4.4 Marxist and Neo-Marxist Perspectives on Religion as Ideology: Test Pack

AQA 7192 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For the 6-mark and 12-mark questions write your answers in full sentences and support points with sociological examples where possible. Time guidance: 15 minutes for this pack.

1 Which term did Karl Marx use to describe religion when he wrote that it soothed the oppressed while distracting them from real social inequalities?

- ☐ A) a social glue
- ☐ B) the opium of the people
- ☐ C) a moral guide
- ☐ D) cultural capital

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 State one criticism that argues Marxism cannot explain religion acting against ruling-class interests.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Explain two ways religion can act as a source of social change, using sociological examples.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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4 Identify and explain one way religion can legitimate the power of the ruling class in capitalist societies.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

5 Explain how Marx argued religion can mask the underlying economic causes of poverty and inequality under capitalism.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 4.4 Marxist and Neo-Marxist Perspectives on Religion as Ideology: Test Pack

Question 1

B (the opium of the people) **B1**

Answer: B

Question 2

identifies a valid criticism, e.g. Marxism struggles to explain clergy or religious movements that lead protests against capitalist elites **B1**

brief development, e.g. such examples show religion can be independent and oppositional, not simply ideological cover for the ruling class **B1**

Answer: One criticism is that Marxism struggles to explain clergy or religious movements that lead protests against capitalist elites, since these show religion can be independent and oppositional rather than merely ideological cover for the ruling class.

Question 3

identifies first way, e.g. liberation theology encouraging political mobilisation among the poor **B1**

development, e.g. leading clergy to support protests, cooperatives or literacy which can shift power relations **B1**

identifies second way, e.g. religion inspiring ethical campaigns, for example civil rights activism led by religious leaders **B1**

development, e.g. moral authority of religious leaders can legitimise claims for equality and reform **B1**

Answer: Religion can act as a source of change by liberation theology encouraging political mobilisation among the poor, with clergy supporting protests and cooperatives that shift power relations; and by inspiring ethical campaigns, for example religiously led civil rights activism where moral authority helps legitimise claims for equality and reform.

Question 4

identifies a method of legitimation, e.g. religion teaches that existing social roles are divinely ordained **B1**

development, e.g. this encourages acceptance of inequality because people see it as natural or part of God's plan **B1**

Answer: Religion may teach that existing social roles are divinely ordained, encouraging acceptance of inequality because people see it as natural or part of a divine plan.

Question 5

identifies that religion diverts attention from structural causes, e.g. by explaining poverty as a result of sin or fate **B1**

development, e.g. this shifts blame to individuals rather than to exploitative employers or unequal class structures **B1**

identifies that this diversion reduces class consciousness and the likelihood of collective action **B1**

further development, e.g. with less class consciousness, workers are less likely to challenge the ruling class or demand systemic change **B1**

Answer: Religion can divert attention from structural causes by explaining poverty as the result of sin or fate, shifting blame to individuals rather than to exploitative employers or unequal class structures; this reduces class consciousness and the likelihood of collective action against the ruling class.

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