

Feminism sees society as being dominated by men. Feminists think that men have always dominated society. This is known as PATRIARCHY. Feminists try to identify the ways in which PATRIARCHY operates in modern society and look at ways of making society more equal. Feminists argue that even sociology is dominated by patriarchy and that a lot of early sociologists ignored women and their lives.

Frances Heidensohn argues that women appear to commit less crime than men because they are controlled in three ways.

- 1) At home, because they are socialised into the role of housewives and mothers.
- 2) In public, because they fear being victims of crime or seen as being “bad” for being out in public.
- 3) At work, because women are seen as less important than men and are the victims of sexual harassment.



Anne Oakley (1985) found that middle class men were more involved in both housework and childcare than working class men. Both middle and working class men were more involved in childcare than in other sorts of housework.



Becky Francis shows that girls and boys are treated differently in the classroom and in schooling generally. She shows that education is generally still patriarchal and boys and girls are still treated differently in schools.



Pat Carlen studied 39 women intensively using in-depth interviews. She found that society offered women a “class” and a “gender” deal, where certain behaviours were seen as acceptable. Women who committed crime rejected these “deals” because they didn’t get to have the good lives that society seemed to promise them.



Sylvia Walby argues that patriarchy takes many forms and is found in many ways. She suggests that patriarchy appears in private (in families) and in public (at work and in laws etc.)

Delphy & Leonard argue that most decision-making in a household is done by men, who have control over money and resources, whilst most housework is done by women. They argue that the amount of time women spent on domestic labour hadn’t changed over the 20th century.

Key Feminist Concept

Patriarchy: The control of society by men and male ideas.