
Gender Stereotypes and Assumptions: Popular Culture Constructions of Women Leaders

The paper draws upon social role theory to outline gendered assumptions which underpin gender leader stereotypes. Through a gender analysis of popular culture, the paper highlights everyday media constructions of women leaders, which perpetuate and reaffirm traditional leader gender stereotypes; which explicitly 'message' the leader role as a non-role for women, and/or, which question women's suitability for a leader role. An aim is to explore the strength (endurance, sustainability) of traditional gender stereotypes in popular media constructing women as leaders. An aim of this paper is to examine women's representation within popular media by focusing on textual analysis of specific examples from newspapers, film and television. (Although the paper draws on examples from America, some of the themes and discussion is relevant to the UK).

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