2.3 The Personal Life Perspective and Late Modern Family Diversity: 30-minute Pack

AQA 7192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For at least five questions you must write full sentences. Spend about 30 minutes on this pack.

1 Compare briefly how the personal life perspective and the New Right differ in their explanations of declining traditional family forms in late modern society.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Using Item A and your own knowledge, explain one way policy makers might need to change services to respond to families constituted by chosen relationships, not only biological kin.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 In your answer you should evaluate competing perspectives, use sociological evidence and reach a supported conclusion.

(Total for Question 3 is 12 marks)

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4 Define the term 'families of choice' as used by Jeffrey Weeks in studies of same-sex relationships.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

5 Identify and explain two features of Janet Finch's idea of 'displaying families' as a way people make relationships visible to others in society.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.3 The Personal Life Perspective and Late Modern Family Diversity: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies personal life perspective view, e.g. sees change as diverse redefinitions of family based on meanings and practices	**B1**
explains this, e.g. change is not decline, it is people forming new family types through social practices	**B1**
identifies New Right view, e.g. sees changes as harmful decline from the ideal nuclear family and linked to social problems	**B1**
explains contrast, e.g. New Right blames moral failure and policy, whereas personal life highlights agency and diversity	**B1**

Answer: The personal life perspective treats changing family forms as diverse redefinitions based on meanings and everyday practices, not decline, while the New Right sees such changes as a harmful decline from the nuclear family caused by moral failure and poor policy. This contrasts agency and diversity with a moral panic about family breakdown.

Question 2

identifies a policy implication, e.g. recognising non-biological carers in benefit, health and social care rules	**B1**
explains link to Item A, e.g. Priya acting as emergency contact and providing care shows non-kin perform caring roles	**B1**
develops with effect, e.g. policy could broaden definitions of family to include chosen kin so services and rights reach those who provide care	**B1**
further development, e.g. this could improve welfare support and recognition for informal carers outside biological families	**B1**

Answer: Policy makers might broaden legal and service definitions of family to recognise non-biological carers, since Item A shows people like Priya provide kin-like care and emergency support; this would allow benefits, health and social care provisions to reach informal carers among chosen kin and improve support.

Question 3

Level 1 Basic statements about the personal life perspective with little or no development or comparison. Limited use of evidence and no clear conclusion.	**1-3**
Level 2 Some developed points about the personal life perspective and one other view. Some use of evidence and a partial conclusion, but evaluation is limited in depth or balance.	**4-6**
Level 3 Clear evaluation that contrasts the personal life perspective with other relevant perspectives such as functionalism, Marxism or the New Right. Good use of sociological examples and evidence. A reasoned conclusion is presented.	**7-9**
Level 4 Thorough and balanced evaluation. Candidates consider strengths and limitations of the personal life perspective, compare it with several alternative perspectives, use appropriate evidence and theory, and reach a well-supported judgement about how far sociologists would agree.	**10-12**

Indicative content:

- AO1 points: outline the personal life perspective: focus on meanings, relationships, family practices, families of choice, displaying families; key names Smart, Morgan, Finch, Weeks.
- AO2 application: show how these ideas explain diversity, chosen kin networks, everyday practices making family, and implications for understanding non-traditional households.
- AO3 evaluation strengths: captures subjective meanings, explains diversity, highlights care and emotion, useful for qualitative research and policy recognising non-kin carers.
- AO3 evaluation limits: may underplay structure, inequality and power such as class, gender and economic constraints; problems of generalisability from qualitative work; critics argue it is descriptive and offers less explanation of causes.
- Compare with functionalism: functionalism emphasises stability and universal roles, different view of family functions; personal life rejects fixed role assumptions.
- Compare with New Right: New Right sees decline and harm from non-nuclear families, personal life sees diversity and agency.
- Compare with Marxism and feminist perspectives: Marxism stresses class and capitalist economic forces shaping family, feminism emphasises patriarchy and power within families; personal life may be complemented by these structural accounts.
- Evidence: refer to studies of chosen families, qualitative work showing everyday practices, and limitations noted in empirical critiques such as small samples or lack of attention to inequality.
- Conclusion: balanced judgement such as the personal life perspective is highly useful for understanding meanings and diversity but should be used alongside structural perspectives to explain patterns and causes.

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Question 4

identifies families of choice as networks of close, supportive relationships people select, often beyond biological kin (oe) **B1**

development, e.g. commonly used to describe how some same-sex couples form family-like bonds with friends and non-biological kin **B1**

Answer: Families of choice are networks of close, supportive relationships that people select, often beyond biological kin, and are used to describe how some same-sex couples form family-like bonds with friends or non-biological relatives.

Question 5

identifies one feature, e.g. using rituals and routines such as family meals, photographs or celebrations to show family membership **B1**

explains why, e.g. these displays make relationships publicly recognisable and help people claim family status **B1**

identifies second feature, e.g. selective presentation, deciding which relationships to display and which to keep private **B1**

explains why, e.g. selective display manages social recognition and can protect alternative family forms from stigma **B1**

Answer: Finch argues people display family by using rituals and routines like meals, photos or celebrations to make relationships publicly recognisable, and by selectively presenting some relationships while keeping others private to manage social recognition and avoid stigma.

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