

L027 Decision-making and power - KO

AQA A Level Sociology 7192 • Families & Households • Couples • 90 minutes

Key concepts

- power
- agenda-setting
- resources
- dependency
- patriarchy
- negotiation
- decision domains

Perspectives

Feminism: decisions may appear joint while deeper constraints and gender norms shape whose preferences count.

Marxism/socialist feminism: economic resources and paid work can create dependence and unequal bargaining power.

Interactionism: decisions are negotiated through meanings and routines, but negotiations are not always equal.

Named material

Edgell: Major decisions may be more likely to be taken by men, especially where they control economic resources. Evaluation: Useful for visible decision-making, but may miss agenda-setting power.

Pahl & Vogler: Money-management systems reveal different forms of financial control and household power. Evaluation: Connects decisions to access to money, not only attitudes.

Barrett & McIntosh: Financial dependence can limit options and reinforce gender inequality. Evaluation: Shows structural power, though contemporary employment patterns vary.

Feminist critiques: Power includes who defines the issue, whose time matters and whose needs become “family needs”. Evaluation: Adds depth beyond counting decisions.

Sources: AQA specification:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/a-level/sociology-7192/specification/subject-content/topics-in-sociology>; ONS Time Use in the UK 2023:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/>

incomeandwealth/bulletins/timeuseintheuk/23septemberto1october2023; ONS Families and the Labour Market:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/familiesandthelabourmarketengland/2021>; British Social Attitudes gender roles:

<https://natcen.ac.uk/publications/british-social-attitudes-40-gender-roles>; AQA assessment materials:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/a-level/sociology-7192/assessment-resources>