



GSOC.FA8 The New Right Perspective on Family Structure and Family Values

AQA 8192 · Calculators not allowed · about 75 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 75 minutes.

- 1** Which family form do New Right sociologists typically idealise as best for raising children in contemporary Britain?

- ☐ A) Extended family with multiple generations living together
- ☐ B) Same-sex households with shared parenting
- ☐ C) Married heterosexual nuclear family with a breadwinning father and homemaker mother
- ☐ D) Lone-parent family supported by the state

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2** Define what New Right sociologists mean by the term 'fatherless family' in discussions of welfare and family structure in the UK.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

- 3** State one policy change the New Right recommend to encourage marriage and the nuclear family in the context of UK benefits and taxation.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

- 4** Explain two reasons the New Right give for why rising lone-parenthood is a social problem in the UK, focusing on family structure and welfare.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

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

(Total for Question 5 is 1 mark)

- 6** 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 6 is 4 marks)

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

(Total for Question 7 is 2 marks)

- 8** Item A: A short summary of government benefit changes and family outcomes in a hypothetical UK town between 2000 and 2018. In Townsville, local statistics show single-parent households rose from 10% to 20% of families, while the proportion of households where a father is the main earner fell from 70% to 50%. Local councils also report increased use of some means-tested benefits. Using Item A and your own knowledge of the New Right perspective, explain two ways the New Right would interpret these changes in Townsville.

(Total for Question 8 is 4 marks)

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

(Total for Question 9 is 2 marks)

- 10** Explain two ways critics argue the New Right perspective can stigmatise lone parents in UK society.

(Total for Question 10 is 4 marks)

- 11** Identify one practical policy the New Right support to reduce 'welfare dependency' and encourage two-parent households in the UK.

(Total for Question 11 is 1 mark)

- 12** 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 12 is 4 marks)

- 13** Compare briefly one New Right claim about family change with one opposing sociological criticism, focusing on causes of lone-parenthood.

(Total for Question 13 is 4 marks)

- 14** 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 14 is 1 mark)

- 15** Discuss the New Right view of changes in family structure and the role of welfare in the UK, for example trends such as rising lone-parenthood and cohabitation and New Right policy proposals to promote marriage.

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 15 is 9 marks)

- 16** Discuss how far sociologists would agree that using the tax and benefits system to promote marriage is the best way to improve child wellbeing in the UK, focusing on New Right claims and competing perspectives.

(Total for Question 16 is 12 marks)

Mark scheme · GSOC.FA8 The New Right Perspective on Family Structure and Family Values

Question 1

- **B1** C (married heterosexual nuclear family with a breadwinning father and homemaker mother)
- **Answer: C**

Question 2

- **B1** identifies that 'fatherless family' refers to a family household without a resident biological father or stable male breadwinner
- **B1** development, e.g. New Right link the term to dependence on state benefits rather than male earnings to support children
- **Answer: A fatherless family is a household without a resident biological father or stable male breadwinner; the New Right use the term to suggest such families depend on state benefits rather than male earnings.**

Question 3

- **B1** identifies a policy, e.g. change tax or benefits to favour married couples over lone parents or cohabiting couples
- **B1** brief development, e.g. incentives might include tax breaks for married couples or reduced child benefits for lone parents
- **Answer: One New Right policy is to change tax and benefits to favour married couples, for example by offering tax breaks to married households or reducing incentives for lone parenthood.**

Question 4

- **B1** identifies reason one, e.g. lone-parenthood undermines the traditional nuclear family and reduces parental role models, especially fathers
- **B1** development of reason one, e.g. New Right claim absence of a male breadwinner and male authority harms discipline and socialisation of children
- **B1** identifies reason two, e.g. welfare benefits encourage lone-parenthood by reducing the financial need to marry
- **B1** development of reason two, e.g. they argue this creates perverse incentives leading to more fatherless, state-dependent households
- **Answer: The New Right argue lone-parenthood undermines the traditional nuclear family by removing a male breadwinner and fatherly role model, which they claim weakens discipline and socialisation. They also argue generous welfare benefits can encourage lone-parenthood by reducing the financial incentive to marry, creating more state-dependent fatherless households.**

Question 5

- **B1** identifies an example, e.g. increasing numbers of couples living together without marriage are cited as evidence of weakened commitment and moral decline
- **Answer: New Right writers point to increasing numbers of couples cohabiting without marriage as evidence of weakened commitment and a decline in moral standards.**

Question 6

- **B1** 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
- **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 7

- **B1** 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
- **Answer: Welfare dependency is reliance on state benefits for basic living rather than earning through paid work; the**

Question 8

- **B1** identifies a New Right interpretation, e.g. rising single-parent households are evidence of family breakdown and moral decline
- **B1** development of that interpretation using Item A, e.g. the rise from 10% to 20% is used to show an erosion of the traditional nuclear family
- **B1** identifies a second New Right interpretation, e.g. increased means-tested benefits and fewer father main earners show welfare creating dependency and disincentives to marry
- **B1** development of the second interpretation using Item A, e.g. the fall in father main earners from 70% to 50% is linked to New Right concerns about fatherless, state-dependent households
- **Answer: The New Right would say Townsville's rise in single-parent households from 10% to 20% shows family breakdown and a moral decline away from the traditional nuclear family. They would also argue the increase in means-tested benefits alongside a fall in households with a father as main earner from 70% to 50% shows welfare creating dependency and reducing incentives to marry, producing more fatherless, state-dependent households.**

Question 9

- **B1** 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
- **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.**

Question 10

- **B1** identifies first way, e.g. rhetoric about moral decline and fatherless families labels lone parents as irresponsible
- **B1** development of first way, e.g. such labelling can increase social stigma and reduce support for lone parents
- **B1** identifies second way, e.g. policy proposals to reduce benefits for lone parents treat them as a social problem rather than people needing support
- **B1** development of second way, e.g. this can push families further into poverty and exclusion, worsening outcomes the New Right claim to prevent
- **Answer: Critics say New Right rhetoric about moral decline and fatherless families labels lone parents as irresponsible, increasing social stigma and reducing community support. They also argue policy proposals to cut benefits for lone parents treat them as the problem, pushing families further into poverty and exclusion and worsening the very outcomes the New Right claim such policies will fix.**

Question 11

- **B1** identifies a practical policy, e.g. tax incentives or benefits structured to favour married couples over lone parents
- **Answer: One practical policy is offering tax incentives or structuring benefits to favour married couples over lone parents.**

Question 12

- **B1** 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
- **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 13

- **B1** identifies a New Right claim, e.g. welfare generosity causes rises in lone-parenthood
- **B1** identifies a sociological criticism, e.g. critics argue economic factors like unemployment and housing costs better explain lone-parenthood
- **B1** explains how the two differ in causal focus, e.g. New Right focus on individual choices and incentives, critics focus on structural economic causes
- **B1** brief development, e.g. this difference implies different policy responses, such as benefit cuts versus poverty reduction
- **Answer: The New Right claim welfare generosity causes rises in lone-parenthood by creating perverse incentives, while critics argue structural economic factors like unemployment, low wages and housing costs better explain family changes. The New Right focus on individual incentives and moral choices, whereas critics emphasise structural causes, implying different policy responses such as benefit cuts versus poverty reduction measures.**

Question 14

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

Question 15

- **Level 1** (1-3): Basic statements about the New Right view with limited supporting evidence or one-sided explanation. Little or no engagement with criticisms or judgement.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Clear explanation of the New Right position and some reference to evidence or examples. Some acknowledgement of criticisms, but limited balance or evaluation.
- **Level 3** (7-9): 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.
- **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 16

- **Level 1** (1-3): Basic, undeveloped statements about whether tax and benefits can improve child wellbeing. Limited use of sociological concepts and minimal consideration of competing views.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Clear explanation of the New Right position and some alternative views. Some supporting evidence or examples and some attempt at evaluation, but limited depth or balance.
- **Level 3** (7-9): Detailed analysis that explains New Right arguments and several competing sociological perspectives, considers empirical evidence and policy effects, and offers a tentative judgement supported by reasoning.
- **Level 4** (10-12): Thorough, balanced evaluation drawing on multiple sociological perspectives. Clear, well-supported conclusion on the extent to which using tax and benefits to promote marriage would be effective, including consideration of likely consequences and alternative policies.
- **Indicative content:**
 - New Right argument that promoting marriage through tax and benefits will increase stable two-parent households, reduce welfare dependency and improve child socialisation
 - Evidence or examples New Right may cite showing better average outcomes for some children in two-parent, married households
 - Criticisms from sociologists that correlation between marriage and child wellbeing may be due to social class, income and selection effects rather than marriage itself
 - Feminist critiques that promoting marriage can reinforce traditional gender roles and disadvantage women, and can stigmatise alternative family forms
 - Empirical evidence showing many lone-parent children do well where there is adequate income and support, and that poverty reduction rather than marital promotion may improve child wellbeing more effectively
 - Practical and ethical concerns: using tax and benefits to favour marriage may penalise vulnerable families, increase poverty among lone parents and face implementation difficulties
 - Alternative policy approaches such as improving wages, affordable childcare, housing and targeted support for families in poverty
 - Balanced conclusion weighing the limited potential benefits of incentivising marriage against the stronger evidence for tackling structural inequalities to improve child wellbeing