

# Year 12 Sociology – New Right Theories

Charles Murray  
(1984)



Charles Murray is one of the key thinkers behind the New Right, he argued that since the 1970s society has taken a deep decline in standards. He argues this is for a number of reasons:

- People have become dependent on welfare from the government – this means they take no self responsibility. The government should try to spend as little as possible on services
- Public services have failed – they should behave like businesses
- People have abandoned traditional values (the nuclear family, religion), these traditional values should be the backbone of society
- The media and schools should promote and encourage 'traditional British values'.

The conservative government are the main implementers of new right policies in the UK. They strongly support free market systems with a limited role of government for the following reasons:

**Individual Freedom** – They are based on the principle of allowing individuals to be free to pursue their own self-interest – this is seen as the best way to pursue the maximum good in society.

**Innovation** – Competition and the profit motive encourage people to produce new products to stimulate demand.

**Economic Growth and jobs** – The end result of leaving businesses free to do business is more wealth and more jobs.

As a result they have followed these forms of policy:

**Deregulation** – Removing restrictions on businesses, including protection for workers & the environment

**Privatisation** – selling to private companies industries that had been owned and run by the state

**Cutting taxes** – so the state plays less of a role in providing welfare for example healthcare, education or welfare

Conservative Government  
1979-1997 & 2010-Now



## Key Terms Associated With the New Right

Neoliberalism	pro-capitalist economic theory which believes that the 'free market' in capitalist economies is the best basis for organising society. Free market economies are based upon the choices individuals make when spending their money. The general principle is that if you 'leave everything to the market', then businesses will provide what people demand
Privatisation	The process by which public services (schools, hospitals, Royal Mail) should be taken away from being run by the government and instead by private companies as they will do a much better job of running them.
Welfare	Any service provided by the government that provides a benefit to the population of a society. For example: The education System, Unemployment Benefits, the Police, Libraries.

## The New Right View On..

**Education**  
Chubb and Moe (1990) and Murray (1984)

- Chubb and Moe (1990)
- Compare private schools and state schools in the USA. State schools fail to create equal opportunities. Private schools are successful as they view themselves as businesses competing to attract customers (students), by providing the best services (grades) they can attract more customers. In order to improve
- Murray (1984)
- Working class students and black students underachieve, this is because they are poorly socialised. It is also because they come from single parent families meaning they lack a figure to discipline them at home.

**Family**  
Charles Murray (1984)

- The nuclear family is the best type of family, the reasons for a decline in societies standards is because, in part, we have abandoned the nuclear family.
- There has been a rise in alternatives to the nuclear family (single parent, same sex). The only way to socialise children is with a mother taking up the expressive role and a father takes up the instrumental role.

**Media**

- Nothing of note – mainly that media should promote 'traditional British values'

**Crime**  
Right Realism

New Right theorists have a strong view of 'upholding law and order'. They believe that the rising crime rate is the result of social disorder.

- They believe that the crime rate will fall with the use of zero tolerance policing and the use of prison as a punishment as it will encourage self responsibility for peoples actions rather than blaming the state.

# Year 12 Sociology – New Right

## Comprehension Questions

1. Who is Charles Murray? How does he criticise the changes in society since the 1970s?
2. Define the term Neoliberalism
3. Explain 3 ways the conservative party have implemented New Right policies in the UK
4. Define the term privatisation
5. Can you give 5 examples of welfare benefits that exist in the UK
6. Why do Chubb and Moe argue that private schools are superior to state schools? How do they want the education system to change?
7. How does Murray believe family background can impact achievement?
8. Why does Murray believe the nuclear family to be the most effective family?
9. Outline the right realist approach to crime and punishment?
10. How does the right realist approach differ from Jock Young's left realist approach?

## Revision Task

Create a revision mind map for the New Right

In your mind map you should outline the viewpoint of the New Right in relation to the education system, the family, the media and crime.

You should also focus on Murray's criticisms of society, especially the welfare state.

## Functionalism and New Right Comparison

*Create a table outlining the similarities and differences between Functionalist theory and New-Right theory*

## Exam Practice Question

Have a go at these exam practice questions. Make sure to give it to your teacher so they can mark it for you.

Outline and explain two ways in which Marketisation policies have impacted the education system  
*[10 Marks]*