

## **Challenging or Reinforcing Stereotypes?**

How Body Diversity is Portrayed in Dutch Underwear Advertisements

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the portrayal of body diversity in underwear advertisements, through the research question: *How is body diversity portrayed in Dutch underwear advertisements for men and women?* With this research, this thesis aimed to fill an academic gap, as valuable insights on the inclusion of body diversity in underwear advertisements were missing. Furthermore, this thesis was socially relevant as it provided a better understanding of how body diversity is perceived by Dutch society and how this is reflected in the media. The analysis considered age, body size, and ethnicity as diversity traits. By applying a visual critical discourse analysis and an intersectional approach to 50 underwear video advertisements from the Netherlands published between 2017 and 2022, various findings emerged that can be divided into four categories. These categories are: portrayals that reinforced or challenged stereotypes, personal and impersonal portrayals, group portrayals, and sexual portrayals. This thesis found that body diversity is mainly portrayed through portrayals that either reinforce or challenge stereotypes, through a personal emphasis on the model, and through an application of humour in male advertisements. Additionally, the exclusion of models with diversity traits in certain portrayals further reinforced stereotypes. The inclusion of diverse models in the advertisements overall did not appear to bring more diversity in terms of portrayals, as gender stereotypes were still present. Additionally, ethnic stereotypes were often present in advertisements for men. Models with a larger body size were found to be mainly depicted in a personal manner, and only rarely in a sexy or sexual manner. Additionally, men with diversity traits were often included in humorous advertisements. With the exclusion of larger-sized models from active and relationship portrayals, the advertisements appeared to reinforce the idea that larger-bodied people are less active and that attractiveness is associated with body size. These findings did not only have academic relevance but also found their significance in societal implications, as this thesis aimed to raise awareness on the presence and use of stereotypical and sexual portrayals in underwear advertisements, and thereby affect the way society perceives these portrayals and the people that are portrayed.

**KEYWORDS:** *underwear advertisements, body diversity, portrayals, stereotypes, sexualisation*

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Theoretical Framework.....	3
2.1. Introduction.....	3
2.2. Body diversity and intersectionality .....	3
2.3. Hegemonic masculinity and femininity .....	5
2.4. Gender roles in advertisements .....	6
2.5. Ethnic diversity in fashion and advertisements.....	8
2.6. Age portrayals in advertisements .....	10
2.7. Stereotypes in Dutch media and humorous advertisements.....	10
2.8. Marketing perspective.....	11
2.9. Challenges of advertising underwear .....	12
2.10. Conclusion .....	13
3. Methods.....	15
3.1. Introduction.....	15
3.2. Research method.....	15
3.3. Data sample.....	16
3.4. Defining the model’s age, ethnicity, and body size .....	17
3.5. Operationalisation and ethics .....	18
4. Results.....	21
4.1. Introduction.....	21
4.2. Summary of key findings .....	21
4.3. Challenging and reinforcing stereotypes.....	21
4.4. Personal and impersonal portrayals .....	32
4.5. Group portrayals .....	34
4.6. Sexual portrayals.....	35
4.7. Conclusion .....	38
5. Conclusion .....	40
5.1. Conclusion and discussion .....	40

5.2. Limitations and recommendations .....	42
References.....	43
Appendix A: Video advertisements .....	49
Appendix B: Table for visual analysis .....	56
Appendix C: Example of visual analysis .....	57
Appendix D: Body traits represented in the advertisements.....	60

# 1. Introduction

The media is increasingly challenging beauty ideals and plus-size models are making more appearances in advertisements as a result of calls to the media to increase diversity (Steward & Ogden, 2020; Pounders, 2018). Fashion brands and Dutch fashion magazines are also increasingly integrating models of various ethnicities and sizes, thereby aiming for more diversity in the fashion world (Narinx, 2020; Lukassen, 2020). Underwear brand Hunkemöller, for example, has created an Inclusivity Workgroup, in which people of different ethnicities, body sizes, and skill levels are given the opportunity to improve the brand in terms of inclusivity and diversity (Engbers, 2020). However, despite these current changes, research has indicated that slim models still appear to remain the standard in media and advertisements (Steward & Ogden, 2020; De Freitas et al., 2018). Additionally, little is known about the way beauty ideals are challenged in the media, and how models that deviate from the ideal are portrayed.

Previous research has focused mainly on what kind of body diversity has been represented in advertisements (De Freitas et al., 2018; Jung, 2011), and on consumer perspectives of body diversity in advertisements (Beale et al., 2016; Barry, 2014; Diedrichs & Lee, 2010), thereby lacking knowledge on *how* diverse bodies have been portrayed in the advertisements, for example by considering the model's role in the advertisement's narrative and the body poses. This thesis aimed to fill this academic gap, by researching how body diversity is portrayed in advertisements. This research has taken a particular focus on underwear advertisements published in the Netherlands, and more specifically on video advertisements, as videos provide more of a narrative and more details of the body than one image would. Furthermore, from a marketing perspective, the best way to advertise underwear is by displaying it on a model's body (Amy-Chinn, 2006). As underwear provides limited coverage, more is shown of the body, and thus there is more content to analyse. The research question for this thesis is as follows: *How is body diversity portrayed in Dutch underwear advertisements for men and women?* In order to better understand how diversity is portrayed in the Dutch underwear advertisements, this thesis included a comparative element in the analysis, and therefore the analysis included both diverse models and models that follow the ideal according to the media and Western society. A deeper understanding of the portrayal of diverse models in advertisements matters because of its possible impact on society. Media portrayals have the power to reinforce ideas of how people perceive themselves and how society overall perceives others. Therefore, understanding how people are portrayed in advertisements would allow for a better understanding of how body diversity is perceived by society. This is especially significant since inaccurate media representations can wrongfully represent social groups, which can be harmful to society (Taylor & Costello, 2017; Halliwell et al., 2011; Gill, 2008).

Previous research has shown that not only the predominance of idealised models, but also ideal gender roles (Barry, 2014), sexualisation, and female objectification (Amy-Chinn, 2006;

Jobling, 2003) have been present in underwear advertisements, which can be harmful to the audience as these portrayals can lead to increasing self-objectification (Halliwell et al., 2011). This thesis aimed to gain a better understanding of whether diverse models are portrayed similar to idealised models, or whether there is a difference in portrayal. Therefore, this thesis finds its social relevance in developing an understanding on whether body diversity has also allowed for a shift in portrayal, and thus how people are represented, or whether sexualisation and gender roles still remain predominant in the media. To research these body portrayals, a visual critical discourse analysis has been applied to 50 Dutch video advertisements. Critical discourse analysis offered the right tools to gain deeper insights into how underwear brands portray diversity, and how these portrayals reflect their idea of body diversity in a larger societal context (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Additionally, this thesis took an intersectional, theoretical approach by considering overlapping body traits and analysing their role into the advertisements' body portrayals (Shields, 2008). Applying intersectionality to the analysis has helped to understand how the interplay of these body traits might lead to different body portrayals.

This thesis will start with a theoretical framework. This framework includes a definition of body diversity, a discussion of previously found portrayals of different social groups in the media, and gender roles and expectations according to Western society. The framework also includes a marketing perspective on the inclusion of stereotypical portrayals, and the challenges of advertising underwear. The theoretical framework is followed by a methodology section, which provides further insights into the methods used for this thesis and the operationalisation of the analysis. This chapter is followed by a discussion of the results of the analysis and the themes that emerged, and the results chapter is followed by a conclusion and discussion.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Introduction

The following chapter will examine relevant insights on previous research towards body diversity and gender roles in society, as well as gender, ethnicity, and age portrayals and stereotypes present in advertisements and in the media overall. This chapter will provide more insights into the ideal body according to Western society and how body diversity can be defined when moving away from this ideal. The theoretical framework will furthermore discuss theories of intersectionality and hegemonic masculinity and femininity, which have been found valuable during the analysis. Apart from providing stereotypical portrayals that have been previously found in the media, this chapter will also elaborate on the challenges of advertising underwear, and advertisers' motives behind the use of stereotypes, including the role of the mirror and mold argument in this discussion. These theories form the framework that supported this thesis' analysis on the portrayal of body diversity in Dutch male and female underwear advertisements. The chapter ends with a conclusion which further explains how these theories have been applied in the analysis of this thesis.

### 2.2. Body diversity and intersectionality

Body diversity can be assessed in many different ways. Therefore, it is important to note which aspects have been considered during the analysis. When assessing body diversity, this thesis considered a model's body size, age, and ethnicity as body characteristics, which is in line with the characteristics used by De Freitas et al. (2018) and Barry (2014) when assessing body diversity. Furthermore, following the definitions of the ideal and predominant body image in Western society, body diversity can be found in bodies that deviate from the idealised body image. Therefore, it is important to define the ideal body according to the media and Western society, as this is essentially what body diversity is moving away from.

This image of the ideal body in terms of size has changed over the years both for men and women; however in contemporary Western culture, previous research predominantly defined the ideal male body as either muscular with low body fat, or skinny (Barry, 2014; Diedrichs & Lee, 2010; Jung, 2011). In this ideal body image, a distinguishment can be made between an editorial look, which is slimmer and mainly occurs in looks for designer brands, and a commercial look, which is more muscular and mainly occurs in looks for mass fashion brands (Barry, 2014). When it comes to the predominant female body in fashion, Mears (2010) also distinguished between the commercial and the editorial look. While the ideal editorial look prefers skinny body figures, the ideal commercial look allows for a bit more curves, but still a thin figure. For most studies, the ideal female body was mainly defined as thin (Diedrichs & Lee, 2010; Beale et al., 2016). The idealised body is therefore also often referred to as the thin ideal, as the ideal female body is thin according to society (Beale et al., 2016). When it comes to ethnicity and age in Western society, the predominant image represented

in the media has been found to be young and white and the ideal body image thus has a low ethnic and age diversity (De Freitas et al., 2018; Barry, 2014). Following this ideal body image according to Western society, diversity in terms of age can be found in older models, and diversity in terms of ethnicity can be found in models with a non-white skin colour. Furthermore, Lewis et al. (2011) and Twigg (2010) noted how people over 40 years old are seldomly represented in fashion magazines. In short, this thesis has considered body diversity to be defined through the aspects body size, ethnicity, and age. Body diversity can be found in models that are larger in size, have a non-white ethnicity, and/or are older in age, more specifically over 40 years old. These traits to assess body diversity are in line with previous studies on body diversity (De Freitas et al., 2018; Barry, 2014). Male body diversity can furthermore be found in models that are less muscular.

By researching different aspects of body diversity, namely age, body size, and ethnicity, this thesis has applied an intersectional approach to the analysis. Intersectionality as a framework allowed for an analysis of different overlapping social categories. Intersectionality argues that “social identities which serve as organizing features of social relations, mutually constitute, reinforce, and naturalize one another” (Shields, 2008, p. 302). Intersectionality further argues that one’s social position reflects their intersecting social traits, and this theoretical approach aims to show that the way someone is treated in a social environment may be affected by intersecting social traits, such as ethnicity or gender (Reddy-Best et al., 2017). Therefore, applying intersectionality is suitable for understanding how these different traits play a role in the portrayal of various models in underwear advertisements. By not only studying one of these traits, but instead considering multiple body traits at once, allowed for the analysis to provide deeper insights into how the interplay of these traits might lead to different body portrayals. Intersectionality has also been applied to body traits by previous research, which have indicated that an intersectional approach leads to an increasing understanding in the complexity of one’s social position as a result of layered social and body traits (Biefeld et al., 2021; Shields, 2008; Reddy-Best et al., 2017; van Amsterdam, 2013). For example, Biefeld et al. (2021) and van Amsterdam (2013) both pointed out the significance of considering someone’s ethnicity and body size when aiming to understand their sexualisation. For example, Biefeld et al. (2021) found that the sexualisation of a woman is affected by both their body size and their ethnicity, thus the overlap of these body traits could either strengthen or lower the sexualisation of a woman. Furthermore, Van Amsterdam (2013) argued that the overlap of social and body traits such as social class, ethnicity, and sexuality co-produce inequalities in intersection with someone’s body size. Therefore, taking into account overlapping body traits is important when aiming to understand a person’s social position and their portrayal. The intersectional approach as part of the analysis will be further discussed in the methods chapter.

As well as assessing the types of bodies that are represented in underwear advertisements, this thesis mainly focused on *how* these bodies are represented. As also noted by Koeman et al. (2007), to better understand how people are represented, it is important to understand the roles and functions



given to particular people. Therefore, insights into behavioural expectations according to Western society allowed for a more detailed analysis of how these roles may be integrated into the portrayal of diverse models, based on their ethnicity, age, and gender. The following paragraphs will therefore provide more information on gender, ethnicity and age stereotypes, and previously found portrayals of these groups in advertisements.

### 2.3. Hegemonic masculinity and femininity

First, of all, this thesis' analysis was supported by theories of hegemonic masculinity and femininity. According to Western society, men would have to adapt to gender expectations that follow hegemonic masculinity, which can be expressed through behaviour and appearance (Barry, 2014). As defined by Connell (1995), hegemonic masculinity is “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (p. 77). Hegemonic masculinity can thus be explained as masculine behaviour and traits that embody the dominance of men in society and thereby considers women as subordinate.

Apart from hegemonic masculinity, Connell (1995) also distinguished other types of masculinity. Subordinate masculinities are considered to be related to homosexuality and are considered inferior to hegemonic masculinities, which are related to heterosexuality, whiteness, and the middle class. Two other masculinities are complicit masculinity and marginalised masculinity. Connell (1995) defined people belonging to complicit masculinity as admirers of hegemonic masculinity, and marginalised masculinities are created by men with a disadvantageous role in society, for example because of their ethnicity or class.

When assessing the female role in society, Connell (1987) rejected the concept hegemonic femininity and replaced this with emphasized femininity, as this would better reflect the gender order, in which men are more dominant. Behaviours of emphasized femininity are ones that support male power, and usually focus on nurturing behaviours and female virtues (Kincaid et al., 2022). However, Schippers (2007) argued that hegemonic masculinity and femininity support the gender order together, and thus considers hegemonic femininity the appropriate term. She also does not call other femininities subordinate, as these other femininities have masculine traits, and can therefore not be considered as inferior. Therefore, she calls them pariah femininities, because when these traits are embodied by women, they contaminate the traditional gender roles in society. These differ from alternative femininities, as alternative femininities intentionally disrupt the gender roles and thus the dominance of men, while pariah femininities are less disruptive.

These theories find their relevance in the way gender roles are characterised and displayed in society. The theories of hegemonic masculinity and femininity and their alternatives have been useful when aiming to understand whether gender role expectations have become more diverse with an

increasing diversity in body types, or whether gender portrayals still follow hegemonic masculinity and femininity ideologies. Furthermore, when considering that hegemonic masculinity has been associated with whiteness and marginalised masculinity has been associated with different ethnicities, this thesis further assessed whether these roles are reflected in advertisements, or whether these roles and expectations have been changing. The next paragraph will provide a more detailed overview of how previous research has found these gender roles to be portrayed in advertisements.

#### 2.4. Gender roles in advertisements

Gender roles and gender stereotypes are two concepts that are often used interchangeably, and both refer to “the belief that certain attributes differentiate men and women” (Eisend, 2019, p. 72). Gender roles have been found to be frequently used in advertisements. The portrayal of gender roles in advertisements can occur through different traits, including physical characteristics, personality traits, social roles, and occupations. Stereotypical portrayals of women often focused on their appearance, and they have been found to be portrayed in more passive and submissive roles that are usually family-oriented and rarely professional (Conley & Ramsey, 2011; Grau & Zotos, 2016). Women were furthermore portrayed with a flawless skin, and advertisements appeared to support the idea that women should take up less space (Conley & Ramsey, 2011). Men were furthermore stereotypically portrayed as more independent, authoritarian, and professional, and their portrayals focused less on their appearance (Grau & Zotos, 2016).

Female underwear advertisements have been found to express sexuality and eroticism, and to support the male gaze, as argued by Amy-Chinn (2006). Female models were found to be often objectified, and the advertisements were therefore argued to be mainly appealing to heterosexual men. However, the nature of underwear advertisements would make this hard to change. Since female underwear advertisements essentially portray a female body wearing limited clothes, it is difficult to make this unappealing to heterosexual men. Biefeld et al. (2021) additionally found that sexualised black women were more popular than non-sexualised black women among the audience, thereby reinforcing the risk of black women being hypersexualised compared to white women. They also found that plus-sized women were overall considered to be less popular and athletic, but smarter and nicer than skinny women, while skinny women were seen as more sexually experienced and sexually relevant.

Furthermore, Reddy-Best et al. (2017) noted how previous research regarding female body portrayals in fashion have frequently found stereotypical representations of women. These stereotypes included a passive and non-dominant role, and the portrayal of women in a home environment. Zawisza and Cinnirella (2010) also noted on the traditional role of women in the household and of men in business roles. Others, however, argued that the rise of feminism, changes in the labour force, and changing family structures have affected gender roles in society, and have thereby also affected

advertisements, as noted by Grau and Zotos (2016). When it comes to male portrayals, men were less likely to be depicted as lead character in advertisements over the years, and there has been a small increase in men portrayed as father or men portrayed in other 'softer' roles, which follows society's changing gender roles (Fowler & Thomas, 2015; Grau & Zotos, 2016). However, men were still less likely to be depicted in a home setting (Fowler & Thomas, 2015).

An and Kim (2007) also noted on stereotypical portrayals of men and women, including the tendency to depict men as taller and larger compared to women, to depict women lying on floors and beds, to depict women stroking the surface or objects with their fingers, and to depict fathers as more distant and relating mainly to sons, and mothers as relating mainly to daughters. Even though social developments such as changes in the labour force and the rise of feminism did affect gender roles in society and thereby also portrayals in advertisements, Grau and Zotos (2016) also argued that gender stereotyping still exists. Women were still more likely to be portrayed in dependent roles, while men were depicted in independent roles outside of the house. Furthermore, women in advertisements were often younger, while men were more likely to be older.

Research by Gill (2008) somewhat contradicts previous findings on women being depicted as passive, as she found that there has been a significant shift in female representations in advertising recently, and claims that women are increasingly depicted as active and sexually powerful. Instead of a sexually passive portrayal, where women are often depicted as unintelligent objects of sex, there has been a shift to women portrayed as active, smart, beautiful, and powerful sexual subjects, making their own decisions. Part of this shift can be considered as positive, as noted by Gill (2008), as the new portrayal allows women more power. However, even though women have been given more power, this power has been given in the form of sexual agency, and thus sexual objectification of women still appears to be present in advertisements that depict women. Furthermore, it becomes expected of women to be sexually skilled and knowledgeable. Halliwell et al. (2011) therefore argued that both these representations are still depictions of self-objectification as both forms of portrayal prioritise a woman's appearance above any other characteristic. Gill (2008) argued that depictions of sexual agency can even be considered as more harmful than passive portrayals, as the active portrayal of women represents women internalising the male gaze, and thereby objectifying themselves. Fowler and Thomas (2015), however, found a decrease in the sexualisation of women in advertisements, therefore their findings contradict those of Gill (2008).

Similar to the findings in female underwear advertisements, previous research on male advertisements has also found a presence of eroticism. According to Jobling (2003), this could be explained by the notion that women are often considered to be the main purchasers of men's underwear. This study also found that male underwear advertisements increasingly included signs over the years that subtly referred to homosexuality, and were only noted by gay men because of their subtlety. This was used as a strategy to make the advertisements attractive to a larger audience. Even though this appeared to be a good tactic to attract a larger group of men, these signs can also be

considered as ‘queerbaiting’, which refers to the tactic of suggesting homosexual relationships without actualising them (Brennan, 2016). This approach is often negatively interpreted by its audiences because the relationships are only suggestive and not actualised, which indicates that this tactic can have both its advantages and disadvantages.

Thus, when it comes to developments regarding gender portrayals, previous studies somewhat contradict each other, as also noted by Grau and Zotos (2016). Even though it is argued that societal changes affected gender portrayals, stereotypes still exist in advertisements. While Fowler and Thomas (2015) found a decrease in the sexualisation of women in advertisements, Gill (2008) and Halliwell et al. (2011) argue that only the type of sexualisation has changed and that women are still sexually objectified. While men were increasingly depicted in softer roles, they were still depicted in independent roles and less likely to be depicted in a home setting (Fowler & Thomas, 2015; Grau & Zotos, 2016).

Furthermore, these previous studies on body portrayals in underwear advertisement indicate that, when analysing underwear advertisements, it is important to consider the advertisement’s audience and how sexuality is expressed in the advertisement based on this. Research has also shown the significance of analysing the advertisement’s setting as part of the portrayed gender roles. Even though these articles do provide insights into body portrayals in underwear and fashion advertisements, more recent research regarding body portrayals in underwear advertisements is lacking. Furthermore, these studies did not take into consideration how body diversity is incorporated into the underwear advertisements, most likely because the articles are outdated, and body diversity has only more recently been included into the fashion world (Pounders, 2018).

## 2.5. Ethnic diversity in fashion and advertisements

Research increasingly focuses on why advertisers should create more ethnically diverse advertisements, for example by noting on cosmopolitanism and stakeholder preferences. Cooley et al. (2015) argued that an increase of cosmopolitanism reflects an acceptance of other cultures and preferences, and therefore this mentality can and should be incorporated into advertisements. Furthermore, Taylor and Costello (2017) noted on stakeholder requests for organisations to consider all groups that are related to their business. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and as societies are becoming more diverse, almost every organisations has stakeholders from multiple ethnic backgrounds, which should therefore also be addressed.

Before analysing how different ethnicities are portrayed in underwear advertisements, it is important to consider how different ethnicities have been portrayed in the media in the past. However, past research on ethnic minority portrayals has mainly focused on the United States, and is therefore limited to portrayals of African, Asian, and Hispanic groups (Taylor & Costello, 2017). When assessing the presence and portrayal of diverse ethnicities in advertisements, Rubie-Davies et al.

(2013) argued that stereotypes of ethnic minorities in the media often reflect the dominant group's perception of these groups, which can lead to an inaccurate portrayal of the ethnic minority groups. They found that ethnic minorities were more present in advertisements that focus on negative aspects of society, such as drinking or gambling, and less present in family-oriented advertisements. When it comes to African people, early research found that they were depicted as being of lower status and as unskilled labourers, as described by Taylor and Costello (2017). However, more recent studies did find improvements in their portrayal, even though there is still an underrepresentation of African people in business settings, thereby contributing to the negative portrayal of Africans as laid-back. African people have also often been cast as athletes, causing an over-emphasis on their physical skills, and a neglect of their intellectual skills (Bristor et al., 1995). Furthermore, multiple articles found that Asian people were often portrayed as well-educated, successful, and serious, and were mainly present in business-related advertisements, while they were missing in family-related and leisure-related advertisements (Rubie-Davies et al., 2013; Taylor & Costello, 2017; Dalisay & Tan, 2009). Asians are often portrayed according to the stereotype that their main focus is work instead of family and leisure, which is why they are mainly portrayed in business settings (Dalisay & Tan, 2009). Research on Hispanic people in advertisements has been limited, but early research has mainly found them to be portrayed as uneducated, and commonly depicted in minor roles (Taylor & Costello, 2017).

In general, ethnic minorities have appeared to be portrayed in advertisements in a stereotypical manner. Even though some stereotypical portrayals have decreased, as noted by Taylor and Costello (2017), ethnic minority groups are still stereotyped in advertisements, including a significantly greater presence in roles focusing on the negative aspects of society (Rubie-Davies et al., 2013). Previous research also notes the potential harm of including gender and ethnic stereotypes in advertisements, as it wrongfully represents certain groups of society (Taylor & Costello, 2017; Halliwell et al., 2011; Gill, 2008). Even though the portrayal of Asian people as successful might seem positive, this portrayal might still be harmful as it can lead to increasing pressure and poor self-images among Asian people (Taylor & Costello, 2017). When considering the fashion world in particular, ethnic diversity has been found to be more common, mainly in commercial fashion (Mears, 2010). Compared to editorial models, commercial fashion models tend to have a fuller figure and ethnic diversity is more accepted. As commercial fashion aims to reach a certain target audience, which is likely to consist of different ethnicities, there is more ethnic diversity in commercial fashion. Editorial models, however, tend to be white and skinnier. As the editorial market is considered riskier and more uncertain, producers hold stronger to conventions in the fashion world, and therefore mainly include white models. (Mears, 2010)

## 2.6. Age portrayals in advertisements

Ageism refers to prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination based on age (Ng, 2021). Previous research on age portrayals and stereotypes has mainly focused on portrayals of older people (Chasteen et al., 2002). According to Zhang et al. (2006), research has shown that older people are generally portrayed positively in advertisements, although their portrayals are less positive than other age groups, while Robinson et al. (2008) argued that older people are mainly portrayed in an undesirable manner. Furthermore, Levy and Macdonald (2016) argued there has been a shift from portrayals of older people as wise and kind to portrayals of older people as burdensome and incompetent. In magazine advertisements, older people were overall depicted less favourably than younger people, however, advertisements that ridiculed older people were disliked by both the younger and the older audience (Robinson et al., 2008). In television series, however, most older people were depicted in good health, as involved in physical activity, as employed, and as social (Kessler et al., 2004).

In general, research on portrayals of older people has found positive portrayals of older people as happy, experienced, wise, generous, and caring, and has found negative portrayals of older people as fragile, senile, helpless, forgetful, and homebound (Zhang et al., 2006; Chasteen et al., 2002; Ng, 2021). Stereotypical portrayals of younger people have been researched less, however, positive characteristics of younger people included being energetic, adventurous, ambitious, healthy, and carefree, while negative characteristics included being reckless, inexperienced, disrespectful, lazy, irresponsible, and vain (Chasteen et al., 2002). When considering the fashion world in particular, there has often been a tension between fashion and age, as noted by Twigg (2010). According to this article, fashion has often been found to be associated with youth, and therefore fashion studies have frequently neglected older people. Mainly people under 40 are represented in the fashion world, and older people portrayed in fashion magazines appeared to reflect the ageing ideal to age without showing visual signs of ageing (Twigg, 2010; Lewis et al., 2011).

## 2.7. Stereotypes in Dutch media and humorous advertisements

Previous research regarding diversity in Dutch television programmes has found that the programmes were not very representative of Dutch society (Koeman et al., 2007; Segijn et al., 2014). These articles found that overall, women and ethnic minorities were underrepresented, and that there was a clear presence of status and gender stereotypes. The Dutch public broadcasting system does have the mission to “address all groups of society and to (re)present them in the most balanced fashion possible” (Koeman et al., 2007, p. 99). However, this did not always appear to be realised. Koeman et al. (2007) and Segijn et al. (2014) both found stereotypical portrayals of women, ethnic minorities, and older people. Women were often portrayed in caring roles, ethnic minorities were often portrayed creating conflicts, and older people were also represented in a stereotypical way,

namely as dependent and in need of help. Even though this research did not include advertisements, it does indicate the significance of understanding the roles given to particular people when assessing how they are represented. Furthermore, these studies do provide relevant insights into the kinds of stereotypes that are present in the Dutch media, which is relevant for this study when assessing how these aforementioned groups are portrayed in Dutch advertisements. However, it is also important to note that this research can be considered outdated, and that these portrayals in the Dutch media may have changed over time, to which this thesis makes further contributions. In terms of guidelines for Dutch advertisements, there are no clear rules that refer to the need of a balanced or diverse societal representation (Stichting Reclame Code, n.d.). However, the guidelines do clearly state that “advertising may not contain or promote any type of discrimination on the basis of gender, race or ethnic descent, nationality, religion or philosophy, handicap, age or sexual orientation.” (Stichting Reclame Code, n.d., "Article 2" section).

Previous research also noted on the use of humour in advertisements that use stereotypical portrayals (Eisend et al., 2014; Rößner et al., 2016). Using stereotypes to convey humour can occur either when the traditional role is broken and thereby contradicts people’s expectations, or when the traditional role is exaggerated and thereby deviates from the social norm of changing societal roles (Eisend et al., 2014). When considering gender stereotypes and the use of humour, Eisend et al. (2014) found that male stereotypes are more prevalent in humorous advertisements, and female stereotypes occur more in non-humorous advertisements. The use of humour can be beneficial for a brand as stereotypes are processed more positively when humour is added, especially when non-traditional stereotypes are applied. Additionally, previous research has found that men are more often the source of humour in advertisements than women, and that humour has been considered as sexually attractive to women, which might explain the use of humour by men (Ivanov et al., 2019). Furthermore, research focusing on adding humour to ethnic minority stereotypes has found that it positively affects the way the advertisements are perceived, and that this effect is the strongest for minority groups (Rößner et al., 2016). Thus, this thesis also considered the use of humour in advertisements, in order to gain a better understanding of how humour may have affected body image portrayals in the underwear advertisements.

## 2.8. Marketing perspective

The motives behind the use of stereotypical portrayals can be argued in different ways. Previous research that considered the point of view of advertisers has found that stereotypes were applied in advertisements for various reasons (Windels, 2016). Advertisers believed that stereotypes were based on the truth, attractive to audiences, and easy to communicate. Furthermore, stereotypes are supposed to simplify processing and categorisation, and prevent distraction and thinking. Other factors that contribute to the use of stereotypes are the 30-second time constraint of a commercial, the

use of segmentation research, the presence of a masculine culture in creative departments, and the risk aversion of clients. The use of stereotypes in advertisements thus appeared to be an obvious solution to advertisers, as it made the advertisements easy to understand.

Furthermore, as noted by Eisend (2019), previous research has indicated that the use of gender roles in advertisements has a positive effect on the brand. This happens because these advertisements are in line with the social expectations of audiences with more traditional perspectives. However, less traditional consumers have been found to prefer counter-stereotypical portrayals in advertisements, and therefore it appears that advertisers have become more likely to alienate consumers when using gender roles in advertisements. Especially women have been found to be more interested in counter-stereotypical portrayals, and gender role portrayals were more favoured by men (Eisend et al., 2014).

Additionally, when arguing why stereotypes are used and whether it is the responsibility of advertisers to break these stereotypes, two perspectives have been taken to argue the responsibility of advertisers, which are the 'mirror and the mold' argument (Eisend, 2019; Grau & Zotos, 2016). According to the mirror argument, advertisements reflect or mirror values that already exist in society. This perspective argues that, when it comes to stereotypes in advertisements, these portrayals correspond to societal expectations and thus advertisers mirror these expectations. Since there are many factors that affect social reality, the influence of advertisements is considered almost negligible. Because of this negligible impact, advertisers decide to use existing values instead of trying to change them. The mold argument, however, argues that people's perceptions of society are shaped by the media, and thus also by advertisements. According to this viewpoint, advertisements create, shape, and reinforce gender roles and societal expectations, and are therefore responsible for society's perception of gender roles.

While both the mold and the mirror argument can be considered valid, there is still discussion on which one is more appropriate and thus whether advertisers carry a responsibility when including stereotypes in advertisements. Regarding this topic, Tuncay Zayer and Coleman (2014) found that not all advertisers acknowledged the negative impact that the use of gender portrayals can have on society, and that not all advertisers approached advertisements with an ethical lens. Even though some appeared to feel an ethical responsibility, others did not consider ethics in the workplace. Furthermore, when considering the dominance of white people in advertisements, Rubie-Davies et al. (2013) argued that this could be based on a fear of advertisers that white people would not want to buy the advertised product anymore if more ethnic minorities are included in the advertisement.

## 2.9. Challenges of advertising underwear

The nature of underwear advertisements has made it challenging for advertisers to avoid comments on sexuality or controversy. As noted by Amy-Chinn (2006), "from the point of view of



the manufacturer, there is an obvious need to show the product – and to show it to best effect requires that it be displayed on the body” (p. 156). Therefore, underwear advertisements are quickly considered as sexual or controversial (Amy-Chinn, 2006; Wailer, 2007). Furthermore, Wailer (2007) found that nudity in women’s underwear advertisements was considered by audiences as an offensive aspect, making it even harder for underwear advertisers to display their products without being considered offensive by their audience.

Apart from the challenge of not offending the audience when displaying models wearing limited clothing, the increasing demand for more inclusion and diversity in underwear advertisements brings another challenge to advertisers, as this demand does not appear to be the case for all consumers (Pounders, 2018). On the one hand, some consumers increasingly demand for more inclusive body shapes and sizes, while on the other hand some consumers consider the feature of plus-size models to be a promotion of unhealthy behaviours and obesity. Paradoxes such as these can make it hard for underwear brands to come to a decision regarding the inclusion of plus-size models. Even though the fashion industry and advertisers claim that thin models are more effective, research has found contradicting results, indicating that consumers prefer more diverse bodies that better represent society (Barry, 2014; Diedrichs & Lee, 2010; Beale et al., 2016). While body ideals are increasingly challenged in advertisements (Steward & Ogden, 2020), the use of idealised bodies also remains a habit. According to Cole (2014), it has also become more common to include sportsmen as models in underwear advertisements. The use of such idealised bodies raises the question whether underwear advertisements are aiming to sell a product or rather a fantasy of an idealised body (Cole, 2014).

## 2.10. Conclusion

This theoretical framework included insights from previous research on body diversity and media portrayals of diverse social groups. A discussion of the ideal body according to western society and aspects in which body diversity can be found provided a framework on what to look for when assessing body diversity in underwear advertisements. As previously mentioned, this thesis thus focused on body size, ethnicity, and age when assessing body diversity. This chapter furthermore argued why an intersectional approach was taken in this thesis, as this approach allowed to combine different characteristics when analysing body portrayals. The discussion of previous theories also provided insights on how certain portrayals derive from societal norms and expectations such as hegemonic masculinity and femininity. Additionally, the perspective from advertisers was discussed, as this provided insights on their decision-making processes when it comes to stereotypes and portrayals. This perspective has proven useful for the analysis, as it allowed for a better understanding on why certain decisions have been made in the advertisements when assessing the way different bodies are portrayed.

A significantly large section of the theoretical framework focused on previously found stereotypes and portrayals of different social groups. These findings contributed to the analysis for this thesis, as they specified certain ethnicity, gender, and age portrayals that might also be relevant and present in underwear advertisements. These articles have furthermore shown the significance of considering the setting in which someone is portrayed, such as a business or a home setting. Research on body size diversity in the media and advertisements appeared to be limited. However, this is thus where this thesis found the opportunity to fill this academic gap. Furthermore, previous findings on ethnic, gender, and age stereotypes also allowed for this thesis to assess whether stereotypes are linked to ideal bodies or whether a change in body types has also made room for a change in the portrayal of different social groups.

## 3. Methods

### 3.1. Introduction

This thesis has examined video advertisements by applying a visual, critical discourse analysis, in order to answer the research question: *How is body diversity portrayed in Dutch underwear advertisements for men and women?* The approach for this research was a qualitative approach, and thus the aim was not to make large-scale generalisations, but instead to gather rich data in order to gain a deeper understanding of body portrayals in underwear advertisements. The focus was therefore also not on counting the different types of body diversity represented in the advertisements, but instead on understanding how these bodies are represented. Therefore, the thesis also took a comparative approach, where body portrayals of different body sizes, ages, and ethnicities were analysed and compared. These portrayals included the role of the model in the overall narrative, the different poses, the angles in which the model is shown, and the overall setting of the advertisement. The following paragraphs will dive deeper into how this analysis has been conducted, and how the different aspects of the body portrayals have been examined.

### 3.2. Research method

This thesis has applied a critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis had been chosen as approach as it offers the right tools to better understand how underwear brands portray diversity among men and women, and how this reflects their idea of body diversity in a larger societal context (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Critical discourse analysis is used to analyse relationships of power, hegemony, and inequality through language or visuals (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). It additionally reveals insights into the implicit meanings of a text, and how it persuades people to (unconsciously) take over this meaning (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The visuals are thus used to create and convey meaning that are often related to hegemony and inequalities in society. In the case of this thesis, which focused on how diverse bodies are portrayed, critical discourse analysis has demonstrated to be a proper tool to assess how they are represented in Dutch underwear advertisements, and how relationships between the represented people can be defined.

Critical discourse analysis argues that the creator of a visual always has certain options available that determine what the image will look like, and that the choices that they make are based on how they want to represent society, as is noted by Machin and Mayr (2012). Therefore, the study of visuals is an appropriate way to learn more about how certain people are perceived by society. At the same time, the way people are represented in visuals has an effect on its viewers and the way they perceive them, making visuals a powerful tool to either maintain or change certain social relationships and inequalities. As previous research on portrayals in advertisements has often taken a quantitative approach when doing content analysis (An & Kim, 2007; Carrigan & Szmigin, 1998; Conley & Ramsey, 2011; Eisend et al., 2014; Fowler & Thomas, 2012), this thesis finds it novelty in taking a

qualitative approach, thereby aiming to gain a deeper understanding of body diversity portrayals in advertisements. The practical steps of discourse analysis that have been applied to the analysis of this thesis will be further discussed in section 3.5.

### 3.3. Data sample

The sample for this thesis consisted of 50 Dutch video advertisements. Video advertisements were preferred over image advertisements as video advertisements have been found to draw more attention of consumers and have more effect on their decision-making, and therefore an analysis of this type of content would be more relevant (Hsieh & Chen, 2011). Additionally, video advertisements provide more of a narrative and more details of the model's body than one image would. In total, 177 images derived from the 50 video advertisements, which allowed for a variety of portrayals, thereby making the visual analysis feasible and extensive. The images included a total of 88 male models and 77 female models. All videos were between 15 and 69 seconds long, with an average length of 25.8 seconds. To ensure the video advertisements were all relevant and not outdated, only video advertisements that were published between 2017 and 2022 were included in the sample. The final sample consisted of advertisements that were all published between February 2017 and March 2022. The similar lengths and date of the advertisements made the data comparable. The sample was obtained by searching for underwear brands sold in the Netherlands, and searching for video advertisements on YouTube and on their social media. Data was also obtained by searching for keywords such as "underwear commercials" on Google in Dutch, and through online commercial archives.

As body diversity has been the main focus of this study, the video advertisements used for the sample all contained at least one model. The final sample included both models that are considered diverse and models that are considered to be according to the ideal Western body image, following the theories discussed in the theoretical framework. This allowed for a comparison between the representation of body diversity and idealised bodies, in order to gain a better understanding in how diverse models are portrayed differently. Additionally, both men and women had to be included in the sample. Therefore, the final sample consisted of 22 advertisements that portrayed male models, 22 advertisements that portrayed female models, and 6 advertisements that portrayed both male and female models (see Appendix A). The sample furthermore included advertisements of 17 different brands. Additionally, the overall sample included white and non-white ethnicities, smaller (and less muscular) and larger (and more muscular) body sizes, and younger and older models. When assessing a model's age, body size, and ethnicity, the thesis followed the methodologies of previous research on body diversity, which will be discussed in detail in the next section. The advertisements were distinguished based on an advertisement ID which can be found in Appendix A. The advertisement IDs are used in the results chapter to correspond the visuals to the original advertisement.

### 3.4. Defining the model's age, ethnicity, and body size

As the emphasis of this research was on the portrayal of models with varying body sizes, ages, and ethnicities, clear characteristics had to be defined for each of these body traits in order to categorise the models based on these traits. The following paragraphs explain in more detail how these body traits were identified and categorised.

The age of the men and women portrayed in the underwear advertisements was distinguished by characteristics used in previous studies on older people in advertisements. As noted by Lee et al. (2006), many different studies considered a different age when discussing older people. Simcock and Lynn (2006) and Carrigan and Szmigin (1998) considered older people to be 50 years or older, and characterized them through the physical characteristics of having greying or thinning hair, wrinkles, and a slack muscle tone. Lee et al. (2006) considered older people to be elderly, and took into account similar physical characteristics, including a grey or white hair colour, wrinkles around the eyes and hands, but also the use of aids such as wheelchairs, and the presence of other people such as their children and grandchildren. This thesis considered the previously mentioned characteristics and defined two different older age groups, namely middle-aged and old. As the exact ages of the models cannot be known, only an indication of their ages can be provided through following certain aging characteristics. Middle-aged people, however, were considered around 40 years and older, and old people were considered around 60 years or older. Old people were characterized by previously mentioned characteristics, and middle-aged people were characterized by the same physical characteristics, but these characteristics for middle-aged people were less present. For example, where old people would be characterised through having wrinkles and grey hair, middle-aged people would have significantly fewer wrinkles, but still clearly older skin than young people, and would have some grey hair but not completely grey hair. Young people were characterized through an opposite of these characteristics, having an appearance or a young body without any wrinkles or grey hair, and having stronger muscle tones.

The ethnicity of the men and women portrayed in the advertisements was identified based on characteristics identified by Reddy-Best et al. (2017). The ethnicity groups they considered were black, Asian, white, other person of colour, and indistinguishable. Black models were characterized by a medium or dark-coloured skin, a natural, afro, braided or dreadlock hairstyle, and/or larger facial features. White models were characterized by a fair or light-coloured skin and/or smaller facial features. Asian models were characterized by narrow-shaped eyes and straight darker hair. Models were categorised under other person of colour when the race could not be determined but their physical characteristics such as their skin tone did indicate they were a person of colour. If the race was truly unclear, the models were categorised as undistinguishable. One advertisement, for example,

depicted the models in black and white, without showing their face, making the models' ethnicities unclear.

When it comes to the body size of the models, the Contour Drawing Rating Scale by Thompson and Gray (1995) was used to categorise the body sizes. This scale provides 9 body size visuals, with 1 being the thinnest and 9 being the largest. To create a clearer identification, all 9 visuals were categorised under names for this thesis. For women, number 1 and 2 were coded as underweight, number 3 and 4 were coded as thin-bodied, number 5 and 6 were coded as average-sized, number 7 was coded as mid-sized, and number 8 and 9 were coded as plus-sized. In terms of muscularity, only one woman in the sample appeared to be muscular, and was therefore categorised as muscular. For men, however, the codes were slightly different, as muscularity was not clearly shown in the Contour Drawing Rating Scale. Numbers 1 and 2 were also coded as underweight, and number 3 and 4 were still coded as thin-bodied but also included a lightly muscled body image, as supporting the ectomorphic body image (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996). Body size number 5 and 6 were coded as average-sized, number 7 was coded as mid-sized, and number 8 and 9 were coded as plus-sized. Number 5 to number 9 included bodies that were not muscular, and number 7 to 9 supported the endomorphic body image of soft and round (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996). As the mesomorphic body image of a very muscular and strong body was not included in the Contour Drawing Rating Scale, men with a very muscular body, showing clear abs and strong arms, were coded separately under muscular (Kolbe & Albanese, 1996). From the analysis appeared that no models were categorised as underweight.

### 3.5. Operationalisation and ethics

Even though qualitative visual analysis is dependent on the interpretation of the researcher, it is important for the analysis to be clearly structured and to be based on a clear approach of analysis. Therefore, critical discourse analysis formed the grounded method on which the analysis and interpretations were based. As visual analysis can take many different approaches, it is important to first explain the steps taken throughout the analysis of this thesis.

Before starting the visual analysis, all video advertisements were watched several times from beginning to end, and were then divided into visuals by taking screenshots of the advertisements. Watching the video as a whole before taking screenshots allowed for a better understanding of the narrative, and thus for a better understanding of what exact moments need to be captured in order for the screenshots to convey the story accurately, as these visuals were analysed in-depth. The full video, however, still served as a tool to better understand the discourse that the visuals are aiming to express. The operationalisation for the analysis of this thesis followed Machin and Mayr's (2012) steps of conducting a visual, critical discourse analysis, partly based on semiotic analysis tools by Barthes (1973, 1977). For every visual, all aspects that are depicted were analysed using connotation and

denotation. Denotation refers to what is depicted in the visual, and connotation refers to what is communicated through the denotation and the way it is depicted. By looking at what exactly is depicted first, and then assessing what it aims to communicate, the analysis allowed to gain deeper insights into how a certain meaning is created. Firstly, the connotators of the visuals were analysed through the settings of the visual, referring to the background information, the location where the visual takes place, and the depiction of the image overall. This category also included information provided by the voice-over that clarifies what is depicted on the visual. Furthermore, the connotators were analysed through the attributes and objects depicted in the visual, and through the salience of the visual. The salience refers to the visual's composition, the use of foregrounding and overlapping, and the use of colours, tones, and focus. Additionally, the analysis considered the models' poses. This included the model's size of frame, and the camera's angle and the distance in relation to the model. Furthermore, the analysis considered the model's position in relation to others, and whether certain people were excluded from a visual or setting in which they would usually be present. The analysis also considered generic and specific portrayals, thereby indicating whether the model is depicted as a person or whether the model is representing a certain group and being portrayed stereotypically. The analysis of all these aspects of a visual contributed to an in-depth understanding of how Dutch video advertisements represented body diversity. (Barthes, 1973; Barthes, 1977; Machin & Mayr, 2012)

This analysis was applied to each visual by filling in a table that included all the previously discussed aspects, followed by a last table row that concluded the models' portrayals in the visual overall (see Appendix B). Each visual was thoroughly analysed by first watching the video advertisement again to indicate the context of the visual and, when applicable, listening to the voice-over's comments on the visual. After that, all visual aspects that are mentioned in the table were analysed and written down. An example of the visual analysis can be found in Appendix C. After all visuals were analysed, each visual was analysed again, to ensure no details or important information was missing. After analysing all the visuals, the findings as described in the table were summarised in keywords, which were applied to the tables for each visual. These keywords were used to categorise the data, and to make the analysis of the various visuals comparable in a more efficient manner. These keywords were categorised based on the model's body traits, their location, the model's portrayal, and, when applicable, particular objects that were present, and the way the model was depicted as part of a group. An example keyword of a model's portrayal is "happy", which was applied to a visual when the depicted model was clearly smiling with their teeth showing. Some portrayals were grouped together to form a subcategory. For example, the keywords "seductive" and "irresistible" both belonged to the subcategory of "sexual portrayals", under the main category of the models' portrayals. During the analysis, intersectionality was applied by considering a model's various body traits when assessing the way they were portrayed. For example, the analysis included assessments of whether larger-sized white women were portrayed differently than larger-sized black women.

As the analysed data consisted of advertisements that have been published by known brands and that are publicly accessible, the analysis of this thesis was not limited by ethical concerns and therefore there was no urge to anonymise the advertisements chosen for the sample. Similar to a study by Sobande (2019), who openly shared the analysed advertisements from the sample, and similar to case studies on brand campaigns and advertisements (Rodgers et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2014), this thesis also shared the brands and advertisements used for the sample (see Appendix A). As the video advertisements are publicly available, brand names, as well as visual examples from the advertisements, were also included in the results chapter.



## 4. Results

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the results of this thesis, in order to answer the research question: *How is body diversity portrayed in Dutch underwear advertisements for men and women?* Based on the visual critical discourse analysis applied to 50 Dutch underwear advertisements, various themes emerged that indicate how body diversity is portrayed in these advertisements. This chapter will discuss how body diversity is represented based on the recurring themes, which are stereotypical portrayals, non-stereotypical portrayals, group dynamics, and sexual portrayals. After a short introduction to the various models represented in the advertisements, these findings will be discussed thoroughly. This chapter will end with a short conclusion in which the results are summarised.

### 4.2. Summary of key findings

Overall, the advertisements for both men and women included a variety of ethnicities. Though the majority of the models were white, 38 out of 50 advertisements included non-white models. There were only a few older people represented, namely six old and 11 middle-aged men, and five old and two middle-aged women. Of the older women, only one old model was not white. Of the older men, three middle-aged models were not white. Thus, when it comes to portrayals of older people, the majority was white. When considering the female models overall, the majority was thin-bodied. One model was muscular, 14 women were average-sized, 10 women were mid-sized, and 11 women were plus-sized. Among the men represented, almost half of the models were average-sized. Furthermore, 23 models were muscular, 15 were thin-bodied, five men were mid-sized, and two men were plus-sized.

The mid-sized and plus-sized women were of various ethnicities, although the majority, namely 14 women, were white. Furthermore, the mid-sized men were all white, and the plus-sized men were black. As the male models included 17 models of older age while the female models included only seven models of older age, it appeared that age diversity was mainly used in the advertisements for men. Additionally, as the male models included only seven mid- and plus-sized men, while the female models included 21 mid- and plus-sized women, it appeared that body size diversity was mainly used in the advertisements for women. An overview of the number of models represented in each body trait category can be found in Appendix D. The next paragraphs will explain how these various models were included in or excluded from portrayals that either reinforced or challenged stereotypes.

### 4.3. Challenging and reinforcing stereotypes

The underwear advertisements for men and women included portrayals that both appeared to reinforce stereotypes and gender roles, and that appeared to challenge these stereotypes. The

following paragraphs will further elaborate on the portrayals that appeared to challenge or reinforce gender, ethnicity, and age stereotypes. The discussed stereotypes are based on previously found stereotypes in media and advertisements that have been discussed in the theoretical framework.

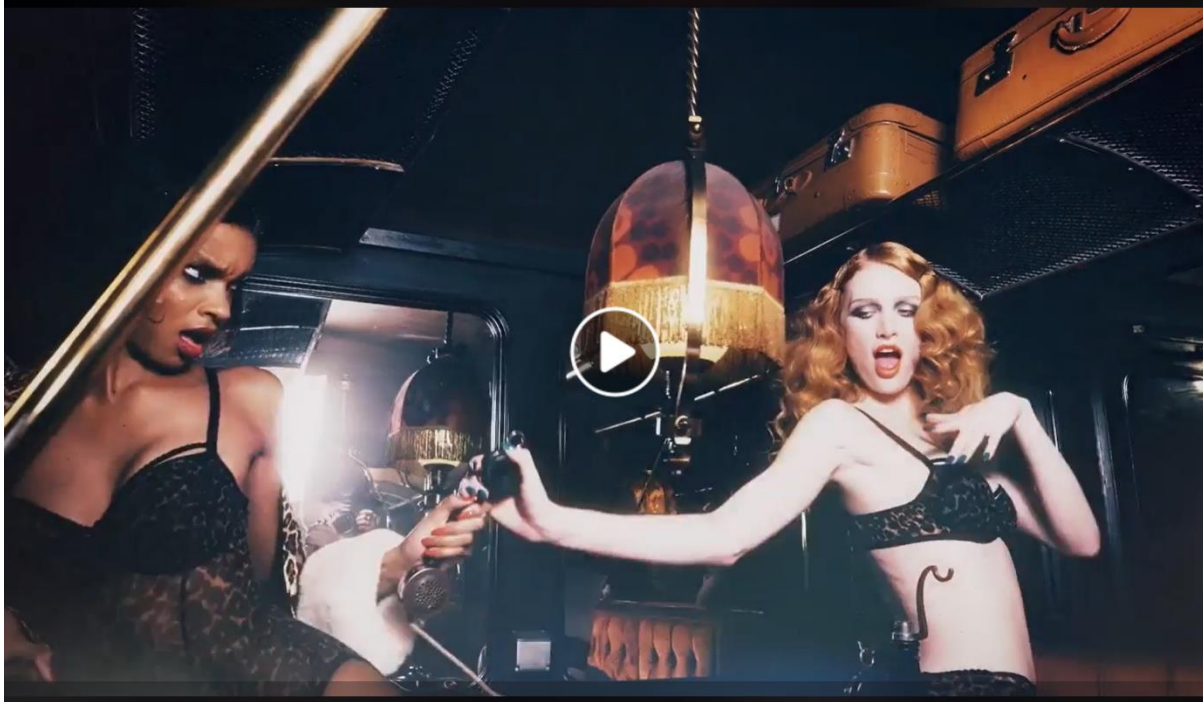
### *Female portrayals*

According to previous research, women have often been portrayed stereotypically in family-oriented roles (Grau & Zotos, 2016). Similarly, Connell (1995) argued that women are expected to support the gender order in which the man is dominant, by taking on nurturing roles. However, from the analysed advertisements, only one model depicted in a Zeeman advertisement was portrayed in a family role, as she was holding a baby. In addition to family roles, women are also often portrayed at home in dependent roles (Grau & Zotos, 2016). One advertisement from Livera did imply the depicted woman to be someone who stays at home, as she was making her partner coffee and then waving him goodbye as she stayed at home. However, there were no other advertisements that indicated the woman to be dependent and staying at home. Both these women that were portrayed in nurturing roles at home were young, white, and thin-bodied, meaning no diverse bodies were portrayed in nurturing roles. The lack of ethnic diversity in family role portrayals is similar to findings from Rubie-Davies et al. (2013), who argued that non-white ethnicities are often excluded from family-oriented advertisements.

Apart from family-oriented and nurturing roles, another stereotypical female portrayal can be found in portrayals of women that focus on their appearance, or that associate women with health and beauty (Conley & Ramsey, 2011; Grau & Zotos, 2016; Rubie-Davies et al., 2013). Six women were found to be portrayed looking into the mirror and/or holding and applying beauty products, thereby emphasizing the significance of their appearance. The portrayals were by various brands, and these women were all young and of various ethnicities. One of the women was plus-sized, while the other women were either thin-bodied or average-sized.

Additionally, Rubie-Davies et al. (2013) noted how vehicles such as cars are often considered to be a male domain, and that men are therefore more often depicted in a setting with cars. However, three advertisements from Marlies Dekkers and Livera depicted women posing with a car or in front of a small plane, while only one advertisement for men depicted a man with a car, namely as driving the car. These female portrayals included a mid-sized woman and women of other ethnicities, as well as thin-bodied and white women. Even though the advertisements depicting the female models are meant for women, having female models pose in front of vehicles makes it appear the advertisement is supposed to be attractive for men as well, as the women posing with vehicles in the advertisements have similarities with female models posing with cars at car shows to attract a male audience. Furthermore, two advertisements from Marlies Dekkers also depicted two women fighting over an object, as they were holding the same object and pulling it towards themselves (see figure 1). As previous advertisements including fights between women have been found to attract attention from

men (Yankelovich & Meer, 2006), this portrayal also appears to make the advertisement attractive for men. These findings of the advertisements incorporating women posing with vehicles and women fighting appeared to support the male gaze, as these portrayals can be considered as attractive to men. Thus, in line with research by Amy-Chinn (2006), female underwear advertisements have been found to support the male gaze.



*Figure 1: Two women fighting (Marlies Dekkers, W13)*

While there is often an emphasis on the appearance of women, a few advertisements from Zeeman and Hunkemöller also challenged female stereotypes. For example, one Asian woman was depicted with her arms up, showing her armpit hair. As the woman was holding her arms up, it appeared that the advertisement purposely showed her armpit hair. Therefore, this portrayal appeared to challenge the idea that women should shave and have no body hair. Thereby, this visual either challenged the woman's emphasis on appearance (Conley & Ramsey, 2011; Grau & Zotos, 2016), or it presented a different idea of what can be considered female beauty. Another example is a woman depicted skateboarding in a Hunkemöller advertisement. As skateboarding has been underrepresented in the media as women's sport and has been male dominated, this portrayal also appeared to challenge stereotypical gender roles (MacKay & Dallaire, 2012). As the women in these portrayals that challenge female stereotypes appeared to take over masculine characteristics and behaviours, they can be considered to be portrayed as pariah femininities, as they embody masculine traits and thereby contaminate traditional gender roles in society (Schippers, 2007). These women portrayed in pariah feminine roles were all young and thin-bodied or muscular. Furthermore, one woman was Asian and the other three women in this portrayal were white.

Overall, there is no clear distinction that can be made between body types included stereotypical and non-stereotypical portrayals of women. There were a total of nine advertisements that included stereotypical female portrayals, which have been discussed above, and four advertisements that challenged these stereotypical female portrayals. The stereotypical portrayals of women included a few diverse models of other ethnicity and other body size, and the non-stereotypical portrayals included a few diverse models of other ethnicity. As the models included in non-stereotypical portrayals did not have more diversity traits than the models included in stereotypical portrayals, the inclusion of diverse female models did not appear to make the advertisements move further away from stereotypes. As mid-sized and plus-sized women were included in stereotypical portrayals. Furthermore, there did not appear to be a difference in portrayals between models of different ethnicities, as these were included in both stereotypical and non-stereotypical feminine portrayals.

### *Male portrayals*

When it comes to the location settings of the underwear advertisements, both advertisements for men and for women had a similar number of depictions inside the house as well as in the studio. The most notable difference in location was found in the depictions outside. Six advertisements for women included depictions outside, of which five of them took place in a nature setting. The other one took place at an airport. For men, 12 advertisements included depictions outside, of which seven were depictions in public, such as on the streets or surrounded by buildings. Only two of the advertisements took place in a nature setting. Women were depicted in public only in one advertisement, which included male models as well. Thus, women were more frequently depicted in a nature setting, while men were more frequently depicted in a public or city setting. Therefore, there appeared to be a connection between women and nature, and between men and public locations. The more frequent depiction of men in public seems to be in line with the gender expectation of male roles outside of the house (Grau & Zotos, 2016). Moreover, men have been found to be more often portrayed outdoor than women, and to be more frequently portrayed engaging in more public activities such as driving cars or going out (Rubie-Davies et al., 2013). The frequent depiction of men in public locations as found in the underwear advertisements thus seems to reinforce this expectation of men engaging more in public life. Furthermore, the more frequent depiction of women in a nature environment could be explained through the previously found association of women with beauty and health (Rubie-Davies et al., 2013). The nature environment could have been chosen by the advertisers as a way to associate women with a nature and naturalness, to thereby emphasize their natural female beauty.

As noted by Grau and Zotos (2016), men have often been portrayed stereotypically in roles outside of the house, while women are stereotypically portrayed at home in dependent roles. However, men have also been found to be depicted in household roles in the underwear

advertisements. Advertisements by the brands Mey, Zeeman, and Boxers included portrayals of men preparing food in the kitchen, and of a man dancing while vacuuming, thereby challenging gender stereotypes. Another advertisement for women, from Christine le Duc, depicted the woman's partner ironing and preparing food in the kitchen, thereby also moving away from stereotypical gender roles. All these men were young and average-sized or muscular, and only one man was not white, meaning men of other ages and size were not depicted in household roles.

Furthermore, even though women are often depicted in family-oriented roles, men were also found to be depicted in family settings in the underwear advertisements, while previous research has found men to be stereotypically portrayed outside of a home environment (Grau & Zotos, 2016). Two advertisements from the brands Boxers and Zeeman depicted men in a family role. One of these advertisements depicted men of three generations, thus a young, middle-aged, and old man, enjoying a drink together on the porch outside. The other advertisement depicted a middle-aged man playing with his two children in the living room (see figure 2). All four men depicted in a family role were



Figure 2: Man with children (Zeeman, M12)

average-sized and white, thus men of other ethnicity and size were not depicted in family roles. Furthermore, both family depictions only included male children, and therefore this finding supports the idea that fathers are mainly relating to their sons (An & Kim, 2007). These findings of men in father and family roles do depict society's changing view of the role of men in society, where there is more attention given to the man's role as a father (Grau & Zotos, 2016). Even though the use of this so-called "dadvertising" could have a positive impact on gender equality and expectations in society, an overemphasis in advertisements could also be negatively interpreted as giving too much credit to fatherhood, as society still mainly considers childrearing to be a woman's obligation (Walker & Gangadharbatla, 2019).

Following Connell's (1995) theory of hegemonic masculinity, men are expected to embody and express their dominance. When it comes to dominant portrayals, which included portrayals of authority, power, and intimidation, seven young men that were either average-sized, thin-bodied, or muscular were found to be portrayed in this manner. However, the portrayals did include a variety of ethnicities. Dominant portrayals were distinguished based on the camera angle when depicting a model, and the model's body pose. By taking a lower angle when filming the model, combined with an upright pose of the model, they appeared dominant or authoritarian. Even though, according to Connell (1995), hegemonic masculinity was often associated with whiteness, the depiction of men as dominant and authoritarian was portrayed by men of different ethnicities. However, the stereotypical characteristic was not portrayed by mid- and plus-sized men and by men of older age. Therefore, this finding indicates that power and dominance are more associated with youth and muscularity, making it appear as if men with larger bodies as well as older men have less dominance or are less powerful. This finding is thereby also in line with the idea that men use muscularity to express their masculinity and dominance (Hunt et al., 2013).

Thus, mid- and plus-sized men and men of non-white ethnicities were excluded from family-portrayals and household portrayals, which were both non-stereotypical portrayals of men. As previously argued, the lack of non-white ethnicities in family-oriented settings has been previously found Rubie-Davies et al. (2013). Non-white ethnicities were included in dominant portrayals; however, men of older age and mid- and plus-sized men were excluded from this portrayal. The inclusion of diversity in advertisements for men thus did not appear to be related to the inclusion of non-stereotypical male portrayals, as diverse models were excluded from these types of portrayals.

### *Ethnic portrayals*

The following paragraphs will further explain stereotypical and non-stereotypical portrayals of models of other ethnicities. In total, 14 male models from six advertisements and five female models from four advertisements have been portrayed as active. Even though being athletic has been considered a stereotype for black people (Bristor et al., 1995), there was a variation of ethnicities portrayed as active. Active portrayals included models that were jogging, doing jumping jacks, or that were located at the gym or in a locker room. Only one man was also portrayed as athletic, as he was portrayed on a running track, which emphasized his athletic characteristics. This man was black and therefore reinforced the stereotypical portrayal of black people as athletic (Bristor et al., 1995). One black woman was also portrayed in a stereotypical manner, as she was depicted twerking, which is a dancing style that is associated with the black culture (Gaunt, 2015). However, the trait of being sporty and active was not bound to a certain ethnicity. Even though there was variety in terms of ethnicities, there was not a wide variety in body sizes when considering the models that were portrayed as active. All models were either thin-bodied, average-sized, or muscular, meaning no mid-sized and plus-sized models were included in active portrayals. As noted by Pounders (2018), some

consumers believe that using plus-sized models promotes an unhealthy lifestyle, thereby indicating plus-sized models can be considered unhealthy. Similarly, Biefeld et al. (2021) found that plus-sized people are stereotypically considered to be less athletic. The exclusion of mid- and plus-sized models from active roles further reinforces this idea that plus-sized people live a less healthy lifestyle and are less athletic. Furthermore, two middle-aged men were portrayed in an active manner, but no old people were portrayed as active. The exclusion of old models from active portrayals could be because of the increasing vulnerability of older bodies, making it increasingly difficult for old people to be active. However, this does contradict findings from Kessler et al. (2004), who argued that old people were portrayed as involved in physical activity in the media.

Two brands, Muchachomalo and On That Ass, also created advertisements for underwear with a specific theme, such as an action theme or a religious theme. In total, seven advertisements included a theme, which all included stereotypical portrayals, of which the majority was based on



*Figure 3: Man running with suitcase and gun (On That Ass, M10)*

ethnic stereotypes. For example, the action theme from On That Ass (see figure 3) portrayed a black man running around with a mysterious suitcase and with a gun. The gun and the running led to a violent portrayal that associate the man with creating conflict. Therefore this portrayal associated the man with negative aspects of society, which has been found to be a stereotypical portrayal of ethnic minorities (Rubie-Davies et al., 2013). Similarly, a man of other ethnicity was portrayed as participating in car races on the streets, which are considered illegal, thereby also associating him with negative aspects of society (Rubie-Davies et al., 2013). There were also stereotypical portrayals in the themed advertisements that were not only related to ethnicity. For example, an advertisement from Muchachomalo which focused on the eighties depicted a young, thin-bodied, white man who was surrounded by mirrors and was walking as if he was in a fashion show. This portrayal emphasized the

editorial look of the man, and also made him appear as occupied with his appearance, as he was going through his hair with his hands, surrounded by mirrors. This portrayal fits the negative stereotypical portrayal of young people as vain (Chasteen et al., 2002), but also emphasizes the editorial look of young, white, slim men (Barry, 2014). Following the analysis, it thus appeared that themed advertisements included more stereotypical portrayals, as all of these advertisements included stereotypes, of which the majority were ethnic stereotypes.

As mentioned before, there were only a few depictions of men and of one woman in family roles, and all these models appeared to be white. Even though no men from non-white ethnicities have been portrayed in family roles, they were depicted in calm and softer roles. For example, one man was depicted in a yoga pose outside, thereby making the man appear calm and peaceful. Another man was depicted drinking tea and holding a cat, thereby giving the man a soft appearance. Three muscular black men, of which two were younger and one was middle-aged, were depicted in softer roles in advertisements by Bamigo and A-dam. These portrayals challenged male stereotypes, as men have often been portrayed as authoritarian and independent instead of soft (Grau & Zotos, 2016). At the same time, the portrayals appeared to be challenging ethnic stereotypes, as the men depicted in calm and softer roles were all black, and ethnic minorities have often been associated with roles including negative aspects of society, such as gambling or drinking, instead of softer portrayals, such as doing yoga or drinking tea (Rubie-Davies et al., 2013).

#### *Age portrayals*

Overall, the analysed advertisements included five old women and six old men. The portrayals of these older models were either neutral, meaning the model played only a small role in the advertisement in which there was no clear emotion or activity related to the model, or the portrayals were positive. For example, a model's portrayal was considered positive when the person was smiling or dancing. As more portrayals of the old models were overall positive rather than negative, the findings are in line with those of Zhang et al. (2006), who also found an overall positive portrayal of old people in advertisements. The findings do contradict those of Robinson et al. (2008), who found an overall undesirable portrayal of old people in advertisements. One man and two women were only depicted shortly, in a home environment. Even though being homebound has been considered a negative stereotypical portrayal of old people (Ng, 2021), in this case the depiction of the man and women at home did not appear to be related to their age, as other, younger people in the same advertisements were also portrayed at home. There was one old man portrayed negatively, in an Undiemeister advertisement. The man was used as comparison with a young man who was wearing old-fashioned white briefs as underwear, thereby implying the underwear was meant for old people and thus the young man should feel embarrassed by it. This made the old man portrayed in a negative and fragile manner, as his whole body was exposed to show the white briefs and as he was used to



depict the embarrassing underwear. This portrayal of the old man indicated the man was portrayed in a negative stereotypical manner as fragile and vulnerable (Chasteen et al., 2002; Ng, 2021).

Furthermore, three old men were portrayed such a way that challenged stereotypes of old people. Two of the old men were portrayed in a way that emphasized how young they are feeling. For example, one man portrayed in a Mey advertisement was swinging from the chandelier, smiling and wearing sunglasses, which emphasized the man's mobility (see figure 4). Wearing the sunglasses inside made him even appear as cool, which further emphasized that the man was still feeling young. The second man was moving his hips while smiling, thereby emphasizing his flexibility, which also indicates the man was still feeling young. Two old women were similarly portrayed, one moving her

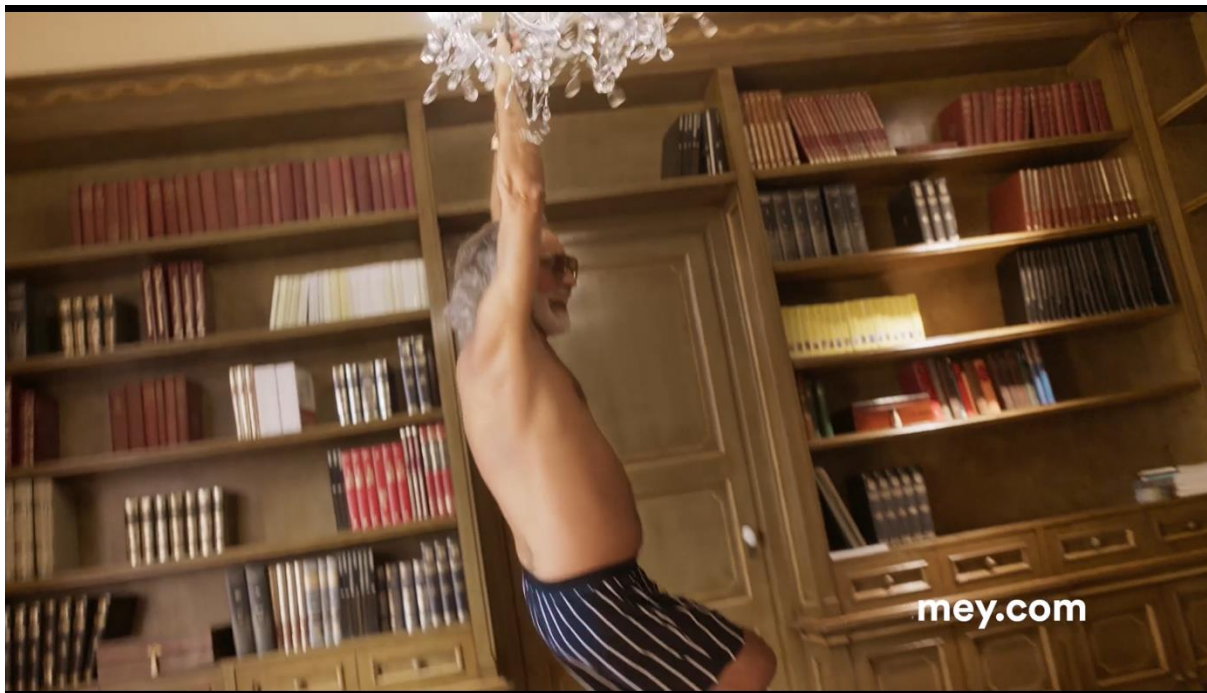


Figure 4: Man swinging from chandelier (Mey, MW6)

hips and one putting her leg up high, which thus emphasized their flexibility and how their bodies are still feeling young. However, the portrayal that stood out the most was of an old woman who was portrayed with an old man in the bedroom, wearing a black lace body, laying on top of him, and kissing him. This depiction portrayed the woman in a sexual manner, as sexually active, which deviates from portrayals of old people that have previously been found, as sexual portrayals of older people in the media are rare, especially of older women (Kessler et al., 2004). Middle-aged men were overall portrayed positively, as happy and as individual. However, a few middle-aged men were also portrayed in a negative manner in Undiemeister advertisements, which will be elaborated on under the section 'humorous advertisements' and in section 4.4. As there were only two middle-aged women, the analysis did not provide a clear portrayal of this particular group. The two women were portrayed in a neutral and in a positive manner. One was only depicted shortly, and one woman was depicted as happy, and dancing.

Young people were overall portrayed positively, in a happy and energetic manner, which is in line with previous research on portrayals of younger people (Chasteen et al., 2002). However, one of the underwear brands for men called Pockies also included negative portrayals of young men. For example, one man was depicted pushing over a copying machine on the streets, thereby portraying him as reckless and irresponsible, which are traits that have also been associated with younger people in previous research (Chasteen et al., 2002). Pockies also portrayed multiple men as lazy. However, even though this is usually considered a negative trait, the advertisements from Pockies did focus on embracing laziness. From their lazy portrayals, which were characterised by the models laying or hanging on a couch or in a chair, only one model was white and four were black, of which one black model was also plus-sized. Even though laziness is not considered a negative trait by Pockies, by mainly portraying black people as lazy, their advertisements did reinforce the stereotype of black people as laid-back (Taylor & Costello, 2017). Additionally, the negative stereotypical trait of young people as vain was found by seven models, through depictions of the models checking themselves out in the mirror (Chasteen et al., 2002). Five of these models were female and two models were male. The two men depicted as vain were both white, one thin-bodied and one muscular. The female models included thin-bodied, average-sized, and plus-sized women, and one of the women was black.

#### *Humorous advertisements*

As found by Eisend et al. (2014), male stereotypical portrayals were more prevalent in humorous settings while female stereotypical portrayals were more prevalent in less humorous settings. From the analysed advertisements, 10 male advertisements included humour, and one advertisement for men and women included humour, in which both a man and a woman were portrayed in a humorous manner. However, there were no humorous advertisements for women only. The majority of the humorous male advertisements included portrayals of diverse bodies, namely mid- and plus-sized models and older models, as well as a variety of ethnicities and ages. Male portrayals were overall less serious than female portrayals. Humorous advertisements depicted the model either as funny, or the model was depicted in a mocking or embarrassing manner. For example, one mid-sized, white man in an On That Ass advertisement was depicted lying on the bed on his side, one knee up and leaning with his head on his hand, while telling the camera how the underwear sells

itself (see figure 5). This portrayal made the man appear funny, while also including self-mockery, as the portrayal brought a high emphasis to his larger body. An example of an embarrassing portrayal in a humorous advertisement can be found in an advertisement from Undiemeister, where a middle-aged man is lying on the street as he had just fallen off his motorbike and the medical people had to cut



Figure 5: Man lying on bed (*On That Ass, M7*)

open his jeans, when they find out the man is wearing a tiger-printed thong. The man is holding his hand in front of his face, indicating the man is feeling ashamed. As the man is depicted in an embarrassing manner, these types of humorous portrayals can be considered as more negative portrayals. The higher presence of humour in advertisements for men is in line with previous research indicating that men are more often the source of humour in advertisements (Ivanov et al., 2019). Furthermore, according to Ivanov et al. (2019), the use of humour in advertisements can be explained by the idea that humour is sexually attractive to women. In this case, the advertisements for men would not only be meant to be appealing to men, but also to women.

The humorous advertisements included a variety of ethnicities, body sizes, and different ages. Of the seven mid-sized and plus-sized male models overall, four men were depicted in the humorous advertisements. Furthermore, apart from some younger men, one older man and four middle-aged men were portrayed in humorous advertisements. The portrayals in these advertisements were not found to be necessarily stereotypical, thus it does not appear that male stereotypes are more prevalent in humorous advertisements, as was found by Eisend et al. (2014). However, it is important to note that the humorous advertisements included a high body diversity. The diverse bodies were portrayed in a funny manner, as part of a humorous advertisements, thereby associating these diverse bodies with humour.

#### 4.4. Personal and impersonal portrayals

The following paragraphs provide more insights into the portrayals that emphasize the portrayal of models in either a personal or impersonal manner. A personal portrayal of a model is characterised by an emphasis on the model as a person through the overall narrative and the advertisement's setting, while an impersonal portrayal of a model is characterised by a high emphasis on the model's pose instead of the model's story. The following examples will further explain the difference between these two portrayals. An example of a model portrayed in a personal manner can be found in a Zeeman advertisement (see figure 6). This woman, as well as other women of different sizes, ethnicities, and ages that were represented in this advertisement, is depicted in a home setting. The clutter in the background on the kitchen counter makes it appear the kitchen is actually being used, which gives the appearance that the displayed kitchen is the woman's own kitchen. The woman is depicted smiling and dancing, which can be indicated by the movement of her arms. The smiling and dancing of the woman in a kitchen makes the visual appear very casual and every day, and



Figure 6: Woman dancing in the kitchen (Zeeman, W10)

thereby the woman becomes more relatable. Through such a depiction, the model is portrayed in a very personal manner. This depiction is in contrast with, for example, figure 7, which depicts a visual from a Hunkemöller advertisement. In this visual, the woman is depicted in a studio. The woman's hands on her hips indicate that she is posing, and her face appears serious. The pose and the studio setting make the portrayal overall appear impersonal. The pose and the setting, as well as the seriousness of the woman, make her less relatable and more distant compared to the woman portrayed in figure 6.

When it comes to impersonal portrayals, the majority of the thin-bodied women were portrayed in this manner, while only two of the mid-sized and plus-sized women were portrayed in



Figure 7: Woman posing in studio (Hunkemöller, W6)

this way. There was almost an equal number of average-sized women portrayed as personal and impersonal. Thin-bodied women were less often included in personal portrayals, while almost all mid- and plus-sized women were included in personal portrayals. Furthermore, mid- and plus-sized women were mainly portrayed as happy, which was indicated through behaviours such as dancing and smiling. However, thin-bodied and average-sized women were also depicted in happy portrayals.

Mid-sized and plus-sized men appeared to be mainly portrayed either in a humorous manner or in a personal manner as a happy individual in an advertisement that emphasized diversity. No average-sized, mid-sized, and plus-sized men were portrayed in an impersonal way, while almost all muscular men were portrayed as in this manner. Only two thin-bodied men were included in impersonal portrayals. Of the funny portrayals, one mid-sized and one plus-sized man, who are also both middle-aged, were included in an Undiemeister advertisement as models wearing examples of underwear that is considered outdated and unflattering by the voice-over. Thereby, the two men appeared to be portrayed as mocked by the voice-over for their underwear choice, which indicates a negative portrayal. Furthermore, there did not appear to be a difference in portrayals between mid- and plus-sized models of different ethnicities.

Both smaller-sized men and mid- and plus-sized men were included in personal portrayals. Mid-sized and plus-sized men were portrayed both positively and negatively, as some were portrayed as individuals in a happy manner, while others were portrayed in humorous advertisements in a mocking manner. Mid-sized and plus-sized women were overall portrayed in a personal manner, and thin-bodied women were more often portrayed in an impersonal manner, therefore mid- and plus-sized women were portrayed as more relatable, while thin-bodied women were portrayed as more unrelatable and more distant. These findings reflect research by Beale et al. (2016), who argued that

women often considered thin models to be self-obsessed and heartless, while larger models were considered real. By portraying larger bodied women in a personal way, their character and individuality are emphasized, while portraying thin-bodied women in an impersonal and distant way, their distance in relation to the audience is emphasized, which can make the women appear self-obsessed. Similarly, muscular men were portrayed as more unrelatable and distant, while mid-sized and plus-sized men were more often portrayed in a relatable manner.

#### 4.5. Group portrayals

The following two sections describe how the models from the Dutch underwear advertisements were portrayed in relation to each other, with a specific focus on relationships that were depicted in the advertisements, and on ethnic diversity in group depictions. When people were depicted together in a visual, the analysis considered how the models were portrayed in relation to each other, for example as being in a relationship. Most importantly, the analysis of group portrayals considered the body traits represented in the groups, especially when considering a model's ethnicity, as most group portrayals included some ethnic diversity. For example, all group portrayals by Bamigo appeared to represent only one non-white model, namely a black model, while all other models were white. This was included in the analysis as an underrepresentation of non-white ethnicities in the group portrayal, as can be seen in figure 8 under 'Ethnic diversity in group portrayals.'

##### *Relationships*

In the advertisements for men, only one man from another ethnicity was depicted with a woman, while nine white men were depicted with a woman. All men were either thin-bodied, average-sized, or muscular, and thus no mid-sized and plus-sized men were depicted with a woman. The exclusion of mid- and plus-sized men in relationship portrayals therefore appeared to reinforce the idea that a man's attractiveness to women is based on his body figure. Furthermore, no older men were depicted in a relationship. The advertisements for women showed more diversity when it comes to relationships. One old woman was depicted in a relationship, as well as a young woman from another ethnicity and a black woman. However, all these women were thin-bodied or average-sized. In a Zeeman advertisement, an average-sized black woman and a mid-sized white woman were also portrayed as being in a relationship, as they were lying in bed, one having her arm around the other. However, this is the only relationship between two people of the same sex that was clearly portrayed. Zeeman did include one other relationship portrayal, depicting the back of a man and someone else's hands on his buttocks, where it is unclear whether these hands are from a man or a woman. This portrayal could have been included by the brand to attract a larger male audience and avoid an overrepresentation of heterosexual relationships. However, such a portrayal can also be considered as queerbaiting, where only an indication towards a homosexual relationship is made, without it being

actualised (Brennan, 2016). The people in this portrayal were both white. Thus, overall, mid-sized and plus-sized men as well as older men were excluded from love and relationship portrayals, while mid-sized and plus-sized women as well as older women were included in love and relationship portrayals. Both white and non-white models were included in both heterosexual and homosexual relationship portrayals.

#### *Ethnic diversity in group portrayals*

When considering group portrayals, the majority of the group portrayals included at least one non-white person. In 12 advertisements, there was a portrayal of one white and one non-white person, or multiple white and non-white models. However, two of these advertisements still included a majority of white models, even though their advertisement overall emphasized diversity. Furthermore, seven advertisements included only one non-white person in a group of multiple models, meaning non-white ethnicities were underrepresented (see figure 8). There were five advertisements that included more models of other ethnicity than of white ethnicity,



Figure 8: Group portrayal (Bamigo, M4)

and one advertisement also included a portrayal of only non-white models. Thus, the majority of the advertisements with group portrayals did represent non-white ethnicities. However, apart from one advertisement, every group portrayal still included at least one white model.

#### 4.6. Sexual portrayals

The following sections describe how the models depicted in the Dutch underwear advertisements have been portrayed in a sexy and sexual way. The first section describes body diversity in more general portrayals that include a high emphasis on the model's body, as well as body

diversity in sexy portrayals. The second section focuses specifically on body diversity in sexual portrayals, which has been distinguished from sexy portrayals based on a higher emphasis on sex in the advertisement.

### *High body emphasis and sexy portrayals*

Almost all advertisements emphasized the model's body, both for men and women. A model's body emphasis was determined by how much of the body was covered, and how much of the body was depicted on camera. The body emphasis was furthermore determined by the model's pose, for example whether their arms were covering lots of their body or whether their pose made the whole body visible on camera. All types of bodies, thus different ages, body sizes, and ethnicities, were included in the category of high body emphasis. The models of whom less of the body was shown also included various body types, meaning there was no clear distinction between the body types of the models when it comes to a high body emphasis.



*Figure 9: Woman posing as sexy (Hunkemöller, W6)*

Almost all advertisements also included the portrayal of men and women as sexy. A sexy portrayal was identified through poses that emphasized or flattered the body, but also by the use of darker lighting and by the model touching the body. An example of a sexy portrayal can be found in figure 9. The woman's pose that emphasizes her hip and the woman softly touching her arm give this portrayal a sexy appearance. The red background, the lace body, and the high heels further contribute to this portrayal. Of the 21 mid-sized and plus-sized female models, only two were portrayed in a sexy manner, while in total 26 female models were portrayed in a sexy manner. The sexy portrayals did include a variety of ethnicities. Furthermore, two of the six old women were portrayed in a sexy manner. When it comes to the sexy portrayals of men, 14 out of 15 sexy portrayals were by muscular



models, of black, white, and indistinguishable ethnicity. Furthermore, all 15 models were young. Only one of the men was thin-bodied.

Thus, there were no mid- and plus-sized and/or older men portrayed as sexy, while there was more variety in sexy portrayals of women, as 2 old women and two plus-sized women were portrayed in a sexy manner. However, compared to the number of plus-sized women represented in all the advertisements, the number of mid-sized and plus-sized women portrayed as sexy was very low. Almost all sexy male portrayals were of muscular men, and thereby the advertisements appeared to associate sexiness with muscularity. Sexiness and ethnicity did not appear to be related, as models of various ethnicities were included in sexy portrayals.

### *Sexual portrayals*

When specifically considering sexual portrayals, there were clearer body types related to this category. Sexual portrayals were distinguished from sexy portrayals based on an emphasis on sex through the advertisement itself or the visual. Sexual portrayals included portrayals on the bed, portrayals of a sexual relationship between two people, but also a referral of the voice-over to sensualism. The majority of the models that were portrayed in a sexual manner were also categorised as sexy. Of the female models that were portrayed in a sexual manner, almost all models were either thin-bodied or average-sized. The models in this category included both black and white women. Furthermore, only one of the 15 women portrayed in a sexual manner was old, but still thin-bodied, and only one other woman was plus-sized. Thus, overall, mainly young, smaller-sized women were portrayed in a sexual manner. This finding is therefore in line with Biefeld et al. (2021), who argued that thin-bodied women are more often portrayed as sexually relevant. However, mid-sized women were portrayed in relationship roles that did not depict a sexual portrayal. Of the seven male models that were portrayed in a sexual manner, all were either thin-bodied or muscular. In terms of ethnicity, three of the men's ethnicities were indistinguishable, and one man was of other ethnicity. All models were young. Thus, there was no age and body diversity found in male sexual portrayals.

Furthermore, according to Gill (2008), there has been a shift in female sexual portrayals from sexually passive to sexually powerful. In the analysed advertisements, women that were portrayed as sexy were overall found to be portrayed as confident, which was indicated by looking directly into the camera and standing upright. Only one woman was found lying on bed on her back, filmed from above, which could indicate a submissive pose. However, women overall appeared to be portrayed as confident when posing in a sexy or sexual manner. Thus, women were not found to be portrayed in a passive manner, but instead appear to be portrayed as sexually powerful. Thereby, these findings are in line with previous findings from Gill (2008).

#### 4.7. Conclusion

The themes discussed above show how diverse bodies have been portrayed in Dutch underwear advertisements for men and women. In general, the most prevalent form of diversity found in the advertisements was ethnic diversity. Advertisements for women were found to include more body size diversity and less age diversity, while advertisements for men were found to include more age diversity and less body size diversity. Diverse models were overall portrayed positively, and included more happy portrayals and depictions of the models as personal. Diverse male models were furthermore often portrayed in humorous ways, which also led to some negative portrayals by *Undiemeister*. Overall, there were no clear differences in portrayals between models with overlapping diverse body traits.

Additionally, diversity in underwear advertisements did not appear to be related to diversity in type of portrayals, meaning that gender stereotypes were not challenged by body diversity. There was not more diversity found in male and female portrayals that challenged stereotypes compared to male and female portrayals that reinforced stereotypes. Furthermore, women were portrayed both in stereotypical and non-stereotypical ways, and as sexy. Men were overall portrayed in a less stereotypical manner, with the inclusion of family roles and roles within the household. The stereotypical dominant role of men was found some of the advertisements, and was portrayed by men of various ethnicities, thereby challenging Connell's (1995) definition of the concept that considers hegemonic masculinity to be associated with white men. Humour was mainly present in advertisements for men, and many humorous advertisements included diverse models portrayed in a funny manner, thereby associating them with humour.

Of the advertisements for men that included non-white models, half of the advertisements included ethnic stereotypes, while only one advertisement for women included an ethnic stereotype. Models of non-white ethnicities that were portrayed stereotypically were mainly depicted in portrayals that are associated with negative aspects of society, and in laid-back portrayals. Some of these stereotypical portrayals occurred in themed advertisements, which are advertisements that overall appeared to include many stereotypical portrayals. A few advertisements also included portrayals that challenged ethnic stereotypes, as a few muscular black men were depicted in calmer and softer roles. However, models of non-white ethnicities were not included in family-oriented portrayals. Three non-white models were included in a relationship portrayal, and various models of non-white ethnicities were included in sexual portrayals. Group portrayals did show a high ethnic diversity. Almost every group portrayal included non-white models, however, only one group portrayal consisted of only non-white models.

Overall, old, middle-aged, and young models were portrayed positively. Some old models were also portrayed in a neutral way, and multiple old models challenged age stereotypes as they were depicted as feeling young, and two women also as sexy. Only one old model was portrayed

negatively. A few male middle-aged models were also portrayed negatively through humorous advertisements by one brand. Even though most young models were portrayed in a happy and energetic manner, a few models were portrayed as lazy, irresponsible, or vain.

Neither mid-sized or plus-sized models were represented in active and sexual portrayals, thereby excluding them from being associated with activeness and sexuality, which is in line with findings from Biefeld et al. (2021), who argued that thin-bodied women are more often considered as sexually relevant. A few plus-sized women were portrayed in a sexy way, but there were no mid-sized or plus-sized men portrayed as sexy. Thin-bodied women were mostly portrayed as impersonal, while mid-sized and plus-sized women were mostly portrayed as personal. Average-sized women were included in a similar number of personal and impersonal portrayals. Mid-sized and plus-sized men were only portrayed as personal, while muscular men were almost only portrayed as impersonal. Thin-bodied and average-sized men were mainly portrayed as personal. Mid-sized and plus-sized men were also often portrayed in a humorous way. Mid- and plus-sized women were overall portrayed positively, while mid- and plus-sized men were portrayed both in positive and negative ways. Mid- and plus-sized men were furthermore prevalent in humorous advertisements; however, smaller-sized men were also portrayed in humorous advertisements. There were no clear distinctions in portrayal when comparing mid- and plus-sized models of white ethnicity and of non-white ethnicity.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Conclusion and discussion

This thesis aimed to answer the research question: *How is body diversity portrayed in Dutch underwear advertisements for men and women?* In order to answer this question, a visual critical discourse analysis was applied to 50 underwear video advertisements from the Netherlands. Additionally, an intersectional approach has been applied to the analysis, in order to analyse different overlapping body traits (Shields, 2008). Overall, this thesis has found that body diversity is mainly portrayed through portrayals that either reinforce or challenge stereotypes, through an emphasis on the model as personal, and through humour in male advertisements. Furthermore, the exclusion of certain models with diversity traits from active, sexy, sexual, dominant, family, and relationship portrayals further reinforced stereotypes. Additionally, all types of models were represented in visuals with a high body emphasis. Overall, there were no clear distinctions in portrayal when comparing male and female mid- and plus-sized models of white ethnicity and of non-white ethnicity.

A higher diversity in terms of body type did not indicate a higher diversity in terms of male and female portrayals, as there was a low diversity in portrayals that challenged male and female stereotypes. Furthermore, there was still a high emphasis on the bodies of all types of models. However, as noted by Amy-Chinn (2006), this is hard to avoid when promoting underwear. When considering portrayals of models as sexy or as personal, the analysis did indicate a clear distinction between various body types. Mid-sized and plus-sized women of various ethnicities and ages were mainly portrayed in a personal manner, and as happy. Mid-sized and plus-sized women were only rarely portrayed in an impersonal way, or as sexy, while thin-bodied women were more often portrayed as impersonal or as sexy than as personal. However, happy portrayals were included in portrayals of smaller-sized and larger-sized women. There was almost an equal number of average-sized models portrayed in a personal and impersonal manner. Furthermore, only one plus-sized woman was portrayed as sexual, and all the other women portrayed as sexual were thin-bodied or average-sized, thereby supporting findings from Biefeld et al. (2021) who argued that thin-bodied women are more often considered as sexually relevant. Thus, diverse models did appear to move away from portrayals emphasizing sexiness and sexuality. These findings are in line with audience perceptions found by Beale et al. (2016), who argued that larger women are often considered as more real, while thin-bodied women are often considered as heartless and self-obsessed.

Similarly for men, mid- and plus-sized men were mainly included in personal portrayals, and rarely in impersonal portrayals. Thin-bodied and average-sized men were included in personal and impersonal portrayals. Additionally, diversity in sexy male portrayals was limited to ethnic diversity. The majority of the humorous advertisements for men included portrayals of diverse models, namely larger and older models, as well as a variety of ethnicities. Therefore male diverse models are also associated with humorousness. Furthermore, men of various ethnicities were portrayed as dominant,

thereby challenging idea of hegemonic masculinity by Connell (1995) and inferiority of non-white men. The majority of the models was portrayed positively. However, a few male models of various body sizes, ages, and ethnicities were also portrayed negatively, while there were no negative portrayals of women.

Models of old age often appeared to challenge age stereotypes, through portrayals indicating how they were still feeling young, and by portraying one woman as sexually active. Ethnic stereotypes were often reinforced, especially in male advertisements, which included the laid-back stereotype and an association with negative aspects of society (Taylor & Costello, 2017; Rubie-Davies et al., 2013). A few men were also portrayed in peaceful and softer roles, who were all black, thereby challenging ethnic stereotypes. For women, there was only one ethnic stereotype present, namely the black woman twerking (Gaunt, 2015). Additionally, themed advertisements appeared to have a high number of stereotypical portrayals, including many ethnic stereotypes. The majority of the advertisements with group portrayals represented non-white ethnicities. However, apart from one advertisement, every group portrayal still included at least one white model.

The exclusion of diverse models from certain portrayals also became clear throughout the analysis. Mid- and plus-sized and old models were found to be excluded from active portrayals, thereby reinforcing the idea that larger bodied people live a less healthy lifestyle (Pounders, 2018). Furthermore, mid- and plus-sized as well as non-white models were excluded from family and household portrayals, which is in line with previous research that also noted the lack of non-white models in family-oriented settings (Rubie-Davies et al., 2013). Additionally, larger bodied and older men were excluded from love and relationship portrayals, while larger and older women were included in these types of portrayals. The exclusion of larger bodied male models from love, relationship, sexy, and sexual portrayals shaped the idea that male attractiveness is based on body size. Additionally, larger bodied men and older men were excluded from dominant portrayals, while mainly muscular men were included in this portrayal, thereby associating dominance with youth and muscularity, which is in line with the idea that muscularity is used to express masculinity and dominance (Hunt et al., 2013).

The study of underwear advertisements that include body diversity has thus led to new findings on how body diversity is portrayed. These findings are socially relevant as they provide a better understanding of how diverse bodies are perceived by Dutch society and how this is reflected in the media. As argued by the mirror and mold argument, advertisements either mirror societal values or have the power to shape them, and therefore portrayals in advertisements are connected to perceptions in society (Eisend, 2019; Grau & Zotos, 2016). As research on diversity in underwear advertisements was lacking, this thesis has contributed to current research on underwear advertisements by providing valuable insights on the inclusion of body diversity in underwear advertisements (Amy-Chinn, 2006; Jobling, 2003). Additionally, this thesis aimed to develop insights on whether body diversity has also allowed for a shift in portrayals, or whether sexualisation and

stereotypes remain predominant in the media. Even though diverse models were rarely portrayed in sexy and sexual portrayals, gender role stereotypes and body trait stereotypes still appeared to be present. Therefore, this thesis also aimed to raise awareness on the use of stereotypes in the media, as inaccurate representations can be harmful to society (Taylor & Costello, 2017; Halliwell et al., 2011; Gill, 2008).

This is therefore where this thesis finds its societal implications, as an increasing understanding and awareness of the stereotypes that are present in the media can affect the way society perceives these portrayals. By becoming more aware of the use of stereotypes in advertisements and in the media overall, society overall may be more aware that these stereotypes can be inaccurate, which can affect the way various social groups are perceived. Apart from raising awareness on the portrayal of body diversity among society overall, the findings are also of interest to businesses and advertisers specifically, as they have the power to change these stereotypical portrayals and the sexualisation of idealised models. The use of more diverse portrayals would be beneficial to society, as the use of stereotypes and the sexualisation of only specific models might present an inaccurate representation of society.

## 5.2. Limitations and recommendations

Even though this thesis has provided relevant insights into how models with various body traits are portrayed in underwear advertisements, this research has been limited to advertisements from the Netherlands, and thereby also from a Western culture. Therefore, a recommendation for further research would be to conduct a similar research for underwear advertisements from non-Western countries and cultures, to see if body diversity is portrayed in a similar manner or not. Additionally, even though the portrayal of stereotypes as found in this thesis can be considered harmful to society (Taylor & Costello, 2017; Halliwell et al., 2011; Gill, 2008), this thesis did not include the perception of the audience regarding these portrayals. Therefore, another recommendation for future research would be to expand the analysis of underwear advertisements with interviews with the audience to better understand how these portrayals are perceived by society. Apart from the audience's perception, the study could also be expanded by interviewing advertisers working in the industry on their approach towards the implementation of body diversity and their motives behind the use of certain portrayals, as well as their perception of its effects on society. This would allow for new insights into how advertisers perceive body diversity and its role in advertisements.

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## Appendix A: Video advertisements

<b>Adver- tise- ment ID</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Publication Year</b>	<b>Represented gender(s)</b>	<b>Video length</b>	<b>URL</b>
M1	Undiemeister	2021	Men	0:26	<a href="https://screenforce.nl/prikbord/undiemeister-2021-boy-meets-girl/">https://screenforce.nl/prikbord/undiemeister-2021-boy-meets-girl/</a>
M2	Undiemeister	2021	Men	0:20	<a href="https://screenforce.nl/prikbord/undiemeister-biker/">https://screenforce.nl/prikbord/undiemeister-biker/</a>
M3	Undiemeister	2020	Men	0:25	<a href="https://screenforce.nl/prikbord/undiemeister/">https://screenforce.nl/prikbord/undiemeister/</a>
M4	Bamigo	2020	Men	0:25	<a href="https://reclamearchief.com/videos/bamigo-laat-jij-je-vertellen-wat-een-bamigo-is">https://reclamearchief.com/videos/bamigo-laat-jij-je-vertellen-wat-een-bamigo-is</a>
M5	Bamigo	2020	Men	0:20	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPscStPkkfo&amp;ab_channel=NED2">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPscStPkkfo&amp;ab_channel=NED2</a>
M6	Bamigo	2017	Men	0:15	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RsiOa1Y4dk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RsiOa1Y4dk</a>
M7	On That Ass	2021	Men	0:20	<a href="https://reclamearchief.com/videos/on-that-ass-eerste-boxer-gratis">https://reclamearchief.com/videos/on-that-ass-eerste-boxer-gratis</a>
M8	On That Ass	2018	Men	0:30	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rp1hbhbYXf8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rp1hbhbYXf8</a>

M9	On That Ass	2021	Men	0:16	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3mEsQyef2E&amp;ab_channel=ONTHATASS">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3mEsQyef2E&amp;ab_channel=ONTHATASS</a>
M10	On That Ass	2020	Men	0:15	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgUQBaq-juA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgUQBaq-juA</a>
M11	On That Ass	2021	Men	0:15	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdQCspA53GY&amp;ab_channel=ONTHATASS">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdQCspA53GY&amp;ab_channel=ONTHATASS</a>
M12	Zeeman	2017	Men	0:20	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5AYU2cMbf&amp;ab_channel=ZeemantextielSupers">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5AYU2cMbf&amp;ab_channel=ZeemantextielSupers</a>
M13	Boxers.nl	2019	Men	0:27	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSM6dbWgbvo&amp;ab_channel=boxers">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSM6dbWgbvo&amp;ab_channel=boxers</a>
M14	Boxers.nl	2020	Men	0:44	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1kFwwX8fpY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1kFwwX8fpY</a>
M15	Pockies	2019	Men	0:57	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rz_fK0XiQBc&amp;ab_channel=Pockies%C2%AE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rz_fK0XiQBc&amp;ab_channel=Pockies%C2%AE</a>
M16	Pockies	2019	Men	0:34	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOiYhCoBJIA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOiYhCoBJIA</a>

					&ab_channel=Pockies%C2%AE
M17	Pockies	2017	Men	1:09	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RPu4VWyKEE&amp;ab_channel=Pockies%C2%AE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RPu4VWyKEE&amp;ab_channel=Pockies%C2%AE</a>
M18	Muchachomalo	2020	Men	0:24	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3skCA68ZQY&amp;ab_channel=MUCHACHOMALO%2a">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3skCA68ZQY&amp;ab_channel=MUCHACHOMALO%2a</a>
M19	Muchachomalo	2020	Men	0:25	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/officialmuchachomalo/videos/270367557411102/">https://www.facebook.com/officialmuchachomalo/videos/270367557411102/</a>
M20	Muchachomalo	2021	Men	0:16	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/officialmuchachomalo/videos/6-pack-boxershorts-special-price-only-available-in-december-boxershorts-menunder/463477445427306/">https://www.facebook.com/officialmuchachomalo/videos/6-pack-boxershorts-special-price-only-available-in-december-boxershorts-menunder/463477445427306/</a>
M21	A-dam	2017	Men	1:00	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAGHjlOa0Bk&amp;ab_channel=A-damUnderwear">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAGHjlOa0Bk&amp;ab_channel=A-damUnderwear</a>
M22	A-dam	2021	Men	0:16	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v</a>

					=rsBRH-0SHvI&ab_channel=A-damUnderwear
MW1	Boxers.nl	2021	Men and women	0:25	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4agZG4tkWY&amp;ab_channel=boxers">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4agZG4tkWY&amp;ab_channel=boxers</a>
MW2	Boxers.nl	2022	Men and women	0:37	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRKkAVYBYys">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRKkAVYBYys</a>
MW3	Muchachomalo	2020	Men and women	0:26	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/officialmuchachomalo/videos/arriving-into-a-new-decade-discover-our-next-print-flower-power-at-the-link-in-o/185874719513910/">https://www.facebook.com/officialmuchachomalo/videos/arriving-into-a-new-decade-discover-our-next-print-flower-power-at-the-link-in-o/185874719513910/</a>
MW4	Muchachomalo	2020	Men and women	0:37	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/officialmuchachomalo/videos/267274771201036">https://www.facebook.com/officialmuchachomalo/videos/267274771201036</a>
MW5	Bamboo Basics	2021	Men and women	0:15	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_q6pGeNS7Uc&amp;ab_channel=BambooBasics">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_q6pGeNS7Uc&amp;ab_channel=BambooBasics</a>
MW6	Mey	2022	Men and women	0:15	<a href="https://www.mey.com/nl/tv-spot-">https://www.mey.com/nl/tv-spot-</a>



					2022#watch-the-spot
W1	Livera	2019	Women	0:25	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuJ1qEB4CwI&amp;ab_channel=LiveraNL">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuJ1qEB4CwI&amp;ab_channel=LiveraNL</a>
W2	Livera	2021	Women	0:15	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xe56XF4bOpU&amp;ab_channel=LiveraNL">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xe56XF4bOpU&amp;ab_channel=LiveraNL</a>
W3	Livera	2020	Women	0:15	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHf6L8TZZbM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHf6L8TZZbM</a>
W4	Livera	2021	Women	0:24	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cq2-cyUWcM0&amp;ab_channel=LiveraNL">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cq2-cyUWcM0&amp;ab_channel=LiveraNL</a>
W5	Livera	2017	Women	0:40	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdQwesIUXIY&amp;ab_channel=LiveraNL">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdQwesIUXIY&amp;ab_channel=LiveraNL</a>
W6	Hunkemöller	2021	Women	0:39	<a href="https://reclamear.chief.com/videos/hunkemoller-glamorama-collection">https://reclamear.chief.com/videos/hunkemoller-glamorama-collection</a>
W7	Hunkemöller	2021	Women	0:16	<a href="https://reclamear.chief.com/videos/hunkemoller-i-am-danielle-van-grondelle">https://reclamear.chief.com/videos/hunkemoller-i-am-danielle-van-grondelle</a>

W8	Hunkemöller	2021	Women	0:16	<a href="https://reclamear.chief.com/videos/hunkemoller-braparty-2021">https://reclamear.chief.com/videos/hunkemoller-braparty-2021</a>
W9	Hunkemöller	2020	Women	1:01	<a href="https://reclamear.chief.com/videos/hunkemoller-happy-glamorous-holidays">https://reclamear.chief.com/videos/hunkemoller-happy-glamorous-holidays</a>
W10	Zeeman	2020	Women	0:15	<a href="https://reclamear.chief.com/videos/zeeman-ons-nieuwste-damesondergoed-is-binnen">https://reclamear.chief.com/videos/zeeman-ons-nieuwste-damesondergoed-is-binnen</a>
W11	Zeeman	2021	Women	0:25	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ULFVOwHmJo&amp;ab_channel=ZeemantextielSupers">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ULFVOwHmJo&amp;ab_channel=ZeemantextielSupers</a>
W12	Zeeman	2019	Women	0:25	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKUKauaS3pE&amp;ab_channel=ZeemantextielSupers">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKUKauaS3pE&amp;ab_channel=ZeemantextielSupers</a>
W13	Marlies Dekkers	2020	Women	0:15	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1713840095456489">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1713840095456489</a>
W14	Marlies Dekkers	2020	Women	0:15	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=335568014079681">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=335568014079681</a>

W15	Marlies Dekkers	2020	Women	0:15	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=670921587023005">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=670921587023005</a>
W16	Christine Le Duc	2018	Women	0:15	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=500151887113974">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=500151887113974</a>
W17	Christine Le Duc	2019	Women	0:18	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=511026356319694">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=511026356319694</a>
W18	PrimaDonna	2021	Women	0:15	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erqsiitads&amp;ab_channel=PrimaDonnaLingerie">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erqsiitads&amp;ab_channel=PrimaDonnaLingerie</a>
W19	PrimaDonna	2021	Women	0:15	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McD49f_jRnY&amp;ab_channel=PrimaDonnaLingerie">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McD49f_jRnY&amp;ab_channel=PrimaDonnaLingerie</a>
W20	Marie Jo	2021	Women	0:15	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQmPZfGaH9o&amp;ab_channel=MarieJoLingerie">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQmPZfGaH9o&amp;ab_channel=MarieJoLingerie</a>
W21	LingaDore	2021	Women	0:40	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTzOjtbs1cw&amp;ab_channel=LingaDore">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTzOjtbs1cw&amp;ab_channel=LingaDore</a>
W22	LingaDore	2021	Women	0:37	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQQ1C9hg6Ic">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQQ1C9hg6Ic</a>

## Appendix B: Table for visual analysis

<b>Aspect of the visual</b>	<b>Denotation</b>	<b>Connotation</b>
Settings (background information, location, image overall)		
Body aspects (body size, ethnicity, age)		
Attributes and objects		
Saliency (composition, foregrounding and overlapping, colours, tone, focus)		
Body poses (size of frame, angle, distance)		
Position in relation to others, exclusion, and generic and specific depictions		
Overall conclusion: How is/are the model(s) portrayed?		

## Appendix C: Example of visual analysis

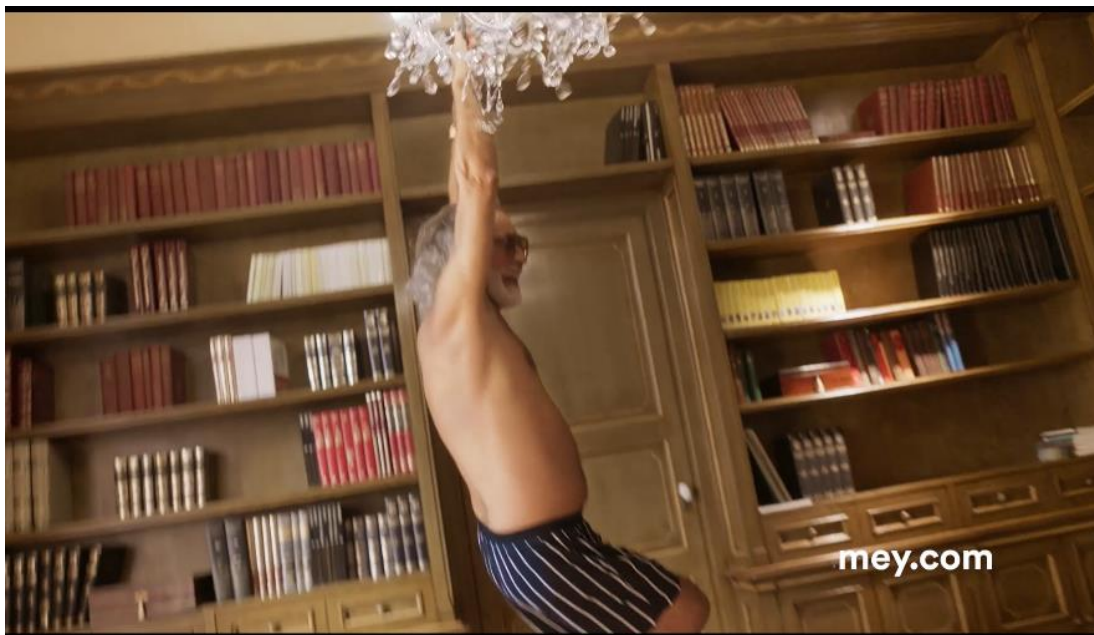


Figure 10: Visual depicting a man swinging from a chandelier (Mey, MW6)

Aspect of the visual	Denotation	Connotation
Settings (background information, location, image overall)	Background information: the advertisements depicts different men and women in a large house or villa, dancing and moving in their underwear Location: a study room or library, as can be indicated based on the books Image overall: depicts a man hanging on a chandelier	The man is depicted doing something fun, namely swinging from a chandelier, in a more serious setting, namely a study room or library. This makes the overall visual appear less serious.
Body aspects (body size, ethnicity, age)	The man depicted is old, white, and average-sized	Body diversity can mainly be found in the man's older age
Attributes and objects	Chandelier The man is wearing wide blue/white striped boxers The man is wearing sunglasses	Wearing sunglasses inside makes the man appear cool The chandelier is used by the man for swinging

<p>Saliency (composition, foregrounding and overlapping, colours, tone, focus)</p>	<p>The man is in the centre of the visual  The man is in the foreground  The camera is slightly tilted  The lighting in the visual is bright</p>	<p>The slightly tilted camera makes the visual appear more playful and less serious  The emphasis is on the man and the activity, as this is brought in focus and in the centre of the visual  The bright lighting of the visual brings attention to all aspects of the visual, clearly depicting the books in the background as well as the man in the foreground</p>
<p>Body poses (size of frame, angle, distance)</p>	<p>The man is swinging from the chandelier  The man is smiling  The man is depicted from the side, in movement  The man is only wearing underwear</p>	<p>The activity of the man emphasizes his mobility, and indicates the man is having fun. As he is smiling, the man appears to be happy.  The man is only wearing underwear and his body is mostly shown, therefore there is emphasis brought to his body. Wearing sunglasses inside and swinging from a chandelier as old man indicate the man is still feeling young.</p>
<p>Position in relation to others, exclusion, and generic and specific depictions</p>	<p>The man is depicted alone  The man is depicted specifically by hanging on a chandelier and wearing sunglasses inside</p>	<p>The man's depiction of hanging from the chandelier and wearing sunglasses inside makes this visual a specific depiction rather than a generic one, as the depiction of an old man wearing sunglasses inside</p>

		and swinging from a chandelier is not common or stereotypical for old people
Overall conclusion: How is/are the model(s) portrayed?	The man is depicted in a house/office setting, smiling and swinging from the chandelier, while wearing sunglasses	The old, white, average-sized man is portrayed in a positive manner, as he portrayed as happy and having fun. The emphasis brought to his mobility and by wearing sunglasses inside, the man appears to still feel young, and the man is portrayed as cool. Furthermore, by only wearing underwear, there is an emphasis brought to his body.

## Appendix D: Body traits represented in the advertisements

The following table shows the number of models represented in each body trait category. One man's body size was categorised as unclear, as the man's clothes were covering too much of his body to accurately categorise his body size. Additionally, two women's age were categorised as unclear. The two women were depicted in the same visual, and only part of their body was shown, excluding their face, from which their age could not be indicated.

	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
<b>Total number of models</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Body size</b>		
- Thin-bodied	15	41
- Average-sized	42	14
- Muscular	23	1
- Mid-sized	5	10
- Plus-sized	2	11
- Unclear	1	-
<b>Age</b>		
- Young	71	68
- Middle-aged	11	2
- Old	6	5
- Unclear	-	2
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
- White	57	47
- Black	21	23
- Asian	2	2
- Other	2	4
- Indistinguishable	6	1