

Can Jip be frightened and Janneke be brave? Egalitarianism of Gender Roles in Dutch Children's Literature: *An Analysis of the book gifts handed out in celebration of the Week for Children's Literature between 1990 and 2020.*

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Abstract. The novels children encounter impact how they view the roles of men and women in society. Regardless, gender egalitarianism in Dutch children's literature has not been properly researched in the past thirty years. This thesis aimed to fill this gap in literature by performing qualitative content analysis on a sample of 15 books for the ages 6-12 years, gifted during the Week for Children's Literature to analyse improvement of gender egalitarianism in Dutch children's literature between 1990 and 2020. The analysis focused on gendered personality traits, gendered stereotypical occupations, gendered stereotypic leisure roles and gendered stereotypic domestic roles. None of these dimensions were found to have become more gender egalitarian between 1990 and 2020.

Keywords: Children's literature, gender egalitarianism, gender roles

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1. Introduction

“Jip [boy] is the father and Janneke [girl] is the mother. And Janneke already asked two times: ‘Would you like some more tea father?’ ‘Yes please,’ says father. And then they drink tea” (Schmidt, 2009, p.10). This is a quote subtracted from the book *Jip and Janneke* by one of the most famous and best selling Dutch authors for children’s literature from the mid 20th century: Annie M.G. Schmidt. The first story about these two characters was published in 1952 and continued until 1960 (Canon van Nederland, 2018). One might be surprised to hear that the book with all collected stories about these two characters was still on the top-100 list of best selling books in 2018 (CPNB, 2017). In other words, the stories of Jip and Janneke are still being read at night time to the little ones. Now, take a closer look at the covert message of this quote. Jip and Janneke are performing role play together in which Jip, the boy, is the father and Janneke, the girl, is the mother. Janneke is serving Jip his tea and has done so already two times. However, there is no notion that Jip is returning the favour. Janneke behaves in line with traditional gender roles as she takes on the role of being the natural servant of the male.

Books being read and handed to children impact how children perceive the roles of men and women in society. Kneeskern and Reeder (2020) found that children being exposed to stories containing multiple chapters with a counter-stereotypic protagonist showed reduced endorsement of gender stereotypes. Research by Trepanier-Street and Romatowski (1999) showed similar results as they found that after being exposed to non-stereotypic literature, children were more likely to perceive that occupations are appropriate for both genders. Hence, one should be sensitive to the portrayal of gender egalitarianism when selecting books that are being read or handed to children. In other words, it can be debated whether children should still be exposed to books such as Jip and Janneke.

Only limited research has been done on gender egalitarianism in children’s literature and especially Dutch children’s literature. Hoorens (2006) researched Dutch children’s literature for children until six years old and found that boys and men were more frequently the main character than girls and women. This inequity is rather hidden as both, males and females, are presented on the cover. Also, there were more titles with female names than male names which indicates that males are regarded as the ‘default’ character and therefore do not need to be mentioned in the title. Moreover, she showed that women are more often presented in family and domestic contexts, whereas men were more often presented in professional contexts (Hoorens, 2006). However, in this study only books published between 2004 and 2006 were analysed and hence no attention was paid to the improvement of gender egalitarianism over time. Also, findings might be different or more elaborate for novels aimed at children above six years as these books are likely to include more and deeper interactions between males and females. Another more recent study by Van de Rozenberg et al. (2023) investigated the representation of gender and sexuality in Dutch linguistic and maths textbooks for secondary education. They concluded that women were underrepresented in both types of textbooks

but nevertheless were overrepresented in domestic tasks as well as in welfare, health and education professions whereas men were overrepresented in occupational roles, especially in STEM professions. This research aims to add to this existing knowledge by investigating change in gender egalitarianism in children's literature over time for the ages of six to twelve years by researching the Week for Children's Literature Book Gifts from 1990 until 2020 published by the association for Collective Promotion of the Dutch Book.

The association for the Collective Promotion of the Dutch Book (CPNB, *Stichting Collectieve Propaganda van het Nederlandse Boek*) is a non-profit organisation aiming to stimulate people to read through launching inspiring campaigns as they believe that reading is life enriching (CPNB, 2023b). Every year the CPNB organises the Week for Children's Literature (*Kinderboekenweek*) to promote reading among children. One renowned Dutch children's author is asked to write a book for the ages of six to twelve years that is connected to the theme of the week and is gifted to all customers spending more than €12.50 in a bookshop. This Week for Children's Literature also contains other elements such as a picture book for young children, a poem, a contest for the best written (*Griffels*) and the best illustrated children's books (*Penselen*) (under twelve) of the year (CPNB, n.d.). Also, the CPNB develops a package of teaching material for primary schools to use during the Week for Children's Literature and, to illustrate, sold 56.000 of these packages in 2018 (CPNB, 2019). In the year 2011 423,000 (Becker, 2021), in 2018 360,000 (CPNB, 2019) and 2021 322,585 (Visser, 2021) copies of the Week for Children's Literature books have been gifted to customers. To compare, the bestselling book of 2022 sold 212.000 copies (CPNB, 2023a). Regardless of the declining trend in the issuance of the book gifts, the book is still being distributed widely. Moreover, writers of the book gifts and the picture book gifts often aim to convey an emancipating message to their large young audience. The author of the 2020 edition picture book, Mylo Freeman, stated that she aimed to enhance the positive representation of children of colour in children's books (Maliepaard, 2020) and Anna Wolz, the writer of the 2019 edition 'Haaientanden', intends to write books with a deeper psychological layer to open up the discussion with children on serious topics such as illness, death and loss (Becker, 2019). Also, the author, Pim Lammers, who was selected for writing the poem for the 2023 edition is known for his books educating young children on inclusiveness and queerness (Becker, 2023). Unfortunately he stepped down as this year's poet after receiving death threats for the false accusation of being a pedophile (Visser, 2023).

Given that the Week for Children's Literature and the corresponding book receive considerable attention, it is valuable to research the level of traditionalism or egalitarianism in these books as children are impacted by the representation of gender roles in children's literature (Hoorens, 2006; Van de Rozenberg et al., 2023). Considering that each year a renowned author is selected to write the book, the Week for Children's Literature book gifts make up an adequate sample for investigating egalitarianism and traditionalism of gender roles in Dutch children's literature over time. Hence, the research question this thesis aims to answer is: *Has the portrayal of gender roles in Dutch*

children's literature become more egalitarian during the period 1990 to 2020? The aim of this research is not only to identify whether or not there is a change in gender role egalitarianism but more importantly how this change is presented in the text.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Social Role Theory of Sex Differences

According to social role theory of sex differences as proposed by Eagly and Wood (2012), similarities and differences of the sexes in behaviour mirror gender role beliefs. Gender role beliefs are a representation of how society distinguishes between social roles for men and for women. These social roles result from differences in the division of labour. In industrialised societies it is still more common for men than for women to be employed and to hold authoritative positions whereas women are often the main caretakers of the house and children. In case of women's employment, women tend to fulfil more caretaker roles at work as well. This division of labour originated from physical sex differences in which men enjoy more physical strength compared to women and women have the ability to bear children. These physical differences lead to task differentiation between men and women as certain tasks are accomplished more effectively by one than the other. Gender role beliefs emerge as people collectively believe men and women possess a different set of attributes that makes them more suitable for carrying out sex specific social roles. Gender roles are perceived to be inevitable and natural as they are believed to mirror innate attributes of the two sexes. Other factors that influence the division of labour are the local economy, social structures and ecology. Socialisation is performed by the society at large to prepare men and women for their gender differentiated roles through promoting character traits and abilities that are deemed beneficial for role performance (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

2.2 Historical Context and Feminist Waves in the Netherlands

During the past century, the position of women in society has changed drastically in the Netherlands. Until 1957, the year when the law of Lex van Oven became effective, women enjoyed severely fewer rights compared to men and were fully dependent on their husbands. Women had to be obedient to their husbands, had to follow the decision of their husbands where to reside and take on their husband's nationality. However, most importantly, when women got married they were deemed incapacitated (*handelingsonbekwaam*) or in other words, held equal legal status to a minor or a curandus. This incapacitation meant that women were not allowed to carry out activities such as employment, making their own purchases, opening bank accounts or travelling without the permission of their husbands (Sikkema et al., 2011). This major legal advancement in 1957 was followed by the second feminist wave (1960-1980) during which two feminist action groups;

‘Man-Vrouw-Maatschappij’ (*Man-Woman-Society*) and the ‘Dolle Minas’ fought for the abolition of lawful discrimination against women, legalising abortion, childcare and female participation in the labour market. There was a growing awareness and knowledge of how deeply rooted gender inequality was in society. This led, in addition to the autonomous women’s movements, to the formation of women’s groups and organisations in labour unions and political parties. Also, groups of feminist men organised themselves into emancipation movements for men, supporting the majority of the ideals held by the female feminists. The government, pressured by feminist initiators, started pursuing emancipated policies and feminist civil servants fought for the integration of gender equality into the law (Atria, 2016). The second feminist wave booked its first success with the acceptance of the law on equal pay for women and men (*Wet gelijk loon voor vrouwen en mannen*) in 1974 followed by a law in 1980 that equalised the pay for male and female civil servants (Lavell, 2022). In 1991 rape within wedlock became punishable (Art 242, *Misdrijven tegen de zeden*), in 2000 a legal right to part-time work was installed (Art 2, *Wet aanpassing arbeidsduur*) and in 2022 the Dutch government issued a women’s quota for top management positions (*Wijzigingswet Burgerlijk Wetboek Boek 2*).

It is still under debate whether the third feminist wave has reached the Netherlands. And, whether third wave feminism exists, what it constitutes and whether it is significantly different from second wave feminism. In the essay *What is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay*, Snyder (2008) organises a wide range of popular as well as academic literature on third wave feminism into three main constituents. Firstly, third wave feminists let go of the idea that all women share a set of common experiences which unites them and opt for a more intersectional perspective, they aim to be inclusive and racially diverse, and acknowledge women to have multiple identities. Secondly, third wave feminists believe in sharing women’s personal anecdotes and stories rather than a coherent synthesis for all women and prefer action over theoretical justification. Lastly, they favour a non-judgemental attitude towards diverse views on sexuality. Whether there is a third feminist wave or not, the debate indicates the prominence of contemporary feminism (Snyder, 2008).

2.3 Women, Work and Education

Women’s employment and education has changed drastically since the mid twentieth century. Traag (2020) researched differences in work and education between women born between 1955 and 1960 and women born between 1975 and 1980 using data from the Dutch Central Agency for Statistics (*Centraal Bureau Voor de Statistiek*). She found that the working life for women in the 1955-1960 cohort differ substantially from women in the 1975-1980 cohort. The level of education for women in the younger cohort has strongly increased and even surpassed the educational levels of men. Not only did the level of education increase, also the choice of educational disciplines has changed. Women are still overrepresented in disciplines related to (health)care and society but the proportion of women in the fields of economics, law and tech has grown. Furthermore, women in the younger cohort are more often employed and tend to work more hours. They are employed in higher

occupational levels than the women in the older cohort as well as men from their own cohort. However, the majority of women participating in the labour market still do so part-time. The largest change is visible between mothers from the 1955-1960 cohort and the mothers from the 1975-1980 cohort. For women in the older cohort it was uncommon to work and have children. Only half of the women were employed and if they had children they usually worked a limited number of hours. This has changed drastically for the younger cohort as it has become more usual to be a mother and be employed at the same time. Also, mothers in the younger cohort tend to work more hours than mothers in the older cohort. However, the proportion of mothers working full time has not increased and mothers still tend to work fewer hours than fathers. No change in labour market participation was found for men and fathers born between 1955-1960 and men and fathers born between 1975-1980. The economical independence of women has grown but is still lower than that of men (Traag, 2020).

More recent data by the Dutch Central Agency for Statistics (*Centraal Bureau Voor de Statistiek*) in collaboration with the Social Cultural Planning Agency (*Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau*) shows that the upward trend in emancipation continues. Their latest emancipation monitor of 2020 (*Emancipatie Monitor*) presents that since 2014 more women have entered the labour force and the number of working hours by women have increased as well. In 2020 couples with children report to favour an equal division in the care of their children. However, the one-and-a-half earning model in which the father works full-time while the mother part-time, taking up the majority of the care responsibilities, is still the dominant division of labour. In 2019, 64% of women were economically independent and this rate is substantially higher than two years before (61%) (van den Brakel et al., 2020). Furthermore, there was a milestone in the equalisation of occupational status when in 2021 for the first time in Dutch history, the gender ratio of politicians forming the cabinet was 50/50 (Atria, 2021).

2.4 Societal Change, Education, Labour Force Participation and Gender Egalitarianism

Since the 1960's gender egalitarianism has been receiving increasing support in Europe (Kraaykamp, 2012) and the United States (Cotter et al., 2011). Thijs et al. (2019, p.594) define gender egalitarianism as: "[...] a belief system that supports equal rights, roles and responsibilities for men and women and, vice versa, opposes the notion that men and women have innately different roles [...]." and found that between 1979 and 2006 there was an upward liberalising trend in gender egalitarian beliefs in the Netherlands. Furthermore, they researched the effect of being exposed to educational expansion, secularisation and increasing female labour force participation on gender egalitarian beliefs and concluded that being exposed to educational expansion was the strongest contributor to the upward trend in support for gender egalitarianism. They argue that the positive effect of educational expansion further reinforced gender egalitarian attitudes through socialisation of the younger cohorts. Interestingly, the increase of women's labour force participation did not explain the rise in gender egalitarian beliefs independently from educational expansion. When controlling for

being subjected to educational expansion, an increase in female labour market participation was associated with even a decrease in support for gender egalitarianism and hence suggest that the positive effect of female labour force participation might be fully induced by educational expansion.

2.5 Traditional Gender Roles in the Netherlands

As presented in the paragraphs above, both society and the division of labour between men and women has changed dramatically since the mid 20th century until now. The social structure has reformed in the sense that women have become more equal to men and enjoy more equal rights as a result of the feminist struggle and the consequent changes in politics and legislation. According to social role theory, this reformation of the social structure should have had an effect on the division of labour (Eagly & Wood, 2012). The division of labour between men and women has changed as women's and mother's labour force participation has increased as well as their working hours, occupational level, educational level and choice of educational discipline (Traag, 2020; van den Brakel et al., 2020). Social role theory suggests that this division of labour changes the gender role beliefs of the society at large (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Hence, it can be expected that, since the 1950s, gender roles have become less rigid and divisive and more egalitarian. The educational- as well as the labour market expansion of women signals women's capabilities and intelligence while weakening the gender role stereotype of women's main quality is to be a caregiver. In other words, it is within the line of expectations that gender roles have become less traditional over the years.

2.6 Traditional Gender Roles in Children's Literature

During the late 20th and beginning of the 21st century some research has been conducted in the field of traditional gender roles in children's literature. Poarch and Monk-Turner (2001) researched gender differences in the presentation of the characters with leisure, household or production artefacts in non-award winning books. They found that men were twice as often portrayed using a production artefact compared to women. When women were illustrated outside the house with a production artefact it was either in a leisure activity or in a teaching setting. Also, women were visualised more frequently utilising household artefacts and doing household tasks compared to the male characters. Furthermore, Anderson and Hamilton (2005) researched the representation of parents in children's picture books and concluded that the stereotype of the absent and incompetent father is endorsed in their sample of children books. Fathers are underrepresented and when they do make an appearance they are portrayed as inadequate and detached. Also, Oskamp et al. (1996) examined gender stereotyping in Caldecott award winning book between 1986 and 1991 comparing them to analysis performed on Caldecott award winning books in the years before and found an upward trend in gender equality as they identified an increase in the proportion of female characters and a decrease in gender stereotypical traits.

These findings show that gender roles as well as changes in gender roles are apparent in children's literature. As presented above, changes in the social structure of the Netherlands from the mid 20th century until now through the mechanism of social role theory are expected to have an influence on gender role beliefs. In addition, the findings laid out above present an upward trend in gender egalitarian beliefs through educational expansion and secularisation in the Dutch societies (see figure 1). Based on these arguments the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: The portrayal of gender roles in Dutch children's literature has become more egalitarian between 1990 to 2020.

Diekman and Murnen (2004) examined differences in gender roles in books that are labelled sexist compared to books that are labelled non-sexist. To do so, they evaluated different forms of sexism in the selected children's novels: unequal representation of the sexes, traditional idealisation of femininity, gender segregation, segregated work and family roles, status inequality and stereotypic personality. Both books deemed sexist as well as the books deemed non-sexist similarly depicted female-stereotypic personality, gendered leisure activities- and domestic chores. However, nonsexist books compared to sexist books, more often portrayed women performing male-stereotypical roles and characteristics. This paper adopts the different dimensions of sexism proposed by Diekman and Murnen (2004) to evaluate gender egalitarianism and hence proposes the following hypotheses:

H2: The portrayal of masculine and feminine personality traits...

H3: The portrayal of male and female stereotypic occupations...

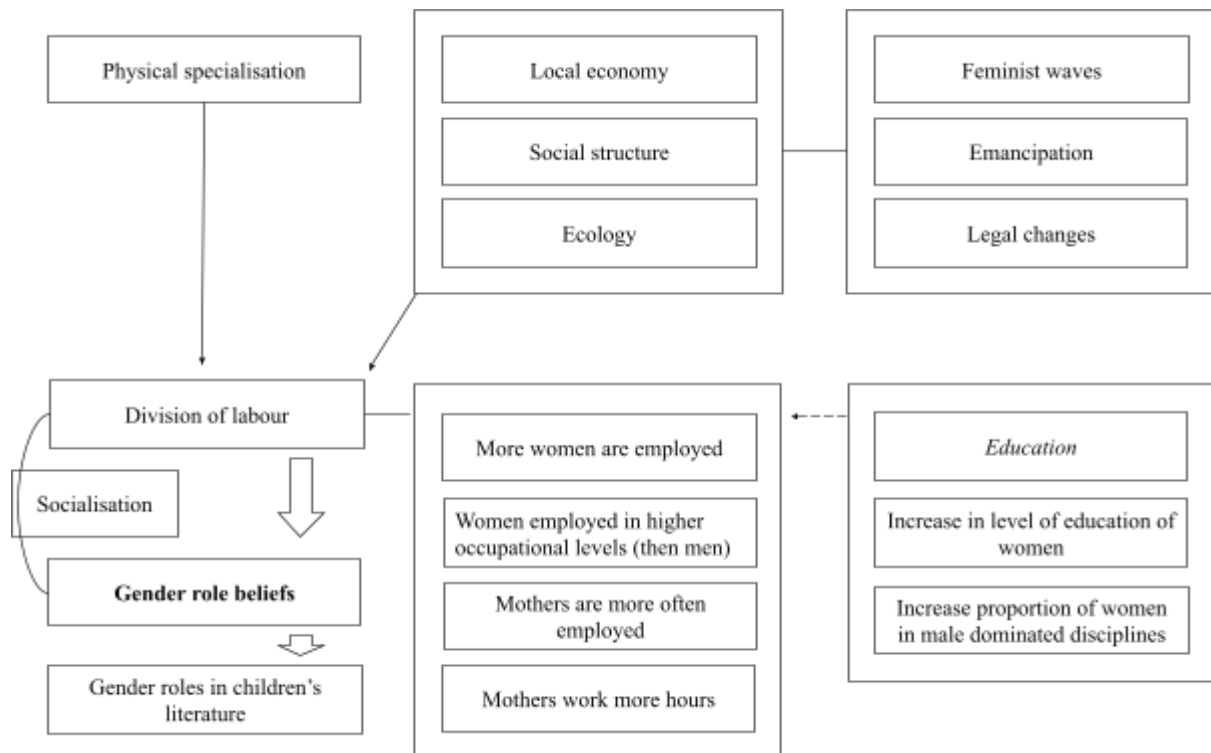
H4: The portrayal of male and female stereotypic leisure roles...

H5: The portrayal of male and female stereotypic domestic roles...

... has become more gender egalitarian between 1990 and 2020 in Dutch children's literature.¹

¹ The distinction between the two genders, men and women, will be made using the terms male and female which are most commonly used to differentiate between sex. However, as this paper does not differentiate between adults and children, the terminology of male and female is still deemed most appropriate as the English language lacks terminology to describe the gender of adults and children in one word.

Figure 1
Conceptual model



Note. The basis of this figure is taken from the model by Eagly and Wood (2012)

3. Methods

3.1 Methodological Approach

This research is conducted using qualitative research methods. The aim is to identify gender egalitarianism, traditional gender roles and counter stereotypic behaviour in the representation of characters in Dutch children's literature and consequently analyse how this representation has changed over time during the period 1990 until 2020. To gain insight in the latter, a sample of the Week for Children's Literature book gifts published between 1990 and 2020 was analysed.

3.2 Data Collection and Selection

The sample used in this study consists of the Week for Children's Literature book gifts (*kinderboekenweekgeschenken*) from 1990 until 2020. Each year a book gift is published and the books published in even years were selected for the sample (see table 1). When the book published in an even year was not available, the book of the next year was selected. The book of 1996 'De huiveringwekkende mythe van Perseus' (*The horrifying myth of Perseus*) was replaced with the book

of the year 1997 as the original book is deemed unsuitable for the analysis as this book retells the story of an ancient Greek myth meaning that the characters are not human nor are they behaving like humans which complicates the analysis of gender roles.

There were no digital versions of the book gifts available. Also, the majority of the books are not on the market anymore. Therefore, the books were collected through buying them from private sellers on the second-hand online market platform *Marktplaats.nl*. Three books from the years 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2016 were unavailable at the time of the data collection. The books were digitised by the author through photo scans, followed by a conversion of the PDF files to text files in order to make the text compatible with the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti. The pictures included in the books are omitted in this analysis due to the scope of this research.

Table 1

Sample

Year	Book	Writer	Gender
1990	Jorrie en Snorrie	Annie M. G. Schmidt	Female
1992	Het raadsel van de Regenboog	Jacques Vriens	Male
1994	Fausto Koppie	Anke de Vries	Female
1997	LYC-DROP	Paul van Loon	Male
1998	Mijn avonturen door V. Swchwrn	Toon Tellegen	Male
2000	Eiber!	Sjoerd Kuyper	Male
2002	Boris en het woeste water	Rindert Kromhout	Male
2004	Swing!	Paul Biegel	Male
2007	Kaloeha Dzung	Lydia Rood	Female
2009	De wraak van het spruitje	Jan Paul Schutten	Male
2012	Het Akropolis Genootschap & De slag om bladzijde 37	Tosca Menten	Female
2014	Zestig spiegels	Harm de Jonge	Male
2017	Kattensoep	Janneke Schotveld	Female
2018	De eilandenruzie	Jozua Douglas	Male
2020	De diamant van Banjarmasin	Arend van Dam	Male

3.3 Method of Analysis

Three time periods were constructed for the comparison of gender egalitarianism over time: 1990-1999, 2000-2009 and 2010-2020. Due to the unavailability of the years 2010 and 2011, it was decided to expand the period to 2020 rather than 2019.

Qualitative content analysis defined by Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p.1278) as: “*a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns*” was utilised. More specifically a deductive form of analysis: directed content analysis, performing content analysis based on a predetermined set of key concepts derived from theory and literature, was used to analyse the novels (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Atlas.ti 9.1 was used to perform the analysis.

To perform the content analysis, a codebook was created based on the questionnaire developed by Diekmann and Murnen (2004). This codebook copies the structure 8 of the 12 dimensions of gender egalitarianism which are focused on gender role and personality egalitarianism as proposed in the questionnaire: masculine personality, feminine personality, male-stereotypic domestic roles, female-stereotypic domestic roles, male-stereotypic occupations, female-stereotypic occupations, male-stereotypic leisure roles and female-stereotypic leisure roles. For the majority of statements corresponding to these dimensions in the questionnaire, sub-dimensions were created. Based on these sub-dimensions codes were generated suitable for text annotations (see appendix A). For the dimension masculine and feminine personality, a number of sub-dimensions are merged as meaningful distinctions among these sub-dimensions was unfeasible. Hence, the masculine personality traits *assertiveness* and *leadership abilities* as well as *strong personality* and *forcefulness* are merged together. The feminine personality traits *compassion* and *sympathy* as well as *affection*, *warmth* and *tenderness* are merged into one sub-dimension.

Two separate codes were generated for male and female for all sub-dimensions. The coding of the texts was done in two rounds. First, the codes as specified in the codebook were applied to the texts generating coded quotes. Codes were applied each time one of the sub-dimensions occurred. The same actions or behaviours could be coded with more than one code as more codes tended to be applicable to certain actions and behaviours. Second, these quotes grouped by dimensions, sub-dimensions and time periods, were analysed to explore the portrayal of different personality traits and gender roles in the three time periods and were accorded additional, more specific codes in the case of these typical or recurring portrayals of personality traits or gender roles. This detailed analysis of recurring portrayals of personality traits or gender roles allowed the researcher to analyse change in the more concealed personality traits and gender roles in the novels. Hereafter, the portrayal of the dimensions and sub-dimensions in the three different time periods were compared with each other to examine possible time trends in the portrayal of personality traits and gender roles (see figure 2). The coding consistency was checked multiple times at the start of the coding process as well as after all

data was coded (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For each novel, a summary of 200 to 350 words was written to provide clear context when interpreting the results.

In the case of characters performing gendered personality traits or engaging in stereotypic gender roles of the opposite gender, this will be interpreted as counter stereotypic behaviour. Counter stereotypic behaviour will not be directly treated as gender egalitarian behaviour as counter stereotypic behaviour is found most occurring among women adopting masculine traits (Eagly & Diekman, 2003). Hence, inferring gender egalitarianism based on counter stereotypic behaviour should be done with caution and only when similar levels of counter stereotypic behaviour for both males and females is recorded throughout the time period. Characters who only perform gendered personality traits or engage in stereotypic gender roles in line with their gender will be interpreted as adhering to traditional gender roles.

The result section will present the findings according to the 8 dimensions. Quotes will be provided only when they contribute to clarifying or illustrating the results or to support the description of a stand-alone but crucial occurrence.

Figure 2

Method of analysis

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Applying codes (sub-dimensions) to the text.	Analysis and coding of typical or recurring portrayals of personality traits and gender roles.	Comparing portrayals of personality traits and gender roles over the three periods.	Interpreting personality traits and gender roles as gender egalitarian, counter-stereotypic or traditional.

4. Results

4.1 Characters and Equality of Representation

The majority of the main characters in the novels published between 1990 and 1999 were male. In the case of ‘Lyc-Drop’ (1997), part of the story is protagonised by the most important female side character to show some events in her life that are important for the story but the main focus of the novel is still on the male character. The rest of the novels in this period with a male main character revolved around this male character and he also protagonises the story. In the book ‘Jorrie and Snorrie’ (1990) there are two main characters, one male and one female, who are equal protagonists of the story (see table 2).

The division between male and female characters in the period 2000-2009 is more evenly distributed. One should note that the book ‘De wraak van het spruitje’ (2009) is excluded from the

analysis of main characters as the genre of this book is non-fiction. The book ‘Swing’ (2004) presents two main characters: one male and one female. Both characters are the protagonist of the story and are equally represented in the book. However, the plot of the novel still revolves around the male character. ‘Eiber!’ (2000) is the only book in the sample with an independent female main character (see table 2).

Three out of the five novels included in the sample and published between 2010 and 2020 revolve around and are protagonised by the male main character. The book ‘De Eilandenruzie’ (2018) does not have a clear main character as the story is told from the perspective of different characters. When all of the characters come together, all three children, two male and one female, alternate being the protagonist. The book for the 2020 edition of the Week for Children’s Literature : ‘De diamant van Banjarmasin’ is a storybook with eight historical stories around the theme of *feeling at home*. Due to the lower status and unequal representation of females throughout history, many historical stories revolve around male characters. However, in this book Van Dam (2020) presents stories in which females are the main character, stories about females who have been overshadowed by males and stories that originally revolve around males told from the perspective of a female.

Table 2

Main characters

	Male	Female	Both
1990-1999	1992 Het raadsel van de Regenboog 1994 Fausto Koppie 1997 Lyc-Drop 1998 Mijn avonturen door V. Swchwrn		1990 Jorrie en Snorrie
2000-2009	2002 Boris en het woeste water 2007 Kaloeha Dzung	2000 Eiber!	2004 Swing!
2010-2020	2012 Het Akropolis Genootschap & De slag om bladzijde 37 2014 Zestig spiegels 2017 Kattensoep		2018 De Eilandenruzie 2020 De diamant van Banjarmasin

*Note ‘De wraak van het spruitje’ is excluded from this table

4.2 Personality

4.2.1 Masculine Personality Traits

4.2.1.1 Aggression

The sub-dimension aggression presented in a multiplicity of forms, is different for males and females and has been detected in the majority of the texts. Both genders are logged screaming or shouting when being angry in all three periods. In the period 1990-1999, females display physical violence on a smaller variety of occasions than males. Females exert physical violence when they protect or stand up for a friend or when they need to defend themselves. The perpetrator of bullying behaviour or violence against the friend has only been recorded to be male. However, physical violence was not recorded for females in the next two periods. In the period 1990-1999 males exert physical aggression as well as verbal aggression or cursing when bullying someone with the intention to hurt this other person. The perpetrators of this behaviour do not act alone but in a group of at least two males. The victim of this type of bullying is often left with physical injuries or damage to personal property (see table 3.1). In the period 2000-2009, bullying behaviour is again only documented for males only but they do so using aggressive language or body language rather than physical violence. In the final period, non violent bullying behaviour is documented for both genders but is an insignificant theme in most of the novels of this period except in 'De Eilandenruzie' (2018). Also, similar to females in the first period, males in all three periods exert physical violence when they need to defend themselves, protect other characters or stand up against a bully. In the period 1990-1999 these occurrences of physical violence were approved upon and even encouraged by adults. The physical violence exerted in the periods 2000-2009 and 2010-2020 does not lead to physical injuries or damages of personal belongings as in the period 1990-1999. Moreover, in the first period males displayed physical violence without a clear cause or motive. This behaviour has not been recorded in the following two periods. In the novel 'Kaloeha Dzung' (2007), the mother is abusive towards her son. She physically hurts him without injury and locks him up in the basement. The author aims to convey the negative consequences of abuse on the life of a young boy and to empower children in similar situations to ask the help of another adult. Hence, this type of aggression is clearly condemned by the author. Also, in the novel 'De diamant van Banjarmasin' (2020) males are shown to engage in violent activities such as going to battle, fighting in a duel or even murder. One should note that this book contains historical stories and hence these violent occurrences are inherent to the stories. Therefore, they do not mirror the beliefs towards violence of the time the book was written but the manner in which the violence is portrayed does. The author demonstrates how violence was used in history but also adds nuances to the use of violence such as conveying that violence is not the best solution (see table 3.2). Male characters in books published during the period 2010-2020, present anger when quarrelling with a friend or with their rival. In the novel 'Het Akropolis Genootschap & De slag om bladzijde 37' (2012) two friends are involved in a lengthy quarrel as both characters are unable to express and address their feelings. To summarise, the exhibition of aggression significantly reduced in the periods 2000-2009

and 2010-2020 compared to the period 1990-1999 as the variety of occasions in which physical violence occurs is reduced, as well as the severity of physical violence and the magnitude of bullying behaviour.

4.2.1.2 Dominance and Risk taking

Both genders are recorded asserting dominance over others in all three periods. They command action from a position of power or authority as well as command action to save the situation. In the period 2000-2009, villains are also shown to exert dominance over someone else by making life threats.

Moreover, both male and female characters are shown to take risks. They do so, in the first period, when they get involved in dangerous actions or perform bold actions, in the second period get involved in dangerous situations as well as potential hazardous situations and display all three forms of risk-taking behaviour in the final period. During the period 2000-2009, risk-taking behaviour by females was seen as natural such as in 'Swing!' (2004), whereas in other cases, such as 'Eiber' (2000) the female develops daring to take more risks throughout the book. In the final period, all risk taking behaviour is portrayed as natural for females as they do not receive more appreciation or compliments compared to the males for exhibiting this behaviour nor are they portrayed needing to grow the confidence for taking risks.

4.2.1.3 Assertiveness, Leadership Abilities, Taking a Stand, Strong Personality, Forcefulness and Defending Beliefs

Male as well as female characters defend their beliefs in a discussion and defend their personal truth, meaning that they defend a personal feeling or vision of what happened in a certain situation in all three periods of analysis. Furthermore, in all three periods, both genders are documented to be assertive and have leadership abilities as they are shown to initiate or take action as well as to take control of a situation. However, during the first period in the case of a larger group, the male main character is presented as the leader of this group. Taking control was mainly performed by females in the period 2000-2009. In the final period, characters, mainly female, need to take control of the situations when male characters cause problems due to irresponsibility or stubbornness. Also, characters of both genders take a stand in the novels. During the first period, females stand up for themselves during confrontations, and both genders stand up for others, whereas during the second period females take a stand in a larger variety of situations than males. They stand up for themselves in confrontations, in case of unwanted behaviour by another character or they stand up for oneself and others whereas males are only recorded to stand up for oneself in a confrontation. During the final period, this sub-dimension is most gender egalitarian as both genders take a stand by standing up for oneself in a confrontation, standing up for oneself as well as standing up for someone else. Interestingly, in this period females stand up for themselves against masculine dominance (see table

3.3). There are cases documented between 1990-1999 in which males as well as females, were afraid to stand up for him or herself in the beginning of the novel but throughout the story developed the confidence to do so. No such cases were reported for the period 2000-2009 but in the novel ‘Zestig spiegels’ (2014) the young male character develops the skills to stand up for himself. The sub-dimension *strong personality* and *forcefulness* are displayed by both males and females in all three periods.

Table 3

Masculine personality traits

No.	Period	Quote
3.1	1990-1999	<i>A cycling interdiction he decided. We always give dangerous cyclists a cycling interdiction ,’ and he started to kick the spokes. ‘Stop it!’ screamed Stijn, but that only made it worse. The gorilla [nickname for the bully] snatched the bike from his hands and threw it on the floor, he kicked the spokes until they broke and bent the wheel. (de Vries, 1998, p.24, translated by R.N. Visscher)</i>
3.2	2010-2020	<i>Jan nods. Magaretha is right. This tournament offers the opportunity to do business. It is much better to buy a piece of land than to fight over it. Jan prefers not to use weapons. Okay for fun ofcourse, but he hates going to war. He rather devotes his time to writing poems, singing and dancing. (van Dam, 2020, p.41, translated by R.N. Visscher).</i>
3.3	2010-2020	<i>‘Give me the knife, Roos,’ the snake man says. ‘Please,’ says Roos. ‘What’ ‘You need to say please. I am done with you bossing me around like I am a dog.’ ‘Give me the knife and stop whining.’ Roos chews her gum angrily, but does not step closer. (Schotveld, 2017, p.86, translated by R.N. Visscher)</i>

4.2.2 Feminine Personality Traits

To start, feminine personality traits occur in a more limited variety of manners and occasions and hence are a less significant theme compared to masculine personality traits. Both genders express compassion and sympathy in all three time periods. In the period 1990-1999 females expressed sympathetic pity whereas males expressed concern for the suffering of others. In the next period 2000-2009 males additionally expressed sympathetic pity. It should be noted for this period that the majority of findings for feminine personality traits result from the book ‘Boris en het woeste water’ (2002). They are included in the analysis as they are an important theme in this novel but should be interpreted with care. During the last period, 2010-2020, similar to the first period, females expressed sympathetic pity whereas males expressed concern for the suffering of others. During the period 1990-1999 and 2000-2009 both genders soothe hurt feelings of another character. However, females do so in a larger variety of situations. During the final period, soothing hurt feelings was not an

explicit trait for any of the characters. Both males and females are loving to children in all three periods. However, the manner in which they express this love is different for males and females and changes over time. In all three periods, females show physical affection such as hugging and kissing usually when showing kindness or providing comfort. It is only the last period that males express physical affection too. However, this physical affection is described in less detail than when females show physical affection (see table 4.1). Different from females, males have playful interactions with children in the period 1990-1999 and 2010-2020. During the first and the last period, males show kindness to children but do so in a rather reserved manner. In the first two periods gentle behaviour was only recorded for females whereas in the final period gentle behaviour was recorded for both genders. Understanding behaviour was recorded for both males and females in the periods 1990-1999 and 2000-2009 whereas in the final period, understanding behaviour was not common for neither males nor females. In all three periods, both genders express affection, warmth or tenderness. At last, both genders are sensitive to the needs of others but display this behaviour differently. In all three periods female characters are sensitive to another character's personal issues or emotions. In the novel 'Mijn avonturen door V. Swchworm' (1998) the sensitivity to the needs of others by females is emphasised through a story in which a female has an extra sense for feeling the insecurity from the male character and is able to come running towards him even if she is not close to give him the support he needs (see table 4.2). Also, in the novel 'Eiber!' (2000) the female main character lies to a male character in order to not hurt his masculinity (see table 4.3). During the period 1990-1999 also males are recorded to be sensitive to another character's personal issues or emotions. However, the corresponding behaviour to this sensitivity is different from that of females as they address these needs in a more reserved manner. In the following two periods: 2000-2009 and 2010-2020 males are recorded to offer help when sensing a need for it.

Table 4

Feminine personality traits

No.	Period	Quote
4.1	2010-2020	<i>'Does she need surgery?'</i> Luuk asked. <i>'No they just poke it in,'</i> dad said. <i>That was a joke, but it made Luuk almost faint himself and so dad quickly gave him a kiss.</i> (Menten, 2012, p. 22, translated by R.N. Visscher)
4.2	1990-1999	<i>I explained to her what I wanted. She only needed to think that I was nice rather than stupid if necessary. But she had to whisper it into my ear immediately. For the rest, she could do and think whatever she liked. 'That's okay' she said. 'But how do you know when you need to come running to me?'</i> I asked. <i>I had not thought about that yet. 'I have an extra sense for that' she said. 'An extra sense?'</i> I asked (Tellegen, 1998, pp. 39-40, translated by R.N. Visscher)
4.3	2000-	<i>"Missy," Sjonnie asks, 'were you -afreud- of me just now?'</i> <i>'A little bit,'</i>

4.3 Stereotypic Domestic Roles

4.3.1 Male Stereotypic Domestic Roles

Male stereotypic domestic roles have been recorded in the books mainly to be performed by males rather than by females. The sub-dimension *caring for the car* was not recorded in the sample of books and hence is not found to be a measure of male stereotypical gender roles in this book selection. The sub-dimension *decision making* was recorded in all three periods. The code was applied to situations in which two or more characters are involved but only one of the characters makes a decision that affects both characters. In the period 1990-1999, the male character is shown to have the decision making power, often within the family, and makes decisions based on his own opinion with only limited consideration of the wants and needs of the female character and the rest of the characters in the household. In the period 2000-2009, females are also shown to make decisions but this is not self-evident. In the book *Swing!* (2004) when the female character tries to make a decision she is manipulated by the male character who makes use of her caring character (see table 5.1). However, later in the story the female makes the decision for both the male and the female character and manages to execute this decision without even needing to consult the male character. On the other hand, the decision making in the familial setting during this period is again more traditional as the father appears to be the head of the family and decides the course of action without taking into consideration the wish of the mother or even acts contrary to the wish of the mother. In the final period, the results for *decision making* are divergent. Female characters can be the lead of a duo and make the decisions for her and the other male. In *'Zestig spiegels'* (2014) the female character of the duo decides at every new stage in the story what the next step will be (see table 5.2). However, similar to the previous periods, the father is still depicted as the head of the household making decisions without consideration of the wishes of the mother or even deciding contrary to her desires (see table 5.3).

The sub-dimensions *fixing things around the house* and *taking care of the yard* were solely recorded for the book *'Het Akropolis Genootschap & De slag om bladzijde 37'* (2012) and only for the male characters. The sub-dimension *paying bills* has only been logged for the book *'Fausto Koppie'* (1994). In this book the mother is the main caretaker of the children whereas the father is mostly absent. One of the few times the father makes an appearance is when his son is buying a road bike and his father promises him to pay the remaining part of the price for which he did not save enough (de Vries, 1994).

Table 5

Male Stereotypic Domestic Roles

No.	Period	Quote
5.1	2000-2009	<i>'We need to get away from here,' Teri said [female] again. 'We need to go home'. Joshua [male] was not planning on quitting. 'You should go home alone then' he said 'I am going to fly.' He only dared to say this because he knew that Teri would not abandon him. (Biegel, 2004, p. 83, translated by R.N. Visscher).</i>
5.2	2010-2020	<i>I [boy] thought we were going to walk but she climbed into the cart. [...] 'We are going to drive, she shouted. 'Come sit behind me in the turboklotser [fantasy racing cart]'. (de Jonge, 2014, p.13, translated by R.N. Visscher)</i>
5.3	2010-2020	<i>'No,' said dad. "But mom does want to do it." [son] "But I don't, so we are not doing it," said dad. 'Won't she stay angry?' 'No,' said dad. (Menten, 2012, p. 44, translated by R.N. Visscher)</i>

4.3.2 Female Stereotypic Domestic Roles

The sub-dimension *taking care of children* is an important theme in all books analysed. The gender of this caretaker as well as the relation to the child and the caretaking activities have changed over the years. In the period 1990-1999 females appear to be the main caretaker of children. Only mothers and sisters are recorded to take care of children and do so in a wide range of activities of both practical care such as preparing food or washing the child as well as cognitive care such as showing an interest, inquiring about feelings or being concerned about the child. Males such as fathers are unmentioned when it comes to the care taking of children. During the second period mothers are shown disciplining the child. Also, they are portrayed as the natural caretaker of children. Males are not involved in the caretaking of children. Fathers are either unmentioned or described as the absent father being uninvolved in the child's life (see table 6.1). In the book 'De wraak van het spruitje' (2009) whenever the author suggests to the young reader to ask for help when doing certain activities, he refers to 'adults' and thus does not make an assumption of the gender or social role of this person. The sub-dimension: *taking care of children* is most extensive in the final period. One must note that in the two novels situated in a familial setting, the mother is either temporarily absent due to hospitalisation or the main character stays over at his grandfather's. Hence, in these two books, mothers are out of the picture. The roles of fathers in this period are varied. Fathers are involved in emotional care by answering questions and giving explanations to children, being concerned about children, and reading to them. On the other hand, fathers are also depicted to be uninvolved in the life of the child and making up for this with grand gestures or are just being fully absent. Also, grandfathers are depicted giving explanations to children, babysitting, being concerned and showing an interest or inquiring about the child's feelings. Males were mainly recorded giving cognitive care rather than practical care. Mothers are less present in this period and are only shown to be caring for

the development of the child and to help them with schoolwork. In all three periods females are the main character when comforting children. Females are shown to understand the emotional state of children without the children telling them they are in need of comfort. In other words, they are presented to be the natural caregivers (see table 6.4).

In both the periods 1990-1999 and 2000 -2009 females, mainly mothers, are presented to do the laundry or to be responsible for doing the laundry. In the period 2000 -2009 children are also recorded to do the laundry. In 'Eiber!' the female child is hanging the clothes and needs to explicitly ask her male friend to help her (see table 6.2).

Moreover, in the period 1990-1999 only mothers are depicted serving food and drinks often without the help of other characters in the scene. Males are only shown to be serving drinks when no females were present in the scene. Also, only mothers are shown cooking during this first period. In the period 2000 - 2009, females in a larger variety of female roles such as an aunt or hostess are demonstrated to be serving food and drinks. It is also assumed in this period that both fathers and mothers can cook for the family. However, it still seems to be more common for the female to be doing the cooking. Interestingly, when cooking is presented as a profession rather than a domestic task, males appear to be more engaged with cooking than females. In 'De wraak van het spruitje' (2009), all chefs that are presented are male. However, in the cooking class, all assistants are female. In the period 2010 - 2020, only females, in again a variety of feminine roles, are presented serving food or drinks. Male characters are depicted cooking, however, they only do so when no female is present in the scene. When a woman enters the scene, the cooking is done by her. Also, the meals that are cooked by the male characters are unhealthy meals, especially liked by children and that are most commonly served on festive occasions such as birthday parties. Healthy, proper dinners are only cooked by the females in the story. In 'Het Akropolis Genootschap & De slag om bladzijde 37'(2012) the mother of the family is in the hospital. Therefore, the father needs to take care of the son. The father feeds the son pancakes or snacks such as chips. However, proper dinners are prepared by a female friend of the family, implying that the father is not able to do so (see table 6.3). The sub-dimensions *cleaning house*, *cleaning up after meals* and *assumption abilities cooking, looking after children and cleaning up* have only been applied to the text a limited number of times.

Table 6

Female Stereotypic Domestic Roles

No.	Period	Quote
6.1	2000-2009	<i>Your father wants you to come every other saturday.' 'Can't,' says Corijn. 'Socker' 'That is what I said, but that is what he would like. He says that he will bring you and pick you up. Well that is what he's saying. But you know how he is.'</i> (Rood, 2007, p. 17-18, translated by R.N. Visscher)
6.2	2000-	<i>"And you are also that if you keep on lying in the grass, laughing and letting a</i>

	2009	<i>woman hang the laundry on her own. Bies [boy] jumps up and runs to Dobbertje. He snatches a wet shirt from the laundry basket and gives it to her.</i> ” (Kuyper, 2000, p.6, translated by R.N. Visscher)
6.3	2010-2020	<i>Luuk and dad drove home. Luuk asked if dad was angry and dad said he wasn't. “We are all just a little upset,’ he said. “Are you craving pancakes?’ “We have eaten already right?’ said Luuk. “So?” And so dad baked some pancakes when we got home. (Menten, 2012, p. 43, translated by R.N. Visscher)</i>
6.4	2010-2020	<i>Aunt Jans entered with two ice creams, looked at them and immediately understood what was wrong because she is aunt Jans. She sat down next to Teun and stroked his hair. “Nothing will change, Teun,” she said. “What does a little bit of money matter? It’s not more important than you are?’ (Menten, 2012, p. 57, translated by R.N. Visscher)</i>

4.4 Stereotypic Occupations

In all three periods, there is a larger variety of masculine stereotypic jobs compared to feminine stereotypic jobs and are mainly performed by male characters. Note that occupations were not an important theme in any of the novels and hence cannot be analysed in depth. During the period 1990-1999 females were recorded to be involved in two types of stereotypical masculine jobs: being a chef or a minister and both genders were recorded to be a school principal. Both genders are recorded being employed in the feminine stereotypical job of being a primary school teacher. No cases are documented in which solely males are employed in feminine stereotypical occupations. In the following period of 2000-2009, females are noted to be employed in the following masculine occupations: orchestra conductor, chief of the zoo and recruiter and both genders are employed as a fisher(wo)man, researcher and advertisement expert. Only females are employed in stereotypic feminine jobs which are more varied than in the previous period. During the final period, one female is recorded to be employed as a baker, a stereotypical masculine job, and other females are noted in a variety of stereotypical feminine jobs. Males are recorded together with females to be employed as a primary school teacher. No males are recorded being employed in other stereotypical feminine occupations (see appendix B). The high variety of male employment in masculine jobs in combination with low variety of jobs for females indicates that female employment is an insignificant theme in the novels.

4.5 Stereotypic Leisure Roles

4.5.1 Male Stereotypic Leisure Roles

During all periods of analysis males are participating in a wider range of active activities than females (see appendix C). However, females (without males) do participate in active activities such as saving hedgehogs, crawling and flying in the period 1990-1999; singing, searching for someone,

making a fire and wandering in the period 2000-2009; or playing the saxophone, driving and fishing in the period 2010-2020. However, in the novel ‘Kaloeha Dzung’ (2009), young male characters express that certain active activities are more fun or more normal to do with another male rather than a female. Also, both genders are shown washing cars and cycling in the first period; running, climbing, rowing a boat and dancing in the second period as well as racing, running, dancing, investigating and swimming in the last period. Stereotypic interest and toys are recorded when a character explicitly states an interest for a certain interest or toy. No females were recorded being explicitly interested in male stereotypical interests or toys (see appendix C).

In the periods 1990-1999 and 2000-2009 both genders demonstrated or were encouraged to show physical strength and confidence. However, in the novel ‘Kaloeha Dzung’ (2009) it is made clear that the ideal for males is to be strong and for females to be beautiful (see table 7.1). During the final period only males are seen demonstrating physical strength. Also, in all three periods, both genders are recorded being adventurous, have the ability to play games or do technical jobs.

Furthermore, in the period 1990 - 1999 both females and males show noisy and messy behaviour. In the case of children, this behaviour seems to be accepted as children are not being punished for it by adults. In the period 2000 - 2009 noisy and messy behaviour is displayed again by both males and females. However, female characters show this behaviour in combination with responsibility whereas male characters do not. In ‘Eiber!’ the female character is hanging the laundry in a messy way but takes responsibility for getting the job done even when later the male character causes a mess again (see table 7.2). Similar to the previous two periods, both male and female characters display noisy and messy behaviour in the period 2010-2020. However, during this period, noisy and messy behaviour seems to have become more extreme for males whereas this behaviour by females is more similar to the previous two periods (see table 7.3).

Table 7

Male Stereotypic Leisure Roles

No.	Period	Quote
7.1	2000-2009	<i>The boys were powerhouses. You never saw old men or women here. The girls were beautiful and the boys strong as a horse. (Rood, 2007, p.11, translated by R.N. Visscher)</i>
7.2	2000-2009	<i>She does her task as quickly as possible. She throws the sheets and the pillow cases over the line and flops some pegs on them. Well on the line? Next to the line. Most pegs fall on the ground. It is okay because there is no wind, the laundry will stay put. [...] Bies [boy] swings his arms through the sheets and pillow cases. Half of them fall on the ground. Now Dobbertje needs to start all over again! (Kuyper, 2000, pp. 8-14, translated by R.N. Visscher)</i>
7.3	2010-	<i>Dad laughed so much that he spilled his soup. Luuk got up. ‘Dad Whowhowho! I</i>

2020 *am an Indian and I jump on a horse!’ He took a run-up and jumped on the couch with so much force that the couch ripped again. ‘Oops.’ Luuk slid aside, looked at the rip startles and then put his finger in it. Dad and uncle Bertus immediately got the giggles which lasted for as much as five minutes, with real tears and soup everywhere. “Oh well. We will buy a new one later,’ laughed dad. (Menten, 2012, p. 48, translated by R.N. Visscher)*

4.5.2 Female Stereotypic Leisure Roles

A smaller variety of passive or quiet activities (female stereotypic leisure role) has been detected than active activities (male stereotypic leisure role) and these passive or quiet activities have not been detected for the period 1990-1999. In the period 2000-2009 both genders are documented reading. During the final period, males are shown to be sleeping in, watching television or studying. Both genders again are recorded reading. Moreover, the variety of stereotypically female interests is smaller than stereotypical male interests. No males are found to be interested in stereotypically female interests (see appendix D).

5. Discussion

The research question this thesis aimed to answer was: *Has the portrayal of gender roles in Dutch children's literature become more egalitarian during the period 1990 to 2020.* To do so, fifteen book gifts published for the Week for Children's Literature from three time periods 1990-1999, 2000-2009 and 2010-2020 were analysed.

5.1 Research Findings and Hypothesis

There is a severe imbalance in the number male and female main characters, similar to the findings of Ward and Grower (2020) who found that at least 60% of the characters in screen media are male. This imbalance is a sign of gender role traditionalism on its own but also caused male characters to be more intensively analysed than female characters. The hypotheses will be accepted only if both genders express equal levels of counter stereotypic behaviour. This is to overcome the bias of females showing more stereotypically male behaviour but not vice versa as explained by Eagly and Diekmann (2003).

H2: The portrayal of masculine and feminine personality traits has become more gender egalitarian between 1990 and 2020 in Dutch children's literature.

Aggression, an often recurring sub-dimension of masculine personality traits, has changed over time as males initiate less physical violence as well as less severe physical violence springing from bullying behaviour in the last two periods compared to the first. Also, the use of physical violence for defence has become a less important theme for both genders. In all three periods, both genders show a multiplicity of dominant behaviours. There is no clear trend for the sub-dimension *risk-taking*. Both genders are recorded engaging in risk-taking, however, females were engaged naturally in risk-taking in the first period, whereas in the second period they were portrayed to both engage naturally as well as needing to develop the confidence to engage in risky behaviours. However, during the final period females were portrayed to engage in risk-taking naturally again. Furthermore, both genders dare to take a stand in all three periods. However, in the first period both genders had to develop confidence first to do so whereas in the later two periods this was only documented for males. In the period 2010-2020 females are shown standing up against masculine dominance. In all three periods both genders have strong personalities and are forceful, both genders defend their beliefs and both genders are shown to be assertive and having leadership abilities. Overall, the portrayal of masculine personality traits has become somewhat more egalitarian due to the reduction of aggression by male characters resulting them to behave more similar to females. However, there is no clear trend for the remaining sub-dimensions as the majority of masculine personality traits are expressed by both genders rather constantly over time and thus reflect counter-stereotypic behaviour by females whereas for the other masculine personality traits females do not show counter-stereotypic behaviour and neither an upward trend.

Both genders are shown to express compassion and sympathy, a feminine personality trait, in all three periods of time. Also, both males and females soothe hurt feelings in the periods 1990-1999 and 2000-2009, however, no such behaviour is recorded for the final period. Both genders are shown to be loving to children but do so differently. Males show a more masculine, more reserved way of being loving to children which is described in less detail compared to females. It is only in the last periods 2010-2020 that males show physical affection to children. Gentle behaviour was only deployed by females in the first two periods, however, in the last period males are also reported showing this type of behaviour. Understanding behaviour is shown in the first two periods by both genders, however, it is not a substantial motif in the final period. Both affection, warmth and tenderness as well as being sensitive to the needs of others are recorded for both genders in all three periods. There is a subtle change of males only being sensitive to other characters' personal issues or emotions and acting on this in a reserved manner in the period 1990-1999 to them offering help in the last two periods which indicates growth in counter-stereotypic behaviour in this sub-dimension. Overall, males have come to show feminine personality traits in a larger variety of occasions over time and the performance of these traits is more similar to females and thus show an improvement in counter-stereotypic behaviour for males in feminine stereotypic personality traits.

To conclude, this hypothesis will be rejected as no clear upward trend in counter-stereotypic personality was found by females, as their expression of male stereotypic personality traits remained a similar level of counter-stereotypic over the years. Only males showed an increase in counter-stereotypic behaviour in female stereotypic personality traits. However, females show consistently more counter-stereotypic personality traits compared to males. This finding aligns within the results of Aubrey and Harrison (2004) who found in a sample of children's series broadcasted in the year 1999 that male and female characters show similar levels of male characteristics.

H3: The portrayal of male and female stereotypic occupations has become more gender egalitarian between 1990 and 2020 in Dutch children's literature.

Due to the unimportance of occupations in all novels, this dimension could not be analysed in depth. However, in all three periods, there was a larger variety of stereotypical male occupations compared to stereotypical female occupations. Also, males are employed in a larger variety of occupations compared to females. No males are occupied in female stereotypical jobs. This gender traditional division in occupation has remained consistent over the three time periods and therefore hypothesis three is rejected. These findings in children's literature are similar to the trends visible in children's screen media (Ward & Grower, 2020).

H4: The portrayal of male and female stereotypic leisure roles has become more gender egalitarian between 1990 and 2020 in Dutch children's literature.

During all three periods, males are participating in a wider range of active activities than females. However, females participate in active activities as well but this is not always fully accepted by the male characters in the periods 2000-2009. Also, no females are recorded to be passionate about any male stereotypic interests. In the periods 1990-1999 and 2000-2009, both genders demonstrated physical strength. However, in the period 2000-2009, there were scenes reported in which there was a clear distinction that females ought to be beautiful and males ought to be strong. In all three periods, both genders are recorded being adventurous, have the ability to play games or do technical jobs. Also, both genders engage in noisy and messy behaviour. In the period 1990-1999 this behaviour was portrayed similarly for both genders, whereas in the period 2000-2009 females show noisy and messy behaviour but only in combination with responsibility. In the final period, this type of behaviour grows more extreme for males whereas it stays the same for females.

A smaller variety of passive or quiet activities has been detected than active activities and these activities have not been detected for the period 1990-1999. Also, there is only a small variety of stereotypical feminine interest and no male characters who are logged to take an interest in them. This absence of feminine stereotypical leisure roles suggest that these roles are insignificant themes in the novels. Given that certain male stereotypic leisure roles seem to become more traditional whereas for

others no change has been reported in addition to the insignificance of female stereotypical leisure roles, this hypothesis needs to be rejected.

H5: The portrayal of male and female stereotypic domestic roles has become more gender egalitarian between 1990 and 2020 in Dutch children's literature.

In the period 1990-1999 males made the majority of decisions with little consideration of the other characters. In the period 2000-2009 females made decisions too, however, this was still not self-evident. Also, in the familial setting, decision making is still rather traditional in this period as the male is still the head of the household and makes decisions again without considering the desires of the other characters. The decision making in the final period is similar to the previous one, however, males make decisions explicitly contrary to the wishes of the female character. *Paying bills* has only been recorded in the first period by males. *Fixing things around the house* and *taking care of the yard* has only been recorded for males in the final period. Given that the male stereotypical domestic roles are still mainly performed by males, males show traditional role behaviour.

In the period 1990-1999 females are the main caretakers of children, males are unmentioned. In the period 2000-2009 females are portrayed to be the natural caretakers of children whereas males are still uninvolved or even explicitly absent. However, there are also references in which both genders are addressed for the care taking of children. In the final periods males are more involved in the care taking of children but only provide emotional care. Still, males are also mentioned to be explicitly absent. In all three periods, the serving of food and drinks is done by females. Moreover, in the period 1990-1999 only females are shown cooking whereas in the period 2000-2009 there is the assumption that both genders are capable of cooking. In the final period males are presented cooking only when there is no female present and no proper diners. At last, only females are presented to be comforting children and are shown as the natural, intuitive caregivers. In other words, females enact traditional role behaviour whereas males enact only limited counter-stereotypic role behaviour in the case of female stereotypic domestic roles and males enact traditional role behaviour in the case of male stereotypic domestic roles. Hence, this hypothesis is rejected.

Given that all hypotheses presented above are rejected, the main hypothesis *H1: The portrayal of gender roles in Dutch children's literature has become more egalitarian between 1990 to 2020* needs to be rejected too. It was expected that the portrayal of gendered personality traits and stereotypical gender role behaviour would become more egalitarian between 1990 and 2020 as a result of the changing social structure and the upward trend in gender egalitarian beliefs in the Netherlands. The rejection of *H1* in combination with the theory at the basis of this hypothesis is in line with findings by Matthes, Prieler and Adam (2016) who concluded that gender equality prevalent in a certain country does not affect gender stereotyping in television advertising. Hence, it is likely there is another mechanism behind the inertia of gender egalitarian roles in children's literature than the one proposed in this thesis.

5.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This sample of books selected for this analysis hold a certain bias as they are the book gifts for the Week for Children's Literature. As explained in the introduction the association for the Collective Promotion of the Dutch Book selects the authors who write these books. One of the objectives of this association is to increase book sales and therefore publish book gifts that are appreciated by the wider public. However, the choice of authors is still being made by a select group of people with a literary background and a certain set of norms and values. For this reason, these books do not fully reflect the average level of gender egalitarianism in Dutch children's literature. To better reflect this average, analysis of a sample of bestselling books would be more appropriate as this would reflect the level of gender egalitarianism in books that are preferred and read by the audience and thus could be most impactful.

Furthermore, not all books included in the sample were optimal for the analysis of gender roles. 'Mijn avonturen door V. Swchwrn' (1998) is a storybook with absurd or nonsensical highly metaphorical stories and hence a high number of different characters which complicated the analysis of personality traits and gender roles. Also, the book 'De wraak van het spruitje' (2009) was not fully suitable for this analysis as the genre of this book is not prose but rather a journalistic book for children. Lastly, 'De diamant van Banjarmasin' (2020) is again a story book and presents historical stories. It is clear that the author aimed to include gender egalitarianism while remaining historically correct and hence this book requires a different course of interpretation.

Moreover, there are possible biases imposed on this thesis by the researcher. This thesis has been written from the perspective that gender egalitarianism is a desirable phenomenon due to its positive effect on wellbeing (Van De Vijver, 2007) as well as that gender equality is a human right as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948). To reduce this bias, many clearly defined proxies are utilised to code the text as objectively as possible. However, text still requires interpretation when coding and hence is prone to bias. For this reason, it is also possible that the researcher has missed certain passages, actions or behaviours as she might not have interpreted them to be fitting any of the codes. Also, the analysis of the quotes and the consequent generalisations are prone to bias for the same reasons as mentioned before. To overcome these biases, it would be advisable to have a diverse team of researchers code the books and have the allocated codes compared to each other and checked for consistency.

Lastly, due to the qualitative nature and aim to investigate how the portrayal of gender roles has changed over the years of this analysis, the analysis is not sensitive to the magnitude of occurrences of these gender roles which is an important indicator of gender egalitarianism. Hence, it would be advisable to use mixed method analysis to reveal possible trends.

6. Conclusion

This research has shown that stereotypic gendered domestic roles, gendered leisure roles, gendered occupational roles and gendered personality traits have not become more egalitarian between 1990 and 2020. I hope that children's authors take these findings as a wakeup call and use the presented findings on the portrayal of gender roles to actively start writing gender egalitarianism into their literature. Perhaps we should regard *Jip en Janneke* as a relic of the past as we cannot forget that the paper children of today are the adults of tomorrow.

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8. Appendices

Appendix A

Codebook

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<i>Masculine Personality</i>	Defending beliefs	Female
		Male
	Independence	Female
		Male
	Assertiveness and Leadership abilities	Female
		Male
	Taking a stand	Female
		Male
	Strong personality and Forcefulness	Female
		Male
	Risk taking	Female
		Male
	Dominance	Female
		Male
	Aggressive	Female
		Male
<i>Feminine personality</i>	Sympathy and Compassion	Female
		Male
	Soothe hurt feelings	Female

		Male
	Affection, Warmth and Tenderness	Female
		Male
	Loving to children	Female
		Male
	Gentle	Female
		Male
	Understanding	Female
		Male
	Sensitive to needs others	Female
		Male
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<i>Male-Stereotypic Domestic Roles</i>	Fixing things around house	Female
		Male
	Caring for car	Female
		Male
	Decision making	Female
		Male
	Taking care of yard	Female
		Male
	Paying bills	Female
		Male
<hr/>		
<i>Female-Stereotypic Domestic Roles</i>	Cook or serve meals	Female
		Male
	Taking care of children	Female
		Male
	Doing laundry	Female
		Male
	Clean up after meals	Female
		Male
	Cleaning house	Female

		Male
	Comforting child	Female
		Male
	Assumption abilities cooking, looking after children and cleaning up	Female
		Male
<i>Male-Stereotypic Occupations</i>	Occupation (variety)	Female
		Male
	Stereotypically masculine jobs	Female
		Male
<i>Female-Stereotypic Occupations</i>	Stereotypically feminine jobs	Female
		Male
<i>Male-Stereotypic Leisure Roles</i>	Traditionally masculine toys.	Female
		Male
	Participation in active activities	Female
		Male
	Adventurous, ability at games and tech jobs	Female
		Male
	Physical strength and confidence demonstrated by or encouraged	Female
		Male
	Suitability noisy or messy behaviour	Female
		Male
	Stereotypical masculine interest	Female
		Male
<i>Female-Stereotypic Leisure Roles</i>	Traditionally feminine toys	Female
		Male
	Participation in passive or quiet activities	Female
		Male

Appendix B

Occupations

Male		Female	Both
1990-1999			
<i>Stereotypical masculine jobs</i>			
Conductor (train)	Occupation includes travelling for work	Minister	School principal (2/1)
President	Bicycle repairman	Chef	
Journalist	Green grocer		
Police officer	Janitor		
Duty manager of the Central Traffic Control Station	Lackey		
<i>Stereotypical feminine jobs</i>			
			Teacher (4/1)
<i>Other occupations</i>			
Newscaster	Writer (2)		
Baker	School inspector		
2000-2009			
<i>Stereotypical masculine jobs</i>			
Painter	Guard	Orchestra conductor	Fisher(wo)man
Restaurant owner	Food expert (2)	Chief of the zoo	Researcher
Shepherd	Inventor	Recruiter	Advertisement expert (1/1)
Merchant (2)	Chef (4)		
Businessman	Soup manufacturer		
Sailor	Ferryman		
<i>Stereotypical feminine jobs</i>			
Assistant		Fortune teller	
		Maid	

		Hostess	
		Assistant at cooking class	
		Psychologist	
		Caretaker	
<hr/>			
<i>Other occupations</i>			
<hr/>			
Servant		Singer	Member of advertisement team
		Market vendor	
<hr/>			
2010-2020			
<hr/>			
<i>Stereotypical masculine jobs</i>			
<hr/>			
Chairman-secretary	Adjutant	Baker	
Executor	Truckdriver		
Treasurer	Soldier		
Hardware store employee	Chief		
Guard	Carnival chief		
Musician (2)	Sultan (3)*		
Clown	Captain*		
Mailman	Reverent*		
Professor	Army captain*		
President (3)	Landlord*		
Secret agent	Governor*		
Doctor (2)	Merchant*		
Paperboy	Police inspector		
Oarsman*			
<hr/>			
<i>Stereotypical feminine jobs</i>			
<hr/>			
	Nurse	Teacher (1/2)	
	Seamstress		
	Cashier		

Witch

Flight attendant

Maid (2)

Other occupations

Photographer	Representative	Bartender	Factory employee
Party organiser	Archeologist		Writer
Painter (art) (2)	Waiter		

Appendix C

Male Stereotypic activities and interests

Male		Female	Both
Participation in active activities			
<i>1990 - 1999</i>			
Digging	Building a treehouse	Saving hedgehogs	Washing cars
Playing football	Speed biking	Crawling	Cycling
Driving a motorcycle		Flying	
<i>2000 - 2009</i>			
Swinging	Jumping	Singing	Running
Doing gymnastics	Doing a head roll	Searching for someone	Climbing
Hiking	Gathering wood	Making a fire	Rowing a boat
Fishing	Picking apples	Wandering	Dancing
Playing outside	Playing the trumpet		
Skiing	Ice skating		
Horseback riding	Hunting		
<i>2010 - 2020</i>			
Sliding of the bannister	Playing the organ	Playing the saxophone	Racing
Performing role play	Romping	Driving	Running

Jumping	Rowing a boat	Fishing	Dancing
Sletting	Doing tricks		Investigating
Playing football	Playing the violin		Swimming
Cycling	Playing board games		
Building a sandcastle	Playing cowboy		
Horseback riding			
Male stereotypic interest and toys			
<i>1990 - 1999</i>			
Football			
<i>2000 - 2009</i>			
Peeing high	Trucks		
Fishing	Building bonfires		
Motorbike			
<i>2010 - 2020</i>			
Smoking cigars	Mummies		
Planes	Electric toy animals		
Submarines	Soldiers		

Appendix D

Female Stereotypic activities and interests

Male	Female	Both
Passive or quiet activities		
<i>1990 - 1999</i>		
<i>2000 - 2009</i>		
	Enjoying a view	Reading
<i>2010 - 2020</i>		
Sleeping in	Whispering	Reading
Watching television	Praying	

Studying

Thinking

Stereotypical feminine interest and toys

1990 - 1999

Marriage

Dolls

Ballet

2000 - 2009

Popstars

2010 - 2020

Furniture

Makeup

Home

Gossip

Princess

Dolls
