

Secondary research for equality in the family

I am doing a research on inequality in the family. Conjugal roles are the roles between couples, and this plays an important part in research and coursework. My research will also include stats, previous stats, newspaper articles and other secondary resources. Relations where people with an relationship who live together share domestic work, labour and leisure time are known as shared conjugal roles.

Some sociologists argue that one important change within the family is the move to greater sex equality. They suggest this because the division of labour is equally shared as more men now more involved in housework and child care, But in the early 20th century, Conjugal roles were segregated because women expected to be responsible for the housework and child care while the man were expected to work and do the bills etc. because of there male and female roles. In the early 1970s Young and Willmott conducted a survey in which nearly 2,000 people were interviewed. All the results are in their book, the symmetrical family. Young and Willmott argued that segregated roles have vanished for all of the social classes, but mostly for the working class. Willmott and Young use the term symmetrical family to describe the nuclear family with joint conjugal roles "symmetry" refers to the arrangement in which the opposites parts are similar. They say although the conjugal roles have changed still the wives still have the most responsibility for raising the children but the husbands still help. Willmott and Young also found out that the husbands did 72% of the housework apart from the washing up. They also said that now more husbands and wives are increasingly sharing the both leisure and decision-making. They pointed out that the main factors for this dramatic change were the rise of married women doing paid work the trends towards smaller families, the privatisation of the family; and the always changing social issues of the proper role between the male and female on the family. Willmott and Young also point out that the changes in employment may alter the balances in domestic work i.e. if the women is in full time employment and the male was unemployed. He would be expected to do more domestic work.

Ann Oakley's own research

Willmott and Young views have been criticised. Ann Oakley's argues that their claims are based on inadequate research and methods. She says the result of 72% of men doing housework apart from the washing up was based on very poor question, which is "Do you/does your husband help at least once a week with any jobs like the washing up, Ironing, cooking or cleaning?" Ann Oakley pointed out that man that does a tiny bit of housework once a week will be added to the percentage. She also said "A man who ironed his trousers on a Saturday afternoon would also be included."

Ann Oakley collected information on 40 married women who had one child or more under the age of 5 and themselves between the aged between 20 and 30. Half of her sample was working class and the other half middle class; they all lived in the London area. She found equality in terms of domestic work in the middle class than in the working class. However in both classes near but few men had high level of participation in housework in housework and childcare. Only 15% of men had a high level of participation in housework and only 25% in childcare

S Edgell (1980) own research

S Edgell tested young and Willmott theory of the Symmetrical again as many Sociologists believed it was wrong. In his study "Middle class couples " He examined conjugal roles in a sample of 38 middle class couples. Young and Willmott thought that the Symmetrical family in the middle class, but Edgell found little of this. None of these couples had joint conjugal roles to housework, although 45% did have joint conjugal to the relation of childcare.

Edgell was investigating the management of money and decision-making in the households. Edgell also found out that some decisions are shared equally and the remainder is split between them i.e. The most important decisions the male seems to dominate while the quick easy decisions were made by the women "What food shall I buy tonight" are made by the wife. There is more evidence of this form of studies of the families in which both male and female both

have. careers that even in these situations the male seems to dominate the more important decision making, partly because his job is granted more because he is male.

Oakley's and Edges study are both based on small that do not represent the population as a whole. Studies with much more larger scale have been taken as part of the British social attitudes survey. Using a sample of over 1000 married couples.

This survey showed that more couples are sharing the childcare than in household tasks. It showed a little bit of movement towards equality in labour. It also showed that there's more sharing responsibility and that there were more household tasks in which men did the washing up, cleaning, ironing, shopping, cooking and washing. However the number of households men were mainly responsible remained in small minorities in 1991 and the repairing of equipment and D.I.Y was only a type a task which was more likely to be carried out by men.

A study by Gershuny (1992) offers support for this preposition. Gershuny main objectives is to measure changes in the division of labour by analysing previous studies, done at different times, all of which look at the use of time in the household, he investigates the hypothesis which states, Even as wives enter the labour market and take on full time employment, they continue to carry the burden of domestic work; Women even remained housewives even if they come the main source of income. Gershuny hypothesis was correct, he found the amount of work, paid and unpaid carried out by husbands and wives had risen of the period of 1974-5 to 1987; the proportion of domestic work is carried out by husbands has risen in context of the increased paid work by wives and the increased total of work by both spouses. The average amount of hours for women to spend on housework a week was 77 hours, and this amount included 5 women with part time jobs. In her famous study "The sociology of housework," She compared the work of housewives to that of car production men. She found out the 2 jobs very similar indeed. She concluded that the housewives worked 77 hours a week longer than anyone working in the car factory. They both found there jobs very boring and it took more effort to do the work as manual workers. Her most amazing discovery is that the manual workers got a wage bill while the housewives got no wage bill and there is no reward and no phrase at the end of the day. According to the spring 1992 labour force survey, there was around 11 million women 16-59 living with a spouse; 67% of these women compared to the 84% of there spouses were employed, and 61% were in a twin earner relationship. Nearly half the men employment, compared with 4% of women, worked for more 30 hours a week. One in 16 women worked over 48 hours a week and a third of there partners did. Men and women jobs were clearly not equal. These statistics tell us little or nothing about the division of working time within the family. Are there any families where the female works longer than any male's. The labour could not supply anymore information. In one in 10 family's where at least one partner is at work, it is the women who work longer. In 67% of families, the man normally works longer hours and in 24% both partners work the same hours. Whilst men in general, work longer hours a week, a third of those partners who works more than 30 hours *Information taken from the family policy bulletin. December 1991. Written by Gary Watson.*

Conjugal roles and power

Edgell, in his own study of middle class couples where they both interviewed husbands and wife about who made the decisions and what decisions did they found was most important. The wives made decisions about interior decorations, baby cloths and domestic spending. All of these area's were considered minor. Men made the decisions relating to moving house, fiancée and the new car, all of these subject were all considered as vital. He found out that the male decided about decisions involving large sums of money. While the wives made the unimportant decisions.

Some sociologists have believed that there is an increase in equality in the family and today women and men are at the same rank. But feminists reply that men are still control of he family and that marriage and a family is a trap for women. Jan Pahl (1989) made a study about the money and power in marriage and interviewed over a 100 couples with dependent children she pointed out the obvious about men are still control about the decisions concerning large amount of money but also pointed out that it is getting better because couples are now sharing more

decisions than 30 years ago but there are still marriages where wives do not have access to such money and live in poverty even though the male has a large income.

We can conclude that there is an unequal division of labour between men and women in British families and that the Symmetrical family is not here yet. Gershuny suggests that the Symmetrical form of the family slowly “trickles down” from the middle class but there is no evidence to show that this is true. R. Pahl (1984) found out in his study that women who are in employment and that there are age effects on the extent to which the domestic tasks are shared. When children are young and there is no employment for the women, inequality in the division of labour is likely but when the child leaves and she enters the labour market, domestic tasks are more likely to be shared more equally.

A good deal of women's identity are organised around the provision of food. A study by Charles and Kerr (1988) illustrates this point, in almost every household they studied; women were responsible for the provision of food for their families; they shopped for it, cooked it and cleared it all up. Food is normally a historic way for women to show their love and affection for their family.

The position of women is often considered to have improved during the last 10 years. The position of women has changed in a number of ways, such as wives do not have to put up with unsatisfactory marriage like their mother may have done and women are not expected to act like servants like they were 50 years ago. Also the financial restriction on wives is not as serious as women as most women have full time work and decisions about large sums of money are shared between husband and wife, but still feminists argue. That still marriages are based on male dominance and that male benefits from marriage and the female don't.

Over the last 150 years, a woman has won most of the same rights and the same political rights as men and so is formal political citizenship. After winning the vote, women were able the right to sit on juries and take up sit in parliament and local government.

Conjugal roles and hours worked

In the symmetrical family, Young and Willmott collected information on how husbands and wives spend their time. They asked members of the sample to keep a record on how much time they spent on different tasks, including paid employment and housework. In this study it seemed that women not in employment did the less work, but women with full time jobs and part time jobs did more work than their partner even though the differences between the male and female were not that great.

The fact that women still tend to do the majority of the housework. Back up the theories of the Marxists and feminists who seem to think that women's domestic labour as exploration.

Women's weak labour position, that is their low wage and insecure employment seems to result from the position in the family. Women and men are persuaded that these particular family forms are natural and good, and the only one's available.

Family ideology has different meanings in reality. In Morris and other surveys partners that tasks should be equal, but in practice they were not. If women see housework and childcare as their main role they will not want joint conjugal roles.

The very assumption that “assists” their wives with domestic chores show that these jobs are seen as “womanise work”

Education

Primary and secondary education has two basic functions; acts as a factor of socialisation, and as a mechanism, training people to the nanny occupations of industrial economic. Education is a area where there has been a transformation of the position of young girls and young women. In school, not only has the traditional gender gap has been closed but girls have overtaken boys; while in higher education the gap is slowly closing.

In the past women obtained fewer of the advanced qualifications needed to get the most professional jobs, but now that girls are doing better than boys in exams at 16, now they can, in 1990-1 70 per cent of girls left with a-levels but only 61% of boys did.

These changes mean there is a hefty gap of the qualifications rate between the young than the old. Amongst people aged 16-24, 23% of men compared to 20% of women have no qualifications; while amongst those aged 50-59, 37% of men and 57% of women have none. You can tell by the statistics that women qualifications has improved greatly but there is no agreement for this improvement. Some believe the changes in the schooling system have benefited girls but some authors believe this is not true and that coeducational schooling hampers girls. Most sociologists believe that the improvements comes from the impact of feminism which published the injustice and inequality between boys and girls. But also sociologists believe the rise of women in employment and intense involvement means that girls are studying in preparation for young Women have become concerned to gain relevant, formal qualifications.

This is one of the most dramatic improvement in women society and these changes contradicts some of the earlier explanations of women's lack of success in education. It was variously held that early socialisation into femininity was incompatible with educational success with educational success; that early upbringing and/or the structure of the brain meant that women could not think mathematically as men this orientation to a domestic role would lead to women dropping behind in school at puberty since they "wanted" a boyfriend/husband more than a job. These theories are contradicted by the evidence of women's superior educational achievements up to the age of 18 years old, and greater proportion of more girls taking GSCE mathematics.

Socialisation and Masculinity/femininity

Stereotypes of masculinity and femininity are for boys to be strong, aggressive, outgoing and demanding, while girl are to be neat and tidy, gentle and obedient. These differences are encourage from an early age by rewards and punishments. These patterns of behaviour throughout the reading material of children, the toys they play with, the roles of there parents/parent, the traditional acted roles they see on television, peer pressure and Media.

Therefore, people are socialised into forms of behaviour appropriate to there sex.

There is no form of femininity and masculinity but rather several. They vary on age, sex, marital status, class and ethnicity. For example, the forms of masculinity in working class lay more on physical progress than those in middle class, where an appropriate career is more important because of the masculinity status.

Unemployment /employment

Employment opportunities for women have increased but this has had little effect on conjugal roles according to Morris research, She believes this to be because of our overriding influence of gender role socialisation. Majority of women who earn a high wage still perform the majority of the housework/childcare chores although the husband is more likely to help out if his wife works. This stage in the life cycle along with the wife being employed/unemployed are the biggest factors to effect the domestic division of labour in the household.

The gap in the earning of men and women is one of the most obvious indicators of gender inequality. women working full time earned only 79% of men hourly rate in 1992, According to the *New Earnings survey*.

Women are less likely to benefit from the range of benefits provided by employers. They are also less likely to benefit from the range of benefits provided by employers. They are much less likely to be continue in the company pension scheme, with serious consequences for old age. In 1989, 61 of men and only 37% of women employees were involved in such pension schemes.

Dispute the rise of the sex discrimination act and the equal pay act, women's and men's position in the labour market remain unequal. One view is that men get paid more than women because they cannot work the hours necessary to earn the higher rate, and do not posses s the skills to get the better jobs because of the time and effort they expand on the care of the home and children. If we agree with this view, than women's lower wages may be seen either as their reward or, as the result of a unjust family system.

The argument has been assessed by examining patterns in women's paid work in a large scale survey, Martin and Robert (1984) interviewed over 6,000 women about there work histories,

current employment and current domestic position. They found that, When women spent time out of paid work bringing up there young one's were found to be placed in a disadvantage point in the labour market. However this survey also found that women spent less time out of the labour market bringing up children. Women on average spent 5 years out of paid employment when they are having children. They also found out that on returning to work many women were unable to utilise the skills that they had acquired before having children.

Another thought is that women get paid less because of direct or indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination is when men prefer men to women in the workplace, Women are segregated from men in the labour, This has been illegal in employment and related area's since 1975. Indirect discrimination is also illegal, but is generally regarded as persistence. for instance, part time workers part time workers get paid less than full time workers. Since most part time workers are women it may be a discrimination against women.

Unemployment

in recent recessions in Britain, women's employment has not declined more than that of men. The official employment rate is based on those out of work who are claiming benefits. Women's unemployment rate in September 1992 was 5.5% as compared with 13.3% of men. Because the figures are based on the number of people claiming benefits, they exclude the people who are unemployed and are not yet claiming benefits. Thus, it make's it very hard for me to make assumptions. More women than men are excluded on the basis that the man claims the benefit for the couple (married, or not) if there are both unemployed. Thus , many women don't appear on the unemployment figures. A better way of measuring unemployment would be to take a sample of the population and ask if they are unemployed or not.

conclusion

This overview of conjugal roles shows the inequality between men and women today. While the situation has improved to a certain extent especially in the area's of education, social attitudes, from paid work to the division of household tasks and decision making.

- significant inequalities include men and women in the household remain in both the level of housework they do and the level of consumption.
- There are inequalities between men and women in housing, welfare benefits and health which affects women's cases to formal social citizenship
- Girls up to the age of 18 years now achieve better formal education qualifications than boys, reversing a previous gender gap in the opposites direction. The gender gap in universities is also closing.
- Women have achieved parties in formal legal and political rights, but this laid to equality overall.
- It has been argued by Willmott and Young that families are becoming more symmetrical, with domestic tasks being more balanced between men and women. Recent evidence shows that, although there is such a tendency, it is still not pronounce.
- Even when women take paid employment , they still do the bulk of domestic work and men take the important decisions.

