

## **Family and violence: Family violence and violence in the family**

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Violence in the family is undoubtedly a topic which has attracted great attention from criminologists in recent years. This interest could on the one hand be explained by the influence of feministically oriented social studies, and on the other hand, by the "state-of-art" in social practice, especially in the area of intimate, love, family and sexual relations, which has undergone radical changes from the disrupted "cultural revolution" in the second part of the sixties. To put it very roughly, in the sphere of intimacy (probably being above all connected to gender roles) there is a decay of "feudal", i.e. pre-modern (attributed according to biological gender) models of the organisation of personal and interpersonal life practices. These complex and divers processes are not at all unconflictual, so it is not surprising that it is described by commentators with militaristic vocabulary, for example with such labels as "war between genders", "struggle for power in the family" or "emotional terror". It seems, however, that in spite of uncontested and probably irreversible dramatic innovations, the old institutional forms (and normative expectations corresponding to them) still to a large extent determine behavioural and emotional patterns in family relations. The aim of the present paper is to highlight certain structural "tensions", conditioned by the traditional family institution, which in many regards generate (but not determine) diverse forms of violence between intimate partners.

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