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## **Heteronormativity and gender norms: socialization across countries, at school, and within the family**

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# Chapter 6

## General discussion



## 6.1 Beyond mere acceptance

Over the last decades, a variety of disciplines have studied general attitudes toward gender roles and sexual minorities. There has been less attention to socializing influences on heteronormative attitudes that go beyond mere acceptance of women's equality and sexual minorities (Croft et al., 2015; Takács & Szalma, 2016). The main aim of this dissertation was to provide more insight into how individuals, and adolescents in particular, are socialized with these specific attitudes. Based on the socializing agents' theory (Durkheim, 1897; Ultee et al., 2003), and gender schema theory (Bem, 1981, 1983), we examined heteronormative socialization across three levels in society: national circumstances (Chapter 2), secondary education (Chapter 3), and within the family (Chapters 4 and 5).

This concluding chapter is structured as follows. First, I will summarize and integrate the main findings of each empirical study and link these to the theoretical frameworks. Second, I will reflect on the limitations and strengths of the research methods used in these studies. Finally, I will provide the main conclusions of this dissertation and discuss the implications for a more inclusive society.

## 6.2 Summary and integration of findings

Heteronormativity is a key underlying construct for attitudes toward gender roles and sexual minorities. It is constructed and maintained across different levels of society (Habarth, 2014; Herz & Johansson, 2015). In the studies of this dissertation, we brought together theoretical insights from multiple disciplines, including sociology, gender studies, educational studies, and family studies. This interdisciplinary approach allowed us to examine various socializing agents and circumstances that can fuel heteronormative socialization. Further, we studied different embodiments of heteronormativity: heteronormative messages (Chapters 3 and 5), gender-stereotypic attitudes and interests (Chapter 5), and people's homophobic attitudes (Chapters 2 and 4). First, I will discuss our findings regarding the socializing circumstances and agents across levels of society. Second, I will integrate our findings for the different embodiments of heteronormativity studied in this dissertation: heteronormative messages and gender-stereotypic and homophobic attitudes.

### **Socializing agents: national circumstances, secondary education, and the family**

According to the theory of socializing agents, individuals' attitudes are influenced by exposure to socializing agents (Sani Dotti & Quaranta, 2020; Scheepers et al., 2002). In addition, individuals are incorporated in the larger context (e.g., national political systems, and religious characteristics of a nation) which can set socializing circumstances that affect individuals' beliefs (Scheepers et al., 2002). In this dissertation, the socializing

influences of national circumstances (Chapter 2), secondary education (Chapter 3), and the family (Chapters 4 and 5) were examined.

On the national level, we examined to what extent national circumstances are related to the rejection of same-sex couples forming a family (Chapter 2). Numerous studies have examined to what extent national circumstances are related to the general acceptance of gay men and women, but international research on the specific issue of adoption by same-sex parents is still scarce (Sani Dotti & Quaranta 2020; Takács et al., 2016). Same-sex couples and their children still face discrimination in their everyday lives, harming their economic, emotional, and relational well-being (Levitt et al. 2020; Messina & D'Amore 2018). To decrease discrimination, it is crucial to identify the socialization factors that contribute to the denial of equal adoption rights despite the formal legalization of this type of family in so many countries.

We aimed to add to this literature by examining to what extent stable socializing circumstances (persistent influence of former regimes) and more variable national circumstances (progressive laws on same-sex relationships) are related to the rejection of same-sex couples to forming a family across 29 European countries. First, we found that equal adoption rights for same-sex couples are more strongly rejected in countries that had communist, Nazi, or Fascist regimes in the past compared to countries with 'uninterrupted' democracies. Second, we found that progressive legislation seems to be a 'buffer' for the rejection of equal adoption rights. Among countries that legalized adoption by same-sex parents, same-sex marriage was relevant in predicting less rejection of equal adoption rights. We found that the 'buffer' effect of progressive laws on same-sex relationships seems to be stronger for younger cohorts and women. This suggests that this issue is currently still so sensitive that legislation affects mostly frontrunners: women and younger birth cohorts in countries with more progressive legislation on same-sex relationships. In conclusion, Chapter 2 shows that, in line with previous studies, same-sex couples forming families seems to be a sensitive topic today that strongly divides people in Europe (Sani Dotti & Quaranta, 2020). For both stable and more variable country characteristics, our findings underline the importance of going beyond the East-West dichotomy and examining differences in individuals' rejection of equal adoption rights among (western) European countries that legalized adoption by same-sex couples.

For secondary education, we examined to what extent textbooks convey gender-stereotypic and heteronormative messages (Chapter 3). Schools function as socializing agents and affect children's attitudes and behaviors (Gouvias & Alexopoulos, 2018). According to the theory of the hidden curriculum, children obtain informal knowledge throughout the environment of the school (e.g., through cultural messages provided by teachers, and peers, and through educational materials (Lee, 2014). Characters in educational materials help shape children's gender schemas because these characters invite children to identify with them (Lee, 2014). Studies on gender bias and heteronormativity in educational materials mainly focused on (English) language

textbooks for primary education (Koster et al., 2020). In Chapter 3, we added to this literature by examining gender-stereotypic and heteronormative messages in Dutch math and language textbooks for first-year secondary pupils. In line with the theory of the hidden curriculum, our results showed that female characters were structurally underrepresented in all textbooks but overrepresented in household tasks, EHW (Education, Health, and Welfare) professions, and parental roles. Male characters were overrepresented in occupational roles, especially in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) professions, technical tasks, and among characters with disharmonious traits and behaviors (e.g., being angry, aggressive). We found no characters from sexual minorities in any of the textbooks. In conclusion, textbooks as socializing agents convey gender-stereotypic messages about social roles, occupational roles, social-emotional traits and behaviors, and heteronormativity.

In addition to socialization at the school level, the family as a socializing agent is crucial for children's gender attitudes because this is where children's first gender-related experiences are incorporated into their gender schemas (Bem, 1981; Endendijk et al., 2018). Within the family context, we examined to what extent parental characteristics are related to adolescents' gender-stereotypic attitudes and interest in HEED occupations (Chapter 4) and homophobic attitudes (Chapter 5). In addition, we examined implicit heteronormative parental messages (Chapter 5). Studies on gender-stereotypic occupational interest and attitudes largely focused on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) occupations (Croft et al., 2015). Yet, studies on the reasons why men do not aspire to a career in HEED occupations are scarce (Beutel et al., 2019; Meeussen et al., 2020; Olsen et al., 2022). This is unfortunate, as male representation in HEED domains can reduce labor shortage in this field, reduce negative stereotypes about men in these roles, increase flexibility in societal gender norms, and provide varied role models for younger generations (Croft et al., 2015; Meeussen et al., 2020). We aimed to add to this literature by examining to what extent adolescents' stereotypic attitudes towards and interest in HEED occupations are related to their parents' gender-stereotypic attitudes, role model behavior, and socialization values. In line with gender schema theory (Bem, 1981, 1983), the present findings suggest that adolescents' gender-stereotypic interests in HEED careers seem likely to be induced by their gender-stereotypic attitudes towards these occupations. For boys, these attitudes seem to be predicted by mothers' gender-stereotypic attitudes and fathers' socialization values. For girls, these attitudes seem to be predicted by both mothers' and fathers' gender-stereotypic attitudes and role-model behavior. As socializing agents, parents also influence children's development of attitudes toward minority groups (Vollebergh et al., 2001). Studies on parent-child similarity in attitudes about gay or lesbian individuals focused on general attitudes toward gay/lesbian individuals. In Chapter 5, we aimed to add to this literature by examining to what extent the homophobic attitudes of parents are related to their children and observing parental discomfort with gay or lesbian issues. In line with gender schema theory (Bem, 1981, 1983), our results showed that parents' homophobic attitudes were associated with

their children's homophobic attitudes. For same-sex kissing and (imagining) having a gay son, these associations were stronger between parents and children of the same gender. Further, parental discomfort with coming-out vignettes occurred and was stronger when parents and children had the same gender, regardless of the gender of the vignette character. These findings suggest that parents as socializing agents seem to pass on homophobic attitudes toward expressing same-sex intimacy and having gay or lesbian family members and socialize their children with heteronormative messages.

In conclusion, the studies in this dissertation are in line with the notion that heteronormativity is present at multiple levels in society (e.g., within institutions, families, and individuals (Herz & Johansson, 2015). National circumstances are related to individuals' attitudes, and secondary education and parents provide heteronormative messages and play a role in developing children's gender-stereotypic and homophobic attitudes. These results are all in line with the notion of gender schema theory (Bem, 1981, 1983) stating that gender norms are culturally specific, and change over time. In the next two paragraphs, I will further discuss and integrate our findings for heteronormative messages and gender-stereotypic and homophobic attitudes.

### **Heteronormative messages**

Heteronormative messages contain important information for children about sexual orientation. Whereas not explicitly incorporated in its label, heteronormative messages also include cues about what behaviors, interests, and issues are, based on their gender, perceived as normal (Kane, 2006; Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2021). Gender schema theory (Bem, 1981, 1983) sheds light on how gender messages are processed by children in gender schemas, i.e., cognitive structures containing gender-related information based on cultural norms that influence children's attitudes, behavior, and identities. Heteronormative messages can become part of children's gender schema and influence gender-stereotypic beliefs, interests, and perceptions about sexual minorities (Bem, 1981; Martin, 2008). We aimed to add to the literature by examining to what extent two socializing agents provide heteronormative messages about gender and sexual minorities to adolescents in the Netherlands: secondary education (Chapter 3) and parents (Chapter 5). Discussing the results of our study on textbooks for secondary education with the participating publishers made clear that gender-stereotypic messages are often included unconsciously by writers and publishers, illustrating the implicit nature of these messages. However, this seemed different for heteronormative messages about sexual minorities in textbooks. Publishers and writers were aware of the exclusion of LGBTQI+ characters in the textbooks we examined. As schools with strong religious signatures are often unwilling to expose their students to LGBTQI+ themes (Maussen & Vermeulen, 2015), it is more profitable for publishers to exclude LGBTQI+ characters.

In the family context, we found that parents provide nonverbal heteronormative messages to their children about gay and lesbian issues (Chapter 5). In line with



qualitative empirical studies (Martin, 2009; Solebello & Elliott, 2011), we found that these implicit heteronormative messages are related to gender. Parents showed more observed parental discomfort with gay and lesbian issues when they interacted with their child of the same gender. However, we did not find differences in observed parental discomfort between vignettes with gay compared to lesbian children. These descriptive findings illustrate that also in quantitative studies, it is important to take the gender of the actors involved into account when examining heteronormative messages about gay or lesbian issues.

In conclusion, we found that heteronormative messages in secondary education and from parents can be hidden in plain sight: subtle but structurally present. Whereas some heteronormative messages seem to be cautious (e.g., excluding characters from sexual minorities from textbooks), others seem to be unconscious (e.g., parents showing discomfort while discussing gay or lesbian issues in interaction with their child). It is important to keep in mind that also unconscious messages of parents (e.g., assuming their child and others to be heterosexual, silencing sexual minorities) can provide powerful cues about what parents expect from children and what they perceive as normal (Martin, 2009).

### **Gender-stereotypic and homophobic attitudes**

For gender-stereotypic attitudes and interest, we found that even among advantaged adolescents in a relatively gender-equal country such as the Netherlands, explicit gender-stereotypic attitudes about traditionally perceived feminine occupations and careers seem to induce gendered interest in these careers (Chapter 4). This finding seems to reflect the relatively high horizontal gender segregation in education compared to other Western European countries (EIGE, 2022). Regarding homophobic attitudes, we found variation across countries (Chapter 2) and individuals (Chapters 2 and 5). Compared to general attitudes toward gay and lesbian orientations, homophobic attitudes toward the expression of gay or lesbian intimacy and relations in the public and (personal) family sphere are more negative (Chapters 2 and 5). We found that explicit rejection of same-sex couples forming a family is, even today, widespread across European countries and that progressive laws on same-sex relationships mostly affect forerunners (Chapter 2). These findings illustrate that the persistent explicit rejection of this family type can be influenced by socializing circumstances (e.g., progressive laws on same-sex relationships), but that a lot remains to be done to decrease these negative attitudes. Further, we found that also in the Netherlands, homophobic attitudes toward same-sex kissing and potential gay or lesbian family members still exist and seem to be passed on from parents to children.

In line with queer and feminist theories, we found that gender plays a role in attitudes toward sexual minorities in multiple ways. First, we found that men and boys generally hold more homophobic attitudes than women and girls (Chapters 2 and 5).

Second, we found that separately examining attitudes toward gay and lesbian individuals is relevant when examining to what extent parents pass on their attitudes to their children (Chapter 5). Third, the extent to which socializing circumstances are related to the attitudes of men and women seems to vary. On the national level, progressive laws on same-sex relationships seem to affect women's rejection of same-sex couples forming a family, in general, more strongly compared to men's (Chapter 2). Within the family context, we found that parent-child similarities in homophobic attitudes toward same-sex kissing and having a gay son are generally stronger among parent-child dyads of the same gender (fathers and sons; mothers and daughters). In developing attitudes toward sexual minorities, boys seem to look at their fathers and daughters as their mothers. This finding is in line with the gender family process model (Endendijk et al., 2018), children observe available role models in their environment, especially role models of the same gender.

### **6.3 Limitations, strengths, and future research**

The studies described in this dissertation have some limitations that need to be addressed. First, our family samples (Chapters 4 and 5) were not representative of the general Dutch population, limiting the generalizability of our findings. Most parents and children were highly educated, White, and lived in urban areas. Studies showed that gender-stereotypic and homophobic attitudes are weaker among these groups compared to people who are lower educated, belong to ethnic minority groups, and/or live in rural areas (Bos et al., 2012; Halpern & Perry-Jenkins, 2016; Huijnk, 2022). The focus on advantaged groups in the Netherlands was formulated over 15 years ago at the start of the longitudinal research project. Given that insights about inclusive sampling have changed considerably in the past decade, the choices would likely have been different now if the current study was not linked to an older design. Yet, our findings suggest that even among these more advantaged groups in the Netherlands, variation in gender-stereotypic and homophobic attitudes exists and could be passed on from parents to children. To get a more complete understanding of how these processes unfold in society as a whole, future research should focus on families of other backgrounds. In addition, future research could examine to what extent these processes of attitude transmission are present (and perhaps even stronger) among religious families (de Vries et al., 2022). It should be acknowledged, however, that recruiting less advantaged groups in society (e.g., groups with a lower social-economic background) is often more challenging, and requires different recruiting strategies (e.g., recruiting people face-to-face, Halpern & Perry Jenkins, 2016).

In addition, in our family studies (Chapters 4 and 5), we cannot determine if our sample includes people who do not identify with the sex/gender binary. When recruiting participants, we asked parents and children 'Are you a boy (man) or a girl (woman)?'.

In addition, we recruited families that consisted of a father and a mother. Excluding same-sex parents can contribute to the already pervasive and persistent marginalization of these groups (Lindqvist et al., 2021). The main reason for this focus is that the cross-sectional family studies in this dissertation were part of a larger longitudinal project. In previous waves of this study, the main aim was to examine gendered socialization processes among families consisting of a father a mother, and two children. To keep the samples of the following waves comparable to each other, the same inclusion criteria were used in the next samples. Families with same-gender parents or families in which parents and/or children do not identify with the sex/gender binary challenge traditional norms about gender and/or sexual orientation heteronormativity in their very existence (McGuire et al., 2016; Takács & Szalma, 2016). Consequently, gender socialization processes in those families can differ from families consisting of opposite-gender parents that identify with the gender binary (McGuire et al., 2016; Mendez, 2022). To examine the mechanisms of heteronormativity properly in the latter group, study samples should include a group of LGBTQI+ parents and children that is sizable enough do to robust statistical analyzes. Recruiting a sizable group was beyond the scope of the larger study.

Third, a methodological limitation is that all four studies in this dissertation are cross-sectional. Therefore, we cannot determine causality and conclude that socializing messages of national circumstances (e.g., progressive laws), secondary education, or parents affect adults' homophobic attitudes and adolescents' gender-stereotypic and homophobic attitudes. Future studies would benefit from longitudinal data, to gain insight into the individual changes and causality of these processes. In addition, qualitative research is needed to examine the gendered processes in which parents pass on gender stereotypic and heteronormative messages in depth. In doing so, the role of children themselves is relevant to take into account, as children are not passive receivers of gender messages (Groeneveld et al., 2022). From a young age, children actively reproduce and disrupt heteronormativity (Gansen, 2017). Qualitative observational studies accompanied by in-depth qualitative interviews could provide opportunities to examine how children observe gender-stereotypic and heteronormative messages and incorporate them into their own gender schema. In this type of research, paying special attention to children who belong to sexual minorities (or who are in the process of questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity) could add to our understanding of how parents can contribute to (or, instead be a buffer for) internalized homophobia (Feinstein et al., 2014).

Lastly, examining different embodiments of heteronormativity (attitudes, representation, gendered interests, nonverbal messages) is not only a strength. It is also a disadvantage for synthesizing the findings of this dissertation, as it is not possible to compare the socializing influences across socializing agents and circumstances (national circumstances, secondary schools, the family) at these levels. For example, it would have been valuable to examine specific attitudes (for example, toward same-sex kissing) across, and interactions between these levels to gain a more complete understanding

of how national circumstances, higher education, and the family each contribute to the socialization of people's attitudes. Yet, each study of this dissertation provided valuable insight into the socializing influences of gender stereotypes and heteronormativity that go beyond merely accepting sexual minorities and gender equality.

## 6.4 Practical implications

The four studies in this dissertation can add to our understanding of how people think about stereotypic gender roles and sexual minorities and how these attitudes can be passed on to adolescents and adults. In doing so, it can provide insights into how our society can become more inclusive regarding gender and sexual orientation. The practical implications of these studies point to the importance of challenging rigid gender norms and normalizing gay and lesbian expressions of intimacy and relationships.

For gender-stereotypic attitudes and roles, our findings highlight the relevance of reducing gender stereotypes about men in roles that are traditionally perceived as feminine. As children develop gender-stereotypical attitudes towards occupations from a young age, parents who want their children to develop their own talents and preferences rather than what society expects from them can be advised to challenge these norms when their children are still young (Solbes-Canales et al., 2020). The importance of doing so is captured in a powerful quote by Gloria Steinem *'I'm glad we've begun to raise our daughters more like our sons, but it will never work until we raise our sons more like our daughters'* (Miller, 2016). Our findings suggest that explicit and cautious gender-stereotypic attitudes regarding these careers still exist. Therefore, parents who want their children to develop their own interests and preferences can be encouraged to explicitly mention that these types of careers and roles are also for men and refer to male role models. Research-based interventions are needed to examine potential effects. It is important to note that parents challenging gender norms will not be enough to foster male engagement in these types of roles and occupations. Interventions are needed to tackle barriers at the societal level (e.g., by providing longer parental and paternal leave that are solely for fathers), organizational level (e.g., by allowing men and women to make use of family-friendly policies), and relational level (e.g. by improving men's self-confidence and efficacy in fathering (Meeussen et al., 2020). Fostering male engagement in traditionally female communal roles and occupations is important, as it can have positive consequences for men themselves, women (and other genders), children, and society as a whole (Meeussen et al., 2020). Amongst others, male representation in HEED domains can reduce labor shortage in this field, reduce negative stereotypes about men in these roles, increase flexibility in societal gender norms, and provide varied role models for younger generations (e.g., Croft et al., 2015; Meeussen et al., 2020).

Parents who want their children to hold positive attitudes toward sexual minorities rather than homophobic ones can be advised to critically evaluate their own attitudes toward these groups. In doing so, it seems relevant for parents to go beyond the acceptance of gay and lesbian people in general and to focus on how they feel about expressions of same-sex intimacy and potentially gay and lesbian family members. Parents can normalize these issues in various ways, for example by not assuming that their children (or other people around them) are heterosexual. This implicitly provides the message to the child that their parents consider other sexual orientations as normal, and that being heterosexual is not a given (Martin, 2009; Mendez, 2022). Further, parents who want to normalize same-sex intimacy in public can be advised to monitor their own (non)verbal reactions. Nonverbal reactions (e.g., showing uneasiness while encountering same-sex couples kissing) are visible and tangible to individuals from the LGBTQI+ community and can be perceived as a form of microaggression (Nadal et al., 2016). Knowing that these reactions are visible to LGBTQI+ individuals, it is likely that children can pick up these reactions from their parents as well. Normalizing these issues is not only important for parents who have children that are gay or lesbian (or bisexual, pansexual, or queer/questioning). Negative attitudes towards sexual minorities can predict homophobic and affirmative behaviors (Mereish & Poteat, 2015), and are therefore also important to reduce among parents of children that are heterosexual. As positive attitudes toward gay and lesbian individuals can only predict affirmative behavior toward these groups when they are strongly held (Mereish & Poteat, 2015), this message is also directed to parents who find themselves somewhat in the middle between homophobic and highly accepting attitudes.

When it comes to fulfilling parental roles, acknowledging the legitimacy of same-sex relationships by allowing couples to marry is important. Longitudinal studies examined how and the direction in which same-sex relationship legislation affects attitudes toward gay and lesbian individuals. These studies found that laws on same-sex relationships can have a powerful influence in shaping general attitudes toward gay and lesbian individuals (Aksoy et al., 2020). Therefore, a key policy implication is to urge policymakers to introduce and use legal institutions that protect same-sex couples from discrimination and make civil union, adoption, *and* marriage available for same-sex couples. At the time of the data collection of our study (2018), same-sex marriage was not legalized in Austria, Italy, Northern Ireland, and Switzerland. The fact that by now, except for Italy, these countries legalized same-sex marriage (ILGA, 2023) seems hopeful.

For socialization on the school level, it can be advised to make cautious choices about inclusion in textbooks. Publishers and schools that want to be more inclusive are recommended to be more critical in their selection of stories and role models in their books. As repetitive exposure to gender-stereotypic and heteronormative messages can affect adolescents' attitudes toward gender roles and sexual minorities (Good, 2010; Kricheli-Katz & Regev, 2020; Ruiz-Cecilia et al., 2021), this part of the curriculum may hinder children to fully develop their personalities, talents, and abilities. Together with

two of my co-authors on Chapter 3, I developed a tool for more inclusive textbooks (Van Veen et al., 2022). This tool was developed based on the request of publishers for an instrument to evaluate their own textbooks for other subjects and practical tips to improve diversity (in terms of gender, ethnicity, and LGBTQ+). Examples from practical tips were increasing (female, LGBTQ+) role models of color and representing characters from the LGBTQ+ community in everyday situations that everyone could recognize themselves in (e.g., being nervous for exams, enjoying a walk in the forest, parents doing groceries together). Hopefully, this tool accompanied by training on how to make textbooks more inclusive will contribute to textbooks that positively challenge gender stereotypes and provide role models that go beyond restrictive normative boundaries. Further, schools and teachers can be encouraged to make a cautious decision about what textbooks they choose and/or pay more attention to the representation of LGBTQI+ characters and gender stereotypes in other parts of the curriculum (e.g., reflecting on biases in textbooks, providing their own examples (Gouvias & Alexopoulos, 2018). More generally speaking, the fact that schools with a strong religious signature appear to be unwilling to expose their students to LGBTQI+ characters and demand textbooks without these minorities, provokes some critical societal questions. As this attitude makes it more profitable for publishers to exclude these groups from their materials altogether, religious schools also influence textbooks used throughout non-religious schools. According to Article 23 of the Dutch constitution, faith-based schools are funded and protected by the government (for a comprehensive explanation I refer to Maussen et al., 2015). Amongst others, this provides the religious school the freedom to express the fundamental orientation of the school (e.g., selecting staff and pupils, in choosing how to discuss sensitive topics and dress codes in the school) and freedom of internal organization (e.g., choosing their own teaching materials; Meussen et al., 2015). When the schools follow fundamental orientations that prescribe the exclusion or marginalization of the LGBTQI+ community and/or rigid gender roles, this freedom of the school can come into conflict with article 1 of the Dutch constitution and Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to article 1 of the Dutch constitution, all citizens should be treated equally and discrimination based on religion, belief, political opinion, race, sex, or any other grounds is prohibited (Burri, 2022). Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that education should help children fully develop their personalities, talents, and abilities (UNESCO, 2017). Politicians and policymakers should take the latter into account when considering the tenability of Article 23 of the Dutch constitution.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This dissertation covered a series of studies on heteronormative and gender socialization across three different levels: national circumstances, secondary education, and the family. Focusing on the different levels of heteronormative socialization provided

insight into the way people think about gender roles and sexual minorities, and how socializing agents could potentially contribute to a more inclusive society. To promote inclusive attitudes, policymakers should try to move beyond increasing acceptance of general gender equality and gay and lesbian orientations. More specifically, they should look for ways to represent more counter-stereotypic role models and normalize the expression of same-sex relationships in the public and family sphere.

