



INCLUSIE EN PARTICIPATIE VAN PERSONEN MET EEN BEPERKING IN VLAANDEREN:

DE REPRESENTATIE VAN MENSEN MET EEN BEPERKING IN DE VLAAMSE
MEDIA

2012-2016

STEUNPUNT GELIJKEKANSENBELEID - 3de GENERATIE

ONDERZOEKER

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Voorwoord

In voorliggend onderzoeksrapport wordt gerapporteerd over representatie personen met een beperking in de Vlaamse media, als onderdeel van Werkpakket Handicap 1 (WPD1) van het Steunpunt Gelijke Kansenbeleid. In deze studie werd een groot aantal Vlaamse geprinte media verzameld en geanalyseerd en zowel op kwantitatieve als kwalitatieve wijze gekeken naar wie in beeld komt en op welke manier mensen met een beperking worden geportretteerd in de media.

In de inleiding wordt het onderzoek gekaderd in een bredere maatschappelijke en wetenschappelijke context, worden de onderzoeksdoelen en –vragen geformuleerd en worden gehanteerde methoden besproken. Nadien volgt een samenvatting van de resultaten, die verder gedetailleerd besproken worden in de twee wetenschappelijke artikels (hoofdstuk 2 en 3).

Aan dit onderzoek is een (dubbel)doctoraatsonderzoek verbonden binnen de Vakgroep Orthopedagogiek van de Universiteit Gent en het Departement Sociologie van de Universiteit Antwerpen.

In Werkpakket Handicap 1 (WPD1) van het Steunpunt Gelijke Kansenbeleid zijn nog andere onderzoekslijnen verbonden die in andere rapporten worden besproken:

- het opstellen van indicatoren die de participatie van personen met een beperking in Vlaanderen opvolgen
- het verzamelen en analyseren van persoonslijke narratieven van personen met een beperking omtrent inclusie/exclusie
- het opvolgen van de politieke participatie van personen met een verstandelijke beperking in Vlaanderen

Vooraleer verder te lezen, vragen we u even stil te staan bij enkele aannames of vooronderstellingen die we vooraf formuleerden en centraal stellen in dit onderzoek, overeenkomstig het VN-verdrag inzake de Rechten van Personen met een Handicap en overeenkomstig het kader van Disability Studies:

1. Het onderzoek dient de rechten van personen met een beperking en hun menselijke waardigheid te ondersteunen en bevorderen.
2. Personen met een beperking zijn niet langer 'objecten' die zorg ontvangen, maar 'subjecten', actieve personen met eigen mogelijkheden en rechten die eigen beslissingen kunnen nemen.
3. Disability ontstaat als een interactie tussen de persoon en de omgeving. Drempels in de maatschappij kunnen participatie in de weg staan.
4. We willen respect tonen voor het anders zijn en personen met een beperking zien als volwaardige persoon.
5. We geloven dat volledige en effectieve participatie en inclusie belangrijk zijn om mensen te laten groeien en om de samenleving te verrijken.
6. Aan alle activiteiten -ook onderzoek- moeten personen met een beperking kunnen participeren (Nothing About Us, Without Us).

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1. INLEIDING EN SAMENVATTING

1.1 Context

Aansluitend bij het opvolgen van processen van inclusie en participatie via narratieven, indicatoren of concrete projecten, blijken de media een cruciale sleutelrol te vervullen in het ondersteunen van deze processen en op het algehele proces van attitude- en opinievorming over personen met een beperking (Auslander & Gold, 1999, Mutz & Soss, 1997). Een correcte representatie in de media kan met andere woorden aanschouwd worden als een uiterst belangrijke randvoorwaarde en contextfactor bij het realiseren van een inclusieve samenleving.

Media vormen vaak de belangrijkste bron van informatie over datgene wat er in de buitenwereld gebeurt, en dus ook over personen met een beperking. Deze rol van de media zorgt uiteraard voor een enorme verrijking, maar impliceert ook een zware verantwoordelijkheid voor deze media. Een incorrecte of eenzijdige representatie van die werkelijkheid kan er voor zorgen dat ook bij de bevolking een verkeerd beeld van de maatschappelijke verhoudingen ontstaat. Enerzijds brengen media feiten en informatie over naar de algemene bevolking. Anderzijds wordt dit medianieuws ook op een zekere manier gekaderd waarin ook bepaalde waarden en normen worden gereflecteerd en versterkt. Dit zorgt ervoor dat beeldvorming in de media een niet te onderschatten invloed uitoefent op de algemene opinievorming en attitudes (Auslander & Gold, 1999, Mutz & Soss, 1997). Sterker nog, ondanks het feit dat media studies duiden op een complexe relatie tussen beeldvorming en de het publiek, zijn er duidelijke correlaties te vinden tussen verslaggeving in de media en het belang dat publiek hecht aan gebeurtenissen, kwesties of personen. Hoe meer media-aandacht, hoe meer belang het publiek aan iets hecht (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McLeod, Becker & Byrnes, 1974). Daarenboven toont Siperstein (2003) aan dat de perceptie van het publiek op de capaciteiten en mogelijkheden van personen met een beperking een belangrijke invloed heeft op de manier waarop het publiek vindt dat deze personen een volwaardige plaats krijgen binnen de samenleving, onderwijs kunnen volgen en kunnen worden tewerkgesteld. De beeldvorming in de media draagt dus met andere woorden bij tot de manier waarop burgers denken over inclusie en participatie.

De afgelopen jaren werden al diverse onderzoeken verricht om bijvoorbeeld de representatie van vrouwen of etnisch culturele minderheden te verbeteren. Voor wat betreft de beeldvorming van personen met een beperking blijft het opvallend stil. Een uitzondering hierop vormt een rapport (Vissers & Hooghe, 2010) over de representatie van personen met een beperking in het televisienieuws. Uit dit rapport blijkt dat personen met een beperking zijn zo goed als afwezig zijn in de Vlaamse audiovisuele media. Bovendien blijkt dat personen met een beperking op een heel eenzijdige manier in beeld worden gebracht. In het merendeel van de nieuwsberichten staat de beperking telkens centraal in de berichtgeving en verschijnen personen met een beperking nauwelijks in andere meer diverse en maatschappelijk gewaardeerde rollen.

Gelet op de onderzoeksresultaten van dit rapport is het bevreemdend dat er tot dusverre weinig of geen aandacht werd besteed aan de representatie van personen met een beperking. Als de Vlaamse media de diversiteit van de Vlaamse samenleving adequaat willen weerspiegelen, ook op het vlak van personen met een beperking, is het dus duidelijk dat mensen met een beperking veel sterker aan bod zullen moeten komen in de media, alsook in meer diverse en maatschappelijk gewaardeerde rollen zullen moeten verschijnen.

Vanuit deze insteek voerden we zelf onderzoek uit naar de representatie van personen met een beperking in de Vlaamse print media (zie hoofdstuk 2). Er werd een kwantitatieve inhoudsanalyse uitgevoerd op de berichtgeving over personen met een beperking in zeven kranten en zestien magazines van de voorbije tien jaar (2003-2012). Dit resulteerde in meer dan 14.000 bronnen. Deze werden allen gecodeerd op een aantal kenmerken die ons meer kunnen vertellen over wie er precies in beeld komt (type beperking, gender, leeftijd), de evolutie van de berichtgeving doorheen de jaren en de soorten bronnen. Dit leverde interessante onderzoeksresultaten op en leerde ons dat de huidige berichtgeving sterk gebaseerd is op een aantal dominante onderliggende opvattingen die leven in onze samenleving over personen met een beperking.

Aansluitend hierbij voerden we onderzoek uit naar *hoe* personen met een beperking gerepresenteerd worden in deze Vlaamse print media (hoofdstuk 3). Naast de kwantitatieve inhoudsanalyse waarbij we keken naar de *frequentie* waarmee personen met een beperking

aan bod kwamen in de berichtgeving, voerden we een framinganalyse uit op een selectie van de bronnen. Dit geeft ons een meer betekenisvollere kijk op de manier waarop personen met een beperking gerepresenteerd worden. De representatie van personen met een beperking in de media gebeurt namelijk meestal aan de hand van negatieve stereotypen (Ellis, 2009). Negatieve attitudes en stereotypering van personen met een beperking kunnen een belangrijke barrière vormen voor deze personen om volwaardig deel te nemen aan het sociale en maatschappelijke leven. Een framinganalyse heeft tot doel om op basis van het systematisch bestuderen van teksten op zoek te gaan naar een aantal framebundels waarbij ingebouwde, onderliggende betekenislagen zichtbaar worden die samenhangen met allerlei culturele assumpties (Van Gorp, 2007). Op die manier bieden frames een geprefereerde interpretatie van de sociale werkelijkheid aan (Hall, 1980) en geeft het zicht op de bestaande beelden over personen met een beperking.

1.2 Onderzoeksvragen

Voor wat betreft deze onderzoekslijn komen we tot volgende twee centrale onderzoeksvragen:

- Hoe worden personen met een beperking gerepresenteerd in de Vlaamse print media van de voorbije 10 jaar (2003-2012)? (hoofdstuk 2)
- Welke frames en eventuele counterframes zijn hierbij te detecteren? (hoofdstuk 3)

1.3 Onderzoeksofzet en methodologie

1.3.1 Onderzoeksdata

Het verzamelde onderzoeksmateriaal voor de eerste studie omvat alle berichtgeving over het thema 'handicap' of over personen met een beperking in de print media van de voorbije tien jaar (2003-2012). Concreet werden zeven kranten (De Standaard, De Morgen, De Tijd, Gazet van Antwerpen, Belang van Limburg, Het Nieuwsblad, Het Laatste Nieuws) en zestien magazines (Knack, Humo, Libelle, Joepie, Story, Flair, Dag Allemaal, P-Magazine, Kerk en

Leven, Feeling, Goed Gevoel, Glam*It, Plus Magazine, Goedele / GDL, Klap, Kits) gescreend op artikels rond het thema.

Het materiaal uit de kranten werd via de online zoekmachine Gopress verzameld. Het andere materiaal uit de magazines moest op handmatige (en intensieve) wijze worden verzameld via de papieren versies van de magazines opgeslagen in het wettelijk depot van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek te Brussel. Dit alles resulteerde in meer dan 14.000 bronnen.

Voor wat betreft de tweede studie namen we een sample van de magazines van 1 jaar (2012) uit dit materiaal (n=184).

1.3.2 Onderzoeksmethode

Het materiaal werd in functie van het eerste onderzoek, de kwantitatieve inhoudsanalyse gecodeerd op een aantal variabelen: type beperking, leeftijd, gender, jaartal, bron. Hierdoor is het gemakkelijk gericht te zoeken in het materiaal, zoals de beeldvorming van personen met een verstandelijke beperking over de jaren heen, van vrouwen met een beperking, kinderen met een beperking, in zogenaamde 'kwaliteitspers', etc.

Betreffende het tweede onderzoek werd een framinganalyse uitgevoerd op een selectie van mediabronnen. Dit soort analyse geeft inzicht in de manier waarop personen met een beperking gerepresenteerd worden en daarbij horende onderliggende assumpties. Deze framinganalyse heeft tot doel om op basis van het systematisch bestuderen van teksten op zoek te gaan naar een aantal *frame packages* (framebundels), bestaande uit drie groepen elementen: het centrale frame, framing devices en reasoning devices. Hierbij worden ingebouwde, onderliggende betekenisragen zichtbaar die samenhangen met allerlei culturele assumpties (Van Gorp, 2007). Op die manier bieden frames een geprefereerde interpretatie van de sociale werkelijkheid aan (Hall, 1980) en geeft het zicht op de bestaande beelden over personen met een beperking.

Al het verzamelde materiaal werd gedetailleerd ontleed en gecodeerd: wat is het issue, welke oorzaken voor het probleem worden aangehaald, wat zijn mogelijke gevolgen, wat zijn voorgestelde oplossingen, wat is de morele evaluatie, welk vocabulaire en metaforen worden gehanteerd, wie is de framing sponsor, wie is de verteller, is de setting

inclusief/exclusief, wie is de initiator, wat is het culturele thema. Vervolgens werd door het ordenen van de codes gezocht naar terugkerende patronen in het databestand. Dit leverde uiteindelijk een reeks relevante frames op.

1.3.3 Co-operatief onderzoek

Ook in deze onderzoekslijn werd bewust gekozen voor co-operatief onderzoek, continue dialoog en actieve betrokkenheid van de mensen met een beperking. Bij de tweede studie werd iemand met een beperking als mede-onderzoeker ingeschakeld om materiaal te ontleden, te analyseren, frames te ontdekken en te rapporteren. Het onderzoek, de resultaten en discussie werd tussentijds ook meerdere keren voorgesteld aan een aantal personen met een beperking.

1.4 Resultaten

1.4.1 Studie 1: kwantitatieve inhoudsanalyse

In de eerste studie, waarbij we kijken naar *wie* werd gerepresenteerd in de Vlaamse media van de voorbije tien jaar, werden 14.529 artikels over tien jaar heen gevonden waar iets rond handicap of personen met een beperking terug te vinden was.

De resultaten leren ons dat we dat we de media kunnen interpreteren als een *Looking Glass Self* (Cooley, 1902), gevormd door assumpties in de maatschappij en als een weerspiegeling van onderliggende opvattingen en machtsrelaties. We zoomen hierbij verder in op de analyse van tijd, soort bron, leeftijd, gender en beperking.

Voor wat betreft de **evolutie** van de berichtgeving over tijd, is een redelijk continue onderstroom van berichtgeving te zien, met een percentage van ongeveer 9,5% (2004, 2005, 2006 & 2011) (voor meer details, zie onder). Dit wil echter niet zeggen dat het thema 'handicap' eerlijk of voldoende gerepresenteerd wordt in de media, dit nummer toont alleen het percentage van gevonden artikels over de jaren heen, op het totale aantal gevonden

artikels waar iets rond handicap of personen met een beperking aan bod kwam. De jaren 2003, 2007, 2009 & 2010 tellen het grootste aantal artikels over het thema, en kan worden verklaard door politieke events zoals het Europees Jaar van Personen met een Handicap, de Adoptie (EU) en ondertekening (B) van de UNCRPD, Europees Jaar voor Gelijke Kansen voor Iedereen, en Belgische ratificatie van de UNCRPD. Deze aantallen dalen ook weer snel, er is zelfs een sterke daling in het laatste jaar (2012) maar het is niet duidelijk of dit een trend is. Politieke events hebben met andere woorden een invloed, maar andere events zoals Special Olympics of Paralympics blijken geen invloed te hebben op de omvang van de berichtgeving (zie ook: Tynedal & Wolbring, 2013; Schantz & Gilbert, 2001).

Voor wat betreft het type **bron**, is te zien dat veel meer artikels worden gepubliceerd in de zogenaamde 'populaire pers', met bovenaan populaire kranten, gevolgd door lifestyle magazines en celebrity and gossip magazines. Opvallend is dat erg weinig artikels terug te vinden zijn in de zogenaamde 'kwaliteitskranten', wat wel verbazend is aangezien deze media wel poogt divers en politiek correct te zijn, te rapporteren over sociale uitsluitingsmechanismen en over diversiteit, maar voor wat betreft handicap is hier dus een erg sterke onderrepresentatie. Er zijn enkele mogelijke verklaringen voor de aanwezigheid van artikels in de zogenaamde 'populaire' pers. Als eerste kan het wijzen op het feit dat personen met een beperking zich helaas nog te vaak bevinden binnen het lager opgeleide lezerspubliek van dit medium, wat kan wijzen op de drempels die er nog steeds zijn op vlak van onderwijs voor personen met een beperking in Vlaanderen. Deze drempels binnen het onderwijs zijn gekend, zijn erg sterk binnen Vlaanderen en dragen we al heel lang mee. Als tweede kan het ook wijzen op het feit dat populaire media meer lokaal en persoonlijk nieuws brengen. Handicap wordt helaas nog te vaak en enkel en alleen gezien als een persoonlijke aangelegenheid, niet relevant voor het bredere sociale en politieke debat, dus ook meer opgepikt in populaire media. Ten derde kan het melodramatisch karakter van populaire media aan de basis liggen. Emoties worden gebruikt en uitgelokt in deze media, en personen met een beperking worden (helaas) en vaak gezien als perfect passend in dit frame (Hayes & Black, 2003).

Voor wat betreft de analyse van **leeftijd** is te zien dat er een grote nadruk ligt op de representatie van volwassenen met een beperking. In sommige gevallen blijven kinderen en

adolescenten met een beperking zelfs totaal uit beeld, zeker in kindermagazines en jeugdmagazines. Voor het jonge lezerspubliek van deze magazines blijven leeftijdsgenoten met een beperking met andere woorden onzichtbaar en niet-bestaand.

Dit resultaat weerspiegelt de Vlaamse realiteit dat kinderen met een zonder beperking weinig of geen collectieve activiteiten delen, wat dus ook zichtbaar wordt in de media.

Artikels over kinderen met een beperking handelden bovendien meestal over kinderen met een verstandelijke beperking, autisme, en gedrags- en leerproblemen- een totaal ander beeld dan bij dit volwassenen met een beperking die geportretteerd werden. Kinderen met een beperking bekleden met andere woorden een speciale status en worden gerelateerd aan andere types beperking dan volwassenen. De link tussen kinderen en onderwijs/leren is hier duidelijk. Deze specifieke 'types' van handicap zijn bovendien identiek aan de meest voorkomende 'types' uit het buitengewoon onderwijs in Vlaanderen, dewelke erg sterk is uitgebouwd in Vlaanderen (Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, 2014).. Dit categoriaal denken in onze samenleving weerspiegelt zich met andere woorden ook in de media. Voor wat betreft kinderen met autisme in de media, stellen andere onderzoekers dat dit een gekend gegeven is dat veel vaker kinderen met autisme worden geportretteerd dan volwassenen met autisme. Bovendien wordt 'het kind met autisme' vaak gezien als non-normatief, speciaal, wat het dus aantrekkelijk maakt voor media, een soort van sensatie.

Voor wat betreft gender is het opvallend dat in artikels over personen met een fysieke beperking veel vaker mannen in beeld worden gebracht, terwijl artikels over chronische ziektes veel vaker over vrouwen gaan. Dit kan in verband worden gebracht met onderliggende gender opvattingen en de publieke-private dichotomie, het klassieke kostwinnersmodel, dewelke stelt dat mannen zich vaak situeren binnen de publieke sfeer en de kostwinner zijn, en vrouwen zich voornamelijk binnen de private sfeer bevinden. Vrouwen en hun beperking worden vaker gerepresenteerd als individueel, iets privaat, minder zichtbaar. Mannen en fysieke beperking worden in media meer in beeld gebracht op een zichtbare manier, met uiterlijke kenmerken die publiek en zichtbaar zijn.

Betreffende de meest voorkomende **beperking**, zien we dan artikels over fysieke beperking meest voorkomen, gevolgd door verstandelijke beperking en chronische ziekte. Dit kan het gevolg zijn van het feit dat visualisatie belangrijk is binnen deze geprinte media, beelden

staan hier namelijk centraal en deze beperkingen zijn dan ook 'relatief gemakkelijk' in beeld te brengen (zie ook: Haller & Ralph, 2001; Saito & Ishiyama, 2010). Wat ook opvalt is dat artikels over personen met een fysieke beperking het meest voorkomen in tijdschriften waarin fysieke schoonheid centraal staat, terwijl artikels over gedragsproblemen het vaakst voorkomen in lifestyle magazines, waar onderwerpen als 'het goede leven/de goede moeder, de goede partner', kortom waar 'gedrag en lifestyle' centraal staat. Hier is dus een duidelijk link met de inhoud en het hoofdthema van de magazines, en de metafoer "materie-antimaterie" kan hier gebruikt worden om dit beschrijven: er wordt heel sterk afgebakend tussen de norm en wat afwijkt van de norm, tussen materie en antimaterie, als een soort van tegengestelden, waardoor grenzen tussen beide duidelijker worden en de norm wordt belicht en versterkt.

Wat tot slot opvalt is dat in het enige religieuze magazine dat werd meegenomen in dit onderzoek, artikels over personen met een visuele beperking sterk aanwezig waren. Dit zou kunnen verklaard worden door het feit dat de meeste Vlaamse organisaties of instituten voor personen met een visuele beperking zich in de katholieke zuil bevinden, en het feit dat visuele beperking een rijke iconografische connotatie heeft, zoals de blinde bedelaar en de ziener.

Als conclusie uit dit eerste onderzoek kan gesteld worden dat mediarepresentatie rond disability gebaseerd is op bredere ideologische opvattingen en processen gekenmerkt door uitsluiting en traditionele machtsrelaties. In sommige gevallen is er zelfs een totaal gebrek aan representatie. Dit ondanks het feit dat media een cruciale bron is van informatie over het thema handicap of personen met een beperking, en ondanks de duidelijke instructies vanuit de VN Conventie voor de Rechten van Personen met een Handicap voor wat betreft beeldvorming in de media. De berichtgeving rond personen met een beperking heeft niet het potentieel in zich om verandering te brengen in attitudes en percepties bij het publiek in lijn met de VN Conventie voor de Rechten van Personen met een Handicap. Handicap-als-deficit (Gabel, 2005) staat centraal, en representaties staan vaak tegenover een geïdealiseerde norm.

1.4.2 Studie 2: Framinganalyse

In de tweede studie kijken we naar de manier waarop personen met een beperking gerepresenteerd worden in de Vlaamse media, aan de hand van onderliggende frames en counter-frames. We ontdekten 9 dominante frames en 3 alternatieve counter-frames. In volgorde van dominantie worden ze hieronder geordend. Meer verduidelijking is te vinden in hoofdstuk 3.

Frames:

1. Lijden en angst voor aftakeling

Handicap staat synoniem voor aftakeling en lijden. Er is veel onzekerheid, maar personen met een beperking zijn eigenlijk bij voorbaat verloren. (“miserie alom”)

2. Een zware zorglast

Handicap treft vooral de naasten die een grote zorglast hebben en zich helemaal moeten opofferen. Personen met een beperking verliezen autonomie of stellen ongepast gedrag waardoor anderen het allemaal in hun plaats moeten doen. (“autistische kleinzoon bron van grote zorgen bij opa”)

3. Geloof in de wetenschap; variant: de maakbare mens

Handicap is een medische aangelegenheid en wordt gezien als een fout in de genen. Mensen met een beperking worden tot *patiënten* of *cases* die moeten worden onderzocht, behandeld en genezen. Het liefst van al moet men voorkomen dat er kinderen met een beperking geboren worden door verregaande diagnostiek en screening. (“afwijking, syndroom, gendefecten, behandeling, ...”)

4. De doorzetter; variant: de held

Het is de individuele en morele plicht van mensen met een beperking om niet op te geven en hun handicap te ‘overkomen’. Inzet en persoonlijke wilskracht staat in de kijker. Mensen met een beperking zijn tot bijzondere prestaties of heldendaden in staat. (“opgeven staat niet in haar woordenboek”, “vol strijd lust”, “ijzeren man”, “straks loopt hij zelfs de Antwerp Ten Miles”)

5. Het weerloze slachtoffer

Het onschuldige slachtoffer dat beschermd en weerbaarder moet worden als archetype. Mensen met een beperking zijn kwetsbaar en mogelijke slachtoffers en verdienen bescherming, maar moeten ook sterker in hun schoenen staan ("met die afwijking word ik de hele tijd gepest").

6. Het monster op de loer

Een handicap of ziekte slaat onverwacht toe en loert om iedere hoek. Een handicap neemt het succesvolle leven van mensen weg en boezemt angst in. ("het doek valt", 'dromen opgeven")

7. Liefdadigheid

Mensen met een beperking dienen bijgestaan te worden door anderen. Het is de morele plicht om hen te helpen vanuit een caritatieve gedachte. ("we steunen een goed doel")

8. Carpe Diem

Het leven is niet steeds waarop we gehoopt hadden, maar personen met een beperking kunnen ook van het leven genieten. Ze moeten leren om geluk en troost te vinden in de kleine alledaagse dingen. ("geluk is blij zijn met elke dag dat je leeft")

9. Lichaam-geest dualisme

Mensen met een beperking komen in een eigen wereld terecht en verkrijgen een andere persoonlijkheid. Lichaam en geest zijn twee aparte dingen. Handicap definieert de persoon helemaal. ("vroeger ne sjieke mijnheer, en nu niks meer", "leven als een plant", "geen baas in eigen hoofd")

Counter-frames:

1. Mensenrechten

Mensen met een beperking worden gezien als een groep met gelijke rechten. ("ons land moet dringend een tandje bijsteken").

2. Handicap biedt kansen

De samenleving kan bijleren van mensen met een beperking, de samenleving is blind voor hun mogelijkheden en expertise. ("zijn expertise betekent een meerwaarde", "boek met levensverhaal")

3. Interafhankelijkheid

De wederkerige en vriendschappelijke relatie tussen mensen met een zonder beperkingen staat centraal, waar sprake is van wederzijds begrip en voordeel ("Jeffrey werkt graag samen met Wouter", "ze smeden samen plannen")

Dit onevenwicht tussen frames enerzijds en counter-frames anderzijds bevestigt de eenzijdige en negatieve portrettering van personen met een beperking in de media (Ellis & Goggin, 2015). De focus ligt op lijden, zorgen, genezen en het overkomen van de handicap. De resultaten tonen aan dat de meeste beelden in de Vlaamse media berusten op frames als 'lijden en angst voor aftakeling', 'handicap als zware zorglast', 'geloof in de wetenschap', 'de doorzetter/de held'. Deze frames kunnen gekoppeld worden aan het medisch model van handicap, het sociaal pathologisch model, en het supercrip model (Clogston, 1990; Haller, 1998). In deze studie werden de oudere modellen van Clogston en Haller echter verder verfijnd of aangevuld.

Het is duidelijk dat de meest dominante frames die gehanteerd worden in de media geworteld zijn in een traditioneel dichotoom denken. Het publiek wordt gevoelig gemaakt voor een ongenueanceerde en binaire manier van waarnemen van personen met een beperking. Disability wordt beperkt tot twee extremen: enerzijds worden mensen met een beperking geportretteerd als mensen die benadeeld, zwak en afhankelijk zijn; anderzijds worden ze afgebeeld als helden, als personen met een uitzonderlijke moed die inspirerende prestaties neerzetten (zie 'inspiration porn', Young, 2012), waarbij hun beperking moet worden 'overkomen' door individuele inzet en wilskracht (Clogston, 1994; Harnett, 2000).

In deze twee extremen wordt disability voorgesteld als een individueel tekort, te genezen of te overwinnen. In deze frames wordt gefocust op wat er niet is, op wat ontbreekt. Op die manier worden de structurele en systematische oorzaken van disability verduisterd in media representatie. Bovendien worden mensen met een beperking geobjectiveerd in deze twee extremen. Zij worden niet voorgesteld als echte personen waar het publiek zich mee kan identificeren, maar als 'the other' die op een veilige afstand van het publiek staat.

Deze dominante mediaframes gaan geen vragen stellen bij overheersende ideologieën, maar gaan ze eerder bevestigen. Geportretteerde personen met een beperking worden namelijk gedwongen in normatieve en binaire uitersten en bekleden een 'minder dan menselijke' positie, terwijl media wel de kans krijgt om de smalle grenzen van het 'normale' en het 'menselijke' open te breken (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2014) en ruimte zou kunnen laten voor meer complexe opvattingen van disability met rijke assemblages van zowel frames als counter-frames.

2. EEN GEBALANCEERDE BEELDVORMING ROND DISABILITY? EEN INHOUDSANALYSE VAN DISABILITY IN DE VLAAMSE PRINT MEDIA

Gebaseerd op: Goethals, T., Mortelmans, D. & Van Hove, G. (in press). Toward a More Balanced Representation of Disability? A Content Analysis of Disability Coverage in the Flemish Print Media. *The Journal of Human Development, Disability and Social Change* (Thematic Issue: 'Social representations and Disability: shared perspectives on the meaning of a concept').

Abstract

Even though there is a complex relationship between media coverage and the public, the media has a powerful influence on the way 'disability' as a phenomenon is perceived and on the process of attitude formation. Hence, it is important to document the depiction of people with disabilities and the myths and stereotypes perpetuated by media portrayals of persons with disabilities.

This paper reports on a quantitative examination of the extent and nature of the coverage of people with disabilities in the print media in Flanders, the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. Seven newspapers and 16 magazines between January 2003 and December 2012 were content-analysed.

Key findings include a sorely limited coverage, or even total lack of representation, in certain media sources. The study also discovered interesting correlations between gender, age and type of magazine on the one hand, and the type of disability on the other. Analysis also revealed that print media focuses on certain disabilities. In addition, the results showed that, looking over the ten-year time span, some events have more influence than others on the evolution of the quantity of coverage.

The paper concludes with a discussion of these findings and their implications, from the perspective of disability studies and with reference to Cooley's concept of the looking glass self. It is argued that media representation on disability reflects certain broader ideologies and socio-political processes shaped by basic exclusionary social frames. Yet, the media do more than hold up a mirror to basic mindsets and frames. As the media functions as mechanisms for strengthening and entrenching the social order, they transmit hegemonic conceptions and play a significant role in the on-going construction of disability discourses.

2.1 Introduction

The mass media is a useful source of information about current and historical norms and values, public opinions and attitudes on disability. The content itself especially reflects dominant discourses about disability. This is not to say that media content is a mirror image of the realities of disability identities in the social world. The world we inhabit is a world of representation and constructions of disability have no essential, fixed or true meaning

against which coverage and distortion can be measured (Hall, 1997). In line with the intersectional framework, we believe that disability constitutes as sites of fluid construction and creativity rather than determination. Opposed to the great binary aggregate abled/disabled, reality is far more complex and the social world cannot be neatly divided into binary categories (Jacob, Köbsell, & Wollrad, 2010; Raab, 2007). Hence, the media do not just represent the reality that exists *out there*, nor do they simply reproduce or distribute knowledge, but they are active producers of knowledge and construct and constitute the very core of our social existence (Kunz & Fleras, 1998) and dominant discourses on disability.

Besides, the mass media play a major role not only in reflecting generally held public attitudes and perceptions on disability, but also in shaping them (Auslander & Gold, 1999; Mutz & Soss, 1997). There are, of course, a number of factors other than press coverage that can influence public opinion on a subject such as disability, ranging from personal experience to historical and political views. Media studies suggest a complex relationship between coverage and the public, but there are evident correlations between increased coverage and growing public priorities (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McLeod, Becker, & Byrnes, 1974). The media not only provide information but also help to create or reinforce ideas about disability and what it means to be human. As Auslander and Gold (1999) state, the media have an influential role in 'news gatekeeping'. Besides, "the amount of media coverage an issue receives is related to the importance placed on that issue by individuals in society, regardless of any measure of the issue's objective importance" (p. 421). Moreover, Siperstein (2003) points out that the public's perception of capabilities of people with a disability have a major influence on their ideas on education and work for people with a disability, and more generally, on the public's perceptions on inclusion and participation in society. Consequently, a correct media representation contributes to the ways in which people think about inclusion.

Taking into account this nuanced and complex view on disability, media and the public, and in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which gives explicit attention to the correct representation of people with a disability in the media, we want to introduce this first baseline measure study, as the first of a two part study.

This media study is conducted to establish a baseline of disability portrayals in Flemish print media through a quantitative content analysis of magazines and newspapers. During ten years (2003-2012), the portrayals of people with disabilities by seven Flemish newspapers and 16 Flemish magazines were systematically analysed, examining how the media represented people with disabilities. In the work presented here, this study seeks to obtain a baseline measure of disability, gender and age distribution across the different sources of current print media. Because media character portrayals and demographics of people with a disability may influence the public's perceptions of social reality (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994; Shrum, 1999), establishing sound baseline measures of media character demographics is a necessary step in conducting research on representation and perceived social reality. As we do not believe in the existence of a single representation, different print media were analysed, ranging from popular to quality press and from targeted to specific audiences to oriented on specific themes.

Despite the ratification of the UNCRPD in Belgium and the fact that 15% of the population are classified as having a disability (World Report on Disability, 2011), the inclusion and participation of people with a disability in Flanders is among the lowest in Europe (FRA, 2010; Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, 2014). As mentioned, a series of factors are assumed to play part in the process of inclusion, however, there is a lack of research into how people with a disability are culturally represented in the Flemish media. The existing content analytical work done on Flemish media has focussed on the representation of social minority groups other than people with disabilities, or solely on the depiction of people with a disability in the television news (Vissers & Hooghe, 2010). A clear underrepresentation and an emphasis on people with physical disabilities were two of the main findings of this last study. Although these studies are important steps in examining media content, there is still much left to discover, including a more basic study of representation. This study here represented was designed to fill this gap and seeks to examine a baseline measure of disability, gender and age distribution in the depiction of persons with disabilities in the print media

2.2 Methodology

This study examined articles on disabilities and people with disabilities published in seven newspapers and sixteen magazines in Flanders, Belgium, over a ten-year time span between 2003 and 2012. All of the issues for this period were surveyed, including each section and article. Data from the newspapers were gathered through Gopress, an electronic news archive that contains all the articles of Flemish newspapers. Because the other media chosen was not included in this online archive, we conducted a manual search in the magazines, collected from the Belgian legal deposit. Although there is a legal requirement that copies of publications need to be submitted to this repository, a small number of copies were missing. Articles were accepted into the study sample if they included a reference to disability in general, or to a specific disability or chronic illness which incurs disabilities. The selected articles could relate to a broad range of disabilities and conditions which lead to disability, from any cause and at all levels of severity. That reference could appear anywhere in the article: in the headline, text or accompanying image.

Articles were then examined as to the extent of coverage and by the way they related to the year of publication, the demographics and the type of medium (popular newspapers, lifestyle magazines, celebrity and gossip magazines, news and opinion magazines, age-oriented magazines, quality newspapers, other). The coded demographics included gender (men, women, mixed), age (child, adolescent, adult and mixed) and type of disability (non-categorical, acquired -, multiple -, auditory -, intellectual -, physical -, visual impairment, chronic health conditions, autism, behavioural problems, learning problems). Two coders were trained to code the data independently and compare and discuss discrepancies.

Since some periodicals were published daily, some weekly and some monthly or as a quarterly, all study results are weighted in such a way that the data are defined on the same scale. Where instead of each article contributing equally to the final result, articles from weekly and monthly magazines contribute more than articles from daily newspapers.

2.3 Results

The reading of the seven newspapers and 16 magazines of the period 2003-2012 yielded 14,529 articles containing some mention of disability.

With regard to the evolution of media coverage across time, Table 1 shows that a relatively continual stock of messages including disability can be distinguished in this ten-year time span. The years 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2011 illustrate this constant undercurrent, with a percentage of about 9.5%. This does not mean that disability is fairly represented in the media; this number only shows the percentage of found articles in those years over the total amount of articles containing mentions of disability in the period 2003-2012. The years 2007 (12.68%) and 2003 (12%) are characterised by the largest number of representations of disability, with a 3% increase compared to the undercurrent. This can be explained by the attention on the European Year of People with Disabilities in 2003, the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the United Nations at the end of the year 2006 and the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All in 2007. These augmentations fade out relatively quickly. The amount of articles in the years 2009 (10.91%) and 2010 (10.27%) also slightly increased, possibly influenced by the Belgian ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on July 2, 2009. Again, this can be considered as a short-term effect because we see a decrease in representation over the last years of the ten-year time span. In 2012, the representation declines strongly below the undercurrent (7.61%). Despite the influence of events on a political level, other events such as the Special Olympics or Paralympics do not seem to affect the amount of messages in a year.

Table 1. The weighted distribution of articles by the year.

Year	Percent (%)
2003	12.00
2004	9.52
2005	9.58
2006	9.75
2007	12.68
2008	8.34
2009	10.91
2010	10.27
2011	9.35
2012	7.61
Total	100.00

As shown in Table 2, far more articles about disability are published in the popular press, with popular newspapers (35.01%) the highest, followed by lifestyle magazines (27.27%), and celebrity and gossip magazines (15.95%). The popular press covers a much larger amount of articles about disability (78.23%) than all the other media types combined. Strikingly, only 4.87% of the articles on disability came from quality newspapers. Even the celebrity and gossip magazines score higher (15.95%) than the quality newspapers and news and opinion magazines combined (12.66%).

Table 2. The weighted distribution of articles by the type of medium for the period 2003-2012.

Type of medium	Percent (%)
Popular newspapers	35.01
Lifestyle magazines	27.27
Celebrity and gossip magazines	15.95
News and opinion magazines	7.79
Age-oriented magazines	6.78
Quality newspapers	4.87
Other	2.32

In line with expectations, the majority of the articles focussed on adults with a disability (70.6%), more than twice the proportion of articles that focussed on children, adolescents or a mix of ages (Table 3). Only in the teen celebrity magazine ('Joepie'), do we see more adolescents than adults with a disability, which seems logical as this magazine mostly targets teenage customers. Remarkably, in some cases children and/or adolescents with a disability remain out of sight, even in children and youth magazines. Also, in news and opinion magazines, children are strongly underrepresented. When we found articles on children with a disability, most of the time they were published in newspapers instead of (weekly or

monthly) magazines. The articles on children referred mostly to general disabilities and on individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism, behavioural problems and learning problems, which concerns the created connection between children on the one hand, and learning and education on the other hand. Considering all these facts, the overall focus on adults with a disability in the print media is extremely manifest.

Concerning gender, Table 3 shows us a slight emphasis on male representation (47.94%) compared to the amount of women with a disability in the print media (42.89%). Noteworthy is that articles about physical impairments involve more men, while news about chronic health conditions includes more women. In some newspapers and magazines, there is a strong and unbalanced focus on men with disabilities (like in 'De Tijd', 'P-Magazine', 'Glam*It', 'Flair'). In two of the cases, this was expected because this media focuses on a male audience or is economically oriented. In other -mostly female orientated- media we found slightly more women with disabilities than men (like in 'Joepie', 'Story', 'Goed Gevoel', 'Libelle', 'Dag Allemaal', 'Klap').

Table 3. The weighted distribution of articles by age and gender for the period 2003-2012.

Variable	Percent (%)
Age	
Child	16.11
Adolescent	8.29
Adult	70.60
Mixed	5.01
Gender	
Men	47.94
Women	42.89
Mixed	9.18

In most cases, articles are non-categorical, focussing on general disabilities and not on specific identified groups or individuals with disabilities. As expected, these general announcements are peculiar in newspapers, as newspapers intend to bring general information to the public and keep people well-informed on important events. When

concerning the most frequently depicted disability, most prevalent, by far, were articles that dealt with physical impairments (28.8%). The popular male magazine 'P-magazine' leads this physical oriented tendency. The second most frequent depicted disabilities were intellectual disabilities (22.4%) and chronic health conditions (19.3%). Remarkable is that articles focussing on people with intellectual disabilities appear almost only in newspapers. Auditory impairments, autism, visual impairments, behavioural and learning problems are clearly underrepresented in our sample (under 9%). Articles on behavioural problems are more common in lifestyle magazines, while articles on visual impairments can be found mostly in the only religious magazine ('Kerk en Leven') we analysed. Across time, no meaningful trends concerning types of disability in the media can be observed.

2.4 Discussion

A first striking finding from this study is the **sorely limited coverage, or even total lack of representation**, of certain persons with disabilities in some Flemish print media sources. For example, children and/or adolescents with a disability remain out of sight in certain children and youth magazines. For the young readership of these magazines, children and/or adolescents with a disability are virtually non-existent. Even though the Flemish government has pointed to the importance of the correct representation of people with a disability in the media and despite the substantial difference with the number of children and/or adolescents with a disability in the real world population, this group remains close to being invisible.

This finding mirrors the reality that **children with and without disabilities share few or even no collective activities**, notwithstanding Belgium agreed to develop a more inclusive system with the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability (2006). Flanders in Belgium still has an extensive network of segregated services and special schools for children with a disability (Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, 2014). In this dual educational system, there are very few opportunities and support for children with special needs in the mainstream educational system and society. With the highest percentage of students in segregated special schools in the European Union, Flanders has

opted more than other countries for segregated settings in education: 5.2% of the total student population attends special education (NESSE, 2012). This tradition of exclusion in education is also visible in our manner of representing children with disabilities in the media.

These findings on the lack of coverage of people with a disability in the media endorse previous international works (Donaldson, 1981; Henderson & Heinz-Knowles, 2003; Saito & Ishiyama, 2005) and reflect that people with disabilities continue to be strongly underrepresented in the media, which adds to the notion that people with disabilities are not fully part of society. This clear underrepresentation falsely implies that people without disabilities are the standard and impedes the struggle of people with a disability for position in social space.

When examining what influences the quantity of disability coverage in the print media, it can be stated that, looking over the long-term span from 2003-2012, **political events have a clear influence**. In particular, this concerns the adopting and ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Year of People with Disabilities. Unfortunately, these effects are short-term as the amount of articles on disability recede the year following the event, despite the persistent number of human rights abuses and discrimination towards people with a disability in Flanders (Belgian Disability Forum, 2014; Hardonk et al., 2013). Looking at other big events that could possibly have an influence on the quantity of coverage of disability in the print media, such as the Paralympics or Special Olympics, no clear connection can be observed. This finding can be connected to earlier research claiming that the coverage of the Paralympics and Paralympians is minimal (Tynedal & Wolbring, 2013; Schantz & Gilbert, 2001) and reflects the invisibility of people with a disability more generally in our media.

What strongly determines the representation of certain groups of persons with disabilities is the degree of **visualization**. Print media rarely depict people with certain disabilities, focussing instead on people with **physical, intellectual and chronic health conditions**. This might be a result of the inherent nature of print media as the medium requires visual images. For example, auditory impairments, autism, visual impairments, behavioural and learning problems are regarded as relatively difficult to portray. In contrast, people with physical,

intellectual or chronic health conditions are much easier to depict and dramatise (cf. Haller & Ralph, 2001; Saito & Ishiyama, 2010). The emphasis on people with physical impairments confirms earlier studies (Auslander & Gold, 1999; Haller & Ralph, 2001; Saito & Ishiyama, 2005), which is not surprising in light of the importance of images in print journalism. Besides, since no clear evolution can be observed in the quantity of articles of certain groups of persons with disabilities over time, it can be presumed that categorical **lobby groups** have no clear influence on the amount of articles in the print media concerning the group of people they represent.

In line with other important findings of this research, such as the higher prevalence of found articles in the popular press, the interesting correlations between gender, age and type of magazine on the one hand, and the type of disability on the other, we can interpret the media as a **Looking Glass Self**. This concept was coined by Cooley in 1902, pointing out how our self-image is shaped by society. The Looking Glass Self has been the dominant metaphor in sociology for the development of self-conception. Cooley argued that our self-concepts are formed as reflections of the responses and evaluations of others in our environment. Interpreting our findings, we can argue that media can also be compared to a Looking Glass, shaped by assumptions in society and reflecting underlying societal opinions and traditional power relations. Nevertheless, a right balance must be found between the idea of the media using intentional media strategies and the idea of the media mirroring societal assumptions. Without wanting a unilateral focus on media as a reflection of society, but as well as being an influence on it, and without forgetting the impact of social and citizen media, the concept of the Looking Glass gives us the possibility to interpret some findings on a more abstract theoretical level.

First, an important and remarkable finding of this study is that far more articles about people with disabilities come from the **popular press**. In quality newspapers and news and opinion magazines, a great lack of coverage of people with a disability and disability related themes is detected.

The higher prevalence of messages about people with disabilities in the popular media indicates in a painful way that **people with disabilities are positioned more in the lower**

educated target audience of these media, which reflects powerful underlying societal relations and distributions. In particular, the finding reveals the poignant looking glass of the educational barriers that persons with a disability have and their limited connection with the social world of higher educated people. These limited educational opportunities and disparities in education for people with a disability have been ongoing for generations (Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, 2014; World Health Organization, 2011).

Moreover, this result is striking as quality media attempts to be diverse and politically correct, reporting on social exclusion and diversity, whilst concerning disability, they fail to cover an adequate representation of it.

Besides, the higher amount of articles about people with disabilities in the popular media can be explained by the fact that popular media, in particular, cover more local and personal information and news. People's lived stories and individual accounts of experience are mainly provisioned in popular journalism, as these media emphasise the particular and personal experiences of individuals at the expense of relating those particularities to more general institutional and structural processes (Sparks & Tulloch, 2000). Although today some shifts in thinking about disability can be tracked, **disability remains peripheral** to the larger political agenda. This can be illustrated by the sidelined and unclear position of disability in the Flemish Government's policy documents (Homans, 2014; Gatz, 2014). Disability is often seen as a matter of a singular personal experience, not relevant to the social and political debate. Recently, disability is increasingly being addressed within a broader human rights context, also in the media, for example by the reporting on the waiting lists for support for people with disabilities. However, disability is situated more within the local agenda than within a larger discourse in respect of human rights. Hence, it is more evident that disability is mainly covered in local popular media, as it is unfortunately not yet embedded in a broadened political discourse on disability in terms of rights and inclusion. The media misses the bigger picture on disability, which is in line with reporting on more general social issues in quality press.

In addition, disability coverage in popular press can be explained by the general prevailing **melodramatic framework** of this media, because of its emphasis on human drama, emotions, scandal and personalities. Their concern is to bring news and reach the public by

using and evoking emotions, and people with disabilities can be qualified as perfectly fitting this frame. This eliciting of emotions in portraying characters with a disability in the media is in line with findings in qualitative research where the following dominant stereotypes are detected: the supercrip, the victim, the maladjusted burden, and the evil threat (Nelson, 1996), which add up to a spectacle of otherness, and evoke emotions of pity or admiration (cf. Hayes & Black, 2003).

Second, another surprising result is that **media about physical impairments involve more men, while reports about chronic health conditions include more women**. These findings can be associated with underlying gender ideologies of men and women regarding dual breadwinner roles, prescribing earning for men and homemaking for women. This gendered approach leads to the notion that men belong to the public and woman to the private sphere. Femininity is often perceived as belonging to the private realm, so women's disabilities are represented more as internal and individual and less visible. Meanwhile, according to this breadwinner model and private/public dichotomy, men act more within the public realm and move freely between the public and the private realm. The association between masculinity and the public is demonstrated in the exteriorisation, where the bodily difference is not a private but a public and visible matter. These norms about gender are reproduced regularly throughout the media. Pompper (2010), for example, found that masculine portrayals often emphasise health and fitness. Hence, reporting by the media on people with disabilities, even if sympathetic, seems to be shaped by the fundamental exclusionary social frames that build on the dichotomous understanding of masculine/external/public/political versus feminine/internal/private/apolitical.

Third, noticeable is the finding that articles on people with **physical impairments** are most common in magazines where **physical beauty** is the main emphasis, while articles about **behavioural problems** are most present in **lifestyle magazines** where behaviour and lifestyle predominate. The first emphasises sexuality and the importance of physical attractiveness, setting unrealistic ideals for the body and making direct statements about beauty. The latter contains articles about health, fashion, decorating, food, and well-being, covering ways to improve and get more out of your life.

The distribution of articles on physical impairments and behavioural problems has a visible connection with the core topics of the magazines they are represented in. In particular, the scientific metaphor of matter-antimatter can be used to clarify this distribution. This concept suggests that for every particle of matter created, an 'antiparticle' exists with opposite charge. They are defined as polar opposites and serve as mirror images of the particles that make up everything in our everyday world. Where images of the body present idealised versions of beauty, representations of individuals with physical differences are omnipresent. Where discourses surrounding 'the good life/the good mother/the good partner' are framed and discussed in magazines as if they are monoliths shared by the whole community, more articles about behavioural problems are depicted. The media continuously demarcate between the norm and the deviant, between the 'acceptable' matter and the 'unacceptable' antimatter, the *dis* and the *able*, as opposites, and as the antithesis of one another. By establishing clear boundaries between the able-bodied and those who deviate from the norm, the image of the ideal able-bodied person becomes illuminated and reinforced. This distribution mirrors traditional disembodied experiences and dominant constructions of norms that "necessarily hierarchizes and ranks the two polarized terms so that one becomes the privileged term and the other is suppressed subordinates, negative counterpart" (Grosz, 1994, p. 3). By over-presenting normative selves as the only way to live and by creating a visible distance between the (dis)abled, the status of what it means to be a human is constantly defined. Since we live in a culture that constantly defines this dominant image normalcy, the presence of disability urges us to think about conceptions of the human (Kittay & Carlson, 2010). At the same time the status of human is frequently denied in the lives of people with disabilities. As Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2014) argue, becoming dis/human is a response to the ambivalent state we find ourselves in relation to the human: disability recognises the norm whilst simultaneously troubles, reshapes and re-fashions ideas about the human that we might have taken for granted. Dis/ability's disruptive potential urges us to think again about normativity and the condition of the human.

Besides the matter-antimatter metaphor, the eroticisation of the disabled body (Garland-Thomson, 1997) can also be a possible reason for the depiction of people with a physical disability in beauty-oriented magazines.

Besides this distribution of articles on physical impairments and behavioural problems, articles on **visual impairments** are found mostly in the only **religious** magazine included in this research. This cannot be connected by the matter-antimatter metaphor, but can serve a more practical interpretation as most of the Flemish organisations for people with visual disabilities are situated in the catholic pillar and Catholicism has had a tight grip for a long time on supporting people with visual disabilities. Visual impairment also has a rich Christian iconographic connotation: from a historical point of view, the blind beggar and the blind prophet or seer - famous for his clairvoyance - are major archetypes for people with a disability. Eventually, a more pragmatic editorial reason may also be the case, although the editorial office objects this argument.

Finally, as opposed to adults, the articles on **children** with disabilities mostly refer to general disabilities, **intellectual disabilities, autism, behavioural problems and learning problems**. Children with disabilities get a peculiar status in the media and are related to other types of disabilities than adults. First, it can be claimed that there is a link between children on the one hand, and on learning and education on the other. This result reveals the dominant looking glass on educational beliefs, where children's academic performance is emphasised (Marcon, 1993). A distinguishing characteristic of education today is the emphasis on outcomes and qualification (Biesta, 2011). It is believed that the extent to which children achieve their educational goals determines the achievement in other domains and is mirror of the success of their future life. The increasing amount of pressure that parents, teachers and society are putting on young children as little emperors to succeed academically, is very influential on our educational mindset and is visible in the media.

Second, the specific types of disabilities related to children in the media, in particular intellectual disabilities, behavioural problems and learning problems, are consistent with the classification of special education in Flanders. Particularly, these three types of disabilities correspond to the largest groups in the Flemish special education system (Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, 2014). In Flanders, diversity is approached by teaching students with disabilities in segregated settings and homogeneous groups. Normalisation and the attainment of the educational standards is emphasised, especially for students with learning

problems, intellectual disabilities and behavioural problems. This categorical thinking poses a vivid debate and can be observed in the media.

Third, connection can be made with qualitative research on the experiences of parents of children with disabilities. Although further research is needed, it could be argued that the stories on children with disabilities in the media are examples of experiences of the moral force of social order parents have when going out in public with their children, where 'unusual behaviour' can embarrass or disorientate "normal" members of society and subvert the social norms of acceptable behaviour (Ryan, 2005).

Lastly, concerning the higher representation of children with autism in the media, Stevenson, Harp, and Gernsbacher (2011) argue that when envisioning the disability of autism, a child is more likely portrayed, rather than an adult. According to the authors, autism is predominantly considered a childhood disability. Children with autism have continually been seen as having a condition that is characterised by a broken self, uncontrollability and exceptional talents, that is so non-normative (Sarrett, 2011) it is attractive for media portrayals. Moreover, the infantilising discourse of autism is characterised by dual stereotypes: either uncontrollable, aggressive, or violent children who cause great stress to their families and carers, or unhappy and often unloved and poorly treated children that evoke pity (Jones & Harwood, 2009).

2.5 Conclusion

Since the press has, among other factors, an important role in reflecting and shaping public attitudes towards people with disabilities, and since the Flemish print media serves as an important source of information for the public about the society, an underrepresentation or an incorrect representation of people with a disability in the media has major impact on public perceptions and attitudes towards people with disabilities in our society. In Flanders, many people rely on the media as a crucial source of information, beliefs and values. Because of the marginalisation of social minority groups from mainstream society, many people rely almost entirely on the media for their information about people with disabilities.

The relationship between the public and these groups is largely filtered through the values, assumptions and perceptions covered in the media.

Besides, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities emphasises the importance of a correct representation and encourages all organs of the media to portray persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with the purpose of the Convention. Moreover, in 2014, the UN Committee noted with concern “that persons with disabilities in Belgium are portrayed in the media mainly as persons with a disability rather than as citizens who participate fully in society” (CRPD, 2014, p. 3), and ordered the Belgian media to “take account of diversity in their code of ethical conduct and provide them, and all relevant professionals, with appropriate training and awareness-raising to ensure better representation of persons with disabilities in the media” (p. 3).

Starting from the insight that media coverage is a key element in the process of attitude formation, and from the clear instructions for Belgium based on the UNCRPD framework, the findings of this study indicate biases and stereotypes in the press that have characterised its coverage till now.

Although this study found a relatively continual stock of messages including disability over the years, which indicates a permanent minimal attention to the issue in the media, a lot of socio cultural-driven biases are discovered in the media reporting on people with disabilities. Remarkably, this study found a number of significant differences between the types of media studied; sometimes a total lack of representation, but generally, the media content reflected underlying dominant societal ideologies that can be problematic as they promote the status quo, reinforce stereotypical attitudes and obstruct change for people with disabilities. When people with a disability are represented in the media, the messages do not have the potential to play a role in facilitating social change and altering public perceptions consistent with the framework of the UNCRPD. The disability-as-deficit notion (Gabel, 2005) has a central place, which is in line with the Flemish policy of approaching, orienting and classifying people on the basis of their labels. Besides, the studied articles are constituted on ideas of normalcy and perfection, together with binary and hegemonic perceptions on disability and gender. The representations of people with disabilities are

often placed opposite to the idealized norm and seem to be shaped by fundamental exclusionary social frames.

This study provided important discoveries about representation in the media and underlying perceptions in relation to disability and intersections with other social categories. Due to the numerous sources analysed and the integral and systematic way in which they were analysed, we could precisely measure the quantity of media coverage. However, the approach does not provide insight in how people with disabilities are represented. Further research will be conducted on the same sample in order to investigate the quality of media representations.

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3. I'M NOT YOUR METAPHOR. FRAMES EN COUNTER-FRAMES IN DE REPRESENTATIE VAN DISABILITY

Gebaseerd op: Goethals, T.; Mortelmans, D.; Van Den Bulck, H.; Van den Heurck, W., De Schauwer, E., Van Hove, G. (almost submitted). I'm not your metaphor. Frames and counter-frames in de representation of disability.

Abstract

Media function as an important arena for the negotiation of difference and normalcy. When it comes to disability, powerful ideas about disability are articulated in and circulated through media. This study examines, by means of framing analysis, how media portray disability and people with disabilities, in a sample of Flemish print news and entertainment magazines. The aim of this study is to understand the dominant and alternative frames related to disability looking at which aspects of reality are selected, rejected, emphasised, or modified in the production of a media text. Participatory analysis of the articles from sixteen Belgian magazines over a one-year time span (n=184) reveals a number of frames and counter-frames. Results indicate that media tend to perpetuate and reinforce the stigma of the disabled as 'the Other' and disability as one of the most frightful obstructions in one's life, while counter frames underlining the notion of the disabled being different but not 'abnormal' are relatively absent. Such negative media image of disability may have repercussions for how we approach and make sense of phenomena relating to disability in the real world. Recognizing this perceptual lens of framing means that it is possible to think about how to reframe disability and what it means to be human.

3.1 Introduction

The media, and more specifically print news and entertainment magazines, serve as valuable sources of information, beliefs and values. Powerful ideas about disability and 'normality' are circulated through the media and are deeply embedded governing assumptions in culture itself. Without exaggerating the importance of media, the representation of disability in the media plays a major role in molding the public perception of disability. Besides, a fair portion of disability-related material in media is negative and offensive and social exclusion is the daily experience of many people with disabilities (Ellis & Goggin, 2015). Disability, then, is a key concern in media.

In Flanders, as elsewhere, media are a vitally important arena for citizens to get information about disability. Despite the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, there is still an extensive network of segregated special services. Because of this

two-track system (i.e. special and regular as two distinct systems), many people in Flanders rely almost entirely on the media for their information about diversity and disability.

There is little research into representation of people with disabilities in Flemish media. Existing work done has focused on the representation of social minority groups other than people with disabilities, or solely on the depiction of people with a disability in the television news (Vissers & Hooghe, 2010). Notwithstanding disability studies is booming and the pioneering work of authors as Cumberbatch and Negrine (1992), Pointon and Dacies (1997), Riley (2005), Haller (2010), Ellis (2015), Ellis and Goggin (2015), there has been much less work in the area of disability and media around the world. Available research papers are lacking or cluster around particular aspects of disability and media.

Our study is designed to fill this gap and builds further on a large quantitative content-analysis (Goethals, Mortelmans, & Van Hove, under review) where we investigated *who* is represented in different print media, analyzing 16 magazines and 7 newspapers, during the period of ten years (n=14,529). As the second of this two-part study, this paper examines on a qualitative way *how* people with disabilities are portrayed, using a one year-sample (2012) of these data (n=184).

3.2 Framing as in inroad to study media representation

Framing originates from the field of social psychology (Barlett, 1932) and refers to the way in which the media and the public represent a particular topic or issue (Reese, 2001). According to Entman (1993), framing fundamentally involves selection and salience: “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (p.52)”. The framing of a message is embedded in a repertoire of symbols and world-views that its members use as a toolkit to attribute meaning to issues they are confronted with (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), a common ground within a given culture based on values, archetypes and shared narratives (Van Gorp & Vercruyssen, 2012).

In this paper, we seek to develop an understanding of the presence of disability in a sample of Flemish print news and entertainment magazines. Our aim is to understand the dominant and alternative conceptualisations (frames and counter-frames) related to disability by means of a framing analysis, that indicates which aspects of 'reality' are selected, rejected, emphasised, or modified in the production of media texts. The way information is transferred to its public comes through various forms of communication, all of which is framed. Framing defines how media coverage can shape public opinions -without implying that audiences are homogenous and passive- by using specific frameworks to help guide the public to understanding. This is not to say we can speak about a simple and fixed reality: disability has no universal, essential, fixed or true meaning against which coverage can be measured (Hall, 1997). Nevertheless, these images are loaded with ideology and by examining media frames, several trends appear which highlight how media sources are able to influence public perceptions and attitudes.

The categories as used in the work of Clogston (1990) and Haller (1998) can offer a productive entrance to organize a first step in applying framing theory to disability. These colleagues developed models of media representation of disability, which fit into either a traditional or progressive category. The traditional categories include the medical model, the social pathology model, the supercrip model and the business model. In the medical model, disability is presented as an illness or malfunction. Persons who are disabled are shown as dependent on health professionals for cures or maintenance. In the social pathology model, people with disabilities are presented as disadvantaged and must look to the state or to society for economic support, which is considered a gift, not a right. In the supercrip model, the person with a disability is portrayed as deviant because of "superhuman" feats (i.e. ocean-sailing blind man) or as "special" because they live regular lives "in spite of" disability (i.e. deaf high school student who plays softball). In the business model, people with disabilities and their issues are represented as costly to society and businesses especially. Making society accessible for disabled people is not really worth the cost and overburdens businesses, i.e. accessibility is not profitable. The progressive categories include the minority/civil rights model, the cultural pluralism model and the legal model. In the minority/civil rights model, people with disabilities are portrayed as members of the disability community, which has legitimate political grievances. They have civil rights that

they may fight for, just like other groups. Accessibility to society is a civil right. In the cultural pluralism model, people with disabilities are presented as multifaceted people and their disabilities do not receive undue attention. They are portrayed as non-disabled people would be. In the legal model, media explain that it is illegal to treat disabled people in certain ways. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other treaties or laws are presented as legal tools to halt discrimination.

This entrance leads us to our main question of this study, i.e. an understanding of the dominant and alternative conceptualisations related to disability by means of a framing analysis of the Flemish print media. In answering this question, the study aims to make a contribution for Haller's and Clogston's proposition of central frames and the continuous development of a set of frames to communicate disability.

3.3 Thinking about media through dis/ability: a theoretical concept

Although framing serves as a central inroad to our analysis of media representation, in this study we also reflect on the emergent theory of the *DisHuman studies* (Goodley, Runswick-Cole, 2014) and its relation to media. In this approach, we ponder upon the vital question what it means to be human and in what ways disability enhances these meanings. The presence of disability -in the media and beyond- invokes discussions about the human (Kittay & Carlson, 2010). It unpacks, troubles and disrupts dominant notions of what it means to be human. It '*disses*' the human, which means that it has the radical potential to trouble and reframe the normative representation of the subject that is often depicted when the human is evoked. This is the *dis* in the dis/human approach. It conveys that the presence of disability, eg. in media, offers us exciting new ways of thinking about humanness and 'normality'. As Braidotti (2013) argues, humanist conceptualisations of the human are often narrow, normative and rigid. She posits that "at the start of it all there is He: the classical ideal of *Man*"(p. 13), referring to a universal model of the human as the idealist figure of da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* as an exclusionary hegemonic cultural model (white, European, male, handsome, able-bodied, ...). Those outside this archetypal humanist ideal are considered less than human or inhuman. The presence of disability in the media can also affirm some typical, common sense normative human categories whilst, simultaneously,

demanding new ways of thinking and '*disses*' these conventions. For that reason, we join with the dishuman position that acknowledges the disruptive potential of disability to trouble these dominant notions and demands we question what counts as human.

Beside recognising that dis/ability has the potential to destabilise normative, taken for granted assumptions about what it means to be human and what it means to be able, thinking in dishuman ways involves at the same time the recognition that a regular normal human being is desirable, especially for those people who have been denied access to the category of the human. At times, desiring and respecting the human is necessary. Everybody seeks to be recognised as human and wants, from time to time, to embrace the able or the normal. Above all, claiming the norm has pragmatic and political value, thinking about political notions as human rights, universal notions of basic respect of the human, citizenship, law, morality etc.

Accordingly, here we extend our analysis to consider how the media enables *and* limits disability by their constructions as simultaneously both 'different from' and 'the same as' other people. We think about 'sameness' and 'difference' in the depiction of people with disabilities and how these representations function to include or exclude. Put differently, we question the ways the presence of disability in the media honour the humanness inherent in dis/ability alongside its disruptive potential.

3.4 Framing as a method: methodology

Sample

The sample in this study consisted of print media content concerning disability, which comprised coverage from sixteen Belgian magazines between January 1st 2012 and December 31st 2012 (n=184). This included a range of magazines: celebrity and gossip magazines, news and opinion magazines, lifestyle magazines and age-oriented magazines. All of the issues for this period were surveyed, including each section and article. Data from one magazine was gathered through Gopress, an electronic news archive. Because the other media sources were not available in this online archive, we conducted a manual search in

the magazines, collected from the Belgian legal deposit. Articles were accepted into the study sample if they included a reference to disability in general, or to a specific impairment or chronic illness which incurs disabilities. The selected articles could relate to a broad range of disabilities and conditions which lead to disability, from any cause and at all levels of severity. That reference could appear anywhere in the article: in the headline, text or accompanying image.

Frame packages

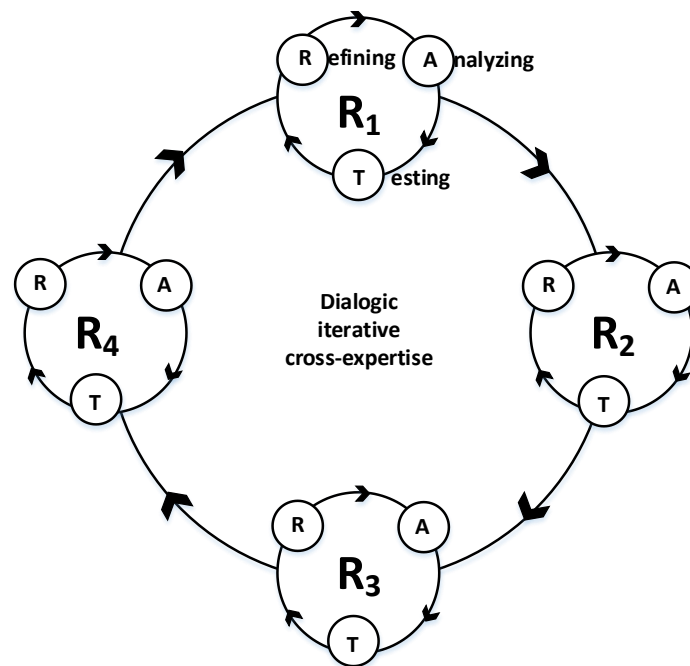
Conducting a framing analysis results in an overview of frame packages (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Van Gorp, 2007; Van Gorp, 2010), composed of a core frame, framing devices and reasoning devices. A core frame represents the implicit cultural phenomenon that defines the package as a whole. Framing devices serve as manifest elements in a message that function as demonstrable indicators of the frame, such as vocabulary, metaphors, catchphrases and depictions. At last, reasoning devices display the causal reasoning that may be evoked when disability is associated with a particular culturally embedded frame.

In our study, each frame package is composed of the following elements: the central frame, the underlying cultural motive, the specific issue or problem definition, its causes and consequences, the moral values that are involved and the possible actions that can be taken. Besides, manifest framing devices that may trigger the latent causal reasoning are included, such as metaphors, choice of vocabulary and visual images. In addition, we included elements like the framing sponsor -the journalistic choice of which expert gets voice in the media text- and the initiator -the person or thing that is suggested to initiate the course of proposed actions. As a result, a range of frames can be distilled which give possible frameworks to problematise an issue; often accompanied with some counter-frames who deproblematise the issue and give an alternative for the dominant conceptualisations of disability. A single text may perform more than one frame, or combine both frames and counter-frames.

Participatory framing analysis

Conducting a framing analysis is not a linear process. The multiple “selves” of the analysts, with their own mental constructs, life experiences and history (familial, cultural, ideological, and educational) may interfere with each other and the identification of the frames. A way of monitoring this interferences is by conducting a participatory framing analysis. We define this process as an *iterative, dialogic and cross-expertise analysis*.

Figure 1 Dialogic iterative cross-expertise analysis



Cross-expertise. The four authors (marked as R1-R4 in the diagram) can be defined as a group of people with different (however not in a dichotomising or essentialist way) functional expertise, knowledge and experiences {dis/abled, non/academic, disability studies/sociology/communication sciences}. Each of them did the coding of the majority of the data independently. There were regular moments of feedback during which possible divergences were discussed. Combining these expertises, gave us different perspectives and theoretical platforms from which to interpret and analyse. As well, it allowed the researchers to capture more out of the data since they balanced each other out. This cross-expertise analysis reminds us of the Greek concepts of Aristotle called *phronesis*, *techne* and *episteme* (*The Nicomachean Ethics*, 1976). These are all of great importance, and Allan (2008) emphasizes the importance not to dismiss *phronesis*, variously translated as practical wisdom, practical judgement, practical ethics, or prudence. *Phronesis* concerns ethics, a

deliberation about values with reference to praxis. It goes beyond analytical, scientific knowledge (*episteme*) and technical knowledge or know how (*techne*). More than anything else, *phronesis* requires specific experience (Flyvbjerg, 2004), on which Aristotle says:

Prudence [phronesis] is not concerned with universals only; it must also take cognizance of particulars, because it is concerned with conduct, and conduct has its sphere in particular circumstances. That is why some people who do not possess theoretical knowledge are more effective in action (especially if they are experienced) than others who do possess it. For example, suppose that someone knows that light flesh foods are digestible and wholesome, but does not know what kinds are light; he will be less likely to produce health than one who knows that chicken is wholesome. But prudence is practical, and therefore it must have both kinds of knowledge, or especially the latter. (N.E., pp. 1141b8–27)

Conducting a framing analysis without a variety of perspectives and interpretations seemed dangerous to us: nobody would notice if we were wrong. So why not involve the interpretations of people with the label of a disability, who are personal experts in reading media articles on disability for decades? By transcending this problem of relevance by anchoring the results in the context studied, we leave the idea of having a privileged position from which the final truth can be told and further discussion arrested. As Nietzsche (1969, pp. 119, §3.12) says: “There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective ‘knowing’; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our ‘concept’ of this thing, our ‘objectivity’, be”

Iterative. The framing analysis was characterized by its iterative design processes. On the individual researchers level (R1-R4), a cyclic process of analysing, testing and refining was conducted. Each researcher individually read the research material, marked key terms, read again, filled in some fields in the frame package overview, read again, refined, etc. This involves a constant to and fro of reading, reflecting, writing and reordering in a circular rather than a linear way. The material itself asked for this approach, because media frames are often hard to identify (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). Framing analysis requires starting from a simple structure, evaluate it, and continue to improve on it. Also on the level *in between* the researchers, an iterative process was desired and implemented. Individual researcher

accounts were evaluated and compared to others, changes and refinements were made, material was reviewed again and frame packages were created and regrouped. This process was repeated until a logical and coherent whole, based on all of the devices, could be created and for the time being, no new frames could be detected. Through these iterations, misunderstandings or inconsistencies are made evident early so it was possible for all the researchers involved to react to them. This study can therefore not claim a definitive truth, but can only be reconceptualized as one utterance in an ongoing dialogue.

Dialogic. The collaboratively-constructed meaning in this study resulted in findings as part of an ongoing conversation rather than represented as an individual product. All the researchers participated in both face-to-face, Skype and email conversations. We met regularly to generate understandings through conversation. Between meetings we encountered new ideas which may be relevant, and these were dropped again in the ongoing dialogic conversation. In contrast to the “lone researcher” metaphor, every frame package in this study can be seen as iterations of past conversations. We are convinced that taking participation seriously is in reality very complex, especially when conducting research with a co-researcher with the label of a disability. Discussions about the representation of disability were always at work in the daily conversations with this co-researcher. What was essential to these dialogues was the intensity, the conscientiousness, and the continuous process of shared searching and asking a thousand questions to each other. A lot of what happened came down to listening very carefully. In that way, anyone learned from each other. Involving a researcher with a disability implied exchanging stories about lived and very concrete experiences regarding the representation of disability, regarding ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’. These experiences were so stuck to the concrete, that they served as eye-openers. They showed us ambivalence and questioned the ways the presence of disability in the media can honour humanness inherent in dis/ability alongside its disruptive potential. We believe that these processes has made our study more rigorous and open for complexities, than if we had used the methods we had been accustomed to using as individual researchers. “*I’m not your metaphor*” can therefore be considered as a good title of this paper, as a result of this intensely felt cooperative research process.

3.5 Results

The framing analysis revealed nine dominant frames and three counter-frames. Table 1 (cf. Annex) shows the twelve frame packages, each composed of a central frame, a cultural theme, a specific definition of the issue, its cause and consequence, the moral evaluation that is involved, the possible action that can be taken and the initiator who is suggested to initiate these proposed actions. The last three columns of the table show some manifest framing devices that may trigger the latent causal reasoning in the people's minds: the framing sponsor (the journalistic choice of which expert gets voice in the media text), the used metaphors and choice of vocabulary, and the visual images. All the frames are ranked by extent, starting with the most dominant ones (cf. table 1 in Annex). Dominant frames include:

1. *Suffering and fear of degeneration.* This frame, which is also the most dominant one, postulates that disability equals suffering and degeneration. Having a disability means nothing more than a fatal catastrophe. Persons with disabilities are lost in advance and extremely fearful for the future. There is misery everywhere and that is also manifest in the pitiable visuals which focus on the impairment (often children and family portraits), the loss, the pain, sadness and suffering.
2. *The heavy burden of care.* The second dominant frame involves those around the person with a disability: the carers have to bear a load without any reciprocity. In this frame, not the person with a disability is affected (like in the first dominant frame), but rather those close to them. The efforts needed to care for someone with a disability are emphasized. This often leads to dreadful headlines as 'Autistic grandson source of great concern to grandpa', where the carers must sacrifice and receive hardly any gratitude or recognition.
3. *Faith in science; variant: human enhancement.* According to the third dominant frame, disability is seen as a medical and individual deficit, with a pathology that can be described in scientific terms. The used jargon is medical and persons with disabilities are reduced to the status of patients or cases. Their impairments are determining and have to be cured to approximate the ideal of 'normality'. In

extreme, the variant of human enhancement can be revealed, where the oversimplified improving of human characteristics by biotechnology is depicted and persons with disabilities are reduced to a defect in the genes.

4. *The goer; variant: the hero.* The fourth dominant frame postulates that it is the individual duty of persons with disabilities not to give up and to overcome the disability. Acts of commitment and perseverance are highlighted, and people with disabilities are called inspirational solely or in part on the basis of their disability. This inspiration porn (Young, 2012) depicts the acts of persons with disabilities just living their lives into superficial stories in order to make the reader feel good. The extreme end of this spectrum includes superheroes with disabilities, outrageously admired for their courage, determination and superior abilities.
5. *The helpless victim.* Another common frame is that of the helpless victim. Persons with disabilities are represented as helpless objects of pity or sympathy, that are chosen to be bullied and therefore must be protected or be more assertive. This frame depicts disabled characters whose disability is used by the author to earn sympathy from the audience.
6. *The lurking monster.* This frame involves the idea that disability is an intruder that is always on the lookout and strikes unexpectedly. Disability is represented as a monster that takes away everything a person has built. The victims must give up every dream and are no longer able to participate. The solution lies in a combative attitude and arming oneself against this evil. What is striking, is the remarkable amount of pictures 'before' and 'after' an accident, so the difference and loss of the person's successful life is clear.
7. *Charity.* The charity frame concerns a tragic portrayal of persons with disabilities. They serve as icons of pity, in need of care, not capable of looking after themselves and in need of charity in order to survive. The focus is on the benefactors who fulfil their moral duty to help others, people with disabilities are reduced to recipients of charity. In the data of our study, people with disabilities are not given a voice and not portrayed, only the benefactors and their noble charities are speaking and depicted.
8. *Carpe Diem.* This frame transmits the message that persons with disabilities and those around them look for happiness and comfort in the little things of life. The idea here is that life is too short to grieve or to worry. Although the focus is no longer

placed on the catastrophe and the sad side of disability, in this study we group this frame as a dominant one as the involved media articles presume the simplified idea that individuals are responsible for their own happiness and must ignore obstacles or worries to have a decent life. The complexity of disability as a phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between the person and the society in which he or she lives, is neglected in this case.

9. *Mind-body dualism.* According to this frame, a human being is made up of a material body and an immaterial soul, as two distinct parts. Here, a disability is a pathology that deprives a human being of his mind. Having a disability means acquiring a new (or no) identity and personality, becoming “a half-fool”, and ending up in your own world. Metaphors of plants, darkness and empty shells are used to contrast with the reason and mental capacities.

Counter-frames include:

1. *Human rights.* In this counter-frame, the notion of disability is conceptualized within a rights-based discourse. People with disabilities become politically active against social forces of ableism, claiming human and civil rights. This frame affirms that all human beings, irrespective of their disabilities, have certain rights which are inalienable. From this perspective, equal access for people with disabilities is a human rights issue of major concern, and concrete policy actions must be taken.
2. *Disability creates opportunities.* The capabilities, expertise and value of persons with disabilities are central in the next counter-frame. Potential is recognized and persons are portrayed as active members, making decisions for their lives and adding value. Disability is evaluated positive and the idea is claimed that society is blind for the expertise and added value of people with disabilities.
3. *Solidarity.* In the last counter-frame, solidarity between people, irrespective of their disabilities, is the main theme. Reciprocity, mutual learning and benefits for both people with and without disabilities are central. There is a focus on solidarity and warm friendships, with a lot of shared dreams, fears and laughter.

What has been described so far does not mean that every source uses only one frame. According to the analysis, several of the frames are combined. None of the counter-frames was the privilege of single sources; they were always a result of a combination with one or multiple dominant frames. Moreover, as can be seen, the examples of the used metaphors and the voice of vocabulary is less detailed when moving to the counter-frames, as these alternative representations are not common in the analysed media texts.

3.6 Discussion and conclusion

Analysing media text from different media magazines offered insights into dominant and alternative frames related to disability. An inventory of dominant frames was developed, together with alternative counter-frames that may offer 'new' perspectives regarding disability.

Framing analysis of the media discourse revealed nine dominant frames and three counter-frames. This unbalance, characterized by the relative absence of counter-frames, confirms the one-sided and negative image of disability in media (Ellis & Goggin, 2015). The accent is above all placed on suffering, caring, fixing and overcoming the disability. The results from the analysis indicate that most of the images rely on the frames of '*Suffering and fear of degeneration*', '*The heavy burden of care*', '*Faith in science; variant: human enhancement*', '*The goer; variant: the hero*', These dominant frames can partially be connected with the medical model, the social pathology model and the supercrip model of disability as defined by Clogston (1990) and Haller (1998). Nevertheless, the inventory made in this study complement their previous propositions of central frames regarding the representation of disability. New frames emerged (e.g. '*The lurking monster*', '*Carpe Diem*', ...) and existing frames were refined (e.g. '*Suffering and fear of degeneration*' and '*Faith in science; variant: human enhancement*' as elements of the medical model on disability).

The evaluations made in the most dominant frames of this study remain grounded in traditional dichotomous thinking. The public is prone to an oversimplified binary way of perceiving persons with a disability. Disability is narrowed in two extremes. On the one hand, the frames rely on the prejudice that persons with a disability are disadvantaged, weak, dependent on and in need of help from nondisabled people. On the other hand, they build upon the prejudice of the disabled person as heroic and inspirational. Disabled persons are

able to perform feats normally considered not possible for persons with disabilities or can live a 'regular' life in spite of a disability. They can display ordinary or extraordinary achievement and this is framed in terms of heroic courage and inspirational achievement, often referred to as inspiration porn (Young, 2012). The impairment begets extraordinary willpower and must be successfully overcome if only the person would try hard enough. This perception does not challenge the cultural and environmental burdens, but demonstrates that they can — with sufficient willpower — be overcome (Clogston, 1994; Harnett, 2000).

In these two extremes - the helpless and the inspirational - disability is represented as a problem located in individual bodies, to be cured or to be overcome. "When disability is seen as the largest component of a person, much of what is unique and human about him or her is obscured" (Kunc, 2000, p. 25). This normative thinking/individualization focuses on what is *not* there, on what is missing, on deficits. In that way, structural and systemic causes of disability are obscured in media representation.

Besides, both the two extremes objectify people with disabilities. They are not represented as real persons or subjects, but as objects. The observing audience is assumed not to have an impairment, and there is little ground for identification with the person. The depictions of disability are connected to the maintenance alienating modes of relating, which may deprive persons with disabilities of the recognition of subjective experience and personhood. It seems that the journalists kept the readers at a distance by exaggerating the people's struggles to fit normative notions of what it means to be human. This normalising process closes off potentialities for being affected (Davies, 2014). What is central in the media discourse, is fear towards monstrous others (Shildrick, 2002), and the abjection of them, to shore up a sense of the reader's own normality.

Where do hybrid identities fit into these representations? According to Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2014), disability challenges our narrow conceptions of what constitutes the human. It allows to trouble and question traditional conceptions of 'normality' and humanness. However, the results of the analysis reveal that the most prominent mediaframes do not question hegemonic ideologies, but rather confirm them. Portrayed people are forced into normative and binary extremes, that catch us all up in the active differentiation between insiders and outsiders, 'us' and 'them', leading to social exclusion of those who are not seen fitting in appropriate normative categories. Analysis proved that the segregated, inferior and 'less than human' position of disability (Goodley & Runswick-Cole,

2014) is still very often taken for granted, instead of granting them opportunities to break up the narrow boundaries of what is conceived as 'normal' and 'human'. By allowing a dis/human position in media representation, we can remain more vigilant to complexities, hybridity and ambivalence. By transcending boundaries of dis/abled, self/other, us/them, complex conceptions of disability can be retained. The Other, like the Self, has many faces and should be recognized as a diverse and complex entity – a citizen, an expert, an object of love and desire, a potential enemy and victim, a model for identification, an object of care and hospitality, a subject with agency, a person-in-relation-to-others, ... Unfortunately, these complex assemblages of the human are not offered in media. Similarly, the world cannot be divided in frames/counter-frames as bad/good. Disability is not just the other side of the binary. Instead of representing disability as great binary aggregates that can act to freeze, a complex assemblage of frames and counter-frames where subjects are allowed to tell their own stories is needed to challenge and deconstruct social prejudices.

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3.8 Annex

Table 1. Dominant and counter-frames in media-analysis

Frame	Cultural theme	Issue	Cause	Consequences	Moral evaluation	Possible solutions/actions	Initiator	Framing sponsor	Metaphors, choice of vocabulary	Visual image
9 DOMINANT FRAMES										
Suffering and fear of degeneration (n=27)	Struggle, suffering, fear.	Disability causes a complete catastrophe. PwD are lost in advance, are uncertain and are extremely fearful.	Defeatism. Disability means degeneration, a disaster.	PwD are suffering in agony, they have to undergo, they have fear of the future.	Disability means suffering, is very negative and pathetic. Fear of degeneration.	Struggling, prostration, praying, hoping, resignation.	PwD and their family.	/	"Suffer, misery everywhere, a pool of pain, misery and fear, he completely degenerates, every day is a fearful day, the sword of Damocles above your head, horrible decline, the distress of the illness, ..."	A lot of images of children and family portraits. Usually unhappy and with medical treatments. A remarkable amount of pictures 'before' and 'after' an accident, so the difference and loss is clear. Focus on the disability.

Frame	Cultural theme	Issue	Cause	Consequences	Moral evaluation	Possible solutions/actions	Initiator	Framing sponsor	Metaphors, choice of vocabulary	Visual image
The heavy burden of care (n=20)	The reciprocity of relationships is essential.	The real victims of disability are those around the person with a disability, heavy burden, sacrifice.	PwD lose autonomy or behave inappropriately. Others have to do everything in their place without getting anything in return.	Collateral damage, the carers must sacrifice, risk of isolation and institutionalisation.	Disability means suffering for the family who must sacrifice, costs outweigh the benefits, feelings of guilt because of the heavy burden.	Potential institutionalisation, environment need more support.	Family carers.	Psychologists, psychiatrists.	"Autistic grandson source of great concern to grandpa, grandfather doesn't know a way out of a problem, the life of father M. is completely dedicated to his son, parents sacrifice themselves, ..."	A lot of family pictures with PwD as passive members. Portraits of unhappy people.
Faith in science; variant: human enhancement (n=15)	Belief in medical improvements and miracles. Disability is a medical affair, a defect, a mistake in the genes. Science can overcome limitations of the body, can	PwD are ill and should be treated as patients. They are impaired and in need of curing.	New scientific breakthrough.	PwD become patients or cases. They disappear behind the diagnosis and are examined and cured.	Belief in medical science and human enhancement. PwD can be saved through curing.	Curing, managing the illness or disability, approximate the ideal of 'normality', medication, medical research, prenatal screening, experimenting, DNA technology.	Medical professionals.	Medical professionals	Medical jargon: "disease, illness, impairment, diagnosis, treatment, cure, deviation, gene defects, patients, medication,	Brains in a test tube, DNA, pictures of surgery and other medical treatments.

Frame	Cultural theme	Issue	Cause	Consequences	Moral evaluation	Possible solutions/actions	Initiator	Framing sponsor	Metaphors, choice of vocabulary	Visual image
	enhance the human condition.								fixing, ..."	
The goer; variant: the hero (n=13)	Struggle, perseverance, the individual duty not to give up.	Deterioration can be conquered by commitment and perseverance. PwD are inspirational, brave, heroic and have distinguished courage and abilities.	There is too little attention to the brave acts of PwD.	Individual: PwD draw satisfaction out of their inspirational role / Societal: PwD and their heroic acts serve as social role model.	Moral duty not to give up, individual courage, dedication and vigor, individual responsibility. Disability must be overcome. The pursuit of the good.	Praising and offering words of unsolicited encouragement to PwD. Placing commitment and personal struggles in the spotlight.	PwD + others who nominate them as inspirational personalities.	/	"Refusing to give up, combative, overcome your disability, iron man, every setback is an opportunity to fight back, fight the devil, fighting spirit, miracles, very stubborn, ..."	Heroic pictures. PwD in combat and sweating.
The helpless victim (n=11)	The innocent victim that must be protected and be more assertive as archetype.	PwD are easy victims.	PwD are fragile and too weak to defend themselves.	Individual: PwD feels vulnerable and not belonging / Societal: PwD are chosen to be bullied.	PwD are fragile and potential victims, they deserve protection and must be more assertive.	Protecting PwD + PwD have to be more resilient.	Others must protect + PwD must be more stronger.	Psychologists, psychiatrists.	"Impaired and bullied, I did not dare to come out of my house, ..."	Portraits of unhappy people. Black and white photography. Anonymous faces.
The lurking monster	Disability is a demon,	Disability means a	Disability lurks around every	Disability takes away everything	Disability as a monster to be	Arm yourself against this evil	PwD and their family.	/	"The curtain falls, we were	A remarkable amount of

Frame	Cultural theme	Issue	Cause	Consequences	Moral evaluation	Possible solutions/actions	Initiator	Framing sponsor	Metaphors, choice of vocabulary	Visual image
(n=10)	constantly lying in wait and striking unexpectedly.	tragedy, it is frightening and steals a person's successful life.	corner.	you've built, one must give up every dream and is no longer able to participate.	fought and must be combated. Focus on negative impacts, arouses pity.	demon and warn others.			attacked on the eve of our retirement when our dreams shattered, defence against terrible suffering, ..."	pictures 'before' and 'after' an accident, so the difference and loss is clear. Unhappy people. Pictures of people confined to bed.
Charity (n=9)	Selfless commitment, charity.	PwD deserve pity and care.	People learned to care unconditionally, also for PwD.	Benefactors fulfil their duty.	Moral duty to help others. PwD as recipients of charity.	Charity, fund-raising.	Benefactors.	/	"We support a good cause, raising money, the smile on the face of those people making all efforts well, ..."	Pictures of benefactors (princesses, private companies, celebrities, ...)
Carpe Diem (n=6)	Seize the day, optimism, carpe diem.	Life is not always what we had hoped for, but PwD and	Today is the day, life is too short to grieve or to worry.	Live from day to day, enjoy the present and don't think about the worries of	The norm to enjoy life.	Learning to find happiness in the little things in life.	PwD and their family.	/	"Take each day as it comes and enjoy it, happiness is	Pictures of sunny beaches and smiling faces.

Frame	Cultural theme	Issue	Cause	Consequences	Moral evaluation	Possible solutions/actions	Initiator	Framing sponsor	Metaphors, choice of vocabulary	Visual image
		their family can also enjoy life.		tomorrow.					in the little things around you, every 26th of September we open a bottle of champagne to celebrate I survived, every day counts, ...".	
Mind-body dualism (n=5)	Mind and body are distinct kinds of natures, a person is made up of a body (material) and soul (immaterial).	Disability means acquiring a new identity and personality.	Disability changes people's minds.	PwD end up in their own world, obtain a different personality.	Having a disability defines the person completely. Acquiring another personality is in opposition to ideals of autonomy and individuality.	Revolt or euthanasia.	Medical professionals.	Neurologists.	"I became a half-fool, another man, his new soul, formerly a gentleman and now nothing, a plant, no master in your own head, ..."	Dark, rainy, foggy pictures. PwD as passive and not capable to participate.
3										

Frame	Cultural theme	Issue	Cause	Consequences	Moral evaluation	Possible solutions/actions	Initiator	Framing sponsor	Metaphors, choice of vocabulary	Visual image
COUNTERFRAMES										
Human rights (n=9)	All human beings, irrespective of their disabilities, have human rights.	The importance of equal rights for PwD.	Problems arise if one does not respect human rights.	Whether or not equal rights for all.	Believe in equal rights for all. PwD are seen as subjects with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights.	Concrete policy actions, demonstrating the importance of equal rights.	Policymakers.	Advocacy organisation.	"Waiting for equal opportunities, our country urgently must pull up its socks, ...".	No focus on the disability.
Disability creates opportunities (n=7)	Cost-benefit analysis of what provides value and opportunities within society.	PwD offer opportunities, expertise and value.	Society can learn from PwD, society is blind to the capabilities and expertise of PwD.	Individual: PwD feel valued / Societal: PwD add value and knowledge.	Recognizing potential and value. PwD as active members, making decisions for their lives and adding value.	Make use of the opportunities, expertise and knowledge of PwD.	Society.	/	"His expertise means an added value, the wise man or woman, they respect me for full and that gives me energy, ..."	No focus on the disability. A picture of a wheelchair as art.
Solidarity (n=4)	Solidarity between people, irrespective of their disabilities.	Solidarity and warm friendships between people with and without disabilities provides a	PwD are active members of society, but are sometimes too little encouraged or given the opportunity to	Individual: PwD feel valued / Societal: society benefits of this mutual understanding.	Friendship, warmth, reciprocity.	Mutual learning, knowledge and experience.	People with and without disabilities.	/	"Jeffrey enjoys working with Wouter, part of the family, get to know each other as human	Hand in hand, working together, laughter.

		mutual understanding and benefits, a win-win situation.	fill in these active roles.						beings, they are making plans together, ..."	
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