5.1 Global Development: Theories of Development, Underdevelopment and World Systems

AQA 7192 · about 55 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Write in full sentences for questions worth 4 marks or more. Spend about 55 minutes in total.

1 Item B: "A study comparing two countries found that Country X, which liberalised trade and privatised large state firms in the 1990s under advice from international lenders, experienced faster GDP growth but rising inequality and cuts to public services. Country Y pursued state-led industrial policy, protected some strategic industries and invested in education; its growth was slower but poverty rates fell and schooling participation rose." Using Item B and your knowledge, explain two ways these contrasting development strategies illustrate the debate between neo-liberal and structural state-led approaches.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 State one strength of using a world-systems approach to explain long-term patterns of global inequality.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Outline two policy implications that follow from a dependency theory analysis of underdevelopment.

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

4 Explain two methodological challenges researchers face when trying to test whether colonial history causes present-day underdevelopment.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 Using Item A and your own knowledge, explain two ways dependency theory and world-systems theory offer similar explanations for persistent inequality between countries.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

6 Discuss how far sociologists would agree that neo-liberal policies are the main cause of rising inequality in many developing countries today. Refer to relevant theories and use material from the items where appropriate.

(Total for Question 6 is 12 marks)

7 Define what dependency theorists mean by the term 'underdevelopment' in the context of global economic history.

(Total for Question 7 is 2 marks)

8 Outline one distinctive claim of world-systems theory about how the global economy organizes development.

(Total for Question 8 is 2 marks)

9 Item A: "Recent comparative indicators show that many former colonies still have lower GDP per head and greater income inequality than countries that were never colonised. These same former colonies often supply raw materials and primary commodities to rich countries." Using Item A, identify one piece of evidence that supports the world-systems perspective.

(Total for Question 9 is 1 mark)

10 Explain two criticisms often levelled at Rostow's stages of economic growth model, focusing on theoretical limitations.

(Total for Question 10 is 4 marks)

11 Outline two empirical examples a critic might use to argue neo-liberal structural adjustment has negative social consequences in some countries.

(Total for Question 11 is 4 marks)

12 Which one of the following is a central claim of neo-Marxist dependency explanations such as Frank's?

- ☐ A) All developing countries will inevitably industrialise if they open markets
- ☐ B) Development of wealthy countries was often built on the underdevelopment of colonies
- ☐ C) Market liberalisation automatically reduces inequality
- ☐ D) World development is driven by cultural values alone

(Total for Question 12 is 1 mark)

Mark scheme · 5.1 Global Development: Theories of Development, Underdevelopment and World Systems

Question 1

identifies that Country X's liberalisation and privatisation are associated in Item B with faster GDP growth, illustrating a neo-liberal claim that market-oriented policies can support growth; this reported association does not establish that the policies caused it **B1**

develops the reported association by linking faster growth with rising inequality and cuts to public services, illustrating critics' concern that growth under neo-liberal policies may carry social costs, without proving the critique or its cause **B1**

identifies that Country Y combined state-led industrial policy and protection of some strategic industries with education investment, illustrating the reported association between a structural state-led approach and an active role for the state **B1**

develops the reported association by relating Country Y's slower growth alongside falling poverty and rising school participation to a possible state-led priority for social development; the association alone does not prove the theory or a causal effect **B1**

Answer: Country X's liberalisation and privatisation alongside faster GDP growth illustrate the neo-liberal argument that market-oriented policies are compatible with growth. Its rising inequality and cuts to public services also illustrate critics' concern that growth may have social costs. Country Y's state-led industrial policy and education investment alongside lower poverty and greater school participation illustrate the argument that state action can prioritise social development, despite slower growth. These are reported associations in two countries: they do not establish that the policies caused the outcomes, prove either approach, or show that the countries had comparable starting conditions.

Question 2

identifies a strength, e.g. it links local outcomes to global structures, showing how unequal exchange benefits cores **B1**

brief development, e.g. helps explain persistent patterns across many countries that simple internal explanations cannot **B1**

Answer: A strength is that world-systems theory links local outcomes to global structures by showing how unequal exchange benefits core countries, which helps explain persistent patterns of inequality across many countries beyond internal factors alone.

Question 3

identifies implication one, e.g. need for import substitution industrialisation or protection of domestic industry **B1**

develops implication one, e.g. to reduce dependence on commodity exports and build local manufacturing **B1**

identifies implication two, e.g. call for political and economic autonomy, including land reform or control of foreign capital **B1**

Answer: Policy implications include pursuing import substitution and protecting domestic industry to reduce dependence on commodity exports and build manufacturing, and seeking greater political and economic autonomy such as land reform or tighter control over foreign capital.

Question 4

identifies challenge one, e.g. isolating causal effects given many intervening variables over long historical periods **B1**

develops challenge one, e.g. factors like institutions, geography and post-independence policy also influence outcomes making causality hard to establish **B1**

identifies challenge two, e.g. limited or biased historical data and difficulties measuring concepts like exploitation **B1**

develops challenge two, e.g. incomplete records and differing metrics across countries reduce comparability and inference strength **B1**

Answer: Researchers struggle to isolate causal effects because many intervening variables such as institutions, geography and post-independence policy influence outcomes, and they face limited or biased historical data and difficulties measuring concepts like exploitation, reducing comparability and inference strength.

Question 5

identifies similarity one, e.g. both see current inequality as rooted in historical patterns of unequal exchange and exploitation **B1**

develops similarity one with reference to Item A, e.g. Item A's link between colonial history and low GDP fits both accounts of extraction and unequal trade **B1**

identifies similarity two, e.g. both emphasise external, systemic causes rather than solely internal cultural or entrepreneurial failings **B1**

develops similarity two with reference to Item A, e.g. Item A's pattern of raw material supply to rich countries illustrates a systemic external relationship **B1**

Answer: Both theories see persistent inequality as rooted in historical unequal exchange and exploitation, and Item A's correlation between colonial history and low GDP fits this view. They also emphasise external systemic causes rather than internal cultural failings, and Item A's note that former colonies supply raw materials to rich countries illustrates this external relationship.

Question 6

Level 1 Basic and generalised points, limited knowledge of theories. Little or no use of the item. Conclusions are undeveloped or absent. **1-3**

Level 2 Clear knowledge of one or two relevant theories such as neo-liberalism and dependency, some attempt to apply Item A or B. Analysis is present but may be partial. Conclusion is tentative. **4-6**

Level 3 Good range of knowledge and understanding of competing perspectives, including neo-liberal critiques and dependency/world-systems explanations. Applies the items to support arguments and shows analytical balance. Conclusion is supported. **7-9**

Level 4 Excellent analysis and evaluation of multiple theoretical perspectives. Uses Item A and Item B where relevant to support both sides. Considers empirical and theoretical counter-arguments, methodological issues and reaches a well-supported, balanced conclusion about the extent to which neo-liberal policies are the main cause of rising inequality. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- AO1 content: Neo-liberal claim that market liberalisation, privatisation and reduced state intervention increase efficiency, attract investment and can raise GDP; structural adjustment as an example of neo-liberal policy prescriptions.
- AO1 content: Dependency and world-systems criticisms arguing inequality stems from historical colonial exploitation, unequal exchange and ongoing asymmetric power relations between core and periphery.
- AO2 application: Item B shows an empirical example where liberalisation raised GDP but increased inequality and cut public services; Item A links colonial history to low GDP and commodity supply roles consistent with dependency/world-systems accounts.
- AO3 analysis: Evaluate the strength of neo-liberal explanations, noting evidence of faster GDP growth but rising inequality in some countries and the mechanisms by which privatisation and reduced welfare can widen income gaps.
- AO3 analysis: Consider counter-arguments from dependency/world-systems perspectives that place primary causal weight on long-term historical structures, and show how neo-liberal policies may interact with these structures rather than being wholly explanatory.
- AO3 evaluation: Consider alternative causes such as domestic political choices, elite capture, institutional weakness, geography, and methodological challenges in attributing causation, including time lags and selection effects in which countries adopt neo-liberal reforms.
- AO3 synthesis: Conclude with a balanced judgement that neo-liberal policies can be a significant proximate cause of rising inequality in particular contexts, especially where weak institutions and unequal power exist, but many sociologists would argue they operate alongside and interact with deeper historical and structural causes identified by dependency and world-systems theories.

Question 7

identifies underdevelopment as a condition produced by external relations, not simply internal backwardness **B1**

development, e.g. underdevelopment results from historical and ongoing economic exploitation and unequal exchange between rich and poor countries **B1**

Answer: Underdevelopment is seen as a condition produced by external relations rather than internal backwardness; dependency theorists argue it results from historical and ongoing exploitation and unequal exchange between rich and poor countries.

Question 8

identifies a core claim, e.g. the world economy is structured into core, semi-periphery and periphery zones **B1**

development, e.g. core zones extract surplus from peripheral zones so development and underdevelopment are linked processes in one system **B1**

Answer: World-systems theory claims the global economy is structured into core, semi-periphery and periphery zones, with core zones extracting surplus from periphery zones so development and underdevelopment are linked within one system.

Question 9

identifies one piece of evidence from Item A that fits the periphery role in world-systems theory: either that former colonies still have lower GDP per head and greater inequality, or that former colonies supply raw materials and primary commodities to rich (core) countries **B1**

Answer: Either: former colonies still have lower GDP per head than countries never colonised; or: former colonies supply raw materials to rich countries. Both fit the periphery role described in world-systems theory.

Question 10

identifies criticism one, e.g. assumes all societies follow the same linear path, ignoring diverse historical paths **B1**

develops criticism one, e.g. this eurocentric assumption ignores how colonial history or global power relations constrain options **B1**

identifies criticism two, e.g. treats development as primarily technical and economic, downplaying social and political structures **B1**

develops criticism two, e.g. modernisation prescriptions may ignore how elites or institutions block equitable development **B1**

Answer: Rostow is criticised for assuming a single linear path to development, ignoring diverse historical and colonial constraints, and for treating development as mainly technical and economic, downplaying social and political structures that can block equitable progress.

Question 11

identifies an empirical consequence, e.g. cuts to public spending on health or education following adjustment loans	**B1**
develops this, e.g. reduced access to services can worsen poverty and human development indicators	**B1**
identifies a second linked consequence, e.g. privatisation can raise costs for essential services	**B1**
develops this, e.g. increased user fees can exclude the poorest from health or water services, harming development outcomes	**B1**

Answer: A critic might point to structural adjustment leading to cuts in public spending on health and education, reducing access and worsening human development indicators, and to privatisation raising costs for essential services so that the poorest are excluded from water or health services.

Question 12

B (dependency theorists argue wealthy countries' development was linked to exploitation of colonies)	**B1**

Answer: B