

Obstacles to Women's Career Progression

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Outline

- ▶ What is a 'career'?
- ▶ Obstacles
- ▶ Explanations
- ▶ Differences by sectors and occupations
- ▶ Intersecting inequalities

Career

- ▶ Not the same as having a job
- ▶ ‘Career woman’
- ▶ Ambition, leadership
- ▶ Educational qualifications, professionals
- ▶ Commitment, responsibility, time and stress
- ▶ Good salary
- ▶ Prestige

Obstacles

- ▶ ‘Glass ceiling’
- ▶ Not only in high level jobs
- ▶ Some obstacles are not hard to see
- ▶ Complex and varied obstacles
- ▶ ‘Labyrinth’
- ▶ Diverse strategies to become leaders

Explanations

- ▶ ‘Choice’: women don’t want career progression beyond a certain level
- ▶ Discrimination
- ▶ Structural obstacles: educational system, labour markets, work organisations, families and communities are ‘gendered’
- ▶ Gender ideologies, gender cultures
- ▶ Resistance to change

Care – Work – Gender

- ▶ The gender division of unpaid care work
- ▶ ‘The second shift’
- ▶ Career interruptions – time outside the labour market
- ▶ Assumptions about women and unpaid care
- ▶ Outcome: many women work below their potential

Different Sectors and Occupations

- ▶ Women dominated sectors
- ▶ Women dominated occupations
- ▶ Prestige and ‘feminisation’
- ▶ Economic and social change
 - Changes in prestige
 - Changes in women’s position

Intersecting Inequalities

▶ Race and ethnicity

- Black women in Academia in the United Kingdom
- Roma women in leadership positions

▶ Disabled women

▶ Age

▶ Parenthood

▶ Immigrant background

- Highly skilled migrant women in Norway

Conclusions

- ▶ Gender is relevant to work and careers
- ▶ Labour market
- ▶ Workplaces
- ▶ Legal framework and particular policies
- ▶ Exceptional women?
- ▶ Reasons to be optimistic?

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