

HETERONORMATIVITEIT OP KLOKHUIS

The representation of gender and sexuality on Dutch children's television

Thesis MA Gender Studies

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ABSTRACT

This research studies the representation of gender and sexuality on Dutch children's television by examining 262 episodes of Klokhuis. Previous research has shown that children's television often reflects the normative associations with gender and sexuality in society. However, no existing research has explored this topic related to children's television in the Netherlands. The examination is done through an analysis of three dimensions reflecting heteronormativity: gender performances; family constructions; and implicit and explicit sexuality. The findings show that the representation of gender and sexuality on Klokhuis remains predominantly heteronormative, indicating the dominance of male characters, the gendered representation of occupational careers, stereotypical characteristics for both male and female characters and a complete absence of gender non-conforming characters. The normative notion of the family is reinforced as most families depart from the standard of the nuclear family. In general, queer representation is kept to a minimum with no depiction of queer physical affection and/or intimacy. However, the findings also suggest that Klokhuis shows counter-stereotypical male characters that challenge hegemonic masculinity. These non-heteronormative representations produce insights into how constructive and positive gender representations can be portrayed within the realms of children's television.

Keywords: gender, sexuality, heteronormativity, gender stereotypes Klokhuis, children's television, queer sexuality, hegemonic masculinity, idealized femininity, counter-stereotypes.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“The task of queer social theory in this context as in so many others must be to confront the default heteronormativity of modern culture with its worst nightmare, a queer planet.”

– Warner, 1991, p.16

HETERONORMATIVITY IN THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands is widely-known as a highly tolerant society; however, many recent Dutch studies show a departure from this tolerant identity. We are known for being a frontrunner in implementing equal rights legislation, such as the adoption of the Equal Treatment Act in 1994, which ensured protection against discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation, and the legalization of same-sex marriage in 2001, as the first country in the world to do so. However, even though ‘being tolerant’ is considered a virtue and part of the Dutch identity (Gordijn, 2010; Hekma, 2011), Dutch studies focusing on the normalization and social acceptance of queer people show that this identity does not always reflect the Dutch society in reality. For example, queer people still enjoy less psychosocial wellbeing and life satisfaction, and experience more victimization and suicidality compared to their heterosexual counterparts (Collier, Bos & Sandfort, 2013; Kuyper, 2015; van Lisdonk, 2018). Additionally, being open about one’s sexual orientation is not self-evident for all queer people, and adjusting behavior or avoiding such topics is not rare (Kuyper, 2015; van Lisdonk, 2018). Visible intimacy between same-sex couples is met with more objections than intimacy between heterosexual couples (Kuyper, 2016; van Lisdonk, 2018). Accordingly, van Lisdonk (2018), whose research explored the experiences of Dutch same-sex oriented young people, concludes: “...[Dutch] society favors heterosexuality over non-heterosexuality, and non-heterosexual expressions can only be tolerated as long as they do not conflict with being ‘normal’, according to heteronormative standards.” (p.15). Heteronormativity thus presumes the hegemony of heterosexuality, employing a seemingly logical and causal relationship between biological sex, gender and heterosexuality, and makes those assumptions seem natural and normal (Taylor & Richardson, 2005; Thorfinnsdottir & Jensen, 2017).

These studies show that heteronormative standards are still a fundamental aspect of the Dutch society, and that we are not as tolerant as we seem. But how are these standards socialized into normative ideas and behavior? From an early age, children are socialized to develop normative ideas about gender and sexuality through social institutions like families, friends and schools, but also by mass media, and especially television (Signorielli, 1990; Wright et al., 1995). This research will address the latter institution of socialization, as it will examine the representation of gender and sexuality on a popular Dutch children’s television show called *Klokhuis*. *Klokhuis* is an educational and informative program for children between the ages nine and twelve with approximately 200.000 views each day (Stichting KijkOnderzoek, 2020), and has

emerged to be one of the most popular children's shows on the Dutch television since its start in 1988. It is broadcasted on a public channel called NTR every weekday between 6PM and 7PM. Each episode lasts about 15 minutes and is themed around one subject. These themes range from topics like airports, doctors and gaming to resting homes for horses, stuttering and Dutch national parks. The goal of *Klokhuis*, in their own words, is to "teach children about the world around them, in the broadest sense of the word." (Klokhuis, 2020). The research will aim to discover the ways in which *Klokhuis* represents gender and sexuality. Because of its educational character, its variety of subjects and its nation-wide popularity and influence, *Klokhuis* is an ideal medium to examine how notions of gender and sexuality are represented and communicated to a wide audience of Dutch children. In order to build on an existing body of knowledge surrounding heteronormativity in the Dutch media, the following paragraph explores how the media is currently representing gender and sexuality.

HETERONORMATIVITY IN THE MEDIA

In general, the Dutch media does not appear to be countering the heteronormative standards and does not seem to be particularly representative of Dutch society. In an ideal world, television, and especially public television, would function as a mirror of society, as it is argued that television contributes greatly to the socialization of individuals, and may teach and inform viewers' perspective of the world and their perspective of minority groups (Bandura, 1977; Gerbner, 1998; Daalmans & ter Horst, 2014). Daalmans & ter Horst (2014) analyzed the representation of gender, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation on Dutch prime time television. They revealed an overrepresentation of men, middle-aged persons, and heterosexuals compared to their proportions in society, adding that "women, the elderly and sexual minorities were significantly underrepresented" (p.263). According to a study conducted in 2019 by the Dutch Media Authority [Commissariaat voor de Media], on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Education, 36.6% of the persons appearing in Dutch non-fiction television programs were women (p.5). This study concluded that these findings are similar to results found in comparable national and international studies in recent years: "Regardless of country, year and genre, the proportion of women on television is almost always between 25 and 40 per cent" (Dutch Media Authority, 2019, p.5).

Furthermore, Daalmans & ter Horst (2014) found that the representation of gender and ethnicity is still highly stereotyped (p.264). The Dutch Media Authority (2019) revealed that

women appear more often as ‘vox-pop’ news sources (51,6%). This means that women frequently appear as more informal, ‘voice of the street’ news sources, whereas they appear far less as ‘experts’ such as politicians, spokespersons or subject specialists (23.2%). Whenever women do appear because of their expertise, they tend to talk about topics like social affairs, health, education or culture and to a lesser extent about politics, sports or economics. Simultaneously, it is shown that sexual orientation is mostly an unknown category for people that are represented on television (Pennekamp, 2011; Daalmans & ter Horst, 2014), and considering the instances where sexual orientations are disclosed to the audience, “there is a distinct overrepresentation of heterosexuals compared to their proportions in society” (p.264). Therefore, we can conclude that television in the Netherlands “does not live up to the ideal of a mirror of the pluralist and culturally diverse society that the Netherlands is” (Daalmans & ter Horst, 2014, p.265). Interestingly, these studies did not include television programs aimed at children, even though research has shown the impact of children’s viewing of gender stereotypes (Signorielli, 1990; Common Sense Media, 2017), as will be elaborated in the next paragraph. Accordingly, this research will contribute to existing research in the Netherlands by exploring the representation of gender and sexuality on a children’s television show.

THE IMPACT OF HETERONORMATIVITY IN THE MEDIA

In which ways does heteronormativity in the media affect children’s gender-role development and behavior? A study conducted in 1990 already found striking results towards the cultivation of gender-role development for children, in which Signorielli concluded that her research “points to the existence of a relationship between television viewing and having more stereotypic conceptions about gender roles. In essence, television may be contributing to the maintenance of notions of more limited roles for women in society.” (p.57). More recently, Common Sense Media, a non-profit organization from the United States, conducted a decade-long research on the role of the media in children’s gender socialization within the US. In 2017, they reported their key findings and demonstrated the power of the media in shaping the ways that children look, think, behave and learn about gender. One of their first findings confirmed that “the television programs and films that children and adolescents watch reinforce traditional gender stereotypes” (p.8), as their research showed that female characters are portrayed as less active, less knowledgeable, less dominant and more deferential than their male counterparts. Additionally, they state that “the media reinforces the idea that masculine traits and behaviors are more valued than feminine traits and behaviors, and boys who consume these media

messages are more likely to exhibit masculine behavior” (p.7). They elaborate by mentioning that masculinity is often illustrated by characteristics like aggression, power, dominance, status seeking, emotion restraint, heterosexuality and risk taking. Simultaneously, girls are taught that they should be concerned about their appearance as “media messages teach girls that looking sexy is often preferred or expected and is equated with popularity and romantic success” (p.8). It is concluded that heavier viewing of gender-traditional television content is associated with children’s gender-typed career aspirations and is associated with the expression of more gendered stereotypes about household chores, motherhood and the general attributes that boys and girls should have (p.11).

Representations and ideas about gender and sexuality in the media tell us something about the dominant ideologies of their culture of origin (McIntosh & Cuklanz, 2014, p.266). In this way, mass media can be understood to help construct and maintain cultural ideas. McIntosh & Cuklanz (2014) provide a clear example of how media can construct and maintain certain norms or dominant ideologies: “... television commercials depicting women using household appliances such as vacuum cleaners, ovens, and washing machines appear frequently, and audiences might automatically associate women with those appliances and domestic chores facilitated by them. This connection among women, appliances, and domestic chores thus appears ‘normal’ or ‘natural’. Real-life women and media-represented women who fail to use and even enjoy these appliances thus fail to be ‘normal’ or ‘natural’.” (p.266). Accordingly, examining the representation of gender and sexuality on *Klokhuis* may indicate how the media facilitates heteronormative standards of gender and sexuality in the Netherlands. This is a crucial first step which will enable future research to experiment with counterstereotypes in order to change these normative standards.

FEMINIST MEDIA RESEARCH

Through feminist media research, the construction of gender and sexuality can be examined by gathering systematic data from television shows with the goal of revealing the power structures, their relationships, and the contradictions that inform them (McIntosh & Cuklanz, 2014, p.268). “These power relationships emerge in representations of many themes, including identity categories such as gender, race/ethnicity, class and sexuality; stereotyping; voice; spectacle; agency; and symbolic annihilation.” (McIntosh & Cuklanz, 2014, p.268). Feminist media research, or any analysis of media, encompasses more than textual analysis. “Analysis

of media might consider different aspects of the industry, such as women's roles during innovation periods, gendering of different divisions of labor, and absences of women from key roles, such as directing and producing" (Meehan & Riordan, 2002; McIntosh & Cuklanz, 2014, p.269). However, considering the limited scope of the research in this paper, and whilst reflecting on the importance and relevance of these different aspects of the media industry, the focus of this research will solely be on the representation of gender and sexuality on screen. In chapter 3, the specifics of this methodology will be discussed.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Therefore, in order to find out whether or not Klokhuis reinforces notions of heteronormativity in its daily educative episodes, this thesis will investigate the following research question:

- How are gender and sexuality, and the relationship between the two, represented on the Dutch children's television show *Klokhuis*?

Furthermore, the following sub-questions are formulated:

- What is the male-to-female ratio of the characters on Klokhuis?
- How is gender identity represented throughout the episodes and how are gender stereotypes portrayed or challenged?
- How are families constructed on Klokhuis and how do they contribute to the representation of gender and sexuality?
- How are sexually oriented desires portrayed and represented on Klokhuis?

The remainder of this thesis will focus on answering these questions. First, the theoretical framework will discuss the concept of heteronormativity including its origins and theoretical developments. Next, the methodology will elaborate on the operationalization of heteronormativity through the formulation of three analytical dimension. The findings of the research will then be discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 6 and will, respectively, discuss the gender performances, the family constructions and the implicit and explicit sexuality on Klokhuis. This thesis will end with a conclusion by reflecting on the limitations and provide recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“...if repression has indeed been the fundamental link between power, knowledge, and sexuality since the classical age, it stands to reason that we will not be able to free ourselves from it except at a considerable cost... a whole new economy in the mechanisms of power will be required.”

– Foucault, 1978, p.5

In order to answer the research question, and understand the relationship between gender and sexuality, this research focuses on the notion of heteronormativity as a central concept. “The term heteronormativity is widely used in contemporary political, social and critical theory to describe socio-legal, cultural, organizational and interpersonal practices that derive from and reinforce a set of taken-for-granted presumptions relating to sex and gender.” (Kitzinger, 2005, p.478). Before 2000, scholars referred to these taken-for-granted presumptions by using terms like heterosensibilities (Epstein & Steinberg, 1995), heterosexual hegemony (Thompson, 1992), heteropatriarchy (Ramazanoglu, 1994), heterocentricity (Kitzinger et al., 1992), technologies of heterosexuality (Gavey, 1993) and the heterosexual imaginary (Ingraham, 1994). These terms all reflect on the heterogendered and heteronormative expectations of institutionalized heterosexuality (Nielson, Walden & Kunkel, 2000). However, the term heteronormativity is gaining wide-spread popularity and is increasingly used in a growing body of theoretical literature that problematizes the gender binary and the hegemony of heterosexuality. In order to gain a deeper understanding of these concepts, this theoretical framework aims to outline the emergence, development and theoretical uses of the notion of heteronormativity. The earlier work focused on the examination of sexuality separate from gender, as can be seen in Foucault (1978) and Warner (1991). However, alongside with the wide-spread introduction of intersectionality in the 1990s, scholars increasingly discussed the intersection between gender, sexuality and other categories of oppression like race and class, arguing that these concepts intersect in their oppression. Various scholars, such as Rubin (1975), Rich (1980) and Butler (1990), therefore argue that gender and sexuality cannot be analyzed separately.

ORIGINS OF HETERONORMATIVITY

Conceptually, the origins of heteronormativity reside in queer theory as the term was coined by Michael Warner (1991) in his essay called *‘Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet’*. However, the theoretical origins can be traced back to the earlier work of Foucault (1978). In his first volume on *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1978) argues that the 19th century had led to a remarkable proliferation of discourses around sexuality. In his words, discourses are “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (1972, p.54), meaning that they are a way of organizing knowledge that enables the constructions of social relations by accepting a discourse as normative. Sexual essentialism, which revolves around the idea that sex is a natural force that exists prior to social life and shapes institutions, classifies sex as a property

of individuals where sexuality has no history and no significant social determinants. Foucault (1978) argued, however, for a constructivist alternative to sexual essentialism with his understanding of sexuality as a discursively constructed body of knowledge. He argues that the 19th century, while acknowledging the repressive economy that prohibited, muted and censored sex in multiple ways, also served as a proliferation of discourses concerned with sex (p.18). “Rather than the uniform concern to hide sex, rather than a general prudishness of language, what distinguishes these last three centuries is the variety, the wide dispersion of devices that were invented for speaking about it, for having it be spoken about, for inducing it to speak of itself, for listening, recording, transcribing, and redistributing what is said about it: around sex, a whole network of varying, specific, and coercive transpositions into discourse.” (Foucault, 1978, p.34). He also describes the construction of a hierarchical policing of sexuality: “that is, not the rigor of a taboo, but the necessity of regulating sex through useful and public discourses (p.25). The emergence of biopolitics is one example of this, wherein power relations served to determine which sexual relation was normalized and which one was not. “At the heart of this economic and political problem of population was sex: it was necessary to analyze the birthrate, the age of marriage, the legitimate and illegitimate births, the precocity and frequency of sexual relations...” (Foucault, 1978, p.25). Consequently, to ensure population growth and to reproduce labor capacity, sexuality was constituted as an economically useful and politically conservative discourse, where heterosexuality served as the only productive one. “All the longer, no doubt, as it is in the nature of power – particularly the kind of power that operates in our society – to be repressive, and to be especially careful in repressing useless energies, the intensity of pleasures, and irregular modes of behavior” (p.9). And thus, Foucault did not only open up the understanding of sexuality as a discursively constructed body of knowledge, he also described the repression of sexuality as related to relations of power and knowledge as we understand it today in relation to heteronormativity. “We are informed that if repression has indeed been the fundamental link between power, knowledge, and sexuality since the classical age, it stands to reason that we will not be able to free ourselves from it except at a considerable cost: nothing less than a transgression of laws, a lifting of prohibitions, an interruption of speech, a reinstating of pleasure within reality, and a whole new economy in the mechanisms of power will be required.” (Foucault, 1978, p.5).

Following this understanding of sexuality, Warner (1991), when arguing for queer politics, places the emphasis on heteronormativity as a field of normalization where power can operate

through discourse to normalize some sexualities and repress others. “In the everyday political terrain, contests over sexuality and its regulation are generally linked to views of social institutions and norms of the most basic sort.” (Warner, 1991, p.6). This field of normalization and stigmatization is, among others, characterized by notions of the family, individual freedom, consumptions and desire, reproductive politics, intimate life and social display, censorship and health care (Warner, 1991). Warner thus described how these discourses of sexuality were formed through relations of power and social institutions.

These contributions of both Foucault and Warner to the discourse of sexuality are fundamental for the development of the notion of heteronormativity. They introduced the hierarchical discourse of sexuality and focused on the relations between power and knowledge, related to social institutions and the public. The representation of sexuality on Klokhuis, which, because of its popularity can be seen as an influential social institution in the Netherlands, can therefore be examined as a discursively constructed body of knowledge to uncover hegemonic discourses of sexuality in the Netherlands.

THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Following Foucault and Warner, normalizing some sexualities and repressing others pertain to the organization of sexuality. As Rubin stated in 1984: “Modern Western societies appraise sex acts according to a hierarchical system of sexual value. Marital, reproductive heterosexuals are alone at the top erotic pyramid.” (p.151). She adds: “All these hierarchies of sexual value – religious, psychiatric, and popular – function in much the same ways as do ideological systems of racism, ethnocentrism, and religious chauvinism. They rationalize the well-being of the sexually privileged and the adversity of the sexual rabble.” (p.151). As Rich successfully introduced in 1980, compulsory heterosexuality can be seen as a political institution based on the institutionalization and naturalization of heterosexuality and the stigmatization of homosexuality. Sexuality is thus systemically rooted in societal structures and institutions, and is perpetuated by the regulation of marriage and family life, but also by divisions of labor, and patterns of dependency (Jackson, 1999; Herz & Johansson, 2014). Practically, this means that public displays of heterosexual affection are generally tolerated; heterosexual desire is normalized within the wider range or mass consumption and heterosexual couples are routinely represented on media platforms – in many ways, heterosexuality is normatively equated with love, affection and romance in social institutions. Therefore, we can conclude that one of the

key tenets of heteronormativity is that heterosexuality is compulsory, normative and unfairly privileged (Rich, 1980; Warner, 1991; Marchia & Sommer, 2017; Brook, 2018).

Continuing, compulsory heterosexuality additionally requires the naturalization of the gender binary. The sex/gender system is defined by Rubin (1975) as “the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity” (p.176). She adds: “At the most general level, the social organization of sex rests upon gender, obligatory heterosexuality, and the constraint of female sexuality.” (p.178). This can be explained more thoroughly by looking at Butler (1999[1990])’s influential and seminal work *Gender Trouble* in which she introduces the performativity of gender: “...gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a subject who might be said to preexist the deed.” (p.34). In 1987, West and Zimmerman theorized a similar concept known as ‘doing gender’. They explain: “Doing gender consists of managing such occasions so that, whatever the particulars, the outcome is seen and seeable in context as gender-appropriate, or, as the case may be, gender-inappropriate, that is, accountable.” (p.135). Later, they add: “Thus if, in doing gender, men are also ‘doing dominance’ and women are ‘doing deference’, the resultant social order, which supposedly reflects ‘natural differences’ is a powerful reinforcer and legitimator of hierarchical arrangements.” (p.146). These hierarchical arrangements are reflected in the current gender order that aligns femininity with women and masculinity with men, and consistently put a higher value on masculinity than femininity (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009). Performing gender-appropriate behavior thus reflects the idea of heteronormativity which refers to the shared set of expectations and norms that shape the ways that women and men are assumed to behave (Gentile, 1993).

Influenced by Rich (1980), Butler argues that gender is routinely produced through the heterosexual matrix, in which expressions of masculinity and femininity are embedded within a presupposed compulsory heterosexuality. “The heterosexualization of desire requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’, where these are understood as expressive attributes of ‘male’ and ‘female’.” (Butler, 1999 [1990], p.24). Basically, to be a real man or a real woman would therefore involve desiring the opposite sex. In her own words, Butler (1999[1990]) described the heterosexual matrix as followed: “...to designate that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies,

gender, and desires are naturalized... to characterize a hegemonic discursive/epistemic model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practices of heterosexuality” (p.151). This heterosexual matrix describes the hegemonic and heteronormative framework that accounts for how we make assumptions based on what we see and what we know, as these assumptions align gender expression with a certain sex and sexuality. A person being viewed as both masculine and male or feminine and female would be assumed heterosexual, whereas a person being viewed as masculine and female or feminine and male would be assumed homosexual. Compulsory sexuality thus requires a stable gender binary because of the seemingly natural attraction between two types of bodies defined as ‘opposite’. This allows for the conceptualization of heteronormativity – maintaining normative assumptions that there are two and only two genders, that gender reflects biological sex, and that only sexual attraction between these two ‘opposite’ bodies is ‘normal’, ‘natural’ or ‘desirable’ (Rubin, 1975; Seidman, 1995; Kitzinger, 2005; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009; Heisterkamp, 2016).

Thus, we can argue that heteronormativity is a “societal hierarchical system that privileges and sanctions individuals based on presumed binaries of gender and sexuality; as a system it defines and enforces beliefs and practices about what is “normal” in everyday life.” (Toomey, McGuire & Russell, 2012, p.188). Gender and sexuality are fundamentally entwined and interdependent within the notion of heteronormativity, which will therefore be used as a framework to explain and reflect on the representation of gender and sexuality on Klokhuis.

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND IDEALIZED FEMININITY

Butler also finds that gender performances other than hegemonic masculinity and idealized femininity are considered non-normative and in conflict with heteronormative assumptions of men and women. Accordingly, hegemonic masculinity and idealized femininity describe the socially accepted and appropriate ways in which men and women can perform their genders (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Connell, 1995). “Hegemonic masculinity presents a pattern of masculinity as an ideal which includes whiteness, heterosexuality, aggressiveness, middle-classness, mental and physical toughness, and independence.” (BehzadBarekat &

NesarNaghshbandi, 2016, p.529). It refers to the set of practices that are ascribed to 'real' men and operates not only through the subordination of femininity to hegemonic masculinity, but also through the marginalization of other masculinities (Connell, 1987; Schippers, 2007; Kareithi, 2013). Accordingly, it is argued that hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to femininity. Connell (1987) defines 'emphasized' femininity by "its compliance with this subordination and [...] oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men." (p.183). Schippers (2007) elaborates by saying that hegemonic masculinity is often characterized by physical strength and authority, which establishes men's legitimate dominance over women only when they are paired with the complimentary and inferior qualities attached to femininity such as physical vulnerability and compliance (p.91). This reinforces the asymmetrical position of masculinities and femininities in a patriarchal gender order (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Heteronormativity thus includes the characteristics that are ascribed to both men and women, the hierarchical relationship between those characteristics and the normativity with which hegemonic masculinity must remain exclusively in the hands of men, and hegemonic femininity must cohere with the gender category of women.

One of the core features of hegemonic masculinity is heterosexual desire, which is also the basis of the relationship between femininity and masculinity. Heterosexual desire, as a defining feature for both men and women, is what binds the masculine and feminine in a binary, hierarchical relationship (Schippers, 2007). Connell (1995) suggests that subordinate masculinities are often conflated with femininity, being the main reason for the subordination of homosexual men. As Morin and Garfinkle argued in 1978, the concept of homophobia was already being attributed to the conventional male role in the 1970s and led to emerging hierarchy of masculinities. "Men's homosexual desire and being weak and ineffectual are not symbolically constructed as problematic masculine characteristics; they are constructed as decidedly feminine. Because femininity is always and already inferior and undesirable when compared to masculinity, it can sustain features of stigmatization and contamination. In contrast, masculinity must always remain superior; it must never be conflated with something undesirable. (Schippers, 2007, p.96). Therefore, hegemonic masculinity is often not only associated with heterosexuality, but also with homophobia, and/or an unwillingness to express, or be associated with, feminine characteristics.

HETERONORMATIVE DISCOURSE: DOING HETERONORMATIVITY

As these theories about the origins and intersections of gender and sexuality show, heteronormativity is a multifaceted and complex concept. Therefore, it is important to understand how heteronormativity operationalizes in hegemonic discourse. “Heteronormativity is embodied in what people do rather than in their beliefs, values, ideologies or faiths. Complicity with heteronormativity does not necessarily imply prejudiced attitudes or beliefs or any deliberate intent to discriminate. Rather, heteronormativity - like other social norms – is embodied and displayed endogenously, in the details of conduct” (Kitzinger, 2005, p.478). Many scholars have studied the ways in which heteronormativity is reproduced within different discursive practices. For example, Heisterkamp (2016) analyzed the recontextualization of heteronormative assumptions in language, aiming to understand how many queer conversational practices still emerge from heteronormative assumptions. Rumens & Ozturk (2019) analyzed heteronormativity in entrepreneurial discourses in order to examine how gay male entrepreneurial identities are constituted and sustained in gendered and sexualized ways. Kitzinger (2005) analyzed family reference terms in medical institutions and found that they are often deployed to construct a normative version of the heterosexual nuclear family – reflecting the culturally normative definition of the family. Furthermore, Čeplak (2013) did research on heteronormativity in formal education, Smith and Shin (2015) examined the intersection of racial oppression and heteronormativity and Brook (2018) looked at how heteronormative assumptions are embedded in the institution of marriage. Lastly, Thorfinnsdottir & Jensen did research in 2017 where they examined the representation of sexuality on Danish public service children’s television. These studies show how heteronormative assumptions influence daily life and experiences and exist within different hegemonic discourses. As Berlant and Warner already stated in 1998: “Heteronormativity is more than ideology, or prejudice, or phobia against gays and lesbians; it is produced in almost every aspect of the forms and arrangements of social life; nationality, the state, and the law; commerce; medicine; and education; as well as in the conventions and affects of narrativity, romance and other protected spaces of culture.” (p.554).

Following the study of Thorfinnsdottir & Jensen (2017), three dimensions are derived from the theory and will be used to operationalize heteronormativity as an analytical tool in order to study the representation of gender and sexuality on the Dutch children’s television show *Klokhuis*. First of all, following Butler’s influential work on the performativity of gender and

the heterosexual matrix, *gender performances* will be the first dimension of analysis. Every person, on and off screen, is inevitably performing their gender in some way. Accordingly, ‘traditional masculinity’ and ‘traditional femininity’ are defined as relatively enduring characteristics encompassing traits, appearances, interests and behaviors that have traditionally been considered more typical of men and women, respectively (Kachel, Steffens & Niedlich, 2016). Gender stereotypes exist in all these enduring characteristics, for example, women are expected to be more affectionate, take care of the family and the household, and are expected to be graceful, wearing dresses and make-up. Men on the other hand, are expected to be more dominant and competitive, take care of finances or home repairs, and are expected to be tall and muscular. Additionally, stereotypical occupations for women are teachers and nurses, while men are traditionally assumed to be scientists, surgeons and policemen. Counter-stereotypical representations, on the other hand, include, for example, female firefighters or male babysitters. Therefore, as Butler (1988) says: “It seems fair to say that certain kinds of acts are usually interpreted as expressive of a gender core or identity, and that these acts either conform to an expected gender identity or contest that expectation in a way” (p.527). The stereotypical representation of queer characters often tends to diverge from these traditional gender roles. For example, stereotypical gay men are often depicted as the effeminate type, having a high-pitched voice, feminine gestures and being fashion conscious, whereas the stereotypical lesbian woman has masculine gestures, short hair and wears baggy clothes (Tropiano, 2002). This first dimension thus analyzes the way that characters on Klokhuis perform their genders, the ways that hegemonic masculinity and idealized femininity are represented, and simultaneously, following the heterosexual matrix of Butler, how this relates to their sexuality.

Accordingly, the second dimension is *family constructions*. There are different types of family structures, like nuclear families, single parent families or extended families. However, often, representations of family, romance or love implicitly depict heterosexuality and the dominant discourse of family remains predominantly heteronormative (Davies & Robinson, 2013). This includes many important life events, such as marriage, reproduction, and responsibility, which are heteronormative determinants of a successful and productive life (Davies & Robinson, 2013). Often, a simple portrayal of same-sex parents tends to lead to ideas that childhood innocence disappears (Lemish, 2010; Thorfinnsdottir & Jensen, 2017). Therefore, this second

dimension focuses on how families are constructed, represented and how the traditional heteronormative perspectives on families may be challenged.

Finally, the third dimension will discuss *implicit and explicit sexuality*, representing all instances of intimacy and sexuality that appear on screen. It starts by analyzing verbal references to sexual orientation, and continues to analyze the implicit and explicit ways that sexuality is shown on Klokhuis. Following Thorfinnsdottir & Jensen (2017), explicit sexuality refers to “any instance in which acts of intimacy indicating a sexually oriented desire takes place between two characters, or are explicitly mimicked or talked about” (p.402), and implicit sexuality refers to representations of sexuality that are not actual sexual acts, but imply that intimacy might take place or that there was a romantic interest (p.403). Following Rich (1980)’s notion of compulsory heterosexuality, a key aspect of heteronormativity includes heterosexuality as normative where all queer sexualities are seen as deviant and non-normative. Heterosexuality is the assumed and expected sexuality, and ideas about intimacy tend to be inextricably linked to this normative sexuality (Johnson, 2005; Martin & Kazyak, 2009; Thorfinnsdottir & Jensen, 2017). Thorfinnsdottir & Jensen (2017) hypothesized in their study: “...in contrast to heteronormative intimacy, non-heteronormative intimacy, desire, and/or practices are absent in children’s television because they are seen as too explicitly sexual.” (p.400). Therefore, this research will explore whether representations of sexuality are restricted to heterosexual acts of intimacy or whether, and how, queer intimacy is represented.

Finally, the dimensions gender performances; family constructions, and; implicit and explicit sexuality will form the theoretical conceptual framework of this research. The next chapter will elaborate on how this framework will be used as an analytical tool to examine the representation of gender and sexuality on Klokhuis.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

“Feminist media research is committed to contributing to our understanding of the operations of power within mediated texts. It seeks and brings to the foreground the expression of muted voices and critiques the patterned discourses that support and reflect dominant ideologies of gender.”

– McIntosh & Cuklanz, 2014, p267

Following the theoretical framework, this chapter will elaborate on the methodology of the research. In order to answer the following research question, feminist media research will be conducted through a thorough analysis of the episodes of *Klokhuis*. The next paragraphs will elaborate on the research approach, the research material, the operationalization of the notion of heteronormativity, the process of data analysis and lastly, the positionality and role of the researcher within this process.

RESEARCH APPROACH

“Feminist media research aims to discover, analyze and critique the means through which mainstream media construct and maintain dominant ideas about gender. In doing so, feminist media research provides insights into the ways in which ideas that may seem ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ are actually socially constructed. By deconstructing these ideas, or showing how they are artificially supported in mediated texts, feminist media research can empower readers to think of new ways to understand gender as well as its intersections with categories such as race, class and sexuality.” (McIntosh & Cuklanz, 2014, p.290). Accordingly, feminist media research will be used to examine the episodes of *Klokhuis* in order to identify the dominant normative narratives in the context of the Dutch hegemonic discourse. This research additionally aims to empower Dutch media to think of gender and sexuality in a more fluid and non-heteronormative way and to actively work against stereotyped representation on television in the future.

Furthermore, feminist media research entails two different dimensions, a quantitative and a qualitative one, which will both be included in this thesis. The quantitative dimension, as explained by McIntosh & Cuklanz (2014) involves “simply to observe and count the characters of different gender, sexuality, age and so forth in the text. From there it is important to examine and evaluate each of the characters and relationships contained in the text.” (p.282). This first step thus involves developing statistical data regarding the gendered representation on television. The qualitative dimension provides more depth on the nature of the presentation, and involves research on the representation in diverse roles, settings and the association with public and private themes (Daalmans & ter Horst, 2014, p.264). A complete qualitative representation can contribute to an increasing acceptance among its viewers. For example, children who see counter-stereotypical representation on television express greater acceptance

for non-traditional gender roles in their own lives (Nathanson et al., 2002; Common Sense Media, 2017).

RESEARCH MATERIAL

In order to answer the research question elaborately, this research will analyze all episodes of *Klokhuis* that have aired in 2019 on the Dutch television. In total, 262 episodes have been broadcasted over a total of 52 weeks, which adds up to approximately 70 hours of research material. A list of the episodes with their corresponding titles and topics have been attached in Appendix 1. These episodes are fully accessible through NPO Plus, which is an internet subscription to all channels and programs of the NPO [Nederlandse Publieke Omroep].

In their introduction to *Feminist Media Research*, McIntosh & Cuklanz (2014) state that: “Feminist research on mass media, whether film, television, or other forms, is usually focused on texts with an obvious dimension of gender.” (p.267). Later, they add: “Any text or group of texts that has something to say about gendered characterizations of people, gender and relations of power, constructions of gender, or the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, or class, can be the focus of feminist media research.” (McIntosh & Cuklanz, 2014, p.267). This research specifically focuses on *Klokhuis* because of its popularity amongst children, as it is one of the most popular informative shows for children between the ages nine and twelve in the Netherlands, and is additionally used as educational material in schools. Therefore, by examining the representation of gender and sexuality, this research can contribute to the deconstruction of heteronormativity which will hopefully stimulate a more diverse, inclusive and non-heteronormative account of gender and sexuality on children’s television.

The *Klokhuis* episodes can be divided into two separate parts: the documentary pieces and the sketches. Every episode is based on one main topic which is introduced and discussed in the documentary pieces by the main presenter and an expert. For example, episode 52 of 2019 is about cars and the presenter goes to a car factory to explain and show the entire production process, with added expertise by one of the factory workers. Every episode consists of documentary pieces that alternate with three sketches. In relation to the professional character of the documentary pieces, the sketches present a more humoristic account of the main topic, and they are often acted, animated, or sung. In the episode about cars, for example, one of the sketches shows a married couple trying to buy a new car to look ‘cool’ for the youth, whilst

two younger boys are not interested in the cars as they are more interested in electric cars. On Mondays, the show is fully dedicated to one of the sketches called 'The Office' [Het Kantoor], which is a fictional series with a permanent cast that is based on the office of Klokhuis. Additionally, there are many sketch-templates that return regularly. These are sketches with the same characters, location and style but that are reproduced to match the specific topic of that day. Some examples of these templates are 'space family', 'checkout girls', 'hobbyquiz', 'Klokko', 'truck drivers', 'Art and Fjodor', 'cowboys', and 'concerned parents'. Next to these regular sketches, new sketches are developed and created when needed.

In the next section, I will elaborate how these documentary pieces and sketches will be analyzed on the notion of heteronormativity by detailing the different dimension, sub-categories and codes that will be used.

DATA ANALYSIS

In order to answer the research question, all episodes of Klokhuis have been watched, coded and analyzed to be able to examine the representation of gender and sexuality effectively. I started the thematic analysis by taking descriptive notes on every character in every episode. This meant not only writing down the gender, sexuality and relevant relationships for every character that appeared, but also recording more detailed information, so-called thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973), such as dialogues, physical characteristics and plot events that were relevant for analyzing the representation of gender and sexuality. These descriptive notes required me to ask myself repeatedly: What do they do in regards to gender-role behavior? What topics of expertise are they talking about and who is talking about which topic? What is the family construction within this segment? How is intimacy shown? Are they holding hands? Are they referring to any sexually oriented desire? These thus were notes presenting "something significant about gender, mark a departure from previous representations, offer gendered interactions whose examination illuminates the operation of power within the text, or contribute to the historical trajectory of some specific issue or theme." (McIntosh & Cuklanz, 2014, p.283). The three previously established analytical dimensions of heteronormativity: gender performance, family constructions and implicit and explicit sexuality were the basis for the process of close reading, coding and analysis.

After the initial close reading process and ‘describing’ the relevant characters and relationships, it was important to develop sub-categories and themes by examining and evaluating patterns that emerge. Therefore, I used primary-cycle and secondary-cycle coding to analyze the descriptions (Tracy, 2013). The code book is included in Appendix 2. “Coding is a way of indexing or categorizing the text in order to establish a framework of thematic ideas about it” (Gibbs, 2007, p.39). I first assigned codes to the descriptive notes to capture the theme in those notes. For example, this made me consider how the characters were presented with characteristics of hegemonic masculinity or idealized femininity. If necessary, the specific episodes were watched again for more detailed descriptions in order to assign more specific codes. In the secondary-cycle coding, I critically examined the codes, and began organizing and categorizing them into more analytical codes connecting to the three dimensions. This also involved going back to the theoretical framework and connecting it to the literature. Some primary-cycle codes, like ‘nuclear family’ and ‘heterosexual parents’ represented the same family construction, which enabled me to combine some codes and define the categories more clearly. This secondary-cycle coding process thus enabled me to organize, synthesize and categorize the codes into categories and analytic themes (Patton, 2002). I indicated the frequency of certain codes, as can be seen in Appendix 3, and found examples and quotes to support them. Finally, analyzing these codes, categories and dimensions enabled me to discuss the three dimensions in detail and formulate overarching conclusions that answer the main research question.

ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

In every research, the role and positionality of the researcher is part of the research process and fundamental for the outcome of the research. “Just as researchers follow ethical guidelines in speaking about interview subjects, they must follow similar guidelines in textual analysis. In particular, they must avoid making assumptions about the people shown, avoid making generalized statements about the people shown, and avoid misrepresenting them and their interests. Their discussions of the people and ideas represented in texts must be fair and well-reasoned, not finely selected to emphasize some points at the expense of others.” (McIntosh & Cuklanz, 2014, p.287). Therefore, while close reading, coding and analyzing, I tried to include all characteristics, non-verbal language, and notions of relationships that I encountered without making assumptions or interpretations. However, as a researcher is always part of the process, it is impossible to be completely objective in this analysis. In order to address these issues,

reflexivity is important throughout every step of the research process. “Reflexivity occurs throughout the research process, not just at the end as part of the writing process. Instead, researchers must remain open and questioning about their assumptions and ideas as they emerge. They must take care of avoid imposing their own meanings on textual representations, and thus not reading them through their own eyes.” (McIntosh & Cuklanz, 2014, p.288). Accordingly, to ensure more objectivity, I have shown multiple segments to others to ask their associations and perceptions on the depicted representations. For example, in episode 16, the first sketch shows two women running down the stairs in their pajamas but no further explicit remarks are made about their appearances. Therefore, I asked several peers for their thoughts on the segment.

CHAPTER 4: GENDER PERFORMANCES

*“Genders can be neither true nor false,
neither real nor apparent, neither original
nor derived.”*

– Butler, 1999 [1990], p.193

This chapter will examine the representation of gender and sexuality on Klokhuis through an analysis of the first dimension: gender performances. This dimension explores how each character on Klokhuis performs their gender and how these representations either depict a normative, gender-appropriate performance, or how they diverge from those normative performances and thus, how gender-inappropriate and counter-stereotypical representations are depicted. As every character inevitably performs their gender in some way, this analysis will focus on the ‘extreme’ depictions of gender performances, elaborating on performances of hegemonic masculinity, idealized femininity and counter-stereotypical representations. This will be done by exploring gender-role behavior, traits, occupations and physical characteristics. The chapter is divided into two separate analysis, one that explores gender performances in the documentary pieces and one that focuses on the gender performances in the sketches.

DOCUMENTARY PIECES

First of all, the representation of gender in the documentary pieces does not reflect the demographics of the Dutch society by depicting a much larger amount of male characters. An overview of these results is included in Appendix 3. For the quantitative representation, it is important to consider proportional representation by, for example, questioning whether men and women are equally represented in the roles of experts, vox-pop news sources and presenters. In the documentary pieces of Klokhuis, every person only appears on screen to give an explanation about their expertise, this means that they only appear in relation to their occupation. These people are called ‘news sources’ in this research. In all episodes of Klokhuis from 2019, 71% of the people appearing as news sources were male and 29% were female. There were no self-identified non-binary people, or people with visible non-binary or androgynous characteristics. According to CBS statistics, the population of the Netherlands was 49,7% male and 50,3% female on January 1, 2019 (CBS, 2019). Comparing these quantitative gender statistics clearly shows that the representation of gender in the documentary pieces does not mirror the demographic of the Dutch society.

Secondly, the hierarchical arrangement of the current gender order is reflected by the quantitative statistics. The analysis shows that 71,3% of the people appearing with professional or active expertise were male, whereas only 28,7% were identified as female. In comparison, only 49% of the vox-pop news sources are male, meaning that the majority of the informal, vox-pop news sources are female. This reflects the hierarchical arrangements from the current

gender order, which, by aligning femininity with women and masculinity with men, consistently puts a higher value on masculinity than femininity (West & Zimmerman, 1987; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009). Therefore, these statistics reinforce the societal norms that value and validate men's expertise and authority more than women's expertise.

Next, the documentary pieces generally reinforce the gendered division of labor as men are mostly represented by having stereotypically masculine occupations and women more stereotypically feminine occupations. Categories that are stereotypically seen as more masculine, like *economics*, *crime and national security* and *science and technologies* have substantially more male experts than female experts. Only 25% of the experts in the field of economics was female and only 14% was female in the category *crime and national security*. Accordingly, the category *social affairs and healthcare*, that is stereotypically seen as more feminine, has more female experts. This stereotypical and heteronormative representation of the division of labor can have a large impact on children as studies have shown that "heavier viewing of gender-traditional television content is associated with children's gender-typed career aspirations" (Common Sense Media, 2017, p.8). Television shows like Klokhuis are often one of children's main sources of inspiration regarding occupational choices, as it shows them what a scientist or a surgeon looks like, and exposure to the stereotypical representation of these occupations can thus severely impact children's career choices and aspirations.

However, the documentary pieces also show counter-stereotypical occupation choices. For example, although men are still overrepresented in the category *sports* (73,2%), women do appear as experts in, for example, rugby, wrestling and snowboarding which are stereotypically seen as masculine sports. These counterstereotypical representations challenge traditional gender stereotypes, and embrace, normalize and promote positive gender representations. Similarly, Klokhuis also introduces female plumbers while explaining construction sites, a female sergeant when explaining how to dismantle a bomb, and a male make-up artist who talks about his work behind the scenes of a television show. These counterstereotypes thus successfully offer children narratives that broaden their aspirations and future prospects (Lemish, 2010).

Taking these counter-stereotypical representations further, the documentary pieces successfully challenge hegemonic masculinity in some episodes. This can be explored through

looking at episode 135, in which the main topic is ‘dancing’. The episode follows two professional ballet dancers, one male and one female dancer, during a typical day in their lives. One of the fundamental and universal components of hegemonic masculinity remains to be the antifeminine aspect of masculinity (Haltom & Worthen, 2014, p.758). Ballet is a form of dance that is often viewed as a highly feminized activity, and, as Haltom & Worthen (2014) argue, “the involvement of men in ballet can serve as a departure from heteromascularity due to the feminized content of ballet and the association of male ballet dancers with homosexuality.” (p.4). Mennesson (2009) found that male ballet dancers often fight this “effeminate, homosexual male-dancer stereotype” (p.190) by engaging in highly gendered and heterosexualized behaviors that include self-enforced heteromascularity in both their body movement and social patterns. However, in this episode of Klokhuis, Jurriën, the male ballet dancer, does not try to hide any feminine aspect about ballet nor does he try to prove his masculinity in any way. Additionally, no assumptions about his sexuality are made throughout the episode. When asked what someone needs in order to become a good ballet dancer, he answers: “*You have to have a sense of music and rhythm, a good balance and flexibility, as well as you have to work hard and be able to move freely.*” In his answer, Jurriën fully embraces his own identity as a ballet dancer without dismissing any assumptions about feminine characteristics of ballet. In the end, the male presenter finishes by saying: “*If I wouldn’t be a presenter, I would know what I want to be.*”, which normalizes the idea of male ballet dancers even more. Similarly, in episode 244, Joep talks about his love for crochet. Joep is presented as a stereotypical boy, who loves wakeboarding, snowboarding and longboarding, and additionally loves to do crochet. At the beginning of the episode, the presenter says: “*When I think about crochet, I do not think of such a ‘tough guy’ like you*”, to which he replies: “*Yes, that’s what most people tell me, but look at what I can make*” while pointing to one of the hats he made. This episode successfully challenges gender stereotypes as Joep normalizes something that is stereotypically seen as a feminine activity and he is not afraid to express his passion for it. During the episode, he explains that other children have attempted to bully him but that they did not succeed as he just “*thinks it’s a cool thing to do*”. So, both Jurriën and Joep embrace a more inclusive form of masculinity as they do not feel the need to prove their masculinity while engaging in activities that are stereotypically seen as feminine.

SKETCHES

Similar to the documentary pieces, the sketches also included more male characters than female characters. However, the sketches were more accessible for exploring the representation of gender and sexuality as they involved stories about families, relationships and real-life situations. There were 1471 characters that appeared in the sketches in 2019. 1055 of them were male, which accounts for 72%, whilst 416 characters were female, which accounts for the remaining 28%. There were no self-identified non-binary people or representations of other genders. Therefore, we can conclude that, while comparing these percentages to the CBS statistics (2019), the sketches do not mirror Dutch demographics on gender either.

A majority of the gender performances in the sketches reflect a more stereotypical and hegemonic representation of masculinity. In total, 96 instances of ‘extreme’ gender performances were coded in the sketches, 39% of which were non-heteronormative and the other 61% were coded as heteronormative gender performances. These heteronormative representations of gender performances are illustrated by men performing hegemonic masculinity or women performing idealized femininity. An example of such a heteronormative performance of masculinity can be explored through looking at ‘The Office’. Ben, one of the main characters in this sketch, can be identified as the boss of the office, and is depicted as a stereotypical male authority, displaying multiple features of hegemonic masculinity. First of all, he reinforces the heteronormative idea that men should present themselves as mentally and physically strong. For example, in episode 237, when talking about different human emotions, he says: *“A real man will surely not sit and cry”*, and *“Anger reflects power, showing any other emotions reflects weakness”*. Secondly, he often emphasizes the superiority of masculinity over femininity (Connell, 1987). In episode 15, for example, he argues that: *“Soccer is for men as it is a tough masculine sport, not for girls that scream like princesses at every little thing or whom are scared of a little pain or blood.”* In episode 206, he says to Leonoor, his female employee: *“You are going to be my secretary, because you are a girl”*. In episode 60, he states: *“Women cannot drive cars, that is widely known”*. In all these examples, Ben attempts to prove his masculinity and authority by subordinating women. This reflects the idea that men’s legitimate dominance over women can only be established by pairing it to complimentary and inferior qualities attached to femininity (Schippers, 2007, p.91). It is argued that women need to perform idealized femininity when complying with this subordination and accommodating the interests and desires of men (Connell, 1987). However, Leonoor, who is the only female

character in 'The Office', is definitely not compliant and does not portray a stereotypical feminine character, which produces interesting power dynamics in the series. She often rejects Ben's denigrating comments and shows her own physical strength and independence, and thus dismisses many of Ben's features of hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity is also shown through the embodiment of heterosexuality. For example, in the sketches 'Art and Fjodor' and 'The Office', there are two instances when two male characters kiss each other on the lips accidentally and immediately scream out how disgusting it is for them to kiss. As Schippers (2007) argued, in order to perform masculinity successfully, it must always remain superior and "it must never be conflated with something undesirable" (p.96). As male homosexual desire is associated with being feminine and inferiority, hegemonic masculinity does not allow for two men to kiss. This feature of hegemonic masculinity is also reflected in the sketch 'Burt and Danny', who are the only queer representation in the sketches. They are depicted as effeminate homosexual men by having high-pitched voices, feminine gestures and being very fashion-conscious (Tropiano, 2002). When looking at Butler (1999[1990])'s heterosexual matrix, this additionally exemplifies how hegemonic masculinity and heterosexuality are intrinsically linked, as the only queer characters are stereotypically portrayed as feminine, which reinforces the idea that heterosexual desire reflects masculinity and queer sexuality reflects femininity.

Furthermore, the sketches also challenge gender stereotypes and hegemonic masculinity by showing counter-stereotypical representations of masculinity. As an example, one of the sketch-templates follows the lives of cowboys in the Wild West. At first, these sketches seem to show the Wild West as a dangerous, masculine and tough place, as common storylines display bank robberies, shooting or executions. However, the cowboys display non-heteronormative characteristics, and are not represented as the typical masculine cowboys, as they express their feelings, cry and enjoy stereotypical feminine activities. The next three segments exemplify this counter-stereotypical representation of masculinity. First, in episode 183, Benjamin, Billy and Bob are three cowboys, best friends and are fighting about minor things, until they realize that they all have divorced parents. They end up talking about their feelings and discuss the pain they felt when they continuously heard their parents argue, which challenges the stereotype that men should be competitive, show physical and mental strength and should not discuss their feelings with each other. Secondly, in episode 237, cowboy Lionel

is introduced as a “*dangerous and feared cowboy, aggressive and hating all pretty and sensitive things.*”, after which the following dialogue takes place:

Lionel’s son: Father, my pet died!

Lionel: Then go bury him.

Cowboy 2: This is going too far, a child needs to be able to cry with his father.

Lionel: Cry? No way. Crying is for weak cowboys.

Cowboy 2: No Lionel, it takes courage to cry, to show your tears.

Lionel: I was never allowed to cry. Not when I fell, not when my pet died, not when I had a nightmare or when I was being bullied.

Cowboy 2: So, you were never able to let go of your tears? It’s not good to keep your tears in for such a long time, maybe that’s why you’re so mean.

Lionel’s son: It doesn’t matter. He is my father. I love him for the way he is.

Narrator: For the first time in years, Lionel let go of his tears. And that day, Lionel discovered something even more important, a person that shows his tears, can be comforted by others.

As can be read in the dialogue above, the episode challenges the stereotype that ‘real’ men do not express their emotions as they state that it is not only okay for men to show their tears, it also enables you to be comforted by your friends. Lastly, in episode 157, cowboy Howard is being executed for committing several crimes, and when being given the chance to say his last words, he says: “*I would like to give a book review about Superjuffie.*” And after the other cowboys protest, he says: “*So you want to tell me that cowboy-kids will never know the pleasure of reading? And that the fantasy of children in the Wild West are not stimulated through reading books? I have 500 children books at home.*” At the end of the sketch, cowboy Howard is not executed but spends his time reading out books to other cowboys in the Wild West, which counters the dominant and stereotypical representation of the masculinity of cowboys. Additionally, men are often more likely to receive negative responses when failing to uphold gender norms. These examples above show a way in which positive counter-stereotypical representations are shown as they do not receive negative responses, but are rather stimulated by their environment in expressing themselves. Therefore, this depiction of cowboys, who are traditionally known for their masculinity, successfully challenges the representation of hegemonic masculinity.

Simultaneously, the findings show both heteronormative and non-heteronormative gender performances by female characters. For example, the ‘checkout girls’ are portrayed as stereotypically feminine, they are gullible, cheerful, and they discuss their attraction to ‘hot boys’ – again reflecting the heterosexual desire that holds femininity and masculinity in a binary, hierarchical relationship (Schippers, 2007). On the other hand, one sketch presents the

lives of two female truck drivers, who are, assessed by their physical appearance, their occupation and their role behavior, not typically feminine. For example, they burp, they love fast-food, do not care as much about their physical appearances and work in a male-dominated workplace. These sketches thus depict completely different representation of women, as both the stereotypical feminine girls are shown as well as less feminine female characters which allows for a broader understanding of the concept of femininity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the gender performances in both the documentary pieces and the sketches do not mirror the demographics of the Dutch society. The documentary pieces reinforce the hierarchical relationship between men and women and show a stereotypical representation of the gendered division of labor. However, they also produce counter-stereotypical content, by representing female rugby players, female plumbers and a male ballet dancer. The sketches largely reinforce ideas about the gender binary, as they depart from a standard norm of heterosexuality and gender-conformity. However, especially the cowboy-sketches show an in-depth counter-stereotypical representation that challenges the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. These counter-stereotypical representations offer children narratives around gender and sexuality that broaden their perspectives and aspirations for the future (Lemish, 2010) as well as they are able to positively affect children's normative behavior, as studies have shown that children who watch non-traditional gender representation on television express greater acceptance of non-traditional gender roles in their own lives (Nathanson et al., 2002).

It is also evident that Klokhuis does not represent gender identities outside the gender binary. There are no representations of non-binary characters, and most of the gender performances strictly adhere to the normative physical characteristics of men and women. Additionally, the only queer characters in Klokhuis are Burt and Danny, who are presented as stereotypically feminine homosexual men, and often in a more humoristic way, which reinforces the stereotypes surrounding homosexuality. Therefore, it would be good to normalize queer characters and other gender identities on Klokhuis, to allow children a more diverse and fluid representation of gender and sexuality.

CHAPTER 5: FAMILY CONSTRUCTIONS

“Educating all children and youth about alternative families and sexuality is critical to children becoming socially informed citizens and politically active members of their communities...”

– Davies & Robinson, 2013, p.39

This chapter focuses on the representation of different family constructions in Klokhuis. Warner (1991) argued that heteronormativity, as a field of normalization, is characterized by notions of the family, notions of individual freedom, consumptions and desire, reproductive politics, intimate life and social display, censorship and health care. Also, Herz and Johansson (2015) state that heteronormativity concerns life issues such as lifestyle and the family. As many of these notions and characteristics are reflected in family life and family structures, analyzing family constructions is very important when exploring the representation of gender and sexuality. The different family constructions that will be analyzed in this chapter include *heterosexual parents*, *heterosexual couple*, *single parent family structure*, *queer parents* and *queer couple*. The documentary pieces and the sketches will be analyzed separately.

DOCUMENTARY PIECES

The documentary pieces show a very heteronormative account of family constructions. In total, there are sixteen depictions of family constructions. The most frequent category is *heterosexual parents*, which is coded twelve times. *Heterosexual couple* is the second most-frequent category, with four depictions. For example, there are four episodes that discuss divorce as their main topic. In these episodes, multiple family members are speaking of their experiences with divorce, however, they are all heterosexual parents in nuclear family structures. Additionally, there are some experts, like a cook in episode 2, a medical illustrator in episode 78, a truck driver in episode 130 and two artists in episode 134 who either talk about their nuclear family or their heterosexual parents. For example, the medical illustrator mentions that she uses her husband and children as ‘models’ for her medical illustrations. The episode shows this process, as her husband performs a Heimlich maneuver, or abdominal thrusts, to her son after which she takes pictures and illustrates their postures when doing the maneuver. Later, this procedure is repeated with their daughter. This episode is therefore a good example of how the documentary pieces depict a heteronormative family construction.

Furthermore, there were no representations of *queer parents*, *queer couples* or *single parent-families*. However, there was one episode that showed an image depicting a queer couple. This image is not coded in the analysis, as the portrayal does not include anyone that is speaking or walking or anyone that is physically present. The image, which is included as a screenshot in Appendix 4, is shown in the background of the segment while the presenter talks about why dogs often look similar to their owners. It depicts two, stereotypically masculine-looking,

women standing close together. They exhibit multiple ‘masculine’ features like short hair (Tropiano, 2002), tattoos and no-sleeve shirts. They have no background story, and the presenter does not refer to the image or the couple in her speech, so there is no additional information about the couple other than their physical appearances. Besides this image, the documentary pieces do not include a single representation of queer families, reflecting the heteronormative presumptions that social institutions like marriage and the family are appropriately organized around heterosexual desire (Kitzinger, 2005).

SKETCHES

Compared to the documentary pieces, the sketches have a more diverse representation of family constructions. In total, I coded 162 representations of family constructions, 95% of which depicted *heterosexual parents* or *heterosexual couples*. Only nine representations depicted a *queer couple*, eight of those depicted two homosexual men in a sketch called ‘Burt and Danny’, and one was a depiction of two women. There were no depictions of *queer parents* or *single-parent families*.

The sketches often depart from a standard norm of a heterosexual, gender-conforming and able-bodied family which is often based on a nuclear family structure. For example, the sketch-templates ‘space family’, ‘concerned parents’ and ‘prehistoric family’ are all build on a nuclear family with heterosexual parents and either one or two children. Screenshots of these family constructions are included in appendix 4. Additionally, the men and women in these families express the gender roles that are reflected within the boundaries of the gender binary, and can therefore easily be assigned to one of those two genders. As there are no depictions of queer parents, the results of this analysis adhere to the general findings that heterosexuality is the standard norm in media representation and that only the attraction between two opposite sexes is appropriate for children’s television (Thorfinnsdottir & Jensen, 2017).

The majority of the family representations depict a heterosexual couple (66,7%). As can be seen in Appendix 4, the sketches ‘restaurant date’, ‘complaint desk’, ‘hobby quiz’ and ‘Klokko’ all feature a heterosexual couple as the focal point in the scenes. For example, the ‘hobby quiz’ always has the same heterosexual couple, Joke and Bert, as its contenders, the ‘restaurant date’ always depicts the same man and woman who are on a date in the restaurant, and Klokko

features different heterosexual couples who all cope with an issue that needs solving. As will be elaborated in the next chapter, their sexually oriented desire is often shown through implicit and explicit instances of intimacy or affection. Furthermore, the different family members in these representations mostly exhibit heteronormative gender identities and gender expressions.

In the sketches, representation of queer families is kept to a minimum. As I mentioned before, the only explicit representation of a queer couple on Klokhuis is depicted in a sketch called 'Burt and Danny'. A screenshot of this sketch-template can be seen in Appendix 4. Burt and Danny are two homosexual men that are in a relationship together. In episode 102, Burt and Danny eat mussels together while Danny says to Burt: "*Thank you for taking me out to dinner, because we are together for 12 years and 3 weeks*". As mentioned in the last chapter, Burt and Danny both exhibit feminine features. As they are both effeminate types, they do not reflect the heteronormative assumption that one must be the 'man in the relationship' and the other must be the 'woman in the relationship'. Additionally, since no queer parents are depicted, there is no evidence that Klokhuis reinforces this stereotypical heteronormative idea of gendered parenting roles in a queer relationship. One other, not explicitly represented, queer couple is depicted in episode 16, when a pianist is secretly playing in a living room in the middle of the night, after which two women run downstairs to tell him to leave their house. They are both wearing full pajama's, have short hair and are approximately the same age. When they come running downstairs, one of the women screams: "*What are you doing in my home, go away!*", after which she starts chasing the pianist while he runs out of the house. The other woman then screams: "*Go Francine, get him.*". As it is not explicitly shown or mentioned that they are together, and they additionally do not show any affection or intimacy towards each other, the nature of this relationship is open for interpretation and identifying these two women as a queer couple remains an assumption. However, following the 'types' of stereotypical gay and lesbian characters in television series as described by Tropiano (2002), they fit into the lesbian stereotypical character as they have short hair, wear baggy clothes and are depicted aggressively while screaming at the intruder.

Finally, the sketches confirm the idea that children's television shows reinforce heteronormative assumptions about traditional families. Brown (2002) argued that representation on television often has a lack of gay family representation or same-sex couples with children. My analysis of Klokhuis shows that not a single episode or segment depict queer

parents or a queer couple within a family situation, which reinforces the idea that having a family, raising children and marriage belongs to a heterosexual relationship. Additionally, by showing a queer couple in isolation from normal social situations, Klokhuis fails to normalize queer characters and their position in society.

CONCLUSION

Regarding the representation of different families on Klokhuis, both the documentary pieces and the sketches show a lack of queer representation. There are no counter-stereotypical representations of queer characters, as Burt and Danny are depicted as stereotypical homosexual men with feminine features and they are the only explicit queer couple in Klokhuis. The large difference between the representation of heterosexual couples and queer couples reinforces the heteronormative notion about families, and confirms the hypothesis that Thorfinnsdottir & Jensen posed in their article, when they mentioned that “it seems that in order for representations of family constellations to be appropriate for children, parents should either be heterosexual or have no apparent sexual orientation.” (p.402). In conclusion, it can be argued that Klokhuis follows the general media portrayal of families by entirely maintaining a heteronormative representation of the family.

CHAPTER 6: EXPLICIT/IMPLICIT SEXUALITY

“A common concern about the impact of television on young viewers is its role as a teacher about sexuality.”

– Ward, 1995, p.596

The previous chapter shows how the family constructions in Klokhuis remain to be rather heteronormative, and that most representations either depict heterosexual couples or heterosexual parents. Continuing, this chapter will explore whether these characters, in both heterosexual and queer relationships, show physical and emotional affection towards each other. Therefore, this chapter will use the dimension of implicit and explicit sexuality to further analyze the representation of gender and sexuality. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, implicit sexuality refers to instances that imply that intimacy might take place or that depicts a romantic interest, and as can be seen in Appendix 2, this category includes codes like *dating*, *sweet talk* and *flirting*. Explicit sexuality refers to any acts of intimacy that indicate a sexually oriented desire, and its codes range from *embracing* to *kissing* to *sexual intercourse*, but also *verbal references to intimacy* are included in this category. The remainder of this chapter will discuss these categories including any verbal references to sexual orientation through an analysis of the documentary pieces and the sketches.

DOCUMENTARY PIECES

In the documentary pieces, the depiction of implicit and explicit sexuality is almost nonexistent, as there are very few instances of verbal references to sexual orientation and there are no instances of implicit or explicit sexuality. For example, in episode 11, when talking about gaming, one of the gamers expresses his attraction to a girl on the screen. However, more often, images depicting implicit and explicit sexuality appear in the documentary pieces. For example, when the presenter is answering questions from children. In episodes 76, 126 and 156, the presenter discusses questions like ‘why are red roses a symbol of love?’, and ‘why do dogs often look like their owners?’. The images appearing in the background show heterosexual couples that are embracing each other, kissing each other or holding hands. As these couples all distinctly conform to either male physical characteristics or female physical characteristics, these representations clearly depict heterosexuality as the sexually oriented desire. In 2017, Thorfinnsdottir & Jensen hypothesized that “...in contrast to heteronormative intimacy, non-heteronormative intimacy, desire and/or practices are absent in children’s television because they are seen as too explicitly sexual.” (p.400). This seems to be reflected in Klokhuis as well, as the very few instances of verbal references to sexual orientation all refer to heterosexual desire, confirming the assumption that queer sexuality tends to be seen as inappropriate for children.

SKETCHES

In comparison to the instances of implicit and explicit sexuality in the documentary pieces, the sketches show a wider range of intimacy and affection. There were 156 instances of either implicit sexuality, explicit sexuality or a verbal reference to sexual orientation. However, only one of those instances depicted intimacy between a queer couple. From these 156 instances, 62% were depictions of implicit sexuality, representing the possibility of intimacy or representing a romantic interest. For example, the following conversation took place between a man and a woman who were having dinner in a restaurant:

Merel: What a delicious piece of meat, Huib!

Huib: Almost as delicious as you, Merel.

Another segment in episode 229 shows the following conversation between a man and a woman in 1923, right before the man leaves for duty:

Man: Sweetheart, I have bad news.

Woman: Please don't tell me that...

Man: Yes. The enemy comes closer. I will have to fight, my dearest.

Woman: No, please stay with me!

Man: I cannot. Duty calls. [Man and woman embrace each other]

Man: I love you.

Woman: I love you too, my love. [Woman cries] Are you sure?

Man: Yes, I have to defend my capital. But as soon as my duty is done, I will come back to you. I promise.

Woman: I will wait for you, even if it takes years. [Man and woman kiss]

Additionally, Rodney and Wesley often fall in love with new girls. In this specific segment, they are in love with a new girl that moved into an apartment in their street.:

Wesley: A beautiful French girl moved into a house in our street.

Rodney: Yes, a 'mademoiselle' with beautiful earlobes.

Wesley: Her name is Marie-Antoinette, and this is where she lives. [Points]

Rodney: She works as an au-pair, so a babysitter who also stays during the night.

Wesley: And we are a 'petit peu' in love with the 'au-pair' with her nice 'derrière'.

Both: Amour!

Wesley: And what did we learn at school? French girls love painters.

Rodney: When a French girl sees a painter, she immediately falls in love with him.

Wesley: Picasso was a painter in Paris, and every 'mademoiselle' that he painted, fell completely in love with him.

Rodney: So, we were thinking and we are going to make a portrait of Marie-Antoinette!

These conversations exemplify how heterosexual desire is expressed in different settings throughout different sketches. Additionally, the frequency of these representations and conversations throughout the sketches emphasizes the normalization of heterosexual implicit sexuality. As Butler (1999 [1990])'s explained: "The heterosexualization of desire requires and

institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’, where these are understood as expressive attributes of ‘male’ and ‘female’ (p.24). These examples all include distinct representations of men and women, with expressive attributes that clearly align femininity with women and masculinity with men, and therefore, depict a clear portrayal of heterosexual desire. In this way, these representations contribute to the normative assumptions that there are only two genders, that gender reflects biological sex, and that only sexual attraction between these two ‘opposite’ bodies is desirable (Rubin, 1975; Kitzinger, 2005; Heisterkamp, 2016).

Additionally, representations of implicit sexuality can also be used to explore the concept of masculinity. Many of the sketches show a dating-setting, which can be shown as which is why 35% of the instances of implicit sexuality depict ‘*heterosexual dating*’. Another frequent code (16%) is ‘*heterosexual flirting*’. The following conversation is from episode 113, when a group of guys use their watch to flirt with girls:

Man 1: Check this! I have a new watch. It shows the time in four different cities. It's the newest model.

Man 2: Wow! Cool. Look at my new watch [pointing at his new golden watch], look how nicely it shines.

Man 1 & 3: Wauw!

Man 1: Hey, what does your watch look like?

Man 4: I don't have a watch.

Man 3: Bro, you don't have a watch? When is your birthday, we'll buy you a toy-watch. [Laughing]

[Man 4 walks away to a group of girls]

Man 1: What is he going to do?

Man 4: Hey girls, do you maybe know what time it is?

Girl: Almost 3.30 PM.

Man 4: Oh thanks, wow you have a nice watch [Winks to the girl].

Girl: Thank you. [Giggles]

Man: Can I look at it? [While taking her hand]

Girl 1: Yes of course. [Holds his hand]

[They go and stand very close together and look like they are in love.]

This last scene reflects the hierarchy of masculinities (Connell, 1995). When the two guys show off their new watches, they gain popularity in their friend group and the others think they are cool. However, when the other man says that he does not have a new watch, they ridicule and belittle him. He then reaffirms his masculinity by successfully flirting with the girls. Shortly after, the other guys follow his example and hide their watches to be able to flirt with girls too. This depicts how heterosexual desire is one of the key features of hegemonic masculinity as successful heterosexual desire can improve a man's position in the hierarchy of masculinities.

However, queer intimacy seems to have no place in the sketches of Klokhuis. As I mentioned in the last chapter, there is one episode of ‘Burt and Danny’ in which they go on a date together to celebrate their 12-year anniversary:

Danny: You’re so sweet for taking me out to dinner today because we have been together for 12 years and 3 weeks.

Burt: For that long? [Looks sarcastically into the camera]

Danny: And we’re eating mussels!

After this short conversation, they continue by explaining how you cook mussels and how you can eat them. It can be concluded that the first sentence of this conversation is the only representation of queer implicit sexuality as Danny addresses his relationship with Burt. Additionally, they do not show any physical affection towards each other or show acts of intimacy. It is also notable that, even within this one conversation, Burt does not reciprocate this affection and responds rather sarcastically. It can be concluded that Klokhuis fails to seriously acknowledge and normalize queer representation.

Furthermore, 21% of the representations depicted explicit sexuality, which is shown through physical affection or acts of intimacy indicating a sexual desire. Most of these representations either display ‘heterosexual embracing’ (41%) or ‘heterosexual kissing’ (37,5%). For example, episode 26 shows a couple walking through the park and embracing each other, episode 139 depicts Bert and Joke while hugging each other before the hobby quiz starts, and episode 218 represents a heterosexual couple kissing on their first date. Additionally, in episode 29, the two parents of the ‘space family’ kiss each other on the lips and in episodes 137, 167, 169, 182 and 214, the Viking-sketches all end with the parents giving each other a kiss. A more explicit example of heterosexual desire can be seen in episode 144, when a woman starts wearing blue contact lenses to look similar to the blue-eyed black lemur, as she notices that her husband is attracted to their blue eyes. This turns out to be successful as the man immediately wants to make out with his wife after seeing her eyes:

Man: Babe, did you see my car keys?

[Woman turns around while wearing blue contact lenses]

Woman: Did you say something?

[Man stares into her eyes, walks up to her and starts kissing her on the counter]

The remaining 17% include verbal references to sexual orientation, which remain completely heterosexual. These verbal references that indicate a heterosexual orientation are often mentioned in normal conversations, for example, when Art and Fjodor talk about their school time in episode 90, they both admit to wanting to kiss ‘Jantien’ from the eighth grade. In

episode 194, Said and Jay have a conversation about how to flirt with girls and Timo from 'The Office' mentions that he has a new girlfriend in episode 251. All these examples reveal how heterosexuality is normalized in many different conversations, in contrast to queer sexuality, which is never discussed or represented.

Finally, the sketches depict the seemingly intrinsic connection between hegemonic masculinity and expressions of homophobia. As I also mentioned in chapter 4, there are several instances which can be interpreted as an expression of homophobia. As Connell (1995) argues, hegemonic masculinity can be shown through the embodiment of heterosexuality, and following Morin and Garfinkle (1978), homophobia is also being attributed and associated with the conventional masculine role. This is reflected in two episodes of Klokhuis, when in the sketches 'Art and Fjodor' and 'The Office', two male characters kiss each other on the lips accidentally and immediately scream out how disgusting it is for them to kiss, which directly dismisses queer sexuality and classifies it as inappropriate. Additionally, another homophobic reference is made in episode 139, when Joke talks about Leonardo da Vinci and mentions how he is a 'homo universalis', which means a universal man. However, as she mentions the word 'homo', Bert responds and says: "Please Joke, go wash your mouth.". This reflects the undesirability of homosexuality and can be interpreted as a clear expression of homophobia.

CONCLUSION

Implicit and explicit sexuality, in the form of physical intimacy or affection, are an important aspect of the representation of gender and sexuality. However, it can be concluded that there is definitely not an equal sexual depiction of queer characters on Klokhuis. Heterosexual desire is represented by adhering to heteronormative understandings of gender and sexuality, being displayed frequently throughout the episodes. It seems to be considered appropriate for characters to show their sexual desire towards each other, as long as they are directed towards the opposite sex (Thorfinnsdottir & Jensen, 2017). The only queer representation lacks physical affection and does not show any display of intimacy. This reflects the heteronormative norm that renders heterosexual relationships as normative and appropriate in comparison to queer relationships and sexuality.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

“The dream I find most compelling is one of androgynous and gender-less society, in which one’s sexual autonomy is irrelevant to who one is, what one does, and with whom one makes love.”

– Rubin, 1975, p.204

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

This research examined 262 episodes of *Klokhuis* to study the representation of gender and sexuality on Dutch children's television. This was done by focusing on three different dimensions related to heteronormativity: gender performances, family constructions and implicit and explicit sexuality. As a result, the previously formulated research question: *How are gender and sexuality, and the relationship between the two, represented on the Dutch children's television show Klokhuis?* can be answered by concluding that the representation of gender and sexuality remains predominantly heteronormative. The main findings indicate the dominance of male characters on *Klokhuis*, the gendered representation of occupational careers, the majority of stereotypical characteristics for both male and female characters with no representations of gender non-conforming characters. The normative notion of the family is reinforced through both the documentary pieces and the sketches, as most families depart from the gender-conforming and heterosexual standard of the nuclear family. There are no depictions of queer parents and generally, queer representation is kept to a minimum. In addition, the conclusion that *Klokhuis* fails to normalize queer sexuality can be supported by the complete absence of queer physical affection and intimacy, especially compared to their heterosexual counterparts, whom are frequently depicted in intimate situations. Although all these results point towards a heteronormative representation of gender and sexuality, we can also conclude that, regarding gender performances, *Klokhuis* shows counter-stereotypical male characters that challenge hegemonic masculinity, as well as some depictions of non-heteronormative gender performances by female characters. These representations give insight into how constructive and positive gender representations can be portrayed within the realms of children's television.

Accordingly, it is important to recall why these findings regarding the representation of gender and sexuality on children's television matter so much. Many scholars have studied the impact of stereotypical and counter-stereotypical content on children's television, concluding that exposure to stereotypical content regarding gender and sexuality cultivates a differential worldview, with serious implications for children's wellbeing and potential for healthy development (Lemish & Götz, 2017). In more detail, stereotypical gender portrayals have been found to be correlated with preferences for gender-appropriate media content, toys, games and activities, have led to traditional perceptions of gender roles, occupations and personality traits, and have shaped attitudes towards expectations and aspirations for future trajectories of life

(Lemish & Götz, 2017). Consequently, this is associated with dating violence and sexual violence, boy's having problems with anger and acting out and body-image concerns and mental health disorders among girls (Common Sense Media, p.11). Additionally, the normalization of heterosexual desire on children's television offers a limited array of aspirations and possibilities for a happy and fulfilling life (Lemish & Götz, 2017). Therefore, it is important to stimulate positive gender representations and encourage television makers to produce a broader and more inclusive perspective of gender and sexuality to offer a promising horizon to children.

As Lemish & Götz (2017) suggest in their book, recommendations to children's television shows can include to present a variety of counter-stereotypical characters, as well as representations that challenge the binary understanding of gender, for example by introducing transgender, gender non-conforming and generally more diverse queer characters. As the results of this study show, the little representation of queer characters on Klokhuis remained very stereotypical. Burt and Danny were depicted as effeminate homosexual men, and were shown with exaggerating feminine gestures, having high-pitched voices and were characterized by their 'love' for fashion shows. Additionally, there were no indicators of successful careers for Burt and Danny, and no interaction took place between heterosexual and queer characters, as the queer storylines were limited and kept in isolation from social situations.

Lastly, it is important to emphasize that the representation of gender and sexuality on Klokhuis is produced through the hegemonic discourse of gender and sexuality in the Netherlands. As I mentioned in the introduction, many recent studies show a departure of the tolerant identity in Dutch society. Therefore, it is even more important to look at how our identities are formed through mainstream media, and which representation of gender and sexuality is being consumed by our children, in order to work towards a society where gender fluidity, queer sexuality and non-heteronormative families are normalized and accepted.

LIMITATIONS

An important first limitation of this study is a disregard towards the inclusion of bisexuality and asexuality. Studies that examine heteronormativity often fall into the binary understanding of sexuality, with heterosexuality and homosexuality as the two opposing options. I have tried

to combat this binary understanding by referring to queer sexuality instead of non-heterosexuality or homosexuality as I believe that ‘queer’ includes a broad variety of sexual identities. However, the findings of this research are solely based on visual observations, including interpretations of what I see and hear. This means that I was not able to examine how characters would identify their gender or sexuality or distinguish between different sexual identities. To provide a clear example of this limitation, the assumption that a depiction of a date between a man and a woman represents heterosexual desire is a normative interpretation of the setting. Therefore, many assumptions remain interpretations based on physical appearance, gender-role behavior, language and context.

A second limitation follows from this first limitation and involves my own discontent with certain analytical measures. To conduct quantitative analysis towards the heteronormativity of Klokhuis, I had to observe and count the genders of the characters, which made me assume a person’s gender identity on the basis of their gender expression. As a result, not only were transgender identities disregarded, also possible wrong assumptions were made from visual observations. However, producers of children’s television often mention that in order to make stories understandable for children, visual aspects are made accessible and easy to understand. Therefore, I believe that many of the assumptions that I made as a researcher about the gender and sexual identities of the characters were still true assumptions reflecting the heteronormative nature of their representations.

Finally, I can conclude that the variety of the representation of gender and sexuality may be broader than is included in this analysis, but a more complete analysis requires more in-depth understanding of the characters, possibly by interviewing the producers of Klokhuis on their perspectives on the gender and sexual identities of the characters.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Further research in this field should continue to examine and challenge heteronormative assumptions in the mainstream media. There are possibilities for in-depth analysis that were beyond the scope of this study, for example, conducting interviews with children and young viewers in the Netherlands to explore the impact of stereotypical and counter-stereotypical content on Dutch television. Additionally, this specific research can be built upon by

conducting qualitative research at the production site of Klokhuis to examine their choices and considerations regarding the representation of gender and sexuality on set.

With the increasing amounts that children spend consuming media, a richer, more diverse and non-heteronormative representation of gender and sexuality can have a significant positive impact on the gender role-development of children. As a result, by changing children's normative attitudes, political, socio-economical and juridical changes can take place that will contribute to more gender equality and acceptance. In the words of Rubin (1975), we continue to "dream of the elimination of obligatory sexualities and sex roles. The dream I find most compelling is one of androgynous and gender-less (though not sexless) society, in which one's sexual autonomy is irrelevant to who one is, what one does, and with whom one makes love." (p.204).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: OVERVIEW OF KLOKHUIS EPISODES IN 2019

1. *Valkenier* – January 1, 2019
2. *Estée maakt* – January 2, 2019
3. *De Dom van Utrecht* – January 3, 2019
4. *Formule 2* – January 4, 2019
5. *Het kantoor 232* – January 7, 2019
6. *Muntgeld* – January 8, 2019
7. *Schilderijrestauratie* – January 9, 2019
8. *Humanoids* – January 10, 2019
9. *Grimeur* – January 11, 2019
10. *Het kantoor 233* – January 14, 2019
11. *Gameverslaving* – January 15, 2019
12. *Huisarts* – January 16, 2019
13. *Tunnelboor* – January 17, 2019
14. *Jostiband* – January 18, 2019
15. *Het kantoor 234* – January 21, 2019
16. *Pianist* – January 22, 2019
17. *Luchthaven* – January 23, 2019
18. *Benzine* – January 24, 2019
19. *Paardenrusthuis* – January 25, 2019
20. *Het kantoor 235* – January 28, 2019
21. *Rembrandt* – January 29, 2019
22. *Jeugdjournaal* – January 30, 2019
23. *Kaas* – January 31, 2019
24. *Transporthelikopter* – February 1, 2019
25. *Het kantoor 236* – February 4, 2019
26. *Lambert maakt* – February 5, 2019
27. *Marten en Oopjen* – February 6, 2019
28. *Wifi* – February 7, 2019
29. *Droneracen* – February 8, 2019
30. *Het kantoor 237* – February 11, 2019
31. *Installateur* – February 12, 2019
32. *Onderzeeboot* – February 13, 2019
33. *Studio Drift* – February 14, 2019
34. *Rugby* – February 15, 2019
35. *Het kantoor 238* – February 18, 2019
36. *Spelen* – February 19, 2019
37. *Marker Wadden: Hoe maak je een eiland* – February 20, 2019
38. *Bionische mens* – February 21, 2019
39. *Indoor skydiven* – February 22, 2019
40. *Het kantoor 239* – February 25, 2019
41. *Reclame* – February 26, 2019
42. *Architect* – February 27, 2019
43. *Augmented reality 2* – February 28, 2019

44. *Donordier* – March 1, 2019
45. *Het kantoor 240* – March 4, 2019
46. *Harry maakt* – March 4, 2019
47. *Waterverkeer* – March 6, 2019
48. *Kernramp Fukushima* – March 7, 2019
49. *Het Klokhuis onderneemt: Bedrijf starten* – March 8, 2019
50. *Het kantoor 225* – March 11, 2019
51. *Slachtofferacteur* – March 12, 2019
52. *Autofabriek* – March 13, 2019
53. *Lichter vliegtuig* – March 14, 2019
54. *Het Klokhuis onderneemt: Van idee tot plan* – March 15, 2019
55. *Het kantoor 224* – March 18, 2019
56. *Zeilmakerij* – March 19, 2019
57. *Lichaamstemperatuur* – March 20, 2019
58. *Kijken in het lichaam* – March 21, 2019
59. *Het Klokhuis onderneemt: Productontwikkeling* – March 22, 2019
60. *Het kantoor 192* – March 25, 2019
61. *Lifeguard* – March 26, 2019
62. *EOD* – March 27, 2019
63. *Belastingen* – March 28, 2019
64. *Het Klokhuis onderneemt: Pitchen* – March 29, 2019
65. *Het kantoor 193* – April 1, 2019
66. *Markerwadden: Nieuwe natuur* – April 2, 2019
67. *Sem maakt* – April 3, 2019
68. *Dynamo* – April 4, 2019
69. *Het Klokhuis onderneemt: Geld* – April 5, 2019
70. *Rembrandt* – April 6, 2019
71. *Het kantoor 196* – April 8, 2019
72. *De Wadden* – April 9, 2019
73. *Escape room* – April 10, 2019
74. *Zuivelfabriek* – April 11, 2019
75. *Het Klokhuis onderneemt: Marketing* – April 12, 2019
76. *Het kantoor 197* – April 15, 2019
77. *Nationaal Park Drentsche Aa* – April 16, 2019
78. *Medisch illustrator* – April 17, 2019
79. *Flyboarden* – April 18, 2019
80. *Het Klokhuis onderneemt: Verkopen* – April 19, 2019
81. *Het kantoor 194* – April 22, 2019
82. *Nationaal Park De Biesbosch* – April 23, 2019
83. *Hoogtevrees* – April 24, 2019
84. *Lasershow* – April 25, 2019
85. *Het Klokhuis onderneemt: Koningsdag* – April 26, 2019
86. *Het kantoor 198* – April 29, 2019
87. *Nationaal Park Veluwezoom* – April 20, 2019
88. *Letterkunst* – May 1, 2019
89. *Nederland bevrijd en bezet* – May 2, 2019
90. *Het Klokhuis onderneemt: Sociaal ondernemen* – May 3, 2019
91. *Het kantoor 200* – May 6, 2019
92. *Nationaal Park Nieuw Land* – May 7, 2019
93. *Fietsfabriek* – May 8, 2019

94. *Geluid* – May 9, 2019
95. *Leeuwenopvang* – May 10, 2019
96. *Het kantoor 204* – May 13, 2019
97. *Nationaal Park Weerribben: Wieben* – May 14, 2019
98. *Worstelen* – May 15, 2019
99. *Energie uit planten* – May 16, 2019
100. *Zuid-Afrika: Taal* – May 17, 2019
101. *Het kantoor 202* – May 20, 2019
102. *Nationaal Park Oosterschelde* – May 21, 2019
103. *Moedervlekken* – May 22, 2019
104. *Zuid-Afrika: Apartheid* – May 23, 2019
105. *Zelfrijdende auto* – May 24, 2019
106. *Het kantoor 203* – May 27, 2019
107. *Slimme bloemen* – May 28, 2019
108. *Treinonderhoud* – May 29, 2019
109. *Zuid-Afrika: Slavernij* – May 30, 2019
110. *Parachutespringen* – May 31, 2019
111. *Het kantoor 205* – June 3, 2019
112. *Annegien maakt* – June 4, 2019
113. *Horloge* – June 5, 2019
114. *Zuid-Afrika: Zeesafari* – June 6, 2019
115. *Survivaltraining* – June 7, 2019
116. *Het kantoor 2016* – June 10, 2019
117. *Zuiderzeeleven* – June 11, 2019
118. *Bloemenveiling* – June 12, 2019
119. *Zuid-Afrika: Wilde dieren* – June 13, 2019
120. *Chips* – June 14, 2019
121. *Het kantoor 207* – June 17, 2019
122. *Crisis oefening overstroming* – June 18, 2019
123. *Papier* – June 19, 2019
124. *Zuid-Afrika: Mandela* – June 20, 2019
125. *Magnetronmaaltijden* – June 21, 2019
126. *Het kantoor 208* – June 24, 2019
127. *Zeeaquarium verzorger* – June 25, 2019
128. *Daklozenkrant* – June 26, 2019
129. *Kleur* – June 27, 2019
130. *Vrachtwagenchauffeur* – June 28, 2019
131. *Het kantoor 209* – July 1, 2019
132. *Ondervoeding* – July 2, 2019
133. *Nieuwe haven* – July 3, 2019
134. *Kunst in de omgeving* – July 4, 2019
135. *Danser* – July 5, 2019
136. *Het kantoor 210* – July 8, 2019
137. *Water* – July 9, 2019
138. *Haventerminal* – July 10, 2019
139. *Leonardo da Vinci* – July 11, 2019
140. *T.rex* – July 12, 2019
141. *Het kantoor 211* – July 15, 2019
142. *Vierdaagse Nijmegen* – July 16, 2019
143. *Rioolwaterzuivering* – July 17, 2019

144. *Blauwoogmaki* – July 18, 2019
145. *Maanmissie* – July 19, 2019
146. *Het kantoor 212* – July 22, 2019
147. *Kaarsen* – July 23, 2019
148. *Politiewapens* – July 24, 2019
149. *3D Animatiefilm* – July 25, 2019
150. *Textieldesign* – July 26, 2019
151. *Het kantoor 213* – July 29, 2019
152. *Lennart en Lars maken* – July 30, 2019
153. *Veganisme* – July 31, 2019
154. *Roofvogelonderzoek* – August 1, 2019
155. *Youtuber* – August 2, 2019
156. *Het kantoor 183* – August 5, 2019
157. *Janneke Schotveld* – August 6, 2019
158. *Schepijs* – August 7, 2019
159. *Schimmels* – August 8, 2019
160. *Natuurfilm: Techniek* – August 9, 2019
161. *Het kantoor 185* – August 12, 2019
162. *Gezonde darmen* – August 13, 2019
163. *Spruitjes* – August 14, 2019
164. *Maria maakt* – August 15, 2019
165. *Nijlpaard* – August 16, 2019
166. *Het kantoor 184* – August 19, 2019
167. *Meisje van Yde* – August 20, 2019
168. *Viool* – August 21, 2019
169. *Drop* – August 22, 2019
170. *Slimme kleding* – August 23, 2019
171. *Het kantoor 186* – August 26, 2019
172. *Cartoonist* – August 27, 2019
173. *Smaak* – August 28, 2019
174. *Verf* – August 29, 2019
175. *Waterskien* – August 30, 2019
176. *Het kantoor 187* – September 2, 2019
177. *Kari maakt* – September 3, 2019
178. *Scheiden: Uit elkaar* – September 4, 2019
179. *Werelderfgoed: Rietveld – Schröderhuis* – September 5, 2019
180. *Sauzen* – September 6, 2019
181. *Het kantoor 188* – September 9, 2019
182. *Zwaartekrachtsgolven* – September 10, 2019
183. *Scheiden: Vechtscheiding* – September 11, 2019
184. *Werelderfgoed: Van Nellefabriek* – September 12, 2019
185. *Cobra* – September 13, 2019
186. *Het kantoor 189* – September 16, 2019
187. *Stoet Prinsjesdag* – September 17, 2019
188. *Scheiden: De Rechtbank* – September 18, 2019
189. *Werelderfgoed: Willemstad op Curaçao* – September 19, 2019
190. *IJsselmeer* – September 20, 2019
191. *Het kantoor 190* – September 23, 2019
192. *Appels* – September 24, 2019
193. *Scheiden: Hulp* – September 25, 2019

194. *Klokhuiswerelderfgoed: De Oosterscheldekering* – September 26, 2019
195. *Castingbureau* – September 27, 2019
196. *Het kantoor 191* – September 30, 2019
197. *Anna Woltz* – October 1, 2019
198. *Markerwadden: Nieuwe eilanden* – October 2, 2019
199. *Werelderfgoed: Kinderdijk* – October 3, 2019
200. *Dierenziekenhuis* – October 4, 2019
201. *Het kantoor 214* – October 7, 2019
202. *Prinses Maxima Centrum* – October 8, 2019
203. *Lezen* – October 9, 2019
204. *Werelderfgoed: Waddenzee* – October 10, 2019
205. *Rookverslaving* – October 11, 2019
206. *Het kantoor 163* – October 14, 2019
207. *Akkerbouw* – October 15, 2019
208. *Wolven in Nederland* – October 16, 2019
209. *Werelderfgoed: Schokland* – October 17, 2019
210. *Para-ijshockey* – October 18, 2019
211. *Het kantoor 171* – October 21, 2019
212. *Stotteren* – October 22, 2019
213. *Kasteel* – October 23, 2019
214. *Werelderfgoed: Beemster* – October 24, 2019
215. *Street-art* – October 25, 2019
216. *Het kantoor 241* – October 28, 2019
217. *Mummies* – October 29, 2019
218. *Wolken* – October 31, 2019
219. *Werelderfgoed: Grachtengordel* – October 31, 2019
220. *Stuntskaten* – November 1, 2019
221. *Het kantoor 243* – November 4, 2019
222. *Games maken* – November 5, 2019
223. *Rolstoelskills* – November 6, 2019
224. *Werelderfgoed: Woudagemaal* – November 7, 2019
225. *Digitale voetafdruk* – November 8, 2019
226. *Het kantoor 242* – November 11, 2019
227. *Scheelzien* – November 12, 2019
228. *Schoonspringen* – November 13, 2019
229. *Werelderfgoed: Stelling van Amsterdam* – November 14, 2019
230. *Politiehond* – November 15, 2019
231. *Het kantoor 244* – November 18, 2019
232. *Cosplay* – November 19, 2019
233. *Mensenrechten* – November 20, 2019
234. *Rubber van paardenbloemen* – November 21, 2019
235. *E-sports* – November 22, 2019
236. *Het kantoor 245* – November 25, 2019
237. *Huilen* – November 26, 2019
238. *Rolf maakt* – November 27, 2019
239. *Gebaren* – November 28, 2019
240. *Okapi* – November 29, 2019
241. *Het kantoor 246* – December 2, 2019
242. *Maxim maakt* – December 3, 2019
243. *Blindedarm* – December 4, 2019

244. *Joep maakt* – December 5, 2019
245. *Skelet* – December 6, 2019
246. *Het kantoor 247* – December 9, 2019
247. *Mini-organen* – December 10, 2019
248. *Maanmissie* – December 11, 2019
249. *Stadsbeiaardier* – December 12, 2019
250. *Darten* – December 13, 2019
251. *Het kantoor 248* – December 16, 2019
252. *Slapen* – December 17, 2019
253. *Zeepmakerij* – December 18, 2019
254. *Diamant* – December 19, 2019
255. *Italiaans eten* – December 20, 2019
256. *Het kantoor 249* – December 23, 2019
257. *Kernenergie* – December 24, 2019
258. *Kytopia* – December 25, 2019
259. *Standaard maten* – December 26, 2019
260. *Smartphone* – December 27, 2019
261. *Het kantoor 250* – December 30, 2019
262. *Vuurwerk* – December 31, 2019

APPENDIX 2: CODEBOOK

I had two separate codebooks. One for coding the occupations in the documentary pieces, and one for all other codes regarding the three different dimensions.

Who is being coded?

- All human persons/characters that speak at least 3 words in a row, this does not include singing. However, this does include sign language.
- The person has to be visible. This means that the viewer must be able to see their face while this person is speaking.
- Every person is only coded once in an episode. This means that if a person or character reappears multiple times during one episode, this counts as one.

Codebook 1: Expertise in documentary pieces.

1st code	2nd code	Meaning
Gender	M	Man
	W	Woman
	X	Other
Function	P	Presenter
	NS	News source (Continue at 3)
	SP	Subject of portrait: episode is about this person.
	O	Other
Expertise (only when coded N at 2)	NE	No expertise
	PAS_E	Passive expertise
	AE	Active expertise (Continue at 4)
	PE	Professional expertise (Continue at 4)
Topic (only when coded AE or PE at 3)	1	Economics (Finance, jobs, industry, construction, trade etc.)
	2	Social affairs, healthcare, wellbeing
	3	Nature and space
	4	Crime and security
	5	Defense and national security
	6	Culture
	7	Science and technology
	8	Media
	9	Politics
	10	News (accidents, disasters, sudden happenings)
	11	Human interest and lifestyle
	12	Sports
	13	Education

Codebook 2: Dimensions.

1st code	2nd code
Gender performances (GP)	Hegemonic masculinity (HM)
	Idealized femininity (IF)
	Male counter-stereotype (MCS)
	Female counter-stereotype (FCS)
Family construction (FC)	Heterosexual couple
	Heterosexual parents
	Single parent
	Queer couple
	Queer parents
Implicit sexuality (code H for Heterosexual and Q for queer)	Dating
	Romance
	Love
	Attraction
	Sweet talk
	Proposal/wedding
	Flirting
	Heartbreak
Explicit sexuality (code H for Heterosexual and Q for queer)	Embracing
	Kissing
	Verbal reference
	Holding hands
	Touching
	Sex
Sexual orientation reference	Heterosexuality
	Queer sexuality
	Other

APPENDIX 3: OVERVIEW FINDINGS QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Table 1: Characters on Klokhuis

Gender	Documentary pieces (x)	Sketches (x)
Man	353	1055
Woman	161	416
Other	0	0

Table 2: Function of characters on Klokhuis

Function	Man (x)	Woman (x)	Total
News sources	277	113	390
Presenter	121	141	262
Subject of portrait	14	23	37

Table 3: Topics of expertise in documentary pieces

Topics of expertise	Man (x)	Woman (x)	Total (x)
1: Economics (Finance, construction, trade)	60	20	80
2: Social affairs, healthcare, wellbeing	20	22	44
3: Nature and space	60	21	81
4: Crime and security	5	3	8
5: Defense and national security	12	2	14
6: Culture	39	16	55
7: Science and technology	48	12	60
8: Media	7	7	14
9: Politics	0	0	0
10: News (accidents, disasters)	2	0	2
11: Human interest and lifestyle	30	11	41
12: Sports	27	11	38
13: Education	5	2	7

Table 4: Frequency of codes and dimensions.

Dimension	Code	Frequency	
		Documentary pieces (x)	Sketches (x)
Gender performances (GP)	Hegemonic masculinity (HM)	6	36
	Idealized femininity (IF)	3	22
	Male counter-stereotype (MCS)	5	22
	Female counter-stereotype (FCS)	4	16
Family construction (FC)	Heterosexual couple	4	108
	Heterosexual parents	12	45
	Single parent	0	0
	Queer couple	0	9
	Queer parents	0	0
Implicit sexuality (code H for Heterosexual and Q for queer)	Dating	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 34 Q: 1
	Romance	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 14 Q: 1

	Love	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 3 Q: 0
	Attraction	H: 1 Q: 0	H: 10 Q: 0
	Sweet talk	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 15 Q: 0
	Proposal/wedding	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 0 Q: 0
	Flirting	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 14 Q: 0
	Heartbreak	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 1 Q: 0
Explicit sexuality (code H for Heterosexual and Q for queer)	Embracing	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 13 Q: 0
	Kissing	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 14 Q: 0
	Verbal reference	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 5 Q: 0
	Holding hands	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 1 Q: 0
	Touching	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 2 Q: 0
	Sex	H: 0 Q: 0	H: 1 Q: 0
Sexual orientation reference	Heterosexuality	4	27
	Queer sexuality	0	0
	Other	0	0
Homophobia		0	3

APPENDIX 4: SCREENSHOTS KLOKHUIS

Screenshot of episode 76: Documentary segment 'Why do dogs look like their owners'



Screenshot of episode 87: Sketch-template 'concerned parents'



Screenshot of episode 207: Sketch-template 'space family'.



Screenshot of episode 169: Sketch-template 'prehistoric family'.



Screenshot of episode 2: Sketch-template 'restaurant date'



Screenshot of episode 180: Sketch-template 'complaint desk'



Screenshot of episode 139: Sketch-template 'hobby quiz'



Screenshot of episode 144: Sketch-template 'Klokko'



Screenshot of episode 123: Sketch-template 'Burt and Danny'

