types-ofalienation>

<https://study.com/academy/lesson>

Thank you

