4.7 Religion as a Force for Political and Social Change

AQA 7192 · about 60 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For short answer questions write in full sentences where asked. The final evaluation requires full paragraphs. Spend about 60 minutes on the whole paper.

1 Explain Bruce's argument about why the New Christian Right in the United States became politically active on issues such as abortion and school curricula, giving two developed points.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Explain one reason why religion can legitimise political power in a state, with a brief development and example.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 State one limit of using religion to promote social equality, with a brief explanation.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

4 Explain how charismatic leaders such as Martin Luther King can turn religious beliefs into effective political action, giving two developed points and reference to the Black Church example.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 Define what sociologists mean by 'religious nationalism' in the study of religion and political mobilisation, giving a brief development.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

6 Describe how religion can act as a conservative force and how it can act as a force for social change. Develop each role with reference to politics or social values.

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

7 Item A: Extract about the Black Church in a US city. "Local Black churches coordinated voter registration drives, organised mass meetings and provided leaders who could speak to both congregations and wider coalitions. These churches also offered meeting space and moral framing for the civil rights campaign." Using Item A and your own knowledge, explain five reasons why religious movements become politically active, referring to the extract and wider examples such as Martin Luther King and the Black Church.

(Total for Question 7 is 10 marks)

8 State one criticism that sociologists make of Bruce's account of the New Christian Right's political mobilisation in the United States.

(Total for Question 8 is 2 marks)

9 Identify and explain two ways the New Christian Right sought to influence education policy in the United States, using Bruce's account and general examples.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

10 Item B: Short extract on religious nationalism in India. "Political actors have used Hindu symbols, festivals and historical narratives to mobilise voters and justify policies privileging majority groups." Using Item B and your sociological knowledge, evaluate the view that religion is always a conservative force in society. Make sure you refer to Item B in your answer.

Evaluate the view that religion is always a conservative force in society, applying material from Item B and your knowledge.

(Total for Question 10 is 12 marks)

Mark scheme · 4.7 Religion as a Force for Political and Social Change

Question 1

identifies a reason, e.g. cultural backlash against liberalising social norms and perceived moral decline **B1**

develops this, e.g. conservative Christians reacted to changes in family structure, sexual morality and secularisation by organising politically **B1**

identifies a second reason, e.g. the movement used institutional resources to influence politics, such as churches, media and pressure groups **B1**

develops this, e.g. organised churches and conservative media allowed the New Christian Right to co-ordinate campaigns and influence elections **B1**

Answer: Bruce argues the New Christian Right was a cultural backlash against liberal social changes, reacting to perceived moral decline; it also used institutional resources such as churches and conservative media to co-ordinate campaigns and influence elections.

Question 2

identifies reason, e.g. religious symbols and narratives can be used to claim divine sanction for leaders or policies **B1**

development and example, e.g. invoking sacred history or ceremonies can persuade followers that policies are morally right, for example using national religious festivals to endorse state actions **B1**

Answer: Religious symbols and narratives can be used to claim divine sanction for leaders or policies; invoking sacred history or ceremonies can persuade followers that policies are morally right, for example using national religious festivals to endorse state actions.

Question 3

identifies a limit, e.g. religious movements can reflect existing hierarchies and so reproduce inequalities **B1**

brief explanation, e.g. dominant groups may control religious institutions and use them to maintain privilege rather than redistribute power **B1**

Answer: A limit is that religious movements can reflect existing hierarchies and reproduce inequalities because dominant groups may control religious institutions and use them to maintain privilege rather than redistribute power.

Question 4

identifies one way, e.g. leaders provide persuasive framing that links religious beliefs to political goals **B1**

develops this with reference, e.g. MLK used Christian language of justice and love to broaden appeal beyond local congregations **B1**

identifies second way, e.g. leaders can mobilise followers through personal authority and reputation **B1**

develops this with reference, e.g. as a trusted figure within the Black Church, King coordinated strategy, sustained morale and attracted national support **B1**

Answer: Leaders provide persuasive framing that links religious beliefs to political goals, for example MLK used Christian language of justice and love to broaden appeal. They also mobilise followers through personal authority and reputation, with King as a trusted figure coordinating strategy, sustaining morale and attracting national support from the Black Church and beyond.

Question 5

identifies that religious nationalism links a particular religion with national identity and political aims (oe) **B1**

development, e.g. it involves using religious symbols, doctrine or institutions to support state policies or to define who belongs to the nation **B1**

Answer: Religious nationalism links a particular religion with national identity and political aims; it involves using religious symbols, doctrine or institutions to support state policies or to define who belongs to the nation.

Question 6

identifies the conservative role, e.g. religion reinforces social stability and existing norms **B1**

develops this, e.g. through rituals and institutions that legitimise authority and social roles **B1**

identifies the social change role, e.g. religion can inspire collective action to alter laws or policies **B1**

develops this, e.g. by mobilising supporters, framing injustice morally and lobbying political actors **B1**

Answer: A conservative role sees religion reinforcing social stability and existing norms, for example by rituals and institutions that legitimise authority and social roles. A change role sees religion inspiring collective action to alter laws or policies, for example by mobilising supporters, framing injustice morally and lobbying political actors.

Question 7

identifies a first reason from Item A or knowledge, e.g. churches provide organisational resources such as meeting space and leadership **B1**

explains how organisational resources lead to political activity, e.g. space and leaders enable coordination of voter drives and protests as in the civil rights movement **B1**

identifies a second reason from Item A or knowledge, e.g. religious movements supply moral framing and legitimacy for demands **B1**

explains how moral framing encourages political mobilisation, e.g. King's sermons and rhetoric linked civil rights to religious ideas of justice, persuading congregations and allies **B1**

identifies a third supporting reason or development, e.g. religious identity builds solidarity and trust within communities **B1**

explains how solidarity helps political activism, e.g. trusted networks improve communication, increase turnout and sustain campaigns under repression **B1**

identifies a fourth relevant reason or limitation, e.g. leaders like King personalised movements and connected religious discourse to broader political coalitions **B1**

explains the role of leaders in translating religious energy into political strategy, e.g. negotiating with politicians and gaining national attention **B1**

identifies use of external opportunity structures or political context, e.g. political openings, state repression or media attention can push religious groups into activism **B1**

explains how context interacts with religion, e.g. favourable legal changes or media coverage can amplify church-led campaigns into national movements **B1**

Answer: Possible points include: churches provide organisational resources such as meeting space and leadership which enable coordination of voter drives and protests; they supply moral framing and legitimacy, as King linked civil rights to religious ideas of justice to persuade congregations and allies; religious identity builds solidarity and trust within communities, aiding communication and turnout; charismatic leaders translate religious energy into political strategy, negotiating with politicians and attracting national attention; and political opportunity structures, such as media coverage or changing laws, interact with religious mobilisation to make activism effective.

Question 8

identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. that Bruce may overemphasise cultural concerns and underplay economic or class factors that also drive mobilisation **B1**

brief development, e.g. campaigners may also be reacting to social and economic insecurity rather than only to moral issues **B1**

Answer: A criticism is that Bruce may overemphasise cultural concerns and underplay economic or class factors; mobilisation by the New Christian Right may also reflect social and economic insecurity rather than only moral issues.

Question 9

identifies one way, e.g. campaigning for school prayer or voluntary religious activities in schools **B1**

explains how this influences education, e.g. it aims to shape school culture and values in line with conservative religious beliefs **B1**

identifies a second way, e.g. pushing for changes to curricula such as promoting creationism or restricting sex education content **B1**

explains the effect, e.g. altering what students learn about science or sexuality to reflect movement values **B1**

Answer: One way was campaigning for school prayer or voluntary religious activities to shape school culture and values; another was pushing for curriculum changes, such as promoting creationism or restricting sex education content, to alter what students learn about science or sexuality.

Question 10

Level 1 Basic assertions about religion as conservative or as a source of change, with little application to Item B or limited sociological support. **1-3**

Level 2 Some relevant knowledge of religion and politics, with at least one developed point. Limited application to Item B or limited use of sociological perspectives. **4-6**

Level 3 Good knowledge of how religion can be conservative and how it can promote change, including relevant perspectives such as functionalism and examples. Clear application to Item B and argument development. **7-9**

Level 4 Detailed and balanced evaluation, drawing on several sociological perspectives and examples. Explicit, sustained application to Item B and a supported conclusion about whether religion is always conservative. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- AO1 knowledge that functionalist views see religion as conservative, promoting social cohesion, consensus and the status quo.
- AO1 knowledge that religion can mobilise for change, for example the Black Church in the US civil rights movement and the New Christian Right in the US.
- Application to Item B: examples of Hindu nationalism show religion being used to justify policies that entrench majority power, which supports the conservative argument in a political sense.
- Counter-evidence: religious movements can challenge inequality and promote rights, for example Martin Luther King drawing on religious rhetoric to campaign for civil rights.
- Sociological perspectives: functionalism emphasises stability; Marxist conflict perspectives see religion as maintaining class or power relations; feminist perspectives note religion can both oppress and empower; interactionism highlights the role of leaders and framing.
- Evaluation could note that religion 'conservative' depends on context, actors and social structure: the same religion can be used conservatively or progressively, and outcomes vary by political opportunity structures.
- Supported conclusion weighing evidence, noting that religion is not always conservative but often used conservatively by dominant groups while also having potential to drive progressive change.