

## Applying sociological theory to Lapland

### ITEM FC

At this time of year Santa Claus is typically busy managing his North Pole production plant. Santa owns the factory in the North Pole; the elves work long shifts, and are paid very little. Santa's elves watch and report back on all children in the build up to Christmas, and if they are on the Good List they receive material goods on Christmas Eve. Most elves nowadays form neo-conventional families, with dual working parents. Female elves are often heard discussing the Triple Shift they endure, as their partners find the work at the factory very stressful, and childcare responsibility falls generally to them. Although some elves argue that the domestic load is being shared more equally over time especially with the emerging 'new elf' who takes pride in being sensitive and keen to take on domestic and childcare roles.

Mary Christmas, Santa's wife does all of the domestic work at their home, which allows Santa to manage the long shifts in the factory. He finds this stressful and says that Mary provides great emotional support, which allows him to stay sane!

Some Sociologists believe that Santa's red and white outfit is a symbol of Coca Cola and capitalism, and that his material giving to children serves an ideological function for capitalism.



A Level sociology exam questions involve analysing an 'item' of text. Before Christmas the A Level sociologists enjoyed this festive take on their exam format. We read about the life of Santa and Mary Claus. The students were able to apply their Marxist theory to life in Lapland as we discussed the oppression of the workers (the elves). We also discussed the Feminist perspective as life can be especially hard for female elves managing their domestic duties and poor Mrs Claus playing an essential role supporting Santa when he is busy working.

We looked at the Capitalist perspective of Christmas, considering the deal Santa has made with Coca Cola to promote their product through his red suit. This was a reminder that we can find sociology in everything!

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