3.10 Traditional Conservatism and the New Right: Tensions Within the Tradition

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 55 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answers may be brief but must use complete sentences where indicated. The final 30-mark essay must be a developed, structured evaluation with a clear judgement. This pack covers tensions between traditional conservatism and the New Right within the Edexcel 9PL0 Core Political Ideas content.

1 State two areas where New Right neo-conservatism emphasises a strong state rather than minimal state action.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Explain briefly why traditional conservatives are sceptical of abstract political ideologies, with a short example of a thinker referenced in Edexcel 9PL0.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

3 Explain two ways in which One Nation conservatives justify paternalism and noblesse oblige in social policy.

(a) Explain one justification for paternalism from a One Nation conservative perspective. **(2)**

(b) Explain a second justification for noblesse oblige as used by One Nation conservatives. **(2)**

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 Explain the difference between Burkean empirical scepticism and the New Right's ideological confidence in market theory, with one short example of each. Use complete sentences.

(Total for Question 4 is 6 marks)

5 Evaluate the extent to which conservatives disagree over the role of the state.

(Total for Question 5 is 24 marks)

6 Using UK examples, explain one way New Right economic policy in the 1980s illustrated neo-liberal principles and one way it reflected neo-conservative emphasis on the strong state. Give dates where possible.

(a) Explain one example showing neo-liberal economic policy in the UK 1980s, named and dated. **(3)**

(b) Explain one example showing neo-conservative emphasis on a strong state in the same period, named and dated. **(3)**

(Total for Question 6 is 6 marks)

7 Distinguish between traditional conservative and New Right views of the state in a focused answer addressing the state's economic and social roles. This is a 10-mark short-answer question assessed with a point-band scheme.

(Total for Question 7 is 10 marks)

Mark scheme · 3.10 Traditional Conservatism and the New Right: Tensions Within the Tradition

Question 1

one accurate area, e.g. law and order **B1**

a second accurate area, e.g. national defence or preserving traditional moral values **B1**

Answer: Any two of: a strong state on law and order (tough policing), a strong national defence, and active promotion of traditional moral or family values.

Question 2

identifies scepticism of abstract theory, e.g. the preference for empiricism and experience over grand theoretical designs **B1**

links this to a reason, e.g. concern that abstract schemes can destroy organic social arrangements **B1**

gives a brief illustration, e.g. referencing Burke's caution about the French Revolution's abstract rights approach **B1**

Answer: Traditional conservatives prefer empiricism and gradual reform because they view abstract political ideologies as likely to ignore historical wisdom and the complex, lived arrangements of society; Edmund Burke is commonly invoked as an example, warning that abstract schemes like those in the French Revolution can produce social disruption.

Question 3

(a) identifies one justification, e.g. to preserve social stability and prevent class division **B1**

(a) develops the point, e.g. arguing that limited welfare or reforms reduce grievance and maintain cohesion **B1**

(a) Answer: One justification is that paternalistic policies reduce social division and grievance, preserving social stability and cohesion by addressing extreme poverty or insecurity that might otherwise provoke social conflict.

(b) identifies a second justification, e.g. moral duty or stewardship by the privileged **B1**

(b) develops the point, e.g. linking elite responsibility to legitimacy of hierarchy and long-term stability **B1**

(b) Answer: A second justification is moral duty: noblesse oblige frames the privileged as having a responsibility to look after the less fortunate, which preserves the legitimacy of social hierarchy and helps prevent unrest by demonstrating reciprocal obligations.

Question 4

identifies Burkean empirical scepticism as cautious reliance on tradition and accumulated experience rather than abstract reason **B1**

provides a brief example or development for Burkean scepticism, e.g. warning against revolutionary schemes **B1**

identifies New Right confidence in market theory as trust in markets to allocate resources efficiently and shape social behaviour **B1**

provides a brief example or development for New Right market confidence, e.g. 1980s privatisations as an application **B1**

links the two positions to their implications for the role of the state in one or two clear sentences **B2**

Answer: Burkean empirical scepticism emphasises gradual change rooted in tradition and experience, warning that abstract schemes can destroy valuable social inheritances; the French Revolution is often cited as a cautionary example. The New Right's confidence in market theory trusts market forces to allocate resources and incentivise behaviour efficiently; 1980s privatisations are a practical instance. The Burkean view implies a more cautious role for the state in reform, while the New Right trusts markets and expects a roll-back of state economic involvement, with the state retained for order and defence.

Question 5

Level 0 No relevant content. **0**

Level 1 Basic, limited knowledge of conservative strands with little or no developed analysis or evaluation. Answers may describe one strand only or make general assertions without evidence. **1-6**

Level 2 Clear and generally accurate knowledge of One Nation and New Right positions with some analysis and partial evaluation. Response may be one-sided or lack detailed evidence from examples. **7-12**

Level 3 Detailed, accurate knowledge and analysis of both strands used to construct a sustained evaluation. The answer weighs areas of disagreement against areas of agreement and uses appropriate examples; judgement is reached but may be slightly unbalanced. **13-18**

Level 4 Sophisticated, wide-ranging and accurate knowledge deployed in a tightly argued evaluation that directly compares One Nation and New Right views on the state, uses precise historical and conceptual examples, addresses counterarguments and reaches a clear, well-supported conclusion on the extent of disagreement. **19-24**

Indicative content:

- Clear points of disagreement: One Nation conservatives accept a more interventionist economic role for the state to preserve social cohesion, endorsing paternalistic measures and selective redistribution. New Right neo-liberals favour minimal economic intervention, privatisation and market solutions, arguing that state welfare can create dependency.
- Clear points of disagreement: New Right neo-liberals and neo-conservatives combine a reduced economic state with a strong state in law and order and defence, producing a different allocation of state responsibility compared with One Nation paternalism.
- Areas of agreement: both strands defend private property and property rights, value social stability and order, and are sceptical of radical egalitarianism and abstract schemes for remaking society; both prefer pragmatic solutions over utopian ideology.
- Thinkers as brief illustrations: Hobbesian pessimism about human nature underpins the desire for order; Burkean empiricism supports gradual reform; these support overlapping conclusions about the necessity of some state authority even where they disagree about economic scope.
- Evidence and examples: the 1980s Thatcher governments implemented New Right economic reforms such as privatisation and trade union limits while retaining strong policing and defence spending; One Nation examples include post-war welfare settlements and Tory paternalistic policies at times when the party has sought to reduce social division.
- Evaluation of extent: a strong answer will argue that disagreement is substantial and politically consequential on economic policy and welfare, but limited at a deeper level because both strands accept state authority for order and the defence of institutions. Alternatively, the answer can argue that practical politics often produces a hybrid in which New Right economic measures are tempered by One Nation pragmatism, so disagreement is significant in rhetoric and emphasis but not absolute in practice.
- Counterarguments: note that electoral politics, coalition arrangements, and institutional constraints (e.g. bureaucratic inertia, public opinion) frequently moderate ideological positions, so empirical divergence may be smaller than doctrinal claims imply.
- Conclusion: a well-supported judgement should specify whether the candidate believes the disagreement is primarily about the state's economic role while there is substantial agreement on social and institutional roles, or whether they believe the disagreement permeates the understanding of state authority more deeply.

Question 6

(a) identifies a correctly dated example, e.g. privatisation of British Telecom in 1984 **B1**

(a) explains how this illustrates neo-liberal belief in markets and reduced state ownership **B1**

(a) brief development, e.g. link to competition, efficiency or widening share ownership **B1**

(a) Answer: Privatisation of British Telecom in 1984 illustrates neo-liberalism by transferring a state monopoly into the private sector to increase market discipline and efficiency, and by selling shares to the public to widen individual ownership.

(b) identifies a correctly dated example, e.g. strong law and order rhetoric and policing increases in the 1980s, or the response to the miners strike 1984-85 **B1**

(b) explains how this illustrates the strong state emphasis, e.g. assertive policing, legal restrictions on industrial action **B1**

(b) brief development, e.g. connection to protecting property rights and social order **B1**

(b) Answer: The government response to the miners strike 1984-85, including strong policing and legal measures that limited picketing and supported maintenance of order, illustrates the neo-conservative emphasis on a strong state to defend property rights and public order.

Question 7

Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**
Level 1 Very limited distinction; perhaps a single, undeveloped difference with no examples.	**1-2**
Level 2 Some accurate differences identified between the state roles, with brief development or a single example for one strand.	**3-4**
Level 3 Clear, accurate distinctions on both economic and social roles with at least one developed example or clear explanation.	**5-6**
Level 4 Detailed distinctions across both domains with well-developed examples or reasoned explanation showing practical consequences of differing views.	**7-8**
Level 5 Comprehensive, focused comparison that clearly contrasts One Nation and New Right positions on the economic and social roles of the state, with precise examples and a concluding synthesis of how the views relate to shared conservative principles.	**9-10**

Indicative content:

- Traditional One Nation conservatives accept a significant role for the state in welfare and moderation of market outcomes to preserve social cohesion, invoking paternalism and noblesse oblige to justify limited intervention.
- One Nation examples include support for state-funded welfare provisions such as the NHS (from 1948) and selective regulation to reduce class divisions and preserve order.
- New Right neo-liberals favour minimal economic intervention, privatisation and market mechanisms, arguing that individual responsibility and market discipline improve efficiency and reduce dependency.
- New Right neo-conservatives, however, support a strong state in non-economic areas such as law and order, defence and upholding traditional values, creating the characteristic combination 'free economy, strong state'.
- Practical consequence: New Right policies in the 1980s, such as privatisation and trade union reform, contrast with One Nation policies that favour redistributive or paternalistic measures to maintain social harmony.
- Synthesis: both strands share conservative scepticism of radical equality projects and value property rights and social stability, but they disagree significantly on how far the state should intervene in the economy while often agreeing on state authority in preserving order and tradition.