

(Re)presenting disability:

A research focusing on the representation of people with a disability in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years.



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ABSTRACT

Marc de Hond (www.marcdehond.nl) and Ange Wieberdink from the organization *Heroes & Victims* (www.heroesandvictims.com) initiated an idea for a study to investigate the representation of disability on Dutch television. According to previous research, people with disabilities are underrepresented and subjected to misrepresentation in different media (e.g. Ciot & Van Hove, 2010; Briant, Watson & Philo, 2013; Devotta, Wilton & Yiannakoulis, 2013). Since 2016, more attention is paid to, among others, the media representation of people with a disability in the Netherlands due to the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The question remains, however, if disabled people are represented, and if so, how they are represented. The way of representation is important as according to Krijnen & Van Bauwel (2015) negative media representations have consequences for the self-identity and social identity of people with (and without) a disability. However, it is said that non-fictional content provides more authoritative exemplars than fictional content (Slater, 1990). Therefore, this study focuses on the non-fictional genre of serious talk show to investigate if and how disabled people are represented in Dutch television. In total, a number of 1010 talk show episodes were checked to determine whether they included a person with a disability. Using quantitative measurements, it was estimated that people with a disability were present in a total of 56 episodes. Subsequently, these 56 episodes were analyzed using a qualitative research method called critical discourse analysis. The analysis provided evidence for five existing discourses: *sport and disability*, *media products and disability*, *(means of) support and disability*, *tragic stories and disability*, and *mental disability*. In addition, the analysis provided the researcher with multiple cases in which people with a disability were randomly represented, without any emphasis being put on the disability of the guest or disabilities in general. To conclude, this research focused on how often and in what ways people with a disability were represented in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years. Based on the findings, it can be stated that people with a disability are not often represented in talk shows, and that role-diversity is very limited when they are. However, the results also show that the discourse surrounding disability is less negative than, based on previous research, could be expected.

KEYWORDS: *Disability, Representation, Talk shows, Media, The Netherlands*

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1. Introduction

On Thursday the 28th of March 2019, I am watching *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA), when Matthijs van Nieuwkerk, the host of the show, and Humberto Tan, the sidekick for that day, discuss what the present episode will be about. Van Nieuwkerk tells Tan and the audience that Kees Momma will be present that evening. “Autistic Kees” (DWDD, 29-03-2019, 00:00:52). The viewer might know Kees from a program broadcasted a few years earlier. In 2014 the Nederlandse Publieke Omroep (NPO) broadcasted a documentary called *Het beste voor Kees* [“The best for Kees”] (NCRV). According to Van Nieuwkerk, the documentary is one of the best watched documentaries from the last ten years. Ever since it was broadcasted, some people seem to think that all autistic people are like Kees, Kees seems to have become a stereotype for people with autism.

Whenever I mention that I work with disabled children, who often have multiple impairments like development disorders, physical impairments and autism, I am often asked: “Oh, like Kees?”. Every time it makes me sigh, because they are not at all similar to Kees. The way this specific autistic man was portrayed in the documentary seems to have generated an all-inclusive image of autistic people. In the “real” world however, there are multiple degrees of autism, and every person has his or her own story regarding the inconveniences that are experienced as a result of this impairment. Although Kees could be a role model for people with a disability, or at least autistic people with a similar story, his story does not represent, or cannot be compared to the story of all disabled people. As it turns out, disabled people, in this case autistic people, are often represented in a non-nuanced, simplified manner, that should, in my opinion, never be qualified as “true” or turn into the collective understanding of a disability.

Apparently, people with a disability are not the only ones being stereotyped by the media. There are multiple cases from different minority groups where members have also been represented in a stereotyped way. Take for instance the representation of people of color, or the representation of ethnic minorities such as the Moroccan people in the Netherlands, who have often been represented in relation to youth crime (Van der Woude & Van der Leun, 2013). However, much research on stereotyping has focused on these minority groups while the representation of disabled people is under researched.

Luckily, the representation of disability and disabled people caught the attention of the United Nations. Facts and figures, presented at the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, reveal that although people with a

disability form the world's largest minority group in the world, they are still scarcely represented in media (Kallman, 2017). Furthermore, according to Devotta, Wilton and Yiannakoulis (2013, p.1861) "media reporting has often continued to rely on stereotypical representations of disability". Disabled people are for instance portrayed as incapable, scary, lazy, pathetic or as monsters. The underrepresentation as well as the fact that most representation of people with a disability deals with negative stereotypical depictions, is problematic, as this only causes reinforcement of all types of prejudices (Kallman, 2017). This was the reason for Marc de Hond (www.marcdehond.nl) and Ange Wieberdink from the organization *Heroes & Victims* (www.heroesandvictims.com) to initiate an idea for a research in which the representation of disability on Dutch television is investigated. The information emerging from this study will eventually be used as a scientific base for a TV program currently developed by Marc de Hond, in which the role and the presence of disabled people on Dutch television will be questioned.

At the moment, diversity and fair representation are both hot topics in public (and academic) debates about media. Nevertheless, the focus seems to be on race, gender and sexuality instead of on disability (e.g. Tienhoven, 2017; Zantingh, 2017; Spraakmakers, 2018). According to Hall (1997) representation is the process of meaning-making through visual (image, video etc.) and verbal (language, sound) communication. Fair representation, in turn, deals with the authenticity of this representation. Does the constructed meaning represent reality in an authentic way (Dhaenens, Van Bauwel & Biltereyst, 2008)? And does the representation do justice to the represented subject?

Although the focus within these public debates seems to be on race, gender and sexuality, the issue of disability is slowly gaining attention. There are, for example, some Dutch television programs that focus on disability. One of these programs is *What if it was yours?* (*Je zal het maar hebben*) (BNN/VARA), which gives useful insights into the lives of people with a disability. *What if it was yours?* (BNN/VARA) mostly presents a positive narrative, and focuses mainly on success stories, emphasizing things the candidates *can* do and things they have overcome (<https://www.bnnvara.nl/jzhmh>). The showrunners highlight not only the medical perspective of the impairments these people cope with, but also the social limitations and barriers these people have to overcome. The presenter of the show accompanies the candidates during a regular day: he goes to work with them, hangs-out with their friends, and even experiences their impairments. This approach gives a glimpse into the lives of people with a disability and therefore provides 'us' (abled people) with information that can be used in dealing with our prejudices.

However, there are also programs that seem to reinforce our prejudices. This is shown in the story of Cheyenne Polderman. The editors of the show *The Undateables* (BNN/VARA), a dating program for people with a disability, invited her to join the program because of the naevus (a birthmark) on her face, and they assumed, without even asking, that the naevus caused her to experience limitations. Hence, she classified for becoming a candidate in the show. Cheyenne, however, did not want to join as she did not feel she was disabled by her impairment in any way (Smulders, 2017; KRO/NCRV, 2017). This critical response and other critical feedback the program got, might have been the reason for the name change. In the Netherlands, *The Undateables* is nowadays called *The Dateables* (BNN/VARA).

The case of *The Dateables* (BNN/VARA) thus seems to represent a whole other narrative: in this program, the showrunners focus on the differences between abled and disabled people. It is constantly questioned why it is so hard for disabled people to find love, and in search for the answer their differences with abled people are highlighted. Another example, one episode focuses on the difficulty of having a normal conversation over dinner when you have Gilles de la Tourette. In addition, the program mainly shows the main characters in awkward, emotionally insecure situations, in which they are very vulnerable, considering the fact that everyone finds it quite scary to go on a first date. Emphasizing disabilities in ways like these seems out of proportion. Television shows such as *The Dateables* (BNN/VARA) contribute to a negative representation of people with a disability, and this might in turn reinforce the prejudices against them. This reinforcement works as follows: if the stereotype surrounding disability is mostly negative, and the representation of disability on television is also negative, the prejudices will probably stay the same or even deteriorate. However, if the representation on television shows a more positive image, people will probably alter their prejudices against people with a disability.

Although roughly the same number of people with a disability is present in both programs, the way they are represented seems to be completely opposite. Both of these representations have very different consequences for the social, political and cultural meaning surrounding disability (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015). Therefore, in this research a lot of attention is paid to the notion of *fair* representation. In order for a representation to qualify as a *fair* representation, representations should be similar to and coherent with reality in such a way that an authentic image is created (Hall, 1997; Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015). Deciding whether something is similar to or coherent with reality, and therefore creates an authentic image, is however very difficult to do in an unambiguous way. The problem is that judging

whether something is represented in a fair manner is in fact a value judgement. The answer to the question: ‘Is this represented in a fair manner?’, is thus subject to different interpretations. For this reason, it is important to not only focus on the quantity of people with a disability in television programs, but also on the quality of the representation.

Entertainment programs such as *What if it was yours?* (BNN/VARA) and *The Dateables* (BNN/VARA) can have a great influence on people’s opinion and perspectives on certain topics such as disability, because people tend to form their opinions and perspectives based on what they see and hear in certain shows. For example, Holbert, Shah and Kwak (2003) show how certain types of entertainment programs, such as progressive dramas and situation comedies, hold a positive relationship with support for women’s rights, whereas traditional dramas, which obviously represent women completely differently, have a negative relationship with support for women’s rights. A similar process would for instance occur if people first watched *What if it was yours?* (BNN/VARA) or *The Dateables* (BNN/VARA) and were then asked about their perspective and opinion towards people with a disability. As the representation of people with a disability in *What if it was yours?* (BNN/VARA) is more positive than in *The Dateables* (BNN/VARA). The latter will probably have a more negative influence on the image and beliefs about disabled people than the representation of disabled people in *What if it was yours?* (BNN/VARA). This process is related to the cultivation theory that was founded by Gerbner (1998) it states that the more time people spend watching television, the more likely it is that their social reality and beliefs align with what they see on television. Yet, this process does not only alter the image of the other (social identity), the self-image (self-identity) is also affected by media images (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015). The social identity is created by what others expect from us based on these media portrayals, and the self-identity is what we expect ourselves to be based on these media portrayals (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015).

However, it is assumed that this is no straightforward process, as television viewers are critical. Therefore, it is expected that non-fictional content provides more authoritative exemplars than fictional content, as the portrayals of people within non-fiction programs are more likely to be perceived as more credible (Slater, 1990). Therefore, this project will focus on representations of people with a disability in Dutch non-fiction programs. Moreover, I have chosen to strengthen the argument made by Slater (1990) by differentiating between entertainment programs and more serious television programs. According to Munson (1993, p.3), more serious television programs such as talk shows function as “advice-giver, ersatz community, entertainer, and promotor”. All of these functions and the fact that these talk-

shows are non-fictional, thus have a great influence on people's opinion or perspective on the topics covered during show. Furthermore, I have chosen to focus on the last ten years in order to investigate whether time and changes within society, such as political or social changes, are meaningful for the way people with a disability are represented. Therefore, the following research question is addressed:

How have people with a disability been represented in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years?

In order to answer this research question, there needs to be an answer to a number of sub-questions, the first being:

How often have people with a disability been portrayed in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years?

The answer to this question will provide the researcher with numbers and percentages that are necessary in order to provide the full image surrounding representation of people with a disability within Dutch talk shows over the last ten years. Furthermore, the answer to this question will provide an interesting starting point for further research. It is assumed that the number or percentage will be relatively low, and will therefore trigger other researchers to investigate the representation of people with a disability in different media. It could for instance be investigated whether people with a disability are more often represented in fiction television programs. This quantitative exploration alone would leave a lot of questions unanswered, however, and therefore the second part of this thesis will be a more qualitative exploration in which questions such as 'What did they discuss?', 'With what words were they introduced?', and 'How did they talk about their disability?', will be answered. This qualitative part is guided by the second sub-question:

In what ways are people with a disability portrayed in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years?

2.2 Social and scientific relevance

As mentioned earlier, media reporting relies heavily on stereotypical depictions of people with disabilities (Devotta, Wilton & Yiannakoulis, 2013). This is problematic as it

reproduces negative cultural narratives and reinforces all kinds of prejudices against people with a disability. Moreover, this misrepresentation is alarming as it hinders both abled and disabled people. Firstly, abled people will be more hesitant to build relationships with people with a disability, because the latter are always depicted in a negative way. Secondly, it hinders the self-development of disabled people, as they will not have stimulating role models to look up to. As a matter of fact, their role expectations will decrease (Kallman, 2017; Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015). The decrease of role expectations and not having role models are problematic, as people tend to identify with images, other people or certain characters. This identification is often based on shared norms and values, a similar life story, but often also on physical similarities.

All of the above-mentioned cultural processes relate to certain power structures, by positioning this research within cultural studies the researcher hopes to identify these power structures. Analyzing the way disability is represented on Dutch TV over the last ten years, and specifically in Dutch talk shows, will expose these power structures by providing a cultural discourse that shapes the perspective on disability and disabled people in the Netherlands. According to Goodley (2011, p.19) "...disability studies is developing in glocal ways reflecting distinct regional contexts across the social sciences and humanities". By 'glocal' Goodley means that it is developing on a local and global scale. Within the regional and national context of the Netherlands, however, work needs to be done. Although our southern neighbors have done some research (e.g. Goethals, 2017; Vertoont, 2017), the field of disability studies is still relatively small. Since the Netherlands is a different country, with different social, political and cultural perspectives, it is necessary to perform similar research here well. As it might demonstrate a different image surrounding people with a disability. Moreover, according to figures from the Central Statistical Office of the Netherlands ('Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek') 29.1% of Dutch society had an impairment in 2018, based on the definition of the Global Activity Limitation Indicator (Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek, 2019). According to this indicator (GALI) people qualify for being impaired if they have been limited because of health problems in activities people usually do for at least the past six months (Lecerf, 2017). Even though within this research a slightly different definition is used, as will be explained in chapter 2, these figures indicate that almost a third of the Dutch population has an impairment. As the group of people with a disability appears to be this big in the Netherlands, the social relevance of this study should be clear.

For the previously mentioned reasons, this thesis aims at being one of the triggers for research related to disability studies within the Netherlands. Furthermore, through exposing

how often people with a disability were present in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years, and by highlighting the surrounding discourse, Marc de Hond will have enough information to design the framework for his program. Together, the initiating (Marc de Hond and Ange Wieberdink) and executive (Lotte van Slageren under supervision of Dr. Tonny Krijnen) parties are able to give advice and even recommendations to future program makers. In addition, both parties hope the research will provide new and original insights which will eventually help to decrease the social inequality for people with a disability. But first and foremost, it is the goal of the researcher to raise awareness regarding the representation of people with a disability, hoping that people will choose their language wisely in the future.

2. Theory and previous research

In this chapter, different perspectives towards disability are addressed using the disability matrix as described by Goodley (2011). Furthermore, the cultural studies perspective on representation will be explained (e.g. Dhaenens, Van Bauwel & Biltereyst, 2008; Hall, 1997) and a discussion on identity formation theory (e.g. Hall, 1997; Shakespeare, 1996) is provided. Next, a clear explanation will be offered with regards to the following concepts: disability, representation and talk shows. These theories, perspectives and definitions are important because they shape the way disability is perceived within this research. Together, they form a discursive framework in which disability can be analyzed.

First, in paragraph 2.1, the concept of disability will be defined. A short historical and national overview of the terminology is discussed. This results in four emerging perspectives on disability, defined by Goodley (2011) as the ‘disability matrix’. Moreover, it is explained which definition of disability will be used within the analytical part of this research. Then, in paragraph 2.2, the concept of representation is addressed. It is explained why fair representation is important, and the relationship between disability and media representation is discussed. This is illustrated by examples from previous studies. The last paragraph 2.4, highlights the talk show genre, and explains what it involves.

2.1 Disability

In the last century, people with a disability have been represented in a variety of ways. Yet, as was mentioned in the introduction, this has not always been done in a fair way. Over the years, the terminology used for people with a disability changed dramatically. In the Middle Ages, for example, people with a disability were called ‘idiots’. However, during the Enlightenment this changed to ‘mentally retarded’ and the word ‘idiot’ was no longer accepted (Van Gennep & Post, 2012). So, it started out with really bad words such as monster, freak, idiot and imbecile, and over time this gradually changed to less derogative terms, such as simple minded, impaired and disabled (Van Gennep & Post, 2012).

Nevertheless, all these terms spark negative connotations. What happens here is similar to the cultivation theory mentioned in the introduction, the more people hear these terms, the more they start to identify with it. People with a mental impairment will eventually believe they are simple minded, and will in turn be identified as simple minded by abled people. This can have negative consequences as the term simple minded might be enough to exclude someone from certain jobs or even from having social contacts.

To stop the use of this negative terminology, and thereby limit the negative social consequences, was one of the underlying goals of the United Nations (UN) when they realized the Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability (CRPD) in 2006. The guiding principles were: 1) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy, including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons, 2) non-discrimination, 3) full and effective participation and inclusion in society, 4) respect for differences, and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity, 5) equality of opportunity, 6) accessibility, 7) equality between men and women, and 8) respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities. What becomes clear from the outlined changes in terminology and the guiding principles from the CRPD, is that people with a disability are not always treated with respect and that, although things have changed, the terminology used for identifying disabled people still has a clear negative connotation.

The fact that disability is an ever-evolving concept becomes clear not only from the changing terminology but also from point E in the preamble of the CRPD (Rijksoverheid, 2016). The state parties to the convention: "Recognize that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (Rijksoverheid, 2016). However, in order to make the CRPD applicable all over the world, it is important to define how disability is understood in this moment in time. According to Goodley (2011), the Disabled People's International (DPI), a network of national organizations and assemblies of disabled people, distinguishes between impairment and disability. An impairment is defined as "the functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment" (Goodley, 2011, p.9). Disability is defined as "the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers" (Goodley, 2011, p.9). Thus, impairments often provide the medical context, while disability mostly relates to the attitudinal and environmental barriers people with an impairment come across. A paralysis for example, is a medical condition which makes certain movements impossible. However, it only becomes a disability when this person is in a wheelchair (which 'solves' the limitations to movement) but still not able to move around because the environment is not adjusted to wheelchairs. This is for instance the case when there are obstacles such as trashcans or lampposts in the middle of the sidewalk, and the person in the wheelchair is not able to move around them.

For the present research, it is important to highlight the difference between impairment and disability, because it focuses on disability and not on impairments. In order to fit into the box of disabled or handicapped, the impairment must thus cause attitudinal and environmental barriers (Goodley, 2011). Therefore, within the present study, only the impairments that cause attitudinal and environmental barriers, and which are irreversible, will be included. A visual impairment which requires that a person wear glasses or contact lenses, for instance, is not causing barriers. However, when this visual impairment is so bad that it causes blindness, it turns into a disability. Thus, the present research only focuses on impairments that cause attitudinal and environmental barriers, and therefore turn into a disability.

According to the previously mentioned definition of disability, disability is an ever-evolving concept. There are multiple perspectives and ways of understanding disability. Within the academic world of disability studies, there are four recurrent models (see *Figure 1*) of understanding disability, 1) the minority model, 2) the social model, 3) the cultural model, and 4) the relational model (Goodley, 2011). These models provide a central perspective and theme from which disability is researched in the academic world. *Table 2.1* presents a concise summary of their meanings and moral implications. The models are part of the discourse surrounding disability and each of them could be seen as discursive formation. In this thesis, these models are used to identify ways of thinking and talking about disability within Dutch talk shows over the last ten years. In this way, the visual and verbal content of the show can be understood. For Goodley (2011) these models are linked to specific national contexts. He states that the social model, for instance, represents a very British perspective, while the minority model, on the other hand, represents a very American perspective. In this thesis, however, I would like to argue that these models can appear intertwined, regardless of their national context.

The first model, *the minority model*, presents a perspective from which disability is seen as civil rights concern. The model originated in North America during the 1960s and 1970s, and was influenced by diverse civil rights movements such as the black, gay, lesbian and trans movements (Goodley, 2011). People with a disability are seen as being part of a minority group, and as for most minority groups, the prejudices and discrimination within society are a big obstacle. Within this model, these prejudices and discrimination against people with a disability are seen as an even bigger obstacle than the functional limitation or the medical impairments they suffer from (Smart & Smart, 2006).

After World War II, the social barriers approach, or *the social model* as it is often called, arose under influence of Marxist thinking. In this model, disability is caused by

oppressive social barriers (Goodley, 2011). People with impairments become disabled by society, and by society, it is meant that they are oppressed, discriminated and socially isolated by people, but also by law and institutions. A person with Gilles de la Tourette could for instance be excluded from performing a job as a waitress, as waitresses are supposed to be kind and considerate, which becomes a great challenge if you have vocal tics which make you curse uncontrollably. A cursing waitress is not typically socially accepted. Based on the impairment, this person becomes excluded, and is in turn disabled by society. In Great Britain, it is still the central perspective and theme from which disability is viewed and researched (Thomas, 2007).

The social model has been criticized by different researchers such as Barnes (1998), Davis (2006) and Vehmas (2008). The latter states that the problem lies with the different views about the purpose of research:

In Britain, the field of disability studies is firmly located in the politics of disability and the disabled people's movement. This is not so much the case in, for example, the Nordic countries, where leadership is located in the academy. (Vehmas, 2008, p.21)

This suggests that in Britain the academic world takes the social and political implications for disabled people into account. Their purpose lies in resolving issues for them, or clarifying certain things. This can be viewed as a bottom-up approach. Instead, in the Nordic countries, as will be explained later on, a top-down approach is adopted, and researchers in this country thus rely more on the relational model of disability. Academics research what they find interesting and worth researching, and they are less influenced by the concerns of disabled people themselves. Nevertheless, this distribution of power, between science, society, and the people it concerns, could be exactly the reason why the social model is nowadays still a widely-used perspective. It is within this model that disabled people can unite against society.

The third model that Goodley (2011) describes is *the cultural model*, which emerged out of the minority and social model based on cultural and literary critique. Theorists who adhere to this model highlight the reliance on an opposition. Disability can only be understood in relation to 'ability'. "Incapable, often, of being able to define what we mean by a normal or able body, we are more adept at describing an abnormal body and situating ourselves as far as possible away from this anomaly" (Goodley, 2011, p.15). Hence, ability is understood in relation to disability. Consequently, disability/disabled is something that will be everlasting, as people will need an opposite in order to explain ability/abled. A change in the

discourse of disability, will provide a cultural shift in the definition and meaning of both abled and disabled. If people with a disability are for instance more positively portrayed within media, current stereotypes and prejudices will be change. Moreover, the differences between disabled and abled, and the definition of abled will then have to be revised. This is the case because abled and disabled are binary opposites. If the definition of disabled becomes more positive than the definition of abled will be challenged and less natural, as it is supposed to have an opposite meaning. As a consequence, the power structures between them will change, a similar thing happened with the binary dichotomy black/white. The unequal binary opposition that favored white people over people of color gradually changed during the course of history. Although people of color are still discriminated, white people are no longer intrinsically favored as was the case during for instance the Apartheid in South-Africa or racial segregation in any other country.

In the last model, *the relational model*, disability is viewed as an interaction between impairment and the environment (Goodley, 2011). This model is often called the *Nordic relational model of disability*, as it originated in the Nordic welfare states. According to Tøssebro (2004), disability is seen as a relationship between body/mind and the environment in the Nordic countries. This means that you are only disabled if you experience environmental limitations, however as you are probably constantly moving during the day, the disability will be situational. This means that the disability is connected to a certain space or situation and therefore not always present. Tøssebro (2004) gives the example of a blind person: he or she is not disabled when speaking on the phone, and is furthermore particularly able when it is dark. Welfare states, such as the Nordic countries, aim at including all citizens (Goodley, 2011). The participation of disabled people is guaranteed by changing the environment, by for example using extra services or professional caretakers. People eventually become disabled if their own expectations, needs or opportunities do not match those provided by the state or the environment.

Table 2.1: The four models of disability. Source: Goodley, 2011, based on direct quotes from pp.13 and 17.

	Meaning	Moral implications
The minority model	People with disabilities (PWD) constitute a minority position in society, like people of color, who are devalued, stigmatized, discredited and discounted. PWD compromise a minority group that has been denied its civil rights, equal access and protection.	Society has devalued and marginalized disabled people to confer minority status. PWD are only offered peripheral membership of society.

The social model	Disability is a social construct. People with impairments are oppressed/disabled by society: they are disabled people (DP). Primary impediments are discrimination, social isolation, economic dependence, high unemployment, inaccessible housing and institutionalization.	Society has failed DP and has oppressed them through barriers that prevent access, integration and inclusion to all walks of life, including work, education and leisure.
The cultural model	Disability is a construction of culture and modes of production, in ways that provide a metaphorical crutch for the constitution of 'abled'. Disability can only be understood in relation the 'the normate', normalcy and ableism.	Cultural re/production constitutes disabled people as mere carriers of information and passive recipients of hegemony that is founded on the ambitions of 'able' people.
The relational model	People with disabilities are disabled through dynamic relationships of body/mind and the environment. Disability is created through three relation processes: (i) the person-environment mis/match (relationship/relational); (ii) disability is a situational or contextual phenomenon; and (iii) disability is a relative construct.	Disabled people are excluded from communities, services and professional practices because of a mismatch of expectations, biological needs and environmental opportunities.

As mentioned in the introduction, the way people think about themselves and the way people think about others is influenced by, among other things, images created in media. Together these media representations, and the real-life experiences of people, create ways of thinking and talking about certain topics such as disability. The same goes for the models of disability, they are influenced by media representations. What happens is that these discursive formations are widely accepted at a certain point in time and can even function as 'the truth'. Although one of the models might be more prevalent at a specific point in time, I assume that they can all appear intertwined.

2.2 Representation

In order to understand how media representations influence discursive formations surrounding disability, it is necessary to explain what the concept of representations entails. For this I would like to draw on the ideas of widely acclaimed scientists such as Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco and Ferdinand de Saussure as elaborated upon by Stuart Hall (1997).

According to Hall (1997), culture consists of shared meanings, values and beliefs. These shared meanings, values and beliefs have to be communicated somehow. In the present-day society, these meanings, values and beliefs are represented to us through a variety of media. These media use language to represent their ideas. In this research, 'language' is used in a broad and inclusive way. It not only entails spoken and written words, but it also includes any other word, sound, image, object or action that functions as a sign, for example

visual images, facial expressions, gestures and body language. Together, all these forms of language, both visual and verbal, thus produce shared meanings about things or people. In conclusion, one could say that representation is the way in which meaning is given to things that are pictured or described (Hall, 1997).

In order to understand each other, and to reach shared meanings or beliefs, it is important that people share the same social or linguistic conventions. This gives rise to a few questions:

“Does language simply reflect a meaning which already exists out there in the world of objects, people and events? Does language express only what the speaker or writer or painter wants to say, his or her personally intended meaning? Or is meaning constructed in and through language?” (Hall, 1997, p.15).

All these questions relate to the concept of representation. The first question relates to a reflective approach to representation. “In the reflective approach, meaning is thought to lie in the object, person, idea or event in the real world, and language functions like a mirror, to reflect the true meaning as it already exists in the world” (Hall, 1997, p.24). The second question relates to an opposite approach, namely the intentional approach to representation. This approach implies that words mean what the author or speaker intends them to mean. However, if the receiver wants to understand these words, he or she needs to use exactly the same linguistic rules and conventions. And this is often not the case. Take for example the story of a boy with autism who travels with the train (P. Wurschy, personal communication, April 10, 2019). He put his feet up on the chair in front of him, so when the railway guard comes along he asks in a semi-sarcastic manner: ‘Do you do this at home too?’, to which the boy replies in a serious way: ‘Yes, of course!’, leaving his feet to rest on the chair. Eventually, the railway guard fines him. This simple example illustrates that if you do not share the same linguistic rules and conventions, you cannot understand each other. Since the boy is autistic, he is not able to understand the latent meaning of the sarcastic question, while most ordinary people would have immediately put their feet down. Additionally, there can be a lot of meanings for words and images that have not been saved into a language, but make up a large part of our representational system. This is for instance the case when something is intended to be sarcastic, or if something is rather abstract. There are for instance a lot of abstract concepts that can be interpreted in multiple ways, and thus have multiple meanings. One person can associate an image of a wheelchair with disability and limitations, whereas

another person connects the same image to mobility and opportunities. Therefore, within this thesis I would like to use the constructionist approach to representation, which relates to the third question: "...is meaning constructed in and through language?" (Hall, 1997, p.15). According to Hall (1997, p.25) the constructionist approach "...acknowledges that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning in language. Things don't mean: We construct meaning, using representational systems – concepts and signs". These representational systems relate to the broad and inclusive meaning of 'language' mentioned before. They include all kinds of language: words, images, sounds and gestures. This means that, in the analytical part of this thesis, the focus lies with all these forms of language. Because together all these forms of language construct a part of the shared meaning about disability.

I write "part of", because all of the shared meanings and beliefs about disability can be captured in a discourse. Hall (1997, p.6) explains what discourses are:

"Discourses are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society."

Discourses thus help us find the right words for the right situations or objects, and through this these discourses basically help us structure the world around us. These discursive formations, as they are often called, share a great deal of power. According to Foucault and Sheridan (1991), these discursive formations produce forms of micro-power, that aim at standardizing certain behavior, and make a division in what is good and what is bad. These micro-powers within a discursive formation are invisible, but they define what is appropriate and what is not. They define "...what knowledge is considered useful, relevant and 'true' in that context; and what sorts of persons or 'subjects' embody its characteristics" (Hall, 1997, p.6). For example, the social model of disability produces micro-power in its own particular way. In this model, people with a disability are seen as disabled people and they are oppressed by society. This results in a micro-power that basically states that you can be disabled, but we (society) do not want you to bother us, and therefore we raise barriers that prevent you (a disabled person) to be integrated and included in society. People with a disability will eventually internalize that idea and shape their identity accordingly. Viewing themselves as not full members of society. The discourse surrounding disability produces and maintains

these relationships. All four models, or rather discursive formations, discussed in the previous section produces these mechanisms in their own particular ways. In the following subparagraph, it is further explained why these discursive formations and their power could be problematic for both abled and disabled people.

2.2.1 Representation and identity

In today's highly mediatized society, diversity and equality seem to be characteristics every company, authority or even person strives for. However, this strive for diversity and equality seems to be focused on ethnicity (e.g. Berry, 2000), gender (e.g. Collins, 2011) and sexuality (e.g. Batchelor, Kitzinger & Burtney, 2004). Trying to represent an image that is diverse and equal has been, and still is a great struggle, as multiple studies have shown that the representation of these marginal, and often minority groups, is problematic. The same goes for people with a disability: studies prove over and over that the representations of these people in news media and television is poor, and when they are represented, it is often in a stereotyped, marginalized or negative way (Briant, Watson & Philo, 2013; Burns, 2016; Ciot & Van Hove, 2010; Saunders, Lansdell & Bunn, 2018). This way of representation will have influence on the identity of people with a disability.

According to Krijnen and Van Bauwel (2015) identity involves social identity and self-identity. Our social identity is created by what others expect from us, whereas our self-identity is what we expect ourselves to be and what we think of that (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015). Media are considered to be of great influence for both types of identities. This was already established by Cohen & Young (1981) who explain that social groups shape their own image and identity through media, a process that Krijnen and Van Bauwel (2015) refer to as self-identity. Moreover, the social identity, the image and ideas about another social group, is shaped in a similar way (Cohen & Young, 1981). This works as follows, the media representation of for instance people with a disability conveys certain expectations and assigns certain characteristics to disabled people. Disabled people start internalizing these expectations and identifying with these characteristics, in such a way that they base their self-identity on it. Abled people on the other hand, will also assign these expectations and characteristics to people with a disability. So, if people with a disability are represented in media as being monsters, they will not only be identified as being a monster by others, but they will also identify themselves as being a monster. These media representations thus construct a large part of the discursive formation surrounding disability, and when they are repeatedly negative, the discursive formation surrounding disability will also be negative.

The concept of fair representation, as explained in the introduction, tries to overcome this often negative, marginalized and stereotypical way of representing minorities. Representations should be similar and coherent with reality in such a way that an authentic image is created (Hall, 1997; Dhaenens, Van Bauwel & Biltereyst, 2008; Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015). In order to give minority groups access to powerful or inspiring media images of themselves as well, rather than inferior images, it is important to represent these minority groups in a more balanced way. Balanced, means that there should not only be negative, stereotypical and marginalized images. Instead, positive media portrayals are needed as well. This could for instance be a news anchor in a wheelchair or a famous sportsperson being open about his learning disability, as long as people with a disability, or any other person belonging to a minority, still have examples to look up to. If this is not the case, the self-identity of people with a disability will become super negative, because as I explained earlier, they will start to internalize the negative expectations and characteristics that were represented in media (Cohen & Young, 1981; Gauntlett, 2008). Therefore, there need to be positive media representations and role models. In the following sub-paragraph, previous research to the representation of disability and disabled people will be highlighted.

2.2.2 Disabled representation

As mentioned earlier, multiple authors and studies show that the representation of people with a disability is poor, and that when they are represented, it is often in a stereotypical, marginalized and negative way (Briant, Watson & Philo, 2013; Burns, 2016; Ciot & Van Hove, 2010; Psaila, 2016; Saunders, Lansdell & Bunn, 2018). According to Psaila (2016, para. 7) for instance, people with a disability are represented as: “[...] pitiable and pathetic, an object of curiosity or violence, sinister and evil, the super cripple, as an atmosphere, as laughable, his/her own worst enemy, a burden, as non-sexual and as unable to participate in everyday life”. Additionally, several researchers focused on the representation of disability and disabled people in news media (e.g. Ciot & Van Hove, 2010; Briant, Watson & Philo, 2013; Devotta, Wilton & Yiannakoulis, 2013). Ciot and Van Hove (2010) found that there exist different categories of representing disability, that are strongly connected to the evolution of society. According to Ciot and Van Hove (2010) there has been a switch from a culture of protection to a culture of promotion for people with disabilities, which is closely linked to the socio-political development of their country of interest, Romania. This cultural switch, from protection to promotion, seems not to be limited to only Romania. Kallman (2017) and Mercado (2018) highlight the presence of success stories and positive media

exemplars of disability or disabled people. According to both Kallman (2017) and Mercado (2018), this manner of representation reduces or even reverses the effects of misrepresentation and underrepresentation. Representing success stories and positive media exemplars could ensure that people with a disability have positive role models, and that abled people feel no fear for disabled people. However, Kallman's (2017) study shows, that despite the fact that her undergraduate students got to see positive exemplar video clips of disabled people, they still showed a strong automatic preference for able-bodied people.

In one of the neighboring countries of the Netherlands, Belgium, there have been some research initiatives that investigated the representation and inclusion of people with a disability in Flanders. Tina Goethals (2017) used an innovative approach, which was, until then, not yet used within disability studies. She put the experiences of people with a disability themselves at the center of her research, and asked them to share their experiences with inclusion and exclusion. Among others things, Goethals (2017, p.75) concluded "...that persons with disabilities can be members of society, but still not fully able to, or want to participate. In other words, one can participate and still get the feeling not to belong." This feeling of not belonging can be increased by an overtly negative discourse. In line of this research, Susan Vertoont (2017) used a quantitative content analysis in order to discover the presence of people with a disability on primetime television in Flanders. As previously explained in this thesis, there is a difference between impairment and disability. Vertoont (2017) adopts all impairments in her research, regardless whether or not they cause disability. She distinguishes between health-related impairments, physical impairments, mental impairments and multiple disability (Vertoont, 2017, p.24). Although Vertoont (2017) uses a broad definition of disability, which included all before mentioned impairments, she concluded that the images we get to see are still very limited. In the sense that they show a very narrow role diversity, limited attention to intersectionality and limited interest in socio-cultural themes. It becomes clear that, although some media did their best to represent disability in a broad and neutral way, there is still the need for a more nuanced view on disability.

All these forms of representations mentioned above, function as transmitters of social norms and cultural images. They do not only shape the image surrounding disabled people, but also function as tools for the identity formation of disabled people themselves (Psaila, 2016). Although the studies of Kallman (2017) and Mercado (2018) prove that the discursive formations surrounding disability can be changed and can have a positive effect on the social and self-identity of people with a disability, the majority of these previously conducted

researches show that the image surrounding disability is still a negative and limited image. Images in which people with a disability are still scarcely represented, show a narrow role diversity, limited interest in different socio-cultural themes, and in which there is a lack of positive role models. This media representation, consisting of negative images, negative cultural representation, and an absence of positive role models, causes disabled people to think of themselves as inferior. That is in turn also reinforced by for example segregated education and negative social treatment (Shakespeare, 1996). The results of these studies reinforce the idea that misrepresentation and underrepresentation are a structural problem, which is alarming as it hinders both abled and disabled people in constructing an authentic image of disability.

It might be that the cause for this problem is rooted much deeper inside our cultural beliefs. According to Costera Meijer and Van Dijck (2001) a place where there is room to discuss such cultural beliefs is during talk shows. Hence, in the following paragraph this genre will be further explored.

2.3 Genre

As explained in the introduction of this thesis, this study focusses on TV talk shows. According to Munson (1993, p.3), these talk shows function as “advice-giver, ersatz community, entertainer, and promotor”. Although all TV programs seem to have the opportunity to inform us, entertain us, promote things, and maybe even give advice, TV talk shows have one characteristic most other programs do not have. According to Costera Meijer and Van Dijck (2001) TV talk shows can function as discussion platforms, where everything that concerns us as a community can be discussed. Costera Meijer and Van Dijck (2001) argue that things gain more meaning by talking about them. To illustrate this they give the example of often plain information provided in the news, and the new layers of meaning that can be added or discovered by talking about it. According to Leurdijk (1997) this is due to a number of characteristics, two of which seem relevant for the present study. Firstly, she argues that talk shows offer opportunities for minority groups to participate. Which provides the base for the second characteristic, namely, that the inclusion of these marginalized groups adds different issues and perspectives, which otherwise would be left out. Although I agree with the arguments she makes that talk shows offer these opportunities, in practice, the focus seems to be on ethnic minorities and gender most of the time, leaving people with a disability behind. This can be concluded from the project ‘Beeldvorming in media’, to which the Dutch public broadcaster NPO, the commercial broadcaster RTL and the media company Vice

Benelux cooperate. This project was an initiative by Women Inc. (2017), in order to have more women and people of color on television. As this initiative only focusses on the dichotomy between men and women, and between white people and people of color, there is even more reason to focus on the dichotomy between abled and disabled. The latter can be done by investigating the presence and role diversity of people with a disability in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years.

With the talk show genre, we can distinguish several subgenres, such as the celebrity talk show (e.g. *The Tonight Show*), and the confessional talk show (e.g. *The Oprah Winfrey Show*). Jane Shattuc (2001a) describes that the celebrity talk show genre focusses on interviews with people from the entertainment industry (e.g. actors, popstars and television personalities), sometimes however, politicians and common people are asked to join the show. The conversations held are mainly about "...a specific object or media event that the guest wants to promote (film, TV program, CD or tour). In exchange for the publicity, the guest usually divulges intimate details of their lives or work to please the audience" (Shattuc, 2001a, p.83). The confessional talk show, on the other hand, is based on the tabloid tradition of exploiting other people's misfortunes for profit. (Shattuc, 2001b) The misfortunes represented in these confessional talk shows, however, often have a strong relation with current social problems or issues.

This study focuses on a third type: the *serious talk show*. The serious talk show has a lot of similarities with the celebrity talk show. As well as the celebrity talk show, the present genre focuses on conversations with people from the entertainment industry (actors, musicians, popular artists, and television personalities). But in addition, the present genre also focusses on politicians, authors and average citizens whose stories can add to the construction of meaning to a certain topic. The guests always seem to be 'experts' in their field. Whether they come to talk about their latest media product or their personal experience concerning a specific current affair or issue, they are the 'chosen' ones, the ones who fulfill the role of role model. Furthermore, the present genre borrows one characteristic from the confessional talk show: there is a great focus on social problems. But not only social problems, but also current affairs and issues are discussed, meaning that the overall atmosphere of the show is generally serious and sometimes even educational (Costera Meijer & Van Dijck, 2001).

Furthermore, the setting and the interaction with the public of the celebrity talk show and the confessional talk show differ from that of the serious talk show. Most of the time, the serious talk show uses a more intimate setting; sometimes the public is not even present in the studio. Whereas the celebrity talk show and the confessional talk show are marked by the

interaction with the studio audience, the genre used within this study shows no interaction with the public in the studio, other than applause. Moreover, the host of the show is usually portrayed in the middle of the frame, surrounded by his or her guests, in order to be able to have a dialogue instead of the more interrogative nature of the celebrity and confessional talk show. Because of all the aforementioned features, that contribute to the serious character of this genre, this study will focus on the way disability has been represented in serious talk shows over the last ten years.

3. Research design

First and foremost, the goal of this research is to find out how often and in what ways people with a disability have been portrayed within Dutch serious talk shows over the last 10 years. Therefore, the following research question will be addressed: How have people with a disability been represented in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years?

Furthermore, this research aims at providing a well-developed and substantiated interpretation of the role people with a disability most of the time fulfill in serious talk shows. In order to come to conclusions, the following sub-questions will be answered:

- *How often have people with a disability been portrayed in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years?*
- *In what ways have people with a disability been portrayed in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years?*

In order to answer the research question, a mixed method design will be used, which is a method for conducting research that involves both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The two parts of the study complement each other as the quantitative exploration will provide numbers and percentages of how many people are actually present in serious talk shows, the results of which will become meaningful using a qualitative analysis. The qualitative analysis is necessary because, as we have seen in the introduction, representation in numbers can differ significantly from how people with a disability are represented. In the introduction, I compared the *The Dateables* (BNN/VARA) and *What if it was yours?* (BNN/VARA), which both have roughly the same number of people with a disability in their show, however, the way they are talked about and represented is completely different from each other. This difference can only be investigated by making use of both methods in order to see how the numbers differ from the manner of representation.

To provide the numbers and percentages for the quantitative part of this research, data are retrieved using the online archive of *Beeld en Geluid*. *Beeld en Geluid* is the only public media archive in the Netherlands that contains a large number of radio and television products, items, episodes and information of the Dutch public broadcasters. Furthermore, in order to double check the data provided by this archive, the websites of the chosen talk shows are used. This quantitative analysis consists of counting guests and checking whether these people are abled or disabled.

The qualitative exploration focusses not on *what* is represented but rather on *how* this is represented. Questions like ‘What did they discuss?’, ‘With what words were the people with a disability introduced?’, and ‘How did they talk about their disability?’, will guide the analysis. These questions were formed knowing that the main interest of a discourse analyst is the way people use language to construct meaning, identities and ideas (Tonkiss, 2004). Hence, the questions will guide the discourse analysis. Moreover, the focus will be on the latent level. Machin and Mayr explain that critical discourse analysis (CDA) tries to expose:

[...] strategies that appear normal or neutral on the surface but may in fact be ideological and seek to shape the representation of events and persons for particular ends. The term critical therefore means ‘denaturalizing’ the language to reveal the kinds of ideas, absences and take-for-granted assumptions in texts (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.4).

Hence, using CDA will eventually reveal the power structures that are present within the representation of people with a disability in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years. Tonkiss (2004, p. 246-247) gives a great example, that illustrates how language divides, stereotypes, and categorizes people:

In recent years there has been an increasing sensitivity to the language used to talk about disability [...]. This has been due to a perception that certain terms, such as *mental handicap*, have represented people in an inaccurate and negative way, so that people are now referred to as experiencing *learning difficulties* (Tonkiss, 2004, p.246-247).

Having the label ‘mental handicap’ results in encountering barriers up front, it suggests that progress cannot be made, whereas the label ‘learning difficulties’ suggests that people are still able to learn and make progress. Using CDA helps to reveal how verbal and visual communication are used to produce certain meanings and effects.

As Tonkiss (2004) points out, discourse analysis is largely data-driven. The four models (a, b, c and d) described within the theoretical framework (Paragraph 2.1) will be the discursive framework that provide sensitizing concepts for analyzing the data. Furthermore, multiple questions are stated as guiding principles during the analyses. These questions were previously formed by Vertoont (2017), who has given explicit approval for using parts of her

instrument. Using these sorts of definitions and key concepts from different critical theorists contributes, according to Jaipal-Jamani (2014, p. 6), to the “...validation of discourse analysis as it provides insights from a broader social and critical perspective”.

3.1 Data collection and units of analysis

The research focuses on disability in Dutch talk shows during the past ten years. The research focuses on three time points within these past years in order to encompass all ten years, being 2008, 2013 and 2018. Moreover, as the archive of *Beeld en Geluid* only entails media products from Dutch public broadcasters, the data sample unfortunately consists of talk shows from public broadcasters only. However, in order to give an overview as complete as possible, three different talk shows from three different broadcasters were included. They are: *De Wereld Draait Door* from BNN/VARA, *Knevel & Van den Brink* from the EO and *Tijd voor MAX* from Omroep MAX. All talk shows were broadcasted the last ten years, except for *Knevel & Van den Brink* (EO). The show stopped during the summer of 2014 and was replaced by *Jinek* (KRO/NCRV).

The Dutch public broadcasters have a joint mission and vision, in which they strive to be a binding factor in the Dutch diverse society. They state to do so by representing the multitude and multi-color of Dutch society within their programs (Jones Creative Productions, 2015). However, beside this mission and vision, the above-mentioned channels, BNN/VARA, EO, Omroep MAX, and KRO/NCRV, have their own mission and vision that appeal to a different target audience each. For BNN/VARA the target audience is two-fold, BNN solely focusses on young people, where VARA focuses in principle on the entire population (BNN/VARA, 2014). The EO, the evangelical broadcaster, mainly focusses on Christian people (Evangelische Omroep, 2016). Omroep MAX in turn, focusses on elderly people, older than 50 (Omroep MAX, 2014). KRO/NCRV has a catholic and protestant Christian tradition, however they focus on all ages (<https://www.kro-ncrv.nl>). By adding these channels together in one sample, it is assumed that a broad image can be created.

The data collection is done by using the archive of *Beeld en Geluid* and the websites of the chosen talk shows. The numbers and percentages for the quantitative analysis will be drawn by counting numbers of guests, and by determining whether they are male or female and able or disable. All guests from all episodes from all talk shows were looked at in order to determine how many disabled people were included. This resulted in checking a total amount of 1010 episodes, which together included 6129 guests. The sample for the qualitative exploration is drawn from the quantitative data using a purposive, nonprobability sampling

method. Although this sampling method is normally used in quantitative research, it is the most appropriate sampling method according to Babbie (2015), as there is one specific characteristic that needs to be fulfilled in order to fit to the purpose of the study. This characteristic is that there should be at least one person with a disability present in the episode. This sampling method brought the number to 56 episodes. These were eventually subjected to a qualitative analysis.

3.2 Operationalization and analysis

In order to collect the numbers and percentages of people with a disability that are represented in these talk shows, the researcher has to count the number of guests present in every episode and distinguish whether they have a disability or not. Within this research a disability is defined as an irreversible impairment that causes attitudinal and environmental barriers, this is further explained in paragraph 2.1. In this research, the guests only include the people invited to talk or share something inside the show; the studio audience or public are not considered guests. This resulted in 9 overviews, which can be consulted in appendix A. The numbers in each category were added up. The total numbers produced by this sum are processed using Excel, and will answer the first sub-question: How often are people with a disability portrayed in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years?

The qualitative analysis will be guided by a registration form. The registration form contains sensitizing concepts and questions, see appendix B. The questions on the form are selected from previous research from Vertoont (2017). Furthermore, the four models of disability (as explained in paragraph 2.1) serve as sensitizing concepts for analyzing the information registered on the forms. These sensitizing concepts and questions concentrate on 3 levels of information: level 1) General information about the show, episode and item, level 2) Information about the guest with a disability during the item and, level 3) Information about the behavior of the host of the show and the audience during the item. A short elaboration on these levels will follow: *General information*. General information is collected by the researcher, answering multiple questions. ‘What is the title of the talk show?’, ‘In which timeslot is the guest with a disability present?’, ‘On which channel has the episode been broadcasted?’, ‘What is the name and gender of the person with a disability?’, and ‘Is the guest with a disability represented in a random or non-random manner?’. A short description of the topic of the item is also given. Giving a short description of the topic is useful as I am trying to define the discourse surrounding disability as mentioned in paragraph 2.1. If there is a constantly recurrent theme, this could be identified as being such a discourse.

Furthermore, as explained in paragraph 2.2, meaning is constructed through language (image, text, sound etc.) and representational systems. Therefore, all information provided by these questions can contain valuable information.

Information about guest with a disability. The information about the guest with a disability will be retrieved answering the following questions: ‘How is the guest with a disability typified during the item?’ Possibilities ranging from ‘as a superhero’ and ‘as someone who cannot participate in society’ to ‘unclear’. Furthermore, it is registered whether the disability is observable during the talk show or not.

Information about the behavior of host and public. This information will be gathered by providing an answer to the following questions: ‘How is the guest with a disability introduced by the host of the show?’, ‘Which attitudes are represented towards the guest with a disability by the host of the show?’, and ‘Which attitudes are represented towards the guest with a disability by the audience during the item?’. The information that is provided by these questions on the registration forms will be analyzed with the sensitizing concepts such as the four models of disability in mind.

Tonkiss (2004, p.52) describes that the research process consists of three stages: “...selecting and approaching data; sorting, coding and analyzing data; and representing the analysis”. The first stage in the research process, selecting and approaching the data, already started before this thesis was written. The initiating parties (Marc de Hond and Ange Wieberdink) already decided what the research was about and the executive party (Lotte van Slageren under supervision of Dr. Tonny Krijnen) further conceptualized the research problem and decided that this study’s focus was on the way meanings of disability are constructed during serious talk shows from the Dutch public broadcasters during the last ten years. The next step, sorting, coding and analyzing data (Tonkiss, 2004), started with organizing the data into smaller chunks based on themes and terms. As will be presented in chapter 4, *sport* and *tragic stories* were such themes. The analysis became “...a process of sifting, comparing and contrasting the different ways in which these themes emerge within the data” (Tonkiss, 2004, p.254-255). It is important to look for patterns, but also for variation by paying close attention to any details or emphasis. The final phase of the process concerns developing an argument based on the analysis and finding a way to write it down.

3.3 Validity and reliability

Research needs to be evaluated, and generally it is believed that validity and reliability can only be measured with regards to quantitative research. Nevertheless, there are multiple tools

and practices that can be used to assess whether a qualitative study is valid and reliable. One of the ways in which validity is ensured within this research is by making use of multiple research methods and comparing the different kinds of results. Silverman (2015) calls this process *triangulation*: combining multiple theories and methods in order “...to produce a more accurate, comprehensive and objective representation of the object of study. The reliability on the other hand, is ensured by making the research process as transparent as possible. This is done by describing the methods in a sufficiently detailed manner in the first part of this chapter. Furthermore, the quantitative part of the study can be replicated without any restrictions. During the qualitative part of the analysis, categories were used in a standardized way, ensuring that any other researcher would categorize in the same way (Silverman, 2015). This was done using *low-inference descriptors*, which means describing the data as concrete as possible by for example making use of verbatim transcripts of what was said (Seale, 1999). In addition, to validate the results even more, the qualitative results were analyzed using a quantitative measure. A simple counting technique referred to as *autonomous counting* by Silverman (2015), one of the benefits of autonomous counting is that it can provide a summary for the entire data set which makes it easier to discover bigger patterns. By making use of the above-mentioned tools, techniques and practices, the researcher was able to retrieve stable and truthful findings, that reinforced and emphasized the social and scientific relevance of this study.

4. Results

In the following paragraphs the results of this research will be explained. In order to answer the research question, two sub-questions needed to be answered:

- *How often have people with a disability been portrayed in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years?*
- *In what ways have people with a disability been portrayed in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years?*

The results show that people with a disability are underrepresented in Dutch talk shows during the last ten years, and that if they are represented there are only three recurring discourses by which that is done. In the following paragraphs, this underrepresentation will be visualized, and it will be explained how these three different discourses have originated.

4.1 The times they are represented

In total a number of 1010 episodes was analysed. Together, a total of 6129 guests was invited. It turned out that only 66 of these guests were disabled and 6063 were able. Figure 4.1 shows the relative distribution of these numbers, and it can be concluded that the disabled guests accounted for just a bit more than 1% of all guests.

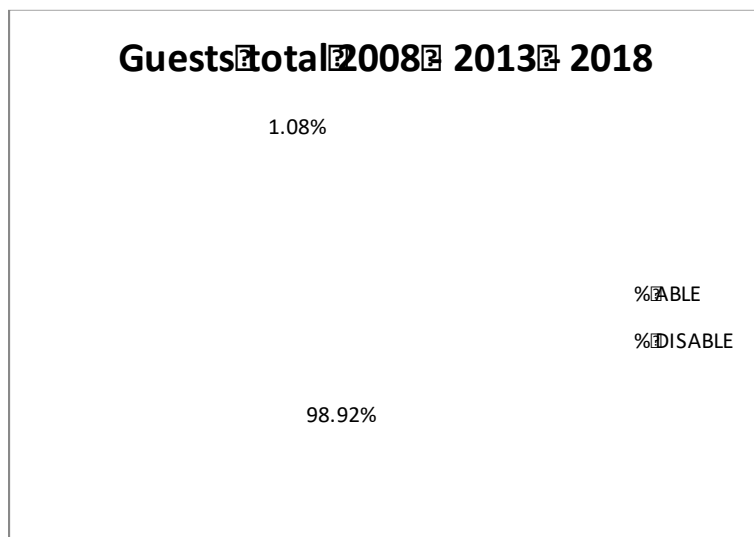


Figure 4.1 Relative distribution of disability all episodes 2008, 2013, 2018.

Yet, the number of people with a disability whom were represented in the talk shows was actually way smaller. The talk show hosts had a small group of people who came to represent

the entire group of people with a disability multiple times: the group consisted of just 42 different people, who kept recurring multiple times. This number will probably decrease the total percentage of disabled guests.

Furthermore, it was analysed whether there was a great difference over the years. From the year 2008, a total of 261 shows was analysed, and 1492 guests were invited. Of course, it was of interest for the researcher to see how many of these people had a disability. After researching all guests, it turned out that 20 of the 1492 guests had a disability. How these numbers were distributed between the three shows is shown in Table 4.1 and the relative distribution of these numbers is shown in figure 4.2. It turns out that in 2008 only 1.34% of the guests had a disability.

Table 4.1 Distribution of total numbers 2008.

2008	SHOWS	GUESTS	ABLE	DISABLE
KvdB	35	184	175	9
DWWD	174	1036	1031	5
TvM	52	272	266	6
Total	261	1492	1472	20

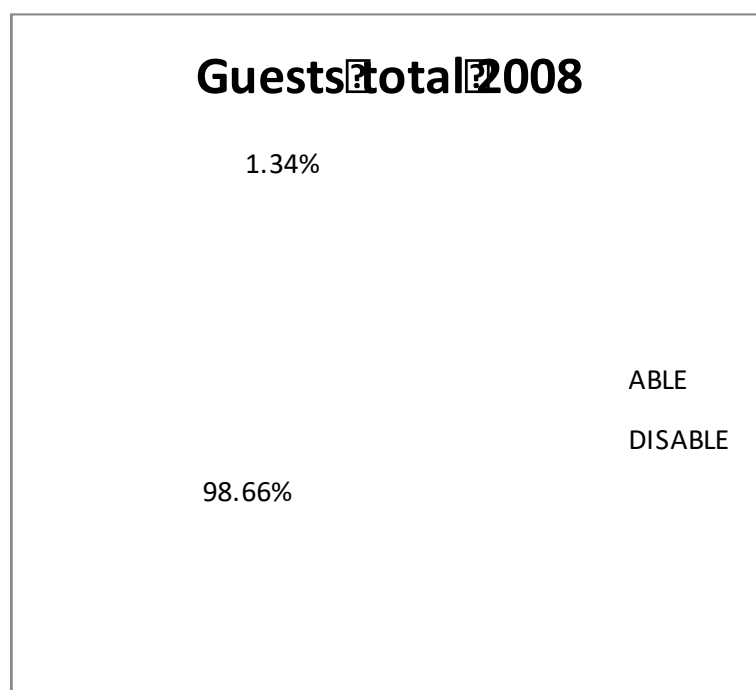


Figure 4.2 Relative distribution of disability all episodes, 2008.

Knevel & Van den Brink (EO) showed 35 episodes in 2008 with a total of 184 guests. It was found that 175 of the guests were abled and 9 disabled, though it must be noted that these 9

disabled people consisted of 3 recurring guests. This means that the same people with a disability were invited multiple different times. However, *Knevel & Van den Brink* (EO) will have a relatively high percentage of disabled people because the calculations were done using each time a person with a disability was present. *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) showed 174 episodes during 2008, with a total of 1036 guests. These guests consisted 1031 abled guests and only 5 who were disabled. *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) showed 52 episodes in 2008 with a total of 272 guests of whom 6 were disabled and 266 were abled. The relative distribution between abled and disabled can be seen in figure 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5.

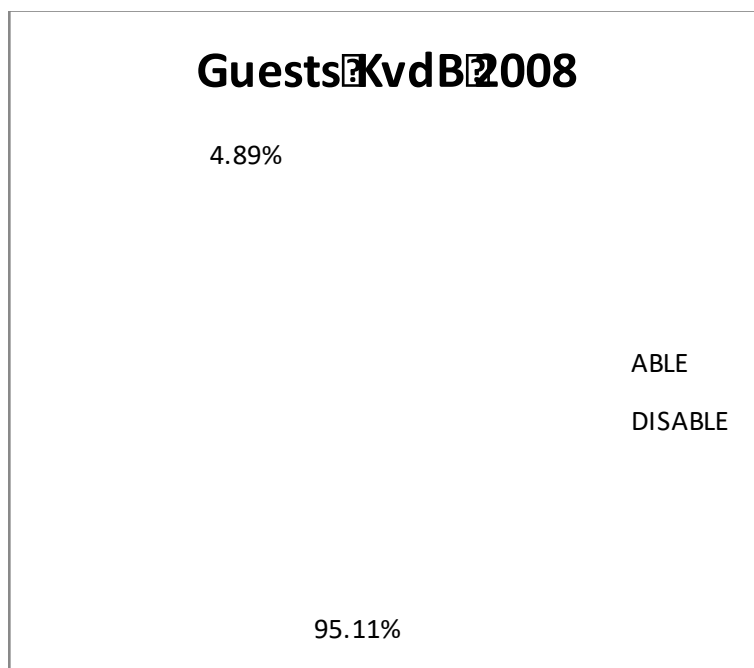


Figure 4.3 Relative distribution disability Knevel & Van den Brink (EO) 2008

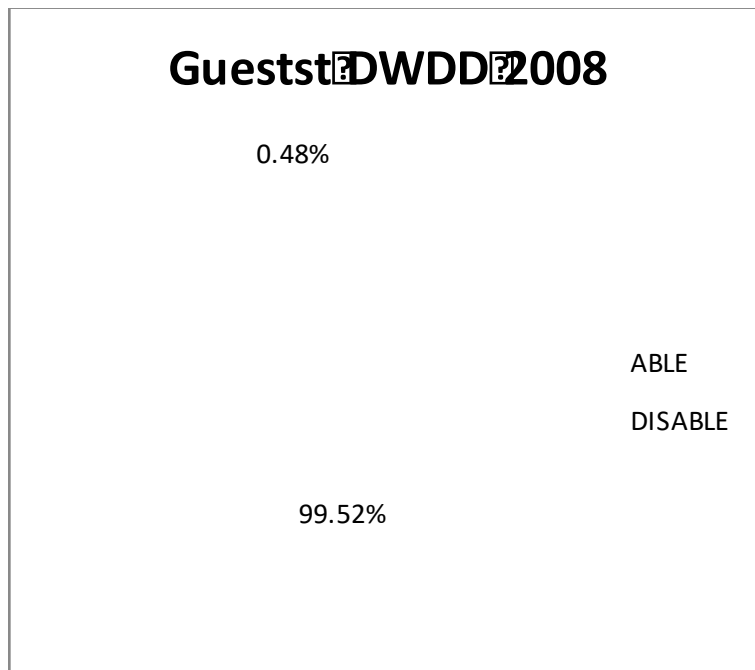


Figure 4.4 Relative distribution disability De Wereld Draait Door (BNN/VARA) 2008.

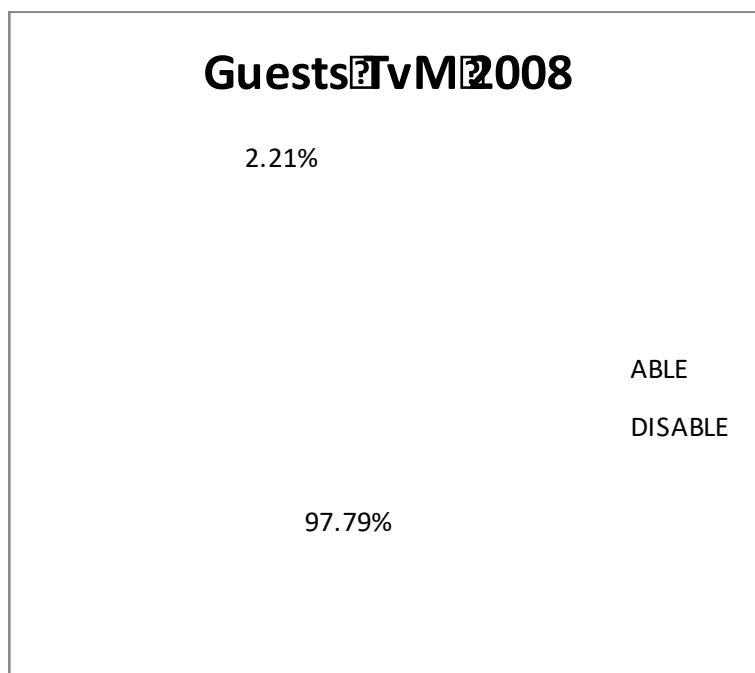


Figure 4.5 Relative distribution of disability Tijd voor MAX (Omroep MAX) 2008.

It turns out that 4.89% of the guests from *Knevel & Van den Brink* (EO) in 2008 were disabled. At *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) this number was considerably lower, just 0.48% of the guests were disabled. *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) was stuck in between with 2.21% of the guests having a disability.

From the year 2013, a total of 378 shows as analysed, and 2473 guests were invited. After researching all guests, it turned out that 23 of the 2473 guests had a disability. How these numbers were distributed between the three shows is shown in Table 4.2 and the relative distribution of these numbers is shown in figure 4.6. It can be concluded that in 2013, only 0.93% of the guests had a disability.

Table 4.2 Distribution of total numbers 2013.

2013	SHOWS	GUESTS	ABLE	DISABLE
KvdB	69	343	335	8
DWWD	169	1443	1431	12
TvM	140	687	684	3
Total	378	2473	2450	23

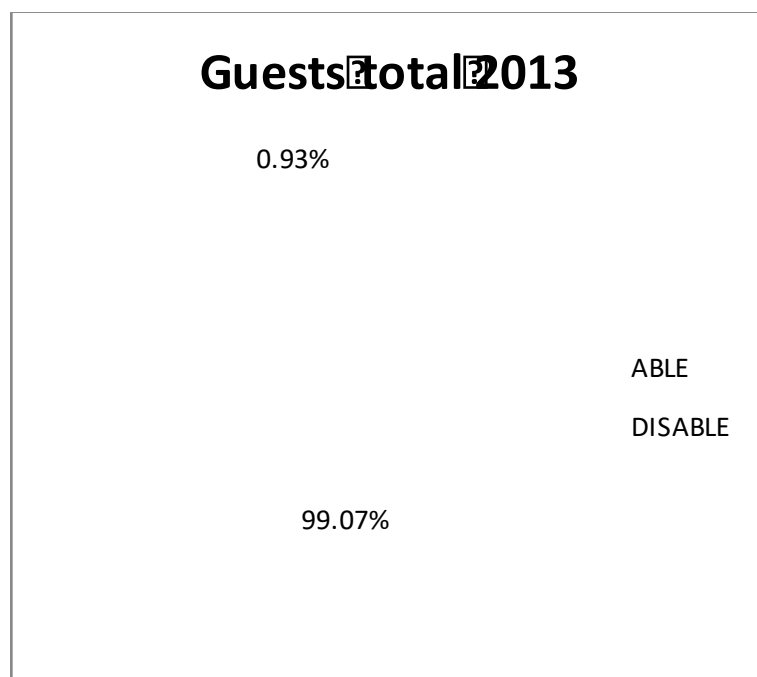


Figure 4.6 Relative distribution of disability all episodes, 2013.

Knevel & Van den Brink (EO) showed 69 episodes in 2013 with a total of 343 guests. It was found that 335 of the guests were abled and 8 disabled, though it must be noted that these 8 disabled people consisted of 5 recurring guests. *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) showed 169 episodes during 2013, with a total of 1443 guests. 1431 of the guests were abled and only 12 disabled. These 12 disabled people consisted of 10 different people. *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) showed 140 episodes in 2013 with a total of 687 guests of whom 3 were disabled and 684 were abled. The relative distribution between abled and disabled is

shown in figure 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9. It turns out that *Knevel & Van den Brink* (EO) had the highest percentage of people with a disability, namely 2.33%. *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) followed with 0.83% of the guests having a disability, and at *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) only 0.44% of the guest had a disability.

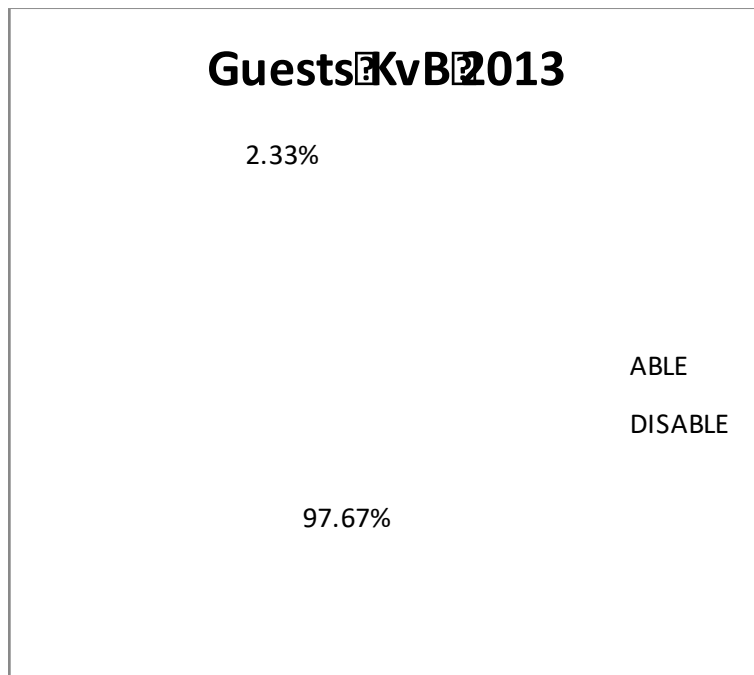


Figure 4.7 Relative distribution disability Knevel & Van den Brink (EO) 2013

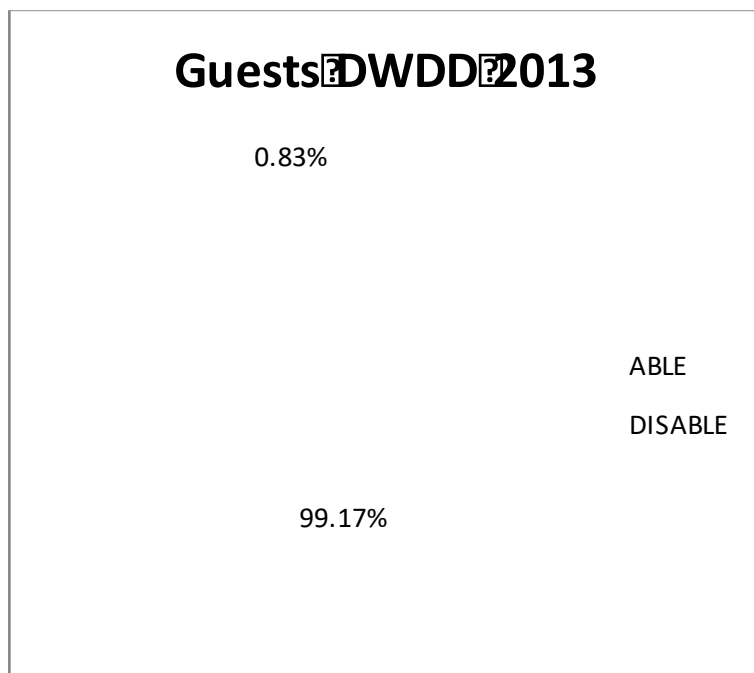


Figure 4.8 Relative distribution disability De Wereld Draait Door (BNN/VARA) 2013.

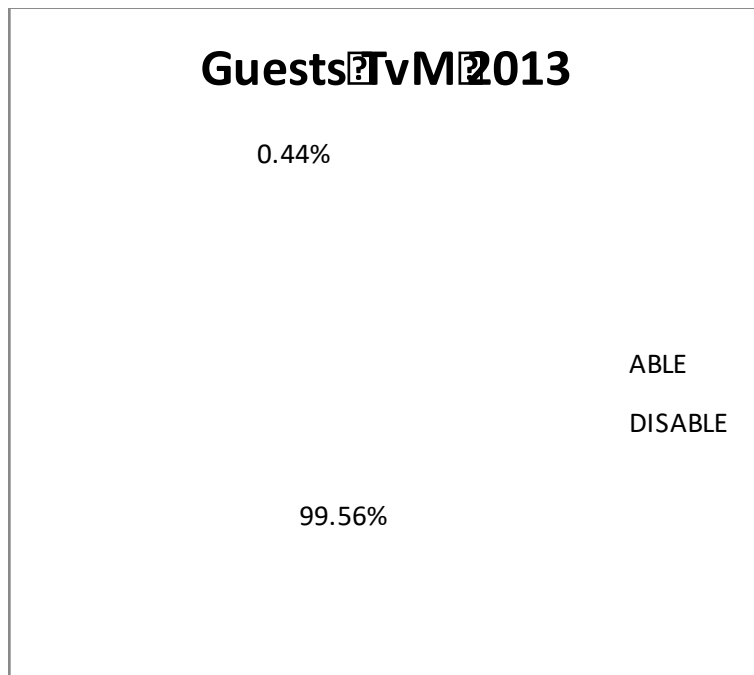


Figure 4.9 Relative distribution disability Tijd voor MAX (Omroep MAX) 2013.

From the year 2018, a total of 371 shows was analysed, and 2164 guests were invited. After researching all guests, it turned out that 23 of the 2164 guests had a disability. How these numbers were distributed between the three shows is shown in Table 4.3 and the relative distribution of these numbers is shown in figure 4.10.

Table 4.3 Distribution of total numbers 2018.

2018	SHOWS	GUESTS	ABLE	DISABLE
Jinek	85	458	455	3
DWWD	118	906	893	13
TvM	168	800	793	7
Total	371	2164	2141	23

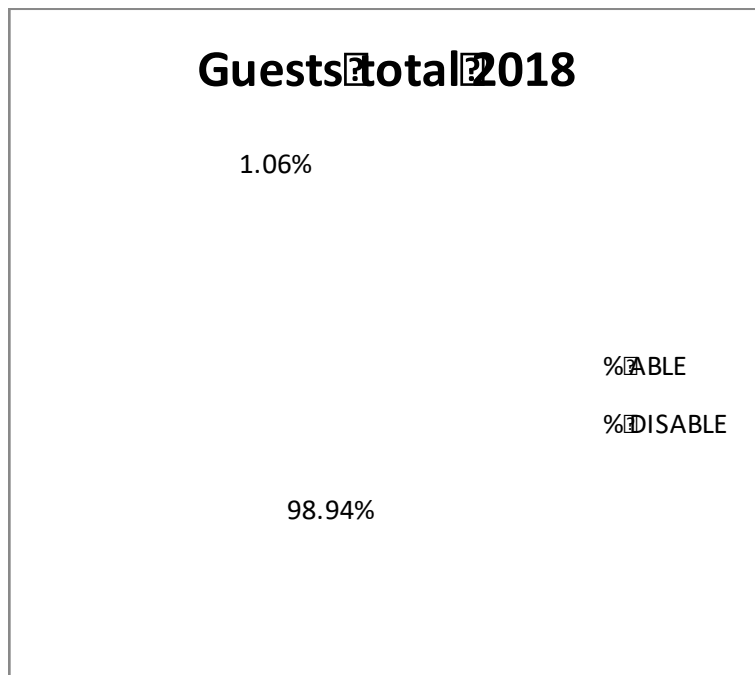


Figure 4.10 Relative distribution of disability all episodes, 2018.

Jinek (KRO/NCRV) showed 85 episodes in 2018 with a total of 458 guests. It was found that 455 of the guests were abled and 3 disabled. *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) showed 118 episodes in 2018, with a total of 906 guests, of which 893 were abled and only 13 disabled. These 13 disabled people consisted of 11 different people. *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) showed 168 episodes in 2018 with a total of 800 guests of whom 7 were disabled and 793 were abled. The relative distribution between abled and disabled is shown in images 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13.

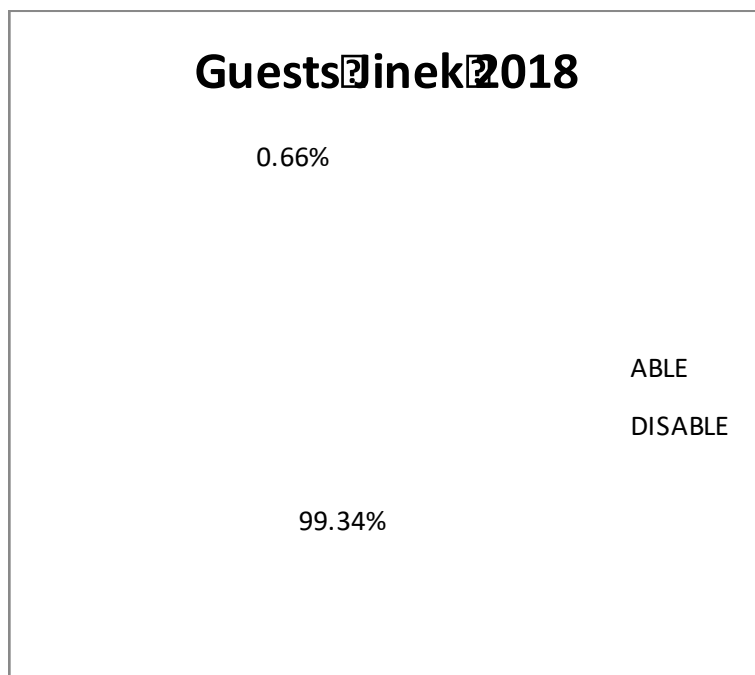


Figure 4.11 Relative distribution disability Jinek (KRONCRV) 2018.

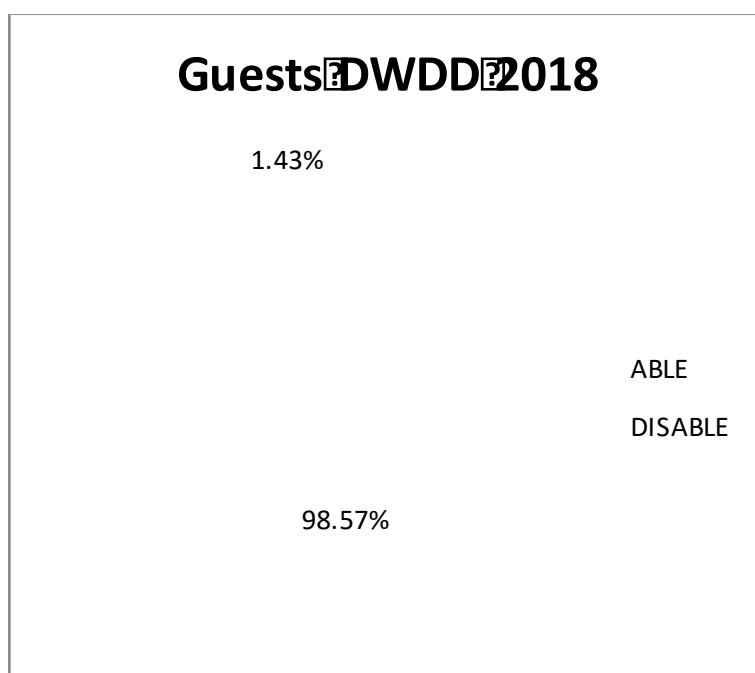


Figure 4.12 Relative distribution disability De Wereld Draait Door (BNN/VARA) 2018.

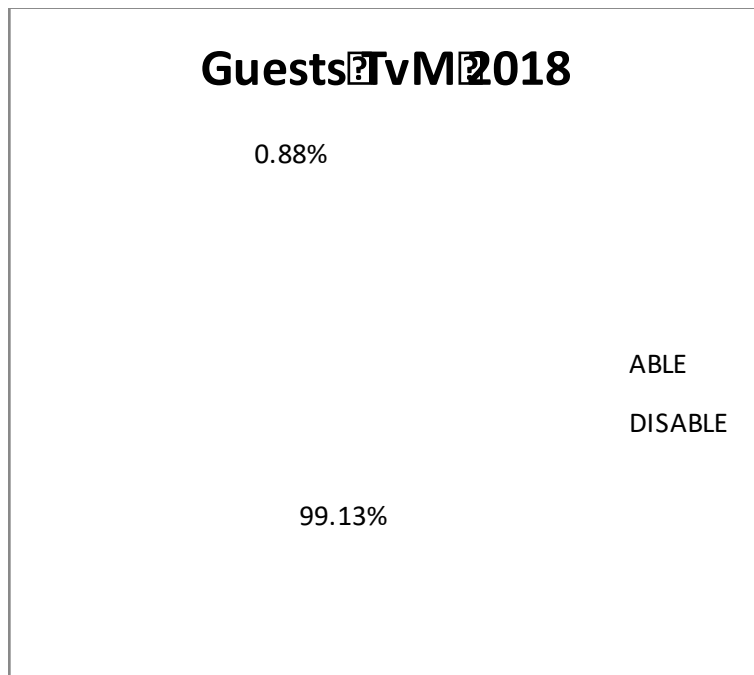


Figure 4.13 Relative distribution disability *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) 2018.

At *Jinek* (KRO/NCRV) only 0.66% of the guests had a disability, for *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) the number was slightly higher, namely 0.88%, and at *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) 1.43% of the guests had a disability.

From the quantitative results, it cannot be concluded that a change has taken place in recent years. People with a disability are still underrepresented as was already established by previous research as explained in paragraph 2.2.2. Nevertheless, whether this representation was mainly negative, as was the case in previous research, can only be concluded by asking a different question. Therefore, the following part of this thesis focusses on the way people with a disability are represented in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years.

4.2 The way they are represented

The quantitative results led to 56 episodes in which a person with a disability was present, and which could thus be analysed using qualitative methods. In these 56 episodes, disability is represented in a non-random, mixed manner most of the time. Which means that the items are mainly specifically about disability, and that the guest is represented in a different manner than other guests. He or she comes into the picture because of the disability. Furthermore, as is the case with the mixed manner, the items are not specifically about disability, but attention is paid to disability or disability is even a requirement in order for the topic to exist. For example, quite a few Paralympic athletes were part of the sample, due to the Paralympics taking place in 2008 and 2018. Most of the time, they are there to talk about their sport

performances. However, as a Paralympic athlete, one has to have a disability. During the analysis it became evident that all the conversations these athletes had, would eventually address the topic of disability. This connection between 1) *disability and sport* is one of the five themes that was identified during the analysis. In addition, there is a theme surrounding 2) *(means of) support and disability*, 3) *media products and disability*, 4) *tragic stories and disability* and 5) *mental disability*. Eventually, there were 20 episodes, in which people with a disability were (almost) randomly represented, these are included in paragraph 4.9 *Randomly represented disability*. When the guest is randomly represented, it means that the guest with a disability is represented as all others. He or she does not come into the picture because of the disability, and no attention is paid to it. It is an ordinary guest who happens to have a disability. Relatively this seems like a large number, as it is more than 35% of the sample, but the explanation of the results will show that these findings cannot yet serve as an example for future programs makers and their programs.

4.2.1. *Sport and disability*

In ten episodes disability is connected to sports. The connection between sport and disability is based on the fact that there are athletes present in these episodes who competed in major sports events that focus on disabled people such as the Paralympic Games, the Invictus Games and the X Games. The items were not specifically about disability, but disability was a ‘requirement’ in order to compete in these games. Though, the disabilities were not visible in more than half of the items. This means that the audience was not able to see the disability on TV. As a lot of the Paralympic athletes are for instance wearing a prosthesis underneath their clothes, or their wheelchair was hidden under the table and not visible due to the camera angle. However, in all of the items the disability of these athletes was eventually discussed.

In total, a number of ten athletes were invited, in different seasons of the talk shows. *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) hosted Annette Roozen in 2008 and Diede de Groot in 2018. Roozen does athletics and De Groot is a Paralympic tennis player. *Knevel & Van den Brink* (EO) hosted Alyda Norbruis, who is a cyclist, in 2013 and in 2018 Chris Vos, who competes as a Paralympic snowboarder, was a guest at *Jinek* (KRO/NCRV). *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) paid more attention to disability and sports. The following Paralympic athletes were present in 2008: Kees-Jan van der Klooster (downhill skiing and wakeboarding) and Mirjam de Koning (swimming) were guests. Moreover, in 2018 Edwin Vermetten (a veteran who competes in multiple sports during the Invictus Games), Paralympic snowboarder Bibian

Mentel (2x), Esther Vergeer (former wheelchair tennis and basketball player) and Jeroen Kampschreur, who is a Paralympic skier.

From the items, it seems clear that the introduction plays an important part in the course of the conversation. In three of the episodes, the ones with Kees-Jan van der Klooster, Alyda Norbruis and Chris Vos, the guests were introduced in a way in which their disability was emphasized. This led the conversations to immediately deal with the causes of their disabilities at first, and only then their performances were discussed. For example, Eva Jinek introduces Chris Vos as follows: “Para-snowboarder Chris Vos pursues Olympic fame in Pyeongchang while they thought he would never be able to walk again” (*KRO/NCRV*, 29-01-2018). This introduction led Chris Vos to first explain what happened to him, before his athletic performances were discussed. This manner of introducing and the explanation that follows results in a power formation comparable to the micro-powers discussed in paragraph 2.2. Kees-Jan van der Klooster, Alyda Norbruis and Chris Vos are introduced as disabled people who do something ‘special’, in this case sports. If we follow the line of argumentation by Foucault and Sheridan (1991), and Hall (1997), as explained in paragraph 2.2, the micro-power aims at making a division in what is good and what is bad. After seeing the representation of these disabled people, being disabled and doing something special is standardized as ‘good’. If you are on the other hand, disabled but you do not do something special like sports, then you do not matter - or at least, you will not be invited at certain talk shows - because your story does not match the shared meanings and beliefs about disability. The shared meaning and belief about disability in this case is that you have to do something special like sports. Otherwise you are just disabled, and that is pathetic and weak. In order to match the shared meaning and belief, you have to become a superhero. Becoming a superhero can be done by conquering your disability with sports.

However, in five other episodes, the ones with Diede de Groot, Annette Roozen, Edwin Vermetten, Mirjam de Koning, and the one with Bibian Mentel and Jeroen Kampschreur, the guests were introduced without emphasis being put on their disability. Martine van Os introduced Diede de Groot as follows:

She is just 21 years old and has already won three Grand Slams. Behold the very best wheelchair tennis player in the world. And as I just said, she is ours, because she comes from the Netherlands. Diede, yes, congratulations! Unbelievable what a performance, Australian Open, Wimbledon, US Open. Only Roland Garros and then you’ve got them all. (*Tijd voor MAX*, 07-11-2018)

These kinds of introductions led the conversations to be very much about the performance and sports achievement rather than about the disability, although the disability was mentioned. Again, there is a micro-power at work here. This micro-power, as explained in paragraph 2.2, basically states that sportswomen and –men are always superheroes (Foucault & Sheridan, 1991; Hall, 1997). Yet, these disabled athletes are even bigger superheroes as they have to deal with an impairment. This impairment gives them a disadvantage. So, if these athletes are able to perform sports on the highest level, despite the impairment, they are super-superheroes. What becomes evident here, is that these disabled athletes are valued based upon their differences with abled athletes.

The previously mentioned comparison becomes evident in the last 2 episodes as well. In these two episodes, Bibian Mentel and Esther Vergeer were invited not to talk about their performances, but rather they were invited to talk about the Olympic Games in general (not limited to the Paralympics). They were experts in the field, and were there to shed their light on this topic, nevertheless, the difference between Paralympic and Olympic was constantly emphasized. This becomes evident from the episode in which Esther Vergeer is invited together with Pieter van den Hoogenband (*De Wereld Draait Door*, 13-11-2018). They are there together in order to talk about their role as Chef de Mission for the group of Olympic athletes. Pieter van den Hoogenband is a former swimming athlete from the Olympic team and Esther Vergeer is a former wheelchair tennis- and basketball player from the Paralympic team. Multiple times Matthijs van Nieuwkerk asks Esther Vergeer how things were, or whether things went different for the Paralympic team. However, eventually, she is asked to share her expertise with Pieter van den Hoogenband. This makes the differences rather indistinct again, as she is giving advice from athlete to athlete, without any emphasis on the difference between abled and disabled.

The first theme, *sport and disability*, focused on professional athletes who competed in major sport events such as the X Games, the Paralympic Games and the Invictus Games. Although these are major events that exist on their own, they can only be understood in relation to their ‘common’ counterparts. The Paralympic games for instance, can only be understood in relation to Olympic Games. This relates to the cultural model of disability as described by Goodley (2011). This idea is reinforced by the fact that the guests had to answer questions about differences with abled athletes. Furthermore, the difference between delivering a sports performance with a disability and without one was being emphasized. Although the last example of Pieter van den Hoogenband and Esther Vergeer seems to

normalize the difference between sport and disability, as Esther Vergeer (former Paralympic athlete) is asked to give advice to Pieter van den Hoogenband (former Olympic athlete), the above-mentioned representations do not normalize sports for the disabled people. Instead, if you are disabled and you perform any sport, you have two options: 1) sport is something ‘special’ that you almost ‘have’ to do, otherwise you do not matter, or 2) the fact that you do sports makes you a superhero because you are limited by an impairment.

4.2.2 Media products and disability

Another theme that became visible during the analysis is that of media products and disability, which suggests that there is a certain need to share stories. In ten of the 56 examined episodes, the topic of the item was a media product. Multiple books, theatre shows and television programs were produced by people with a disability or they were the main character. Four people are present in a talk show to talk about a book: Marc de Hond during *Knevel & Van den Brink* (EO) at the 26th of August 2008, Pascal Ursines in *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) at 9 December 2008, and Bibian Mentel is invited in *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) and in *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) in 2018, to talk about a book she wrote. Previously, in 2013, Fernando Ricksen was present in *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) to tell about his new autobiography.

Connected to this topic are the items in which certain guests advertise for television shows concerning people with a disability. During three episodes of *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA, 04-09-2013; 16-03-2018; 12-12-2018) multiple people are present in order to tell about these programs. Wouter de Ruyter van Steveninck, Evelien van der Meij and Francisco Mosso for example, are guests on the 4th of September 2013 during *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) to tell about their participation in *The Undateables* (BNN). They specifically come into the picture because of their disability. Additionally, in 2018, Aafke Coopmans and Shivan Hassan are present in an episode of *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA, 16-03-2018), that concerns the television program *What if it was yours?* (BNN/VARA). Coopmans and Hassan were participants in the program in which the presenter of the program joined them for a day in their life. Later that year, again in *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA, 12-12-2018), Samantha Jaeggi-Werther and Evert Bloemert tell the audience what made them participate in a new television program called *Je geld of mijn leven* (EO), translated: your money or my life. The program follows four people who try to raise money in order to have a special treatment for their disease or impairment through crowdfunding (<https://portal.eo.nl/programmas/tv/je-geld-of-mijn-leven/>).

When represented in relation to these media products, the guest with the disability is mostly represented as a superhero, as someone who achieved a great victory. Despite the disability, the guest is able to perform in an ordinary or even excellent way. People seem to think “Whoohoo, you are disabled and wrote a book” or “How awesome, disabled and looking for love in a television show, you go girl” as if this are really great performances. I write seem to think, as people do not say this out loud using these exact words. It could however be derived from the things they say and do. Take for instance the episode in which Martine van Os introduces Bibian Mentel: “If there would be a Nobel Prize for positivity and perseverance, then Bibian Mentel should be the first winner...” (Omroep MAX, 16-10-2018). After this she deliberately leaves a moment for applause and then continues her introduction. The words Martine van Os chooses and the orchestrated opportunity for applause makes the audience aware of the hero status of the guest. Similar words and gestures were observed during the introduction of other disabled people in relation their media products.

Lastly, there are two episodes in which the item concerned the presentation and advertisement of a new theatre show. In both items Marc de Hond is the one who is sharing his story. Disability is incidental in these items. For instance, the item during *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) at 6 February 2013 is about a theatre show called “Cock-Stories”. Marc de Hond is introduced as follows by Matthijs van Nieuwkerk:

Marc, we turn to you. Cock-stories. The evening will know a lot of different stories, and your story is of course a dramatic story. You got a paraplegia due to a mistake on the operation table, then sexuality is a subject which needs attention at least [leaves a silence]. Are you going to talk about that? (BNN/VARA, 06-02-2013)

Although the theatre show is not about disability, Matthijs van Nieuwkerk assumes that Marc de Hond will talk about his disability. Despite the fact that Matthijs van Nieuwkerk puts it neatly, he basically assumes that Marc de Hond had to overcome certain things related to his disability, in order for his sexual organ to work. In paragraph 2.2. I explained that discourses help us find the right words for the right situations or objects, and that through this these discourses we basically structure the world around us. These discursive formations, as they are often called, share a great deal of power, called micro-power (Foucault & Sheridan, 1991; Hall, 1997). What happens in this example, is that the discursive formation surrounding disability produces a micro-power which basically states that if you are disabled, you have to share your story, the more personal the better. In addition, your story is valued based on the

differences with abled people. Although there a lot of men with erection problems, Marc's story is valued as being much more interesting or even pitiful, as his erection problems were caused by an impairment.

So, despite the fact that disability was not the main focus within the theme *media products and disability*, the items eventually focussed, at least partly, on disability. Similar to the previous theme, this theme also relates to the cultural model of disability (Goodley, 2011). Within the theme media products and disability, people with a disability come to share their story. Nevertheless, most of the times their story is compared to stories of abled people, and by doing that people with a disability become superheroes, because despite their disability they are able to perform in an excellent way, just as the athletes in the previous theme.

4.2.3 (*Means of*) support and disability

In nine of the episodes the theme involves (means of) support and disability. The items are specifically about topics related to disability, and care or support resources for disabled people. There are for example people who come to talk about certain tools that can make life with a disability easier, but also people who come to raise awareness for events that aim to raise money for research into different impairments. This is often done by people with a disability themselves. However, in an episode of *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA, 22-10-2013) Louis van Gaal, an abled person, is one of the people who raises awareness for multiple events surrounding 'Spieren voor Spieren'. This is a foundation that collects money for research into muscle diseases. In order to reinforce his message, Van Gaal brought a boy who is disabled by such a disease. Timo Koningsberger is present to talk about the disabilities caused by his disease.

Tijd voor MAX (Omroep MAX) also spent time on certain topics. In 2008, Lucille Werner was on the show to talk about an award she had won for her effort and commitment in order to help people with a physical disability. Furthermore, in the same year, Judith Lorand was there when it was the 'day of the white stick', a tool that blind people use. Judith Lorand told about her own experiences as a blind person. In 2018 *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) spends an entire episode to raise awareness on muscle diseases. Max, Marit and Nynke are present in order to tell or show how their disease made them impaired and even disabled. Finally, *Knevel & Van den Brink* (EO) also present an item that fits into this discourse. In 2008, Reni de Boer is a guest, and talks about her role as ambassador for people with a

functional disability in the Netherlands. Besides, she is asked about the political influence she thinks she has had in the past year.

In all these items or episodes, the guests were mostly introduced as being a victim. Disability was seen as a personal tragedy with which they had to deal. Furthermore, in order to raise awareness or money, the guests were typified as persons in need of care. It was emphasized that the guest needed care from his or her environment, and in this case, care from Dutch society. Martine van Os, for example, introduces Nynke de Waard as follows: “Nynke de Waard, she has had a progressive muscle disease since she was a little girl and she hopes to draw attention for the importance of research by sharing her story today” (Omroep MAX, 23-01-2008). Moreover, the fact that the guest was in need of care was reinforced by for instance Matthijs van Nieuwkerk, who asks Timo Koningsberger to sum up all the things he can no longer do, and to tell the public what is wrong with him (BNN/VARA, 22-10-2013).

Another part of this theme consists of people who are on the show to talk about certain tools that make life with a disability easier or tools that even resolve the impairment that causes them to be disabled. For this, 2013 seemed a prominent year. Jettie Hollanders and Riet Kleerebezem, both invited to *Knevel & Van den Brink* (EO), talked about their artificial implants which made their disability less or even totally disappear. Jettie Hollanders has a deviation in her balance organ. Which makes her vision very distorted, this causes her to walk as if she is drunk. A special implant must ensure that she finds here balance back. Riet Kleerebezem in turn, has become blind due to a disease. A special implant in combination with special glasses must ensure that she can see again. Hannes Wallrafen came to *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) to talk about scale models of buildings, especially made for blind people in order to understand the structure and layout of the building. Furthermore, Marc de Hond was introduced during an item in *De Wereld Draait Door* about a new study in which apes were able to control robot arms with their brains (BNN/VARA, 07-11-2013). Certain techniques could ensure that paralyzed people, such as Marc de Hond, could be able to walk again in the future. In these episodes, the guests were introduced as experts in relation to the topic due to their own experiences as a disabled person. The micro-power (Sheridan & Foucault, 199; Hall, 1997) basically ventilates what follows: you have a such a disability so you must have an opinion about a topic related to such a disability.

What becomes evident from these findings is that within this theme, (*means*) of *support and disability*, people with a disability are represented as either victims, or experts in the field of disability. Thus, the same line or argumentation is followed as with the previous

themes, however, they cannot be placed into the same umbrella discourse. Within this theme people with a disability are seen as victims, because they have to deal with their impairment which causes them to be disabled. Or as experts: because they have a disability which relates to this topic, they must be able to share something about it. For example, in the episode of *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) of 07-11-2013, Marc de Hond is invited to talk about news surrounding a new study in which apes were able to control robot arms with their brains. Of course, Marc de Hond had been asked to join the show and was informed about the topic of the episode, yet it seems as if Matthijs van Nieuwkerk assumes that Marc de Hond, a disabled person, has followed this news and has a specific opinion about it (BNN/VARA, 07-11-2013). The micro-power (Sheridan & Foucault, 1991; Hall, 1997) that is at work here basically states that as a disabled person you are supposed to be on the search to get rid of your disability. You are portrayed as a victim who wants to become a superhero. Something similar happened in the example of Cheyenne Polderman. As I mentioned in the introduction, she was asked by the editors of a dating program for people with a disability to join the program, as they assumed that the birthmark on her face caused her to be disabled. However, she did not experience any limitations due to her birthmark, and did not at all feel disabled (Smulders, 2017; KRO/NCRV, 2017).

4.2.4 *Tragic stories and disability*

A distinct, but less evident theme that becomes visible through the analysis of the data is that of *tragic stories and disability*. During four of the items in which a person with a disability was present, the person had had a very bad accident or had a tragic story to share. Two of these items concerned Marc van der Kuilen, a Dutch veteran who served in Afghanistan. During a mission things went wrong when he got hit by friendly fire: another Dutch soldier shot him. As a result, he lost both his legs and is now in a wheelchair. He was able to share this story first in *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA, 11-12-2008) and later in *Jinek* (KRO/NCRV, 15-01-2018). The same goes for Mike Lingen (KRO/NCRV, 13-06-2018). He was a lively young man when he stumbled on the platform and was hit by a train. He lost his lower leg and his ear, both on the right side of his body. But he picked up his life surprisingly well afterwards.

Another example is an item during *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) from 12 October 2018, and concerns Ali B, a Dutch artist. The night before the episode, Ali became very emotional during a performance. He got invited to talk about these emotions, but he rather shared a different story of someone, because that person's story deserves to be heard,

he claims. That is why he brought Floor on the show. She is paired up with him by the Make a Wish Foundation, and her wish was to meet Ali and be on television. She has a rare syndrome and is blind, and although this seems like a sad and tragic story, during the end of the item she becomes a superhero because she has the courage to sing a song on television.

During these items, the guest is first represented as a victim, and people (the host, audience and other guests) seem to have compassion. What happens is that abled people have certain prejudices based on the impairment they see. This results in a certain sadness: abled people (in this case the host and other guests) act sad because of the impairment the disabled guest has to deal with. Multiple times this can be read from their faces and inferred from their words. Whereas at first the stories are sad stories, they eventually become success stories. The victims overcame their sorrows and were able to move on. Eventually the victims turn into superheroes. Again, this results in a certain micro-power (Sheridan & Foucault, 1991; Hall, 1997): if you have had an accident or are disabled you have to conquer this. Not only by medical rehabilitation, but you have to truly make something of your life. Take on every opportunity and be as optimistic as can be. However, this seems to be unrealistic, as in real-life, there should be room for sadness and grief. People who have such a tragic story to share cannot always be optimistic.

4.2.5 Mental disability

In another three episodes, the items included people with a mental disability. During an episode of *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA, 10-04-2008) the band ‘Wimpie and the Domino’s’ was present to provide the music and in 2013, *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX, 04-02-2013) hosted the ‘Jostiband Orkest’ and Evelien Blemond who was asked about her participation in the orchestra. Both groups consist of people with a mental disability. The hosts of the talk shows talk about these people in a sympathetic way. However, when they talk with these people their tone tends to be more childish and less serious than is the case with ordinary guests: it is as if they try to adapt to the mental abilities of their guests. The same goes for Erik van Loenen, who is present in the episode of *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) on the 7th of December 2018. Erik van Loenen is a gymnast with Down Syndrome who challenged Epke Zonderland (Olympic Champion) for a competition in the gym. The audience, the other guests and Matthijs van Nieuwkerk seem to find it touching and adorable that this happens, as they all seem to know that Erik van Loenen is never going to beat Epke Zonderland. The latter becomes evident from the fact that the audience laughs loudly when Van Loenen tells that he might even be better than Zonderland. However, Erik

van Loenen strongly believes in his own abilities, which turn him into comic relief. The audience and other people laugh at him. So, although all the guests with a mental disability, who are present in these items, are treated with sympathy and respect, there is a certain sphere of ridicule or fun which makes the items less serious than for instance items with people with a physical disability. This results in a micro-power (Sheridan & Foucault, 1991; Hall, 1997) that states that if you are mentally disabled society will treat you as a child because your mental abilities and behaviour is comparable to that of a child.

4.2.6 Randomly represented disability

Lastly, during the analysis of the episodes, 20 items were discovered in which people with a disability were present but the topic had no relation to disability. In 17 of these items, no attention was paid to disability at all. Nonetheless, there were 3 items in which a short reference is made to the impairment of the guest. Namely, *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) from 29-09-2008 and *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) from 28-11-2013 and 02-03-2018. All three items include Vincent Bijlo, a Dutch comedian, writer and columnist who is born blind. As an illustration, I would like to draw on the item of *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) from 29 September 2008 in which his disability becomes evident from the introduction and his appearance. Martine van Os says the following words: “Comedian, writer, columnist, and certainly no stranger on television. Although he doesn’t look at television himself, he listens to it. Vincent Bijlo, a warm welcome”. This introduction complemented with the way his eyes look, tells us that he is blind.

Also, as mentioned before, in 17 of these 20 items there was no attention paid to disability at all and the topic did not concern disability. This seems like a quite high number if you take into account that there were only 56 items examined. However, the items included only five different people. *Knevel & Van den Brink* (EO) invite Annemarie Postma in 2008 at least six times as a sidekick, which means that she is not there to talk about herself or her disability, but that she is expected to contribute to the conversation with the other guests. Moreover, in these episodes she is seated at the rear end of the table, an angle from which the camera does not film. This leaves her wheelchair out of sight. Another regular guest is Martin Visser. In 2013 he got invited to *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) and four times to *Knevel & Van den Brink* (EO). On all these occasions, the item concerned an economic topic, and therefore it can be estimated that Visser got invited for his professional knowledge and expertise rather than his disability. This was noticed as the items did not once concerned disability or a disability related topic. Besides, no attention was paid to his disability, that

means he was not questioned about it, nor did the host of the show or the other guests mention his disability. The same goes for Roel van Velzen, who got invited to *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) in 2008 and 2013, and in 2018 to *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX). During all of these times, he was present in order to talk about and show his music expertise, never was the item in any way related to his dwarfism, nor did the conversations touch upon his disability. Comparable to this is the situation of Koos Alberts during the episode of *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep MAX) at the first of October 2008. He is on the show to sing a song. Finally, Lucille Werner is present during an episode of *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA) and during an episode of *Knevel & Van den Brink* (EO), both in 2013, in which no attention is paid to her disability and the topic is not connected to disability or impairments.

Hence, a large part of the data provided evidence that the themes and their ongoing micro-power are not the only discursive formations surrounding disability. In 17 of the 56 episodes, people with a disability were completely randomly represented, which means that the topic had no relation to disability, and that although their disability was observable, no references were made to it. It is exactly these examples that people with disabilities need, because these examples are free of prejudices, negative stereotypes or any form of marginalization towards people with a disability. Role models like these can have a positive influence on the self-identity and the social identity of people with a disability. As it allows disabled people to finally see that they can be more than athletes or storytellers, that they can excel in things ordinary people excel in as well. Koos Alberts proves that you can still make music when you are in a wheelchair and no one mentions the fact that you are in a wheelchair. Sybrand Niessen, the host of *Tijd voor MAX* (Omroep Max), even introduces Koos Alberts as ‘standing’ on the stage, while he obviously wheeled onto the stage. So, in fact his disability is being ignored, he is represented in a way in which his disability does not matter. All the above-mentioned examples, Annemarie Postma, Martin Visser, Roel van Velzen, Lucille Werner, and Koos Alberts, are great role models. As they are represented in an equal manner as abled people, and not specifically due to their disability, or in combination with a disability related topic. Still, the problem is that these role models are very limited: although they were present in 17 episodes, they consisted of just 5 different people. In the following paragraph, it will be argued what kind of implications the results have for the discourse surrounding disability.

4.3 Dutch discourses on disability

In paragraph 2.2. I explained that the shared meanings and beliefs about disability can be captured in a discourse. Stuart Hall gave the following definition of a discourse:

Discourses are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society (Hall, 1997, p.6).

Discourses thus help us find words for certain situations or objects, they basically help us structure the world around us. The qualitative results, as described in paragraph 4.2, show us that disability in Dutch talk shows often relates to a couple of themes: sports, media products, (means of) support, tragic stories, and the mental system. Along with these themes, there are a couple of discursive formations that constantly return. People with a disability are represented as either being a superhero, a victim or a child. This means that they are referred to as, or associated with, one or two of these options.

4.3.1 *Victim, superhero or a child*

The first discourse in which people with a disability are represented is that of a victim. Multiple times people with a disability are asked to share their story and to tell what happened to them. There are two themes that contribute to this discourse: *(means of) support and disability*, and *disability and tragic stories*. In these themes people with a disability are identified as pathetic, endearing and in need for help. They are seen as victims of the disability. Moreover, disability is seen as a personal tragedy and people have compassion. This discourse can be placed into the minority model of disability (Goodley, 2011). Conforming to what Smart and Smart (2006) reported, that within this discourse the prejudices, and sometimes even discrimination, form the biggest obstacle instead of the functional limitation or the medical impairments they suffer from. What happens in this discourse is that people do not have to overcome the functional limitations or the medical impairments they suffer from, rather they have to overcome the prejudices against them, as within this discourse they can only be a victim in need for help. Take for instance Timo Koningsberger, he is present in an episode of *De Wereld Draait Door* (BNN/VARA, 22-10-2013). Although he is in a wheelchair and suffers from a muscle disease, he is fully human

and probably able to do a lot of things. However, he is only asked about the things he cannot do anymore, this leaves him to be represented only as a person in need for help.

Disability and tragic stories however, does not only contribute to the discourse that represents people with a disability as nothing but victims. Within this theme people with a disability eventually become a superhero by conquering the fact that they had an accident. Take for instance Mike Lingen, he was able to share his tragic story at the episode of *Jinek* (KRO/NCRV) during the 13th of June 2018. At first, he is asked by Eva Jinek to tell the guests about the horrible accident he got in. He stumbled on the platform, was hit by a train, and as a result he lost his lower leg and his ear on the right side of his body. Telling this story leaves him to be represented as a victim. Yet, Jinek continues to question him about his life after the accident, and it becomes clear that he picked up his life surprisingly well after the accident. By adding this last part of his story, Mike Lingen is no longer a victim, he is now represented as a superhero. This leaves people with a disability to choose from two options: you can either be a victim of your disability, or you can overcome the disability and become a superhero.

This last option becomes also evident from the themes *sport and disability*, and *media products and disability*. Within these themes people with a disability are seen as superheroes, they have overcome their disability and do something special like sports. However, as the case with *media products and disability*, their performances or stories are constantly compared with the performances and stories of abled people. This is interesting, as it means that whenever a comparison is made between an abled person and a disabled person in which they perform the same, the disabled person will always be praised more because the disadvantage of the disability will basically outweigh anything. Although the people with a disability are not negatively represented in this discourse, the consequences seem to be negative. As identifying the disability as a disadvantage, promotes the idea of identifying people with a disability as pathetic and endearing. Disabled people have to deal with their impairment, which leads, in the eyes of abled people, to multiple disadvantages. So, while they might be represented as being superheroes, they are eventually still victims of the comparison.

A third discourse in which people with a disability are represented is that of a child. This is caused by the theme *mental disability*. In this theme, people with a disability are represented in a completely different manner than is the case with the first couple of themes. Within this theme the guests with a disability are approached and treated in a sympathetic way as well, but the difference is that the tone of the hosts tends to be more childish and less

serious than is the case in the previous themes. The example of Erik van Loenen illustrates perfectly how discursive formations work their micro-power. Van Loenen does not feel disabled in any way, which is observed by the fact that he challenges Epke Zonderland. However, the audience, the host of the show and the other guests obviously seem to think that he is disabled, as Down Syndrome is considered to be an impairment which causes people to be disabled. The contrasting perspectives within this theme fit perfectly within the relational model of disability, in which disability is relative and situational (Goodley, 2011). This indicates that disability is not always present, which often seems to rely on the relationship between disability and the environment (Tøssebro, 2004). The same is true for Erik van Loenen in this case. He has Down Syndrome, but he is not a person with Down Syndrome when he does gymnastics, he is an athlete. However, only Erik van Loenen is able to see that in this case. Unfortunately, the discourse and its ongoing power relations make him invisible as an athlete. The audience, the host of the show, and the other guest just see a disabled person, a child who thinks he can beat the Olympic champion.

To summarize, the results show that disability is related to five major themes that create three different discourses surrounding disability. In these discourses people with a disability are either represented as a victim, a superhero or a child. In the following chapter, it will be explained what kind of consequences these discourses have for both abled and disabled people.

5. Conclusion

It was just about three years ago, on the 14 July 2016, when the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) entered into force within the Netherlands. This treaty aims to strengthen the position of people with a disability in society by promoting, protecting and safeguarding the human rights of people with disabilities. This is for instance done by showing a contrasting image of disability through different forms of media. A particular medium of interest for representing such images and raising awareness for less stereotypical images of disability is the talk show, because it functions as a discussion platform, where everything that concerns us as a community can be discussed and certain meanings can be promoted. However, not much research had been done in the Netherlands and previous research from other countries showed that people with a disability were often represented in a way that was stereotypical, marginal or negative (Briant, Watson & Philo, 2013; Burns, 2016; Ciot & Van Hove, 2010; Saunders, Lansdell & Bunn, 2018). Therefore, this research tried to answer the following research question:

How have people with a disability been represented in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years?

In order to answer this questions two sub-questions were formulated:

- *How often have people with a disability been portrayed in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years?*
- *In what ways have people with a disability been portrayed in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years?*

The sub-questions relate to a mixed method design. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods ensured that it was not merely calculated how often people with a disability were represented in these talk shows, but that attention was also paid to the way in which they were represented.

The research results have shown that people with a disability are still scarcely represented within talk shows over the last ten years. In 2008, 1.34% of the guests present in the talk shows had a disability, in 2013 just 0.93% and in 2018 only 1.06%. The somewhat higher percentage in 2008 may be due to the fact that there were Paralympic Games that year,

after which we see a small decrease in 2013, which again increases slightly in 2018. This last increase might be due to the commissioning of the UN CRPD, which perhaps produced increased awareness and resulted in providing people with a disability a platform to share their story. The results showed that 66 of the 6129 guests had a disability and together they were represented in 56 items.

Additionally, this research investigated the ways in which people with a disability were represented in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years. This resulted in discovering 5 major themes that relate to the way in which disability is represented: *sport and disability* (paragraph 4.2.1), *media products and disability* (paragraph 4.2.2), *(means of) support and disability* (paragraph 4.2.3), *tragic stories and disability* (paragraph 4.2.4), and *mental disability* (paragraph 4.2.5). Further, it was discovered that only 5 of the 42 people with a disability were represented in a completely random manner. This is covered in paragraph 4.2.6 *Randomly represented disability*. In paragraph 4.3 it was established what kind of discourses these themes produced. The results showed that people with a disability are represented in three different discourses: as being a victim, a superhero, or a child.

During the analysis of the 56 items that together included 66 people with a disability, it became clear that these were not 66 different people. The number of people with a disability whom were represented in a talk show was actually way smaller. The talk show hosts had a small group of people who came to represent the entire group of people with a disability multiple times: the group consisted of just 42 different people. Furthermore, the percentages of people with a disability that are present in each year are relatively low if you consider that figures of the Central Statistical Office of the Netherlands ('Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek') indicate that 29.1% of Dutch society had an impairment in 2018, based on the definition of the Global Activity Limitation Indicator (GALI) as explained in the introduction of this thesis. Hence, it could be concluded that people with a disability have had to deal with a particularly high degree of underrepresentation in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years.

Although there were 5 major themes in which disability was represented, there were just three discourses in which people with a disability were represented: a victim, a superhero or a child. As media representations function as tools for the identity formation of disabled people, leaving them with only three different roles to choose from, is not going to change their expected role in society (Psaila, 2016). These three different roles form a certain stereotype surrounding people with a disability, and trying to become something outside of this stereotype is like farting in a windstorm, it will have no effect at all. For now, disabled people can only be storytellers. They can for instance share their tragic and often heroic

stories, or they can share their stories in order to raise awareness for their impairment. What is more, is that sport seems to be the only thing in which people with a disability can excel. These achievements are unfortunately most of the time compared to similar achievements by abled people, which in turn changes the latent meaning of the discourse leaving them not to be victims of their disability, but rather victims of the comparison.

To conclude, this research focused on how often and in what ways people with a disability were represented in Dutch talk shows over the last ten years. Based on the findings it can be concluded that people with a disability are not often represented in talk shows, and that when they are, the role-diversity is very limited. As explained in Chapter 2, paragraph 2.2.1 of this thesis, this will eventually have negative consequences for the social identity and the self-identity of people with a disability (Cohen & Young, 1981; Gauntlett, 2008; Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2015). Moreover, there seems to be a difference between physical disabilities and mental disabilities. If on the one hand, people suffer from a physical disability they are expected to conquer their disability, because in media representations these victims eventually become superheroes. Or at least, it is expected that a person suffering from a physical disability wants to become a superhero. This was illustrated by the example of Marc de Hond in paragraph 4.2.3, who is supposed to want a completely new lower body which he can control with his brain, just like the apes (BNN/VARA, 07-11-2013). However, it has not been asked whether he sees himself as being limited or disabled. Maybe he does not even strive to become a superhero, let alone that he identifies as a victim. But of course, that is not accepted in society as was already illustrated in the introduction by the example of Cheyenne Polderman. She was labeled as being a victim in need to become a superhero even though she did not identify as being a victim herself. If, on the other hand, people suffer from a mental disability, they are expected to stay in the role of a child, as was the case with Erik van Loenen. It is precisely these examples that illustrate what is wrong with these discourses. Disabled people are being labeled, and identified as only being able to strive for certain roles. While in fact they should be able to identify with much more roles.

Nonetheless, the data show a small number of examples in which the disability was observable but no emphasis was put on it, nor was the topic related to disability. These were disabled people who were experts in a random field. Roel van Velzen who excels in making music; Lucille Werner who is a proper media expert as the presenter of a popular game show *Lingo*; Annemarie Postma who fulfilled the role of sidekick; Koos Alberts who comes to recite a song; and Martin Visser an economist who has never been invited to talk about his disability, but has always been present to share his professional opinion and knowledge about

economics. This relates back to the example of Erik van Loenen, the gymnast with Down Syndrome. Who proves that disability is something relational, instead of something that is always present. He is a gymnast, nevertheless, the use of the *child* discourse makes him a disabled gymnast. What becomes evident from the examples in which the disabilities of the guests seem to be ignored, is that no such discourse is used. Martin Visser does not become a disabled economist; Roel van Velzen does not become a disabled musician; Lucille Werner does not become a disabled media expert; Annemarie Postma does not become a disabled sidekick; and Koos Alberts does not become a disabled singer. All because the discourses used to represent these people does not match the discourses that are normally used to represent people with a disability.

5.1 Limitations and future research

Although the data proves that people with a disability are still represented very limitedly both in numbers and in variety of ways, the research comprises a number of limitations that should be addressed. First of all, the researcher only had access to public archives such as *Beeld & Geluid*, and similar overviews that could be checked using the websites of the talk shows. This led to a methodological limitation, as the researcher cannot vouch for mistakes and flaws in these sources. Additionally, the limited access to data ensured that different methodological choices were made than previously established. This resulted in only analyzing talk shows from public broadcasters. Future research should focus on commercial broadcasters as well in order to see whether the findings can be generalized for all serious talk shows.

Another element to which future research should pay attention is genre. This research only focused on serious talk shows, that are labeled as non-fictional and serious television. Yet, research by Holbert, Shah and Kwak (2003) demonstrates that each genre has a different effect on people's opinions and perspectives. They concluded for example that entertainment programs, such as progressive dramas and situation comedies, hold a positive relationship with support for women's rights, whereas traditional dramas, which obviously represent women completely differently, had a negative relationship with support for women's rights. Although drama and sitcoms belong to a different genre, it would be interesting to see whether the same happens inside the talk show genre. It might be that subgenres such as the celebrity talk show or the confessional talk show represents a very different image surrounding disability. Though, as people can choose from a wide and diverse range of television programs, it would also be interesting to investigate different genres. As all of these

genres contribute in a different way to their perception and their imaging. It could for instance also be investigated whether there is a great difference between the representation of people with a disability between non-fictional, serious programs, and programs that are more focused on entertainment such as sitcoms and dramas.

Lastly, the definition of disability used in this study, made that this research focused only on impairments that were irreversible and caused attitudinal and environmental barriers. This caused people with certain mental disabilities, such as an obsessive-compulsive disorder or a depression, to be excluded. Likewise, people who stutter were also excluded as these impairments can be remedied by means of psychiatric help, or in the case of stammering, a speech therapist. Nevertheless, these impairments can certainly cause attitudinal and environmental barriers. Future research should therefore maybe adopt a broader definition of disability, which could be based on the Global Activity Limitation Indicator (GALI). This indicator is used all over Europe and could thence ensure more generalizability of the results.

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Appendix A – Overview names and numbers

See separate part.

Appendix B – Registration form

Three levels of information will be registered:

1. Level 1: General information about the show, episode and item
2. Level 2: Information about the guest with a disability during the item
3. Level 3: Information about the behaviour of the host of the show and the public during the item

1. Level 1: General information about the show, episode and item

1.1 Title of the talk show:

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1.2 Date of the episode:

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1.3 Time slot of the item in which the guest with a disability is present:

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1.4 Channel it was broadcasted:

--

1.5 Name and gender of the person with a disability

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1.6 Casualty of representation

Is the guest with a disability represented in a random or non-random manner?

1. Random representation	The guest with a disability is represented as all others. He or she does not come into the picture because of the disability, and no attention is paid to it. It is an ordinary guest who happens to have a disability.
2. Non-random representation	The guest with a disability is represented in a different manner than other guests. He or she comes into the picture because of the disability. The item goes specifically about disability.
3. Mixed representation	The item is not specifically about disability. Attention is paid to disability, but there is also

	attention paid to other facets of his or her personality and life.
4. Unclear	It is unclear whether the guest with a disability is represented in a random or non-random way.

1.7 Topic of the item

Give a short description of the topic of the item.

2. Level 2: Information about the guest with a disability during the item

2.1 Way of typifying the disabled guest

How is the guest with a disability typified during the item? Multiple answers possible.

1. As a superhero	Despite the disability, the guest is able to perform in an excellent way.
2. As a villain	The guest seeks revenge. Disability is associated with the “bad and evil”.
3. As a victim	Disability as a personal tragedy, people have compassion.
4. As a person in need of care, as a burden	The emphasis is on the care that the guest needs from his or her environment.
5. As a humorous aspect	The funny idiot who creates comic moments.
6. As better off dead, own worst enemy	The guest or environment thinks he/she should not have survived. The actor is full of self-pity.
7. As someone who cannot participate in society	The guest lives in marginality and is shown as someone who cannot participate in society.
8. Neutral, everyday, ordinary	The guest is represented like everyone else and not as special or extraordinary. Disability is not emphasised.
9. As a multidimensional person	Different facets of the guest’s life and identity are represented: profession, family situation, hobbies, disability etc.
10. Other	The guest is represented in a different way than the above-mentioned ways.
11. Unclear	It is unclear how the guest is being typified during the item.

2.2 disability

Is the disability observable during the talk show?

1. No	The disability of the guest is not observable during the talk show.
2. Yes	The disability of the guest is observable during the

	talk show.
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3. Level 3: Information about the behaviour of the host of the show and the public during the item

3.1. Introduction of guest with a disability

How is the guest with a disability introduced by the host of the show? Write down a short transcript.

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3.2 Attitudes towards the guest with a disability by the host of the show

Which attitudes are represented towards the guest with a disability by the host of the show? Multiple answers possible.

1. Sympathy, respect	He/she has sympathy and respect for the disabled guest.
2. Attraction	The disabled guest is considered attractive.
3. Fear	He/she fears the disabled guest.
4. Pity	The disabled guest is considered pitiful.
5. Ridicule	He/she makes jokes about the disabled guest.
6. Avoidance	The disabled guest is being avoided.
7. Patronizing	He/she acts condescendingly towards the disabled guest.
8. Aggressive	He/she behaves aggressively towards the disabled guest.
9. Sadness	He/she acts sad because of the impairment the disabled guest has to deal with.
10. Neutral	The attitudes are ordinary, no different from attitudes towards other guests.
11. Other	The attitudes are different than the above mentioned.
12. Unclear	It is unclear what attitudes are shown.

3.3 Attitudes towards the guest with a disability by the public in the studio

Which attitudes are presented towards the guest with a disability by the public during the item? Write down any observation of gestures, body language or facial expression.

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Appendix C – Completed registration forms

See separate part.