



Cinema and Society:

Shaping our Worldview
Beyond the Lens

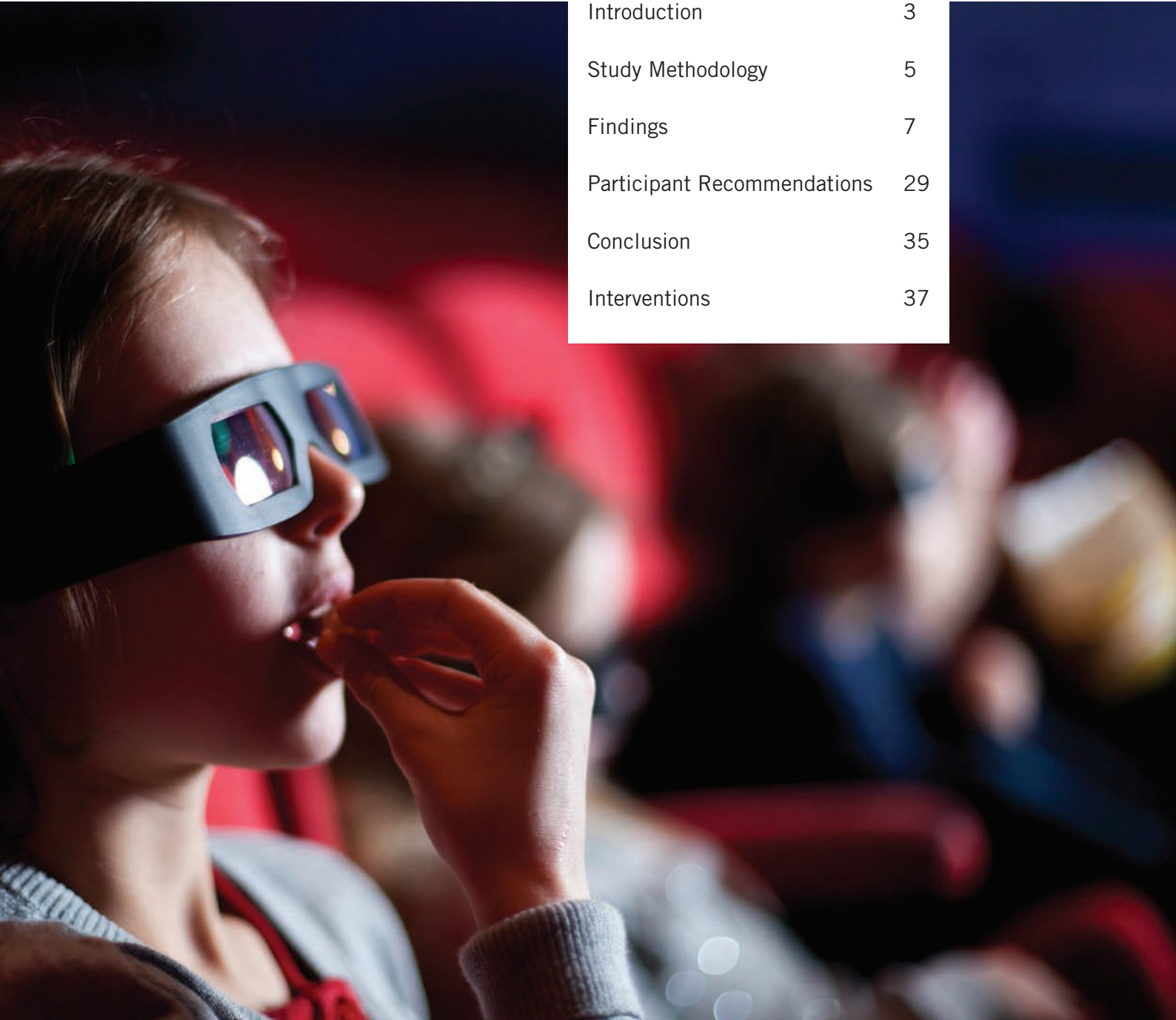
Investigation on the Impact
of Gender Representation
in United Kingdom Films



If she can see it, she can be it™

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INTRODUCTION

This research is driven by two primary questions. First, how do British people of different ages perceive of gender representations in contemporary entertainment media? Secondly, how do gender representations in media influence viewer perceptions and aspirations?

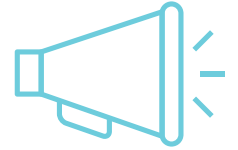
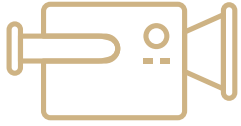
These questions were selected to fill a gap in existing research on media effects. Previous studies have documented gender bias in media, but ours is the first systematic study of whether everyday Britons are aware of this bias, and whether they think it influences their lives.

In our groundbreaking 2014 research study *Gender Bias Without Borders*, we analyzed gender representations in popular film in eleven countries and found that filmmakers perpetuate negative attitudes toward women and girls in both developed and developing countries. Women are vastly underrepresented in film and, when they are featured, their characters tend to reinforce harmful gender stereotypes. Even though the British film industry employs more women as writers (59%) and directors (27.3%) than any other country in the study, gender bias is still present in British entertainment media.

In the U.K., women comprise 37.9 % of all film characters and one-third of films feature a female lead or co-lead. Only one-in-five British films have a gender balanced cast. Our 2014 study also found that gender inequality is greater in films produced jointly by British and U.S. studios compared to those produced solely by British studios. When women are included in British films, they are rarely shown in positions of power. Fewer than 15% of all female roles depict business executives, political figures, or other professionals. Female characters are most commonly presented in traditionally feminine professions, such as teaching and nursing.

British female film characters are also often hyper-sexualized. Women are three times more likely to appear in sexually revealing clothing or be nude on-screen than male characters (19.5% compared to 6.5%). Female characters are twice as likely as male characters to be very thin (38% compared to 20%), which contributes to unhealthy body norms for British girls and women. Our new study analyzes how Britons of different backgrounds perceive the content of entertainment media, and how they believe it affects their lives. We asked boys, girls, men and women, in their own words, who their role models are within the entertainment world and why they look up to these people – what is it about their behavior,





qualities, lifestyle and attitude they admire? How is this reflected in their own lives, attitudes and behavior? How do these role models interact with the opposite sex? We also asked participants what it means to be a boy or a girl, a man or a woman, in their country. What do they think is expected of them? Where do these ideas come from? How, if at all, have they changed over time? How have these expectations affected their choices? How do these expectations affect their perceived opportunities? We honed in on specific scenes from movies to ask how participants relate to the characters and the situation, and whether this reflects normal life in their country.

Previous research indicates that while media does not tell people what to think, it does tell them what to think about and how to think about it.¹ British media is a powerful influence on what issues people focus on and what options they think are available for social change.² A 2012 British study from the All Parliamentary Group on Body Image found that media causes girls as young as five to be concerned about body size. This study also found that media is the root cause of body dissatisfaction amongst teen girls and has led to a dramatic increase in plastic surgery in recent years.³ Previous studies have used content analysis and survey research to study British media effects, but ours is the first study that asks everyday Britons to talk about the issue.





STUDY METHODOLOGY

We used focus groups to explore the primary questions of this research. Qualitative focus groups allow for deeper insight into research questions than quantitative survey research because they employ open-ended questions in a group setting where participants can interact with one another. Researchers pose the same questions to each focus group, but participants often take the discussion in new directions that furnish a richer understanding of the research question and generate new themes.

For this study, ten focus groups were conducted over the course of four days by Schlessinger Associates at a market research facility located in central London. Each group included eight participants.⁴ They were selected by age group, gender and parental status in order to compare how different groups perceive of gender representations in media and their effects. The following focus groups were recruited for this study:

Focus group participants were representative of the diversity of U.K. Adult participants were diverse in terms of education (all had the U.K. equivalent of an American high school degree or above), employment status (e.g., full-time, part-time, unemployed, and homemaker), career types (e.g., blue collar, white collar, government, technology, educator, etc.) and race. Participants under 18 were selected based on the diversity of their parents' education, employment and household income.

CHILDREN	TEENS	YOUNG ADULTS	ADULTS	PARENTS
Girls, ages 9 – 11	Teen girls, ages 13 – 16	Women, ages 18 – 24	Women, ages 30 – 44	Mothers of children ages 6 – 9
Boys, ages 9 – 11	Teen boys, ages 13 – 16	Men, ages 18 – 24	Men, ages 30 – 44	Fathers of children ages 6 – 9





Focus group participants were also selected based on the requirement that they had viewed at least one top grossing film (rated U, PG, 12A or 15) in the past year. Participants were also screened for their level of comfort discussing the personal impact of their most recent movie viewing experience to ensure that they would be active contributors in their focus group. People who work in media or market research were excluded from the study given their professional proximity to the research question.

Each focus group was led by a professionally trained moderator. Moderators were matched by gender for each group to control for potential gender moderator effects.⁵ The male moderator had thirteen years of research experience with a specialization in social research. The female moderator had 25 years of research experience with an emphasis in social research and entertainment.

Each focus group started with background questions to get the group talking. Next, the moderators asked about societal gender roles and how they are represented in media. At some point during the session, participants were shown two short clip of scenes from the films “*Gnomeo and Juliet*”⁶ and “*Harry Potter and the Philosophers Stone*”⁷ to spark discussion of social injustice in film. “*Philosophers Stone*” was used to spark conversation around the abuse of children (in this case Harry by his aunt and uncle) and “*Gnomeo and Juliet*” was used as a representation of gender injustice (specifically an overprotective father making decisions for his daughter around who she should marry). These films were selected based on their popularity and their clear depiction of these issues. Participants were also asked a series of questions about media influence. The moderators’ script can be found in Appendix A.

This study has several limitations. First, the study asked specific questions about film and television, which do not represent the full array of entertainment media available (e.g., video games, YouTube videos, books, magazines, etc.). Focus group participants discussed many forms of media in each session, so we were able to gather information on a wide array of media types. Secondly, focus group research with approximately 80 participants over-simplifies the experiences of the 63 million people who reside in the U.K. Every attempt was made to include a diversity of voices in the focus groups, but the small number of participants by definition limits the representativeness of the findings. Lastly, study findings may be affected by social desirability, a tendency for participants to respond to questions in a manner that reflects desirable or “good” behavior. Social desirability could have been triggered for some when they were told that the study involved questions of gender. Although moderators did their best to minimize this phenomenon, some participants may have given socially desirable answers instead of their honest opinions in order to avoid the appearance of sexism.

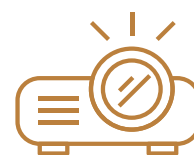
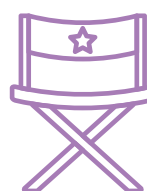




FINDINGS

The remainder of this report is organized around five key themes that emerged during focus group discussions:

- Gender Equality in Society
- Accelerating Media Consumption
- Gender Bias in Media
- Media Influence
- Social Injustice in Media



In each of the following sections, we summarize the major findings for each theme and illustrate finer points with verbatim quotes from focus group participants. We also note agreement and disagreement across the groups as well as disagreement within groups.

Gender Equality in Society: Still Elusive

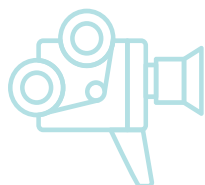
Focus group participants were asked whether gender roles have changed compared to the past. Their opinions and discussions provided some interesting findings about this complex issue.

FINDING: Moving Toward Gender Equality

Most male and female participants believe that the professional aspirations of women and girls are not as limited by their gender as they were in the past, and that gender no longer plays a significant role in educational opportunities or career choices in the U.K.

“Women and men have equal jobs, equal roles.” – Jamie, age 14

“I would say to a degree, yes. I think if you compare it to the 20 years ago, the jobs that – or the parts that were in play can be a lot more sort of jobs, of what it was then. I think now you’ve certainly got women in the workplace that are getting more significant jobs than what they were 20, 30 years ago.”
– Richard, age 39



The perception that women have more educational opportunities than in the past was supported by the fact that all but one of the women in the 18-24 group were headed to university or were already enrolled. The group noted that their educational expectations are a dramatic departure from previous generations of women in their families.

In terms of persistent gender inequality, women of different ages agree that, while women have made strides in education and employment outside the home, they bear a double burden because they are still expected to perform household chores.

"I think the women work harder because, if they had a job, then they also come to the kids, and they don't say, 'Do the dishes, and clean everything.'" – Isabelle, age 15

"It's like you've got multiple jobs because you wake up; you're a mom. Then you've gotta put your work hat on. Then you've gotta come home and be mom, be chef, sort out the laundry, maid and all that. And then be a wife or a girlfriend and then go to sleep and do it all again." – Seta, age 40

FINDING: Redefining Family Roles and Relationships

Focus group participants across age and gender find that family arrangements are also changing. The traditional family structure of a stay-at-home mum and a dad who works outside the home has largely been replaced by families with two working parents. Participants see more flexibility with traditional gender roles than in the past, and it is more common to see men staying at home with their children, single-parent households and same-sex families. Young women also report less pressure to get married at an early age.

"Years ago, it was more like the male being the breadwinner and the female being the homemaker, and now it's a lot more balanced." – Maria, age 20

"The home has changed a lot. The father generally cooks. There's no housewife. The mother goes to work." – Dwayne, age 34

"I saw a wedding picture of my grandmum the other day, and my grandmother was 17. She's a kid. What must she think that the normal age is nearing to 30?" – Harriet, age 23





Not Equal Yet

Most participants see gender roles becoming more equal, but many men and women also think that the U.K. still has a long way to go before achieving true equality.

“Jobs that take power in the city, I think it’s quite common to see a man in that seat. Men still have a sort of upper hand.” – Nathaniel, age 22

“Although we have physically seen that [gender roles] have changed...sometimes they revert to what they used to be in the mind.” – Vanisha, age 24

“British culture. It’s like: I mean, women are now getting like, as you say, power, having jobs and doing more things. But I think we are a long way off.” – Claire, age 30

“We are totally a long, long way off. Not in my lifetime.” – Louise, age 33

“We get paid more. We’re like top more so. And we basically write the rules, don’t we?” – Tony, age 38

Female participants of all ages and older men agree that gender inequality is not desirable, but this was a point of debate for males ages 18-24. Some young men think gender gaps in the workforce and family arrangements are natural or desirable.

*“Her role as a wife and mother, she wouldn’t be as confident [in the workforce] as I am.”
– Paul, age 18*

*“Any gender can do any role. It’s just the way it is now. I don’t agree with it. I don’t think I see women as more naturally material, so I see her as raising the child more than the man does, and I still see him being the breadwinner.”
– Nathaniel, age 22*





FINDING: Household Chores are still “Women’s Work”

One theme that came up in several groups was a gender gap in household chores for girls and boys. Mothers and fathers report few chore expectations for their children, but noticeable differences emerged by gender with kids through young adults. Female participants in the kid, teen, and young adult focus groups say they are expected to contribute more to household chores than their brothers.

“The boys haven’t learned yet [to do housework]...I’m already like a housewife... I’ve never seen my brother pick up anything and clean it.” – Katie, age 23

Teen boys echoed this expectation during a discussion of whether they perform chores.

“I’m meant to keep my room tidy, but I don’t. It doesn’t really bother me if it’s messy or not, but it bothers my mum. But if I just leave it for a couple of weeks, she’ll do it for me.” – Jamie, age 14

“I don’t care how my room looks cause I’m not in it much of the time. But if I leave it for too long and it’s too messy, my mom will do it. So I don’t worry about it.” – Colin, age 14



FINDING: Gender Stereotypes Limit Career Aspirations

Almost all of the focus group participants agree that gender is no longer a factor inhibiting career choices. Children, teens, adults, and parents think that Britons are free to choose any occupation, regardless of their gender. The moderators asked about whether it was socially appropriate for women to work as lawyers and men to work as nurses, and British children and teens of both genders were very open to the idea.

*“Police officers...there’s a lot of variation.”
– Josh, age 14*

*“Could be anyone. There are male nurses.”
– Jay, age 14*



Despite this freedom of choice, many participants note that occupations are still gendered:

“Well, sometimes [police officers] wear navy blue and dark jackets with hats. They’re generally boys, but it’s again, one that either boys or girls can do.” – Reese, Age 10

“Some of the boys might’ve said that women shouldn’t be builders, or policemen, and I think they do get the job, and I don’t think they’re not much common, boys are.” – Anna, age 14

Young men were the exception to this. Most men in the group 18 – 24 readily responded that lawyers and nurses are still gendered professions.

Moderator: What does a lawyer look like? *“A young guy in a suit. A male.” – Matthew, age 24*

Moderator: What does a judge look like? *“An older man.” – Daniel, age 19*

Moderator: What does a nurse look like? *“A woman.” – Freddie, age 23*

This young adult male group also debated whether a male nurse or a female fire fighter was “stranger,” and they concluded that it is more socially acceptable for women to enter traditionally male professions than for men to enter traditionally female professions.

Counter to perceptions of equality, young Britons have clearly gendered aspirations for their future occupations. When asked what they wanted to be when they grow up, boys and male teens say they want to be professional athletes, wrestlers, scientists, mathematicians, graphic designers, commercial pilots and computer programmers. Girls and female teens want to be school teachers, florists, dancers, singers, child psychologists and actors. Parents report that these gendered career choices are shaped by media. When asked, “Where are they getting all of this from, wanting to be wrestlers, wanting to be actors,



wanting to be singers?," fathers and mothers were quick to point to media.

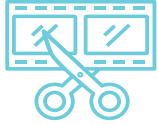
"TV" – Melissa, mother of two

"Telly." – Saskiya, mother of one

Mothers and fathers attribute this gendering of aspirations to television and other media that portray stereotypical careers for men and women. Most of the fathers want their daughters to aspire to the same professional heights as their sons, but a few fathers desire different paths based on gender.

"I want my boy having a stronger character than my girl should do... Being able to go out into the world, into the market, being a go-getter. From the girl's side of things, you can set those goals, but you don't want her to be so dominant." – David, father of two.

These findings do not support the widely held perception that young people are more egalitarian when it comes to gender than older generations. While parents have less gendered aspirations for their children, young Britons still espouse old gender stereotypes when it comes to expectations and aspirations.





Accelerating Media Consumption: Good, Bad and Scary

One primary theme that emerged across focus groups is new media consumption patterns. Participants of all ages and genders say that the way they consume media has changed dramatically in recent years. New online streaming technologies and smart phones make movies, television shows, video games and videos more accessible than ever before. Youth and adult participants say this has increased the amount of media they watch and has altered the way they watch it. For example, television was once a family experience with a limited number of channels to choose from, but now it is typically done alone and with virtually unlimited choices in terms of content.

“When we were younger, you watched telly a couple hours an evening, and that was it. Whereas now the Disney channel is on loop from god knows what time in the morning. It’s on too much.”

– Sharon, mother of two

“It’s changed for everyone now because of the Internet.” – Alison, mother of two

“Computer. Computer games. Video games. I pads as well.” – Bonnie, mother of five

Parents are especially concerned about the trend of solo viewing because they find that media of all forms has become more socially crass, sexual and violent in recent years. Gender differences in media consumption were reported in the child and teen focus groups. Male children and teens report that they spend most of their free time consuming media, with boys of all ages playing a lot of video games and teenage boys spending time in their rooms watching movies on their smart phones.

“I love video games. It’s my favorite thing to do. One time on it, I can’t be – I will have to be dragged off. I just – I’m totally addicted.” – Reese, age 10

“I usually always play video games.” – Patrick, age 9

“I’m not sure if you’ve heard of it but it’s called X box. There’s like an X box and you put games inside of it.” – Manny, age 11



Female participants in the child and teen focus group reported less media consumption than males of the same age. The parents of young girls reported heavy consumption of the same animated princess movies over and over again. Girls tend to memorize the words to the songs and learn some of the film dialogue by heart. These films spill over into other aspects of girls' lives because the film industry has created many spin-off products (e.g., dolls, toys, board games, video games, princess dresses, etc.) to capitalized on "princess culture."

"I've got two nieces. Every time they come around, they know I've got the 'Frozen' DVD. They put it on from start to finish." – Alison, mother of two

"When they're really young, they watch them over and over again." – Sharon, mother of two

"That's the big thing now – to have all the accessories." – Melissa, mother of two

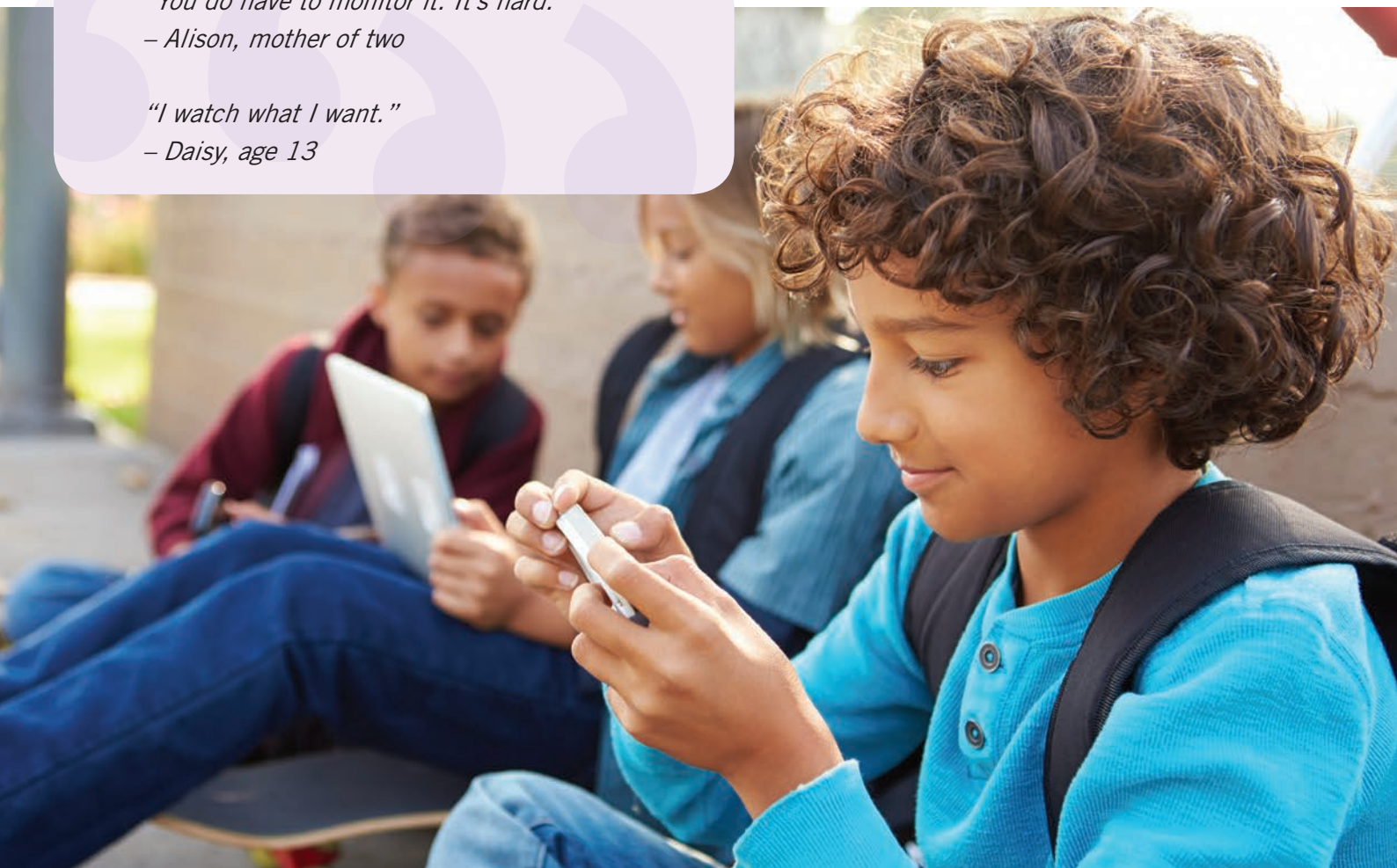
Although parents are concerned about the content of contemporary entertainment media, few mothers and fathers say they are monitoring their children's media consumption. They are not able to effectively monitor what their children are watching, even their youngest children, because of easy online access via handheld devices. Parents are also concerned about the influence of relatively new social media, including Facebook and Twitter, on their children's expectations and behavior. Participants in the child and teen focus groups confirm that most of their game playing and media viewing is unsupervised.

"You do have to monitor it. It's hard."

– Alison, mother of two

"I watch what I want."

– Daisy, age 13





Gender Bias in Media: Still Prevalent

Participants had a lot to say about the ways in which men and women are represented in film, television and other forms of media. There was wide agreement about women's underrepresentation, and the gendered ways in which they are portrayed.

FINDING: Missing in Action: Women and Girls

Participants of all ages and genders notice that men continue to appear more in film and television than women, and that women are generally relegated to supporting roles.

"We're still underrepresented." – Vanisha, age 24

"That's where the problem is, that there's not as much female lead characters." – Brian, father of two

"A lot of films, the main characters are often men. Women are smaller parts." – Amy, age 19

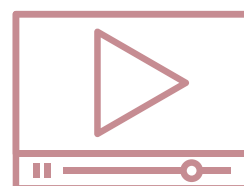
"But usually when you go and see a film, the man gets all the best roles and the women are just kind of on the side, aren't they?" – Sarah, age 34

Men ages 18 – 24 agree that male characters are almost always featured in lead roles but, unlike other participants, they see this as natural and desirable.

"I think it's natural as a male to find another male inspiring." – Nathaniel, age 22

"The man will take the lead. I like that role better." – Daniel, age 19

"Think about a pack of lions. It's generally a male that leads the pack." – Nick, age 25⁸





Many of the participants in the teen male group say that they prefer films featuring men; they think the situation is improving for women.

“They’re starting to become more higher up, more main characters in film.” – Jamie, age 14

“In the past, women had less roles in movies. You didn’t see them much. Women have always had smaller roles to men as well.” – Jay, age 14

“Female characters are getting bigger roles. Normally they’re just in the background but that’s starting to change. Now they are more higher up and main characters in films.” – Josh, age 14

Too Sexy, Too Thin, Too Young

Adult focus group participants generally agree that when women are shown in television, film and other entertainment media, they tend to be young, thin and sexy. When asked how women primarily portrayed in media, participants responded:

“As sexual objects.” – Maria, age 20

“Very much objects of desire.” – Amy, age 19

“They’re objectified in films.” – Matthew, age 24

“Women are often sex objects.” – Julie, age 21



Parents and young women are especially concerned that female hyper-sexualization is demeaning.

“When I saw all the naked women in the office [in ‘The Wolf of Wall Street,’] I thought, I couldn’t believe it. I felt horrible because it was such a masculine environment in the office and the only females who were present were naked. It was really demeaning.” – Harriet, age 23



British parents are concerned about the overemphasis on appearance of women and girls in the media who are portrayed as unrealistically thin and beautiful. Participants think this causes young people to overemphasize attractiveness in ways that harm their confidence and self-esteem.

“Self-esteem and body image are still big issues for girls in our society.” – Saskiya, mother of one

“I’ve never seen a fat princess.” – Bonnie, mother of five

Several adult female focus group participants note that women are especially underrepresented in media as they age – which contributes to unattainable ideals of perfection.

“There’s a lot of like ageism in the media. And females often get less parts than males when males – as they age, they still get as many roles.” – Claire, age 30

FINDING: Men are Powerful, Women are Dependent

A common theme across focus groups of all ages and genders was a lack of women in professional positions and/or positions of power in film and television. Male characters are often shown in these positions, but women are rarely depicted in these roles.

“In most movies I see, nurses are usually women and doctors are usually men.” – Kaia, age 10

“Women are more realistic in British films these days, but men still hold the more powerful roles.” – Simon, age 32

“When you do get a woman who’s actually in a high-powered job, they’re looked at as a threat.” – Sarah, age 34





Many participants, but especially teen girls, think that female characters are presented as hyper-feminine and dependent in ways that undercut their power.

“In T.V. and films, but more like in T.V. programs, they have like idolization of women, and they’re always like in such a way, and they always depend on the husband, they’re never alone and independent and hardworking.” – Reanne, age 15

“Some movies make girls really, really girly, they talk in a high-pitched voice that’s not like normal people would speak, and have them wearing all pink. It’s not realistic.” – Anna, age 14

FINDING: Successful but Damaged Women

Adult participants report that when female characters are featured as professionals in media, they are often portrayed as struggling and in need of improvement. Participants mentioned many examples of this trend, including “*Scott and Bailey*” (2011–), “*Line of Duty*” (2012–), “*Last Tango in Halifax*” (2012–), “*The Fall*” (2013–), “*Happy Valley*” (2014) and “*The Honourable Woman*” (2014).

“There are very few films that have a strong woman and if there is, there’s something wrong with her. She has issues to overcome. Why can’t she be a strong character from the beginning?” – Harriet, 23

“It’s never just that they are powerful, creative women – strong women – it’s always a thing that they are striving to do or to deal with.” – Robert, age 32

“I think there are very few films, T.V. shows, regardless of where it’s made, that have female as a strong woman who doesn’t have to rely on another guy – mentally, physically, sexually, financially... and if she is the leading lady, there’s something wrong with her. There’s an issue she has to get over.” – Vanisha, age 24

So they are more believable now because women like this now, they’re more independent, and they’re striving to do better, to be better, to be more than just that model housewife.” – Jeff, age 35





Despite these common critiques of strong female characters in media, many adult focus group participants think that progress has been made in terms of more complicated female characters in recent years.

"I think that women we see in movies these days seem to have a lot more bite and drive and will than you may have seen in the past when we were younger. So they are more believable now because women like this now, they're more independent, and they're striving to do better, to be better, to be more than just that model housewife." – Jeff, age 35

FINDING: Men Remain the Heroes, Women are "Damsels in Distress"

Another common critique of gender representation that emerged across groups is that girls and women are rarely seen in action or heroic films. And when they are shown, they are often depicted as a "helper," as a love interest for the male character, or as someone who brings feminine insights to the problem at hand. Participants in several groups say that male characters are overrepresented as the "savior" and the "hero," especially in horror films. While men get to play the hero, participants point out that women are often portrayed as "damsels in distress" who are in need of protection and saving.

"Disney films, they've always been subservient women getting rescued by the Prince Charming or whatever." – Reese, age 10

"Women are [portrayed as] helpless." – Jay, age 14

"The man's unusually the savior of the woman. The woman needs help; the man comes and saves her." – Nathaniel, age 22

"They normally portray the woman to be saved." – Paul, age 18

"When you do get a female in a movie, they don't take a strong position... they aren't very strong characters." – John, father of two



Some study participants are optimistic about a new trend in “princess” movies. In some films, the stereotype of the “damsel in distress” has been replaced by stronger female heroines who fight their own battles (“*The Croods*,” 2013), get themselves out of trouble (“*Brave*,” 2012) and recognize their own power (“*Frozen*,” 2013; “*Tangled*,” 2010).

“Even the traditional helpless princess has changed, because when they escape, like Rapunzel [“Tangled”], they show that they have a bit to them after all. – Paul, father of two

“The [Frozen] storyline is very empowering, being a female, whereas in other Disney it’s like ‘she must get rescued by a prince.’ It tells them that they can do things for themselves instead of having to rely on the opposite sex or someone else to save them.” – Saskiya, mother of one

“There are a lot less ‘damsel in distress’ type characters than there used to be... but there are still women as a supporter or as man’s support is still quite common.” – Maria, age 20

“[Disney] female parts are much greater, and they female parts aren’t being told what to do.” – Jay, age 14

*If she can see it,
she can be it™*



Media Influence: Subtle and Unavoidable

Two major findings emerge about the influence of media content. First, despite decades of research finding a variety of media effects, this was the first time that most of the adults in the focus groups had been asked to think about the topic. Even parents seemed unfamiliar with the idea that the media their children consume has an effect on their ideas, expectations or aspirations.

FINDING: Divided Opinion on Media Effects

The second major finding here is that when asked to consider its influence, most adult respondents across groups think that media shapes perceptions, including gender portrayals.

*“It’s not until you get older that you realize that it did impact your worldviews growing up.”
– Saskiya, mother of one*

“If you continuously watch movies, it sort of like ingrains without you knowing. You see for example of a woman who’s being maternal and looking after a kid, you think that you’re shaping the idea by yourself that that’s what a woman should be.” – Paul, age 18

“You’re not consciously taking in what happens. It might be affecting you... It does affect your mind without realizing it.” – Khloe, age 21

“In a way, it’s almost like a form of legalized marketing or propaganda, in order to kind of – almost like wean a new way of thinking, or wean us off the old way of thinking.” – Tony, age 38

Parents are the most likely group of adults to believe that media influences children’s self-perceptions and life choices. Fathers are concerned about the power of media to shape the perceptions of younger children, while mothers worry that streaming technology has increased the influence of media.

“They’re just absorbing it.” – John, father of two

“They will copy whatever they see in front of them. I think it does persuade them.” – Brian, father of two

“When I think about T.V. and I think about young people, they’re impressionable.” – Nathaniel, age 22





Some participants in each focus group minimize or dismiss the effects of media because they see it as entertainment. Some study participants debate whether children are the most or least affected by the media.

"It's just a film."— Maria, age 20

"I'm not sure children take notice." – Melissa, mother of two

"Maybe if I was a kid. Not at this stage in my life." – Nathaniel, age 22

"If I was 16, I would be influenced in a different way than I am now." —Matthew, age 24

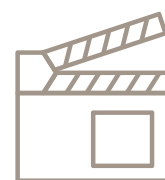
When asked about specific ways in which media influences people, participants discussed gender roles, leadership aspirations and body image.

Outdated Gender Roles

Some British participants say they are concerned that outdated or stereotypical gender roles on the big screen affect what their children come to expect in real life.

"My daughter says, 'Mum, I never want to get married because the men will just have me slave around the house.' I look at her and say, 'I'd like to see anyone boss you around.' I think she gets it from 'East Enders'. It has completely dysfunctional relationships." – Saskiya, mother of one

"It subconsciously gets into men's heads more in terms of where they do that whole 'girl, make me a sandwich' or they feel like they're in control kind of thing. I think they pick it up from the media." – Amy, age 19





Some participants in each focus group mentioned the transformative power of media to positively shape perceptions of gender roles, career options, aspirations and self-confidence.

“It’s almost like they’re trying to evolve tradition through films as they go on. It’s nice to see, especially if it’s a kid’s film... All the kid’s films we had, the girls waited for the man to come find her.”
– Amy, age 19

“It wasn’t until I saw the movie ‘Meet the Parents’ and the series ‘Casualty’ that I knew men could be nurses.” – David, age 18

“I want to be a forensic scientist because I saw it on ‘Criminal Minds’ and ‘Crime Watch’, that’s why.” – Mary, age 16

Seeing strong female characters, “It gives women confidence.” – Chloe, 24

FINDING: Limiting Leadership Aspiration

Female participants of all ages think that portraying women as less powerful in film sends the message to boys and girls that women are not supposed to be ambitious or hold positions of leadership.

“Men aspire to what they see in the movies. I don’t see women in movies and think I want to be like them. The men always have the lead, so there’s nothing for me to aspire to.” – Claudia, age 21

“There are all sorts of forms of media, then that probably has an effect on your aspirations. In a film, you might not notice it, but it does effect you.” – Jane, age 24

On the flip side, British teens of both genders and mothers believe that the growth in young female action films positively influences both boys and girls because these films normalize female leadership.

“Katniss Everdeen in ‘The Hunger Games’ inspires me because she’s very strong and independent and she’s female, and you don’t really see many females like that in the movies.” – Daisy, age 13



Body Image Issues

Participants across groups voiced concern that the young, thin, sexualized norm for female characters places pressure on girls in ways that are harmful to their health. Young adult women and parents were especially aware of its effects in terms of lower self-esteem, body issues and eating disorders.

“It teaches them to be attractive first.” – Matthew, age 24

“When girls go through puberty, they can get a bit depressed with body issues.” – Sharon, mother of two

“Media wise, girls have a lot more pressure than boys. I’ve got five daughters, and I’ve seen them not eat because they want to be skinny, and it freaks me out.” – Melissa, mother of five

Social Injustice in Media: Outrage and Impact

One part of the study involved showing participants clips from films to measure their reaction to overt injustices. The first clip showed scenes of gender injustice from the animated film *“Gnomeo and Juliet”* in which Juliet’s father attempts to dictate her marriage choice. The second clip was a scene from *“Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone”* in which Harry is emotionally abused by his aunt, uncle and cousin.

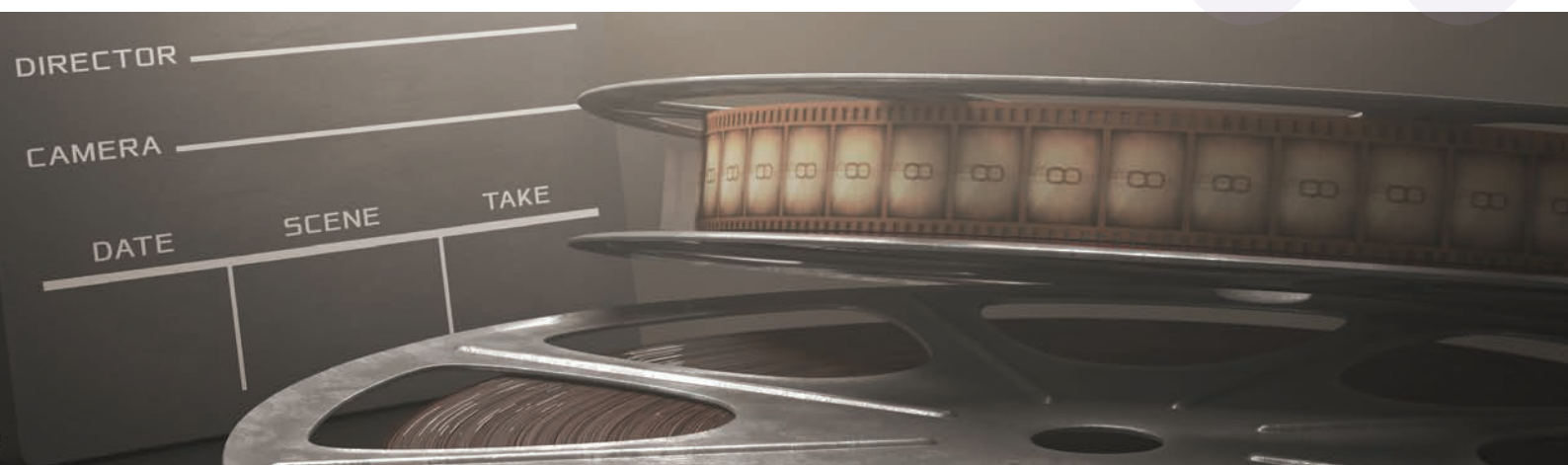
Reactions to Gender Injustice in Film

When shown the clip from *“Gnomeo and Juliet”* where Juliet’s father treats her unfairly, British girls and boys express outrage and tremendous empathy, visible anger and frustration on Juliet’s behalf. Young people think the father is old-fashioned and over-protective, and that girls should be able to decide who they eventually marry.

“She doesn’t really get on well with her parent, with her dad, and she doesn’t really like him because he’s being too protective.” – Reese, Age 10

“He’s being old-fashioned and a bit sexist, thinking all women are meant to be feeble-minded, and just need men to keep them safe.” – Patrick, age 9

“This is a free country. You have the right to make your own choices. It’s up to you if you want to get married.” – Fiona, age 11





Teen girls and boys also took umbrage to the father's heavy hand in the "Gnomeo and Juliet" clip and drew connections to similar scenarios in other films.

"She wants to live her life, instead of someone protecting her all the time." – Charlotte, age 13

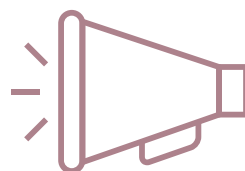
"It's stereotypical. Her father always pushing her and watching over her all the time." – Argon, age 14

"In the movie 'Tangled', Rapunzel's mother says don't go outside of the castle, even though she does and that's a bit like Juliet's father because he's like don't go outside of our base." – Manny, Age 11

One young adult male commented on gender stereotypes in the "Gnomeo and Juliet" clip: "To me, that fit every single traditional gender stereotype" (Daniel, age 19). Other young men in this focus group did not notice the gender injustice. Young women on the other hand were very vocal about the more traditional gender roles portrayed in the segment.

"It's very much traditional. It annoys me... The dad literally said the same words I was told a few weeks ago." – Amy, age 19

"I think it showed the fact that, yes, female gender roles have evolved where we don't want to follow the rules that were set for our parents beforehand, but it also shows that the guys roles haven't moved, either. There are still guys out there who want to find their daughter's a husband. There are still guys out there who think they're the gift to the women." – Vanisha, age 24





Adult women and especially men in their 30s and 40s were equally critical of the gender roles in the “Gnomeo and Juliet” clip.

“Well, what I saw, and what I saw initially, the father seems to be once again, very much that 1940s outdated mentality, almost kind of forcing the daughter into an arranged marriage as it were... So I almost found that a little bit condescending in a way to women, because it was simply a very outdated mentality that her father had.” – Jeff, age 35

“It’s an outdated character, if you know what I mean, throughout society.” – Chris, age 32

“The father’s mentality is literally from the 1950s. That’s what she’s trying to break free from.” – Robert, age 32

Participants in the parents’ focus groups had a distinct reaction to the gender injustice in “Gnomeo and Juliet.” Both parent groups see the father’s role in the clip as outdated, and dads in particular think that making life choices for daughters is not appropriate in contemporary British culture. Mothers praise Juliet’s characters for being in control and not interested in romantic relationships. Some fathers see Juliet as too “headstrong” and “rebellious,” and think she is behaving like a “tomboy” for standing up to her father. Others fathers commend Juliet for being “strong-willed” and “adventurous.”

“She’s challenging what she’s being told what to do... You don’t want an ornament, do you?” – Paul, father of two

“You want the kid to be confident. There’s no problem with that.” – Greg, father of two





Reactions to Child Abuse in Film

Participants across focus groups agree that even though the “Harry Potter” clip did not show physical violence, it did show emotional violence, which constitutes child abuse.

“Pure child abuse.” – Amy, age 19

“He’s like a slave.” – Reanne, age 15

“Yeah, making him like a domestic servant. He’s cooking the food, he’s got threats being employed, his living conditions.” – Dwayne, age 34

“It’s tantamount to abuse.” – Greg, father of two

“There’s mental abuse as well.” – Brian, father of two

Participants across focus groups expressed outrage at Harry’s treatment and sympathy for his abuse.

“It enraged me.” – Matt, age 24

“Why would they have him if they are going to treat him that way? If that was me, I would just run away and leave.” – Joshua, Age 10

“Children that grow up like that, it’s not right.” – Harriet, age 23

“I feel a bit sorry for him because his parents have just died, and then he has to take that all in and they’re not treating him as you would get treated if you were a child.” – Sam, Age 10

“I feel sorry for him.” – Daniel, age 19



Many study participants think that Harry is mistreated because he is not the family's biological son:

"They didn't care about him because he's not a real son. He's just an adopted boy." – Manny, age 11

"It's stereotypical treatment of a stepchild. I've seen that happen a lot" – Mike, father of two

Young Britons attribute their awareness that this scene constitutes child abuse to the "Closer Than You Think" campaign to educate Britons about this public health issue. Many participants think that it is important to show public health issues like child abuse in documentaries, public service announcements, and films to raise awareness.

"It's happening in other people's lives, but you can try and stop it. If you – I don't know, I just think you should know about it." – Daisy, age 13

"It's real, and you should be aware of it." – Isabella, age 15

"If it was a child watching that, that they were in a similar situation, the film would then go on to show that that's not right and that it's not a normal way of life." – Grace, 31

"I think it's good for them to see that some people are treated differently. That some children are treated as less." – Melissa, mother of two

Some female participants in their 30s and 40s are concerned that scenes of child abuse are inappropriate for a children's film.

"I don't like kids being exposed to such strong emotions. Why do children need to see things like that at that age?" – Sarah, age 34

"Say if my kids only saw the first 20 minutes and then they didn't see the end, they'd probably have nightmares, you know?" – Seta, age 40



PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus group participants have many concerns about the content and influence of film and television, but they also have clear ideas about how to fix it. They want to see more British films (and fewer U.S. films), more diversity in characters, more untraditional families arrangements, fewer stereotypes, less reality television programming, and more stories of triumph over adversity.

More British Films

Though many enjoy watching English-language movies, they also hold negative feelings about U.S. films and television. Participants across groups say that U.S. media content is not relevant to the lives of Britons. For example, British citizens are not allowed to have guns, so they cannot relate to the level and types of gun violence in U.S. films. Participants also criticized U.S. media for gender stereotypes, hyper-sexualized content and materialism. Participants of all ages think that British films, on the whole, are much closer to “getting it right.”

“Well, sometimes when we watch films, they’re always like based in America, it’s kind of hard to relate.”
– Taylor, age 16

“With the American films, they glorify sexiness and wealth and all of that. I find that the British films I’ve seen are more kind of low key and real life.” – Harriet, age 23

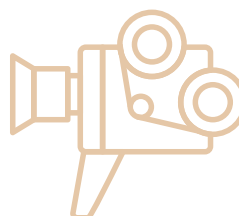
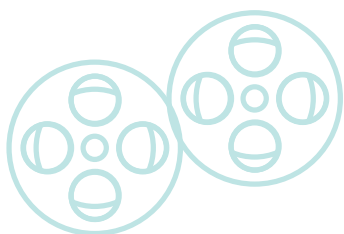
“I thought of British T.V. and film, is maybe a little bit more realistic than American T.V., in the terms of the actual actions of it, where it could happen, after the throes of passion. I don’t know, to me, it just feels a little bit more realistic.” – Tony, age 38

Participants across focus groups also express a desire for more British-made content for children and families, especially feature films with British characters, accents and locales. Parents and children alike felt they would not consume as much U.S. content if more British content was available.

“It’s nice to hear a British accent.” – Matt, age 24

“The way they speak. You know where they’re coming from. It’s familiar.” – Freddie, age 23

“When it’s English, you know the location and the story line and some of the words they use more.”
– Jamie, age 14



More Racial, Gender, Economic Diversity

Adult focus group participants would also like more diversity of characters in entertainment media. They specifically mention greater gender, racial, and economic diversity in storytelling and characters. Many male and female participants would like to see more equitable gender representation in films and other entertainment media. Women of all ages especially note that they appreciate content featuring women as main characters, especially if they are powerful women who deny norms of media perfection.

“There should be more bio pics about strong, realistic British women.” – Nancy, age 36

Female focus group participants are especially keen on seeing more diversity in the body types of female characters in film and television. They prefer content with women and girls who have unconventional looks or unconventional body types in leading and prominent roles.

*“I want [my daughter] to see fat, skinny and all different colors in between so it’s normal.”
– Saskiya, mother of one*

Participants across focus groups also express a desire for greater racial and ethnic diversity in film. Minority participants are more likely to notice a lack of racial diversity than white participants.

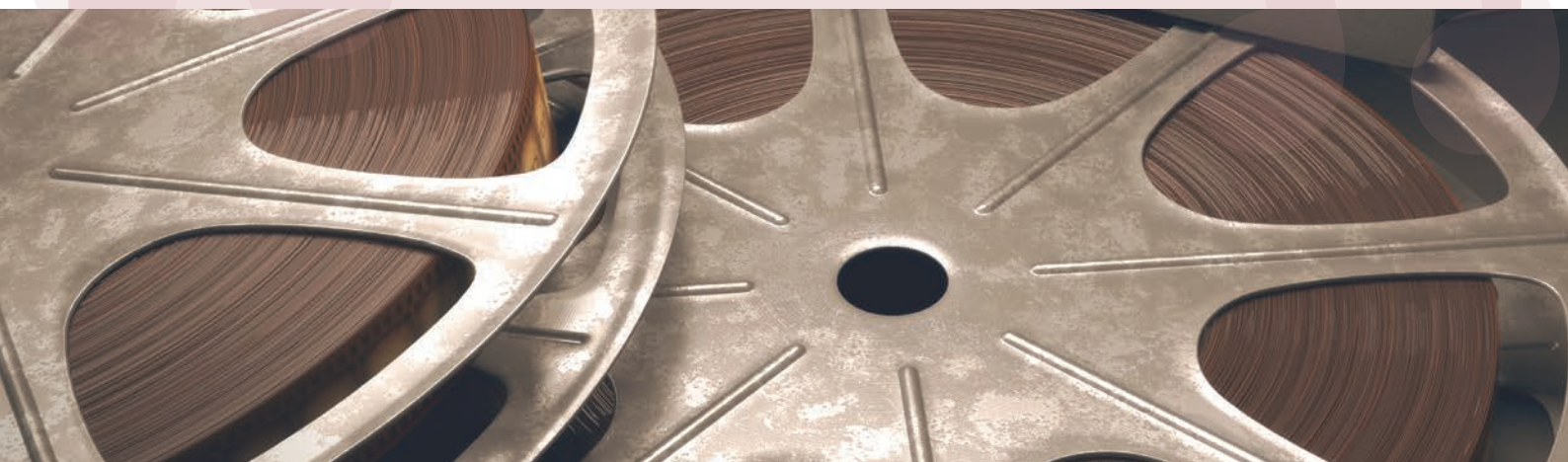
“Also, how many British films have you seen recently where the lead is Black or Asian?” – Dwayne, age 34

“Having diversity and that. Lots of different characters.” – Jay, age 14

*“And are there sufficient strong Black women in British females, or in American films? No.”
– Franica, age 38*

Participants in the “mother and women age 18 – 24” groups also called for more representations of people from different social classes. They noted that entertainment media either portrays the very rich or the very poor, but middle class lives are rarely shown.

*“Many of the leading British characters are upper class posh. Bridget Jones is more like us.”
– Helen, mother of three*



More Untraditional Families

Adults study participants would like to see more untraditional family arrangements in film and television. More specifically, they would like to see same-sex parents, male caregivers and homemakers and other increasingly common family configurations that reflect changes that are happening in society.

“British T.V. and movies don’t reflect our culture today. Our lives are all so different. There are so many different family set-ups, so many different cultures in Britain today.” – Alison, mother of two

*“I have yet to see a kids’ film that has two gay characters in it. If you are going to portray something, why not portray that? My daughter has a friend in her class and she has two mums.”
– Saskiya, mother of one*

*“Where is the ‘Everyman’? The guy in his 30s who has children and takes care of his family?”
– Clay, age 35*

Less Stereotyping

Many participants across groups would like to see less gender and race stereotyping in film and television. Adult female participants especially enjoy media where women are presented as rounded characters on an even playing field with men.

“When they have strong women that come across as really bitchy, so it’s hard for them, in films, to get the mix between independent, and then strong without seeing that they’re trying to be like forceful. That’s the thing I would change.” – Daisy, age 13

*“I quite like superhero films... The last female who was a superhero was probable X-Men.”
– Seta, age 40*

Participants across focus groups would also like to see fewer racial stereotypes in film and television. Black men in several groups were especially vocal about how racial stereotypes harm the self-perceptions of minority youth.

“Oh my gosh. Every Black young man is a criminal.” – Nathaniel, age 22

“They’re all drug dealers.” – Nick, age 25





Less Violence

Participants across groups report there are high rates of extreme and gratuitous violence in British and U.S. in recent years.

“There’s violence in every British series or movie. There’s some degree of it. There’s nothing that doesn’t include it.” – Matthew, age 24

“A lot of children are exposed to a lot of this violence.” – Tony, age 38

Older men and some fathers are critical of violence in film and television because they see a connection between exposure to violence and behavior in real life.

“Gratuitous violence as well, has also sort of – look how many mass shootings there are, you know, the Columbine thing.” – Richard, age 39

Male teenagers and young men are not bothered by higher rates of violence in film and television. They say that most violence in media is comical and exaggerated, so it has no effect on real life. These young males also see media violence as necessary or justified. “Breaking Bad” and “Dexter” were mentioned in several groups as examples of justified violence owing to the fact that targets are “bad people” who deserve violence.

“It’s violence, but it sort of good because it’s like it’s the victim has earned in.” – Josh, age 14





Less Reality Television Programming

Adult focus group participants of both genders mentioned reality television programs as something they would like to see less of. Parents are especially worried that the popularity of reality television shows is having a negative impact on young people because they see it as more realistic than fictional storylines and characters. “Keeping Up With The Kardashians” was the program most criticized by participants.

“Rubbish that we have on our television now. My daughter’s 13 and she went on a holiday skiing and watched the Kardashians... It’s rubbish... it’s more of an influence than films.” – Rochelle, mother of two

“I think that women in particular are more so taken into this world of wanting to be famous. I believe it’s because I’ve been spending time in reality shows, but I see these thousands and thousands of young girls trying to get on these programs, and most of them are between 10 and 20 years old, and not one of them seems like they’ve got anything between their ears.” – Robert, age 32

More Meaningful Messages

Participants across groups say they enjoy watching films where people triumph over adversity. They are also inspired by characters that do good in the world.

*“I quite like films where there’s an underlying message, wherever you go, you think about it.”
– Miriam, age 40*

*“I think that’s what grips you. When you see someone face adversity, you want them to do well.”
– Matthew, age 24*



Teens of both genders and young men (ages 18 – 24) agree that they want to see important issues brought up in entertainment media, such as gay people coming out of the closet, social issues like sexual violence and health issues like cancer. Participants also like that help lines are sometimes advertised at the end of programs in case viewers are struggling with an issue covered in the show.

“It’s getting people informed, because everyone watches T.V. pretty much.” – Nick, age 25

Some participants in each group say they do not want their media to have a message. Instead, they want their media to be pure entertainment, a means of escape.

“In terms of a film, I want to switch off from daily life.” – Katie, age 23

“If like every single film had to have some deeper meaning, it would be kind of annoying. Sometimes I don’t want to have to come to some conclusion about a film. I just want to enjoy it and forget about it.” – Maria, age 20





CONCLUSION

Focus group discussions centered on the five primary themes of gender equality in society, media consumption, gender bias in media, media influence and social injustice in media. We summarize the major findings for each theme below.

Gender Equality in Society: Still Elusive

This study reveals interesting aspects of how Britons of all ages view changing gender roles, gender representations in media, and the effects of those representations. In terms of gender roles in society, participants of all ages perceive the U.K. to be more gender equitable than it actually is. Almost every focus group participant thinks that gender is no longer an inhibiting factor in educational and career choices. But when asked what they want to be when they grown up, virtually every child and teen gives a stereotypical answer for their gender. This gap between perceived equality and lived equality is also highlighted by adult female participants reporting that, even though the traditional family structure of a stay-at-home mum and a dad who works outside the home has largely been replaced by families with two working parents, women continue to carry most of the domestic load. According to self-report from teens and young adults, the expectation gender gap in domestic chores starts in childhood.

Accelerating Media Consumption: Good, Bad and Scary

Many study participants think that media content matters more than ever because new technologies make it more accessible than ever before. Parents note that social media is more influential in shaping children's lives than in the past. Young Britons spend most of their free time consuming media and parents are not able to effectively monitor what they are watching. Parents have a difficult time tracking the media consumption of even their youngest children because of easy online access via handheld devices. Children and teens confirm that most of their game playing and media viewing is unsupervised. In other words, media influence is growing in the lives of children at the same time that parents are less able than ever to monitor their media intake.

Gender Bias in Media: Still Prevalent

Male and female participants of all ages are aware of gender bias in film and television. They identify that women are vastly underrepresented. And when they are included, it is often as supporting characters or "damsels in distress." Additionally, women are rarely shown in positions of power or as professionals. Many participants noticed that when female professionals are shown, they are typically framed as damaged and in need of improvement. Parents are particularly concerned about common representations





of girls and women as young, thin and sexy. They think that an overemphasis on physical perfection and attractiveness harm the confidence and self-esteem of girls. Not all of the news is negative, though. Participants note a new trend in children's animated films and teen action films where girls are portrayed as empowered, confident, capable protagonists.

Most study participants are bothered by inequitable gender representations in film, but young men see this gender inequality as natural and desirable. British boys in the study think that the situation for women in media is improving, but they admit that they are mostly interested in films with male leads. These findings challenge the notion that gender equality is a linear progression where successive generations are less bound to traditional gender roles than their parents. While parents have less gendered aspirations for their children, young Britons still espouse old gender stereotypes when it comes to expectations and aspirations. Millennials continue to be constrained by gender stereotypes in their life choices.

Media Influence: Subtle and Unavoidable

Britons in this study are mixed on whether media influences people's lives. Most adult participants, including parents, had not previously considered this idea, but were visibly concerned about media influence after discussing the topic. A sizable number of participants were quick to minimize or dismiss the effects of media, but a majority think that media does influence perceptions and life choices. Young women in the study think that portrayals of less powerful women in film send the message to boys and girls that women are not supposed to be ambitious or hold positions of leadership. Participants are also concerned that the young, thin, sexualized norm for female characters places pressure on girls in ways that are harmful to their health. Participants point out that not all media influence is negative. Many participants of different ages note the transformative power of media to positively shape their perceptions of proper career paths, aspirations and self-confidence. Others think that the growth in young female action films positively influences both boys and girls because it normalizes strong women and female leadership.

Social Injustice in Media: Outrage and Impact

Study participants express outrage when they see blatant sexism in media. They also demonstrate visible anger at child abuse, another social injustice included in the study for comparison. This means that people in this study are able to recognize social injustice when it appears in media and they have a passionate emotional response – a precursor to taking action.





INTERVENTIONS

We recommend that the British film and television industries seriously entertain the advice offered by study participants who want to see more programs produced in the U.K., fewer stereotypes, less violence, more diversity of characters and family arrangements and more stories of triumph over adversity. Study participants also think that entertainment media should tackle pressing social issues more often.

We further recommend that the British Academy of Film & Television Awards (BAFTA) create awards for children's media that promotes gender, racial and economic equality in order to establish new diversity norms for the industry.

Advertising and Marketing Communication

Advertising and brand communications have a powerful role in influencing attitudes and behavior in terms of the images pushed out into culture. Given the broadcast and reach of such communication, many consider the industry has not just permission but also a responsibility to influence culture. Brand advertisers and marketers are also ideally placed as an industry ally to enact change rapidly given the relatively short production process – in contrast to say T.V. shows, games or film.

Few brand advertisers will be ignorant of the fact that women account for over two thirds of all consumers spending globally. According to Ernst & Young, they are set to be the largest global “emerging market,” highlighting the importance of engaging this powerful audience.

There is an increasing awareness for the issue of brands promoting traditional gender stereotypes. Global companies such as Unilever are working towards a commitment to move away from such stereotypes, perhaps unsurprisingly given that only 9% of women feel that marketers are reaching them effectively.^A J Walter Thompson, through its research on “Female Tribes,” is vocal within the industry to promote the importance and significance of women and their diversity – dramatizing the way in which the de facto classification of women as “busy working moms” is redundant and driving brand narratives that truly reflect women's status within society. Its research highlights the fact that 76% of women globally perceive it's never been a better time to be a woman and 84% of U.K. women feel their femininity is a strength not a weakness. Additionally, 56% of women feel that they are more ambitious than their spouse, 75% of U.K. women claim to make the majority of financial decisions in the household^B and 51% perceive themselves to be the main breadwinner. However, popular culture still has some way to catch up and reflect women's new cultural and economic status: 74% of women in the U.K. wanted women to have a stronger voice when it comes to cultural influence.





“The Women’s Index” highlights the persuasive power of the moving image, not just in shaping women’s career aspirations but their life decisions. The global study revealed that 58% of women^c said that strong onscreen female role models inspired them to be either more ambitious or more assertive, and one-in-ten women in the U.K. were inspired to stay determined even in the face of sexism purely through the influence of onscreen female role models. When one considers that one-in-four women in the U.K. claim to experience sexism at work on a regular basis, this serves to underline the significant and persuasive power of the moving image: it doesn’t just sell products it can change lives.

Engaging women as a diverse and powerful audience, not only has the power to change lives but pragmatically creates a more sustainable business model for brands.

- A Insights in Marketing 2012
- B JWT Women’s Index 2015
- C JWT Women’s Index 2015

APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR GUIDE

GLOBAL GENDER IN MEDIA IMPACT STUDY

Discussion Guide

WARM UP

10 MINS

EXPLAIN THE PROCESS:

Moderator introduction. Explain two-way mirror, recording, etc. There are no right or wrong answers. We want your honest opinions. Very important to be open/honest with your feelings.

FOR PARENTS GROUPS ONLY:

What are the ages and genders of your children? (Each parent should consider their child(ren) when answering questions, with the focus being on their daughters.)

RESPONDENT WARMUP:

I’d like to find out everyone’s name, age and what are some of the things you like to do for fun! (movies, television, games, books, live shows, etc.)!



SOCIAL BEHAVIOR/MOVIES

40 MINS

Rotate order of questions across the different groups

What do you feel is expected of you in different roles in your life? (As a student, in your family, in your community, religion, etc.) Are expectations different depending on the role?

SAMPLE OF QUESTIONS TO PROBE:

Do you have chores? What types of chores do you do?

Do you read books? What types of books do you read?

What are some of the characters like in those books?

How important is education? Is it important for everyone to receive an education?

If not, who is education not important for?

What occupation would you ideally like to have?

(CHILDREN: What do you want to be/do when you grow up?)

Do you feel there are any obstacles to having that career/job? What are they?

Are only certain people suited for certain jobs?

For example, when you think of a nurse, who do you picture? What does that person look like?

How about for a police officer? For a teacher?

Where do you get the idea of what a nurse, police officer, teacher looks like
– experience, books, movies, T.V. shows?

FOR PARENTS, GENERAL ONLY:

Do you feel there are any obstacles to goals or dreams that you want to achieve?

If so, what are those obstacles and are they able to be overcome?

PROBE

Thinking over the course of your lifetime, how have gender roles changed?

How have they remained the same?

Has the fact that you are a [man/boy, woman/girl] impacted your life positively and/or negatively?

In what ways?



MOVIE SCENES

40 MINS

Moderator NOTE:

These scenes are meant to open up a discussion about gender roles. The focus of this section is to get the respondents to discuss their feelings about the characters behavior and if/how the situation the characters are in relates to their own lives.

I'd now like to show you a scene from a movie. It doesn't matter if you've seen the movie before or not. Make sure you watch carefully because we'll be talking about what you thought afterwards.

Scene #1- MALE/FEMALE INTERACTION SCENE

How do you feel about the characters in the scene?

PROBE

What specifically did you like/not like about the interaction the characters had?

Do you relate to any of the characters?

What do you think about their appearances?

Do you think that any of the characters should have responded differently in the situation?

Why?

I'd now like to show you another scene from a movie. Again, it doesn't matter if you've seen the movie before or not. Make sure you watch carefully because we'll be talking about what you thought afterwards.

Scene #2- DOMESTIC RELATIONS SCENE

What are your thoughts/feelings about this scene?

Describe the relationship between the characters.

PROBE

Are the characters/relationships believable?

Do you relate to any of the characters?

How do you feel about the situation they are in?

Did you find anything in either of the scenes you just saw disturbing?

Did anything in either scene make you uncomfortable?

What do you think about each character's behavior in these scenes?



MOVIE SCENES CONTINUED

40 MINS

PROBE FOR EACH CHARACTER:

Is it clear why they are responding in the way in which they are reacting?

Are their reactions appropriate given the situation they are in?

In what ways are they appropriate/not appropriate?

What would be a more appropriate response?

IMPACT OF MEDIA

30 MINS

For General and Parents ONLY

What is the role, if any, of local media - specifically movies and television - in shaping attitudes and ideas about gender roles within your society?

What should their role be?

What is the impact of locally made entertainment?

Is it generally positive/negative?

How does locally made entertainment (movies and television) impact men and women in society?

Is it different based on whether they are a man or a woman? If so, in what ways?

In what ways, if any, do you think that locally made entertainment has an impact on children?

On their ideals of the world? Is it typically a positive or negative impact?

In what ways?

Now we want to talk about local media's impact on health issues.

Are there any movies or television shows you've seen that discussed a health issue that you found particularly interesting or informative?

What are your general thoughts about these types of issues being included in movies or television shows?

Have you ever sought out more information for a health issue based on something you saw in a movie or television show?

Have you ever shared information you saw in a movie or television show on a health related topic with others?

Have you viewed a movie or show specifically because it dealt with a health issue that was important to you?



WRAP UP

5 MINS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

APPENDIX B: GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE U.K.

This report on gender representations in film and television is situated within the larger context of persistent gender disparities in the U.K. Gender gaps are pronounced in politics, economics and experiences of sexual harassment and sexism.

The U.K. was the first major European nation to have a female head of state (Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister, 1979 - 1990), but women remain vastly underrepresented in British politics. Only 25% of Members of the House of Lords are female and 29% of MPs are women.⁹ Economic inequality by gender also persists in the U.K. The country has the sixth largest male-female pay gap in the European Union,¹⁰ with British men earning an average of 17.5% more per hour than women.¹¹ For women of color, the wage gender gap is even more pronounced.

In addition to political and economic biases, British women are also far more likely than men to experience sexual harassment and sexism. A 2013 United Nations report finds that sexual harassment is commonplace in the U.K., and sexism affects most areas of British girls' lives. Nearly nine-in-ten young Brits say that women are judged more on their appearance than their ability.¹² A follow-up study from the United Nation found that British sexism is "pervasive."¹³ Although strides have been made to close the gender gap, Britons are taught from a very young age that girls are not equal to boys – that girls are not as intelligent and should not aspire to the same goals. This message is conveyed through entertainment media that generally erased girls and women and, when they are included, they tend to be hyper-sexualized and are rarely shown in powerful positions.

For the past decade, government officials have worked with the entertainment industry to close gender and race gaps in media. In November of 2014, the British Film Institute established a set of guidelines to encourage media producers to fairly represent people of different races, abilities, social classes and genders, both on-screen and behind-the-camera.¹⁴ It is too early to tell whether these initiatives will significantly alter media content.



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- 4 Two groups had fewer than eight participants. The focus group for mothers included seven participants, and the young men's group (ages 18 – 24) involved six participants.
- 5 Gender moderator effect refers to the phenomenon where focus group participants give different responses depending upon the gender of the person asking the question. For example, men who hold gender biases are more likely to share these biases with a male moderator than a female moderator.
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