**PPE Revision – Feminism**



What barriers does Naomi Wolf think women have broken through? What inequalities do women still face?

We talked about lots of rights that women have gained in the last 150 years – for instance the right to vote, the right to do the same jobs as men, the right to be paid the same as men.

Despite these changes in the law, there are still lots of inequalities between men and women – for example, women in full time jobs earn 15% less than men; women are much more likely to suffer domestic violence; only about ¼ of MPs are women.

What does Naomi Wolf think is the main cause of these inequalities?

Naomi Wolf argues that the new obstacle facing women is the expectation that they should be beautiful. She thinks that this expectation has been created as a way of holding women back as they have gained more legal rights. She describes beauty as a “qualification” that women have to have, in addition to the same qualifications as men (like a degree, job experience, etc.)

What evidence is there to support Naomi Wolf?

* News presenters –most of the men on the BBC are over 50, while most of the women are under 50. One explanation for this is that women are judged on their beauty, so as women get older – which is associated with being less attractive – they lose their jobs on TV. Men, however, don’t have to be attractive – so older, more knowledgeable and experienced men can keep their jobs.
* GQ Magazine – the five men on the cover were dressed in smart suits, suggesting power and wealth, while the one woman was naked – suggesting she should only be judged on her appearance.

How could you argue against Naomi Wolf?

* Different choices – we looked at a study that claimed most of the pay gap between men and women comes down to different choices (e.g. what they study, what career they go into), and isn’t because of any discrimination.
* Men can also suffer from expectations – for instance, in the GQ Magazine example, the expectation that men should be rich and powerful could be damaging to men who aren’t interested in those things.