

**Jalna Hanmer, “Violence and social control of women” (Violence et contrôle social des femmes),
Questions Féministes, No 1 (Novembre 1977), pp 68-88**

<https://fr.scribd.com/document/373540151/Jalna-Hanmer-Violence-Et-Contrôle-Social-Des-Femmes-1977>

Text summary of Jalna Hanmer’s article.	Words and expressions
Women have generally – always and everywhere – exercised less power and authority than men. Two explanations are usually given for this. First, women’s role in giving birth and bringing up children excludes them from activities society values most (and which are the most violent): war and hunting. This sexual division of labour is also a division in the public and private sphere. Secondly, women have an unequal position in economic production. This article seeks to show that the use of force and the threat of force, even when hidden, are sufficiently important in industrialised western societies to be recognised as a major factor of social control of women by men. It also aims to show that everything which men extort from women in terms of economic and sexual benefits, and prestige is based on force and the threat of force. For women, the fear of male violence is subtle and widespread. At a first level, it leads to malaise: attention given to behaving properly, to not be mocked. Fear is greater when a woman has been the victim of violence and when she knows that other women have experienced violence. Every woman knows, intuitively and emotionally, that there is a <i>no woman’s land</i> in which she has every chance of losing out in a confrontation – even in the home. “Joking” may also be threatening. Nearly all violent crimes are committed by men, and women are by far the main victims of “sexual violence”. Figures [for Britain in the mid-1970s] show that 84% of domestic violence is carried out by men on women (the rest being mainly violence against children and between siblings). Violence by men against women outside the family only accounted for 13% of cases: in other words, women are at greater risk when living with a man. The role of the State also needs to be taken into account when examining the use of force as a means of social control. Violence in the home is punished less than violence in the street. Indeed, often the State represents the interests of the dominant group (men) in its confrontation with the subordinated group (women), especially in relation to domestic violence. More generally, the [British] State [in the mid-1970s] tends to support the dependency of women in households. The topology of cities in industrialised societies is similar to that of traditional, non-capitalist societies: the place and space of men are central, whereas women and children are confined to the periphery. Women must avoid certain roads, areas, parks and public spaces during daytime, if they are not fulfilling their domestic and childcare roles, and at night in any case. Rapists are more likely to be acquitted if women “live alone, walk alone, hitchhike, wear ‘indecent’ clothing, have spoken to or had a drink with their rapist”. “Being single, divorced, adulterous, having an illegitimate child, a lover, having had an abortion, are all situations that have nothing to do with rape, but are factors lending a good conscience to a rapist”. Men generally do not consider they owe something to women for their unpaid labour. Marriage is often not viewed as being based on a power relationship, in which money and the potential use of physical force play a role.	To give birth= to have a child and bring it into the world To bring up a child= to raise and educate a child Threat=menace, to intimidate Extort=to take by force Subtle=hard to see, elusive Widespread= spread widely To lose out= to lose, to be defeated Siblings=brothers and sisters Account for=to be responsible for Dominant group=group with power over others Topology of cities= the way parts/areas of cities are related and organised Whereas= at the same time, in contrast Fulfil = to do, to perform, to meet To be acquitted=found not guilty, not responsible and let free To owe= to have a debt, to have an obligation to give Unpaid labour=work which is not paid, which is given freely

Discussion:

- 1/ Jalna Hanmer’s text was published in 1977. She was mainly talking about Britain. Do you think things are very different in Britain and France today?
- 2/ What can be done to improve the situation?