2.1 Functionalist and Marxist Perspectives on the Family: 10-minute Pack

AQA 7192 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For full-credit answers in short questions write in full sentences where asked. Spend about 10 minutes on this pack.

1 State one criticism of Parsons's theory that the nuclear family best fits industrial society.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Identify and explain two key differences between Murdock's functionalist account of the family's functions and Engels' Marxist account linking the family to private property.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Define Althusser's concept of the family as an Ideological State Apparatus in the context of how ideology is transmitted.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.1 Functionalist and Marxist Perspectives on the Family: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. it is deterministic and ignores family diversity	**B1**
brief development, e.g. critics argue many family types coexist and the nuclear family is not universally dominant	**B1**

Answer: A criticism is that Parsons' view is deterministic and ignores diversity, since many different family types coexist and the nuclear family is not universally dominant even in industrial societies.

Question 2

identifies a first difference, e.g. Murdock sees universal positive functions while Engels sees the family as reproducing class inequality	**B1**
explains the difference, e.g. Murdock presents functions as beneficial to all societies, Engels sees the family as historically specific and serving ruling class interests	**B1**
identifies a second difference, e.g. Murdock focuses on social order and stability, Engels focuses on inheritance and ownership	**B1**
explains the difference, e.g. Murdock's approach is functionalist and consensual, Engels is conflict-oriented and emphasises economic causes	**B1**

Answer: Murdock presents the family as performing universal, generally beneficial functions supporting social order, while Engels argues the family historically developed to protect private property and reproduce class inequalities; Murdock is consensual and functionalist, Engels is conflict-based and economic in focus.

Question 3

identifies ISA idea: institutions like the family transmit ideology that supports the state and ruling class	**B1**
development, e.g. the family socialises children into acceptance of existing class structures and capitalist relations	**B1**

Answer: Althusser argued the family is an Ideological State Apparatus because it helps transmit ruling-class ideology, socialising children to accept existing class structures and capitalist relations.

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