6.12 Marxist and Feminist Perspectives on Power and the State: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For longer answers write in full sentences. There is one levels-marked evaluation question at the end.

1 Define the feminist concept of 'patriarchy' as used when analysing political power in Britain.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 State two policy changes that could be advocated to reduce gender imbalance in senior state roles, and briefly explain how each would help.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Evaluate how far political power in Britain is unequally distributed by class and gender, drawing on Marxist and feminist perspectives and considering possible limitations or alternative views.

(Total for Question 3 is 8 marks)

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4 Identify and explain one way Marxists argue that police priorities in modern Britain support capitalist interests.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

5 Describe one way Marxists argue that the modern ruling class is becoming more global in its composition, with reference to multinational business owners and financiers.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

6 State one piece of evidence, from recent UK political life, that feminist sociologists use to argue political power remains patriarchal.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

7 Identify and explain two feminist reasons why women remain underrepresented in senior political roles in Britain.

(Total for Question 7 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 6.12 Marxist and Feminist Perspectives on Power and the State: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies patriarchy as a system of social power in which men hold dominant positions over women in political, economic and social institutions **B1**

development, e.g. this can be seen in patterns of underrepresentation and in gendered expectations and norms **B1**

Answer: Patriarchy is a system of social power in which men hold dominant positions over women across political, economic and social institutions, seen in underrepresentation and gendered expectations and norms that sustain male dominance.

Question 2

identifies a realistic policy, e.g. guaranteed childcare provision or flexible working for senior posts **B1**

explains how it helps, e.g. reduces the career penalty from childcare and enables more women to compete for senior roles **B1**

identifies a second element or example, e.g. gender quotas for selection or promotion **B1**

explains how it helps, e.g. increases the number of women in senior positions and changes institutional culture over time **B1**

Answer: One policy is guaranteed childcare provision and flexible working for senior posts, which reduces the career penalty from childcare and helps more women compete for senior roles. Another is introducing gender quotas for selection or promotion, which increases women in senior positions and can change institutional culture over time.

Question 3

Level 1 Basic assertions about inequality with little sociological explanation or evidence. Limited reference to Marxist or feminist ideas. **1-2**

Level 2 Sound explanation using Marxist and feminist ideas to show unequal distribution of power by class and gender, with some supporting examples. Some attempt at evaluation or consideration of limitations. **3-5**

Level 3 Detailed, balanced discussion using Marxist and feminist perspectives, clear examples and evidence, and a well-supported judgement about the extent of unequal distribution of political power in Britain. **6-8**

Indicative content:

- Marxist view that the state serves capitalist class interests, protecting private property and wealth, so political power is concentrated with the ruling class.
- Examples of how courts, police and laws can reflect class advantage, such as better legal representation for the wealthy and policies favourable to business.
- Marxist argument about global capitalism, multinational owners and financiers constraining national policy and creating a transnational capitalist class.
- Feminist view that patriarchy shapes political institutions, producing underrepresentation of women among MPs, Cabinet members, senior judges and civil servants.
- Examples of gendered barriers: childcare responsibilities, biased selection processes, informal networks and gendered norms about leadership.
- Evaluation points: overlap and interaction between class and gender, for example elite women may still benefit from class; limits of Marxism in explaining gender specific mechanisms and limits of feminist accounts in explaining class power.
- Consideration of change over time and reforms, such as increases in female representation, policy initiatives or corporate diversity drives, and whether these indicate major shifts.
- Conclusion should weigh Marxist and feminist evidence and consider which explanation is stronger for class inequality and for gender inequality, leading to a reasoned judgement on how far power is unequally distributed.

Question 4

identifies a correct way, e.g. prioritising policing that protects property and businesses **B1**

explains how this supports capitalist interests, e.g. by safeguarding owners and profits and discouraging labour unrest **B1**

Answer: One way is prioritising policing that protects property and businesses; this supports capitalist interests by safeguarding owners, profits and by discouraging protests or labour unrest that might threaten accumulation.

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Question 5

identifies a genuine way, e.g. multinational owners and financiers operate across national borders	**B1**
development, e.g. they make investment and location decisions that affect many countries	**B1**
further development, e.g. global finance links elites in different countries so their interests cross national boundaries	**B1**
further development, e.g. this reduces the power of national governments to act against transnational capital	**B1**

Answer: Marxists point to multinational owners and financiers operating across borders who make investment and location decisions affecting many countries. Global finance links elites in different states so their interests cross national boundaries, reducing how far national governments can act against transnational capital.

Question 6

identifies a genuine piece of evidence, e.g. underrepresentation of women among Members of Parliament	**B1**
brief development, e.g. lower percentages of women in the Cabinet or as senior judges or civil servants	**B1**

Answer: One piece of evidence is the underrepresentation of women among Members of Parliament, with similarly lower percentages of women in the Cabinet and in senior judicial and civil service roles.

Question 7

identifies reason one, e.g. structural barriers such as gendered childcare responsibilities limiting time for politics	**B1**
explains reason one, e.g. women may be less able to attend late sittings or campaign full time, reducing political career progression	**B1**
identifies reason two, e.g. informal networks and male-dominated party structures favouring men	**B1**
explains reason two, e.g. selection processes and patronage within parties may reproduce male privilege and limit women's access to senior posts	**B1**

Answer: Structural barriers such as gendered childcare responsibilities limit time for politics and make it harder for women to attend late sittings or campaign full time, and informal networks and male-dominated party structures favour men through selection and patronage, reproducing male privilege and limiting women reaching senior posts.

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