

**From Screen to Standpoint:
The Role of Male Bias in Hollywood Movies in Shaping Public Attitudes Towards
Gender Stereotypes**

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Master's Thesis
June 2024

Word Count: 16.688

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ABSTRACT

Sexism, female marginalization, and gender stereotyping in movies are evident in Western popular media, especially in Hollywood productions (Valentowitsch, 2023, p. 293). The prioritizing and standardization of men is called male bias, it is a form of discrimination where women are treated differently compared to men, solely based on their gender, and is often visible in Hollywood movies (Perez, 2020, p. XI). This research takes part in a transformation towards more gender equality in Hollywood movies, by researching how male bias is the product of societal thinking where women are continued to be overlooked and discriminated from men. By examining male bias, the research sheds light on the influence media production companies, e.g. Hollywood, have in shaping the public discourse (Perez, 2020, pp. XII-XIV). This research investigates the role of male bias in Hollywood movies in shaping negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes among individuals aged 18 to 25 in the Netherlands. As individuals tend to internalize behaviors and attitudes observed in media, this research also investigates the moderation of media consumption levels and its impact on shaping attitudes (Ward & Grower, 2020, p. 179). Political preference is likewise an important factor that shapes attitudes, as people tend to align their actions and thoughts with their political beliefs (Acharya et al., 2015, p. 2). Therefore, political preference is another moderator in this research. To analyze these effects, this research employs quantitative research with pretest-posttest control group experimental design, as quantitative research allows for objective measurements in social contexts (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 209). This research conducts an online survey with an experimental design, since online surveys systematically collect measurable social data, reach big groups of people, ensure high levels of objectivity, and results can be projected to an entire population (Matthews & Ros, 2020, p. 206). Results of a one-way between-groups analysis of covariance show that the awareness of male bias, which is measured by the Bechdel test (Agarwal et al., 2015, p. 830), results in more negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes compared to those not made aware of male bias. In other words, the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies strengthens negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, among individuals aged 18 to 25 years living in the Netherlands. Furthermore, media consumption levels play a significant role in moderating this effect, as people with a high level of media consumption on their phone are associated with even stronger negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes than people who are not aware of male bias. Political preference also moderates the effect of male bias in Hollywood movies on attitudes towards gender stereotypes, as people with a left-wing and centrist political preference show an even more negative attitude towards gender stereotypes than those who are not aware of male bias in Hollywood movies. The research compliments the existing body of research of male bias within the context of Hollywood movies and their social impact in the Netherlands, offering insights for future research aimed at gender equality in media portrayals.

KEYWORDS: Male bias, Gender stereotypes, Hollywood movies, Quantitative research, Experimental online survey, Moderation analysis

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1. Introduction

Connections between screen media and gender ideologies have been a subject of research for decades (Ward & Grower, 2020, p. 182). Especially traditional gender roles and gender stereotypes, the beliefs about attributes that differentiate how women and men should behave, have often been reviewed, shedding a light on the evolving nature of societal expectations. Sexism, female marginalization, and gender stereotyping in movies are evident in Western popular media, especially in Hollywood productions (Valentowitsch, 2023, p. 293). Popular media, like Hollywood movies, are the cultural content that attracts significant attention across a diverse and wide audience and is known for its accessibility and wide range of media content (Stein et al., 2014, pp. 153-163). Hollywood has faced longstanding criticism of its portrayal of women in movies, as they often portray women in limiting and reductive roles (Valentowitsch, 2023, pp. 293-294). While steps are taken towards gender inequality in representation, little has changed in the Hollywood movie industry. These unequal gender representations are frequently perpetuated beyond the screen, appearing in various part of Hollywood culture. Exemplified by the Barbie movie, Greta Gerwig created the Barbie movie to address the issues of double standards and to mock societal different expectations for women and men (Gunawan & Prihandini, 2023, pp. 281-284). The message of the movie challenged the heteronormative, which was a step in the direction to challenge gender biases in Hollywood movies. While Barbie was part of the biggest box offices of 2023, Hollywood revealed, once again, the favoring of the presence of men. For example, the 2023 Oscar nominations failed to recognize the powerful women creating this movie, Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie (Gunawan & Prihandini, 2023, pp. 281-284). While these women were entirely disregarded in the nominations of this promising movie, the film's central argument was substantiated: Women receive only half as much recognition as men (Perez, 2020, p. 14). The movie was indeed nominated for Best Song for "I'm Just Ken", a song from Barbie's *male* counterpart Ken, serving as an illustration how a movie centered around the presence of women shifts its focus back to men in the Oscar nominations. A similar event exemplifying Hollywood's perpetuation of gender biases unfolded during the 2023 Golden Globes when a comedian addressed "Barbenheimer" in his opening monologue (Golden Globes, 2024, 2:37). The quote "Oppenheimer is based on a 721-page Pulitzer Prize winning book about the Manhattan Project - and Barbie is on a plastic doll with big boobies" (Golden Globes, 2024, 2:37), is criticized for being sexist and fails to acknowledge the message conveyed by the Barbie movie.

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The Oscars and Golden Globes examples reveal how Hollywood deals with societal biases and the favoring of men. These societal standards of gender are not recent phenomena. Simone de Beauvoir revealed in *The Second Sex* in 1949 how “humanity is male, and man defines women not in herself, but as relative to him. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other” (De Beauvoir, 1949, p. 13). This quote resonates as a reflection on how pervasive gender dynamics have persisted throughout history. The only difference is, how 75 years ahead of time, these same gender dynamics continue to exist and be perpetuated (Perez, 2020, p. XII). The prioritizing and standardization of men is called male bias (Perez, 2020, p. 4). It is a form of discrimination where women are treated differently compared to men, solely based on their gender, often visible in Western popular media (Perez, 2020, p. XI). The gender data gap is a term used for the systematic underrepresentation of women in various types of data, present in every aspect of society, including movies, news, literature, science, city planning, economics, and medicine (Perez, 2020, pp. XI-XV). This gap arose from the standardization of men, with the lives of men being regarded as the default representation of humanity. Crucial aspects of women’s lives, such as representation, healthcare needs, and social dynamics, have been silenced. This gender data gap, and male bias, have consequences on women’s everyday life, such as on career decisions and self-esteem. This research endeavors the pervasive male bias prevalent in Hollywood movies. By shedding light on male bias in Hollywood movies, this research aims to cultivate awareness and understanding of its implications on societal attitudes towards gender stereotypes. Furthermore, this research seeks to be part of a contribution towards the advancement of gender equality in popular media and aims to participate in empowering women and fostering a more equitable society. While male bias and the gender data gap is not always malicious, it is the product of societal thinking that has been around for millennia and is a kind of *not* thinking (Perez, 2020, p. XII). Where the Other (including women) is going ignored and failed to be covered in societal data. If these biases continue to be overlooked, women will persist being discriminated from men. Examining male bias holds a significant social relevance as it fails to take the Other into account, reflecting a tendency to overlook gender perspectives (Perez, 2020, p. XIV). This neglect is particularly striking given the influence media production companies, such as Hollywood, have in shaping public discourse. Media productions serve as an authority on impacting the societal environment (Freedman, 2014, p. 273). Media’s influence extends far beyond entertainment dissemination, it actively contributes to frameworks of societal expectations. The perpetuating of male bias by such influential productions can affect how

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individuals perceive gender and therefore creates a distorted view of reality, leading to perpetuating stereotypes in Western society (Heldman & Haggard, 2017, pp. 3-4).

The Bechdel test, a simple yet powerful test, measures, evaluates, and visualizes the presence of male bias in movies. The interplay between the Bechdel Test and Hollywood productions reveal the perpetuation of gender stereotypes in movie characters of Hollywood movies (Fogel & Criscione, 2020, p. 67), as the Bechdel test determines the representation of women in Hollywood movies. By employing the test in this research, a structural framework for assessing Hollywood movies based on their gender portrayals is established (Valentowitsch, 2023, p. 294). For a movie to pass the Bechdel test, it requires (1) two named female characters (2) engaging in dialogue (3) unrelated to a man. The test indicates movies to be equitable in terms of gender roles, by comparing the role of the female actress compared to the role of a male actor. While the Bechdel test is increasingly used in popular movie reviews, little has changed in unequal gender roles in Hollywood over the years (Valentowitsch, 2023, p. 293). In 2023, Hollywood was defined by the 'Barbenheimer' box office (Shanfeld, 2023, para. 1), and even the movie *Oppenheimer*, which dominated the 2024 Oscars nominations, failed the Bechdel test (Davis, 2024, para. 1). Evidently, portraying how Hollywood's most promising movies are reluctant to contribute moving to equal gender roles. The reluctance to include equal gender representation in movies is linked to the global reception of such changes, with the Hollywood movies audience unconsciously continue to favor the deeply rooted stereotypes as a reflection of social norms (Valentowitsch, 2023, p. 293). Movies that pass the Bechdel test has found to achieve lower box office earnings. Furthermore, in 2023, a study was conducted on the 1200 most popular movies of the past 40 years, revealing that only 49,58% of the most popular movies passed the Bechdel test, while almost all movies (95,31%) passed the reverse Bechdel test (movies featuring named men who talk to each other about something other than a woman), showing a much stronger representation of men than women in Hollywood (Appel & Gnambs, 2023, pp. 499-501). Additionally, a content-analysis of popular movies between 2007 and 2018 revealed that the percentage of female characters that are speaking or named is still low with little change from the first year that was considered, with a slight increase from 29,9% in 2007 to 33.1% in 2018. While the Bechdel test has its weaknesses, as authors argue the simple requirements for passing, still more than half of all film productions fail the Bechdel test, illustrating it's a valuable tool for highlighting gender representation issues in Hollywood movies (Valentowitsch, 2023, p. 295).

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Western popular media and Hollywood productions share many similarities, particularly in their storytelling techniques, characters, and thematic elements (Matusitz & Payano, 2012, pp. 123–130), this research will focus on Hollywood movies. As Hollywood is a component of Western popular media it will provide more targeted research. Hollywood movies play a significant role in shaping popular culture and Western popular media. By delving into Hollywood movies, this research will provide a detailed examination of how these movies reflect and perpetuate cultural values of gender dynamics. By focusing on a specific part of Western popular media, this allows for a nuanced understanding of the impact of Hollywood productions within the broader context of Western popular culture (Matusitz & Payano, 2012, pp. 123–130). The Netherlands present an interesting location for investigating how Hollywood movies influence cultural perceptions of gender dynamics, as the Netherlands is deeply embedded in Western media culture (Kooijman, 2011, pp. 16-18). The Dutch popular movie industry is heavily exposed to American films and television shows, contributing to a close engagement between Dutch movie viewers and Hollywood's movies. Furthermore, the Netherlands is known for its progressiveness and acceptable social attitudes towards gender equality. Despite this reputation, gender biases and stereotypes are also perpetuated in Dutch society, including media representation (Endendijk et al., 2013, p. 577). Researching how awareness of male bias can influence Dutch youth's attitudes towards gender stereotypes provides valuable insights, as it helps to understand how media shapes societal values and beliefs. As Dutch inhabitants between 18 and 25 years old are most involved in the consumption of Western popular media, including Hollywood productions, this age group is relevant to examine how their attitudes could be affected (Antunovic et al., 2018, p. 634).

While plenty of research has been done on the occurrence and recognition of male bias in popular media (e.g. Aley & Hahn, 2020, p. 499; Perez, 2020, p. XIV; Ward & Grower, 2020, p. 182), research is lacking in providing data for the consequences of gender biases on public attitudes. Examining male bias in Hollywood movies and its relation to negative public perceptions of gender stereotypes is significant due to the consequential occurrences resulting from neglecting gender stereotypes, which will be examined in this thesis. Therefore, this research will investigate the research question (RQ):

To what extent does the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies, as measured by the Bechdel Test, influence negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, among individuals aged 18 to 25 years living in the Netherlands?

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To answer this research question, the thesis is to explore the role of male bias in Hollywood movies in shaping public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, in the context of the Netherlands.

Furthermore, observational learning is a significant aspect of human behavior, these observations can be done through media (Ward & Grower, 2020, p. 179). Therefore, media consumption levels could play a role in shaping public attitudes. If gendered stereotypes in Hollywood movies are more present, individuals could adopt these stereotypes by observing. The media consumption levels of an individual could potentially impact the public attitudes of gender stereotypes in Western society. Consequently, media consumption levels will be taken into account in this research. As individuals aged 18 to 25 years old tend to have significantly high media consumption levels (Antunovic et al., 2018, p. 634), their perspectives regarding media engagement are particularly relevant for this research. Furthermore, research has shown that people tend to align their actions and thoughts with their political preference (Acharya et al., 2015, p. 2). Additionally, the acceptance of sexist beliefs and gender roles are affected by political preference (Ditonto, 2019, pp. 590-594). Political preference could potentially lead to an adaptation of an individual's attitudes towards gendered stereotypes, a phenomenon known as cognitive dissonance theory (Acharya et al., 2015, p. 2). As a result, this research will consider political preference. Therefore, the following sub-questions are formulated to investigate media consumption levels and political preference as moderation variables in the thesis:

To what extent does a) media consumption levels and b) political preference moderate the relationship between the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies and negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, among individuals aged 18 to 25 years living in the Netherlands?

The first chapter served as an explanation of the background and the relevance of this research and introduced the research questions. This research is further divided in four other chapters. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the theoretical background the current research is based on, which primarily focuses on male bias in Western popular (Hollywood) media, gender stereotypes, media consumption levels, and political preference, applied to the aim of this research. Deriving from the theoretical framework, the hypotheses for this research were entailed in chapter 2. Chapter 3 entails the overall explanation of the methodology and

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research design. This chapter focuses on an experimental survey design, the sample method, the target population, and the measurements levels. Chapter 4 presents the results of the statistical analyses conducted from the experimental data. The last chapter, chapter 5, provides a conclusion of this research by answering the research question. This chapter delves into the results and discusses how the findings compare with previous research. Furthermore, chapter 5 delves into the implications and limitations of this research and proposes recommendations for future research.

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2. Theoretical framework

In exploring the relationship between the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies and negative public attitudes towards gendered stereotypes in Hollywood movies, this research involves several fundamental concepts that require some clarification. Previous research mostly focused on the occurrence of stereotypes and how male characters dominate screen time, dialogues, and storylines, reinforcing traditional gender roles and stereotypes (Perez, 2020, p. XIV; Ward & Grower, 2020, p. 182). These studies primarily focused on identifying and recognizing the patterns of the presence of gender biases. This research aims to bridge the social constructs that come with male bias and stereotypes. The theoretical framework is grounded in the interconnectedness of several factors shaping negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes among individuals 18 to 25 years living in the Netherlands.

The first section delves into male bias in general and shows the pervasive influence of male bias within Western popular media, especially in Hollywood movies, particularly on screen and its role in perpetuating gender stereotypes in the Netherlands. Building upon this, the second section explores the role of gender stereotypes and shifts towards the perpetuation of gender stereotypes in media portrayals and how this affects Dutch society, among individuals aged 18 to 25 years old. Furthermore, the third section examines the impact of media consumption levels and its influence on individuals' perception of reality, specifically for individuals aged 18 to 25 years old. Finally, the fourth section delves into the influence of political preference on behavior and explores the influence political preference may have on the acceptance of sexist beliefs, especially in the context of the Netherlands among individuals aged 18 to 25 years old. The four sections lay the groundwork for exploring the relationships between the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies, attitudes towards gender stereotypes, media consumption levels, and political preference.

2.1. Male Bias

This research focuses on understanding the social and cultural impact of the awareness of male bias portrayed and perpetuated in Hollywood movies and how it shapes negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes among individuals aged 18 to 25 years old in the Netherlands. In recent studies, there has been a growing discussion and awareness surrounding the influence of male bias of society, especially in popular media such as big and influential Hollywood productions (Perez, 2020, pp. 7-10). Research illustrates how Hollywood movies often perpetuate the favoring of men and male characters. This

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phenomenon is known as male bias. Male bias refers to standardization of men in society (Perez, 2020, p. 4). It is a systematic tendency that favors and prioritizes men and male perspectives in society over other genders. Male bias is often seen as a product of scholarly tradition largely shaped by male influence, reflecting broader societal biases (Milton, 1979, p. 40). The bias reflects the male-centric viewpoints prevalent in societies. Male dominance is a widespread cultural phenomenon and it is a notion that is generally shared by all members of society. The lack of interest in women has over time led to distorted theories, resulting in a genuine deficiency (Milton, 1979, p. 44). The bias exists in many forms, impacting the daily lives of those who are Othered, as it actively contributes to frameworks of societal expectations (Perez, 2020, p. XI).

The standardization of men can be seen in many industries in society and is specifically visible in the media and entertainment industry (Shor et al., 2019, p. 526). Popular media, made for mass consumption, refers to the cultural content that attracts extensive attention and engagement within a diverse and wide audience (Stein et al., 2014, pp. 153-163). Popular media is known for its accessibility and broad appeal of media content. In Western popular media productions, such as in Hollywood, male bias is widely perpetuated (Perez, 2020, p. 10). In Hollywood productions, men do not only occupy a greater number of roles than females, they also spend twice as much time on screen and are more often assigned to the lead role. Men get more lines, more speaking time, and more interesting stories. Consequently, the storytelling community of these popular media productions are perpetuating society's male bias in their movies. The stories that are showcased by Hollywood productions play a major role in influencing contemporary Western culture, by reinforcing the social understanding of gender (Perez, 2020, p. 10). This perpetuating of male bias is exemplified in contemporary society where, as demonstrated before, even the newest Hollywood cinema movies fail the Bechdel Test (Valentowitsch, 2023, p. 293).

Despite the ongoing efforts for gender justice advocating for a reform within and outside the Hollywood industry for over fifty years, the progress has been slow (Heldman & Haggard, 2017, pp. 3-4). Addressing male bias in the entertainment industry is important because what we see on screen in Hollywood impacts the world around us, leading to Hollywood's contribution to the perpetuation of a distorted view of reality. In the U.S.A., the population of women constitute 51% of the total population, yet male characters overwhelmingly control screen and speaking time in the highest-grossing Hollywood films, as depicted in the 2.3-to-1 ratio male to female in screen time (Heldman & Haggard, 2017, p. 3).

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This ratio illustrates male bias in Hollywood movies. Despite the lower likelihood of female characters being portrayed on screen compared to male characters in Hollywood movies, women are more frequently subjected to sexualization in comparison to men. The onscreen hyper sexualization aligns with the prevalent issue of sexual harassment behind the scenes in Hollywood (Heldman & Haggard, 2017, pp. 3-4). The sexualization of females on screen contributes to the normalization of objectification of women and reinforces societal expectations regarding women's roles and appearances. In turn, the link between onscreen representation and real-world behavior is significant, as popular media, and especially Hollywood, has a powerful influence on shaping societal norms.

Researching male bias in Western popular Hollywood movies in the context of the Netherlands is particularly interesting because of the omnipresence of American popular culture in Dutch society and therefore influencing social constructs of the Netherlands (Kooijman, 2011, p. 17). American entertainment culture and especially Hollywood is represented in the popular culture of the Netherlands, implicating that "we are all implicated by American culture in one manner or another" (Kooijman, 2011, p. 17). Therefore, the interaction between Hollywood and the Netherlands could give us interesting insights into how Hollywood movies influence cultural values and gender dynamics within a different sociocultural context.

While most bias is unconscious and not malicious (Perez, 2020, p. XI), awareness of male bias can be crucial in working towards less hostile Western popular media environments, such as Hollywood (Pietri et al., 2017, p. 176). The Bechdel test is an effective detector for male bias, where its simplicity reveals the pervasive tendency within media to prioritize male perspectives. Gender inequality roots in the subconscious of individuals, therefore, creating awareness of male bias using the Bechdel test, it may allow for exposure of gender inequality over Hollywood movies (Agarwal et al., 2015, p. 830). The Bechdel test is a simple test to shed light on a highly problematic issue that many are not aware of, creating an efficient way of challenging a structural defect in the Hollywood culture. Taking the findings of previous research into account, the present research aims to integrate the concept of male bias on screen by examining its presence within the context of the Bechdel test. This examination integrates the concept of male bias in an analysis of its prevalence and implications within Hollywood movies. By using the Bechdel test as a lens through exploring male bias in Hollywood movies, the research question aims to unravel the extent to which gender disparities affect societies thinking.

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2.2. Gender Stereotypes

In Western society, gender stereotypes are part of daily life, shaping perceptions, attitudes, behavior, and expectations regarding gender (Heldman & Haggard, 2017, pp. 3-4). These stereotypes differ per culture and dictate certain norms for different societies and cultures. As this research delves into male bias in Hollywood movies and the perpetuating and reinforcement of gender stereotypes, this research explores the attitudes that come with these gender disparities and inequalities.

Yet another instance of male bias is generic masculinity, assuming something gender-neutral is male unless stated otherwise (Perez, 2020, p. 7). By positioning male characteristics as the standard gender, it reinforces gender stereotypes and shapes societies understanding of what seems normal. The influence of generic masculinity is particularly evident in Hollywood movies where gender-neutral characters, for example Sonic the Hedgehog, are perceived as male (Perez, 2020, p. 15). This exemplifies how societies' collective understanding of what is deemed normal, is deemed as male. The unconscious male bias in Hollywood movies normalizes a distorted version of reality and perpetuates stereotypes (Heldman & Haggard, 2017, pp. 3-4).

The representation of gender in American Western culture has undergone significant changes in both social and professional spheres over the past century (Bhatia & Bhatia, 2021, p. 106). Women have achieved more presence in the work field, educational achievements, additionally women achieved more presence in the social aspects of society, such as not being the primary caregiver. Despite these advancements, much has stayed unchanged. Women continued to be underrepresented in a lot of positions compared to men. Especially popular media coverage, such as in Hollywood movies, often portray characters according to gendered stereotypes (Aley & Hahn, 2020, p. 499). Gender stereotypes can be defined as "beliefs about certain attributes that differentiate how women and men are or should be, and frequently address traits, physical characteristics, role behaviors, and occupations" (Ward & Grower, 2020, p. 178). Hollywood plays a crucial role in shaping gender stereotypes. Gender can be seen as more than biological make-up, it is based on and shaped by sociocultural element, such as media (Markova & Lo, 2019, p. 1). Media creates the misrepresentation of gender and promotes gender inequality through media content. Stereotypical portrayals hold expectations of how different genders are expected to behave in society (Ward & Grower, 2020, p. 179). Hollywood movies contribute to this by mirroring broader societal expectations of gender roles. The exposure to these representations in Hollywood movies can reinforce certain

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attitudes or beliefs towards gender stereotypes by consumers, especially in Western society that is heavily influenced by Hollywood productions. Ruling stereotypes can cluster to form gender ideologies, resulting in expected behavior of women and men. Stereotypes have a significant impact, influencing an individual's psychological functioning (Freedman, 2014, p. 273). The cultivation theory states that long-term exposure to mass media messages impact individuals' views of social reality. Popular media like Hollywood movies that promote gender stereotypes can over time result in the internalization of those expectations (Markova & Lo, 2019, p. 2).

According to research by Markova and Lo (2019, p. 1) there is a shift of attitudes towards gender stereotypes, where consumers are becoming more aware of the harms of gender stereotypes. Together with this awareness of gender stereotypes, people become more open-minded and are stepping away from traditional gender values. Furthermore, they found that consumers want marketers to stop promoting gender stereotypes. However, in contrast, audiences of popular media, unaware of and maybe cultivated towards these gender biases, continue to favor the deeply rooted stereotypes in Hollywood movies. The implicit association test is a tool to measure implicit biases and associations that individuals might hold unconsciously (Bhatia, 2017, pp. 46-48). The principle states that people could possess implicit biases or associations that influence their thoughts and behaviors which can reveal biases, for example regarding gender. This demonstrates that the presence of male bias can subtly and unconsciously influence people's attitudes towards gender stereotypes, as such biases are often unconsciously perpetuated through popular media use. However, becoming aware of these gender biases has been shown to reduce the acceptance of gender stereotypes and could potentially lead to a greater likelihood of rejecting stereotypes (Markova & Lo, 2019, p. 1).

Gender stereotypes differ per culture and prescribe roles and behaviors to people based on their gender. When examining gender stereotypes, it is important to consider the context. In the Netherlands, gender equality and the participation of women in society is relatively high (Endendijk et al., 2013, p. 577). However, gender stereotypes continue to shape societal interaction, perceptions, and gender roles. Gender stereotypes are particularly evident in the media, especially film and television. The Dutch film industry is relatively small and dictated by the U.S. distributors, especially by Hollywood productions (Kooijman, 2011, pp. 16-18). Hollywood's popular culture has a global reach and is part of social constructs in the Netherlands. Researching gender stereotypes coming from Hollywood

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productions in societies like the Netherlands is interesting to give insights on why gender stereotypes persist being favored in movies in a society that no longer accepts stereotypes and to see what happens in a shift in attitudes when people are made aware of these biases.

The combination of male bias and stereotypes within the Western popular media entertainment context of gender ideologies, especially Hollywood movies, presents a complex interplay that influences societal norms. Hollywood content, influenced by societal biases, frequently portrays men and women in stereotypical roles. Exposure to media that standardizes men over women, may contribute to the normalization of gendered stereotypes (Ward & Grower, 2020, p. 179). Hollywood content audiences that are unaware of and maybe cultivated towards this male bias, could continue to favor the traditional stereotypes. Whereas people who are made aware of male bias are slowly stepping away from these traditional norms (Markova & Lo, 2019, pp. 1-2). Therefore, awareness around male bias may be crucial in shaping negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes in Hollywood movies (Valentowitsch, 2023, p. 293) Leading to H1.

2.3 Media Consumption Levels

Media consumption has become embedded in adolescents' daily lives (Boer et al., 2020, p. 90). This increase comes with concerns about its potential impact. In 2018, 45% of people aged 18 to 25 years old reported being online almost constantly, a trend that has likely intensified in recent years. This increase underscores the importance of understanding the impact of media consumption levels. Media consumption levels refer to the amount people use electronic media per day (Poulain et al., 2019, p. 110). Consumption patterns in online media, which includes all forms of online communication, could have an impact on how Western popular media standards, particularly biases in Hollywood, shape negative public attitudes. Higher media consumption levels indicate that individuals are exposed to more electronic media. Media use may create challenges for implicit biases and stereotypes, as media platforms are not immune to implicit biases (Bhatia, 2017, p. 46). Biased associations that characterize stereotypes are likely to emerge in media due to a variety of factors, including the influence of cultural norms, historical representations, and commercial interests. The underrepresentation or misrepresentation of certain groups in Hollywood media can therefore reinforce gender stereotypes (Bhatia, 2017, pp. 46-47). Additionally, the portrayal of characters in entertainment media like Hollywood and the usage of images and language may contribute to the reinforcement of implicit biases. Recognizing and addressing implicit biases

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in media representation is crucial for promoting equity and inclusion, where media creators have a responsibility to challenge stereotypes (Kooijman, 2011, pp. 20-23). Individuals aged 18 to 25 years old who are considerably exposed to a great volume of content, have a high risk of being exposed to these biases.

The presence of male bias in Hollywood movies may predict the attitudes of traditional gender stereotypes in popular media, especially among people who have high media consumption levels. Looking at the social cognitive theory, it posits that individuals learn from observing, including through media content (Gawronski, 2012, p. 657). If public attitudes towards gendered stereotypes are more favorable, individuals who have high media consumption levels could be more likely to adopt traditional gender stereotypes in everyday life. The cultivation theory suggests that enduring exposure to mass media content, which often portrays male bias, shapes individuals' perceptions of social reality (Markova & Lo, 2019, pp. 1-2). Specifically, the theory implies that continuous exposure to content that promotes gender stereotypes, can lead to the internalization of these ideals over time. Individuals with high consumption levels, who are classified as individuals aged 18 to 25 years old (Antunovic et al., 2018, p. 634), may come to perceive the real world as mirroring the representations depicted in popular media, as in Hollywood productions. However, there is an ongoing discussion to which extent phone use perpetuates gender stereotypes (Vaast, 2019, pp. 1673-1674). Even though social media platforms offer a low barrier for engagement for everyone and all voices, concerns have been raised for surveillance capitalism, where marginal and vulnerable groups seem to get lost (Vaast, 2019, p. 1674). While gender stereotypes are particularly visible in media, their visibility on mobile phones and social media could be less evident, because social media also serves as a platform for promoting gender minorities (Vaast, 2019, p. 1689). This research aims to contribute to this ongoing discussion.

In the Netherlands specifically, research has indicated that 34.5% of individuals aged 18 to 25 years old have intense media use and 7.38% have problematic social media use (Boer et al., 2020, p. 97). In addition, the Netherlands shows a great social media penetration rate of 88%, positioning as the largest social media market region of the Benelux (Guttman, 2024, para. 1). The Dutch media landscape is seamlessly integrated in online content in their daily lives. The increase in media consumption levels is crucial for understanding the impact of Western popular media, especially of Hollywood movies, on public cultural norms in the

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Netherlands. The prevalence of digital media may influence how Hollywood movies and their inclusion of male bias are consumed and accepted by people living in the Netherlands.

Individuals with in general high consumption levels are expected to be more acceptable and have a positive attitude towards gender stereotypes and endorse these stereotypes in their own lives, as they are often exposed to gender biases and are cultivated towards these norms (Ward & Grower, 2020, p. 179). According to the implicit association test, media gender biases visible in Hollywood productions influence people's perceptions and behaviors, illustrating the importance of implicit biases at both conscious and unconscious levels (Bhati, 2017, pp. 46-49). Consequently, media consumption levels should be taken into account when researching the relationship between the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies and negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, since it may influence the way of thinking of individuals. Resulting in H2.

2.4. Political preference

Political preference, an individual's ideological stance on the political spectrum, plays an important role in shaping people's worldview and attitudes (Swim & Campbell, 2003, pp. 218-231). The status of women has undergone changes across various societies in the past century. Structural and legislative changes also made room for shifts in personal attitudes and acceptance of women's positions over time. Despite these developments, persistent concerns remain regarding gender inequality. Perceptions of women and beliefs about the extent of gender inequality are shaped by political relationships (Swim & Campbell, 2003, pp. 218-228). Research has shown that the acceptance of sexist beliefs is affected by political behavior. People have a psychological need where they tend to justify the system they live in regarding unequal relationships among groups in society (Russo et al., 2013, pp. 465-466). This system justification results in favoritism and acceptance of dominant groups and the endorsement of stereotypes. Political preference aligns with system justification, where right-wing preference can be an endorser for stereotypical attitudes. Additionally, the Attitudes Toward Women Scale measures the extent to which individuals endorse traditional gender roles (Ditonto, 2019, pp. 590-594). While this scale has measured a decline in the number of people who express sexist attitudes, gender racist attitudes still exist in subtler means. Due to social desirability factors and society norms the nature of gender racism has become more insidious. However, research has shown that the adoption of traditional gender norms is more prevalent in certain ascriptive identities, such as in political preference (Ditonto, 2019, pp.

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590-594). People with a sexist attitude are often more positive towards traditional gender roles and seem to score higher on right-wing parties. However, literature on sexism and voting behavior is still small, therefore it is an interesting area for consideration. Furthermore, the relationship between male bias in Hollywood movies and public attitudes towards gender stereotypes can be influenced by ideological ideas, such as political preference. This moderation could possibly be explained by the Cognitive Dissonance Theory. This theory describes that individuals act and think in a way that aligns with their political ideas, leading to an adaptation of their attitudes (Acharya et al., 2015, p. 2). Cognitive dissonance is the psychological discomfort that arises when an individual's action seems to be in conflict with their original attitude. Moreover, research has figured that people will modify their attitudes based on their political preferences (Acharya et al., 2015, p. 3). Research by Gawronski (2012, p. 657) also discovered that individuals will form their attitude to align with their beliefs system, such as their political view. This conforms with the selective exposure theory which posits that people are inclined to expose themselves to political information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs (Trilling et al., 2017, p. 189). The selective exposure arises from the change of media landscape, where users are able to control their online environment. In the Netherlands, where media consumption is high (Guttman, 2024, para. 1), people are often exposed to like-minded messages (Trilling et al., 2017, p. 189). This tendency increases political polarization. However, in the Netherlands the political landscape is not overly polarized, due to its multi-party system (Trilling et al., 2017, p. 195). These contrasts, characterized by a multi-party system that diminishes polarization and the simultaneous exposure to like-minded ideologically fitting media, presents an interesting context for examining how political preference could influence social attitudes in the Netherlands.

Studies suggest that individuals who identify with right-wing ideologies have a more positive attitude towards traditional gender roles, especially when popular media, such as Hollywood movies, align with their beliefs (Dietze & Roth, 2020, p. 7). Especially conservative right-wing parties emphasize the preference for the preservation of traditions, where traditional gender stereotypes are perpetuated. For example, right wing parties tend to argue against quotas for women, assuming that societal changes in gender roles will come naturally (Lombardo & Meier, 2009, p. 360). This viewpoint aligns with male bias, as it tends to persevere the status quo where men are in power without acknowledging the need for active measures that promote gender equality (Perez, 2020, pp. 7-10). In the Netherlands, the representation of women in politics is high compared to other countries. However, left wing

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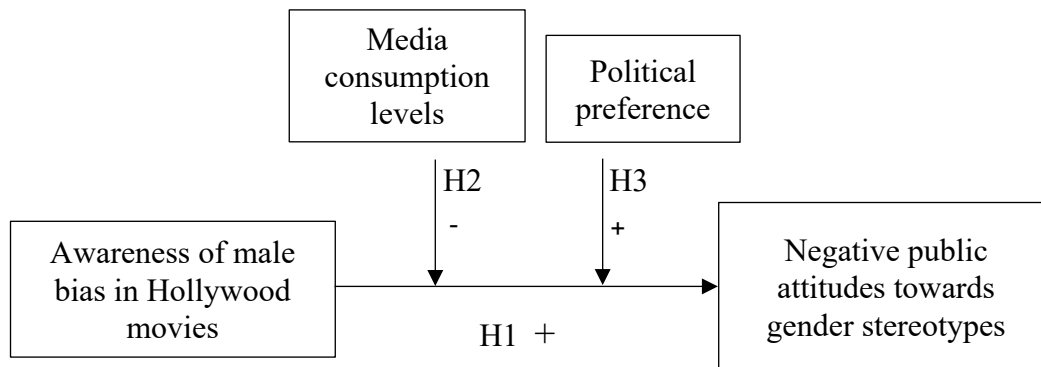
parties have been shown to express more concerns about gender equality and tend to include more women in their parties than right wing parties (Kantola, 2009, p.388). For this reason, it is expected that people with left-wing political preference are less accepting of gender stereotypes. For this reason, it could be argued that political preference could moderate attitudes towards male bias in Hollywood movies and gender stereotypes, especially when Hollywood movies match or are in contrast with people's political beliefs. By understanding how political preference could interact with attitudes formed based on Hollywood portrayals, insights can be gathered into the broader societal implications that come with gender biases in Hollywood in the context of the Netherlands. Therefore, political preferences should be taken into account when looking at how male bias in Hollywood movies could influence public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, leading to H3.

Building upon the literature review, three primary hypotheses were developed. The main hypothesis (H1) posits that the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies strengthens the negative public attitude towards gender stereotypes among individuals aged 18 to 25 years old living in the Netherlands, stating that awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies creates a more negative public attitude towards gender stereotypes than for people unaware of male bias in Hollywood movies. The second hypothesis (H2) expects that media consumption levels weaken the relationship between awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies and negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes positively, therefore stating that people who have high media consumption levels will have a weaker negative attitude towards gender stereotypes than people with low media consumption levels, when they are aware of male bias in Hollywood movies. The third hypothesis (H3) predicts that type of political preference moderates the effect of awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies and negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes. Expecting that (H3a) right-wing political preference weakens the relationship between awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies on negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, and (H3b) left-wing political preference strengthens the relationship between awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies on negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes. The hypotheses are visualized in Figure

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Figure 1. Hypotheses model



H1: Awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies strengthens negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, among individuals aged 18 to 25 years living in the Netherlands.

H2: Media consumption levels negatively moderate the effect of awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies on negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, among individuals aged 18 to 25 years living in the Netherlands.

H3: Type of political preference moderates the effect of awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies on negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, among individuals aged 18 to 25 years living in the Netherlands.

H3a: Right-wing political preference negatively moderates the effect of awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies on negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, among individuals aged 18 to 25 years living in the Netherlands.

H3b: Left-wing political preference positively moderates the effect of awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies on negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, among individuals aged 18 to 25 years living in the Netherlands

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3. Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology employed in this research will be outlined, providing a framework for understanding the research design and implementation. The methodology includes several aspects, including a justification of the chosen approach, sampling methods, information about the sample, the measurements, procedure, and considers the validity and reliability of this research. The justification addresses why a quantitative experimental design was deemed most suitable for investigating the research question. The sampling method employed in this research will explain how participants were selected and justifies the chosen approach as the most appropriate for achieving the research objectives. A description of the participants involved in the research will be provided, offering insights into their demographic characteristics and information. Furthermore, the measurements utilized in the research to gather the relevant data will be explained. The procedural aspects of this research will be outlined, showing the steps the participants had to undertake and which tasks were executed. Lastly, considerations of validity and reliability will be addressed, discussing the credibility of the research findings.

3.1 Methods

This research employs a quantitative research design, utilizing a pretest-posttest control group experimental design with a between subjects factor, utilized by an online survey (Neuman, 2014, p. 292). For measuring public attitudes, an experimental design by using a survey is an ideal way to do so according to Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 209). Quantitative research allows for objective measurements in social contexts, where qualitative research falls short on this aspect due to its inherently subjective nature. Qualitative research often relies on self-reporting data from the researcher, a quantitative experimental design allows for objective and unbiased data (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 209). An experimental survey design systematically collects measurable social data, to answer the research question by using statistical analysis. Through statistical analysis, patterns can be identified in the data found. Furthermore, surveys are interesting because they can reach big groups of people, the results can be projected to an entire population, they can predict behavior very accurately, and surveys ensure a high level of objectivity (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 206). By reaching a large audience, an online survey enhances generalizability compared to qualitative research. Moreover, participants are less likely to provide socially desirable responses without a researcher present during the online survey. Using an online survey for an experimental

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design reduces suspicion from participants that participate in the research rather than conducting an experiment in real life due to a survey's perceived familiarity and anonymity (Neuman, 2014, pp. 282-283). The program that will be used to conduct the experimental survey is Qualtrics, a tool provided by Erasmus University for collecting confidential survey data (Tooling, n.d., para. 8). An online tool like Qualtrics provides online administration, which facilitates precise notation and allows a larger number of responses. Although online surveys may pose limitations, such as the prerequisite of internet literacy, the selection of the research's sample is derived from its high level of media usage and therefore big challenges for using online surveys are therefore not anticipated. The subject of gender biases and gender stereotypes are a complex interplay and while qualitative research has been done on the occurrence of male bias in Western popular media (e.g. Aley & Hahn, 2020, p. 499; Perez, 2020, p. XIV; Ward & Grower, 2020, p. 182), quantitative research on the social consequences of these occurrences is highly interesting for consideration.

An experimental design can also have risks and disadvantages. This research uses an experiential design in a controlled setting, therefore generalizing the findings to real-life conditions may not accurately reflect the complexities present in a natural setting, which can lead to overgeneralization (Neuman, 2014, p. 287). The observed findings in a controlled experiment may not hold the same outcomes when applied in a real-world scenario. However, by keeping these risks in mind and by focusing on enhancing the validity and reliability, the research design minimizes these risks. Furthermore, the research question is explored through relational hypotheses, therefore an experiment emerged as a suitable approach for conducting this research (Neuman, 2014, pp. 282-283). Experimental studies are effective for exploratory research. Additionally, experiments have the benefits of a high level of control, enabling them to create conditions that correlate to the research question. Lastly, an experimental design facilitates the collection of evidence to establish relationships between variables (Neuman, 2014, pp. 282-283). For the results, the data will be analyzed by various statistical analyses using the software SPSS (Tooling, n.d.).

3.2 Sampling

Participants for this research were recruited through the researcher's social media channels, including Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and WhatsApp, resulting in a convenience sample (Snow, n.d., p. 142). An engaging message on the social media channels, along with a Qualtrics-provided survey link, invited individuals to participate in the research (See

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Appendix A). The recruitment message was crafted in both Dutch and English to invite a broad audience of people living in the Netherlands, accommodating participants proficient in either language. The message explicitly stated the eligibility criteria, specifying that participants must be 18 to 25 years old and must reside in the Netherlands. Through social media a big group of participants can be reached, allowing for representative, diverse, and inclusive sample (Snow, n.d., p. 135). To enhance the sample size and diversity, participants were encouraged and asked to share the survey link with their networks, thereby facilitating a snowball sample technique (Snow, n.d., p. 142). This approach not only broadened the reach of potential participants but also ensured a more representative sample. The target sample size for this research was set at a minimum of 60 participants to sufficiently power the analysis and enhance the generalizability of the findings, with 30 participants in each condition. Although a larger sample size is desirable, the specified number of participants ensured that each condition would have an adequate number of participants for a meaningful analysis (Erasmus University, 2024, p. 13) Through random assignment, each participant had an equal chance of being assigned to either the experimental or the control group, minimizing potential biases and allows to make valid comparisons between groups (Neuman, 2014, p. 288). Qualtrics facilitated the random assignment process by employing a random processor to allocate the participants in either the experimental or the control group.

3.3 Sample

The research targeted individuals aged 18 to 25, who reside in the Netherlands and who consume Western popular media. Furthermore, participants must be open to share their political preference. The inclusion of the age group 18 to 25, categorized as young adults, is grounded in their active involvement in and consumption of popular media (Antunovic et al., 2018, p. 634). With consistently higher levels of media consumption than older age groups, this age group makes them a relevant demographic for researching the impact of media portrayals, such as in Hollywood movies, on attitudes. Participants below 18 and above 25 were directed to the end of the survey, as their responses are not relevant to the research objectives. Similarly, individuals indicated their residence outside the Netherlands were not able to participate in this research, given that this research targets specifically individuals aged 18 to 25 residing within the Netherlands. Filter questions are useful to guide people through the survey by tailoring the content to their benefit, avoiding asking individuals questions that are not relevant to them (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 211). Furthermore,

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participants who do not consume Western popular media were excluded from the research as well, since they were not able to provide relevant insights for this research. Once participants answered they do not consume Western popular media, they were directed to the end of the survey. Lastly, this research investigates the impact of political preference. Therefore, individuals who chose “prefer not to say” regarding the question on their political preference were also excluded from this survey.

After completing the initial draft of the survey, it was pilot tested on six participants from the researcher’s network. These participants were selected to represent a range of backgrounds and perspectives, ensuring the survey was evaluated from multiple viewpoints and experiences (Neuman, 2014, p. 304). Upon finishing the survey, the six participants were asked to provide feedback on their experience, including the survey’s clarity, relevance, understanding, and ease of completion. Participants were asked to mark any parts of the survey that could be improved, such as wording, instructions, or response options. The experimental online survey was refined based on feedback from the pilot test before conducting the final experimental survey. By conducting a pilot test and incorporating feedback from participants, the quality and validity of the survey was enhanced (Neuman, 2014, p. 304).

The research data was gathered through Qualtrics and the online survey was available and spread online for a duration of 20 days. The application of the snowball sampling facilitated rapid data collection (Snow, n.d., p. 142). A decline in the rapidity number of responses was noticeable over time, therefore the survey was periodically posted twice a week on the researcher’s social media channels. This proactive approach aimed to maintain engagement and ensure a steady stream of participants. During the data cleaning process, several responses were identified as missing, often due to incompleteness or incorrect information input (e.g., not meeting the required criteria for this research).

3.4 Measurements and Operationalizations

Media consumption levels. The survey started collecting demographic information from participants, following upon, media consumption levels were measured to explore their potential influence on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, consistent with the expectations outlined by Ward & Grower’s research (2020, p. 179). Media consumption levels were measured according to the scale used by Poulain et al. (2019, p. 111), where participants were required to indicate their frequency of media consumption via

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mobile phone, television, and internet (computer/laptop) over a typical week. The scale used ranged from less than 1 hour a day, 1 to 2 hours a day, 2 to 4 hours a day, and more than 4 hours a day.

Political preference. Political preference, a demographic variable, was measured across a spectrum of ideological positions ranging from left-wing to right-wing, as well as centrist preferences (Acharya et al., 2015, pp. 1-6; Swim & Campbell, 2003, pp. 218-231).

Participants were first informed that political preference was a factor taken into account in the research and were prompted to select the option that best aligned with their political preference. Additionally, a note emphasizing the participant's anonymity and confidentiality was included to ensure participant's privacy. The question asked was: "What is your political preference?", where participants could indicate their preference with left-wing, centrist, right-wing, or prefer not to say.

Attitudes towards gender stereotypes in Hollywood movies. Participants were provided with an easy-to-understand definition of the term popular movies: "Western popular movies are made for mass consumption and are known for its accessibility and broad appeal, for example Hollywood productions (Stein et al., 2014, p. 153-163). These movies can include a variety of genres, such as action, comedy, drama, romance, fantasy, adventure, thriller, horror, and science fiction." This definition, based on Stein et al. (2014, p. 153-163), was used to ensure participants have the right understanding of the concept Western popular media movies, focusing on Hollywood movies. The gender-stereotype attitudes scale by Huhmann and Limbu (2018, p. 852) was used to measure attitudes toward gender stereotypes. The researchers developed a set of 10 items, where participants had to indicate their level of agreement with the 10 items on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. The scale was originally used to measure gender stereotype attitudes in advertisements. The items were adapted to align with the aim of the current research, changing the term 'advertisements' to 'Western popular media movies.' Furthermore, items not relevant to movies were excluded from the survey. In total, participants were asked to rate their agreement towards eight items. An example item is "Western popular media movies suggest that women are fundamentally dependent on men."

Bechdel test. Once participants rated their agreement with the attitude towards gender

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stereotypes items, the survey continued with an explanation on the Bechdel test, ensuring that participants understood the specific criteria used for evaluating the questions, avoiding potential biases (Neuman, 2014, p. 309). The explanation of the Bechdel test is based on the definition by Fogel and Criscione (2020, p. 67): “The Bechdel test looks at how women are represented in movies. For a movie to pass the test, it must meet three criteria, which are three easy-to-answer questions: 1. Are there at least two women with a name included in the movie? 2. Do these two named women speak to each other? 3. Do these two named women speak to each other about something other than men? This test helps to see if movies treat men and women equally by comparing their roles.” The Bechdel test was used to visualize male bias in Hollywood movies (Agarwal et al., 2015, p. 830), by showing participants a list of eleven Hollywood movie posters either failing or passing the Bechdel test. These movies were classified as failing or passing the Bechdel test by using the official Bechdel test movie list together with an IMDb list of 250 movies that fail or pass the Bechdel test (*Bechdel Test movie list*, n.d.; *IMDb: Advanced title search*, n.d.; *Top 250 IMDB movies that pass the Bechdel Test - IMDb*, 2018). A randomizer was used to select eleven popular Hollywood movies for each category (*Research Randomizer*, n.d.). Eleven movies were used to include the most popular movie genres used in Hollywood movies: Drama, Action, Comedy, Thriller, Adventure, Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Romance, Crime, Animation, and Family (Stein et al., 2014, pp. 153-163). The experimental group was exposed to movies that all fail the Bechdel test, and thus visualizing male bias, and the control group was exposed to movies that all pass the Bechdel test. The movies that passed the Bechdel test were: *Top Gun Maverick* (Action), *Mean Girls* (Comedy), *Joker* (Thriller), *Spider-Man No Way Home* (Adventure), *The Hunger Games* (Sci-Fi), *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (Fantasy), *The Notebook* (Romance), *The Wolf of Wall Street* (Crime), *Frozen* (Animation), *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* (Family), and *The Fault in Our Stars* (Drama) (*Bechdel Test movie list*, n.d.; *IMDb: Advanced title search*, n.d.; *Top 250 IMDB movies that pass the Bechdel Test - IMDb*, 2018). The movies that failed the Bechdel test were: *Oppenheimer* (Drama), *The Lord of the Rings The Fellowship of the Ring* (Action), *Shrek* (Comedy), *No Time to Die* (Thriller), *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* (Adventure), *The Avengers* (Sci-Fi), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (Fantasy), *A Star is Born* (Romance), *Now You See Me* (Crime), *Ratatouille* (Animation), and *Marley & Me* (Family).

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3.5 Procedure

Upon clicking on the survey link, participants were presented with the initial phase of the research, the informed consent. This initial part provided participants with a short explanation of the research without revealing the researcher's aim of the survey (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 206). Additionally, the informed consent outlined the participant's anonymity and confidentiality, reassuring participants of the protection of their personal information throughout the research. Furthermore, participants were informed of the potential risks and benefits that came with their participation. It was emphasized that participation in the research was entirely voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw at any moment. The contact details of the researcher, as well as contact details from the Data Protection Officer of Erasmus university were provided so participants could reach out if they had any questions or concerns. Lastly, participants were asked to only participate if they met the requirements of this research, being 18 to 25 years old, living in the Netherlands, consuming Western popular movies, and willing to share their political preference. The informed consent aimed to uphold ethical standards, prioritize safety, and foster trust between researcher and participants throughout the research (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 206). Participants were required to give consent to participate to make sure they acknowledged the information provided. The survey continued with demographic questions about age, gender, and political preference. To ensure participants met the research criteria, they were asked to confirm whether they resided in the Netherlands. Following this, participants were presented with an easy definition of Western popular movies focusing on Hollywood movies, based on the definition given by Stein et al. (2014, pp. 153-163), and were asked if they had ever consumed Western popular movies, to ensure participants understood the concept. The research proceeded by asking participants to fill in how often they consume online media in a typical week on their mobile phone, television, and internet (laptop/computer). A matrix table was utilized to allow participants to indicate their media consumption across four different levels: less than 1 hour a day, 1-2 hours a day, 3-4 hours a day, and more than 4 hours a day. After proceeding to the next page, participants were presented with text informing that they will be asked to share their thoughts and opinions on media-related topics in the upcoming section. The definition of Western popular movies was shown again, along with an explanation that participants should carefully read the definition as it would be relevant for the upcoming questions. After 15 seconds participants could proceed to the next page where their attitude towards the role of women in Western popular movies were measured using a matrix table (*Qualtrics - Timing Question*,

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n.d., para. 1). Timing questions were used to prevent participants from proceeding to the next section too quickly, thereby encouraging them to spend adequate time on the definitions and instructions. Timing questions help to ensure participants have a clear understanding of key terms and of the instructions, enhancing the validity of the research by reducing risk of misunderstandings and incomplete comprehension (*Qualtrics - Timing Question*, n.d., para. 1). As the participants continued, they were provided with an easy-to-understand definition of the Bechdel test, based on the definition by Fogel and Criscione (2020, p. 67). After 15 seconds participants could proceed to the next page, where they were asked to take 30 seconds to independently evaluate for themselves whether each movie they will see passes or fails the Bechdel test. Participants were informed they could only proceed to the next page after 30 seconds to ensure they spent enough time evaluating the movies (*Qualtrics - Timing Question*, n.d., para. 1). Participants were again provided with the definition of the Bechdel test, to ensure participants' understanding of its criteria. On the subsequent page, participants encountered a text informing them that all the movies they evaluated either all passed or failed the Bechdel test (Bechdel Test movie list, n.d.), depending on their assigned group. Additionally, participants received an explanation of what it entailed when the movies they saw passed or failed the Bechdel test. For instance: "All the movies you just saw FAILED the Bechdel test (Bechdel Test movie list, n.d.). This means that there were no scenes where two named female characters talked to each other about anything other than men." Participants were asked to keep this in mind while evaluating the next and second-to-last-question. Informing participants they were almost done with the survey served as a motivational tool to prevent survey fatigue, which can lead to reduced attention and lower data quality (Porter et al., 2014, pp. 63-64). Reassuring participants they were almost done helps to maintain engagement. Continuing, participants were asked again to express their attitude towards the role of women in Western popular movies, using the same statements and matrix table as before. Lastly, to ensure that the experimental manipulation was effective, a manipulation check was included (Neuman, 2014, p. 304). Participants were asked if the movies they saw passed the Bechdel test, to verify if the participants interpreted the manipulation correctly. Submitting their responses, participants were provided with a debriefing, explaining the aim of this research and provided the contact details of the researcher. Participants were asked not to disclose the purpose of the research with anyone and were encouraged to share the survey with anyone they believed might be interested in participating. The complete survey can be found in Appendix B.

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3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity. Multiple steps were taken into account to ensure the validity of this research, ensuring the data collected aligned with the intended data collection objectives (Matthews & Ross, 2010, pp. 216-217). To ensure the validity of this research, participants were given definitions of concepts to ensure they had the correct understanding which increased the validity-enhancing strategy. By providing participants with clear and easy-to-understand definitions of the concepts, it was ensured that they understood the intended meaning of the constructs that were assessed. This helps participant's responses accurately reflect their opinions, thereby enhancing the content validity of the measurements (Matthews & Ross, 2010, pp. 216-217). All definitions in the survey were also marked as timing questions, which was used to prevent participants from proceeding to the next page without reading the definitions, enhancing the validity of the research (*Qualtrics - Timing Question*, n.d., para. 1). Furthermore, as mentioned in the measurements and operationalizations section, all concepts were derived from previous proven research, improving the construct validity (Matthews & Ross, 2010, pp. 216-217). By utilizing established scales, the instruments already demonstrated their ability to measure the intended construct effectively. To further ensure the validity of this research, the survey was pilot tested (Neuman, 2014, pp. 291-304). During the pilot test, six participants were asked to reflect and give feedback on the survey. This was done to check if everything went smoothly and had the intended effects on participants (Neuman, 2014, pp. 291-304).

Reliability. To minimize variability in participant's responses due to misunderstandings, clear constructions were given for each new section of the survey (Neuman, 2014, p. 309). All instructions followed a clear order to ensure all participants saw the same instruction, increasing the reliability of the research. A reliable instrument consists of consistent results when measuring the same concepts under similar conditions. Furthermore, the pilot test aimed to identify issues with the survey items (Neuman, 2014, p. 309). Based on feedback given, the survey was refined and adapted, enhancing also the reliability of the final survey, by ensuring consistent measurements (Neuman, 2014, pp. 291-309). After conducting the survey, data that was incomplete, incorrect, or insufficient for the research was excluded from the data set. This step was taken to ensure that only reliable data was included in the analyses, improving the reliability of the research.

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4. Results and Findings

The following section presents the findings of the data analysis, providing a comprehensive overview of the results obtained from the survey responses. The analysis covers the examination of participant demographics, media consumption levels, attitudes towards gender stereotypes, and the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies, together with other variables investigated in this research. With the use of statistical analyses and data visualizations, the results offer insights into the relationship between the independent and dependent variable, as well as the other variables, shedding light on patterns and associations within the dataset. A series of analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses, including reliability analyses, exploratory factor analysis, analysis of covariance, and multiple regression analysis.

4.1 Demographics and Descriptive Statistics

In total, 201 responses were recorded in Qualtrics for this research. Following the data cleaning process, a total of $N = 139$ responses were deemed suitable for further analysis. In preparation for analysis, the data were exported from Qualtrics to SPSS. The option 'export viewing order data for randomized surveys' was selected, ensuring that participants were shown in their assigned group. Subsequently, a new variable was computed, where participants who were in the control group were labeled as 0 and those who were in the experimental group were labeled as 1. This allows for the differentiation of participants based on their assignment in a group.

The biggest percentage of the participants were female, as 72,7% of the participants indicated they identified as female, 23,5% as male, 2,7% as non-binary/third gender, and 1,1% preferred not to identify their gender. As participants were asked to share their political preference, 54% of the participants identified as left-wing, 26,7% as centrist, and 19,3% as right-wing. The participants average time of consuming online media on a mobile phone was 3-4 hours a day ($SD = .80$). The average of consuming online media watching television was less than one hour a day ($SD = .60$) and the average for media consumption levels using the internet on a laptop or a computer was one to two hours a day ($SD = 1.09$). Furthermore, the average age of the participants was 22 years old ($SD = 1.97$), where 24,1% of the participants were aged 23 years old, 18,5% was 22 years old, and 16,7% was 25 years old.

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4.2 Reliability of Scales

The scale used to measure attitudes towards gender stereotypes was adopted from the gender-stereotypes attitudes scale by Huhmann and Limbu (2018, p. 852), and was modified to the current research. The original scale used ten items to measure gender-stereotype attitudes and was originally used to measure attitudes towards advertisements. In the current research, eight out of ten items were utilized, as two items were deemed irrelevant and could not be appropriately adapted for assessing attitudes towards gender stereotypes in Western popular (Hollywood) movies, compared to the original items that measured attitudes towards advertisements.

To test the reliability of the scale used to measure attitudes towards gender stereotypes, a factor analysis was conducted followed by reliability analysis to ensure the scale's ability to measure gender stereotype attitudes. Before conducting a factor and reliability analysis, the a priori criteria had to be met. These criteria included a sufficient sample size with a minimum of 100 participants (Kline, 1979, p. 40) or 10 participants per item (Pallant, 2020, p. 190). Furthermore, each scale had to contain a minimum of three items, and the items had to be measured on a continuous level (Pallant, 2020, pp. 189-190). After confirming these prerequisites, factor analyses and reliability checks were conducted.

Attitudes towards gender stereotypes in Western popular Hollywood movies (pretest). The 8 items which were Likert-scale based were entered into an exploratory factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with Direct Oblimin rotation based on Eigenvalues (> 1.00) $KMO = .72$, $\chi^2(N = 139, 28) 299.14$, $p < .001$. The resultant model explained 61.5% of the variance in attitudes towards gender stereotypes. Factor loadings of individual items onto the two factors found are represented in Table 1. The factors found were in accordance with the literature, as three items were constructed positively towards gender role accuracy and five items were constructed offensive towards gender role stereotypes (Huhmann & Limbu, 2018, p. 854). The following factors were found:

Negative perceptions of gender stereotypes in Western popular movies. The first factor included five items that were constructed negatively towards gender stereotypes.

Positive perceptions of gender stereotypes in Western popular movies. The second factor included three items that were constructed positively towards gender stereotypes.

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Table 1. Factor analyses for scale attitude towards gender stereotypes (pretest).

Items	Components	
	Negative perceptions	Positive perceptions
Western popular movies suggest that women don't do important things.	.88	
Western popular movies reinforce the stereotype that a woman's main place is at home.	.84	
I find the portrayal of women in Western popular movies offensive.	.79	
Western popular movies reinforce the stereotype that women are fundamentally dependent on men.	.73	
I am more sensitive to the portrayal of women in Western popular movies than I used to be.	.53	
Western popular movies show men as they really are.		.81
Western popular movies accurately portray women in most of their daily activities.		.79
Western popular movies show women as they really are.		.78
R^2	.42	.20
<i>Cronbach's a</i>	.81	.73

Attitudes towards gender stereotypes in Western popular media (posttest). The 8 items which were Likert-scale based were entered into an exploratory factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with Direct Oblimin rotation based on Eigenvalues (> 1.00) $KMO = .76$, χ^2 (N = 139, 28) = 392.57, $p < .001$. The resultant model explained 67.5% of the variance in attitudes towards gender stereotypes (posttest). Factor loadings of individual items onto the two factors found are represented in Table 2. The factors found were in accordance with the

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literature, as three items were constructed positively towards gender role accuracy and five items were constructed offensive towards gender role stereotypes (Huhmann & Limbu, 2018, p. 854). The following factors were found:

Negative perceptions of gender stereotypes in Western popular movies. The first factor included five items that were constructed negatively towards gender stereotypes.

Positive perceptions of gender stereotypes in Western popular movies. The second factor included three items that were constructed positively towards gender stereotypes.

Table 2. Factor analyses for scale attitude towards gender stereotypes (posttest).

Items	Components	
	Negative perceptions	Positive perceptions
Western popular movies suggest that women don't do important things.	.85	
I find the portrayal of women in Western popular movies offensive.	.84	
Western popular movies reinforce the stereotype that women are fundamentally dependent on men.	.78	
Western popular movies reinforce the stereotype that a woman's main place is at home.	.77	
I am more sensitive to the portrayal of women in Western popular movies than I used to be.	.61	
Western popular movies show women as they really are.		.89
Western popular movies show men as they really are.		.80
Western popular movies accurately portray women in most of their daily activities.		.70
R^2	.46	.21
<i>Cronbach's α</i>	.84	.78

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After conducting the factor and reliability analysis, the items that could form a scale for positive perceptions of gender stereotypes in Western popular Hollywood movies were reversed into negative perceptions of gender stereotypes in Western popular Hollywood movies. This reversal ensured that these positive items aligned with the rest of the items, which were measuring negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes. By reversing the items, a consistent scale was established where all items uniformly assessed negative perceptions, thereby enhancing the coherence and reliability of the overall measurement tool (Pallant, 2020, p. 102). The pretest scale including all eight items, originally created by Huhmann and Limbu (2018, p. 852), turned out to be reliable (Pallant, 2020, p. 105). The eight items measured on a 7-point Likert scale have a good internal consistency, with a desirable Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$). The posttest scale including all eight items, using the same instrument as the pretest, showed a good internal consistency, with a desirable Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$).

4.3 Main Effect

Before conducting an ANCOVA, preliminary checks were performed to ensure that the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variances, homogeneity of regression slopes, or reliable measurement of the covariate were not violated (Pallant, 2020, pp. 319-328). The pretest scores must not differ significantly across the levels of the independent variable, meaning there should be no difference between the control and treatment groups. To test this, an ANOVA was performed. The results indicated no statistically significant difference between the control and treatment groups on the pretest, $F(1, 120) = .52, p = .473$. The second assumption, the homogeneity of regression, was assessed by examining the interaction between the covariate and the independent variable. The interaction was not statistically significant, $F(1, 103) = .01, p = .943$, indicating that the slopes of regression lines for the covariate (pretest) across the levels of the independent variable (assigned group) did not significantly differ and therefore meets the homogeneity of regression assumption and indicates an ANCOVA could be conducted.

A one-way between-groups analysis of covariance was conducted to compare the effect of male bias in Western popular Hollywood movies (measured by the Bechdel test) on posttest attitudes towards gender stereotypes, controlling for pretest attitudes towards gender stereotypes. The independent variable was the group participants were assigned to (treatment vs. control group), and the dependent variable included the scores on attitudes towards gender

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stereotypes from the posttest. Participant's scores on the pretest of attitudes towards gender stereotypes was used as the covariate in this analysis. The results of between-subjects effects of the ANCOVA indicated a significant effect of the type of movie on posttest attitudes towards gender stereotypes after controlling for pretest attitudes, $F(1, 104) = 54.18, p < .001$, partial eta squared = .34. These findings underscore the influential role of the type of movies shown and thus the presence of male bias in Western popular Hollywood movies in shaping attitudes toward gender stereotypes, when controlling for the pre-existing attitudes towards gender stereotypes, as visualized in Figure 2. The partial eta squared suggests that group assignment explains about 34% of the variance in the posttest attitudes towards gender stereotypes, which is a meaningful and large effect size (Pallant, 2020, p. 218). The types of movies participants were exposed to had a strong impact and increased their negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes, when accounting for their initial attitudes measured during the pretest. Therefore, it can be said that the awareness of male bias in Western popular Hollywood movies, as measured by group assignment, significantly influences attitudes towards gender stereotypes. Participants who were made aware of male bias in Hollywood movies had more negative attitudes scores towards gender stereotypes compared to those who were not made aware of male bias.

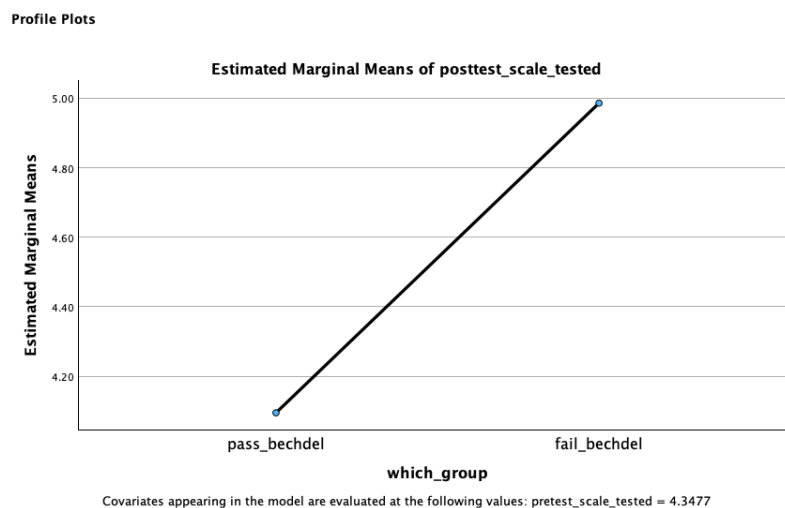


Figure 2. Differences in posttest attitudes towards gender stereotypes between groups that saw either movies that passed or failed the Bechdel test, controlling for the pretest attitudes (ANCOVA).

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A simple linear regression also revealed that assignment to group (whether participants viewed movies that passed or failed the Bechdel test) was a significant predictor of attitude change towards gender stereotypes. Attitude change was created as a variable and included in the regression as the dependent variable. Assignment to group was included as the predictor. The model was found to be significant, $F(1, 105) = 49.67, p < .001, R^2 = .32$. The awareness of male bias had a positive significant influence on attitude change ($\beta = .57, p < .001$). The results suggest that awareness of male bias has a substantial impact on participants' attitudes towards gender stereotypes and resulted in more negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes. The hypothesis that the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies strengthens the negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes is therefore accepted.

4.4 Moderators

Media Consumption Levels. A multiple linear regression was conducted to understand the potential impact of media consumption levels on attitude change, with attitude change towards gender stereotypes (comparing pretest and posttest attitudes) as dependent variable and media consumption levels as predictors. Media consumption levels were divided into three categories (phone, television, and internet (computer/laptop)) and were measured on a continuous level. The model was found to be significant, $F(4, 102) = 13.05, p < .001, R^2 = .34$, indicating that approximately 34% of the variance in attitude change was explained by media consumption levels. However, for the individual predictors showed no statistically significant relationships with the dependent variable, phone ($\beta = < .01, p = .959$), television ($\beta = .07, p = .390$), and internet on computer or laptop ($\beta = -.12, p = .182$).

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether the relationship between the assignment to group (whether participants viewed movies that passed or failed the Bechdel test) and attitude change (comparing pretest and posttest attitudes) was moderated by media consumption levels. When checking for the media consumption levels, interaction variables were created to examine whether the relationship between assignment to which group (pass/fail Bechdel test) and attitude change was moderated by different media consumption levels. The analysis examined each type of media consumption separately, following the approach outlined by the research by Ward and Grower (2020, p. 179). Interaction terms between the independent variable and the separate media consumption type variables were included to test for the moderation effects. A multiple regression analysis was conducted. The model was found to be significant, $F(7, 99) = 8.44, p < .001, R^2 = .37$.

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The interaction term between which group participants were assigned to and media consumption levels via phone usage was found to be significant, ($\beta = .83, p = .021$), suggesting that media consumption levels of phone usage moderate the relationship between the group assignment of type of movies viewed and attitude change towards gender stereotypes. Specifically, more phone usage strengthens the relationship between the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies and change in attitude towards gender stereotypes. People who have high consumption levels on their phone and were made aware of male bias in Western popular Hollywood movies significantly stronger disagreed with gender stereotypes, as visualized in Figure 3.

The interaction term between which group participants were assigned to and media consumption levels through watching television indicated that a higher level of media consumption weakens the relationship between the awareness of male bias and change in attitude towards gender stereotypes, as visualized in Figure 4. People who have higher consumption levels watching television and were made aware of male bias in Western popular Hollywood movies (by watching movies that failed the Bechdel test) were more positive towards gender stereotypes than people with lower consumption levels of watching television, however this was found not to be significant ($\beta = -.11, p = .639$).

The same results were found for the interaction term between which group participants were assigned to and media consumption levels through using the internet on a computer or laptop, as visualized in Figure 5. People who have higher consumption levels of using the internet on their computer or laptop and were made aware of male bias in Western popular Hollywood movies (by watching movies that failed the Bechdel test) were more positive towards stereotypes, this was also not found to be significant ($\beta = -.19, p = .405$).

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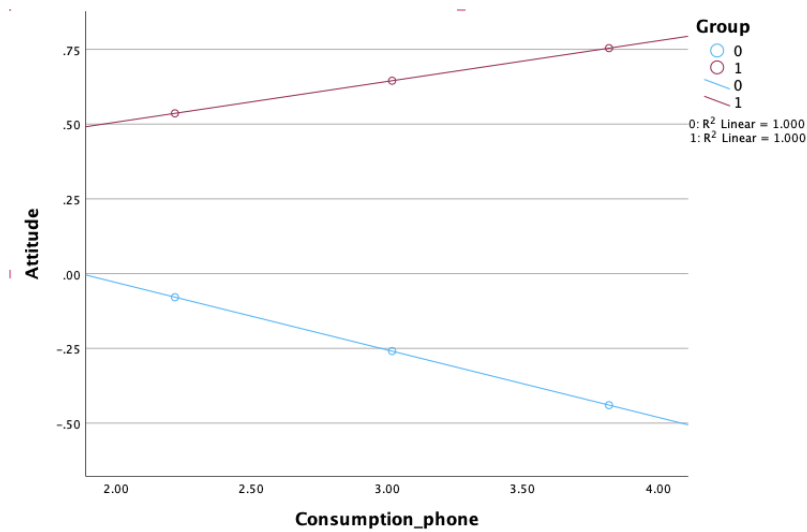


Figure 3. Moderation effect of consumption levels of phone usage on the relationship between group assignment and attitude change.

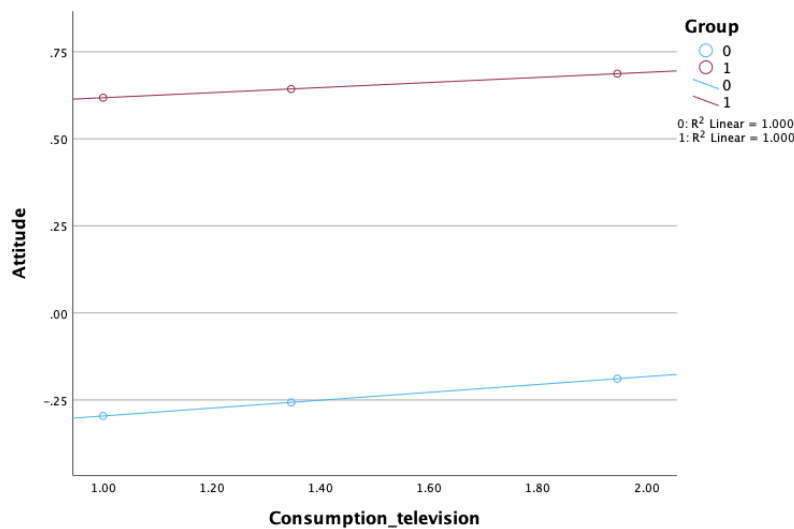


Figure 4. Moderation effect of consumption levels of television on the relationship between group assignment and attitude change.

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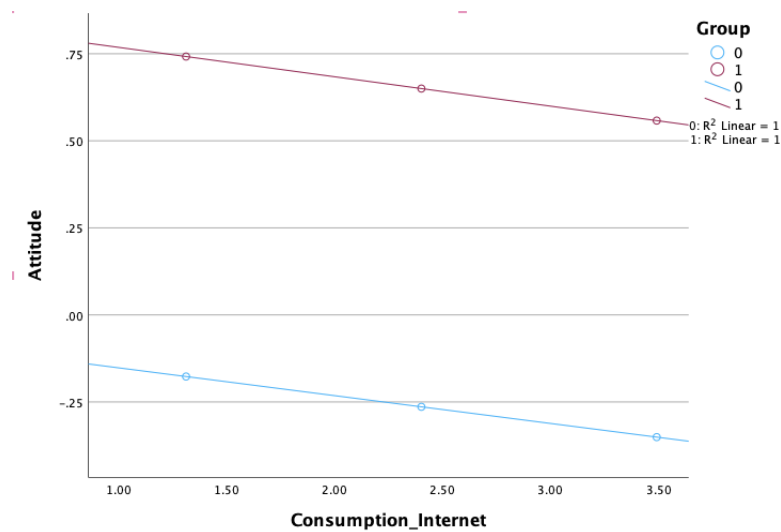


Figure 5. Moderation effect of consumption levels of internet usage on computer or laptop on the relationship between group assignment and attitude change.

To further explore the significant moderation effect of media consumption levels of phone usage on the relationship between the assignment to groups and attitude change towards gender stereotypes, an additional moderation analysis was conducted using PROCESS. The overall model was significant, $F(3, 103) = 18.85, p < .001, R^2 = .35$. The interaction between group assignment and consumption levels of phone usage was significant, $\Delta R^2 = .03, F(1, 103) = 5.18, p = .025$, indicating that the relationship between group assignment and attitude change towards gender stereotypes was moderated by media consumption levels of phone usage. More phone usage strengthens the relationship between male bias in Hollywood movies and negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes. The relationship between awareness of male bias in Western popular Hollywood movies and attitude change towards gender stereotypes is moderately moderated by phone usage according to Cohen's guidelines (Pallant, 2020, p. 240). The hypothesis (H2) that media consumption levels weaken the relationship between awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies and negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes positively is therefore not supported, since only a significant strengthened effect was found.

Political Preference. First, a multiple linear regression was conducted to understand the potential impact of additional influences. A multiple linear regression with attitude change towards gender stereotypes (comparing pretest and posttest) as dependent variable and political preference as predictors was conducted to test how political preference

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independently affects attitude change towards gender stereotypes. Political preference was coded into three categories, left-wing, centrist, and right-wing. These variables were transformed into three dummy variables. The model was found to be significant, $F(1, 105) = 3.73, p = .027, R^2 = .07$. The results indicate that participants identifying left-wing had significantly stronger negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes compared to right-wing individuals ($\beta = -.30, p = .031$). Furthermore, the results indicate that participants identifying as centrist had significantly stronger negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes compared to right-wing individuals, however this was not significant ($\beta = -.06, p = .664$). Participants identifying as left-wing had significantly stronger negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes compared to centrist individuals ($\beta = -.23, p = .036$).

Building upon this, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine whether the relationship between the assignment to group (whether participants viewed movies that passed or failed the Bechdel test) and attitude change (comparing pretest and posttest attitudes) was moderated by political preference. Political preference was coded into three dummy variables. Interaction terms between the independent variables and the dummy variables were included to test for the moderation effects. The model was found to be significant, $F(5, 101) = 11.81, p < .001, R^2 = .37$, indicating that approximately 37% of the variance in attitude change was explained by the predictors. The interaction between group and left-wing political preference was significant ($\beta = .51, p < .001$), indicating the relationship between which group people were assigned to on attitude change varies significantly based on people who identify as a left-wing political orientation. People who were assigned to the group that saw movies that failed the Bechdel test and identified as left-wing significantly stronger disagreed with gender stereotypes than people who saw the movies that passed the Bechdel test. Therefore, the results suggest that being aware of male bias in Hollywood movies and identifying as left-wing has a substantial significant impact on participants' attitudes towards gender stereotypes and strengthens their negative attitude towards gender stereotypes compared to those who are not made aware of male bias in Western popular Hollywood movies.

Furthermore, the interaction between group and centrist political preference was significant, ($\beta = .44, p < .001$), indicating the relationship between the group people were assigned to and attitude change towards gender stereotypes varies significantly for people who identify as a centrist political orientation. The results suggest that being aware of male bias in Hollywood movies and identifying as centrist has a substantial significant impact on

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participant's attitudes towards gender stereotypes and strengthened their negative attitude towards gender stereotypes compared to people who are not made aware of male bias in Hollywood movies.

For the interaction between group and right-wing political preference no significant result was found, ($\beta = .15, p = .203$). This implies that right-wing political preference does not moderate the effect of male bias in Hollywood movies on negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes.

The hypothesis (H3) that type of political preference moderates the effect of awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies on negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes is therefore supported, as well as H3b. However, H3a is not supported.

4.5 Manipulation Check

A chi-square test for independence was conducted to examine the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation, to assess whether participants who were assigned to movies that either passed or failed the Bechdel test could correctly recognize the type of movie group they were assigned to. The chi-square test revealed a significant association between the type of movie group and participant's recognition accuracy, $X^2(2) = 56.94, p < .001$. The effect size of .73, measured by Cramér's V, indicates a strong association between the group and the participant's ability to correctly recognize which group they were assigned to. Therefore, it can be concluded that the manipulation was successful.

In summary, the findings of this research portrayed that most hypotheses are accepted, except for H2 and H3a. The results revealed that the awareness of male bias in Western popular Hollywood movies, as measured by the Bechdel test, was connected with more negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes. Moreover, the research uncovered interesting interactions for the moderator variables media consumption levels and political preference on the relationship of the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies on negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes, while not all moderators were significant. The following section will further delve into a comprehensive discussion of the findings.

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5. Conclusion

This chapter delves into the conclusions drawn from the research on awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies and its impact on negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes among individuals aged 18 to 25 years old in the Netherlands. Through the use of the Bechdel test, this research explored how prevalent gender biases in Western popular media, especially in Hollywood movies, shape societal perceptions. By including the interplay of media consumption levels and political preference, this research sought to shed a light on the dynamics driving our social attitudes. The research aimed to investigate this by the following research questions (RQs):

To what extent does the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies, as measured by the Bechdel Test, influence negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, among individuals aged 18 to 25 years living in the Netherlands?

To what extent does a) media consumption levels and b) political preference moderate the relationship between the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies and negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, among individuals aged 18 to 25 years living in the Netherlands?

This chapter delves into the conclusions drawn from this research, reflects on these findings and the overarching research questions. Furthermore, the implications and limitations of these conclusions within the theoretical and contextual context will be discussed, together with proposals for future research. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse of media representations in society, offering valuable insights into gender inequality in media portrayals in Hollywood movies.

The research showed that the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies influenced negative public attitudes towards gender stereotypes, among individuals aged 18 to 25 years living in the Netherlands. By using the Bechdel test, this research discovered that people who were made aware of male bias in Hollywood movies, by showing them movies that all failed the Bechdel test to visualize male bias, shifted to more negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes compared to people who were not made aware of male bias. This finding aligns with earlier done research where it was found that stereotypical portrayals are mirroring broader societal expectations and those not aware of these deeply rooted biases continue to hold on to these stereotypes (Bhatia, 2017, pp. 46-48); Ward & Grower, 2020, p. 179). However, those who are aware of gender stereotypes have become more open-minded and favor stepping away from traditional gender values (Markova & Lo, 2019, p. 1). This current

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research added how people are changing their attitude and are becoming more negative towards gender stereotypes when they are made aware of male biases. The relevance of these results lies in the potential of cultivating awareness and understanding of the implications of male bias in Hollywood movies that influences Western societal attitudes towards gender stereotypes (Perez, 2020, pp. XI-XV). By recognizing the effects that becoming aware of male bias has on society's attitudes, we can begin to challenge and change the gender norms and values that are evident in Western society. This research plays a role in holding big media producers like Hollywood accountable for perpetuating gender inequality in society. Hollywood's influence extends far beyond the borders of the United States and influences a big part of everyday lives in countries that are reliant on Hollywood productions, such as the Netherlands (Kooijman, 2011, p. 7). Dutch culture is seamlessly integrated into online media (Guttman, 2024, para. 1). Consequently, Hollywood's popular culture has a substantial impact on social constructs in the Netherlands. This research on Hollywood content has found that gender representations in its media have a profound effect on societal norms and values worldwide, such as in the Netherlands. By critically raising awareness of the effects of male bias in Hollywood productions, this research participates in challenging media producers like Hollywood to consider the broader societal impacts of their content. While one could argue that people generally prefer stereotypes (Valentowitsch, 2023, p. 293), this research has proven that these preferences persist because they are unconsciously embedded through media exposure. When individuals become aware of these biases, their attitudes towards gender stereotypes become more negative. According to Markova and Lo (2019, pp. 1-2), this awareness also leads to a desire to challenge and reject gender stereotypes in society.

Additionally, the results of the moderation variable media consumption levels are interesting, as it was revealed that media consumption levels play a significant role in moderating the effect of male bias in Hollywood movies on attitudes towards gender stereotypes. Interestingly, people who were made aware of male bias and reported higher levels of media consumption on their phone, had greater disagreement towards gender stereotypes. This suggests that increased exposure to media on phones enhances people's critical awareness of male bias portrayed in media. While this finding was opposed with what was expected, it can be seen as an interesting result. This finding contributes to the ongoing discussion where some argue that (social) media and telephone use could participate in the inclusion of gender minorities in the media, rather than excluding marginalized gender groups in media representations (Vaast, 2019, p. 1674). People who were made aware of male bias in

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Hollywood movies and reported higher levels of media consumption through television or internet use showed more agreement with gender stereotypes. This was in accordance with the cultivation theory that suggests that enduring exposure to mass media content which often includes male bias, found on television and the internet, shapes individuals' perceptions of reality (Markova & Lo, 2019, pp. 1-2). Especially since the individuals aged 18 to 25 years old in the Netherlands have high media consumption levels, it was expected they perceived the real world as a mirror of the stereotypes represented in media (Antunovic et al., 2018, p. 634). While the findings of the current research were not significant, they did underscore the relationship between media consumption patterns and attitudes towards gender stereotypes. It emphasized the importance of promoting gender equal media as it reflects in social thinking.

Furthermore, it was revealed that political preference plays a significant role in moderating the effect of male bias in Hollywood movies on attitudes towards gender stereotypes. Those with left-wing political preference and who were made aware of male bias had stronger negative attitude changes towards gender stereotypes compared to those who were not made aware. This finding aligned with research by Kantola (2009, p.388), which figured that left-wing parties tend to be more equal regarding gender. Similarly, individuals with centrist political preferences had a stronger disagreement in attitude change towards gender stereotypes when they were made aware of male bias. However, the lack of significant results for individuals with right-wing political preferences raised some questions, as it was expected that those who hold conservative right-wing political preferences are favoring the perpetuating of male bias and repeating the status quo (Lombardo & Meier, 2009, p.360). While it was expected that people with right-wing political preference were more acceptant of gender stereotypes, this could not be proven. However, this may be linked to the formation of the sample, as the majority of the sample included people with a left-wing or centrist political preferences. For future research it would be advantageous to extend the spectrum of political preferences beyond the left-wing, centrist, and right-wing orientations. As the Netherlands has a very diverse and not much polarized political field, it could be more interesting to include a wider political spectrum or conduct the research in countries where polarization is more prevalent (Trilling et al., 2017, p. 195).

5.1 Implications

The findings of this research have given interesting insights in the interplay between the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies and negative attitudes towards gender

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stereotypes, when checking for media consumption levels and political preferences. While most of the results aligned with initial expectations some findings were not significant, indicating they cannot be generalized to the whole population. Still, they offer valuable insights in the research field to see what shapes societal perceptions of the sample of the research. This also highlights the need for more research on these concepts to understand what factors can shape societal thinking. The significance of political preference as moderator visualized how individual differences can shape attitudes to media content. While the current research was built upon previously conducted research and the manipulation check was successful, determining whether there are additional confounding variables that may influence the outcomes is crucial for a complete understanding of these concepts. For example, movie genre preference was not taken into account, which could potentially influence people's perceptions of the portrayed movies. Research has been conducted on gender differences in movie preferences, implying that individuals could have potential biases in exposure to certain content (Wühr et al., 2017, pp. 1-2). Certain genres, for example action movies are more prone to males and are more likely to contain gender stereotypes (Wühr et al., 2017, pp. 1-3), individuals who prefer this genre could be more acceptant to the influence of these stereotypes. Subsequent research could consider these potential confounding variables.

5.2 Limitations

While efforts were made to conduct the research in its full potential, there are some inevitably limitations that should be acknowledged. First of all, the sampling method of this research relied on convenience and snowball samples. While these sampling methods allow for the reach of wide and diverse audiences, they may not fully represent the diversity of the entire Netherlands population (Snow, n.d., p. 142). Participants were recruited through social media networks and referrals, causing a risk of bias towards certain demographics or groups. This shortcoming results in limiting the generalizability of the findings.

Another limitation is related to the use of the Bechdel test to visualize male bias in the manipulation of the research. While research has proved that the Bechdel test is commonly used for visualizing gender representation in Hollywood movies (Agarwal et al., 2015, p. 830), there are also some critiques on the use of the Bechdel test on gender biases (Kagan et al., 2020, pp. 3-14). First of all, the Bechdel test does not check if women are represented in a stereotypical manner. Furthermore, a movie can pass the Bechdel test with just a single line of dialogue between two named female characters that is not about a man, which doesn't

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inherently mean that the movie represents women in an equal manner. Kagan et al. (2020, pp. 3-14) presented a new test where they compared the number of interactions according to gender to better indicate the gender equality in a movie. This test could be taken into account to provide a more comprehensive assessment of male bias in Hollywood movies. Moreover, most research that has been conducted on the Bechdel test have the significant limitation that all data is limited to the U.S. market, limiting the use of the Bechdel test for other venues for future research (Valentowitsch, 2023, p. 295).

Additionally, this research has found interesting insights accounting for people's political preference. However, this research only considered a limited spectrum of political preferences, as it only took left-wing, centrist, and right-wing into account. This limitation could have affected some results, as individuals of varying political ideologies may have interpreted the survey questions differently based on their beliefs (Trilling et al., 2017, p. 195). Political preferences vary more widely than the right-left spectrum and including a broader range of political ideologies, for example progressive, conservative, socialist, and other nuances could provide more comprehensive insights. Given this, the Netherlands has a broad variety of parties compared to, for example, the U.S. and is less polarized. For future research this should be taken into account. In a two-party system people are more exposed to extreme division in media portrayals, which could potentially give more clear results (Trilling et al., 2017, p. 206).

Lastly, this research tried to include a broad variety of inhabitants of the Netherlands by conducting the survey in English. It is important to include as many people of the population as possible as this ensured inclusivity for a broad and diverse audience (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 206). However, it may have created challenges for Dutch-speaking individuals who were not comfortable in English. This decision could have excluded certain participants or led to difficulties in understanding and completing the survey.

5.3 Future Research

While this section has identified certain implications, limitations, and areas for improvement, there remain promising recommendations for future research aimed to enrich the interesting concepts of this research.

This research primarily focuses on Western popular media and specifically Hollywood movies. For further research it might be interesting to research the same concepts in different contexts. Since male bias in Hollywood movies and attitudes towards stereotypes come with a

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lot of cultural, political, and societal values (Perez, 2020, pp. 7-10), it could be interesting to research these concepts in another context than Hollywood movies. Hollywood movies are a reflection of Western popular society, they mirror the social issues and norms of its international markets (Valentowitsch, 2023, p. 294). Research has shown that Hollywood movies reflect the ongoing stereotypes and consequently portray these norms and values on their audience of Hollywood movies. For future reference, it could be interesting to compare the interesting findings found in Western societies in non-Western societies, for example in Bollywood movies. Bollywood is a dominant force on the social values of modern India, as it has a big impact on identity construction in the whole country (Matusitz & Payano, 2012, p. 124). As Bollywood is the world's largest film industry, it could be interesting to compare the findings of the current research focused on Hollywood with the Bollywood industry, since the storylines and dialogues of these two industries differ from each other as they come from different roots, but also share similarities on commercial aspects (Matusitz & Payano, 2012, p. 125). While the Bollywood industry and its social biases is not yet widely researched, conducting research on gender attitudes and biases could be interesting as the Bollywood industry copes with a lot of sexist and misogynist dialogues (Khadilkar et al., 2022, p. 2). As the research previously done on gender inequality in movie representations in Bollywood also mainly include qualitative content analyses of the occurrence of gender bias (Khadilkar et al., 2022, pp. 1-14), future research could provide the consequences of these biases in cultures other than Hollywood. Furthermore, religion is an integral part of Indian culture that also influences their politics. Male and son preference is still at high rates present in India, therefore prioritizing males, and thus also perpetuating male bias in Bollywood movies. A comparative approach between Hollywood and Bollywood could be giving new interesting insights as the context of cinema producers could matter significantly (Matusitz & Payano, 2012, pp. 123-126). In addition, a comparison within a different context, where women and men are very much equal in everyday life, but fail to be recognized in movie portrayals, as is happening in Iceland, could give different interesting insights (Konefal, 2012, pp. 133-135). As the current research has given new interesting insights into the change of attitudes towards gender stereotypes, in addition to the occurrence of male bias, future research could primarily focus on the setting of male bias and gender stereotypes. A content analysis would be advised (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 206). Given the interesting insights of the current research, exploring how different societies perceive and respond to gender biases could result in comparative insights into societal norms. The Netherlands is a liberal country which is known

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for its political freedom (Trilling et al., 2017, pp. 189-194). However, across different generations, perspectives and attitudes on social issues, including gender equality, have shifted over time, for example due to political influences. Exploring generational differences and political influences over time could also provide valuable insights on the shift of societal attitude in the Dutch context.

As discussed before, multiple factors could have influenced this research, therefore an intersectional analysis could be advised for future research. By incorporating an intersectional approach, researchers can delve deeper into the nature of identity and its influence on social constructs. For example, more genders could intersect with the awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies on attitudes towards gender stereotypes. This research limits itself towards binary thinking, where only men and women are taken into account (Perez, 2020, p. 7-10). The Other is seen as anything other than men, where other gender identities continue to be ignored and failed to be covered in societal data (Perez, 2020, p. XII). By including other genders than the binary, research can contribute to a more diverse understanding of inclusivity where gender equality can be promoted.

Overall, this research has shed light on the relationship between awareness of male bias in Hollywood movies and negative attitudes towards gender stereotypes among individuals aged 18 to 25 years old in the Netherlands and it opens avenues for further exploration. Future research has the potential to continue to broaden the academia on perspectives of gender representation in the media and its societal implications. This research has contributed to cultivate awareness and understanding of gender stereotypes and gender equality in popular media and thereby tried to be part of fostering a more equitable Western society.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Recruitment Messages

Hi, Hope you're doing well! I'm working on my thesis about media portrayals in Western popular movies and their roles in society, and I would love your input! If you're between 18 to 25 years old and currently residing in the Netherlands, your participation would be incredibly valuable. The survey only takes a few minutes. Thank you!

https://erasmusuniversity.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3sVZcJsdQQZcvmC

Hi, Ik ben bezig met mijn scriptie over de media weergaven in westerse populaire films en hun rol in de maatschappij, en ik zou graag jouw input willen! Als je tussen de 18 en 25 jaar oud bent en in Nederland woont, zou jouw deelname ontzettend waardevol zijn. De enquête neemt slechts een paar minuten in beslag. Dank je wel!

https://erasmusuniversity.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3sVZcJsdQQZcvmC

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Appendix B: Questionnaire

Start of Block: Informed consent

Informed consent

Dear participant,

You have been invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Viva van Pelt for her master's thesis research at Erasmus University Rotterdam. Before you decide whether to participate, please read this form carefully and take your time to ask any questions you may have. The purpose of this study is to get insights on media portrayals in Western popular movies.

Procedure:

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer survey questions. The survey takes less than 10 minutes.

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

Your participation in this research is completely anonymous and your responses will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Data collected during this study will be stored securely and only accessible to the researcher. Your individual responses will not be identifiable in any publications or presentations resulting from this research.

Risks and Benefits:

There are minimal risks associated with participating in this study. Some questions may be personal or sensitive in nature, but your responses will remain confidential. Your contribution will help advance knowledge in the field.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or consequence. Your decision whether to participate or not will not affect your current or future relationship with the researcher.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact the researcher (via 702949vp@eur.nl). Do you have a complaint or concerns about your privacy? Please email the Data Protection Officer (fg@eur.nl) or visit www.autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl. (T: 088 - 1805250)

Please only participate if you identify with the following aspects:

- You are 18 to 25 years old
 - You live in the Netherlands
 - You are willing to share your political preference (This will be kept confidential and the response will not be identifiable to you)
-

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I acknowledge the information provided above and hereby give my consent to participate in this research study.

- I consent to participate (1)
- I do not consent to participate (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If I acknowledge the information provided above and hereby give my consent to participate in this re... = I do not consent to participate

End of Block: Informed consent

Start of Block: Demographic questions

What is your age in years?

Skip To: End of Survey If Condition: What is your age in years? Is Greater Than 25. Skip To: End of Survey.

Skip To: End of Survey If Condition: What is your age in years? Is Less Than 18. Skip To: End of Survey.

Do you live in the Netherlands?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Do you live in the Netherlands? = No

What gender do you identify as?

- Female (1)
- Male (2)
- Non-binary/third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)
-

Page Break

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For this research, we take political preference into account. Please select the option that best represents your political preference. Remember that your responses are anonymous and will be kept confidential.

What is your political preference?

- Left-wing (1)
- Centrist (2)
- Right-wing (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

Skip To: End of Survey If What is your political preference? = Prefer not to say

Page Break

Western popular movies are movies made for mass consumption and are known for its accessibility and broad appeal of content, for example Hollywood productions (Stein et al., 2014).

Have you ever consumed Western popular movies?

- Yes (1)
- I don't know (2)
- No (3)

Skip To: End of Survey If Have you ever consumed Western popular movies? != Yes

End of Block: Demographic questions

Start of Block: Media consumption levels

How often do you consume online media in a typical week on your mobile phone, television, and internet (=laptop/computer)?

Online media includes all forms of online communication, for example think of online

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images, digital videos, streaming services, video games, websites, social media, podcasts, online news, and digital data (Poulain et al., 2019).

	Less than 1 hour a day (1)	1-2 hours a day (2)	3-4 hours a day (3)	More than 4 hours a day (4)
Mobile phone (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Television (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internet (laptop/computer) (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Media consumption levels

Start of Block: Attitude P1

This research explores various aspects of media perceptions and individual attitudes. During this survey you will be asked to share your thoughts and opinions on media-related topics.

Please read the following definition of 'Western popular movies' carefully, the following questions will be based on this concept. You can continue to the next page after 15 seconds, this way you can read the definition carefully.

Western popular movies are made for mass consumption and are known for its accessibility and broad appeal, for example Hollywood productions (Stein et al., 2014). These movies can include a variety of genres, such as action, comedy, drama, romance, fantasy, adventure, thriller, horror, and science fiction.

Timing

Page Break

In the following questions you will be asked to give your agreement on the role of women in Western popular movies. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements, ranging from 1= Strongly disagree to 7= Strongly agree.

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	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Western popular movies reinforce the stereotype that a woman's main place is at home. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Western popular movies reinforce the stereotype that women are fundamentally dependent on men. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Western popular movies show women as they really are. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Western popular movies show men as they really are. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Western popular movies accurately portray women in most of their daily activities. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Western popular movies suggest that women don't do important things. (6)

I am more sensitive to the portrayal of women in Western popular movies than I used to be. (7)

I find the portrayal of women in Western popular movies offensive. (8)

End of Block: Attitude P1

Start of Block: Bechdel test

Please read the following definition carefully, since you will need this definition for the next question. You can continue after 15 seconds.

The Bechdel test looks at how women are represented in movies. For a movie to pass the test, it must meet three criteria, which are three easy-to-answer questions:

1. Are there at least two women with a name included in the movie?
2. Do these two named women speak to each other?
3. Do these two named women speak to each other about something other than men?

This test helps to see if movies treat men and women equally by comparing their roles. (Fogel & Criscione, 2020)

Timing

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End of Block: Bechdel test

Start of Block: Pass Bechdel

Please take 30 seconds to independently evaluate for yourself whether each movie passes or fails the Bechdel test. After 30 seconds, you can continue to the next page.

Remember:

For a movie to pass the Bechdel test, it must meet three criteria, which are of three easy-to-answer questions:

1. Are there at least two women with a name included in the movie?
 2. Do these two named women speak to each other?
 3. Do these two named women speak to each other about something other than men?
-

Top Gun: Maverick



Mean Girls



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Joker



Spider-Man: No Way Home



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The Hunger Games

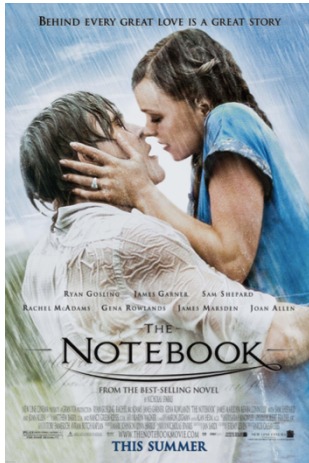


Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (First Harry Potter movie)

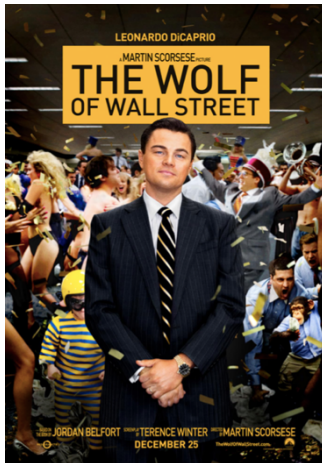


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The Notebook



The Wolf of Wall Street



Frozen



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Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them



The Fault in Our Stars



(IMDb: *Advanced title search*, n.d.)

Timing

Page Break

All the movies you just saw successfully **PASSED** the Bechdel test (*Bechdel Test movie list*, n.d.). This means that in each movie there were scenes where two named female characters talked to each other about topics other than men. Please keep this in mind evaluating the next and second-to-last question.

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End of Block: Pass Bechdel

Start of Block: Fail Bechdel

Please take 30 seconds to independently evaluate for yourself whether each movie passes or fails the Bechdel test. After 30 seconds, you can continue to the next page.

Remember:

For a movie to pass the Bechdel test, it must meet three criteria, which consist of three easy-to-answer questions:

1. Are there at least two women with a name included in the movie?
2. Do these two named women speak to each other?
3. Do these two named women speak to each other about something other than men?

Oppenheimer



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The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring



Shrek



From Screen to Standpoint:
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No Time to Die



Mr. & Mrs. Smith



From Screen to Standpoint:
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The Avengers



Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire



A Star is Born



From Screen to Standpoint:
The Role of Male Bias in Hollywood Movies in Shaping Public Attitudes Towards Gender
Stereotypes

Now You See Me



Ratatouille



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Marley & Me



(IMDb: Advanced title search, n.d.)

Timing

Page Break

All the movies you just saw **FAILED** the Bechdel test (Bechdel Test movie list, n.d.). This means that there were no scenes where two named female characters talked to each other about anything other than men. Please keep this in mind evaluating the next and second-to-last question.

End of Block: Fail Bechdel

Start of Block: Attitude P2

Remember the information that has been given to you in the evaluation of the movies regarding the Bechdel test. Please (again) indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on the role of women in Western popular movies, ranging from 1= Strongly disagree to 7= Strongly agree.

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	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Western popular movies reinforce the stereotype that a woman's main place is at home. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Western popular movies reinforce the stereotype that women are fundamentally dependent on men. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Western popular movies show women as they really are. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Western popular movies show men as they really are. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Western popular movies accurately portray women in most of their daily activities. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Western popular movies suggest that women don't do important things. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am more sensitive to the portrayal of women in Western popular movies than I used to be. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find the portrayal of women in Western popular movies offensive. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Attitude P2

Start of Block: Manipulation check

Did the movies you saw pass the Bechdel test?

- Yes (1)
- I don't know (2)
- No (3)

End of Block: Manipulation check

Start of Block: Debrief

***Please don't forget to click submit at the bottom of this page!**

Thank you for participating in this study on attitudes towards gender stereotypes and the influence of male bias. The purpose of this research is to gain insights into how individuals perceive and respond to gender stereotypes in various contexts. The survey included an experimental design, where the Bechdel test was included to create awareness for male bias in

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the experimental condition. The control group evaluated images of movies that all passed that Bechdel test, while the experimental group evaluated movies that all failed the Bechdel test. Your participation is greatly appreciated and will contribute to our understanding of this important topic. Please do not share the purpose of this research with anyone.

Confidentiality and Data Handling:

Your responses to the questionnaire and any data collected during the experiment are confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Your identity will remain anonymous, and your individual responses will not be disclosed to anyone outside the research.

You are welcome to share this survey with anyone you believe may be interested in participating.

If you have any further questions or would like more information about the study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher Viva van Pelt, via 702949vp@eur.nl.

End of Block: Debrief
