

LIBERAL ARTS

Evocative Imagery: Integrating Annie Leibovitz's Women with Narratives about Work and Leadership

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Research indicates that role models strongly influence career aspirations, and yet little is known about what young women draw from visual portrayals of work and leadership. In this study, we presented a collection of images to fifty young women, and we asked them to create a narrative essay discussing the meaning of the image and its relationship to their understanding of women, work, and leadership. The photographs were chosen from a collection titled "Women," by Annie Leibovitz. Using a combination of photo elicitation and narrative analysis, we catalogued and categorized the photograph collection to analyze image selection. We

explored which photographs were chosen and drew connections based on the narratives in the essays. The photos that were not selected were analyzed in order to understand why those photos were not seen to possess leadership qualities. Next, we analyzed the essays to identify emergent themes in the narratives. Our findings shed light on what influences and inspires women in defining work and leadership, and the implications of this for career theory.

Research advisor Lorraine Kisselburgh writes, "In the U.S., images and media about women play an important role in career aspirations. Carolyn's research explores how women construct their social and career identities based on the images presented to them, and has important implications for understanding views of women and leadership in today's workplace."