

# Sociological Theories - Marxism

## LO1 – DESCRIBE SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF CRIMINALITY

Assessment Criterion	Content	Amplification
<b>AC2.3</b> <i>You should be able to -</i> Describe Sociological Theories of Criminality	<b>Sociological Theories</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Social Structure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactionism</li> <li>• Realism</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	You should have knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Marxism</b></li> <li>✓ Labelling</li> <li>✓ Functionalism</li> <li>✓ Left and Right Realism</li> </ul>

### MARXIST EXPLANATIONS OF CRIME

Marxist's see crime as inevitable in a capitalist society as most of the structures of society exist to exploit the working class and to benefit the ruling class. This is true of many of the institutions of society such as the education system, the police, the justice systems and even the law.

### SOCIAL STRUCTURE EXPLANATIONS

These theories assume that crime results from disadvantage which is inherent within the capitalist system. Crime is committed by marginalised groups such as the working class and ethnic minority groups because of unfavourable conditions such as unemployment, poor housing, poorly paid or boring jobs. Among the most widely discussed are Marxist explanations of crime



### MARXISM AND CAPITALISM

**Capitalism** – is an economic system in which private individuals or businesses own capital goods. Ownership of the means of production (a country's trade and industry) is by a small number of people, these are the ruling or upper class. Everyone else must sell their labour, these are the 'proletariat' or the working class. Marxist do not approve of this system and believe it must be overthrown through revolution.

**Marxism** is a social, political, and economic philosophy named after Karl Marx. It examines the effect of capitalism on labour, productivity, and economic development and argues for a worker revolution to overturn capitalism in favour of communism.

### Marxist Views on Crime

- **White Collar Crime** - is not treated as seriously as it should be. Crimes that cost the taxpayer millions of pounds, or cause massive environmental damage are routinely ignored because these are the crimes of the ruling classes. On the other hand, more minor crimes such as street robbery or shoplifting attract severe prison sentences because they are committed by the working classes and other marginalised groups.
- **The Criminal Justice Systems and Policing** – Marxist argue that the police favour the ruling class. The fact that working class people and ethnic minorities are over-represented compared to more powerful groups is not surprising because the police focus their resources on these groups and their activities. This made worse by the criminal justice system which routinely gives stiffer sentences to people from a working-class background.