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**An Analysis of Female Leadership and its
Stereotypes in Corporate Cinema in the
Context of SDG 5 – Gender Equality**

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Abstract

This study examines how female leadership is represented in cinema and to what extent these portrayals reinforce or challenge gender-based stereotypes. Drawing on theories such as Role Congruity Theory, the Lack of Fit Model, and the concept of the double bind, the research analyzes a selection of films from the 1980s to the 2020s using a qualitative approach. The study develops a typology of female leadership stereotypes and applies it to identify recurring narrative patterns in film.

The findings reveal that female leadership is consistently portrayed as conditional, contested, and often associated with personal or professional costs. Rather than being depicted as a normalized form of authority, female leaders are frequently framed through tension, moral scrutiny, and emotional expectations. While more recent films offer more complex and nuanced representations, they largely continue to reproduce underlying gendered assumptions about leadership.

Overall, the study demonstrates that cinema plays a significant role in shaping and reinforcing cultural understandings of leadership and gender. These representations not only reflect societal norms but also contribute to their reproduction, influencing perceptions of women in positions of authority across organizational and social contexts.

Keywords

Female leadership; gender stereotypes; cinema; media representation; double bind; role congruity; film analysis

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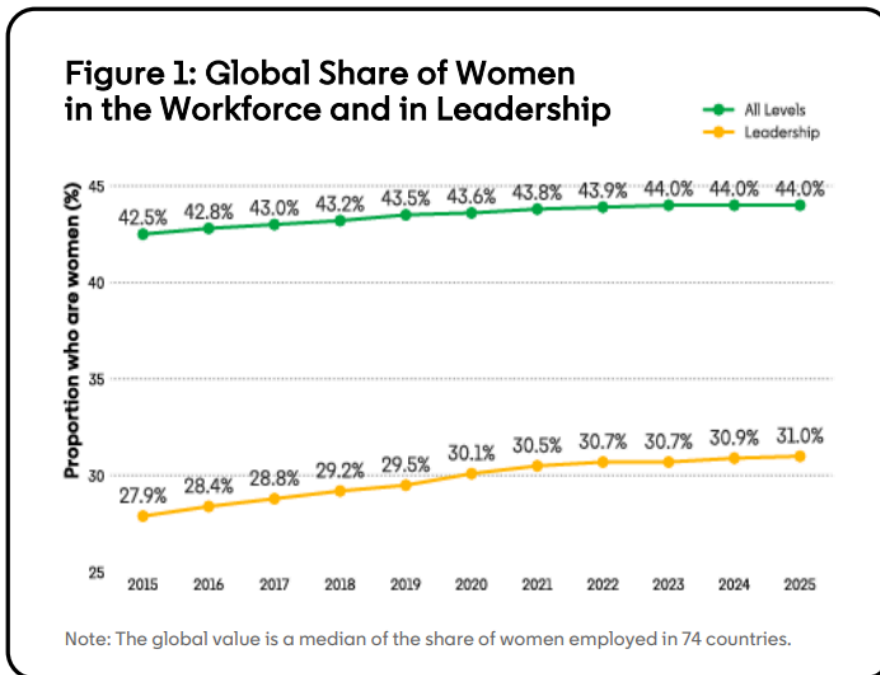
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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Context of the Research

Over recent decades, the number of women in leadership roles has risen significantly as more women have entered the workforce and progressed within organizational hierarchies. Despite these advancements, women are still under-represented in the world's most influential leadership roles. Global labor data shows that despite making up a significant portion of the workforce, women only hold a small percentage of senior leadership positions, such as CEOs and board chairs.

Figure 1. Global Share of Women in the Workforce and in Leadership



(LinkedIn, 2026, p. 3)

This draws attention to the persistent disparity between women's qualifications and their access to positions of authority. Therefore, in order to fully understand leadership inequality, it is required to examine not only institutional barriers, but also the cultural meanings and expectations associated with leadership itself.

Figure 2. The State of Gender Gaps, by Subindex

Percentage of the gender gap closed to date, 2025



World Economic Forum (2023)

As depicted in Figure 2 above, while there are significant reductions in gender disparities in health and education globally, political empowerment, which includes leadership and decision-making positions, continues to be substantially lower. This, in essence, points to the fact that there are fewer females in leadership positions compared to their male counterparts.

One major reason for this disparity lies in the fact that leadership in society tends to be culturally associated with masculinity. In this regard, traditional leadership tends to place a significant emphasis on "agentic" characteristics, such as assertiveness, competitiveness, decisiveness, and independence. On the other hand, "communal" characteristics, such as empathy, cooperation, and emotional sensitivity, are frequently associated with females (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Although Communal characteristics are considered to be highly valuable in leadership situations, they are nevertheless perceived as insufficient to warrant earning a leadership position.

In fact, as Eagly and Karau assert, "women leaders are caught in a double bind in which communal behavior may be seen as insufficiently authoritative and agentic behavior may be seen as gender-deviant." This explains that women in leadership positions are caught in a "double bind" in the sense that while communal characteristics may be viewed as making them insufficiently authoritative, agentic characteristics may be

viewed as gender-deviant. This, in essence, asserts that while there are significant stereotypes surrounding females in leadership positions, there are also significant stereotypes surrounding females in general. Stereotypes surrounding females in leadership positions are largely perpetuated and normalized through the media. In both news and entertainment media, men are more likely to be portrayed as authoritative decision-makers or expert voices, while women are more likely to be portrayed in supportive or relational roles, once again highlighting the link between leadership and masculinity (Hall, 1997; Koenig et al., 2011; Bell & Sinclair, 2016). Similarly, studies in political communication demonstrate that male politicians are more frequently portrayed in terms of leadership competence and authority, while female politicians are more often assessed through gendered stereotypes (Andrich, 2023). Such phenomena contribute to and perpetuate gender stereotypes, which in turn affect the way in which the general public perceives the concept of leadership. In this context, cinema as a form of media becomes particularly pertinent to an analysis of the concept of leadership and gender stereotypes. This is because cinema, as a form of media, both reflects and projects societal ideals and norms. It also has the ability to perpetuate and solidify societal ideals in relation to gender, power, and authority. In the context of leadership, contemporary media appears to feature an increasing number of female leaders; however, such portrayals often seem to reproduce familiar stereotypes or limit the complexity of female authority figures. At the same time, certain films present women in leadership roles in ways that challenge and reshape conventional understandings of leadership and gender. In this regard, cinema can be viewed as a significant medium through which notions of leadership and gender are constructed, negotiated, and interpreted.

1.2 Academic Gap

The literature that currently exists on gender and leadership provides a solid theoretical framework to understand the impact of stereotypes on the perception of authority. As mentioned above, social psychological and organizational studies have shown a consistent relationship between leadership and agentic personality traits, such as assertiveness, decisiveness, and competitiveness, which are also culturally associated with masculinity. Conversely, women tend to be associated with communal personality traits, like empathy, cooperation, and emotional sensitivity. Such a contrast between

gender stereotypes and leadership ideals leads to 'role congruity dynamics,' where women are perceived as less suitable for, or are judged more stringently in, leadership positions (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2012). Therefore, a major portion of the literature that currently exists has focused on the impact of gender stereotypes on hiring, leadership evaluation, and promotions in organizational/institutional contexts.

The literature on media and communication studies has also examined the role of gender stereotypes in the depiction of gender roles in all types of media. Existing literature indicates that the media simultaneously reflects societal norms surrounding gender and shapes perceptions of what is considered “normal,” thereby influencing the construction of gender roles (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2013). These gender roles, as represented in the media, tend to reinforce existing social norms, with men more frequently depicted as decision-makers and leaders, while women are often portrayed in relational or supportive roles. Such recurring patterns can shape public perceptions of women in positions of authority, contributing to the persistence of traditional gender roles and making them more resistant to change. While there is a substantial body of literature on stereotypes of women and on media representations of gender, relatively little research directly connects these areas by examining how women in leadership roles are portrayed in films. Existing studies often focus on the presence or absence of women in media, rather than on the specific leadership traits and qualities attributed to them within narratives. Similarly, although leadership stereotypes have been widely studied, they are typically explored in organizational or workplace contexts rather than in media representations. This reveals a clear gap in the literature: despite extensive research on both leadership and gender stereotypes, there is limited understanding of how female leaders are depicted in films and whether these portrayals reinforce or challenge dominant conceptions of leadership.

1.3 Social and Organizational Relevance

The research on female leadership stereotypes in films is relevant to social and organizational factors. This is because it is understood that the notion of leadership and evaluation of it is not a vacuum concept. In other words, it is a part of the broader social environment where, according to Bell & Sinclair (2016), the media, especially films and television, contribute to the formation of a collective social perception of what

constitutes a legitimate social group that can occupy a position of leadership and behave in a certain way (Soliman, 2021). We can change the perception of women in positions of power through films, and it is possible to create a cinematic narrative that challenges the general perception of women in leadership by presenting them as capable and central characters, rather than as secondary to male protagonists.

Studies on organizational behavior suggest that leaders are related to masculine stereotypes. For example, a woman must be strong, independent, and authoritative, according to Eagly & Karau (2002); Koenig et al. (2011). According to Role Congruity Theory, prejudice against female leaders stems from a perception that women lack agentic qualities, i.e., qualities related to a leadership role. This is because women are perceived to have communal qualities, i.e., warmth or cooperation, according to Eagly & Karau (2002).

As supported by empirical findings, female leaders are subject to a more critical evaluation compared to their male counterparts and are likely to be in a “double bind” situation. While female leaders exhibit high assertiveness and leadership skills, they are likely to be rated as competent but unlikeable leaders; on the contrary, when female leaders exhibit behaviors that are typical of female gender roles, they are rated as likeable but incompetent leaders (Rudman & Glick, 2001; Heilman, 2012). Due to these factors, structural barriers still exist in the workplace and may be a contributing factor to explaining the global underrepresentation of female leaders in senior leadership roles.

Figure 3: Evaluation of male and female managers across conditions

Table 1
Study 1: Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent Measure Scales

Dependent measure scale	No added information		Positive information		Communal information	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Likability						
Male target	6.28 _{ad}	1.24	6.26 _{ad}	1.48	6.30 _a	1.28
Female target	5.34 _b	1.39	5.38 _b	1.78	7.04 _d	1.37
Interpersonal hostility						
Male target	4.26 _{ac}	1.03	4.70 _a	1.10	4.54 _a	1.43
Female target	3.42 _b	0.95	3.67 _{bc}	1.21	4.90 _a	1.19
Boss desirability						
Male target	6.20 _a	1.35	5.88 _{ac}	2.09	6.04 _a	2.17
Female target	5.08 _{bc}	1.58	4.89 _b	2.06	6.56 _a	2.02

Note. All ratings were done on 9-point scales, and the higher the number, the more favorable the rating (the more likable, the less interpersonally hostile, the more desirable a boss). $n = 25$ in each condition. Means for each dependent measure grouping that do not share subscripts differ significantly, as indicated by paired t tests for comparisons between male and female targets and by least significant difference tests for comparisons between information conditions.

Heilman and Okimoto (2007)

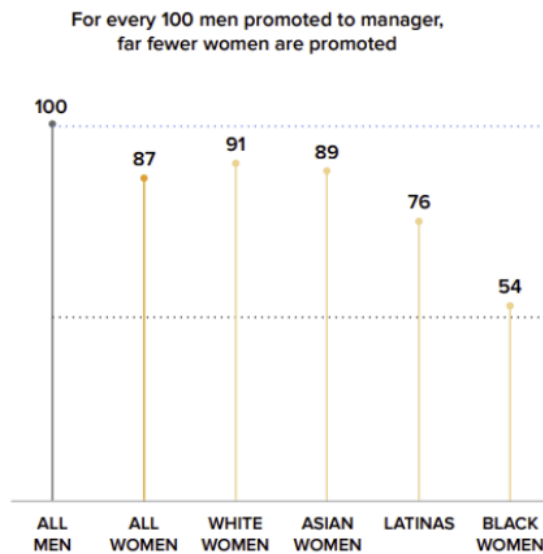
As indicated in Figure 3 above, female managers who succeed in leadership roles are rated as unlikeable and less appropriate as leaders compared to their male counterparts who succeed in similar roles. Notably, when communal factors are highlighted, there is a significant improvement in the evaluation of female leaders.

Recent findings on the issue indicate that the issue still persists in the global workforce today. According to the World Economic Forum (2023), women leaders only occupy approximately 32% of senior leadership roles in the global workforce today. These findings indicate that there is still a significant gap that still exists in the global workforce today. Furthermore, findings by McKinsey & Company (2023) indicate that women leaders are less likely to be promoted to managerial roles in the early stages of their careers compared to men; this has been described as the “Broken Rung” and has a significant negative impact on the number of female leaders qualified for executive roles later in their careers.

Figure 4: Ratio of Promotions to Manager for Men vs. Women

WOMEN LOSE THE MOST GROUND AT THE FIRST STEP UP TO MANAGER

Ratio of promotions to manager for men vs. women



Progress for early career Black women remains the farthest out of reach.¹⁴ After rising in 2020 and 2021, likely in response to heightened focus on their advancement, the number of Black women promoted to manager for every 100 men has fallen back to 2019 levels.¹⁵

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
58	58	82	96	54

(LeanIn.Org & McKinsey & Company, 2023)

As depicted in Figure 4, for every 100 men promoted to managerial roles, significantly fewer women are promoted. This highlights the barriers women face at the earliest stages of leadership.

It is believed that media representation may play a major role in influencing such perceptions. Cinema often depicts women in leadership positions through certain archetypes such as the "ruthless career woman," the "emotionally vulnerable leader," or the "lonely workaholic," which may link female leadership with emotional instability, moral ambiguity, or personal sacrifice (Bell & Sinclair, 2016; Mavin, 2009). Repeatedly watching such portrayals of women in leadership may eventually lead people to believe that biased perceptions about women in leadership are normal & acceptable. In the long run, this may contribute to the formation of stereotypes, which can influence not only individual perceptions but also the ways in which processes and practices are implemented within organisations.

From an organisational perspective, such portrayals are relevant, as perceptions of women in leadership may be shaped by prevailing leadership stereotypes. As Eagly & Carli (2007) noted in their work, perceptions of women in leadership may shape not only evaluations of their competence, but also beliefs about whether they should hold power and authority. When people are repeatedly exposed to media representation of women in leadership as somehow special,

controversial, or even socially isolated, people may even think female leadership is somehow abnormal.

Based on these considerations, the study of female leadership representation in film offers valuable insight into the broader cultural dynamics that shape gender equality within professional contexts. Cinematic portrayals do not merely reflect reality; they actively contribute to the construction of social expectations regarding who is perceived as a legitimate leader and how leadership should be performed (Hall, 1997). By examining how women in leadership roles are depicted, and the stereotypes that are reinforced or challenged through these narratives, it becomes possible to better understand how cultural representations influence perceptions of authority, competence, and legitimacy. Importantly, this analysis aligns with the broader objectives of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (United Nations, 2022).

A central component of SDG 5 is ensuring women's full and effective participation, as well as equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life. However, achieving this goal extends beyond addressing structural and institutional barriers; it also requires confronting the cultural narratives and symbolic frameworks that shape societal attitudes toward women in positions of power (Eagly & Carli, 2007). In this context, media representations, particularly those found in widely consumed forms such as film play a critical role. Repeated portrayals of female leaders as exceptional, problematic, or constrained can reinforce limiting beliefs about women's suitability for leadership, thereby indirectly sustaining gender inequalities in professional environments (Koenig et al., 2011; Heilman, 2012). Conversely, more diverse and complex representations have the potential to challenge these assumptions and contribute to more inclusive understandings of leadership.

Therefore, analyzing the representation of female leadership in cinema not only advances academic knowledge at the intersection of gender, leadership, and media studies, but also contributes to a broader societal effort to promote gender equality. By shedding light on the cultural mechanisms through which leadership norms are reproduced or contested, this study provides insight into how progress toward SDG 5 may be supported not only through policy and organizational change, but also through shifts in representation and meaning within popular culture.

1.4 Personal Motivation

If there was one thing that significantly impacted my life as a young girl growing up, it would have to be films, but most importantly, being a girl transitioning to a woman

watching films. In an increasingly digital and media-saturated society, a pertinent question emerges: ‘To what extent do films shape our perspectives on ourselves and others?’ It is a widely accepted fact that films are more than just entertainment. They are a tool of great power within society. Thus, what remains to be analysed is:

‘How much impact, either positive or negative, can films truly have on our perspectives as viewers, and can such an impact be either positive or negative depending on what these films present?’

Having chosen to pursue a course of study in the field of business, I have come to realize more and more that certain titles, such as a ‘businesswoman,’ carry a certain connotation. What does it truly mean to be a woman in leadership? What images come to mind when one hears such a phrase? This question prompts a critical reflection on the images of women in leadership that I have encountered in film. Against this backdrop, this thesis seeks to examine the portrayal of women in leadership roles within cinema, as well as to analyse how such representations have evolved over time. This topic holds particular relevance in the context of ongoing debates surrounding gender equality.

1.5 Research Objectives

Although there have been extensive studies on gender stereotypes in organizational settings and in the media, there are limited studies on the representation of female leadership in film narratives and their relation to gender stereotypes in positions of authority. Thus, the purpose of the research is to contribute to the ongoing debate on the representation of female leadership in film narratives.

The general objective of the research is as follows:

‘To analyze how female leadership is portrayed in cinema and identify recurring stereotypes associated with women in positions of authority.’

The general objective seeks to address the identified research gap by examining the representation of female leadership in film narratives and its relationship to prevailing stereotypes associated with positions of authority. To achieve this overarching aim, the study establishes a set of specific objectives. These objectives are both descriptive and interpretative in nature, enabling a comprehensive analysis of filmic representations and their connection to existing stereotypes in positions of authority.

Objective 1: Identify the dominant stereotypes associated with female leaders in film narratives.

The first objective is purely descriptive in nature. The objective focuses on identifying the existing stereotypes associated with female leaders in film narratives and linking it to the existing stereotypes.

Objective 2: Analyze the way authority and leadership are framed in relation to female characters.

This will involve examining the way leadership qualities like decisiveness, ambition, emotional displays, and relationships are framed in cinematic storytelling. It is crucial to note that particular attention will be given to the way leadership qualities are interpreted when they are linked to female characters.

Objective 3: Examine the narrative rewards and punishments given to female leadership.

This will involve examining whether female characters in leadership roles are framed as successful, justified, isolated, and sanctioned, and the way these are linked to the narrative structures of the films under analysis.

Objective 4: Explore the implications of female leadership in film representations.

This will involve exploring the implications and links to broader social perceptions and leadership, and examining the way the cinematic representations are linked to perceptivity and gender concepts.

Objective 5: Examine the way female leadership is framed in relation to changing decades.

This will involve examining the way female leadership is framed in relation to changing decades, including examining the differences and similarities between films from the 1980s and the 2020s, and exploring the way female leadership is framed in relation to changing decades. By including the temporal dimension, it is possible to explore the way changing social and cultural contexts are reflected in cinematic representations.

Collectively, these objectives enable the research to progress from the identification of stereotypes to an interpretation of their narrative role and possible social significance. In achieving this, the research contributes to an understanding of the ways in which

representations of female leadership in culture may serve to reinforce or subvert existing gender norms.

1.6 Methodology Overview

The current study employs a qualitative approach to research to investigate the representation of female leadership in film and the stereotypes associated with these representations. The analysis in the current study is conducted on a sample of ten films depicting female leaders. The selection of films for the purpose of data collection and analysis was conducted over a range of decades from the 1980s to the 2020s. A detailed discussion on the research approach, film selection criteria, data collection process, and framework employed in the current study for data analysis can be seen in Chapter 3.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

The structure of this thesis has been designed to progress from a general theory to a specific research, allowing the research topic to be addressed in a comprehensible and logical manner. Each chapter has built upon the previous one in order to progress from theory to research to reflection.

Chapter one has been designed as the introductory chapter, in which the research findings have been contextualized within a broader social and academic setting. It begins by highlighting the presence of women in leadership positions and the preconceptions that have continued to shape the understanding of leadership in the modern world. By exploring the preconceptions and the role of media in this, the relevance of cinema as a social space in which leadership perceptions are shared has been highlighted. In this chapter, the gap in academic literature has also been identified, the social and organizational importance of researching this topic has been highlighted, and the research objectives/methodology have been provided.

Chapter Two seeks to establish a conceptual framework that can be used to interpret the actual data. In this chapter, the major theoretical approaches to gender stereotypes, female leaders, and the media are examined. The final section of the chapter offers a typology of female leaders' stereotypes, which will be used as a foundation for the analytical framework used in the film analysis.

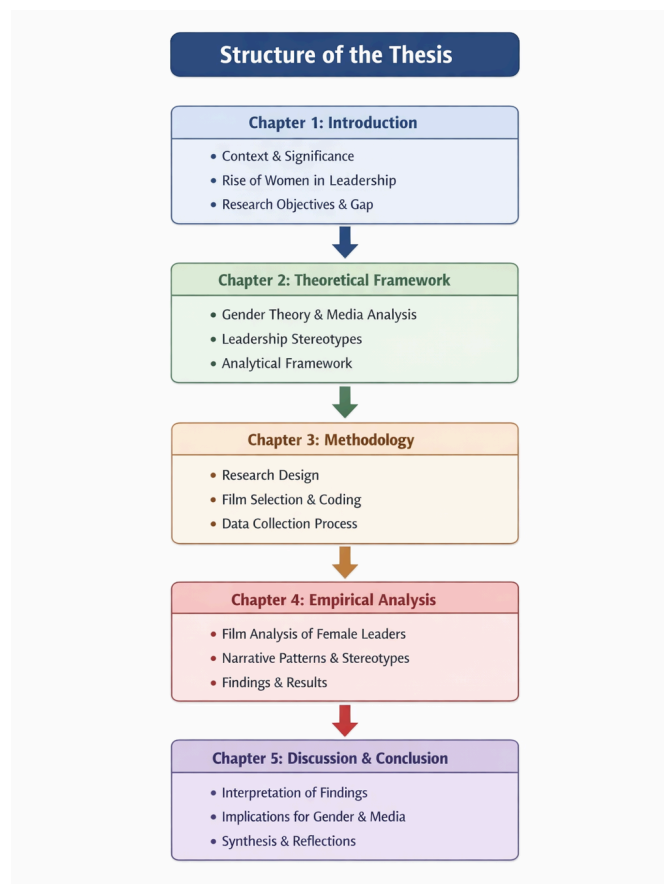
Chapter Three presents the research methodology and explains the procedures through which the study was conducted, with particular attention to the operationalization of key theoretical concepts.

Chapter Four is the empirical part of the thesis, where the research of a number of films from different decades is discussed, focusing on the depiction of female leaders.

Chapter 5, therefore, seeks to interpret the actual data obtained from the research in light of the theoretical framework established in the second chapter. The final aim of the chapter is to synthesize the major concepts obtained from the research and discuss them in light of the relationship between gender, leaders, and the media. The overall structure of the thesis is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Structure of the Thesis, outlining the five chapters and their key components.

Source: Author's own work.



2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Gender Stereotypes and Leadership

Leadership is not a neutral or technical concept; on the contrary, it is socially constructed through norms, expectations, and beliefs shared by the majority of the members of a given society. In the context of the above definition of leadership as a social construct, the concept of leadership is closely related to gender stereotypes considered to be typical of males, such as assertiveness, independence, rationality, and decisiveness (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Koenig et al., 2011). In the above context, the concept of leadership is gendered per se, with females in leadership roles being evaluated through gender stereotypes.

2.1.1 Leadership as a Gendered Social Construct

Social Role Theory is considered to be the primary theory explaining the existence of gender stereotypes in the context of leadership. According to Eagly (1987) and Eagly & Wood (2012), the primary cause of gender differences in behavior is not biological but is the result of the social allocation of males and females to different social roles throughout history. In the above context, males have been traditionally associated with gender roles such as leadership and decision-making, whereas females have been traditionally associated with gender roles such as caregiving, cooperation, and emotional support.

Thus, there is an implicit definition of leadership in masculine terms, which again supports the relationship between authority and agency. Empirical research further reinforces this association, demonstrating that perceptions of effective leadership are disproportionately aligned with masculine rather than feminine characteristics (Koenig et al., 2011). Therefore, women in leadership roles must confront a social environment in which there is an incongruence between their gender identity and the definition of an effective leader.

2.1.2 Role Congruity Theory and the Problem of Incongruence

Based on Social Role Theory, Role Congruity Theory, proposed by Eagly and Karau (2002), explains the process of prejudice against female leaders through gender stereotypes. According to this theory, prejudice occurs when there is incongruence between the characteristics of a social group and the characteristics of a role. Since

women are associated with communal qualities such as warmth and empathy, while the role of a leader is associated with agentic qualities such as dominance and assertiveness, female leaders will be perceived as less congruent or less appropriate for the role. There are two types of prejudice against female leaders. First, women may be rated lower on leader potential because of their assumed absence of agentic qualities. Second, women who possess agentic qualities may be rated lower because of their incongruent behavior with traditional female roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

2.1.3 The Lack of Fit Model and Performance Evaluations

Heilman's Lack of Fit Model is a theoretical framework that extends on this concept, specifically in the context of the impact on performance evaluations within the organizational context (Heilman, 1983, 2001). This perspective suggests that the expectations for an individual's competence will be based on the perceived "fit" between the individual's gender and the role they play. In the case of women, if they are perceived to be lacking the qualities expected for leadership, their success will be attributed to external factors and their failures to internal factors. The implication is that the bias extends beyond the hiring process to include promotion, evaluation, and leadership opportunities. It is critical to note that the Lack of Fit Model indicates that the bias occurs even in the absence of discriminatory practices, based on cognitive expectations and assumptions (Heilman, 2001). In effect, gender stereotypes are not simply cognitive constructs but have practical implications for organizational dynamics.

2.1.4 Agency, Communality, and the Double Bind

One of the major dimensions that all the theoretical models seek to address is the difference between agency and communality. Agency involves assertiveness, independence, and control, and these are the qualities that have been stereotypically linked to leadership (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Communality involves qualities like warmth, empathy, and cooperativeness, and these are the qualities stereotypically linked to femininity (Eagly & Wood, 2012). The challenge for women in leadership is the "double bind" between the two. The concept of the double bind illustrates the process by which women are subject to negative consequences, irrespective of whether they choose to conform to or challenge traditional gender norms. In the case of agentic women, they may be seen as aggressive, unlikable, and "too ambitious," while women who exhibit communal behaviors may be perceived as lacking strength and leadership

ability (Rudman & Glick, 2001). This illustrates the narrow “behavioral space” within which women may be perceived as competent and likable.

2.1.5 Backlash Effects and Moral Scrutiny

One of the issues closely related to the concept of the double bind is the backlash effect, which relates to the negative social and professional repercussions faced by women when they exhibit behaviors that challenge traditional gender norms. The study by Rudman and Glick (2001) illustrates the process by which women, particularly those exhibiting agentic behaviors, may be subject to negative interpersonal evaluations, such as being perceived as less likable and more socially deviant. The study by Rudman et al. (2012) further supports the notion that backlash maintains the status quo in terms of gender dominance by deterring women from engaging in behaviors associated with power and authority. The backlash effect is critical in the context of leadership, particularly because it not only relates to perceptions of competence but also to moral and emotional judgments. Women leaders, for example, may be subject to a higher degree of scrutiny in terms of their behaviors, motivations, and personal characteristics, thus illustrating the process by which they may be subject to moral evaluation, a process not often directed towards their male counterparts. This process further illustrates the notion that women leaders may be perceived as exceptional, controversial, and problematic.

2.1.6 Gender Stereotypes in Leadership Discourse and Popular Culture

Finally, the phenomenon of gender stereotypes in leadership is also studied in the broader context of cultural narratives and popular media. In this regard, Mavin (2009) refers to the impact of popular culture on the construction and dissemination of simplistic and often exaggerated portrayals of female leaders, such as the stereotype of the “queen bee” or the “ruthless career woman.” This phenomenon is seen as a reflection and extension of the tension between the different elements identified in the theoretical literature, translating abstract concepts such as role incongruity and backlash into more concrete forms. Moreover, more recent research by Tremmel and Wahl (2023) clearly illustrates the idea that stereotypes regarding female leaders are not only persistent but also clearly structured. In particular, the research suggests that the stereotypes regarding female leaders were consistently rated more negatively than those regarding male leaders, especially in relation to those involving a deviation from traditional gender roles. This phenomenon illustrates the idea that the construction of

leadership is clearly tied to the broader cognitive and cultural frameworks through which it is perceived. Overall, the above theoretical perspectives clearly illustrate the idea that the phenomenon of gender stereotypes in leadership is not isolated or arbitrary but rather clearly structured and connected to a range of evaluative and behavioral outcomes. In particular, the construction of leadership is seen as being tied to a set of gendered expectations that privilege masculine characteristics, creating a sense of incongruity for female leaders. This provides the conceptual framework through which the phenomenon of female leadership in film will be analyzed. In particular, the study will seek to bridge the gap between abstract theoretical concepts and the way in which they are represented in the broader cultural narratives.

2.2 From Symbolic Representations to Practical Consequences

Although gender stereotypes in leadership begin with social constructs of what leadership and followership should be like, their effects are far more concrete and extend beyond symbolic representation. Gender stereotypes are cognitive tools that guide individuals' perceptions and evaluations of leaders in social and organizational environments. Thus, representation of female leadership does not merely involve symbolic representation; rather, it directly impacts leadership selection, advancement, and performance evaluation.

2.2.1 Gender Stereotypes as Cognitive Shortcuts in Leadership Evaluation

Gender stereotypes provide cognitive shortcuts to simplify complex social judgments and allow individuals to make quick judgments and evaluations of others according to their pre-established expectations of social behavior (Heilman, 2012). In leadership situations, cognitive shortcuts impact perceptions of competence, authority, and effectiveness. Since leadership characteristics like assertiveness, decisiveness, and control are linked to leadership and are more likely to be perceived in males rather than females (Koenig et al., 2011), women leaders are more likely to be evaluated with a bias that questions their competence to hold a leadership role. Such effects are particularly obvious in situations like performance evaluation and professional advancement. Women leaders exhibiting characteristics like assertiveness and decisiveness are perceived to be competent leaders but simultaneously evaluated negatively for being less likable and more aggressive in their behavior (Heilman, 2012; Rudman & Glick, 2001). In contrast, males exhibiting similar behavior are perceived to be more competent leaders and do not incur social costs for their behavior.

2.2.2 Leadership Legitimacy and Differential Standards of Evaluation

Apart from competence, gender stereotypes also impact perceptions of leadership legitimacy. Legitimacy refers to the degree to which individuals are perceived to be ‘proper’ and ‘credible’ leaders. Since leadership roles are perceived to be masculine in nature, women leaders need to prove their competence to a higher degree to be equally legitimate leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This leads to a higher level of scrutiny and a lower error tolerance. Studies have shown that women leaders’ failures are more likely to be explained by their internal shortcomings like a lack of ability or judgment, while men leaders’ failures are more likely to be explained by factors beyond their control (Heilman, 2012). This further reinforces the notion that women’s leadership is inherently ‘unstable’ and ‘risky.’ This phenomenon finds an echo in narrative and cultural depictions of women leaders as incompetent, immoral, and overambitious after a failure, like the ‘Questioned Professional’ and ‘Hubristic Villain’ archetypes.

2.2.3 Media Representations as Anticipatory Socialization Mechanisms

The role of media representation in creating a social image of leadership cannot be overemphasized. This is especially significant given the media’s role as an anticipatory socialization mechanism. This refers to a phenomenon in which individuals develop implicit models of leadership and leaders through repeated exposure to specific narrative forms, which subsequently influence their perceptions and behaviours (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Film is a particularly prominent medium with respect to its role in creating social images. When female leaders are represented in a way that portrays them as lonely and emotionally burdened or personally unfulfilled, this reinforces a social image of leadership that equates leadership with a lack of femininity. For instance, repeated representations of female leaders as ‘Lonely Career Women’ or ‘Emotional Leaders’ reinforce a social image of leadership whereby women leaders are perceived to be forced to make a choice between their professional and personal lives.

2.2.4 Emotional Labor and the Burden of Self-Regulation

Another significant consequence of gendered leadership styles is the emotional labor that women experience. According to organizational literature, emotional labor is defined as “the labor involved in managing one’s emotions and behaviors to meet organizational and social expectations” (Hochschild, 1983, as cited in organizational literature). As a leadership quality, women must exhibit strength and authority, as well as empathy, warmth, and approachability. The dual role of being a woman leader

requires self-regulation, which puts women under more pressure and causes more emotional exhaustion than their male counterparts. The woman leader must walk a tightrope, being neither too aggressive nor too passive, and must find a balance between the two extremes. The cultural representation of a woman leader is often that of a woman who is emotionally exhausted, as represented by the “Moral Counterweight” and the “Maternal Failure.”

2.2.5 Reproduction of Structural Inequality through Cultural Narratives

At a more macro level, the representation of a woman leader can lead to the reproduction and normalization of structural inequalities. The repeated representation of a woman leader through stereotypical roles reinforces the idea that the inclusion of a woman in leadership roles is exceptional, short-lived, or conditional. The representation of a woman leader as a “Token Professional” and as an “Excluded Leader” indicates a conditionality that is associated with tokenism. These stories resonate well with the organizational environment, which still lacks diversity in leadership positions occupied by women. In many cases, the roles occupied by women have been peripheral or have come under a lot of scrutiny (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This has created a vicious cycle whereby cultural representations have been the driving force behind biased organizational practices, which in turn have strengthened the stereotypes used to develop the said representations. As shown in the study by Tremmel and Wahl (2023), the assessment of stereotypes revolving around female leaders has been more negative than those revolving around male leaders. This has created a wide gap between the genders in leadership positions. In the broader society, the impact of the concepts discussed above on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality is crucial. This is because the realization of this goal depends on ensuring women’s full and equal participation in leadership and decision-making positions. In conclusion, the existence of gender stereotypes in leadership roles has more than symbolic significance. It affects the organizational environment and society as a whole. It acts as a mental shortcut in the evaluation process, which determines the legitimacy and the behavior expected from a woman in a leadership position. In the media and cultural environment, there is continuous representation and normalization of the said stereotypes. Understanding these processes is important in order to comprehend the representation of females as leaders in film, as film narratives are part of the larger social processes that influence the way we think about leadership.

2.3 Media, Film, and the Construction of Leadership Archetypes

Gender stereotypes in leadership are embedded in the larger social structure of organizations, but the media plays a vital role in the development, perpetuation, and dissemination of gender stereotypes in leadership roles. Film, in particular, is a cultural sensemaking device through which individuals make sense of social reality, including gender roles in leadership positions.

2.3.1 Film as a Cultural Sensemaking Device

Bell and Sinclair (2016) note that films are important in the development of gendered leadership identities, as they offer cultural representations of leadership roles through the use of images, dialogue, and narrative development. Through these elements, films translate abstract concepts of leadership into tangible and accessible forms, making them easier for audiences to interpret and internalize. In doing so, they contribute to the normalization of specific perceptions of gender roles in leadership positions, including expectations regarding appropriate behaviors and characteristics of leaders. Most importantly, these representations are not neutral but are shaped by existing cultural norms and power structures, which can result in the reinforcement of dominant ideologies related to gender and authority. Film therefore functions not only as a medium through which leadership is depicted, but also as a space in which meanings of leadership are actively constructed and negotiated.

2.3.2 Repetition, Narrative Patterns, and Archetype Formation

Another way through which media plays a role in shaping perceptions is through the repetition of narrative patterns. Essentially, when similar representations of female leadership appear in a series of films and television programs, it starts to form an archetype. More specifically, it starts to form a series of recurring character archetypes or types through which audiences cognitively process and understand female leadership. These archetypes, therefore, simplify complex realities by reducing diverse experiences to recognizable narrative patterns. For instance, the repetition of female leaders being ruthless, unstable, and lonely eventually leads to the formation of archetypes such as ‘the ruthless career woman’ or ‘the lonely workaholic’. Eventually, these archetypes become an integral part of the audience’s consciousness and influence how audiences perceive female leaders. Soliman (2021) indicates that the repetition of these narrative patterns leads to the formation of archetypes, which also reinforce stereotypical

representations of women in leadership roles. Essentially, there is a limited range of recognizable character archetypes through which female leadership is represented in films. Instead of representing a diverse range of female leadership, films and other media tend to stick to a narrow range of recognizable archetypes.

2.3.3 Moral and Emotional Framing of Female Leadership

In addition to the framing of leadership based on repetition, media portrayals of female leadership are also associated with specific moral or emotional framing. Contrary to male leadership, where leadership is depicted as natural or without any conflict, media portrayals of female leadership are associated with specific narrative styles where morality, emotions, or sacrifice are emphasized (Bell & Sinclair, 2016). This framing of media portrayals of female leadership is associated with the problematization of women's authority by linking it with conflict, tension, or instability. Women in leadership roles are depicted as being extremely harsh or immoral or as being emotionally vulnerable or overwhelmed by the demands of the leadership role. This framing of media portrayals of female leadership is consistent with the theoretical frameworks discussed in the previous sections, specifically the double bind or backlash effects, as it links femininity and authority as being incompatible. Emotional framing of media portrayals of female leadership is also important as it links leadership with the personal costs of being in a leadership role, including loneliness or emotional exhaustion, thereby making leadership more difficult or less desirable for women.

2.3.4 Gendered Storytelling Conventions and Audience Interpretation

In addition to framing media portrayals of female leadership, gendered storytelling conventions are also important as they are associated with linking femininity or masculinity with specific roles or behaviors. For instance, female leadership is associated with the “softening” of authority through relational behaviors, morality, or sacrifice in order to be accepted by the audience (Pirzada et al., 2025). These storytelling conventions not only shape the portrayal of female leaders but also shape the interpretation of their actions. The audience is encouraged to think about female leaders from a gendered perspective, not only judging their competence but also their likability, morality, and conformity to social norms. This is a different approach from that which might be applied to male leaders, whose leadership ability might be assumed. Pirzada et al. (2025) discuss how media storytelling, particularly in patriarchal societies, reflects and reinforces societal understandings of gender roles, while at the same time

presenting limited possibilities for change. While there is a more contemporary media representation that challenges traditional stereotypes, there is a limited scope for change, which continues to reflect gendered roles and tensions.

2.3.5 Media as a Site of Both Reproduction and Transformation

The media can both reproduce stereotypes and challenge them. Recent research indicates that more contemporary portrayals of female leaders might be more nuanced and complex, reflecting a change in societal understandings and a move toward gender equality (Akhtar, 2025). However, this change is a gradual process and can be found alongside more traditional and stereotypical portrayals. The fact that the media can both reproduce and transform stereotypes makes it a valuable site for analysis. By examining cinematic portrayals of female leadership, not only can the reproduction of stereotypes be understood, but their evolution can also be examined. Given all that has been stated above, it is clear that the roles of film and television in the development of leadership archetypes will be the construction of cultural sensemaking devices that allow abstract social norms to be understood in concrete terms. This will allow the construction of a set of archetypes that will play a crucial part in the way in which female leaders will be viewed in the real world, reinforcing the connection between cultural representation and organizational outcomes that was stated in the last section. This will allow the way in which the media represents female leaders to be understood in the following sections, which will explore the construction of leadership archetypes in relation to film and television stereotypes.

2.4 Cinematic Representations of Female Leadership

The cinematic representation of female leadership can be an essential tool for analyzing and evaluating society's attitude towards gender and leadership. Based on the theoretical perspectives and dynamics of the media presented in the previous sections, previous research on this topic has established a number of notable characteristics in the representation of female leaders in film.

2.4.1 Dominant Narrative Patterns in Film Representations of Female Leadership

The most notable aspect of these studies on film representation of female leaders is that these women leaders are represented according to a few dominant narrative patterns. In other words, film representation of female leaders does not exhibit a wide variety of leadership styles; rather, these women leaders are represented according to a few

notable and easily identifiable character types that are typical of gender stereotypes (Soliman, 2021). In most cases, these women leaders are represented according to a narrative of tension and conflict. Bell and Sinclair (2016) state that female leaders in film and other forms of popular culture are represented as spectacles; that is, their leadership and presence in leadership roles are represented in a way that they are abnormal and controversial. This representation of female leaders in film and other forms of popular culture further emphasizes that women in leadership roles are abnormal and not typical leaders; rather, they are exceptions to the rule. Common narratives include the depiction of women leaders as overambitious, emotionally conflicted, and socially isolated. These narratives are consistent with the general stereotypes presented in the literature on leadership, such as the “ruthless career woman” and the “lonely workaholic,” and contribute to the further development of gender stereotypes on leadership and success.

2.4.2 Visual, Emotional, and Relational Coding of Authority

In addition to the narrative form, the cinematic depiction of women leaders is subject to the processes of visual, emotional, and relational coding. Film, being a visual medium, transmits meaning not only through spoken and written words but also through images, acting, and symbolic representation. These processes play a critical role in the construction and depiction of leadership. Bell and Sinclair (2016) highlight the fact that the appearance, bodily presentation, and emotional expression of women leaders form an integral part of the construction and depiction of their authority in film. Women leaders, for example, may be visually depicted in a manner that accentuates the tension between femininity and authority. A leader may be depicted as very composed and in control in professional settings but emotionally vulnerable in personal settings, thus accentuating the notion that women leaders and their authority are inherently conflicted. Equally important is the role of emotional coding. Thus, female leaders are often represented as emotionally stressed, having to juggle their professional role with their relationships or their moral obligations. By contrast, male leadership is often represented as rational, stable, and unproblematic. The role of relational coding serves to reinforce this, as female leaders are often represented as being embedded in a web of relationships that influence their leadership. Their leadership is often evaluated in terms of how it impacts others, not simply in terms of its success or effects.

2.4.3 Narrative Rewards and Punishments

Another important aspect that can be found in the cinematic representation of female leadership is the existence of narrative rewards and punishments. The films often impose a kind of narrative reward or punishment, which can reinforce the normative expectations placed upon female leadership. Those female characters who exhibit behaviors that conform to traditional gender roles, such as empathy, self-sacrifice, and moral integrity, often receive a narrative reward, which can take the form of self-fulfillment, reconciliation, or professional validation. On the other hand, female characters who exhibit behaviors associated with traditional leadership, such as being assertive, ambitious, and competitive, often face a narrative punishment, which can take the form of professional, social, or emotional backlash. According to Bell and Sinclair (2016), this can reinforce the idea that female leadership must be tempered by relational or moral considerations. These representational aspects can be understood as a manifestation of the dynamics of backlash and the double bind, which was discussed earlier. By infusing a kind of narrative reward or punishment, the films can reinforce the normalization of gender role expectations placed upon female leadership.

2.4.4 Continuities and Shifts Across Genres and Periods

Although there are some representational aspects that can be considered as static, there is a possibility that the cinematic representation of female leadership has shifted over time. According to Soliman (2021), earlier films often focused on the novelty and abnormality of female leadership, while more recent films can provide more complexity. However, these changes do not occur linearly or uniformly. Moreover, the traditional stereotypes continue to coexist with the progressive ones, which is again indicative of the broader societal tensions with regards to gender and power. For instance, movies belonging to different genres, such as drama or thriller movies, may be more likely to present the image of the female leader as emotionally conflicted or morally ambiguous, while movies belonging to different genres, such as comedy or biopic movies, may be more likely to present the image of the female leader as sympathetic or empowering. Despite the above variations, however, the underlying gendered patterns remain evident. The image of the female leader is again presented as being closely related to emotional labor or moral assessment. In conclusion, the above research indicates that the cinematic image of the female leader is characterized by the underlying narrative patterns, visual or emotional coding, as well as the underlying

gendered rewards or punishments. These representations of the female leader image are indicative of the broader societal stereotypes with regards to gender and power. At the same time, the above variations with regards to different genres or different periods indicate that the image of the female leader is not static or uniform but evolves over time as a response to the broader societal changes. Thus, the above synthesis is the basis on which the next section is developed, which refers to the underlying typologies of the female leadership stereotypes applied in the present study, as well as the underlying analysis presented in the next Chapter 4.

2.5 Typologies of Female Leadership Stereotypes in Film

This study contributes to the development of typologies of female leadership stereotypes in film, based on the theoretical foundations of gender stereotypes in leadership and media representation of gender stereotypes in film. These typologies are tools for analysis of the portrayal of female leadership in film. It is important to note that these typologies are not seen as fixed or mutually exclusive categories of female leadership stereotypes in film. Rather, they are conceptualized as ideal types of analysis of gender stereotypes in film. This means that any single character in film could be seen as exemplifying more than one of these stereotypes of female leadership at any one time, or as shifting between them as the film progresses. The typologies of female leadership stereotypes in film are based on the existing body of research literature about gender stereotypes in leadership, leadership evaluation, and media representation of gender stereotypes in film. The foundational theories of gender stereotypes in leadership, including the Role Congruity Theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002), the Lack of Fit Model (Heilman, 1983, 2001), backlash (Rudman & Glick, 2001; Rudman et al., 2012), provide the basis for the analysis of the portrayal of gender stereotypes in film. In addition, the media representation of gender stereotypes in film (Bell & Sinclair, 2016; Soliman, 2021; Mavin, 2009; Tremmel & Wahl, 2023) provides the basis for the identification of the typologies of female leadership stereotypes in film.

Five types of stereotypes of female leadership in film are identified.

A. Agency-Based Penalties

This category of stereotypes includes women being held accountable for behaviors typically considered indicative of leadership, such as being ambitious, assertive, and having authority. This type of stereotypical portrayal of women leaders is a

manifestation of the duality identified in Role Congruity Theory, wherein women leaders who exhibit behaviors indicative of leadership are simultaneously seen as having violated gender roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

The “Ruthless Career Woman” or “Bitch Boss” type of stereotypical portrayal of women leaders includes women leaders being depicted as being extremely harsh, cold-hearted, and/or unethical in their pursuit of success. This type of stereotypical portrayal of women leaders is a manifestation of backlash effects wherein women leaders exhibiting agentic behaviors are negatively evaluated for having violated communal norms (Rudman & Glick, 2001).

The “Double Bind” or “Hyper-Agentic Leader” type of stereotypical portrayal of women leaders includes women leaders being depicted as having the burden of having to be competent and likable. This type of stereotypical portrayal of women leaders is a manifestation of the structural constraints placed upon women leaders (Heilman, 2012).

The “Hubristic Villain” or “Corrupt Overachiever” type of stereotypical portrayal of women leaders includes women leaders being depicted as being unethical and dangerous. This type of stereotypical portrayal of women leaders is a manifestation of the structural constraints placed upon women leaders wherein women leaders being ambitious is a manifestation of moral failure.

B. Relational and Emotional Constraints

This category of stereotypical portrayals of women leaders includes stereotypical portrayals of women leaders wherein the relational and emotional aspects of female leadership are highlighted. This type of stereotypical portrayal of women leaders is a manifestation of the stereotypical assumption that women leaders should be relational and emotionally centered (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

The “Emotional/Vulnerable Leader” refers to portrayals in which female leaders are depicted as emotionally exposed, overwhelmed, or fragile. This representation reflects the broader stereotype that women’s leadership is inherently tied to emotional expression and relational sensitivity (Heilman, 2012).

Similarly, the “Moral Counterweight/Softened Leader” describes portrayals in which female authority is balanced or legitimized through morality, care, or ethical restraint. In these cases, leadership is softened through traditionally feminine traits, reinforcing

expectations that women must remain relational and emotionally attuned in order to be accepted as leaders.

The “Sexualized or Emotionally Driven Professional” corresponds to images in which women’s power is discredited by associations with sexuality or emotional instability, reducing professional competence to personal or relational qualities.

C. Professional Legitimacy Denial

This category includes stereotypes that express doubt or disaffirmation of women’s competence or legitimacy as leaders. These images are closely related to the Lack of Fit Model, in which women are seen as being less suitable or fitting as leaders because of stereotype-based assumptions (Heilman, 1983; 2001).

The “Incompetent or Questioned Professional” is a common stereotype in which women’s competence is challenged or discredited, requiring them to constantly prove or demonstrate competence.

The “Token or Undermined Minority Professional” refers to portrayals in which women occupy visible positions within organizations but lack genuine authority or influence. Although they are present in leadership spaces, their role is often symbolic, and their competence is questioned or subtly undermined by colleagues, reinforcing the perception that they are exceptions rather than legitimate leaders.

The “Excluded or Tokenized Professional” captures representations in which women are formally positioned within professional environments but are systematically excluded from key decision-making processes. In these portrayals, access to power remains limited, and women are marginalized from strategic influence, highlighting structural barriers to full leadership participation.

The “Ivory-Tower Executive” (Turrís Ebúrnea) describes portrayals of female leaders as detached, isolated, or disconnected from practical realities. This stereotype frames women in positions of authority as out of touch, overly theoretical, or ineffective, thereby undermining their credibility and reinforcing doubts about the practicality and legitimacy of their leadership.

D. Identity-Based and Intersectional Penalties

This category includes images of leadership stereotypes as intersecting with other identity factors, including race, age, or gender expression. These images of women as

leaders are associated with the concept of intersectional penalties, in which various forms of marginalization intersect or intersectingly influence perceptions of leadership competence.

The “Angry Black Woman” stereotype illustrates the intersection of racial and gender biases in the evaluation of leadership. In these portrayals, assertiveness and authority in Black female leaders are often reframed as aggression, hostility, or emotional volatility, thereby delegitimizing their leadership and reinforcing both racialized and gendered prejudices.

The “Age-Limited Leader” reflects the way in which perceptions of leadership are shaped by expectations related to youth, appearance, and femininity. Female leaders are often judged in relation to age in ways that undermine their credibility—being perceived as either too young and inexperienced or too old and no longer aligned with societal ideals of femininity and relevance.

The “Masculinized Leader” or “Renouncer of Femininity” refers to portrayals in which women who adopt traditionally masculine traits—such as assertiveness, dominance, or emotional restraint—are depicted as having sacrificed their femininity. This framing reinforces the notion that leadership competence in women requires a departure from gender norms, positioning femininity and authority as inherently incompatible.

E. Work-Life Moralization

The final typology focuses on the moralization of female leadership in relation to work–life balance and personal fulfillment. These representations frame women’s professional success as inherently tied to personal sacrifice, particularly in relation to family and emotional well-being.

The “Lonely or Unfulfilled Career Woman” reflects portrayals in which female leaders achieve professional success at the cost of personal relationships, emotional fulfillment, or social belonging. In these narratives, leadership is depicted as isolating, reinforcing the idea that women must sacrifice intimacy and happiness in order to succeed.

The “Sacrificing Careerist” or “Maternal Failure” captures representations in which women are positioned as having to choose between professional ambition and motherhood. In these portrayals, success in one domain is often framed as failure in the

other, reinforcing the expectation that women cannot fully reconcile leadership roles with traditional family responsibilities.

The typologies used in this study offer a framework for understanding female leader stereotypes in film. By examining how female leader stereotypes fall into these typologies, it is possible to understand how female leader stereotypes contain biases against women. Most importantly, these typologies are not intended to be exhaustive and definitive, but rather to be used as tools to facilitate the identification of patterns within different films. In the chapters to follow, these typologies will be used to examine the representations of female leadership within the context of the films to be discussed, and the ways in which they reflect societal attitudes towards gender and leadership.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design for the study is qualitative in nature. This is important in that leadership is a socially constructed concept. This means that it is influenced by a variety of factors related to culture and representation. In light of these considerations, qualitative research appears to be most appropriate. This is in line with Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) assertion that qualitative research is inherently interpretive. This means that qualitative research focuses on the ways in which individuals and social systems make sense of the world. Flick (2009) also asserts that qualitative research methods are most appropriate for exploring complex social realities. This includes the analysis of narratives, symbols, and meaning. In the case of the proposed study, the purpose is not to measure anything. Rather, it is to make sense of the concept of female leadership. In addition to these considerations, qualitative research appears to be most appropriate in that film is a form of social construction. This means that film does not merely reflect reality. Rather, it also creates and communicates social meanings, values, and ideologies. Hall (1997) asserts that media representations are very important in shaping the ways in which individuals make sense of the world. In light of these considerations, it appears that the way in which female leaders are portrayed in film may be an important site for the construction and communication of gender stereotypes. This makes qualitative research most appropriate in that it provides an opportunity to delve deeper into these representations. Brennen (2017) asserts that qualitative media research provides an opportunity to uncover the underlying meanings and discourses that are embedded in film.

3.2 Film Selection

The selection of films has been made in accordance with the objective of carrying out the analysis of the portrayal of the concept of female leadership in a professional and organizational setting. In order to ensure analytical consistency in the selection of films, the films included in the study have depicted the character of the female protagonist in a formal position of authority, such as executives, entrepreneurs, etc. Moreover, the selection of films has also been made in accordance with the extent to which the films have depicted leadership dynamics in general. Furthermore, the films selected have

been made to include a variety of decades, ranging from the 1980s to the 2020s. This has provided a framework to compare the extent to which the concept of female leadership has been depicted in different socio-cultural settings. The selection of films across different decades provides a framework for identifying potential continuities and changes in the portrayal of female leadership in film. A total of ten films was chosen for the analysis, which is a suitable number for qualitative research that focuses more on in-depth rather than breadth of research (Flick, 2009). This number of films was enough to provide a detailed and in-depth analysis of each film, at the same time allowing for a broader view of patterns and differences in the films under consideration. A complete list of the films used in the analysis is presented in Appendix A.

3.3 Data Collection

The data used in the research was a group of films showing female characters in a position of leadership in a professional setting or organization. The data was collected through a systematic viewing of each film, with a focus on scenes where female characters are shown to be in a position of leadership, where the female characters face challenges to their leadership, or where the female characters are shown to be under evaluation in a position of leadership. In the course of the systematic viewing, key features of each film, such as behavior, dialogue, interaction, and other relevant details, were considered to establish the role of female leadership in each film. This method is consistent with qualitative analysis of the media, where films are considered to be a form of cultural text that carries meaning in the narrative and visual content of the film (Brennen, 2017; Hall, 1997). In order to operationalize the data collection process and ensure a level of systematic consistency in all of the selected films, a data collection instrument was developed in the form of an observation grid, facilitated by spreadsheet software (e.g., Excel). This grid was designed to act as a data recording instrument to enable the classification and coding of key analytical dimensions, such as leadership, communication, and outcomes, among others. This data collection instrument is consistent with qualitative media analysis methodologies, which highlight the significance of data recording processes in enhancing reliability and analytical rigor (Brennen, 2017; Flick, 2009). By structuring observations in accordance with predefined categories based on the analytical framework, this instrument facilitated the identification of patterns and themes in relation to female leadership representation in

media texts. This type of data collection instrument is also consistent with other qualitative and observational research methodologies, which often employ such an instrument to classify and analyze complex media texts, particularly in relation to media texts as a system of cultural meaning (Hall, 1997). Observations of the films were recorded during and immediately following viewing, with a consistent framework applied to all of the films in this study.

3.4 Analytical Framework.

The typologies that were created in Chapter 2 were used as analytical tools to identify and interpret patterns in the depiction of female leadership in the films that were chosen for analysis. The films were analyzed on an individual basis, with specific attention paid to the female character and her position in the story. The characters were analyzed in relation to the stereotype categories that were created, enabling patterns to be established as well as any variations in depiction. It is necessary to note that these stereotype categories are not mutually exclusive; a character can embody a number of stereotypes at any given time or be a combination of them. The analysis was centered around a number of key dimensions that emerged from the theoretical framework. These were the construction of authority (such as leadership style, decision-making, and control), perceptions of competence and legitimacy, emotional and relational portrayal, and narrative outcomes. The focus was particularly on the effectiveness and conditionality of the portrayal of the female leadership and the rewards and punishments of the character in the narrative structure. The application of the theoretical framework allows for the combination of theoretical literature from the gender and leadership domain with the empirical analysis of the film narratives and provides the opportunity for a systematic exploration of the construction and evaluation of the portrayal of the female leadership.

The coding framework for the analysis is outlined in Appendix B.

4. Film Analysis

4.1 9 to 5 (1980)

Based on observation, the film presents a collective form of female leadership through the characters of Judy, Violet, and Doralee, who assume control of their workplace in response to an oppressive male superior. Rather than focusing on a single dominant leader, leadership is portrayed as a shared and collaborative process, emerging through solidarity and resistance within a patriarchal office setting. Leadership in the film is depicted as both adaptive and relational. Initially positioned as subordinate employees, the three protagonists gradually move into positions of authority, taking over decision-making processes and introducing more equitable and efficient workplace practices. Their leadership style stands in clear contrast to that of their male boss, as it emphasizes cooperation, fairness, and concern for employee well-being. However, their authority becomes fully recognized only after the removal of the male figure, suggesting that female leadership is framed as reactive rather than normalized. The film reflects several key stereotype categories identified in the analytical framework, particularly the “Token/Undermined Professional” and the “Moral Counterweight.” At the beginning of the narrative, the women are dismissed, sexualized, or underestimated, which aligns with patterns of professional legitimacy denial. At the same time, their leadership is constructed as morally superior to that of their male counterpart, reinforcing the expectation that female authority must be justified through ethical conduct and care-oriented behavior. In terms of narrative outcome, the film ultimately rewards female leadership by presenting the women’s management as effective and transformative. However, this success is framed within a comedic and somewhat exceptional context, implying that such a shift in power is unusual or temporary rather than indicative of broader structural change.

4.2 Working Girl (1988)

In the movie, we mainly focus on the life and activities of Tess McGill, a young and ambitious secretary who dreams of becoming a leader and moving into the executive leadership position in a male-dominated environment. The movie depicts the concept of leadership as desirable and linked to upward mobility, and Tess's journey is depicted as a move from being a junior employee to becoming a professional leader. Tess's leadership style is depicted by her determination, flexibility, and intelligence. Contrary

to the traditional depiction of leaders, Tess's leadership is demonstrated by her taking initiative and becoming an executive, thus showcasing her competence in deal-making and negotiation. Tess's leadership, however, is constantly challenged by her male associates and even by her female boss, thus indicating the challenges faced by women in accessing leadership positions. The movie depicts the “Double-Bind Leader” and “Queen Bee” stereotypes. Tess has to prove herself to be competent and likable, thus having to deal with the stereotype of femininity. On the other hand, Tess's boss, Katherine, depicts the “Ruthless Career Woman” and “Queen Bee” stereotype, where women in leadership tend to act in the same discriminatory manner as their male associates. In the movie, Tess is rewarded for her efforts and achieves her ambitions, thus indicating the post-feminist stereotype, where women's ambitions and aspirations are achieved, and they get their “happy ending” in the form of love. The movie depicts the stereotype that women's ambition has to be coupled with their femininity.

4.3 Disclosure (1994)

This film offers a highly controversial portrayal of female leadership through the character of Meredith Johnson, a senior executive depicted as sexually aggressive and manipulative. Her authority is framed within a narrative of threat and moral ambiguity, positioning her power as both excessive and destabilizing. Meredith’s leadership style is characterized by dominance, control, and manipulation—traits traditionally associated with masculine leadership yet, unlike male counterparts, these qualities are constructed as deviant and problematic.

Her interactions with subordinates emphasize coercion and the abuse of power, reinforcing the perception of female authority as predatory when it exceeds accepted gender norms. The film aligns closely with the “Hubristic Villain” and “Sexualized Professional” stereotypes, as her leadership is undermined through its association with sexuality and moral transgression. Ultimately, the narrative imposes both professional and moral punishment, suggesting that female leadership that diverges from traditional gender expectations is not only illegitimate but deserving of sanction.

4.4 The Associate (1996)

The setting for this film revolves around the character, Laurel Ayres, who is a highly competent financial analyst. However, she fails to achieve recognition as a female leader in a male-dominated environment. As a result, she decides to create a white male

partner to achieve credibility. Laurel, as a leader, is portrayed as highly intelligent, strategic, and competent. However, she is not recognized as a leader. The fact that she creates a male alter ego indicates that leadership is associated with masculinity rather than competence. The film is a clear representation of the “Token/Undermined Professional” and “Incompetent/Questioned Professional” stereotypes. The fact that she is not visible and lacks credibility, yet she is qualified, indicates that there is a lack of fit between women and leadership. The film also indicates some aspects of intersectionality, as she is a black woman. Laurel, as a character, is eventually rewarded, which indicates that she was not recognized as a leader. The fact that she achieves this through deception indicates that women must conform to masculine norms or identities to achieve credibility as a leader.

4.5 Erin Brockovich (2000)

In this film, there is an interesting portrayal of non-traditional female leadership through the character of a working-class single mother. Erin’s leadership is unconventional, being informal and extremely effective. In terms of the characteristics of Erin’s leadership, it is evident that it is non-traditional, being centered around relationships, emotions, and intuition. While initially being dismissed as a leader because of her appearance and lack of qualifications, Erin is eventually able to prove her effectiveness through her achievements. Thus, her authority is recognized, albeit in a manner that is linked to her emotions and her engagement with communities. In terms of the stereotypes evident in the film, it is evident that there is a strong emphasis on the “Moral Counterweight” and “Emotional Leader” stereotypes. While Erin’s effectiveness is centered around care, it is also evident that there is a strong emphasis on the need for female leaders to be linked to the “Sexualized Professional” stereotype, as indicated through Erin’s appearance. In terms of the narrative of the film, it is evident that Erin’s success is rewarded professionally, albeit at a cost that is related to the challenges of balancing work and family life. Thus, there is a strong emphasis on the “Sacrificing Careerist” stereotype also.

4.6 The Devil Wears Prada (2006)

In this film, the character of Miranda Priestly is shown as a powerful and demanding leader in the fashion world. As the editor-in-chief of Runway magazine, she represents a leadership style that is associated with control, accuracy, and authority. The leadership style represented by Miranda Priestly is a highly authoritative one, characterized by a

focus on results and a lack of emotional involvement. While she is clearly a competent leader, she is represented as being overly harsh and emotionally distant, which creates a tension between being effective and being likable. While her authority is clearly accepted, there is a social penalty for this. The film represents a classic case of the “Ruthless Career Woman” and “Double-Bind Leader” stereotypes. The character of Miranda Priestly is clearly competent, but this is represented as being associated with being cold. There is a clear implication that a powerful woman must be cold. The film also represents a classic case of the “Lonely Career Woman” stereotype, as the character’s private life is clearly unhappy. The character of Miranda Priestly is clearly rewarded and penalized throughout the film. While she is a successful leader, there is a penalty for this in terms of her loneliness. There is a clear implication that female leadership must be associated with sacrifice.

4.7 Joy (2015)

A more modern and feminist take on the entrepreneurial journey, Joy (2015) tells the story of Joy Mangano, a woman who creates a business empire through her entrepreneurial journey. Leadership is depicted as a process of perseverance, determination, and self-confidence, which emerges through the challenges faced. Joy’s leadership development is evident as she moves from a position of uncertainty to self-assurance through her acquisition of control over the business. She faces challenges from family members as well as business associates, highlighting the general lack of trust in female leaders. However, Joy’s perseverance and intelligence help her transcend these challenges. The film also depicts the “Sacrificing Careerist” and “Emotional Leader” stereotypes. Joy’s leadership is linked to her personal challenges, highlighting the need for women leaders to balance their professional roles with family responsibilities. At the same time, the film depicts the “Emotional Leader” stereotype favorably. In terms of the outcome, Joy is rewarded through her success, both financially and personally. However, the film emphasises the need for sacrifice in order to achieve success, highlighting the need for women leaders to endure through challenges in order to achieve success.

4.8 Miss Sloane (2016)

Miss Sloane is a 2016 film about Elizabeth Sloane, a highly skilled and ruthless lobbyist in a competitive political environment. Elizabeth Sloane is a leader whose style is marked by intelligence, strategy, and an unwavering commitment to winning and

achieving success. She is a dominant female figure in a male-dominated political environment. Sloane's leadership style is highly agentic, marked by control, decisiveness, and emotional unavailability. She is seen as highly effective but also as a manipulative and immoral figure. Her relationships with others also highlight the complex and conflicting perceptions of her as a leader. Miss Sloane is heavily influenced by the 'Double-Bind Leader' and 'Hubristic Villain' leader stereotypes. Elizabeth Sloane is seen as overly ambitious and assertive as a leader, reinforcing the common perception of powerful women as problematic. Additionally, Elizabeth Sloane is seen as having no relationships, which is also a common aspect of the 'Lonely Career Woman' leader stereotype. In terms of the narrative, Elizabeth Sloane is both punished and redeemed as a leader. She achieves her goal but at great personal expense, reinforcing the perception of female leaders as complex and problematic.

4.9 Fair Play (2023)

Fair Play (2023) is a film that examines power relations and gender in a highly competitive financial industry. The film revolves around a female character named Emily and her professional success and its impact on her relationship. The film portrays Emily's professional success and her role in a financial industry as highly effective and confident; however, her success and power are constantly challenged and undermined by the responses and behaviors of people surrounding her. The film also reflects the "Double-Bind Leader" and "Token Professional" stereotypes. The film portrays Emily's professional competence and success as undermined by her gender; her professional success also leads to feelings of resentment and insecurity among her male counterparts. The film can also be said to be more critical in terms of its narrative and its attempt to highlight power relations and gender in a contemporary professional setting.

4.10 Bombshell (2019)

Bombshell explores the phenomenon of female leadership in a highly gendered and hierarchical media corporation, focusing on the experiences of women in a culture of sexual harassment and the balance of power between the genders. In the film, the concept of leadership is restricted and mediated through a system that undermines the position and authority of the female leaders. There are a number of female characters in the film, all representing different forms of leadership, ranging from compliance to resistance. However, the leadership roles of the characters are restricted by the broader organizational framework, which emphasizes the dominance and power of the male.

Therefore, the concept of leadership is not restricted to the abilities of the leaders but also to the power balance between the genders. The film represents the “Token Professional,” the “Sexualized Professional,” and the “Moral Counterweight” stereotypes. The film emphasizes the relationship between the appearance and sexual identity of the female leaders and the legitimacy of the female leaders, who need to balance the moral position. The film provides a complex resolution to the story, which represents the current changes in the construction of the phenomenon of female leadership.

4.11 Discussion

4.11.1 Overview of Key Findings

This study had set out to explore the representation of female leadership in film and evaluate the extent to which it reinforces or challenges traditional gender-based stereotypes. The findings have revealed how female leadership is represented in film is not an unstructured or random process but is subject to certain common trends and expectations. In film, female leadership is represented as a state of tension and not as an unproblematic or normalized state. Female leaders in film are never represented as ‘leaders’ but through negotiation and conflict. This supports the argument presented in Chapters 1 and 2, which highlighted how female leadership is a construct and is associated with masculine norms. The repetition of certain female leader typology, such as ‘agency penalties,’ ‘emotional expectations,’ and ‘legitimacy challenges,’ also supports the argument presented in the study, which highlighted how female leaders are subject to the same constraints as those identified in female leadership theories. This supports the argument presented in the study, which highlighted how film is not simply representing the status quo but also reinforcing it. In addition, the findings also highlighted how there is a shift in more contemporary films, which is more complex and critical of the constraints on female leaders. However, it also indicates how this shift is not significant enough to break with the traditional gender-based representation of female leaders.

4.11.2 Interpreting Stereotypes Through Theory

The patterns identified in the analysis have a strong affinity with the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 2, namely Role Congruity Theory, the Lack of Fit Model, and the concept of the double bind. First, the frequency of agency-based

penalties in the films supports the finding of the continued presence of role incongruity. Female leaders exhibiting characteristics of being assertive, ambitious, and having authority are often depicted as unlikeable, having moral flaws, or being socially deviant. This finding is in line with the theoretical framework of Role Congruity Theory, which proposes that women face penalties when they conform to the norms of being a leader, which is incongruent with being female. It is also noteworthy that the depiction of female leaders in films does not only reinforce the finding of the theory; it also heightens it through the incorporation of the narrative. Second, the challenge of female competence and leadership is also in line with the theoretical framework of the Lack of Fit Model. In the films, the female leaders' competence is questioned. In several films, the female leaders' competence is not accepted at face value; they need to prove it. This finding is in line with the Lack of Fit Model, which proposes that women's competence is questioned. Furthermore, the finding of the study that the female leaders' competence is questioned in several films also supports the finding of the study that women's competence is questioned even if they have proven it. Third, the finding of the study also supports the theoretical framework of the double bind. In the films, female leaders need to be competent and likable; they need to be authoritative and warm. It is noteworthy that the finding of the study that the double bind is a major construct of the films' depiction of female leaders is also significant because it is not only depicted; it is also narratively resolved. These findings, taken as a whole, imply that cinematic narrative does not merely represent actualized versions of theoretical dynamics, but rather transforms them into recognizable and emotionally accessible forms. The process serves to reinforce and actualize gendered leadership norms.

4.11.3 Narrative Logic of Female Leadership: More Than Stereotypes

In addition to the individual stereotypes, the present study contributes to the field with the identification of a broader narrative logic underlying the representation of female leadership. Stereotypes do not appear as isolated entities but as part of larger narrative structures that shape the representation of female leadership.

Three narrative logics dominate the representation of female leadership:

- Leadership as deviation: Female leadership is represented as deviant or unusual.
- Leadership as conditional: Female leadership is represented as legitimate only when aligned with moral or emotional expectations.

- Leadership as trade-off: Female leadership is represented as being tied to professional costs or sacrifices.

These narrative logics indicate that the problem is not simply the way women leaders are represented, but the way their leadership is made meaningful through the narrative. Female leadership is always contextualized or made meaningful through the narrative, whereas male leadership is represented as implicit or unproblematic. Thus, the present study contributes to the existing body of research by demonstrating the existence of gender bias at the narrative structure level as well as the character trait level. Inequality is therefore not just reflected in the way things are represented, but also in the way the narrative is structured.

4.11.4 Continuity and Change Across Time

The findings of this study indicate that while there have been notable shifts in the representation of female leadership over time, these changes coexist with a significant degree of continuity. Earlier films, particularly those from the 1980s and 1990s, tend to frame female leadership in terms of access, visibility, and legitimacy. Women are frequently positioned as outsiders attempting to enter male-dominated spaces, with narratives centered on proving competence, overcoming exclusion, and gaining recognition within established power structures. In these portrayals, leadership is not assumed but must be earned and justified, often in the face of skepticism or resistance. In contrast, more contemporary films move beyond questions of access and instead focus on the internal dynamics of leadership. These representations explore more nuanced dimensions, including emotional complexity, ethical dilemmas, interpersonal relationships, and the psychological costs associated with positions of authority. Female leaders are more visibly situated within positions of power, and narratives increasingly address how they navigate authority rather than whether they deserve it. This shift suggests a progression toward more layered and multifaceted portrayals. However, despite these developments, the underlying gendered dynamics identified in earlier periods remain remarkably persistent. The core tensions highlighted by theoretical frameworks such as the double bind, role incongruity, and backlash continue to structure these representations. Female leadership is still frequently depicted as conditional, requiring the negotiation of competing expectations related to authority, likability, and morality. Even in more contemporary portrayals, leadership is often associated with

personal sacrifice, emotional burden, or social isolation, reinforcing the notion that female authority remains inherently problematic or exceptional. What changes over time, therefore, is not the existence of stereotypes themselves, but rather the manner in which they are expressed. Contemporary representations tend to present these tensions in more subtle, complex, and individualized ways, moving away from overt or simplistic characterizations. Nevertheless, these narratives continue to reproduce the same fundamental contradictions between gender and leadership. As a result, the evolution observed across decades reflects a transformation in form rather than a substantive shift in underlying meaning, highlighting the resilience of gendered expectations in shaping representations of leadership in film.

4.11.5 Broader Implications

The findings of this study also carry a number of broader implications. From a theoretical point of view, this study demonstrates that leadership stereotypes are not contained within organizational boundaries but are embedded within broader cultural dynamics. Film is a major arena in which these stereotypes are played out and become embedded within social reality. From a more practical point of view, these dynamics and representations are also significant because they carry a number of implications for our expectations and perceptions of women leaders. Thus, while these findings do not necessarily challenge existing research on women and leadership in terms of their accuracy or validity, they do reinforce a number of dynamics and tensions that are also embedded within more contemporary representations of women leaders. In this sense, these findings reinforce a number of broader dynamics and tensions that may impact on our perceptions and expectations of women leaders and their role in organizations.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Final Answer to the Research Question

This study aimed to explore the way in which female leadership is represented in the cinema and the extent to which this representation aligns with broader stereotypes of gender. Overall, the study's findings have shown that the representation of female leadership in film is consistently represented through a set of structured patterns that reinforce the notion that leadership is a masculine construct. In particular, the study found that rather than being represented as unproblematic leaders, female leaders were represented as leaders in a conditional and contested way, which often involved a cost to the individual or society more broadly. Although some films offered more nuanced and complex representations of female leadership, it was also found that this representation did not challenge the underlying logic of gender and leadership. Instead, it was seen to simply represent the existing tensions in a more complex way. Therefore, the study suggests that the cinema represents a part of the way in which the broader notion of gendered leadership is understood and experienced.

5.2 Key Contributions of the Study

This study makes a number of contributions to the field. Firstly, it helps to bridge the gap between the study of leadership and the study of the media. In particular, the study has shown how concepts such as the double bind, role incongruity, and backlash are not only part of the leadership literature but also part of the way in which the media represents the world. This is a significant contribution because it suggests that the media is a place in which leadership concepts are represented. Secondly, the study makes a contribution to the field through the development of a structured typology of female leadership stereotypes. This is a methodological contribution because it provides a tool that can be used in the study of the media. Third, by exploring films from different decades, the research offers a glimpse into the continuity and change in the portrayal of female leadership.

5.3 Implications

The implications of these findings are far-reaching in organizational, political, and social life, as stereotypical portrayals of women leaders are known to affect the perception and evaluation of these leaders. In organizational life, stereotypical

portrayals may affect the way in which organizational members make biased assumptions about the ability and leadership styles of women, creating a double standard in which these leaders are criticized regardless of their behavior. This may limit their access to leadership positions and affect their legitimacy as leaders, thereby perpetuating exclusive organizational cultures and the underrepresentation of women in leadership. In terms of policy implications, these findings suggest that while formal equality policies may be in place, these may not be enough to bring about change in stereotypical portrayals of women leaders. These portrayals may affect the way in which the general public perceives and accepts women in leadership positions, thereby affecting the legitimacy and support for female leaders and gender equality policies. In society, stereotypical portrayals may affect the way in which individuals aspire to leadership and view themselves as leaders. These portrayals may affect the way in which individuals view leadership and masculinity, thereby perpetuating gender inequality in society. In this regard, stereotypical portrayals in the media are instrumental in perpetuating or challenging gender inequality.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

As a qualitative interpretive study, this research is subject to several limitations. Firstly, the review is inherently subjective, given that it relies upon the interpretation of the researcher's narrative and ocular component. Although methodological asperity has been overcome by enacting a structured cryptography outline, option reading in cinematic text remains a possibility. Second, the study does not aim for statistical generalization, but rather for analytical depth and theoretical insight. The selected sample of films, while diverse across decades, is relatively limited and may not fully capture the breadth of representations of female leadership across all cinematic contexts. Thirdly, the focus on the West may restrict the ethnic applicability of the conclusions, as the word picture of female guidance in non-Western cinematic traditions may differ greatly from the established form. Lastly, the deepening of the analytical focus and the academic contribution above statistical generalizability. Their limited scope cannot fully reflect the full spectrum of female leadership portrayals in international film. Despite this limitation, the study extends a systematic, theoretically informed study of perennial representational schemes and advances scholarship at the intersection of media narrative, gendered authority, and traditional understanding.

5.5 Directions for Future Research

This study opens several avenues for future research. First, further investigation could focus on audience reception in order to better understand how viewers interpret and respond to cinematic portrayals of female leadership. Such research would provide valuable insight into the relationship between media representation and the formation of social perceptions, particularly regarding leadership legitimacy and gender expectations.

Second, future studies could expand the scope of analysis beyond Western cinema. Examining representations of female leadership in non-Western cultural and media contexts would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural norms, values, and institutional structures shape leadership portrayals across different societies.

Finally, further research could engage more deeply with intersectionality by exploring how gender intersects with other identity dimensions, such as race, age, class, and sexuality, in shaping representations of leadership. This would enable a more nuanced analysis of how multiple forms of inequality are reflected and reproduced within cinematic narratives.

5.6 Final Reflection

The end result, therefore, is a demonstration from this research that cinematic portrayals of female leadership are not merely a reflection of the world we live in, but a part of the construction itself. Significantly, film helps construct the way in which leadership is perceived, judged, and understood. In this regard, the contribution of film to the maintenance and subversion of gender stereotypes is substantial. While there have been advances in the visibility and depth of female leaders in film, the presence of underlying stereotypes suggests the ongoing tension between gender and leadership. Ultimately, the achievement of gender balance in leadership roles requires more than changes to the way in which institutions function; it requires a challenge to the cultural narratives that define what leadership looks like, and who is capable of representing it.

Declaración de Uso de Herramientas de Inteligencia Artificial Generativa en Trabajos Fin de Grado

ADVERTENCIA: Desde la Universidad consideramos que ChatGPT u otras herramientas similares son herramientas muy útiles en la vida académica, aunque su uso queda siempre bajo la responsabilidad del alumno, puesto que las respuestas que proporciona pueden no ser veraces. En este sentido, NO está permitido su uso en la elaboración del Trabajo fin de Grado para generar código porque estas herramientas no son fiables en esa tarea. Aunque el código funcione, no hay garantías de que metodológicamente sea correcto, y es altamente probable que no lo sea.

Por la presente, yo, Ieva Tenenyte, estudiante de E4 - *Administración y Dirección de Empresas* doble titulación internacional de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas al presentar mi Trabajo Fin de Grado titulado “An Analysis of Female Leadership and Related Stereotypes in Film and Television (SDG 5 - Gender Equality)” declaro que he utilizado la herramienta de Inteligencia Artificial Generativa ChatGPT u otras similares de IAG de código sólo en el contexto de las actividades descritas a continuación:

1. **Brainstorming de ideas de investigación:** Utilizado para idear y esbozar posibles áreas de investigación.
2. **Metodólogo:** Para descubrir métodos aplicables a problemas específicos de investigación.
3. **Constructor de plantillas:** Para diseñar formatos específicos para secciones del trabajo.
4. **Corrector de estilo literario y de lenguaje:** Para mejorar la calidad lingüística y estilística del texto.
5. **Generador previo de diagramas de flujo y contenido:** Para esbozar diagramas iniciales.
6. **Generador de problemas de ejemplo:** Para ilustrar conceptos y técnicas.
7. **Revisor:** Para recibir sugerencias sobre cómo mejorar y perfeccionar el trabajo con diferentes niveles de exigencia.

Afirmo que toda la información y contenido presentados en este trabajo son producto de mi investigación y esfuerzo individual, excepto donde se ha indicado lo contrario y se han dado los créditos correspondientes (he incluido las referencias adecuadas en el TFG y he explicitado para que se ha usado ChatGPT u otras herramientas similares). Soy consciente de las implicaciones académicas y éticas de presentar un trabajo no original y acepto las consecuencias de cualquier violación a esta declaración.

Fecha: 25/03/2026

Firma:

Ieva Tenenyte

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Appendices

Appendix A: List of Analysed Films

This appendix provides an overview of the films included in the analysis, categorized by decade and thematic representation of female leadership.

Film	Year	Decade	Thematic Category
9 to 5	1980	1980's	Access & Visibility
Working Girl	1988	1980's	Access & Visibility
Disclosure	1994	1990's	Fear of Female Power
The Associate	1996	1990's	Fear of Female Power
Erin Brockovich	2000	2000s	Control & Sacrifice
The Devil Wears Prada	2000	2000s	Control & Sacrifice
Joy	2015	2010s	Reinvention & Empathy
Miss Sloane	2016	2010s	Reinvention & Empathy

Bombshell	2019	2020s	Ethics & Deconstruction
Fair Play	2023	2020s	Ethics & Deconstruction

Appendix B: Example Film Analysis Table

Disclosure (1994)		
Basic Information		
Film	Disclosure	
Year	1994	
Main Female Leader	Meredith Johnson	
Leadership Role (Job)	Senior executive	
Leadership Construction		
Category	Notes	
Authority Style	very dominant; aggressive; manipulative; uses power + sexuality	
Key Leadership Behaviors	control; coercion; intimidation; manipulation; strategic aggression	
How Others React	seen as threatening; feared not respected; discomfort; distrust	
Is Authority Questioned?	yes - morally not competence	
Stereotype Identification		
Category	Yes/No	Notes
Ruthless Career Woman	Yes	cold; no empathy
Double-Bind Leader	Yes	ambition punished
Hubristic Villain	Yes	corrupt; abuses power
Emotional/Vulnerable Leader	No	
Moral Counterweight	No	
Sexualized Professional	Yes	power tied to sexuality
Incompetent/Questioned Professional	No	
Token Professional		
Excluded Leader		
Ivory Tower Executive		
Angry Black Woman		
Age-Limited Leader		
Masculinized Leader	Yes	masculine traits judged negatively
Lonely Career Woman	Implied	no personal life
Sacrificing Careerist	Implied	career over everything
Emotional & Relational Framing		
Category	Notes	
Emotional portrayal	cold; detached; no vulnerability	
Work-life balance	no personal life shown	
Relationships emphasized	transactional; power-based	
Isolation	isolated; outsider despite power	
Narrative Treatment		
Category	Notes	
Rewarded or punished	punished	
Ending	loses power; exposed	
Success framing	success framed as unethical	
Moral judgment	strong condemnation	
Key Scenes		
Scene	Why important	
Harassment scene	links power + sexuality; central conflict	
HR investigation	shows manipulation of system	
Final downfall	restores moral order; punishment	