3.9 The New Right Perspective on Family Structure and Family Values: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Use full sentences for extended answers and the 12-mark evaluation. Show sociological knowledge and, where asked, give brief examples. Total time suggested 30 minutes.

1 Explain two empirical problems critics raise with the New Right claim that children in lone-parent households always do worse than children in married nuclear families.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Which of the following best captures the New Right view on how to improve child outcomes through family policy in the UK?

- ☐ A) Increase universal benefits to all families regardless of marital status
- ☐ B) Encourage and financially support marriage and two-parent households through tax and benefit changes
- ☐ C) Replace cash benefits with in-kind services such as childcare only
- ☐ D) Prioritise legal recognition of cohabiting couples over marriage

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

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3 Discuss the New Right view of changes in family structure and the role of welfare in the UK, addressing both New Right arguments and sociological criticisms. Give a reasoned judgement.

(Total for Question 3 is 9 marks)

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4 Identify one example New Right writers use to claim that cohabitation reflects a decline in moral standards in contemporary Britain.

(Total for Question 4 is 1 mark)

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5 Explain two reasons New Right thinkers argue that a married father who is the main earner is important for child socialisation in the UK context.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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6 Define what the New Right mean by 'welfare dependency' when discussing family policy in the UK.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

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7 State one common criticism sociologists make of the New Right claim that lone-parent families cause poor outcomes for children.

(Total for Question 7 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 3.9 The New Right Perspective on Family Structure and Family Values: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies first empirical problem, e.g. research that controls for poverty often finds much smaller differences in child outcomes by family structure	**B1**
development of first problem, e.g. meaning the association may be due to economic disadvantage rather than parental marital status itself	**B1**
identifies second empirical problem, e.g. longitudinal and qualitative studies show many children in lone-parent or cohabiting families achieve well	**B1**
development of second problem, e.g. outcomes vary widely within family types, so blanket claims about lone-parent families are misleading	**B1**

Answer: Critics note that once research controls for poverty, differences in child outcomes by family structure are often much smaller, suggesting economic disadvantage rather than marital status explains much of the gap. They also point to longitudinal and qualitative studies showing many children in lone-parent or cohabiting families do well, and that outcomes vary widely within family types, so blanket New Right claims are misleading.

Question 2

B (encourage and financially support marriage and two-parent households through tax and benefit changes)	**B1**

Answer: B

Question 3

Level 1 Basic statements about the New Right view with limited supporting evidence or one-sided explanation. Little or no engagement with criticisms or judgement.	**1-3**
Level 2 Clear explanation of the New Right position and some reference to evidence or examples. Some acknowledgement of criticisms, but limited balance or evaluation.	**4-6**
Level 3 Detailed discussion that explains New Right arguments and their policy proposals, evaluates these with appropriate sociological criticisms and evidence, and reaches a supported judgement on the usefulness or limitations of the New Right view.	**7-9**

Indicative content:

- New Right claims that the married heterosexual nuclear family is best for children because it provides a stable breadwinner and parental roles that socialise children
- New Right argument that rising lone-parenthood and cohabitation reflect moral decline and weakening of family values
- New Right concern that generous welfare benefits create perverse incentives, producing 'fatherless' households dependent on the state
- New Right policy proposals such as favouring married couples in tax and benefit systems, and promoting marriage as a social good
- Sociological criticisms: correlation not causation, poverty and structural factors explain many poor outcomes rather than family form alone
- Evidence that many children from lone-parent or cohabiting families do well when material needs and social support are met
- Criticisms that New Right policies stigmatise lone parents and can worsen material conditions through benefit cuts
- Consideration of policy alternatives, such as tackling poverty, improving employment, childcare and housing, which address root causes rather than only marital status
- A reasoned judgement weighing whether New Right focus on family structure is sufficient or whether broader social and economic policies are more effective

Question 4

identifies an example, e.g. increasing numbers of couples living together without marriage are cited as evidence of weakened commitment and moral decline	**B1**

Answer: New Right writers point to increasing numbers of couples cohabiting without marriage as evidence of weakened commitment and a decline in moral standards.

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Question 5

identifies reason one, e.g. a male breadwinner provides economic stability through steady income **B1**

development of reason one, e.g. economic stability is argued to reduce poverty and provide a secure home environment for child development **B1**

identifies reason two, e.g. a resident father offers a male role model thought to provide discipline and authority **B1**

development of reason two, e.g. this is claimed to support proper socialisation into norms and responsibilities **B1**

Answer: New Right thinkers argue a male breadwinner gives economic stability from a steady income, reducing poverty and providing a secure home, and that a resident father offers a male role model providing discipline and authority, which they claim aids socialisation into norms and responsibilities.

Question 6

identifies welfare dependency as reliance on state benefits for basic living costs rather than earning through paid work **B1**

development, e.g. New Right argue long-term benefit reliance weakens work incentives and family responsibilities **B1**

Answer: Welfare dependency is reliance on state benefits for basic living rather than earning through paid work; the New Right argue long-term reliance weakens incentives to work and undermines family responsibilities.

Question 7

identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. critics say poverty and social inequality explain poor outcomes, not family structure itself **B1**

brief development, e.g. or that evidence shows many children from lone-parent or cohabiting families do well when given sufficient support **B1**

Answer: One criticism is that poor outcomes linked to lone-parent families are better explained by poverty and social inequality than by family structure alone; many children from lone-parent or cohabiting families do well when given sufficient support.

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