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Leeds Business School

The “Gogglebox” and Gender

An Interdiscursive analysis of television representations and professional femininities

Dr Helen Rodgers, Dr Liz Yeomans and
Sallyann Halliday

Are Women in the Media Only Portrayed As Sex Icons? Statistics Show a Massive Gender Imbalance Across Industries

WFAA.com | 10/15/2014, October 15 (wfaa.com)

SHARE 17 | F 3827 | TWEET 36 | REPOST



A recent report by provided statistics women in U.S. are striking underrep the content of new entertainment, as women in entertai consequence, the effects, including i inequality. MissReve "expos how Ame concept that wom beauty and sexual this issue and emp challenge the limit potential.



Representations of Gender



The Representation of Women in the Media

Gender: MS1 Representations and Responses



Proposition and Key questions for our research

- Television and other media representations of women in work play an important yet permeable role in the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of gendered professional identities.
- How is cultural meaning shaped for women working in 3 distinct professions and consuming television as a cultural commodity?
- How are women and femininity being included in the organizational sphere? (Billing, 2011 in Lewis, 2014, p1848).

TV representations of the PR professional



TV representations of the Police



TV representations of Politics and Government



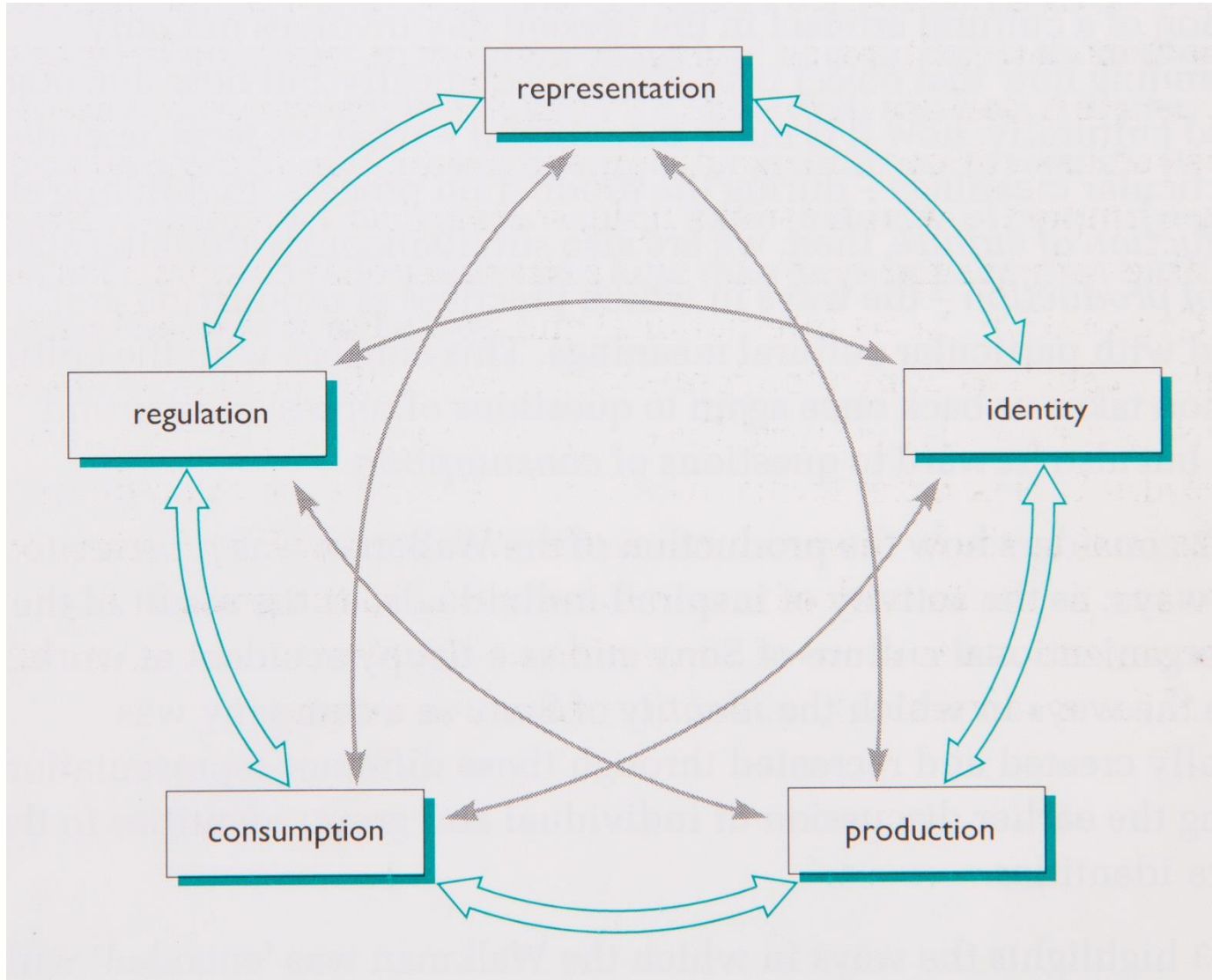
Methodology (primary data)

- Qualitative research design involving:
 - Initial discussions with course leaders in Criminology, Public Relations and Politics at Leeds Beckett University (January)
 - Recruit participants and survey televisual/media influences
 - 3 focus groups with first year students attending above courses (February)
 - 6-9 semi-structured interviews with practitioners at senior, middle and entry level (each in fields of criminology/police, public relations and politics) (February)

Table 1: Research Participants

Profession/subject	Student Focus group Student prospectors	Early-career professional (1-5 years)	Mid-career professional (6-14 years)	Senior-career professional (15+ years)
Politics	Sarah, Ann, and Tom	Tom		
FCO			Penny	Isabella and Maddy
Criminology/Police	Josh and Louisa	Amy	Lucy	Natasha
PR	Hannah, Emma, and James	Victoria	Rebecca	Tracey

Conceptual Framework - The Circuit of Culture



du Gay et al 1997

Analysis

- Critical Discourse analysis – defined as “emancipatory and politically committed to social change” (Jorgenson & Phillips, 2002, p.54).
- “interdiscursivity and intertextuality” (Fairclough, 1992, p.117)..... Some discourses will be privileged over others at a given point in time.
- Identifying dominant discourses and responses to these discourses (e.g. Feminism, post-feminism).

Representation

Tensions and Multiple Interpretations:

“A lot of women coming through still think PR is fluffy and consumer driven and that’s why a lot of cosmetic agencies and fashion agencies get away with things such as unpaid internships.”

Tracey – PR, senior career professional

“I don’t think that she is [a PR bunny] I think she’s quite authoritative; I think she’s quite a strong woman.....Byt whenever everyone talks about Sex and the City and Samantha Jones, they do go for the PR bunny, going out for cocktails, et cetera. I think that can be quite frustrating being in PR yourself to kind of see those and that’s what people think you do, which is far from the truth”

Emma - PR, student

Representation

– Embodying Leadership (Mavin, 2010; van Zoonen, 2006)

“I’m so sick of Theresa May’s shoes being discussed rather than her actual policies and what she does in Parliament, if you go to the Daily Mail, there’s pages and pages on her different outfits”.

“Hillary Clinton was referred to so much as a bitch during her [2008] campaign ...when all she was doing was asserting herself. If you’re a man and you’re asserting yourself you’re confident, you’re charismatic, and you’ve got style whereas if you’re a woman doing it [asserting yourself] you’re a bitch, you’re manipulative.”

Sarah, Politics undergraduate

Representation

Embodying Leadership:

“And I think it’s pretty clear, in Australia anyway, if you’re a female politician you’re going to have to deal with a whole set of issues about appearance and very, quite frankly, sexist things that a male politician just won’t have to deal with.”

Penny - FCO, mid career professional

“The young women need to dress and act for the part. Some of them look like Miss Whiplash.... There’s an issue of young women having a voice full stop. I think that it maybe feels unfeminine to be more business-orientated.”

Tracey – PR, senior career professional

Representation

Feminine Femininities: (Lewis, 2014)

“I was really pleased to see Babylon (Boyle, El Hosaini, Baird, Bain, Armstrong & Brown, 2014) because it showed a [PR] woman operating in a complex series of relationships that had to be managed, as well as the work itself. She’s glamorous; she’s self-contained.”

Rebecca – PR, mid career professional

“She’s amazing, she’s strong, she’s powerful, she’s confident, she’s sexually active...and she’s leading the investigation.”

(Gillian Anderson as Stella in *The Fall*)

Sarah – Politics undergraduate

- Feminine Femininities “hierarchical relationship existing between different modes of femininity” (Lewis, 2014, 1859)

Representation

“Interactive mirrors” (Coleman, 2012)

“I think they’ve got better at it ...as a force...one of the ones that was filmed in our Force area was the Happy Valley series with Sarah Lancashire.... Sarah actually came and spent a significant amount of time with officers on patrol so that the role that she portrayed was much more real and I think that’s the key - she spoke to people doing that job and spent time with people and saw first hand what it really is like rather than trying to portray a role that in her own mind should look like.”

Natasha – Police, senior career professional

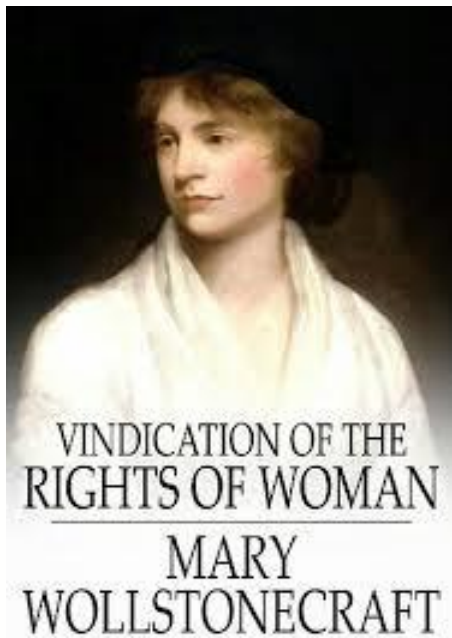
Representation

“Emancipatory change” – (Jorgenson & Phillips, 2002)

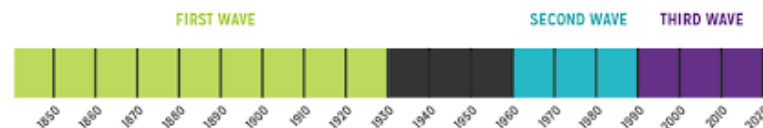
“There’s been a real focus on diversity and hearing different voices, so I get the sense that maybe once the organization was very mono-cultural, which is sort of straight White men...old... [laughter] and they had all the leadership positions and did all the talking but it’s quite clearly, everyone’s decided that that can’t happen in this world anymore.”

Penny – FCO, mid career professional

Key discourses – Feminism and Post Feminism?



WAVES OF FEMINISM:



Discussion

Ebbs and flows of feminism and femininities?

A broadening out of professional identities in the “location between feminism and femininity.” (Lewis, 2014 p.1857)

Relationships between feminism and post-feminism? “A re-signification of femininity, making available to organisational actors a range of emerging femininities” (Lewis, 2014, p.1848)

Strong/powerful identities portrayed in the professionally regulated areas of police and government. PR is only partially professionalised; hence a struggle for identity in reality.

Not “retreating to home as a matter of choice” remaining solidly and proudly within the public sphere.