Uncovering the Glass Cliff: Women’s leadership roles in times of crisis

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Abstract:
Research into the glass cliff examines what happens when women begin to take on leadership roles in increasing numbers. Extending the metaphor of the glass ceiling, 'the glass cliff' describes a leadership phenomenon whereby women are more likely to be found in leadership positions that are associated with a greater risk of failure and criticism - think Theresa May and Brexit. This talk will describe a decades worth of research which has uncovered the phenomenon of the glass cliff looking at archival research into company performance, experimental laboratory studies, and interviews with female leaders. We will also examine some of the underlying psychological processes: stereotypes, support networks, and organisational strategy; and a recent meta-analysis of the glass cliff phenomenon. Implications for gender equality initiatives and for women who are aiming for leadership roles will be discussed.

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