*The Conjugal Role Debate*

Within sociology; there has been an ongoing debate regarding conjugal roles and how they have evolved due to socio-ecological developments. There are two basic views on this argument: over the past 40 years, some believe an equal partnership has come about within the family. However, a more realistic approach is that the relationship within the males and females within the family remains no more equal. This essay will explore to what extent the roles within the family have retained the segregated conjugal roles with regards to money and power within the family.

Jan Paul’s 1989 study looked at the decision making aspect of conjugal roles. The study, Money and Marriage, found that although there are a variety of financial arrangements within families, it is typically men who are in control and benefit from the arrangement.

Gillian Dunne suggests that in same sex households, the conjugal roles are split more evenly. The study consisted of 37 cohabiting lesbian couples and took place in 1999. Many of the women found that due to the lack of different socialised gender roles, it was easier to share roles fairly.

Saba Waseem looked at how different incomes are perceived. The study was called Household Monies and decision-making and took place in 2001. Waseem found that the privacy of the family conceals the true power relations. The women’s income is trivialised and seen as solely for her – for her benefit and personal purchases. Whereas the man’s income is seen as the only source of provisions and is seen as more useful for the wellbeing of the family.