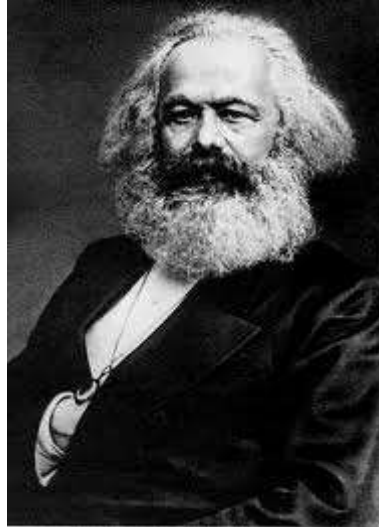


Marxism – the basics



Understand all sociologists and social theorists by knowing a little about the time they lived in





Karl Marx
1818 - 1883

Mid- Late Nineteenth Century Britain



- Unrest and protest – Chartism
- Long hours, low pay
- Periodic unemployment
- No Welfare State
- No universal right to vote



Mid-Nineteenth Century Europe

Revolution in France - 1848



Revolutions elsewhere in Europe

Times of Turmoil

Marx's insight:

It's all about money



Some have it.....



They are called capitalists (or the bourgeoisie)

Others don't



They are called the workers (or the proletariat)

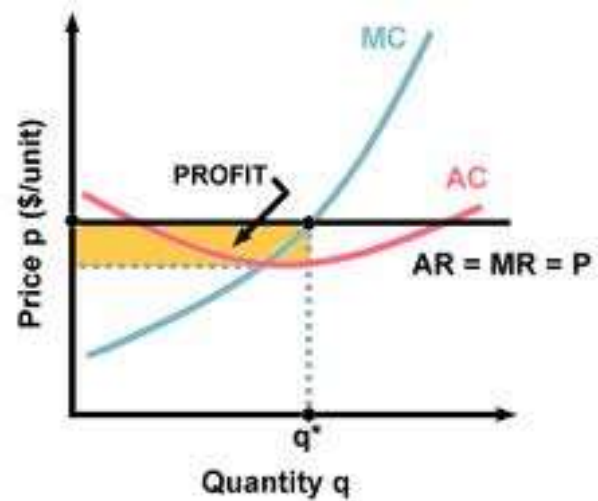
Capitalists and workers are thrown together into relations of production



They don't get on too well

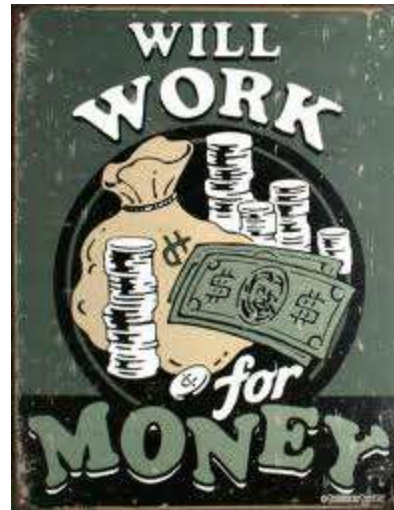


Capitalists want



**the maximum PROFIT – and
the lowest costs**

**Workers
want**



**the highest wage for the
least work**

**These two groups
are locked in mortal
combat**



**The Capitalists compete
with each other.**



**The successful capitalist's
get richer and richer**

**...and the failed capitalists fall down
into the working class**



The workers meanwhile are more and more exploited by the remaining capitalists – they get poorer and poorer



Marx said that eventually the workers will rise up in revolution against the capitalist class

A new communist society will be created



The backstory

What is making all this happen?



Marx has a theory

it's because societies are always made from two parts



The Base



**The base is like the foundations of a building.
Marxists say the economy
(the means of production)
is the base**

**And the superstructure
The rest of the building which
is built on the foundations**



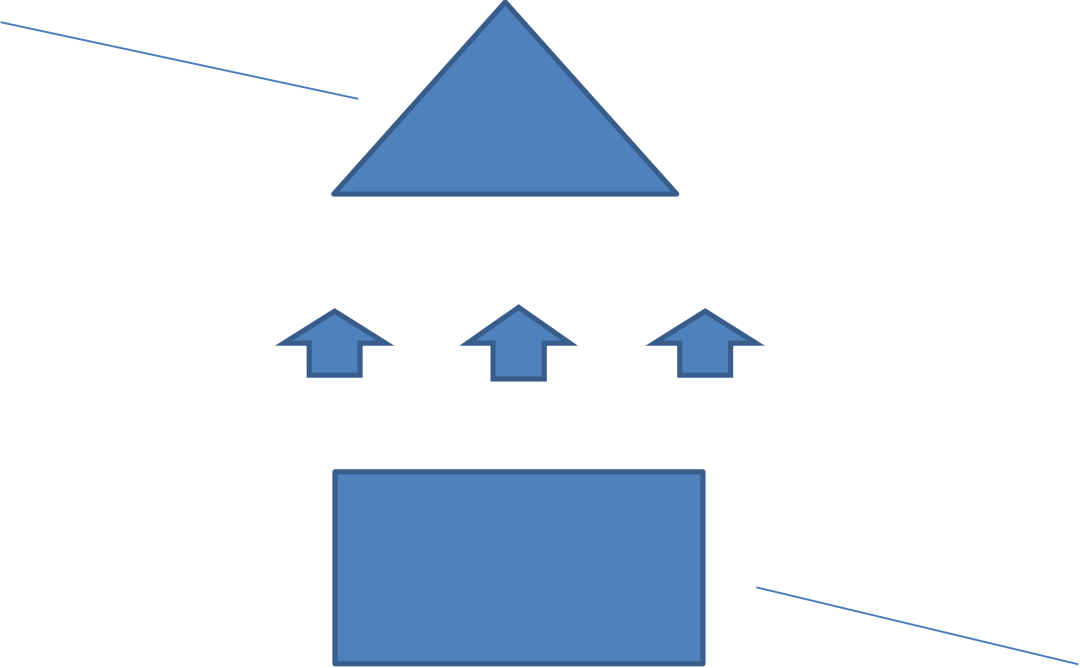
**The superstructure means
all the other parts of
society – culture, the
state, education**

The economic base determines (shapes) the superstructure



So this is called The base-superstructure model

Superstructure



Base

**Social Control in capitalist society
is achieved through ideology -
ruling class ideology**



The ruling ideas in any time are always those of the ruling class



The working class may suffer from false consciousness – not understanding their true class position



**Not a bad theory – but there are several criticisms
which can be made of it**



**It's not all about money – this is
economically reductionist**



**e.g. what about ideas,
culture, religion?**

**Marxism makes people appear to
be dominated by structures**



Puppets or People with the ability to act?

**Gender and Race blind -
the only social groupings it seems
to recognise are classes**



Now – over to you – weigh it up.

Like any theory it has good points and bad points

- but hopefully you will find it can explain some things about your society



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