

Power and Control

In the Family

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Conjugal Roles

- The division of labour between husband and wife or partners is often seen as a representation of the division of power within the relationship
 - Feminist viewpoints
 - Marxist viewpoints
- Decision-making is also seen as an important indicator – e.g. Edgell (1980)


Patriarchal Ideology

- Still has influence on views of husbands' and wives' roles
 - Acceptance of traditional roles
 - Career priorities
 - State policies
 - Childbearing has greater effect on women's lives
 - Low status of housewife role
 - No ~~in~~ situation?

Economics of power

- Jobs v. careers
- Employment discrimination
- Can change when men become unemployed - Leighton (1992)

Physical power

- Domestic violence as important in the power equation
 - Power of fear
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So

- Evidence tends to suggest that power within heterosexual relationships is unequal
 - Favours men

Why?

- Functionalists – biologically inevitable
- Marxists/marxist-feminists – serves the needs of capitalism
- Radical feminists – exploitation of women

BUT

- Does not explain cultural variations
- Devaluation of caring/housewife roles?
- Women have power to end relationships - divorce

Further reading

- Sociology for AS-Level, pp.60-62
- Sections relating to conjugal roles and views on the family in other textbooks