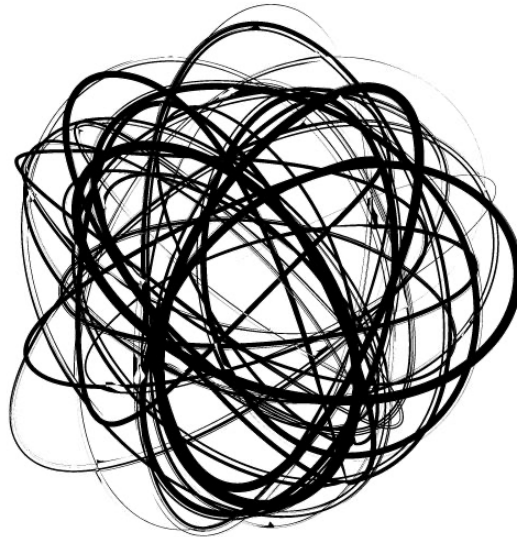


# Queer Figurations and Gatekeepers of Citizenship

*An Analysis of Queer Figurations as Constructed by COC and the Organisation  
of Queer Citizenship in the Netherlands*



Nynke Anna van der Mark BA  
s1876848

Thesis

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Leiden University

Supervisor: Dr. V. Thakur

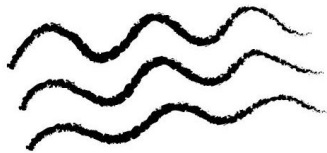
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I am everything, roared the wave as it came crashing  
I am joy and pain and the space between  
I am you, her, him and them  
I am living and I am dead  
I am past and future and this very instant  
Godly, yet insignificant

**- Melodie Michel**



## PREFACE

This thesis marks the end of a journey through the realms of International Relations. When I started the Master International Relations, Global Order in a Historical Perspective, I was completely new to the discipline, having a background in History. In the first semester, I followed the research seminar *History, Race and Empire in the Study of International Relations*, instructed by Dr. Vineet Thakur. What followed were twelve weeks of critical readings and conversations about the origins of International Relations, in which we discussed topics of race, colonialism, imperialism and gender. This was one of the most interesting courses I ever took in university and I knew that International Relations had a lot to offer, beyond the historical perspective as well. Vineet also introduced me to Feminist and Queer Theory in International Relations. When it was time to pick a supervisor, I did not have to think long about who I would like to supervise me.

However, because I was also enrolled in a Research Master in History, I shelved my thesis plans for a while. When I was ready to dust them off, the world was captivated by a global pandemic of COVID-19. It complicated the writing process, not only because it has been a difficult time, but also because the University Library only allowed study shifts of four hours a day and I did not want to travel when it was not necessary. So, I ended up writing my thesis largely from home, where at least I could play music freely, the coffee and tea were cheap and my cat Donder was always by my side providing comfort.

There are many people who contributed to the very existence of this thesis. First of all, the authors whose books contained not only useful theories for this thesis, but also provided me with insights on life, particularly Jack Halberstam, Jasbir Puar, Cynthia Weber, Gloria Wekker and Rahul Rao. Vineet, who got on board with the topic immediately and with whom I had very valuable conversations. Dr. John-Harmen Valk, for willing to be my second reader on such a short notice. Closer to home; my good friend Melle, who feels like my academic soulmate. My parents, who let me stay in their house for a while when they were touring the country, so that I could write in peace. Melodie, who has written the beautiful words on the previous page. And last but not least, Mojdeh, who is the most amazing and supportive person I know. Thank you all.

Haarlem, 1 July 2021

Nynke Anna van der Mark

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	5
Research Questions and Relevance	6
Methodology and Sources	8
Structure	11
<b>1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND</b>	12
1.1 Queer Figurations	12
1.2 Queer Citizenship and Gatekeepers	13
1.3 Cultuur en Ontspanningscentrum (COC)	15
<b>2. ‘THE RIGHTS-HOLDER/NON-RIGHTS-HOLDER’</b>	19
2.1 The Rights-Holder and the Non-Rights-Holder in International Relations	19
2.2 Equal Marital Rights as Unchallenged Milestone	22
2.3 Equal Marriage as the Affirmation of Good Citizenship	26
<b>3. ‘THE VICTIM’</b>	29
3.1 The Discursive Victimisation of Queers	29
3.2 A Culturalization of Citizenship in Service of an Anti-Islam Agenda	31
3.3 The Mobilisation of Queer Victimhood in Dutch Party Politics	34
<b>4. ‘THE COMMUNITY MEMBER’</b>	39
4.1 An Out and Proud Community	39
4.3 Pink in Blue: Negotiations Between the Police and the Queer Community	42
4.2 The Rainbow: Community, Capitalism and Nationalism	45
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	49
<b>REFERENCES</b>	51
<b>APPENDIX: CODE ANALYSIS</b>	58

## INTRODUCTION

*Le pouvoir est partout; non pas parce qu'il embrasse tout, mais parce qu'il vient de partout.*

- Michel Foucault

Power, says the French philosopher Michel Foucault, is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere.<sup>1</sup> In the first part of his four-volume *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault lays down a complicated scheme of power, discourse and sex, which he summarises as follows: 'power's hold on sex is maintained through language, or rather through the act of discourse that creates, from the very fact that it is articulated, a rule of law.'<sup>2</sup> Power should not be understood as limited to hard governmental power, but rather as a force that is created in all kinds of spaces.<sup>3</sup> Foucault sees as a particular powerful mechanism the so-called 'will to truth' or 'will to knowledge', which is the urge to know the sexualised subject, or in the words of scholar of International Relations Cynthia Weber: 'contemporary Western society's demand that the sexed and sexualized organ/body speak.'<sup>4</sup>

These are the points of departure from which this thesis starts its inquiry into power, discourse, gender and sexuality. I argue that the will to knowledge manifests itself in different spheres of society, indeed, because power comes from everywhere. Through discursive practices, driven by the will to knowledge, certain figurations are constructed that represent perceptions of non-normative sexualised and gendered subjectivities. The construction of these figurations can be strategic, although it often happens unwittingly. The fabrication of sexualised and gendered figurations also happens in spaces in which non-normative subjectivities should find protection and whose interests are advocated for: at non-governmental lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual (LGBTQIA)+ advocacy organisations, especially when these spaces maintain close ties with the state, that also plays its part in constructing figurations. This thesis aims to uncover these figurations and to show how they are quintessential in the organisation of queer citizenship.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge* (London, 2020 [1976]), 93.

<sup>2</sup> Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 81.

<sup>3</sup> Foucault writes that there are: 'methods of power whose operation is not ensured by right but by technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but by control, methods that are employed on all levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its apparatus.' in *Ibidem*, 89.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, 79 and C. Weber, *Queer International Relations. Sovereignty, Sexuality and the Will to Knowledge* ((New York, 2016), 2.

## Research Questions and Relevance

As is indicated above, I argue that LGBTQIA+ advocacy organisations construct certain figurations around sexualised and gendered subjectivities. In other words, through the way they work and lobby on behalf of LGBTQIA+ people and write and talk about them, it appears how they perceive non-normative sexualities and genders. The largest queer advocacy organisation in the Netherlands is *Cultuur en Ontspannings Centrum* (Culture and Recreation Centre, COC). Queer advocacy organisations influence policy because they are supposed to be experts on queerness. They are often invited to advise authorities and they lobby to push legislation and raise awareness about certain queer issues. Because of COC's central role and high visibility in the public debate both nationally and internationally, it is relevant to research their construction of figurations that influence the way in which queer citizenship is mediated. It would be a mistake to contend that queer subjects or queer advocacy organisations escape the urge to construct, often fixed, figurations based on gender and/or sexuality. Therefore, the central research question of this thesis is: *How are the queer figurations that emerge from the discourse of COC Nederland employed in the organisation of queer citizenship?*

This question can be divided into two parts. First, it is necessary to understand how COC constructs queer figurations and how they can be typified. The first sub question is therefore: *Which queer figurations does COC construct and by means of which strategies and mediums are they established?* The figurations are deciphered through an analysis of the news items COC has published on their website over the course of one year. These items provide a comprehensible body of text which reflects COC's general discourse about sexuality and gender. The second part of the research question specifically focuses on how these figurations are deployed to serve as moulds for citizenship, based on the sub question: *How are queer figurations deployed to delineate queer citizenship?* This sub question represents an investigation into how citizenship is influenced by figurations of queerness. As the state is a key organiser of citizenship through law, order and political discourse, it can be regarded as functioning as a gatekeeper of citizenship. Therefore, I study various manifestations of queer citizenship in which the state plays a significant role.

The Dutch state and COC both navigate in a complex playing field, in which they are influencing each other. It is impossible to measure the exact influence COC has on government decisions and vice versa. However, it is clear that both institutions constantly interact and enter into a mutual dialogue. Since the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, COC has

been the government's interlocutor on behalf of the homosexual community.<sup>5</sup> There are also financial ties that prove the interconnectedness between the state and COC. On COC's website, it is disclosed that they receive financial contributions from four different ministries, of which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is particularly important to stress the fact that COC is highly present in the international arena.<sup>6</sup>

The main relevance of this thesis is twofold. Firstly, it is important to show that International Relations (IR) and other socio-politico disciplines are not gender- and sexuality-neutral fields of study. Queer scholarship problematises common assumptions in academia and often exposes the gendered, racialised and sexualised notions underlying power relations. I wholeheartedly agree with Weber, who pleads for a mutual acknowledgment of scholars of Queer Studies and International Relations, so that scholarly challenges in the realms of sexuality and power can be taken up adequately.<sup>7</sup> Through this study, I fight the assumption that citizenship is a neutral political concept which serves all citizens equally and I show how ideas about sexuality and gender influence the way citizenship is construed.

Secondly, this study uncovers the way in which politics are influenced by sexual discourse in the Netherlands, which also has implications in the international arena. Anthropologist Gloria Wekker argues that the dominant Dutch self-image can be summarised

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<sup>5</sup> COC webpage, section *over ons*. URL: <https://www.coc.nl/over-ons> (last accessed 17 June 2021) and various items in the government's calendar, for instance a working visit to COC by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stef Blok on 24 June 2020 (URL: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/regering/agenda/2020/06/24/werkbezoek-coc>, last accessed 25 June 2021) and a conversation between the Minister of Internal Affairs, Kajsa Ollongren, and COC on 26 June 2018 (URL: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/agenda/2018/06/26/gesprek-met-het-coc>, last accessed 25 June 2021).

<sup>6</sup> Source: Webpage COC, section 'Financiers'. URL: <https://www.coc.nl/financiers> (last accessed 17 June 2021). An example from the research of Johanne Døhlle Saltnes and Markus Thiel moreover shows how the entanglement between the state and COC works in practice. When the government of Uganda passed the so-called Anti-Homosexuality Bill in 2014, the Netherlands immediately cut aid to Uganda. According to Saltnes and Thiel, the Dutch state's reasoning behind this act was that 'it was important [...] to show to its constituency, including influential CSOs such as COC (Cultuur en Ontspanningscentrum), that they were actively countering rights deterioration.' (J.D. Saltnes and M. Thiel, 'The Politicization of LGBTI Human Rights Norms in the EU-Uganda Development Partnership', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 59.1 (2021), 108-125, 117.) COC has made firm statements, both before the introduction of the law as well as after its instalment, about the need for international pressure against Uganda. This example shows how the Dutch government is influenced by COC in making decisions that bear far-reaching implications in the international arena. Saltnes and Thiel rightly state that COC's lobbying juxtaposed a modern and human rights embracing homeland with a human rights denying Uganda. This lobby completely ignored the fact that 1) homosexuality was already criminalised in Uganda through the Ugandan Penal Code, which was largely installed through British colonial law and 2) that three American evangelical right-wing pastors who had organised a seminar in Uganda on 'exposing the homosexual agenda' partly informed the content of the new anti-homosexuality bill (R. Rao, *Out of Time, The Queer Politics of Postcoloniality* (Oxford, 2020), 2-4). At the same time, it is also problematic to overemphasise both the role of British Victorians as well as the American pastors, because it neglects Ugandan agency at the hands of religious figures as well as politicians (See for instance N.N. Mhaioleoin, 'The Ironic Gay Spectator: The Impacts of Centring Western Subjects in International LGBT Rights Campaigns', *Sexualities* 22.1-2 (2019), 148-164 and S. Nyanzi and A. Karamagi, 'The Social-Political Dynamics of the Antihomosexuality Legislation in Uganda', *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 29.1 (2015), 24-38.)

<sup>7</sup> Weber, *Queer International Relations*, 2.

as the feeling of being ‘a small, but ethically righteous country that has to offer the world something special.’<sup>8</sup> She furthermore argues that this feeling of ‘exceptionalism’ finds its expression in aspirations on a global scale, for example materialised in the fact that The Hague is the home to multiple international tribunals.<sup>9</sup> Coupled with the myth that the Netherlands are an international beacon of tolerance and emancipation, Dutch discourse on gender and sexuality easily finds its way into international politics, by means of the European Union and other international governance bodies.<sup>10</sup>

Weber moreover points out that policymakers employ sexual figurations that ‘participate in constructing “sexualized orders of international relations” – international orders that are *necessarily* produced through various codings of sex, gender *and* sexuality’<sup>11</sup> Queer research like the present study is needed to expose this gendered and sexualised order. It is important to acknowledge that the figurations on which policy and lawmakers rely do not drop out of thin air. Instead, they are constructed in a complex web of political and social discourse. Studying the share of queer advocacy in the construction of this discourse is important, because these organisations can be regarded as gatekeepers of queer discourse. Non-queer entities and policymakers take over parts of their discourse and policy issues, because these organisations are fighting for queer equality, acceptance and emancipation and are therefore regarded as specialists concerning these issues, which grants them significant discursive power.

## Methodology and Sources

This thesis departs from a junction of among other sub disciplines, International Relations and Queer Theory. First of all, this investigation is conducted from a queer point of view. Conducting queer research does not necessarily mean that the research subject is queer. It often means that the methodology at the basis of the research is queer. In this case, both are true. Aristeia Fotopoulou states that: ‘the critical edge of queer theory lies in the framing of ‘queer’ as a site of ‘becoming’ [...] and of constant questioning of norms. We may thus want to consider a ‘queer approach’ to research, a distinct methodological approach that aims to

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<sup>8</sup> Quote: ‘Het dominante Nederlandse zelfbeeld [kan] worden samengevat als het algemene gevoel een klein maar ethisch land te zijn dat de wereld iets bijzonders te bieden heeft.’ Source: G. Wekker, *Witte onschuld, paradoxen van kolonialisme en ras* (Amsterdam, 2018), 13.

<sup>9</sup> Wekker, *Witte onschuld*, 13.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, 155.

<sup>11</sup> C. Weber, ‘Queer Intellectual Curiosity as International Relations Method: Developing Queer International Relations Theoretical and Methodological Framework’, *International Studies Quarterly* 60.1 (2016), 11-23, 12.



perform an act of ‘queering’, to de-naturalise taken for granted categories of analysis, even beyond issues of sexuality and gender.’<sup>12</sup>

Instead of taking citizenship for granted as a uniform political concept, I understand it as fluid, whereby questions of rights, responsibilities and residence permits go hand in hand with questions of belonging and normativity. Political communities exclude from their vision on citizenship various individuals and groups of people, explicitly and implicitly. The exclusive character of citizenship stems from a normative framework which, in the words of Amy Brandzel, ‘entrenches notions of proper versus improper, natural versus abnormal, and normative versus abject.’<sup>13</sup> These notions have historically been constructed along the lines of identity markers as gender, sexuality, race, class and religion. On the basis of these actual or presumed personal characteristics, people have been granted and denied rights and found themselves in a societal framework that is constructed in favour or against their needs and interests.

I have tracked queer figurations to uncover how this normative framework of citizenship negotiates with non-normative sexualised and gendered subjectivities. This research can therefore be placed in a tradition of Queer IR and critical citizenship studies. As Maya Mikdashi points out, critical citizenship studies plea for a focus on ‘the distance between the ideal of citizenship and its everyday embodied practices and on what the citizen and the state do rather than on the state’s narration of itself.’<sup>14</sup> This study is also influenced by Weber’s concept of ‘queer intellectual curiosity’, which ‘refuses to take for granted the personal-to-international institutional arrangements, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that figure “homosexuality” and “the homosexual”.’<sup>15</sup> Weber argues that these figurations are mobilised in international politics because they ‘powerfully attach to – and detach from – material bodies.’<sup>16</sup> Ideologies, practices and policy have historically revolved around these figurations. For example, historian Ann Stoler has shown how the gendered, sexualised and racialised figurations of ‘the savage’, ‘the primitive’ and ‘the colonised’ have influenced the European project of colonial paternalism and the subjugation of entire

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<sup>12</sup> A. Fotopoulou, ‘Intersectionality Queer Studies and Hybridity: Methodological Frameworks for Social Research’, *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 31.2 (2012), 19-35, 25.

<sup>13</sup> A.L. Brandzel, *Against Citizenship: The Violence of the Normative* (Urbana, Chicago and Springfield, 2016), x.

<sup>14</sup> M. Mikdashi, ‘Queering Citizenship, Queering Middle East Studies’, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 45 (2013), 350-352.

<sup>15</sup> Weber, ‘Queer Intellectual Curiosity’, 11.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem.

populations.<sup>17</sup> Another example is Foucault, who distinguishes ‘the hysterical woman’, ‘the masturbating child’, ‘the Malthusian couple’ and the ‘perverse adult’ and shows how the bodies attached to these figures have been historically pathologised.<sup>18</sup>

This thesis is based on extensive qualitative desk research. Interdisciplinary secondary literature forms the basis of the theoretical framework. In light of this framework, a case study is presented which serves both as an illustration for the arguments as well as the structure around which the arguments revolve. The case study consists of the advocacy organisation COC in combination with observations around the state. I combined close reading with discourse analysis, performed on COC’s communication towards the public. In studies of normative power and/or violence, discourse is important because it is powerful in itself. Discourse can be found on multiple levels, ranging from a single text, to an ensemble of outlets in a large community.<sup>19</sup> The discursive practices that are critically analysed in this thesis are displayed in COC’s news items and are further embedded in a larger discourse of queerness as it is practiced in society.

I have chosen to analyse news items that have appeared on COC’s main website over the period of a year, because there is a considerable number of items that reflect on yearly events and activities, like Pride, the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia and Intersexphobia (IDAHOT) and International Women’s Day. If I had chosen to analyse a period shorter or longer than one year, it would have generated a distorted image in which some events and topics would have been given more attention than others. The items that are analysed have appeared between 23 March 2020 and 23 March 2021, generating a total of 123 news items.<sup>20</sup> The method of analysis is informed by a combination of close reading and discourse analysis, supported by the method of open, axial and selective coding.<sup>21</sup> I have systemised the news items with the help of the coding software programme ATLAS.ti, to draw meanings from the data. Through open coding, I have attached 400 codes to paragraphs or sentences within the news items, that reflect their general subjects. On the basis of these codes, 26 code groups have been created through axial coding. In the final phase, I

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<sup>17</sup> A.L. Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Raleigh, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 105.

<sup>19</sup> R. Wodak, ‘Foreword: Critical Discourse Analysis/Studies – Challenges, Concepts, and Perspectives’, in T. Catalano and L.R. Waugh (eds.), *Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Discourse Studies and Beyond* (Cham, 2020), xxi-xxv, xxiii.

<sup>20</sup> The news items have been transferred to ATLAS.ti on 23 March 2021 and 24 March 2021. All analyses are based on the news items as they were available on the website of COC on these dates. Potential later amendments on the website could therefore not be taken into account.

<sup>21</sup> See for instance H. Boeije, *Analysis in Qualitative Research* (New York, 2009).

have selectively coded the codes and code groups, resulting in four core categories that broadly speaking emerge as the most central themes within the news items: 1) Rights, 2) Violence, 3) Foreign affairs and 4) Community. An overview of the news items and an extensive explanation of the complete analysis are attached in the appendix at the end of this thesis.

To the four core categories that have come forward through the coding analysis, protagonists are tied, which form the figurations that are investigated in this thesis: 1) the double-faced Rights-Holder/non-Rights-Holder, 2) the Victim and 3) the Community Member. The reason that there is a double figuration is that the third category - foreign affairs - is closely tied to the category of rights. In news items about foreign affairs, rights or a lack thereof are often a central theme. 'Rights' and 'a lack of rights' are often measured against a Western Eurocentric yardstick and form implicit comparisons. Therefore, these are considered two sides of the same coin.

## **Structure**

The first chapter consists of a theoretical framework in which the research is embedded, as well as of a brief organisational background of COC. After the first chapter, three substantive chapters follow in which the research questions are answered. Instead of embracing a vertical structure in which each chapter would correspond with a sub question, I have decided to approach the structure of my thesis horizontally. The first sub question asks which queer figurations COC constructs and by means of what strategies. The analysis of the news items brought forward three main figurations, that form part of the answer to the first sub question. At the same time, however, they form the units of analysis of the second sub question, which asks how these figurations play a role in the moulding of citizenship. That is why I have chosen to dedicate a chapter to each of the main figurations. In the first chapter, the double-faced figuration of the Rights-Holder/non-Rights Holder is set forth. The second chapter engages with The Victim, while the third chapter centralises the Community Member. In each chapter, I focus on different manifestations of the figurations, touching upon law and order, politics and cultural symbols. This allows me to show sets of interconnected assemblages of power, discourse and queerness. The final section of the thesis is a concluding chapter, in which the main research question is answered and the findings are summarised.

## CHAPTER 1

### Theoretical Framework and Organisational Background

In this chapter, the theoretical framework of this thesis is laid down and relevant concepts are defined and explained. At least three concepts emerge from the main research question that need to be delineated: queer, figurations, and citizenship, which will be explicated and brought into conversation with each other in the first two paragraphs. The final section of this chapter forms an organisational background of COC, to place their current advocacy activities in their historical context and map out the playing field in which COC navigates.

#### 1.1 Queer Figurations

Alongside many queer theorists, I maintain Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's definition of 'queer': 'the open mesh of possibilities, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent element of anyone's gender, or anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't* be made) to signify monolithically.'<sup>22</sup> Sedgwick uses the word 'monolithically'. It is useful to look at the origins of that adverb, which is derived from the noun 'monolith'. A monolith is a geological feature which consists of a single (*monos*) rock (*lithos*): a knowable and singular entity. A queer entity is thus the opposite of monolithic, in which all sorts of assemblies and compositions of elements are possible and not necessarily knowable. Someone who regards themselves as queer, does not necessarily have to propagate their queerness or act upon it as if it were a solid basis. The nature of their queerness may be fluid or changing or not deeply felt. However, policymakers often assume that queer subjects can be signified monolithically, so that they can be known and included in or excluded from policy.

In this thesis, queer figurations are tracked down. Borrowing Weber's definition, figurations are: 'distillations of shared meanings in forms or images.'<sup>23</sup> She further notes that 'figurations emerge out of discursive and material semiotic assemblages that condense diffuse imaginaries about the world into specific worlds into being.'<sup>24</sup> It is important to remember that figurations are social constructs. Figurations emerge as knowable entities, sometimes recognisable as stereotypes, but more often disguised as carefully assembled and reiterated archetypes that influence society and vice versa. Figurations are often stripped of their

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<sup>22</sup> E. Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (Durham, 1993), 8.

<sup>23</sup> Weber, *Queer International Relations*, 28.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*.

queerness to see it replaced by a gayness or a transness that is knowable and static. I nevertheless speak of queer figurations, because upon deconstruction, one finds a disorderly queer mass that is made to be represented by one or more figurations. More often than not, the figuration is implicitly or explicitly White, male and able-bodied, thereby erasing Other queer identities, experiences and expressions.<sup>25</sup> Queer theorists engage with figurations, because they are informative about the power relations that are at the core of their creation and only by a careful deconstruction of these figurations the power relations become visible.

The will to knowledge in the context of gender and sexuality is employed to construct subjectivities that are classified in categories. These classifications are based on the creators' interpretation of the subjectivity, very much like figurative artworks which are the artists' interpretations and representations of something or someone. Like a painter who assume they know the sea and thus they can paint the sea, agents assume they know the queer and thus they can represent the queer. However, even though a grey and blue sea painted in oil on canvas can look very realistic, it is not the sea but a mere interpretation of it. In the same fashion, queer representations – even if they are constructed by queer people or queer organisations – are mere figurations based upon interpretations. In this thesis, figurations are understood as constructed representations of queer subjectivities that are often used to build policy upon.

## 1.2 Queer Citizenship and Gatekeepers

Political theorist Keith Faulks argues that citizenship is 1) a status that negotiates the relationship between the individual and the political community and 2) a framework for the interactions individuals perform within civil society.<sup>26</sup> Citizenship, both as a status and as a framework, is enormously important to people's lives since it is vital to many aspects of modern-day existence, including personal relationships, education, healthcare and work. Faulks also states that citizenship has an advantage over other social identities because it has an inclusive quality that identities as class, religion or ethnicity lack.<sup>27</sup> The basis for this is that citizenship is subjective and historically and culturally constructed and therefore inclusivity should be feasible. However, Faulks also points to the fact that 'the state, through

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<sup>25</sup> I deliberately write 'White' with a capital W, as I would write 'Black' with a capital B, because these are historically and socially constructed racial categories. With writing capital letters, I hope to stress the fact that these are not neutral categories or mere colours. For an extensive discussion, see: K.A. Appiah, 'The Case for Capitalizing the B in Black', *The Atlantic* (18 June 2020).

<sup>26</sup> K. Faulks, *Citizenship* (London and New York, 2000), 107.

<sup>27</sup> Faulks, *Citizenship*, 107.

its efforts to create unity and symmetry between citizens, necessarily denies and suppresses difference.’<sup>28</sup>

Leti Volpp describes citizenship as ‘Janus-faced’, referring to the Roman god Janus, who is imagined as having two faces.<sup>29</sup> Janus is the god of gates and doors who uses his faces to gaze in both directions: inside and outside. Similarly, the one face of citizenship looks into the parameters of the political community, while the other face looks to the outside, the realm of those who may not enter. Volpp states that the fact that citizenship is presented as universal masks its double-faced character.<sup>30</sup> At the birth of citizenship in Western nation states, White males with a high enough income were the only people who were regarded fit for full citizenship. In the course of time, *some* women and sexual and racial minorities have been granted portions of citizenship.<sup>31</sup> For people who had been living outside the nation state and who wished to immigrate to within the borders, it has been and remains even more difficult to get citizenship. Immigrants have to bring something to the table; preferably human capital, and they have to underline values and ideas that correspond with the dominant values of the receiving country.

In her reflection on the concept of citizenship, Diane Richardson states that citizenship has traditionally been understood ‘in relation to the rights and responsibilities of citizens within a given nation state.’<sup>32</sup> She also notes that recent scholars understand citizenship as ‘beyond formal citizenship as a member of a nation state, to include considerations of belonging and associated practices of citizenship that go beyond traditional rights-based understandings.’<sup>33</sup> That means that questions of citizenship are questions of who can enjoy privileges, who is deserving of protection, for whom laws are drafted up, who benefits from rules and regulations and who is harmed by it. As Faulks eloquently puts it: ‘citizenship has been about exclusion from, as well as inclusion into the polity.’<sup>34</sup>

To determine who may be included in and who must be excluded from the polity, gatekeepers are installed. These are powerful figures, guarding the gateway through which one can gain access to whatever is beyond. Assessing the souls that come to the gates, gatekeepers have the power to determine who may enter and who may not, protecting the borders between the ‘in’ and the ‘out’. Gatekeepers of citizenship have determinative power

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<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, 49.

<sup>29</sup> L. Volpp, ‘Feminist, Sexual and Queer Citizenship’ in A. Shachar, R. Bauböck, I. Bloemraad and M. Vink (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Citizenship* (Oxford, 2017), 154-173, 154.

<sup>30</sup> Volpp, ‘Feminist, Sexual and Queer Citizenship’, 154.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>32</sup> D. Richardson, *Sexuality and Citizenship* (Cambridge and Medford, 2018), 18.

<sup>33</sup> Richardson, *Sexuality and Citizenship*, 18.

<sup>34</sup> K. Faulks, *Citizenship* (London and New York, 2000), 29.

to demarcate who may belong and fit in. There is never one gatekeeper, rather, there are multiple gatekeepers, intertwined in a complex web of capital, knowledge, power and law. Some gatekeepers perform their tasks knowingly and explicitly, like customs officials, immigration services or judges who have the final word in asylum cases. Other gatekeepers are interwoven within institutions, setting the tone of the discourse because they have a wide audience or great political power. Among them are for instance journalists, educators and politicians, writing, teaching or voting and influencing their audience about who may belong. Citizenship is not only regarded a status or even a possession, but also as participatory through acts of civic virtue that show that the political community is more important than personal pleasure.<sup>35</sup>

### 1.3 *Cultuur en Ontspanningscentrum (COC)*

As has been indicated above, this thesis investigates how COC Nederland constructs queer figurations. COC is the largest and most long-standing key player in Dutch homosexuality advocacy. Early Dutch homosexuality advocacy took off when Christian political parties pushed through so-called anti-vice legislation around pornography, prostitution, homosexuality and contraception in 1911, which was aimed at raising standards of morality and protecting the youth.<sup>36</sup> As Chelsea Shields argues, the vice laws were created in a gendered discourse of citizenship, in which men's and women's roles within the nation-state were not only assumed, but also regulated through legislation.<sup>37</sup> One of the new articles – Article 248bis – prohibited underage (under twenty-one) homosexual intercourse, while the age limit for heterosexual intercourse remained sixteen.<sup>38</sup> The lawmakers assumed that older homosexual men blackmailed or lured younger men into sex, sometimes by paying them for it.<sup>39</sup> The state felt the need to prevent these practices so that normative heterosexuality, in which innocence and purity were firmly imbedded, was protected. There was no discussion in

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<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, 164.

<sup>36</sup> C. Shields, '“Combatting the Sensuality of the Youth”: Youthful Sexuality and the Reformulation of Desire in the 1911 Dutch Vice Laws', *Gender & History* 31.1 (2019), 155-131, 115.

<sup>37</sup> Shields, "Combatting the Sensuality of the Youth", 116.

<sup>38</sup> Originally, Article 248bis was drafted to regulate all sexual intercourse to protect the purity of the youth under twenty-one years old. However, Christian political parties claimed that youthful women with sexual desires that led them to have sexual intercourse, were undeserving of protection. Hence, the new law only came into force regulating homosexual sex and was not only homophobic in nature, but maybe even more so misogynist. Next to that, the law was framed in gender-neutral terms, but it was actually targeted at male-male sexual encounters, because female-female sex was thought of as almost non-existent by the all-male Parliament at the time. In Shields, "Combatting the Sensuality of the Youth".

<sup>39</sup> Shields, "Combatting the Sensuality of the Youth", 122.

Parliament if the younger partners would actually desire homosexual sex or even *were* homosexual.

Soon, Article 248bis became the battleground of early homosexuality rights advocates. From the 1910s into the 1940s, wealthy homosexuals started to publish leaflets and magazines about homosexuality.<sup>40</sup> After laying low during World War II, the homosexuality advocacy community founded the Shakespeare Club in 1946 in Amsterdam, of which the first meeting at Hotel Krasnapolsky attracted 150 people.<sup>41</sup> The main activities of the club were ‘recreating’ with each other and informing psychiatrists about homosexuality, because many middle and high class homosexual men and lesbian women ended up on psychiatrists’ couches.<sup>42</sup> Although the first Shakespeare Club meeting was not noticed by the police, vice police were present at subsequent meetings, undercover and mingling in the audience while on the lookout for violations of Article 248bis and general misbehaviour.<sup>43</sup>

In 1949, the Shakespeare Club changed its name to *Cultuur- en Ontspannings Centrum* (Culture and Recreation Centre, C.O.C.). Nothing in the name of the organisation, the statutes or the magazine *Vriendschap* (Friendship) signalled at homosexuality, or – as the organisation preferred – homophilia, which emphasised same-sex love (*philia*) rather than sex.<sup>44</sup> Historians Hans Warmerdam and Pieter Koenders state that C.O.C. preferred homophilia over homosexuality because this term more adequately describes the whole array of feelings one can have for another person. The state and the church also distinguished homophilia from homosexuality, so that they could tolerate homophilia and acknowledge the existence of ‘feelings’ while firmly rejecting acts of homosexuality.<sup>45</sup> More and more people – predominantly men – became member of C.O.C and in 1950, C.O.C. obtained their own building in Amsterdam, which functioned as a refuge for homosexuals to enjoy music, cabaret and dancing.<sup>46</sup> Against a backdrop of an emerging sexual revolution and a less secretive public climate, the organisation changed its name once again to *Nederlandse Vereniging van*

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<sup>40</sup> P. Roggema ‘Geschiedenis van het COC’, 17 January 2017, website of COC Amsterdam. URL: <https://www.cocamsterdam.nl/70-jaar/geschiedenis-van-het-coc> (accessed 16 November 2020).

<sup>41</sup> Section ‘About’ on the website of the Shakespeare Club: <https://shakespeareclub.nl/en/about/> (accessed 12 November 2020).

<sup>42</sup> Repressed sexuality had market value. As Foucault informs us, in the nineteenth century, room was made for illegitimate sexualities ‘to a place where they could be reintegrated, if not in the circuits of production, at least in those of profit’, exemplified by brothels and mental hospitals. In the twentieth century, repressed sexuality was capitalised on by those who ‘have even offered their ears for hire’, meaning psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. In Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 4-7.

<sup>43</sup> J.N. Warmerdam and P. Koenders, *Cultuur en Ontspanning, het COC 1946-1966* (Utrecht, 1987), 107.

<sup>44</sup> Roggema ‘Geschiedenis van het COC’.

<sup>45</sup> Warmerdam and Koenders, *Cultuur en Ontspanning*, 17.

<sup>46</sup> Roggema ‘Geschiedenis van het COC’.



*Homofielen* C.O.C. (Dutch Association of Homophiles C.O.C) in 1966.<sup>47</sup> In 1971, another name change took place and the organisation became *Nederlandse Vereniging tot Integratie van Homoseksualiteit* (Dutch Organisation for Integration of Homosexuality).<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, the focus on love made place for the focus on sex. The last name change was in 2017, back to COC, but without the dots in between.<sup>49</sup>

Nowadays, COC is a membership federation of twenty local COC organisations with their own board, together forming the General Assembly. The local boards choose the federal board, which operates on a national level and whose task it is to advocate in the national and international arena.<sup>50</sup> COC states on its website that it ‘has been advocating the rights of lesbian women, gay men, bisexuals and transgenders (LGBT’s) from 1946 on’ and that ‘COC strives for the decriminalization of sexual orientation and gender identity and for equal rights, emancipation and social acceptance of LGBTs in the Netherlands and all over the world.’<sup>51</sup> It is remarkable that COC advocates the rights of ‘LGBTs’ and does not mention any other form of queerness or non-normative sexualities or genders, not even queer, intersex and asexuality, which are included in the common-used abbreviation LGBTQIA+. The absence of a relatively easy addable plus sign or any other textual remark that COC’s advocacy includes the rights of others is also significant. By explicitly naming LGBT and nothing else, an act of gatekeeping is performed. Interestingly, in COC’s research document *Pride or Shame?* it is stated that COC recently decided to not use the term LGBT anymore, but LGBTI instead.<sup>52</sup> However, this is not (yet) implemented in other COC communication.

COC often employs ‘high-profile politics’, which means it focuses on highly visible campaigns and partners up with national and supranational actors, working in a transnational network of advocacy groups.<sup>53</sup> According to Megan Osterbur and Christina Kiel, COC functions as a central node in the transnational advocacy network because it is a well-financed

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<sup>47</sup> Nederlands afschrift van statutenwijziging, Federatie van Nederlandse Verenigingen tot Integratie van Homoseksualiteit, 14 October 2017.

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>50</sup> COC, *Samen Sterk, COC Strategisch Kader 2019-2022* (2018), 19.

<sup>51</sup> Section ‘About COC’ on the website of COC Nederland. URL: <https://www.coc.nl/engels> (last accessed 12 November 2020).

<sup>52</sup> S. Jansen S., *Pride or Shame? Assessing LGBTI Asylum Applications in the Netherlands Following the XYZ and ABC Judgments* (Amsterdam, 2019 [2018]), 9.

<sup>53</sup> M. Osterbur and C. Kiel, ‘A Hegemon Fighting for Equal Rights: The Dominant Role of COC Nederland in the LGBT Transnational Advocacy Network’, *Global Networks* 17.2 (2017), 234-254, 237 and R. Holzhaacker, ‘National and Transnational Strategies of LGBT Civil Society Organizations in Different Political Environments: Modes of Interaction in Western and Eastern Europe For Equality’, *Comparative European Politics* 10.1 (2012), 23-47, 27.

and long-established organisation.<sup>54</sup> Osterbur and Kiel have found that COC is the most central node in the European inter-actor LGBT advocacy network, which consisted at the time of publishing of 251 nodes in total.<sup>55</sup> These high-profile politics are visible in the close bond that COC maintains with the Dutch state and foster the mutual construction of queer figurations, as we will see in the next three chapters.

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<sup>54</sup> Osterbur and Kiel, 'A Hegemon Fighting for Equal Rights', 238.

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem, 246.

## CHAPTER 2

### **‘The Rights-Holder/Non-Rights-Holder’**

The first queer figuration that is distilled from COC’s communication is a double-faced figuration of the Rights-Holder and its antagonist the non-Rights-Holder, both of which emerge from the same discourse of rights. In the first paragraph, this figuration is explicated and imbedded in a scholarly context, specifically referencing Cynthia Weber and Jasbir Puar, who have distinguished similar figurations in the US, and Lisa Duggan who has observed a gay normativity modelled after heteronormativity, called homonormativity. In the second paragraph, the theoretical premises are brought into practice through the examination of COC’s discourse of rights in general, and marital rights in particular, which are generally celebrated as a milestone in LGBTQIA+ liberation. The third and last paragraph delves deeper into how equal marriage rights are mobilised in the ‘affirmation of good citizenship’.

#### **2.1 The Rights-Holder and the Non-Rights-Holder in International Relations**

LGBTQIA+ are regularly associated with rights and portrayed as Rights-Holders, especially since Hilary Clinton made the phrase ‘gay rights are human rights’ famous during a speech at the United Nations in 2011, when she was secretary of state in the Obama administration.<sup>56</sup> In the Netherlands, as in many other countries, LGBTQIA+ activists have fought for equal rights for decades, gradually celebrating minor and major successes over the years. For a long time, the state did not acknowledge or legally enshrine LGBTQIA+ rights. On the contrary, they often pathologised and criminalised queer bodies. Only in recent decades, many Western states have turned around and gradually started granting equal rights to the queer.

However, Western states face a dilemma if they want to see the queer as deserving of rights, because there are many identities, expressions and lifestyles on the queer continuum that are still seen as perverse. According to Weber, there are four strategies that Western states pursue to solve this dilemma: 1) to abandon same-sex sexual desires as perverse, 2) to only allow same-sex sexual desires if they uphold specific (neo) liberal values and if they do not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, 3) to refigure the normal subject into a ‘multiculturalised whit(ned), ableised, domesticated, entrepreneurial subject who is (re)productive in/for capitalism, regardless of whether they are heterosexual or

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<sup>56</sup> Weber, *Queer International Relations*, 106.

homosexual'<sup>57</sup> and 4) to measure an individual's level of modernity against their desire for neoliberal domesticity and consumption.<sup>58</sup> Through the pursuit of these strategies, states arrive at a figuration of the queer Rights-Holder. Other feminist and queer theorists already distinguished various articulations of this figuration. Weber identified the 'Gay Rights Holder' together with the 'Gay Patriot' in a US context, as expressions of who are regarded 'normal homosexuals'.<sup>59</sup> According to her, the normal homosexual is treated by the US state as deserving of rights and protection, while being mobilised to showcase tolerance and acceptance towards LGBTQIA+ in an attempt to gain political esteem, both domestically and internationally, because, in the words of Anna Agathangelou 'sovereign-worlding power is inconceivable without a legal and moral obligation to one's queers as well as the larger international community's queers.'<sup>60</sup>

Some argue that the rights of the queer Rights-Holder are organised after pre-existing straight rights, that were created in a patriarchal and hetero- and cissexist framework. In this way, hetero- and cisnormative ways of life, work and love are projected onto non-normative people to arrive at equal rights between straight people and queer people, without radically contesting the norm. In this manner, the queer Rights-Holders is made to adhere to something Lisa Duggan has called 'homonormativity', as a gay version of heteronormativity.<sup>61</sup> If we look at how the homonormative is mobilised in a political context, we arrive at Jasbir Puar's interventions, who has coined the influential concept of homonationalism in her work *Terrorist Assemblages*.<sup>62</sup> Homonationalism signals at the political fusion of homosexuality and nationalism. Puar notes that 'some homosexual subjects are complicit with heterosexual nationalist formations rather than inherently or automatically excluded from or opposed to them.'<sup>63</sup> Homonationalism forms a complicated scheme in which nationalist homosexuality is used to fuel racist, Orientalist and Islamophobic narratives of the Other.<sup>64</sup>

The opposite of the Rights-Holder is the non-Rights Holder. This figuration is seen in discourse about the (lack of) LGBTQIA+ rights abroad, predominantly in the Global South.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibidem, 110.

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem, 107-111.

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem, 104.

<sup>60</sup> A.M. Agathangelou, 'Neoliberal Geopolitical Order and Value', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 15.4 (2013), 453-476, 453.

<sup>61</sup> L. Duggan, 'The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism' in R. Castronovo and D.D. Nelson (eds.), *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Culture* (Durham, 2002), 175-194.

<sup>62</sup> J.K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages. Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham and London, 2017 [2007]).

<sup>63</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 4.

<sup>64</sup> The concept of Orientalism is coined by literary scholar Edward Said, who defined it as 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient.' The Orient forms the European imagination of the East, which is regarded as the homeland of 'the Other' in E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978), 3.

Niamh Ní Mhaoileoin contends that a troubling discursive trope within advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights abroad is ‘the deployment of evolutionary narratives in relation to queer identity and rights in non-western states’.<sup>65</sup> The phenomenon she points at is recognised by many other authors, among which are Rahul Rao, Cynthia Weber and Neville Hoad.<sup>66</sup> Their theories are all based on a notion of progressive time, which has been around for centuries in Western thought and colonialist logic. This notion stems from the conviction of the existence of linearly progressing developmental stages which societies and/or states go through to arrive at a final stage, a so-called telos. Historian Sebastian Conrad states that this notion must ‘be understood as the result of global hierarchies and of asymmetrical geopolitical structures.’<sup>67</sup> The tool with which such a progressive time grid is forged, is what anthropologist Johannes Fabian has called ‘allochronism’, which he defined as ‘a conjuring trick to separate in historical time those who actually exist in shared time.’<sup>68</sup> Just like this conjuring trick was used to temporally separate colonial populations from the coloniser, it is now used by Western states and LGBTQIA+ advocacy organisations to conceptually separate in historical time states that grant their populations queer rights and states that do not.

Within queer advocacy discourse, the queer non-Rights-Holder is often portrayed as living in a past stage at the teleological ladder, and is supposed to follow the same itinerary as the Western Rights-Holder. Western states and queer advocacy organisations closely follow LGBTQIA+ rights in foreign states. In COC’s news items, rights that already have been granted to Dutch LGBTQIA+ citizens, and are now granted to LGBTQIA+ citizens in foreign states, are highlighted and celebrated. Living conditions and the legal framework in which LGBTQIA+ people navigate in different states are often compared. On the one hand, there is sincere solidarity, but underneath lies a powerful juxtaposition between the Rights-Holder and the non-Rights-Holder. When a former non-Rights-Holder becomes a Rights-Holder by means of legislation, a celebration is organised. Mhaoileoin suggests that ‘international gay solidarity is not mobilized by objective observance of the suffering of sexual minorities’ but instead ‘by a narcissistic perception that attacks on ‘gay’ people anywhere represent an attack on the western gay subject.’<sup>69</sup> Although this perception is by no means a deliberately malicious position, it evokes a false sense of community. By celebrating foreign LGBTQIA+

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<sup>65</sup> Mhaoileoin, ‘The Ironic Gay Spectator’, 150.

<sup>66</sup> Weber, *Queer International Relations*, Rao, *Out of Time* and N. Hoad, ‘Arrested Development or the Queerness of Savages: Resisting Evolutionary Narratives of Difference’, *Postcolonial Studies* 3.3 (2000), 133-158.

<sup>67</sup> S. Conrad, ‘“Nothing is the Way it Should Be”: Global Transformations of the Time Regime in the Nineteenth Century’, *Modern Intellectual History* 15.3 (2018), 821-848, 827.

<sup>68</sup> J. Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York, 2000 [1983], xli.

<sup>69</sup> Mhaoileoin, ‘The Ironic Gay Spectator’, 152.

rights and co-suffering with foreign queer non-Rights Holders, the image appears that there is one large queer community. However, this neglects, silences and erases specific queer experiences, identities and expressions in other realities. For Rahul Rao, international comparisons between queer living conditions, show ‘a hierarchy in which the western self finds proof of its emancipation and worth in the shackles of its non-western other.’<sup>70</sup> In this quote, the western self can be replaced by the Rights-Holder and the non-western other by the non-Rights-Holder in the context of the argument of this thesis.

In the next paragraph, I concretise how the Dutch state’s and COC’s discourse of rights is built around the figurations of the Rights-Holder and the non-Rights-Holder, by unravelling the case of equal marital rights.

## **2.2 Equal Marital Rights as Unchallenged Milestone**

As an advocacy organisation, it bears no surprise that COC regularly engages in a discourse of (human) rights. COC constructs the figuration of the queer Rights-Holder through a constant repetition of granted rights and rights that still need to be fought for. Rights that are given a prominent position in COC’s discourse are reproductive rights, such as adoption rights, birth leave rights and equal partner leave rights, but they pay most attention to marital rights.

If we look at the way in which COC writes about rights in their news items, three findings stand out. First, COC repetitively draws attention to the opening of civil marriage to same-gender or same-sex couples and their own role in accomplishing this fact. Second, COC lobbies for more LGBTQIA+ rights and urges politicians to legally enshrine more rights by means of their news items and statements as well as through calls-to-action towards their target audience. Third, COC closely follows international developments regarding LGBTQIA+ rights and expresses its opinion on these matters, either by means of organising demonstrations, drawing up statements or providing information in which a universalising and liberal cosmopolitan discourse of rights is maintained.

The three findings are largely interconnected. COC urges the government as well as Parliament to take action regarding LGBTQIA+ issues, for example, to draft legislation. At the same time, COC targets their audience and the general public to engage in demonstrations and activities to foster the political discussion. Although the opening up of civil marriage has been realised in the Netherlands in 2001, it keeps functioning as a prime example of a hard-

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<sup>70</sup> R. Rao, ‘The Locations of Homophobia’, *London Review of International Law* 2.2 (2014), 169-199, 173.

won battle in COC's discourse of rights and it is mobilised in the reporting on LGBTQIA+ rights abroad. In the remainder of this paragraph, an exemplary news item in which the importance of equal marital rights come forward is set forth, on the basis of which is explained how these rights are mobilised in a domestic and in a foreign context.

COC frequently points at Dutch LGBTQIA+ marriage rights, at different occasions. There are certain standard formulations which are recycled time and again. One of these phrases is 'hard-won rights, such as the opening of civil marriage' (*zwaarbevochten rechten zoals het opengestelde huwelijk*). This phrase is used when reporting on the opening of civil marriage in foreign states, as well as when discussing other rights to show from how far the community has come. To illustrate how attention to marital rights is drawn and which narrative is constructed through the deployment of this discourse, I scrutinised an article about Liberation Day (5 May). In the Netherlands, on 5 May, the end of German occupation, ending World War II in 1945 is annually celebrated and commemorated. In the first two paragraphs of the article, COC writes:

On 5 May, COC Nederland will celebrate that the Second World War ended 75 years ago, and that we live in freedom in the Netherlands. We pay particular attention to the fact that in our country, people are generally free to be who they are, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. In the 75 years that have passed since the Second World War, LGBTIs in the Netherlands have accomplished a lot. When Article 248bis was abolished from the Criminal Code, homosexuality was no longer punishable. In 2001, our country opened civil marriage for same-sex couples and was the first in the world to do so. And in 2014, a new transgender law was installed, that accomplished that the human rights of transgender people were respected more. The acceptance increased strongly in the last 75 years.<sup>71</sup>

In this relatively small section, two important and related observations stand out. First, there is a teleological framework with a clear progressive and linear narrative from total unfreedom during Nazi occupation to a present in which the queers are liberated through three milestones: the decriminalisation of homosexuality, equal marital rights and 'a new

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<sup>71</sup> 'Op 5 mei viert ook COC Nederland dat de Tweede Wereldoorlog 75 jaar geleden werd beëindigd en dat we in Nederland in vrijheid leven. We staan in het bijzonder stil bij het feit dat je in ons land over het algemeen vrij bent om te zijn wie je bent, ongeacht je seksuele oriëntatie, genderidentiteit, genderexpressie en geslachtskenmerken. In de 75 jaar sinds de Tweede Wereldoorlog hebben LHBTI's in Nederland veel bereikt. Met de afschaffing van artikel 248bis van het Wetboek van Strafrecht kwam er in 1971 een einde aan de strafbaarheid van homoseksualiteit. In 2001 stelde ons land als eerste ter wereld het huwelijk open voor paren van gelijk geslacht. En in 2014 trad een nieuwe transgenderwet in werking, waardoor mensenrechten van transgender personen meer gerespecteerd worden. De acceptatie nam de afgelopen 75 jaar sterk toe.' COC, *COC viert bevrijding* (5 May 2020).

transgender law’.<sup>72</sup> Second, within the journey to the telos, same-sex marriage is particularly seen as a major milestone in LGBTQIA+ liberation. The Dutch pioneering role and the part COC played in the accomplishment never goes unmentioned. This can be considered a form of Dutch sexual exceptionalism, inspired by Jasbir Puar’s US sexual exceptionalism.<sup>73</sup> In sexual exceptionalism, the status of a distinct nation-state – which claps itself on the back for their tremendously exceptional place in the hierarchy of LGBTQIA+ rights granting states – is repetitively pointed at.

These two observations are part of a larger framework in which the right to marry emerges as the most important hard-won right the Rights-Holder can enjoy, and the most important right the non-Rights-Holder abroad lacks. This celebration ignores queer criticism on the heteronormative and patriarchal character of the institution of marriage and upholds the binary and monogamous idea of relationships. Queer and activist criticism on marriage have been around for decades. Tom Boellstorff identifies two main sets of queer concerns around ‘same-sex marriage’. The first set of theoretical arguments boils down to the idea that ‘same-sex marriage takes heteronormative marriage as a model (indeed, an ideal) for sexual and affective relations.’<sup>74</sup> The other strand of criticism is focused on the fact that through marriage, the state may authorise sexual and affective relations, which according to Boellstorff, creates ‘a class of denigrated sexual and affective relations (e.g., the single, the promiscuous, those who sell or pay for sex, the polyamorous).’<sup>75</sup>

In similar fashion, Hameed Herukhuti S. Williams argues in a powerful critique that same-sex marriage advocacy is founded upon the ‘reification and (re)legitimization of the couple as an a priori relationship structure for marriage’ and therefore bears a shortcoming in

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<sup>72</sup> This law was a replacement of an older law from 1985, which allowed transgender people to change their registered gender in their birth certificate. However, if someone wanted to change their gender registration, a sex-changing operation was compulsory as well as an irreversible sterilisation. The replaced law explicitly bore two messages: 1) biological sex has to correspond with gender, so if someone wants to change their gender, they have to change their sex and 2) if someone would be so transgressive to change gender and sex, reproductive possibilities are for ever eliminated. In this way, the state secured the binary order of things, in which men have phalluses, women have vulvas and if you dare to cross to the other side, you cannot ever deliver offspring for the nation. These conditions were abolished from the law in 2014, hence ‘a new transgender law’. The Dutch government apologised for the old law in 2020 and promised financial reparations to transgender and intersex people who underwent physical transition as the result of adhering to the conditions of changing their gender registrations. The state took these steps after the Transgender Collective (*Transgendercollectief*) held the state liable for the suffering of many. Source: Bureau Clara Wichmann, ‘Transgendercollectief opgelucht over excuses voor transgender wetgeving’ (30 November 2020). URL: <https://clara-wichmann.nl/nieuws/transgendercollectief-opgelucht-over-excuses-voor-transgender-wetgeving> (last accessed 30 April 2021).

<sup>73</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 3-11.

<sup>74</sup> T. Boellstorff, ‘When Marriage Falls: Queer Coincidences in Straight Time’, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 13.2-3 (2007), 227-248, 232.

<sup>75</sup> Boellstorff, ‘When Marriage Falls’, 233.



terms of radical queer equality.<sup>76</sup> Williams sees the opening of marriage as a small modification from two persons of the same sex marrying to two persons of different sexes marrying, which maintains a hegemonic structure and does not arrive at radical equality. Indeed, one of the most fundamental critiques on the opening of marriage and the discourse of equality is that it is still a binary concept, which polyamorous queers cannot enjoy. Despite the fact that these criticisms are widespread, COC does not challenge the meaning of marriage and continues to unproblematically celebrates the opening of civil marriage to same-sex couples.

Of course, the fact that many criticise the concept of marriage does not mean that marriage should have never been opened for all couples, because as Ajnesh Prasad shows, it is possible to hold the position that marriage should be available for same-sex couples out of a belief in strict symmetrical equality, while criticising the institution at the same time.<sup>77</sup> However, by presenting the right to marry for queer couples as a pivotal hard-won right the Rights-Holder enjoys, without mentioning the fact that marriage is still a binary concept, COC resembles the state's ideology regarding marriage.

According to Dutch civil law, 'marriage can be entered by two people of the same or different sex'.<sup>78</sup> Both regarding registered partnership and marriage, it is furthermore explicitly stated in civil law that people can only be legally connected to one other person and it is forbidden to be married to someone and simultaneously have a registered partnership with someone else.<sup>79</sup> A restriction on polygamy is not only included in civil law, but also in penal law. People who willingly enter more than one marriage or marry someone who was already married can get a prison sentence of maximum six years.<sup>80</sup> A civil registrar who willingly marries someone who is already married can also be sentenced to six years in prison.<sup>81</sup> The only legal institution that the Dutch state allows for more than two people is a cohabitation contract.<sup>82</sup> Although the opening up of marriage has been liberating for some

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<sup>76</sup> H.H.S. Williams 'A Bisex-Queer Critique of Same-Sex Marriage Advocacy', *Journal of Bisexuality* 7.3-4 (2008), 313-318, 315.

<sup>77</sup> A. Prasad, 'On the Potential and Perils of Same-Sex Marriage: A Perspective from Queer Theory', *Journal of Bisexuality* 7.3-4 (2008), 191-215.

<sup>78</sup> 'Een huwelijk kan worden aangegaan door twee personen van verschillend of van gelijk geslacht', Art. 1:30 sub 1 Dutch Civil Code (DCC).

<sup>79</sup> Art. 1:80a sub 1 DCC, Art. 1:80a sub 2, DCC and Art. 1:42 DCC.

<sup>80</sup> Art. 2:237 sub 1 Dutch Penal Code (DPC).

<sup>81</sup> Art. 2:379 sub 1 DPC.

<sup>82</sup> Former Member of Parliament Tom van den Nieuwenhuijzen, who is in a polyamorous relationship with two other men lists a few of the problems they encounter in society as a throuple. He says while couples can open a bank account online in a few minutes, they were summoned to come to the bank where they were discouraged to do so. Another problem they encounter is that they often cannot book a hotel room for the three of them, even if they want to pay extra and are okay with a regular double bed. Matthijs, 'Polyamorie in een monogame wereld',

queers, Dutch marriage is still a binary concept that entails two partners and is therefore limiting, instead of liberating, for other queers.

### 2.3 Equal Marriage as the Affirmation of Good Citizenship

As I have shown in the previous paragraph, ‘the hard-won marital rights’ emerge as the victory of a long battle in which queers have finally arrived at equality. These rights are also often mobilised to measure other states’ status on LGBTQIA+ rights. The inclination to follow other country’s journeys to equal marital rights, comes forward in many of the news items, in which COC often congratulates the community of that country. For example:

Costa Rica will open up marriage for couples of the same sex on 26 May [2020] as the first country in Central America. COC Nederland congratulates the Costa Rican LGBTI community with this historical victory and wishes all couples of the same sex that are going to get married all the best.<sup>83</sup>

In this news item, the pioneering role of Costa Rica in Central America is highlighted, just as the Dutch global pioneering role is always mentioned. In another item, the fact that civil registrars in South Africa cannot longer refuse to marry same-sex couples, is celebrated in the same fashion.<sup>84</sup> The fact that the Dutch government was the first to open marriage, comes forward as a ground-breaking history-writing event. It is not surprising that COC emphasises this fact, because it gives them the opportunity to act as an expert in the international arena. The international agenda is also touched upon in a broadcast of a Dutch television talk show in March 2021. Henk Krol, who was one of the most visible proponents of the opening of civil marriage at the time and editor-in-chief of the *Gaykrant* (Gay Newspaper), named same-sex marriage ‘the most beautiful immaterial export product’ in the airing, which was dedicated to the twenty years lustrum of the *fait accompli*.<sup>85</sup>

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*Expreszo* (20 January 2021). URL: <https://expreszo.nl/polyamorie-in-een-monogame-wereld/> (last accessed 19 May 2021).

<sup>83</sup> ‘Costa Rica is op 26 mei het eerste Centraal-Amerikaanse land waar het huwelijk is opengesteld voor paren van gelijk geslacht. COC Nederland feliciteert de Costaricaanse LHBTI-gemeenschap met deze historische overwinning en wenst alle paren van gelijk geslacht die in het huwelijk gaan treden heel veel geluk!’ in COC, *Costa Rica eerste Centraal-Amerikaanse land dat huwelijk openstelt* (26 May 2020).

<sup>84</sup> COC, ‘Geen weigerambtenaren meer in Zuid-Afrika’ (7 July 2020).

<sup>85</sup> Henk Krol in the Dutch television talk show *Wakker Nederland* (WNL) on 30 March 2021. URL: <https://wnl.tv/2021/03/30/homohuwelijk-viert-twintigjarig-jubileum-het-mooiste-immateriele-exportproduct/> (last accessed 18 May 2021).

Kelly Kollman shows that the idea of the opening of marriage as an export product was in fact a policy deliberation at the time the government decided to open up marriage.<sup>86</sup> She argues that ‘the desire of Dutch activists and policy elites to burnish their international reputation as a social policy and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights pioneer played a critical role in motivating the government to adopt this controversial policy invention.’<sup>87</sup> Next to the dedication to equal rights, the opening of marriage was thus also a long-term investment to be able to forever draw on the fact that the Dutch were the pioneers in enshrining LGBTQIA+ rights. Here, it is visible how COC’s discourse resembles the state’s discourse and vice versa. The idea of ‘gay marriage’ as an export product furthermore fits in Barbara Oomen’s argument that for the Netherlands, ‘human rights are above all an export product, a moral cornerstone of foreign policy.’<sup>88</sup>

The Netherlands thus set a prime example for the rest of the world of how benevolence towards queer citizenship should be modelled. Regarding queer rights in general, Joseph Massad has uncovered how predominantly White, Western and male gay organisations such as the International Lesbian and Gay Organisation (ILGA) universalised ‘gay rights’ and sought to export these abroad in a fashion that resembles missionary practises.<sup>89</sup> Many Western states cooperate with these NGO’s, by constantly pointing at the lacking LGBTQIA+ rights abroad. Pioneering in the opening of marriage has thus served multiple goals, from being able to set the scene in a universalising discourse about citizenship and rights, to gaining reputational points in the international arena, but also to be able to strengthen marriage as a civil institute by allowing more people to enter in marriage. The Dutch government still draws on the fact that they were the first to allow same-sex couples to marry, as indicated by an announcement on their website, in which they state that they work for ‘equal rights for lesbian women, homosexual men, bisexuals, transgenders and intersex people (LGBTI).’ They also state that ‘same-sex couples can marry and adopt children since 2001.’<sup>90</sup> In this statement, the prime examples of equal rights that are given are the rights to marry and to have children. These are two of the most quintessential elements of the nuclear

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<sup>86</sup> K. Kollman, ‘Pioneering Marriage for Same-Sex Couples in the Netherlands’, *Journal of European Public Policy* 24.1 (2017), 100-118.

<sup>87</sup> Kollman, ‘Pioneering Marriage’, 100.

<sup>88</sup> B. Oomen, *Rights for Others: The Slow Home-Coming of Human Rights in the Netherlands* (Cambridge, 2014) 5.

<sup>89</sup> J.A. Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago, 2008), 160.

<sup>90</sup> ‘De overheid werkt aan gelijke rechten voor lesbische vrouwen, homoseksuele mannen, biseksuelen, transgender- en intersekse personen (LHBTI’s). Zo mogen paren van hetzelfde geslacht sinds 2001 trouwen en kinderen adopteren.’ on the webpage of the government. URL: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/lhbt-emanipatie/gelijke-rechten-lhbtis> (last accessed 17 June 2021).

cis heterosexual family, and which the state as well as the Church have been acknowledging as main organisational structures for a long time.<sup>91</sup> These predominantly heteronormative structures, have now also become homonormative. Queers who embrace these structures are included in the state's vision on citizenship and are un-Othered and welcomed into the nation as good citizens.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, the queer figuration of the Rights-Holder and its antagonist the non-Rights-Holder as configurations of the discourse of rights that is highly present in COC's news items, were investigated. COC pays considerable attention to all kinds of different rights for queer people, such as reproductive rights and civil rights. Within the discourse of rights, marital rights are deemed highly important, and these are constantly pointed at. For that reason, this chapter has predominantly engaged with marital rights.

In a domestic context, the pioneering role of the Dutch by being the first state in the world that allowed same-sex partners to marry, is repeatedly mentioned. Writing about foreign contexts, states that open up marriage are celebrated and the possibility for queer people to marry has become a measuring rod on the basis of which other countries' 'gay-friendliness' is assessed. COC also maintains a teleological perspective on LGBTQIA+ rights, in which the right to marry emerges as one of the most important milestones. The emphasis on the celebration of the possibility of same-sex marriage silences the critique that marriage is still not available for all kinds of queer kinships and takes away a nourishing base to critically discuss the purpose of civil marriage. The Dutch state employs a similar celebrating discourse on same-sex marriage rights, while, at the same time, polyamorous marriage is prohibited by law, which is considered an act of gatekeeping.

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<sup>91</sup> Boellstorff, 'When Marriage Falls', 233.

## CHAPTER 3

### ‘The Victim’

COC regularly mentions violence against LGBTQIA+ people, either reporting on single hate-crimes or pointing at the occurrence of structural violence. The queer figuration that emerges from this discourse is the Victim, who is the target of anti-queer violence and suffers from structural and institutional discrimination. In the first paragraph of this chapter, this discursive figure is deconstructed, supported by media theory around the victim trope and critical scholarship about victimisation. In the second paragraph, I use the concept of ‘culturalization of citizenship’ as a framework to show how LGBTQIA+ acceptance has become a pivotal element of Dutch culture. In the third and final paragraph, I analyse how the discursive victimisation of queers and the culturalization of citizenship play a crucial role in Dutch party politics, exemplified by the party programmes of the largest political parties that were drafted up for the parliamentary elections of March 2021.

#### 3.1 The Discursive Victimisation of Queers

Some queer people have experienced or continually experience physical or psychological violence. The concept of violence is broadly interpreted here, in which among other violent manifestations, verbal violence, discrimination, intimidation and negligence are included. Some of the violent occurrences are structural and can be attributed to the fact that society is built based on cis- and heteronormative pillars, while other violence can be typified as hate-motivated assault. COC regularly addresses these problems, because, as an advocacy organisation, they need to uncover violent structures. An often-repeated phrase in COC’s news items is: ‘Seven out of ten LGBTIs in the Netherlands experience physical or verbal violence because of their identity and ‘homo’ is still the most-used slur in schools.’<sup>92</sup> Eighteen of the 123 studied COC news items had ‘violence’ as their general topic. However, the total number of mentions (either sentences or paragraphs) of violence in these articles was 68, of which 53 could be categorised as psychological violence and 15 as physical violence. In these articles, individual queer people as well as the queer community as a whole are portrayed as the victims of violence.

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<sup>92</sup> ‘Aangezien bijvoorbeeld 7 op de 10 LHBTI’s in Nederland te maken krijgen met fysiek of verbaal geweld om hun identiteit en ‘homo’ op school het meest gebruikte scheldwoord is.’ For example in COC, ‘Senaat debatteert over verankering LHBTI-rechten in Grondwet’ (8 February 2021).

Since COC chooses to report and address violence against LGBTQIA+, it ineluctably complies with something I call ‘the discursive victimisation of queers’. With this concept, I signal at a wider societal tendency to appoint LGBTQIA+ people the status of ‘victim’ and make it a vital component of their identity. This does by no means indicate that COC engages in problematic reporting on social injustices, or that they should be judged by it. These reports are necessary to pinpoint the violent reality of some queer people in order to enhance their livelihoods by lobbying for protective legislation and raising awareness about these issues. Nonetheless, this practice indisputably connotates queerness with victimhood.

Because of this connotation, LGBTQIA+ people are often portrayed as victims or strugglers. This is not only the case in a queer advocacy context, but also in other parts of society. Queer victimhood has become a trope, that according to Daniel Marshall, is very powerful, both in anti-queer discourse as well as in ‘anti-homophobic representations’.<sup>93</sup> In popular culture, it is rare to witness an LGBTQIA+ character, or a character who is engaged in non-normative sexual acts or gender expressions, without the plot revolving around their victimhood or struggle. Scripted versions of perceived queer experiences often engage with a naturalised victim trope. This trope is sometimes taken to the extreme, resulting in the ‘Bury Your Gays’ or ‘Dead Lesbian Syndrome’ tropes, which have been circulating since the late nineteenth century in literary texts.<sup>94</sup> These tropes represent the tendency of ‘killing off’ queer characters before cis straight characters in popular media or literature. Transgender characters are also often portrayed as either victims who get murdered or villains who murder, as the Netflix documentary *Disclosure* about problematic trans tropes and stereotypes in the Hollywood industry shows.<sup>95</sup>

The queer victim trope is also omnipresent beyond popular culture, in advocacy, education and especially politics. Queers are reduced to their presumed, perceived or actual victimhood and struggle. It makes sense that COC reports on anti-queer violence regularly, because it is an advocacy organisation that strives to enhance queer living conditions and therefore feels the need to designate the occurrence of discriminatory violence. However, reducing queers to victims has at least two problematic implications. First, the establishment of a causal relationship between a queer identity, expression or experience and victimhood, violence or struggle, leaves little room for an intersectional approach. Intersectionality, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, contends that the kinds of oppression that people with multiple

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<sup>93</sup> D. Marshall, ‘Popular Culture, the ‘Victim’ Trope and Queer Youth Analytics, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 23.1 (2010), 65-85, 65.

<sup>94</sup> H. Hulan, ‘Bury Your Gays: History, Usage and Context’, *McNair Scholars Journal* 21.1 (2017), 17-27.

<sup>95</sup> *Disclosure: Trans Lives on Screen*, a documentary directed by Sam Feder (2020), distributed by Netflix.

marginalised identities experience, overlap.<sup>96</sup> With respect to anti-queer violence, that means that the discriminatory experiences of many queer people are more complex than ‘just’ anti-queer. For queer people of colour, racism may play just as an important role as queer hate, and the two types of oppression can even reinforce each other. These complex violent experiences may be getting lost in the mire of a rhetoric of homophobia and anti-queerness.

The second problematic implication of the construction of the queer Victim has to do with the question of agency. Peter Dunn has researched the meanings of hate-motivated victimisation for gay men in the United Kingdom. He stated about the participants’ conception of victimhood: ‘because of its capacity to signal passivity and powerlessness, the word “victim” was problematic for many.’<sup>97</sup> One of the participants of Dunn’s research stated that ‘using terms like “victim” gives the offender more power than I want him to have. I refuse to be victimized.’<sup>98</sup> This suggests that the mentioning of victimhood or the victimisation of the subject, took away agency for this particular participant. Other participants had similar feelings. Feminist scholarship has also been criticizing the conceptual use of victimhood. Gilson, for instance, states that ‘the concept provokes concern because it is believed to connote powerlessness, weakness, and susceptibility to exploitation’ and that ‘this conceptual significance raises worries that merely being perceived or labelled as a victim may “exacerbate exploitation” because one is viewed as especially susceptible.’<sup>99</sup>

### **3.2 A Culturalization of Citizenship in Service of an Anti-Islam Agenda**

As was already indicated in the previous chapter, Western states increasingly tie LGBTQIA+ rights – and especially gay rights – to the image of the nation. This is part of what Paul Mepschen, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Evelien Tonkens call ‘culturalization of citizenship’, a tendency that they have observed in many Western European societies. The authors define culturalization of citizenship as ‘the increasing importance attached to culture and morality in shaping citizenship and integration policy.’<sup>100</sup> Within the culturalization of citizenship, LGBTQIA+ rights are regarded as legal outcomes of tolerance and acceptance towards the

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<sup>96</sup> K. Crenshaw, ‘Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color’, *Stanford Law Review* 43.6 (1991), 1241-1299.

<sup>97</sup> P. Dunn, ‘Men as Victims: “Victim” Identities, Gay Identities and Masculinities’, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 27.17 (2012), 3442-3467, 3447.

<sup>98</sup> Peter, cited by Dunn, ‘Men as Victims’, 3448.

<sup>99</sup> E.C. Gilson, ‘Vulnerability and Victimization: Rethinking Key Concepts in Feminist Discourses on Sexual Violence’, *Signs* 42.1 (2016), 71-98, 79.

<sup>100</sup> Mepschen, Duyvendak and Tonkens, ‘Sexual Politics, Orientalism and Multicultural Citizenship in the Netherlands’, 964.

queer population. As such, (an image of) acceptance of sexual minorities has gained an important place in the national culture. This image distorts the way LGBTQIA+ people are actually viewed and treated in the Netherlands. Certainly, not all people who identify with Dutch national culture ‘tolerate’ or ‘accept’ LGBTQIA+ people, let alone treat them equally as they treat cis straight people.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, acceptance and tolerance are often portrayed as inextricably Dutch in a way that it can also be employed in a xenophobic and anti-Islam agenda.

This agenda was catalysed by the in 2006 murdered politician Pim Fortuyn, the leader of the political party *Lijst Pim Fortuyn* (LPF). Fortuyn called the Islam a ‘backward’ or ‘repulsive’ religion, and saw it as a major threat to the emancipation of homosexuals and women.<sup>102</sup> According to him, the Dutch had completed these emancipation processes and when the nation would allow Muslim immigrants to enter, they would risk the undoing of these processes. Thus, Fortuyn also maintained a teleological scheme, as came forward in the previous chapter about rights. Fortuyn not only coupled homosexuality with an anti-Islam ideology by means of these statements, but also because he was openly gay himself and he could present the threats he perceived as highly personal.<sup>103</sup> In this way, as Yoshie Furuhashi has commented, he signalled ‘a new era of white gay male politics. By promoting anti-immigrant politics vigorously and marketing it with anti-Muslim prejudice demagogically, Fortuyn showed that right-wing populism can very well be gay and enormously popular to boot.’<sup>104</sup> Gloria Wekker has studied the political economy of Fortuyn’s paradoxical aversion and concurrent desire of Muslim men, which he did not conceal.<sup>105</sup> She sees reflections of

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<sup>101</sup> Some examples of indications that ‘acceptance’ and ‘tolerance’ towards LGBTQIA+ people in the Netherlands are that homosexual and bisexual youth were bullied online more than twice as much as their heterosexual peers in 2018 (Statistics Netherlands (*Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*), ‘Meisjes vaker dan jongens last van online stalken of laster’ (10 January 2020). URL: <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2020/02/meisjes-vaker-dan-jongens-last-van-online-stalken-of-laster>. (last accessed 26 June 2021)), the fact that there are at least fifteen ‘conversion therapy’ providers in the Netherlands (ILGA Europe, *Annual Review of the Human Rights Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, And Intersex People in the Netherlands Covering the Period of January to December 2020*. URL: <https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/2021/netherlands.pdf> (last accessed 26 June 2021)), the fact that twenty percent of conservative Christian schools actively reject homosexuality (Pointer, ‘Eén op de vijf reformatorische scholen vindt homohuwelijk moreel onacceptabel’ (5 February 2020) URL: <https://pointer.kro-ncrv.nl/een-op-de-vijf-reformatorische-scholen-vindt-homohuwelijk-moreel-onacceptabel#gs.4u5xae> (last accessed 26 June 2021)).

<sup>102</sup> Pim Fortuyn: ‘achterlijke religie’, as cited by G. Wekker, *Witte onschuld. Paradoxen van kolonialisme en ras* (Amsterdam, 2018 [2016]), 156.

<sup>103</sup> Oomen, *Rights for Others*, 108.

<sup>104</sup> Y. Furuhashi, ‘A ‘Clash of Civilizations’, Sending Pink Sparks Flying?, *Critical Montages* (8 June 2004), as cited in Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 20.

<sup>105</sup> Wekker, *Witte onschuld*, 181.



Orientalist images of sexual available and wild Arabs in his sexual desire, but also of colonial sexual relationships between the ruler and the ruled.<sup>106</sup>

According to Wekker, the emancipation of homosexuals and women have become a litmus test for modernity, and for the question of who belongs to the nation.<sup>107</sup> In this scheme, modernity is characterised by acceptance of and tolerance towards LGBTQIA+ people and backwardness is characterised by misogyny and homophobia, which are believed to be inherent to Islam. In this way, a false juxtaposition between ‘gay’ and ‘Muslim’ is brought into place, in which queer Muslims are often overlooked.<sup>108</sup> This juxtaposition of Islam and homosexuality is sometimes also reinforced by homosexuality advocacy organisations. Mepschen et al., for instance, point at COC’s response to the assault of an American homosexual journalist in Amsterdam in 2004. COC’s president stated upon this incident: ‘Immigrants originate from a culture in which homosexuality is less accepted. In the Netherlands, the individual comes before the group. In cultures where Islam dominates, the group is more important.’<sup>109</sup> Moreover, Vera Bergkamp, who was COC’s president at the time, has claimed in 2010 that a majority of the culprits of anti-gay violence were Moroccan youth and that she understood how anti-immigration and anti-Islam politics found resonance with homosexuals.<sup>110</sup> Next to providing evidence of that Bergkamp’s statement about the majority of culprits being Moroccan was false, Wekker also rightfully states that COC here implicitly showed that they saw the queer as White.<sup>111</sup>

LGBTQIA+ rights and attitudes towards queers are thus often used as ‘markers of modernity’ to show how liberal the West is.<sup>112</sup> In the Netherlands, both progressive-liberal political parties and right wing populist parties have mobilised LGBTQIA+ rights and LGBTQIA+ (potential) victimhood to draw new lines at the citizenship blueprint. In this novel blueprint, embracing equal rights for LGBTQIA+ people is turned into an essential

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<sup>106</sup> Ibidem, 184-185.

<sup>107</sup> Ibidem 158.

<sup>108</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 19.

<sup>109</sup> *Vrij Nederland* (28 May 2005) as cited in Mepschen, Duyvendak and Tonkens, ‘Sexual Politics, Orientalism and Multicultural Citizenship in the Netherlands’, 970.

<sup>110</sup> Vera Bergkamp, cited by G. Wekker, *Witte onschuld*, 165.

<sup>111</sup> Ibidem, 166.

<sup>112</sup> Rahul Rao has shown how paradoxical this tendency is by arguing that European powers have exported cis- and heteronormativity to their colonies over a period of hundreds of years. Colonised subjects had to adhere to a Western and binary image of gender and sexuality. Western liberal thought has now turned around one hundred and eighty degrees to condemn societies in which forms of queerness are criminalised in R. Rao, *Third World Protest: Between Home and the World* (Oxford, 2010).

element of Dutch identity and culture.<sup>113</sup> In the next paragraph, it is further explicated how the largest political parties of the Netherlands have realised this.

### 3.3 The Mobilisation of Queer Victimhood in Dutch Party Politics

On 17 March 2021, parliamentary elections were held in the Netherlands. All political parties that participated in these elections had published electoral programmes on their websites in the months before. I have performed a close reading of the electoral programmes of the largest parties with regard to the framing of LGBTQIA+ issues, because in the electoral programmes a direct communication towards the electorate is established. I hypothesised – based on previous statements by politicians and the general political discourse – that these parties would mobilise an actual or potential queer victimhood to bring their political viewpoints on citizenship across. From the analysis of the party programmes, two findings stand out: 1) most parties maintain a temporal framework in which LGBTQIA+ rights are embedded and 2) ‘newcomers’ and/or Muslims are perceived as the most dangerous threats to LGBTQIA+ people.

The People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie*, VVD) has been in the coalition since 2010 and has also since then provided prime-minister Mark Rutte. In 2021, the VVD was elected as the largest party once again. The party is conservative-liberal with particularly right-wing standpoints on the topics of migration and the economy. The VVD’s election programme states:

In the Netherlands, it should be possible to ‘just be you’. We do not differentiate between heterosexuals, homosexuals, lesbians, bisexuals, transgenders and intersex people. Unfortunately, not everyone in the Netherlands has yet arrived at that stage. [...] newcomers need to underwrite Dutch norms and values.<sup>114</sup>

The VVD claims that they do not differentiate between LGBTI people and heterosexuals, and they find that it ‘should be possible’ to be yourself. However, recent voting behaviour of the VVD delegation in Parliament does not reflect the idea that everyone should be able to be themselves. In 2019, to name one example, the VVD voted against a motion to revise the terminology in the Penal Code from ‘homo- or heterosexual orientation’ to ‘sexuality’ to

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<sup>113</sup> J.W. Duyvendak, ‘The Pitfalls of Normalization. The Dutch Case and the Future of Equality in C.A. Ball (ed.), *After Marriage Equality. The Future of LGBT Rights* (New York, 2016), 288-305, 289-290.

<sup>114</sup> ‘In Nederland moet je gewoon jezelf kunnen zijn. We maken geen onderscheid tussen hetero’s, homo’s, lesbiennes, biseksuelen, transgenders en interseksuelen. Helaas is nog niet iedereen in Nederland zover.’ Source: VVD, *Samen aan de slag. Nieuwe keuzes voor een nieuwe tijd. Verkiezingsprogramma 2021-2025*, 70.

include bisexual, pansexual and asexual people.<sup>115</sup> The VVD thus willingly keeps a simple binary between homo- and heterosexuality in place, effacing many queer realities.

The VVD also maintains a temporal framework that is tied to a hierarchy of civilisation or modernity, articulated by the phrase ‘has yet arrived at this stage’. In the programme, it is clear to whom it concerns, according to the VVD: newcomers, or immigrants. In this discourse, those who do not (yet) underwrite equality between all sexes and genders, are not as far developed as those who do, and non-Western immigrants and Muslims are presented as intolerant towards the queer. In a separate ‘standpoint on LGBTI’ on the VVD’s website, the temporal framework is visible even more clearly, combined with a strong hint of Dutch exceptionalism, exemplified by the emphasis on the leading position of the Dutch and the literal articulation of pride:

The Netherlands have always been on the forefront in granting equal rights to LGBTIs (gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgenders and intersex people). That is something to be proud of. We want to strengthen the position of LGBTIs in the Netherlands. Their rights cannot be undone or impaired.<sup>116</sup>

It becomes clear that the VVD is particularly concerned about the rights of the queer being undone or impaired, mobilising queer victimhood as possible consequences of bad policy decisions. However, current LGBTQIA+ are not particularly portrayed as victims, but as liberated citizens that enjoy freedoms, fully in line with the VVD’s liberal political views.

The second-largest political party are the Democrats 66 (*Democraten 66*, D66), a progressive, social-liberal centre party. Their electoral programme includes the following statement:

D66 fights to protect LGBTI+ people against discrimination and violence. The space for conservative views is increasing, which threatens the equal rights and equal treatment for LGBTI+ people. Freedom and equality are not yet evident. The high rates of suicide among LGBTI+ youth show that they are still in a vulnerable position. Stigmatisation and discrimination of LGBTI+ people have to be tackled so that everyone is free to openly and visibly be themselves.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Parliamentary Papers 35080, Wijziging van onder meer het Wetboek van Strafrecht in verband met de herwaardering van de strafbaarstelling van enkele actuele delictsvormen (herwaardering strafbaarstelling actuele delictsvormen), no. 16: Motion by Van Nispen and Van Dijk.

<sup>116</sup> ‘Nederland heeft altijd vooropgelopen bij het geven van gelijke rechten aan LHBTI’ers (homo’s, lesbiennes, biseksuelen, transgenders en interseksepersonen). Dat is iets om trots op te zijn. We willen de positie van LHBTI’ers in Nederland verder versterken. Hun rechten mogen niet worden teruggedraaid of aangetast’ on the webpage of the VVD. URL: <https://www.vvd.nl/standpunten/lhbt/> (last accessed 29 June 2021).

<sup>117</sup> ‘D66 strijdt voor de bescherming van LHBTI+ personen tegen discriminatie en geweld. De ruimte voor conservatieve denkbelden groeit en dit bedreigt de gelijke rechten voor en gelijke behandeling van LHBTI+ personen. Vrijheid en gelijkheid zijn nog niet vanzelfsprekend. Het hoge percentage zelfmoord onder LHBTI+

As in VVD's discourse, a temporal framework is also present in D66's rhetoric, indicated by the words 'not yet' (*nog niet*) and 'still' (*nog altijd*). In D66's discourse, a quite literal and extreme victimisation of the queer is visible. The issues that are highlighted are the high rates of suicide, as well as stigmatisation and discrimination, which are mobilised to denounce 'conservative views', although this argument is not further substantiated or explicated. D66 advertises with being *the* party for LGBTIs at their website:<sup>118</sup>

In the Netherlands, you should be able to be yourself always and everywhere. We are, of course proud that we are the first country in which you could marry someone of the same sex. However, that is not a reason to sit back and be satisfied.<sup>119</sup>

Again, Dutch international leadership in the opening of civil marriage is highlighted, but it is also recognised that the stigmatisation, discrimination and violence towards LGBTQIA+ people is not resolved by this. The culturalization of citizenship is visible in D66's discourse, by making it distinctively Dutch to be able to be yourself. However, it is not explicitly tied to an anti-Islam agenda.

The third largest party is Geert Wilders' Party for Freedom (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*, PVV). This is a far-right nationalist-populist party with strong anti-Islam and anti-European Union views, and can be considered as the political offspring of Fortuyn's LPF.<sup>120</sup> PVV's electoral programme is highly populist and is full of racist remarks, and since being anti-Islam is the main element of the PVV's political identity, every opportunity is (mis)used to place the Islam in a negative limelight. The District Court of the Hague even found Wilders guilty of 'insulting of a group and incitement to discrimination', on account of the promise he made to his electorate that he would organise that there would be 'less Moroccans' in the Netherlands.<sup>121</sup> In PVV's electoral programme, it is stated that:

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jongeren laat zien dat zij zich nog altijd [in] een kwetsbare positie bevinden. Stigmatisering en discriminatie van LHBTI+ personen moeten worden aangepakt. Zodat iedereen vrij is om daadwerkelijk zichtbaar zichzelf te kunnen zijn.' Source: D66, *Een nieuw begin. Laat iedereen vrij, maar niemand vallen. Verkiezingsprogramma 2021-2025*, 145.

<sup>118</sup> 'Waarom wij dé partij zijn voor LHBTI'ers' on the webpage of Democraten 66 (D66). URL: <https://d66.nl/lhbt/> (last accessed 30 June 2021).

<sup>119</sup> 'In Nederland moet je altijd en overal jezelf kunnen zijn. Natuurlijk zijn we trots om het eerste land te zijn waar je mocht trouwen met iemand van je eigen geslacht. Maar dat is geen reden om tevreden achterover te leunen', Ibidem.

<sup>120</sup> Although the PVV is a classic opposition party, in 2010, it semi-entered the coalition through a political construction of passive support for the other coalition parties, the VVD and the Christian Democratic Appeal (*Christen-Democratisch Appèl*, CDA). in H. Ghorashi, 'Racism and "the Ungrateful Other" in the Netherlands', P. Essed and I Hoving (eds.), *Dutch Racism* (Amsterdam and New York, 2014), 101-116, 101.

<sup>121</sup> GHDHA, 9 December 2016, ECLI: NL:RBDHA:2016:15014.

Jews, Christians, homosexuals, apostates and women are often the first victims of Islamisation. Unfortunately, this is also the case in the Netherlands. [...] Neither elders, youth, women or gays – no one is safe anymore.<sup>122</sup>

Wilders and his PVV are overtly homonationalist, because they appropriate a nationalist discourse of LGBT rights in order to serve an anti-immigrant agenda.<sup>123</sup> Here, we see a very literal queer victimisation, as well as a victimisation of women in general and it is directly tied to the Islam. Wilders sketches an unsafe domestic situation for ‘gays and women’, at the hands of Muslims, while at same time, he wants to close the borders to Muslim immigrants, who sometimes have fled very unsafe spaces in search of refuge. As Duyvendak notes, ‘Dutch anti-immigration discourse goes hand in glove with a rhetoric of sexual emancipation and gender equality’.<sup>124</sup> This is most explicitly expressed by the PVV.<sup>125</sup>

In most conservative and right-wing discourses, Muslims are portrayed as the dangerous fundamentalist Other, who is underdeveloped and has not reached modernity by their supposed rejection of LGBTQIA+ rights.<sup>126</sup> Philomena Essed and Isabel Hoving consider this form of racism one of the most visible forms in the Netherlands, which they typify as ‘cultural violence, based on gendered and racially inscribed imaginations of “the Muslim” or “the veiled woman”’.<sup>127</sup> They furthermore argue that offensive statements about Muslims as everyday phenomena have become a European trend.<sup>128</sup> The political discourse in which ‘the gays’ need to be protected from ‘the Muslims’ finds resonance with a part of the queer electorate, predominantly with White homosexual men.<sup>129</sup>

Queerness, racism and anti-Islam sentiments are embedded in a complex register of Orientalism, a colonial past and a paradox of exotic desires on the one hand and fear for the

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<sup>122</sup> ‘Joden, christenen, homo’s, afvalligen en vrouwen zijn vaak de eerste slachtoffers van de islamisering; dat zien we helaas ook in Nederland.’ in: PVV, *Het gaat om u. Verkiezingsprogramma 2021-2025*, 7-19.

<sup>123</sup> Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*.

<sup>124</sup> Duyvendak, ‘The Pitfalls of Normalization’, 294.

<sup>125</sup> It is noteworthy that the other popular far right party in the Dutch political arena – Forum for Democracy (*Forum voor Democratie*, FvD) does not maintain a homonationalist discourse, while at the same time being heavily anti-Islam and anti-immigration. On the contrary, FvD shows a pattern of endorsing overtly anti-queer authors, foreign politicians and standpoints (M. Tonie, ‘Is Baudet een homo-hater?’, *Joop* (10 February 2020). In this respect, FvD’s discourse is more in line with the right wing Christian Reformed Political Party (*Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij*, SGP), a profoundly conservative orthodox Christian opposition party. The SGP opposes same-sex marriage and multiple parenthood, seeks to reinforce traditional gender and sexual norms, rejects free gender choice and is anti-abortion, while being anti-immigration and anti-Islam as well (SGP, *In Vertrouwen. Verkiezingsprogramma 2021-2025*).

<sup>126</sup> Duyvendak, ‘The Pitfalls of Normalization’, 294.

<sup>127</sup> P. Essed and I. Hoving, ‘Innocence, Smug Ignorance, Resentment: An Introduction to Dutch Racism’, in Essed and Hoving, *Dutch Racism*, 9-30, 9.

<sup>128</sup> Essed and Hoving, ‘Innocence, Smug Ignorance, Resentment’, 9.

<sup>129</sup> Gloria Wekker has found that a large majority of White gay men voted for the PVV in the parliamentary elections of 2010. White lesbian women, in contrast, voted largely for green and/or leftist parties as *Groenlinks* and the Labour Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*, PvdA) in Wekker, *Witte onschuld*, 157.

fundamentalist Other on the other. The nationalist character that underlies this register, makes it a predominantly homonationalist scheme.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I showed how COC often reports on various physically or psychologically violent incidents, crimes and structures. This is not surprising, because COC actively seeks enhancement of LGBTQIA+ lives, and experiences of violence distinctly obstruct such enhancements. In order to establish improvements, they chart and report the wrongdoings against queers. These reports nonetheless fit in a wider tendency which I have called ‘the discursive victimization of queers’. The presence of this discursive practice is, for example, indicated by the trope of the queer victim in popular media.

Whereas COC mostly urges politicians to protect the queer better, without engaging in a discussion about culprits or possible threats, political parties use the same narrative of victimhood but turn it around to serve political agendas. My hypothesis was that the largest political parties employ the figuration of the Victim to serve their political standpoints on citizenship. After a close reading of the electoral programmes of the three largest political parties, it can be concluded that these parties indeed engage in this discursive practice, but they do it against a different backdrop, namely through a culturalization of citizenship.

This concept signals at the idea that moral and cultural values have gained prominent positions in the delineation of citizenship and a national culture. LGBTQIA+ rights and a general idea of acceptance and tolerance towards the LGBTQIA+ population, have become pivotal elements of how the national culture of the Netherlands is presented. I have shown how these parties actively participate in the culturalization of citizenship, by presenting LGBTQIA+ rights as distinctively Dutch. In the discourse of the VVD, D66 and PVV, it stands out that they maintain a teleological framework of LGBTQIA+ rights in which a telos of full acceptance and equal rights is presented. The second finding is that in the paradigm of VVD and PVV so-called newcomers, immigrants and especially Muslims need to adapt to the Dutch culture of tolerance and acceptance. In this way, the queer citizens of the nation are portrayed as potential victims to which newcomers, predominantly Muslims, are imagined to form a threat. A complex scheme of discursive victimization of queers and culturalization of citizenship is thus activated to pursue a political agenda of limiting immigration and denouncing Islam.

## CHAPTER 4

### ‘The Community Member’

The general topics of COC’s news items are often tied to the ‘LGBTQIA+ community’. Examples of topics that explicitly reflect the community are Pride, Coming Out Day and Transgender Day of Visibility. However, more often a sense of community is evoked without specifically pointing at community-based celebrations. The word ‘community’ (*gemeenschap*) is, for example, often used to designate LGBTQIA+ people in general. If we look at the way COC writes about the community, two main observations stand out.

First, COC pays considerable attention to coming out as a pivotal moment in a queer’s life and considers being out as a valuable status to strive for as a queer person. From the news items, it becomes clear that the ‘the community’ is portrayed as consisting predominantly of ‘out and proud’ queers, as I will show in the first paragraph. Second, the rainbow is omnipresent as a symbolisation of the community. The rainbow theme – which I discuss in the third paragraph – does not only play a large role in the visual representations that are accompanying the written articles, but it is also actively deployed in community-based actions and manifestations. I have identified the figuration that is tied to these observations as the Community Member. Both observations also find resonance in the way the state organises queer citizenship, as I will show in the second paragraph by zooming in on negotiations between the police and the queer community, using a case study of the Canal Parade of 2018.

#### 4.1 An Out and Proud Community

As I have stated in the introduction to this chapter, COC continually presents the idea of a queer community in their news items, both nationally and transnationally. All presumed members of this community have at least one thing in common: they in one way or another reject or do not recognise cis and heteronormative identities or expressions. To emphasise this shared characteristic, COC accentuates the idea of being ‘out and proud’ as an important common denominator for community members. To be out and proud is to have undergone the process of coming out and to be proud of you who are. However, COC does not engage with the problematic inclinations of the coming out narrative.

‘Coming out of the closet’ is normatively seen as a ground-breaking moment in queer lives. It signals the moment in which the subject reveals their non-normative sexuality or gender identity to their environment, from which moment on they openly live as LGBTQIA+.

Coming outs are presented as *rites de passage* from a life of secrecy and hiding to a life of openness and pride. In COC's news reports, considerable attention is given to this moment and its afterlife of being 'out and proud'. This is for example visible in two interviews COC conducted in celebration of Lesbian Visibility Day. In both interviews, the first question after 'Who are you?' was 'Can you tell us something about how you experienced coming out of the closet?'<sup>130</sup> This emphasises the weight that is placed on coming out, and the perceived importance of visibility.

Another example of the fact that COC actively engages with the coming out narrative can be found in their platform *Jong & Out* (Young & Out), which is an application meant for youth below the age of eighteen and signals at 'being out' in its title.<sup>131</sup> It also stands out that COC writes about coming outs as if it is a given that each queer person goes through a coming out, or at least, is supposed to do so. The coming out narrative does not necessarily include a literal representation of the act of coming out. It also entails the idea that queer people should be able to 'be themselves' and that they should be open about their gender and sexuality. This kind of rhetoric is visible in a COC article titled 'Not much progress for LGBTIs in Europe', in which the results of a European-wide research project are discussed:

Dutch LGBTIs score the highest compared to LGBTIs in other countries, when it comes to openness about their sexual orientation, gender identity and sexual characteristics. Two third of the informants is very open or fairly open about it.<sup>132</sup>

The fact that LGBTQIA+ people can 'score' imaginary points on a comparative scale that measures openness means that being open is viewed as something good, something to strive for. By envisioning a community of out and proud queers, at least three difficulties emerge.

First, the juxtaposition of 'being closeted' and 'being out' provokes a false dichotomy with clear-cut boundaries between a life in the closet and a life in the open. However, in reality, this boundary is not as neat as it is presented. This becomes clear from the above-mentioned interviews with two lesbian women. One of the interviewees said about her

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<sup>130</sup> 'Kun je iets vertellen over hoe het voor je was om uit de kast te komen?' in COC, 'Portret Renata de Leeuw' (25 April 2020) and COC, 'Portret Anne Krul' (25 April 2020).

<sup>131</sup> Website of *Jong & Out*. URL: <https://www.jongenout.nl> (last accessed 27 June 2021).

<sup>132</sup> 'Als het gaat om openheid over de eigen seksuele gerichtheid, genderidentiteit of geslachtskenmerken blijken Nederlandse LHBTI's in vergelijking met de LHBTI's in de andere landen het hoogst te scoren: twee derde van de respondenten is heel of tamelijk open.' in COC, 'Weinig vooruitgang voor LHBTI's in Europa' (14 May 2020).



coming out: ‘The very first times were clumsy attempts to hit on a classmate.’<sup>133</sup> The interviewee here indicates that hers was not a single coming out, indicated by the plural use of ‘times’ and ‘attempts’. The other interviewee expressed a similar statement: ‘I had to come out of the closet multiple times for different groups of people.’<sup>134</sup> Some queers choose to disclose their sexuality or gender identity only in certain environments, but do not disclose it in other environments, making it quite complicated to identify as ‘closeted’ or ‘out’. The image of two comprehensible phases, closeted and out, moreover provokes extensive social binaries between being closeted as a dark, unhappy phase and being out as a happy and proud phase.<sup>135</sup> This does not correspond with reality, because it simplifies the idea that you can live openly. For some, living openly queer is not a viable possibility, because they would be unsafe in their environment. In that case, it is also possible that they have a better wellbeing when they do not talk openly about their gender or sexuality identity. The cultural practice of coming out as something or someone conforms with the ‘will to knowledge’ as I described in the introduction to this thesis: society’s need to know sexualised and gendered bodies by demanding them to delineate their Otherness.<sup>136</sup>

Many queer theorists have criticised the binary implications and cis- and heterosexist structures that lie at the basis of the coming out narrative.<sup>137</sup> One of the most dominant of these structures is the constant invigoration of what is normal and what is not, invoked by a cultural emphasis on the need to come out. The linearity and binarity of the narrative namely assumes that you are breaking the status quo by being queer and you have to debunk the common assumption that everyone is straight, unless otherwise specified, or in the words of Jen Bacon:

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<sup>133</sup> ‘De allereerste keren waren onhandige pogingen om een schoolgenote te versieren’, COC, ‘Portret Anne Krul’.

<sup>134</sup> ‘Ik heb voor verschillende mensen verschillende keren uit de kast moeten komen’, COC, ‘Portret Renata de Leeuw’.

<sup>135</sup> See for instance V. de Hingh, ‘Waarom hebben we het nog steeds over ‘uit de kast komen’?’, *De Correspondent* (20 October 2020).

<sup>136</sup> See Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 79 and Weber, *Queer International Relations*, 2.

<sup>137</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, for instance, points at the historical connotation of secrecy with homosexuality and says the following with regard to ‘coming out’: ‘I want to argue that a lot of the energy of attention and demarcation that has swirled around issues of homosexuality since the end of the nineteenth century, in Europe and the United States, has been impelled by the distinctively indicative relation of homosexuality to wider mappings of secrecy and disclosure, and of the private and the public, that were and are critically problematical for the gender, sexual and economic structures of the heterosexist culture at large, mappings whose enabling but dangerous incoherence has become oppressively, durably condensed in certain figures of homosexuality. “The closet” and “coming out”, now verging on all-purpose phrases for the potent crossing and recrossing of almost any politically charged lines of representation, have been the gravest and most magnetic of those figures. in E. Kosofsky Segdwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkely, Los Angeles and London, 2008 [1990]), 70-71.

It is really not enough to have the possibility of ‘telling’ people. To be really ‘out’ as queer, we must deny straight people the possibility of assuming we are straight, we have to challenge heteronormative assumptions with our very being [...] <sup>138</sup>

Lal Zimman further points out that it is also problematic to apply an analogous coming out narrative on the whole array of LGBTQIA+. An idea of coming out as revealing one’s gender or sexual identity to finally live as themselves, for example, does not apply to all transgender people whose gender identity already corresponds with how they are perceived by their environment, because they have transitioned and their gender expression matches normative ideas about gender.<sup>139</sup> For them, Zimman rightly points out, coming out is more about revealing a ‘gender history’ than a ‘gender identity’.<sup>140</sup> For others, queerness is a rejection of essentialism, which makes it unimaginable and undesirable to put a ‘label’ on their sexuality or gender.

### 4.3 Pink in Blue: Negotiations Between the Police and the Queer Community

In this paragraph, I investigate how the state engages with the idea of the queer community. Throughout society, queer groups and individuals encounter the state in many different guises at various occasions, for example, through law, by exposure to political discourse, and through all kinds of state or state-affiliated institutions. One of the key elements of a state is its formal monopoly on violence, generally articulated through the police and a national army.<sup>141</sup> The police is a very visible and powerful manifestation of the state, that regularly engages with the queer community. Therefore, I have chosen to zoom in on the negotiations between the police and the queer community, exemplified in their encounter during the Pride 2018.

The national police have a special unit called ‘Pink in Blue’ (*Roze in Blauw*), referring to the colour pink queerness is sometimes associated with, and the colour blue of the police uniforms. The unit is established for ‘LGBTI+’ who experience ‘discrimination, threats, assault or other punishable facts, in the context of their sexual or gender identity.’<sup>142</sup> Pink in

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<sup>138</sup> J. Bacon, ‘Getting the Story Straight: Coming Out Narratives and the Possibility of a Cultural Rhetoric’, *World Englishes* 17.2 (1998), 249-258, 250.

<sup>139</sup> L. Zimman, ‘The Other Kind of Coming Out’: Transgender People and the Coming Out Narrative’, *Gender and Language* 3.1 (2009), 53-80, 54.

<sup>140</sup> Zimman, ‘The Other Kind of Coming Out’, 54.

<sup>141</sup> C. Tilly, *The Formations of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1975), 70.

<sup>142</sup> ‘Lesbische vrouwen, homoseksuele mannen, biseksuelen, transgender- en intersekse personen (LHBTI+) die te maken krijgen met discriminatie, bedreiging, mishandeling of andere strafbare zaken gerelateerd aan hun

Blue regards itself as ‘very recognisable’ to the ‘LGBT community’.<sup>143</sup> Part of their visibility stems from the fact that the police officers of Pink in Blue identify as LGBTQIA+ themselves. One of their aims is to lower the threshold for queer people to go to the police upon an incident and positively influence the public trust in the police.<sup>144</sup> They are actively present in uniform at queer manifestations throughout the year, for example, during Pride in Amsterdam.<sup>145</sup> In 2018, dozens of police officers participate in the Canal Parade on a large boat with the words ‘proud to be your friend’ and the police emblem on the side.<sup>146</sup> In another edition, police officers on the police boat during the Parade held various signs. One of the signs read ‘*Helden Melden*’, which translates to ‘heroes report’.<sup>147</sup> This is a reference to the low rate of reporting on hate-crimes against queer people.<sup>148</sup> The message that one is a hero when they report a crime, immediately invokes images of bravery and courage. The other side of the story then implicitly is, that not reporting a hate-crime is not very courageous. This lays all responsibility for the low rate of reporting in the hands of crime-victims, while those rates may also stem from the fact that the police is known for their internal problems regarding a lack of attention to queer issues and hate crimes. These problems are regularly reported by the media. Whistle-blower and ex-police advisor Carel Boers has, for instance, stated that often the police ‘does nothing against homophobia, Islamophobia and the intimidation of women.’<sup>149</sup>

Politician, activist and member of We Reclaim Our Pride Lennon Fokkens has called the presence of the police on a boat during the Canal Parade of 2018 ‘a slap in the face of all people who have been the victim of discrimination and abuse of power at the hands of the police.’<sup>150</sup> He also refers to the fact that while the police on the boat tried to convince the community that they were proud to be their friends, other police officers violently took away inflatable unicorns from a protesting collective on a bridge that call themselves We Reclaim

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seksuele oriëntatie of genderidentiteit’ on the webpage of the National Police. URL: <https://www.politie.nl/onderwerpen/roze-in-blauw.html> (last accessed 1 July 2021).

<sup>143</sup> ‘Roze in Blauw is in de afgelopen jaren een zeer herkenbaar beeldmerk voor de LHBT-gemeenschap geworden.’ in *Ibidem*.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>146</sup> See the image accompanying the newspaper article ‘Hele bestuur Roze in Blauw Amsterdam treedt terug’, *Het Parool* (8 October 2018).

<sup>147</sup> See the image accompanying the newspaper article ‘Roze in Blauw: aangifte tegen minister Slob mogelijk’, *Het Parool* (10 November 2020).

<sup>148</sup> Webpage of the National Police. URL: <https://www.politie.nl/onderwerpen/roze-in-blauw.html> (last accessed 1 July 2021).

<sup>149</sup> A quote from Carel Boers: ‘Er gebeurt niets tegen homohaar, moslimfobie en intimidatie van vrouwen’ in M. Haenen, ‘Moslimfobie, intimidatie bij politie – en de top kijkt weg’, *NRC Handelsblad* (12 July 2019).

<sup>150</sup> L. Fokkens, ‘De hypocrisie van de politie tijdens Pride’, *OneWorld* (9 August 2018).

Our Pride.<sup>151</sup> This collective demonstrates against the exclusive character of Pride. The unicorns were not just fun accessories, instead, they were vital elements of their protest, because the activists had written slogans on them. In this way, the unicorns formed the materialisation of their protest. Fokkens reads the two manifestations of police presence at Pride as hypocritical because, according to him, the police camouflaged their institutional oppression of minorities with one day of performative ‘gay friendliness’.<sup>152</sup> I argue furthermore, that the double-presence of the police in the space of Pride showed an act of gatekeeping with regard to queer citizenship. While the police on the boat assured the people on the canal sides that they were their friends, they showed the protesting queers on the bridge that did not feel represented by Pride and actively protested police presence, that they were not tolerated. On top of that, the presence of the police is historically loaded, given the fact that the first Pride manifestations were also protests against police brutality.<sup>153</sup> Moreover, Dutch police continues to be associated with racism and ethnic profiling, which makes their presence at Pride for queer people of colour even more complicated.<sup>154</sup>

If we look closer at the way how the figuration of the Community Member is employed by the police, it stands out that the police also engages with the coming out narrative as well as with the rainbow theme. The coming out narrative is mobilised in their emphasis on ‘being visible’ and by coming out as ‘LGBT’ themselves, appearing as Pink in Blue. They furthermore established themselves as standing very close to the community by presenting as ‘friends’ and ‘proud’, which can be viewed as typical community jargon.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Fokkens, ‘De hypocrisie van de politie tijdens Pride’. See also: ‘Sylvana Simons ‘geschokt’ over inbeslagname opblaasbare eenhoorns tijdens Pride’, *AT5*. URL: <https://www.at5.nl/artikelen/185211/sylvana-simons-geschokt-over-in-beslagname-opblaasbare-eenhoorns-tijdens-pride> (last accessed 1 July 2021).

<sup>152</sup> Fokkens, ‘De hypocrisie van de politie tijdens Pride’.

<sup>153</sup> M.D. Nevius, ‘The First Pride Was a Riot: How Queer Activism Has Partnered with Police to Hurt the Community’s Most Vulnerable’, *Hastings Women’s Law Journal* 29 (2018), 125-146, 125.

<sup>154</sup> In recent years, Dutch newspapers have regularly reported on (institutional) racism at the police. See for instance the articles by Marcel Haenen in *NRC Handelsblad*: ‘Politieagent tot geldboete veroordeeld voor discriminerende belediging’ (30 June 2021), ‘Rotterdamse agenten appten ook discriminerend over gedode Hümeýra’ (24 March 2021), ‘Politie Rotterdam onderzoekt racisme in appgroep agenten’, (30 June 2020), ‘Politie Rotterdam weer in opspraak om racisme’ (29 December 2020) and ‘Agenten die burgers omschreven als k\*tafrikanten’ in appjes niet vervolgd’ (4 Augustus 2020).

<sup>155</sup> It should be noted that it is impossible to completely view the police and the queer community as two separate entities, as becomes clear from the fact that there are LGBTQIA+ police officers who may consider themselves part of the community, while others, such as the queer people of We Reclaim Our Pride actively resist any association with the police.

## 4.2 The Rainbow: Community, Capitalism and Nationalism

One of the most invoked symbols of the queer community is the rainbow flag. The website of COC is full of rainbows, as is the website of Pink in Blue and virtually any other visual of which the goal is to establish an association with the queer community. In this paragraph, I argue that the rainbow flag forms a binding agent that runs through the narratives and practices that invoke or appropriate the queer community.

After its first emergence in San Francisco in the 1970s, the rainbow or Pride flag gained ground during European Pride festivals in the 1990s. Now, it is a well-recognised LGBTQIA+ symbol.<sup>156</sup> It takes a central place on various occasions, for example during Pride and Coming Out Day, but it is also used more permanently as a symbol of acceptance, tolerance and visibility by both queer and non-queer entities. COC often calls to action, using the rainbow flag as a sign of protest. For instance, they asked citizens, companies, government bodies and institutions to hoist the rainbow flag to celebrate the twenty years lustrum of the opening of civil marriage and to ask for continued attention regarding LGBTQIA+ issues.<sup>157</sup> They also actively ask people who are coming to demonstrations to bring a rainbow flag.<sup>158</sup> Moreover, COC sometimes uses the phrase ‘rainbow community’ as a synonym for ‘LGBTQIA+ community’.<sup>159</sup> The rainbow flag is at least conjured up in three different systems: 1) as the representation of an (imagined) community, 2) as tokens of nation states’ tolerance and modernity and 3) in the capitalisation of queerness.

Erika Alm and Lena Martinsson argue that the rainbow flag is not merely a representation of a community, but that it must be understood as ‘an active part of the creation of a community’.<sup>160</sup> This represents the first system in which the rainbow is conjured up. Flags have historically form powerful symbols and artefacts to signal at nations, as a visual representation of everyone in the nation. However, not all queers feel represented by the classic rainbow flag, touching upon the vulnerability of using one symbol for a large, multi-faceted community. Because of that, the so-called ‘Progress Pride flag’ was introduced in 2018, adding white, light blue and pink as a representation for transgender people and black

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<sup>156</sup> P. Laskar, A. Johansson and D. Mulinari, ‘Decolonising the Rainbow Flag’, *Culture Unbound* 8.3 (2016), 193-216, 194.

<sup>157</sup> COC, ‘Twintig jaar LHBT-huwelijk: Oproep uithangen regenboogvlag’ (23 March 2021).

<sup>158</sup> COC, Maandag demonstratie: stop haatcampagne tegen Poolse regenbooggemeenschap’ (3 September 2020).

<sup>159</sup> For example in COC, Maandag demonstratie: stop haatcampagne tegen Poolse regenbooggemeenschap’ (3 September 2020).

<sup>160</sup> E. Alm and L. Martinsson, ‘The Rainbow Flag as Friction: Transnational, Imagined Communities of Belonging among Pakistani LGBTQ Activists’, *Culture Unbound* 8.3 (2016), 218-329, 219.

and brown for queer people of colour.<sup>161</sup> The most recent addition to the flag is a yellow area with a purple circle, referencing the intersex community. The rainbow flag can thus be seen as a kind of binding agent of the community, although it continually remains to be under review and alternative versions are drafted up as well.

Alm and Martinsson also point to the second system in which the rainbow flag is invoked. They argue that it contributes to a problematic construction of imagined national communities, since nation states continue to use the rainbow flag as a token of their tolerance and modernism in depictions of national representations, such as on stamps or government buildings.<sup>162</sup> Pia Laskar, Anna Johansson and Diana Mulinari, in a similar fashion point to the problematic context of the rainbow flag in its 'central role in boundary-making between the construction of Europeanness coded as progressive and its others, defined by their supposed lack of tolerance towards sexual minorities, inscribing colonial and racist discourses.'<sup>163</sup> In the Netherlands, the appropriation of the rainbow flag by the state becomes visible at Coming Out Day, when official governmental bodies hoist the rainbow flag.<sup>164</sup>

In the third system, the rainbow flag is widely used for marketing purposes, by large corporations, small businesses and even cities. For instance, many cities in the Netherlands now have a so-called *gaybrapad*, a play on the Dutch word for pedestrian crossing: *zebrapad*. Cities with pedestrian crossings in the colours of the rainbow show that everyone – regardless of gender or sexuality is welcome. An additional advantage is that they can spend their money within the city walls. A *gaybrapad* is particularly aesthetic and Instagrammable, which scores extra branding points for the city.<sup>165</sup> The capitalisation of the rainbow, however, occurs especially during Pride month.<sup>166</sup> Then, the rainbow appears in commercial activities on the regular, from special Pride merchandise, to temporary corporate rainbow logos, to deploying a boat in the famous Canal Parade. To the practice of commercially profiting off of the LGBTQIA+ community without actively contributing to the enhancement of their lives is generally referred to as pinkwashing, although the term is also used for nation states that appear to be 'gay friendly' while at the same time violating human rights.<sup>167</sup> We Reclaim Our

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<sup>161</sup> S. Jossell, 'The Progress Pride Flag is Getting an Intersex-Inclusive Makeover', *Them* (8 June 2021).

<sup>162</sup> Alm and Martinsson, 'The Rainbow Flag as Friction', 221.

<sup>163</sup> Laskar, Johansson and Mulinari, 'Decolonising the Rainbow Flag', 194.

<sup>164</sup> COC, 'Friesland ook Regenboogprovincie' (27 May 2020).

<sup>165</sup> The word 'Instagrammable' means that a place, an object or a setting is worth photographing and uploading it on the social media platform Instagram (or any other social media platform). Instagrammable settings are particularly special, eccentric, beautiful or colourful. Some restaurants even have made it an essential part of their management strategy to be Instagrammable. See for instance: S. Posthumus, 'Het Instagrammable restaurant: 'Mensen verklaarden me voor gek'', *Het Parool* (16 September 2019).

<sup>166</sup> D. van Engelen, 'De Pride is er niet om je slechte imago op te krikken', *OneWorld* (31 July 2018).

<sup>167</sup> L. Appels, 'Bedrijven die meeliften met Pride: oprecht of pinkwashing?', *Het Parool* (2 August 2019).

Pride has been protesting this practice during Pride Amsterdam.<sup>168</sup> They also demonstrate against the lack of intersectionality at Pride, which, as they point out, was originally a protest by trans women of colour.<sup>169</sup> In other countries, similar protests have been organised, such as ‘Reclaim Pride’ in Sweden.<sup>170</sup> Because of the two modes of appropriation of the rainbow flag, some queer activists now regard the flag as ‘normalised, mainstreamed and thus harmless’, as Cathrin Wasshede shows.<sup>171</sup>

## Conclusion

In this chapter, the figuration of the ‘Community Member’ was central, the third and final main figuration COC employs. I have presented three main arguments in this chapter. First, that this figuration is characterised by a sense of belonging and connectedness to other LGBTQIA+ people and by being ‘out and proud’. The construction of this figuration is established through a reinforcement of the coming out narrative and the binary of being closeted and being out. In their news items, COC discursively presents a large and unilateral community of queer people. The problematic inclinations of the coming out narrative are among other things that it provokes a set of misleading binaries between ‘being closeted’ and ‘being out’, that it neglects that coming out is not a viable option for some queer people, and that a coming out does not fit certain types of queerness.

I have also shown one of the ways in which the state engages with the queer community, by presenting a case study of negotiations between the police and queer people during Pride. I argue that the police performed an act of gatekeeping when they manifested themselves in two different configurations. They wanted to be visible at the most public community-based event of the year – Pride – by dancing in their uniforms on a boat, proudly presenting themselves as ‘friends’ of the community. By calling the people at the side of the canals who were celebrating Pride their friends, the police initiated a connection with the queer community represented by Pride. The queers that did not feel represented by Pride,

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<sup>168</sup> K. Levie, ‘Bedrijfsboten op Pride veroveren meer water dan ooit’, *OneWorld* (2 August 2019).

<sup>169</sup> Facebook announcement of the event ‘FIRST Pride Was A RIOT 3 August!’ by We Reclaim Our Pride, scheduled at 3 August 2019. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/events/470754757076550/> (last accessed 27 June 2021).

<sup>170</sup> C. Wasshede, ‘Rainbow Flag and Belongings/Disbelongings: Öckerö Pride and Reclaim Pride in Gothenburg, Sweden 2019’ in E. Alm, L. Berg, M. Lundahl Hero, A. Johansson, P. Laskar, L. Martinsson, D. Mulinari and C. Wasshede (eds.), *Pluralistic Struggles in Gender, Sexuality and Coloniality. Challenging Swedish Exceptionalism* (Cham, 2021), 147-177, 147.

<sup>171</sup> Wasshede, ‘Rainbow Flag and Belongings/Disbelongings’, 149.

however, were violently obstructed in their protests. These were predominantly queer people of colour, who were critical of police and commercial presence.

In a reading of the rainbow flag as a cultural symbol, I have shown how a sense of community is invoked in various codings. First, by queer people and organisations that strive to represent queer people. The rainbow flag serves as a common denominator for the group, just as a nation's flag does for the nation. Although a sense of transnational community and kinship is something many queer people value, the idea of a queer community is also mobilised in a complex web of capital and nationalism. Corporations appropriate the rainbow to capitalise on the community, which is heavily criticised of being a form of so-called pinkwashing. States also gratefully employ the rainbow as a token of their tolerance. I therefore argue that more than just being a symbol, the rainbow is a mode of appropriating the community and firmly embedding the figuration of the Community Member in a nationalist and capitalist environment.



## CONCLUSION

This research project has been an inquiry to queerness and citizenship. To answer the main research question — *How are the queer figurations that emerge from the discourse of COC Nederland employed in the organisation of queer citizenship?* – the first necessary step was to track down the figurations that emerge from COC’s discourse. Through a combination of qualitative code analysis and discourse analysis, I identified three main queer figurations: 1) The Rights-Holder/non-Rights-Holder, 2) the Victim and 3) the Community Member. Certainly, these figurations are not as clear-cut as they may appear here. Rather, many facets of the figurations are overlapping since they are not pre-configured or consciously delineated by a single agent. Together, the figurations form an adequate overview of how COC writes about LGBTQIA+ issues and of whom they consider these issues concern. They also have profound influence in the organisation of queer citizenship and uncover tendencies about who may belong and fit in. In the deconstruction of the figurations, I was strengthened by various theories and I was able to embed the figurations in wider observations about queerness, international relations, and political theory.

The first figuration – the Rights-Holder/non-Rights-Holder – forms a complicated comparative scheme of granted rights in the Netherlands and lacking rights abroad. The right to marry particularly receives considerable attention, although it is two decades ago that the Dutch state allowed marriage for same-sex partners. I argue that one of the reasons equal marriage rights have gained such importance in COC’s discourse is that they function as an important and unproblematised milestone in the teleological scheme towards queer liberation. Because of that, it is also used as a litmus test for other state’s modernity and ‘gay-friendliness’. The Dutch pioneering role is further used to showcase Dutch’ progressiveness and to portray equal marital rights as an export-product in the international arena. COC and the state both present queer marital rights as the end of the telos. However, in both discursive schemes, no attention is paid to the fact that marriage is still a limited and binary concept for some queer people. Polyamorous queers, for example, cannot enjoy full citizenship in this way.

The figuration that forms the protagonist of the second discursive scheme is the Victim, which is mobilised in various ways. COC sincerely advocates the rights and lives of queer people and therefore feels the need to report on structural violence and hate-crimes against. By doing this, however, they comply in something I have called ‘the discursive

victimisation of queers', which is putting up an image in which queerness is associated with victimhood or struggle. The complicated fact that some queer people experience violence at the hand of many different individuals, groups and institutions is simplified and coupled with the fiction that the Netherlands is a very tolerant country. This myth is partly the result of a culturalization of citizenship, in which tolerance is presented as a cultural trait of the Dutch. The fusion of queer victimhood on the one hand and a Dutch culture of tolerance on the other hand is mobilised by political parties to foster an anti-immigration and anti-Islam agenda, fitting in Puar's scheme of homonationalism, and to reinforce the teleological framework.

The third figuration that emerged from COC's discourse is the Community Member. It is characterised by the fact that community-members have 'come out' and now openly live as queer. I have problematised the coming out narrative by pointing at queer criticism of the extensive binaries that underly the idea of a single coming out. The Community Member is a widely recognised figuration because it perfectly fits in with the will to knowledge, as described by Foucault and Weber: society's demand to know the gendered and sexualised subject. In a reading of encounters between the queer and the police as a manifestation of the state, I have shown how the police performed an act of gatekeeping in their double-presence at the Pride celebration in Amsterdam in 2018. I have furthermore argued how an appropriation of the rainbow flag partly facilitates complicated schemes of capitalism and nationalism, despite it being a powerful transnational queer symbol at the same time.

This thesis has engaged with manifold manifestations of queer figurations and gatekeeping acts. Although some of them might seem unrelated, I argue that all the cases I have discussed cooperate in the organisation of queer citizenship in the Netherlands. The rights the Rights-Holder enjoys are, for instance, also applied in the teleological framework that works together with the victimisation of queerness, and the disposition of the rainbow operates in a nationalist portrayal of tolerance and rights, as well as in a commercialisation of the community. Queer citizenship is not fixed, rather, it is elastic. On the one hand, hard legal lines are drawn, but on the other hand, the figurations discursively delineate who may belong. This thesis has shown that COC and the state have not only been literally working together for a long time, but that they also cooperate in discursive practices of constructing figurations in a semiotic relationship, pushing their own programs and ideologies, but also reinforcing each other's portrayals of the queer. Despite the strength of the will to knowledge, however, queerness will remain 'an open mesh of possibilities, overlaps, dissonances and resonances' that 'can't be made to signify monolithically' as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick will always remember us.

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## APPENDIX: CODE ANALYSIS

In this appendix, the news items and the process and results of the code analysis that I have conducted are presented. To make the reflection of the research process as transparent and comprehensible as possible, I have divided this process in four phases. The first three phases are the well-known phases of qualitative code analysis: open, axial and selective coding. The fourth phase is particular to this research and reflects the translation from the articles and corresponding codes and code groups to the figurations that play leading parts in this thesis. The first section of this appendix is a list of the 123 news items that COC published on their website between 23 March 2020 and 23 March 2021.

### A List of the Studied COC News Items (23 March 2020 – 23 March 2021)

In the list below, all 123 news items as they were published on COC's website between 23 March 2020 and 23 March 2021 are presented.

	COC News Items	Date
1.	'#TransgenderDayofVisibility' (interview with Brian van Nunen)	31-03-20
2.	'#TransgenderDayofVisibility' (interview with Sherry Jae Ebere)	31-03-20
3.	'Solidair met ontwikkelingslanden tijdens corona'	01-04-20
4.	'Forse toename discriminatie seksuele oriëntatie in het onderwijs'	02-04-20
5.	'Mensenrechtencollege: transgender vrouw mag gewoon naar vrouwentoilet'	02-04-20
6.	'Campagne roept op af te zien van seksdates tijdens coronacrisis'	03-04-20
7.	'Belangenorganisaties willen actie tegen Hongaarse anti-transgenderwet'	04-04-20
8.	'Wéér geen extra politiematregelen voor veiligheid LHBTI's'	09-04-20
9.	'Regering gaat discriminatie van trans- en bi personen strafbaar stellen'	10-04-20
10.	'Stuur een regenboogkaart naar roze senioren!'	11-04-20
11.	'Homokoppel uitgescholden en bespuugd'	13-04-20
12.	'Pride Amsterdam gaat dit jaar vanwege de coronacrisis niet door'	16-04-20
13.	'COC's Switchboard staat voor jullie klaar!'	23-04-20
14.	'Weer meer meldingen van LHBTI-discriminatie'	24-04-20
15.	'Portret Anne Krul'	25-04-20
16.	'Portret Renata de Leeuw'	25-04-20
17.	'LINTJESREGEN 2020'	27-04-20
18.	'Verzet Turkse LHBTI-beweging tegen uitspraak geestelijke'	29-04-20
19.	'Transgender persoon mishandeld in Amsterdamse metro'	29-04-20
20.	'COC herdenkt slachtoffers Tweede Wereldoorlog'	04-05-20
21.	'COC viert bevrijding'	05-05-20
22.	'LHBTI+ Steun gaat de strijd aan tegen eenzaamheid in coronatijd'	06-05-20
23.	'Steun Marokkaanse LHBTI's in nood!'	06-05-20
24.	'Duitsland verbiedt genezingstherapieën'	07-05-20
25.	'Soa Aids Nederland: advies voor intimiteit en seks in coronatijd'	09-05-20
26.	'Homokoppel in Amsterdam opnieuw aangevallen'	11-05-20
27.	'Nederland valt weer uit top 10 LHBTI rechten'	14-05-20
28.	'Weinig vooruitgang voor LHBTI's in Europa'	14-05-20

29.	‘IDAHOT 2020 = Spreek je uit!’	16-05-20
30.	‘Vraag minister Dekker vandaag om een meerouderschapswet!’	16-05-20
31.	‘Aids Memorial Day, steek een kaarsje aan en deel je verhaal’	17-05-20
32.	‘COC wil actie tegen ‘LHBTI-vrije zones’ in Polen	18-05-20
33.	‘IDAHOT-Regenboogvlaggenactie Roze 50+’	19-05-20
34.	‘Schandalige Hongaarse anti-transgenderwet toch aangenomen’	19-05-20
35.	‘Opnieuw anti-homogeweld in Amsterdam Oost’	22-05-20
36.	‘Informatie tijdens de coronapandemie’	23-05-20
37.	‘Costa Rica eerste Centraal-Amerikaanse land dat huwelijk openstelt’	26-05-20
38.	‘Friesland ook Regenboogprovincie’	27-05-20
39.	‘Koen van Dijk neemt afscheid als directeur COC Nederland’	29-05-20
40.	‘Steun Indonesische LHBTI’s in de coronacrisis!’	29-05-20
41.	‘Nieuw Transgender infopunt voor alle vragen over trans-zijn’	02-06-20
42.	‘Solidair tegen discriminatie om huidskleur’	02-06-20
43.	‘#NUffTESTEN: actie met gratis hiv-tests van start’	05-06-20
44.	‘GLOBAL PRIDE 2020’	09-06-20
45.	‘Wijs coördinator aan voor aanpak van discriminatie in openbare ruimte’	10-06-20
46.	‘Kom snel met verbod op ‘LHBT-genezing’’	11-06-20
47.	‘Dak- en thuisloze LHBTI-jongeren zijn driedubbel kwetsbaar’	18-06-20
48.	‘Stem voor LHBTI-rechten in de Grondwet!’	19-06-20
49.	‘Minister Blok brengt werkbezoek aan COC’	25-06-20
50.	‘COC blij met voorstel hogere straffen op haatmisdrijven’	29-06-20
51.	‘Schelden geen reden voor strafverzwaring, vinden officieren en rechters’	30-06-20
52.	‘Prachtig nieuws: Kamer stemt voor Grondwetswijziging!’	30-06-20
53.	‘Minister Grapperhaus spreekt vrijdag met TNN en COC over aanpak geweld’	02-07-20
54.	‘Minister Grapperhaus voert indrukwekkende gesprekken met slachtoffers geweld’	03-07-20
55.	‘Belangenorganisaties gelukkig met schrappen geslachtsregistratie ID-kaart’	04-07-20
56.	‘Geen weigerambtenaren meer in Zuid-Afrika’	07-07-20
57.	‘AFGEZEGD: Demonstreer mee tegen geweld tegen Pride Amsterdam!’	23-07-20
58.	‘“Een enorme knauw voor mijn gevoel van veiligheid”	24-07-20
59.	‘COC’s SHAKESPEARE CLUB tijdens Pride Amsterdam’	26-07-20
60.	‘HEMA start met extra bijzonder geboorteverlof’	28-07-20
61.	‘Demonstratie op Museumplein gaat niet door’	28-07-20
62.	‘AXE ondersteunt COC’s jongerencommunity met donatie’	29-07-20
63.	‘“Liever een X op een grafsteen”	29-07-20
64.	‘Limburg Pride Show – Live via COC Limburg’	31-07-20
65.	‘Opinieartikel: ‘Kabinet, kom in actie tegen geweld!’	01-08-20
66.	‘Maak aanpak geweld tot speerpunt voor verkiezingen’	01-08-20
67.	‘Peiling effecten coronacrisis op LHBTI’s’	11-08-20
68.	‘Maandag demonstratie: stop haatcampagne tegen Poolse regenbooggemeenschap’	03-09-20
69.	‘Veel belangstelling demonstratie tegen haatcampagne Polen’	08-09-20
70.	‘COC lanceert ’s werelds eerste veilige ontmoetings-app voor LHBTI-jongeren	10-09-20
71.	‘LESBIAN FESTIVAL NIJMEGEN 2020’	21-09-20
72.	‘“Gay is not normal” is geen groepsbelediging, vindt rechter’	25-09-20
73.	‘Acceptatie moet op school de norm worden’	28-09-20
74.	‘COMING OUT DAY 2020 – activiteiten door het hele land’	07-10-20
75.	‘Motivaction: 44% van Nederlanders vindt viering Coming Out Day belangrijk’	08-10-20
76.	‘Minister van Engelshoven presenteert COC’s standaard voor LHBTI-vriendelijke scholen	09-10-20
77.	‘COC Nederland reorganiseert’	13-10-20
78.	‘Theoloog des Vaderlands: ‘Kerken erken leed dat LHBTI+’s is aangedaan’’	19-10-20

79.	‘Uitspraken Paus zijn kleine revolutie’	21-10-20
80.	‘Mrs. en Mr. Senior Pride 2020’	27-10-20
81.	‘Bezuinig tijdens coronacrisis niet op ontwikkelingssamenwerking!’	28-10-20
82.	‘Amsterdam ondertekent Nederlandse Intersekseverklaring’	30-10-20
83.	‘Kabinet, ondersteun kwetsbare LHBTI’s’	30-10-20
84.	‘Afwijzing LHBTI’s door scholen moet stoppen’	09-11-20
85.	‘TRANSGENDER GEDENKDAG 2020’	11-11-20
86.	‘COC wint Finse prijs’	12-11-20
87.	‘Veel aandacht voor kwetsbare LHBTI’s tijdens emancipatiedebat’	12-11-20
88.	‘Wijziging plasmadonatiebeleid is teleurstellend’	16-11-20
89.	‘Scholen worden verplicht om te zorgen voor LHBTI-acceptatie in de klas’	17-11-20
90.	‘Start campagne #TotHier tegen seksueel geweld’	24-11-20
91.	‘Op koers om doelen Nationaal Actieplan Soa-Hiv te halen’	24-11-20
92.	‘Marie Ricardo benoemd tot directeur COC Nederland’	28-11-20
93.	‘Kabinet biedt excuses aan voor oude transgenderwet’	01-12-20
94.	‘Paarse Vrijdag op 11 december voor het eerst ook op de basisschool’	08-12-20
95.	‘Tweede Kamer investeert in kwetsbare LHBTI’s en veiligheid’	09-12-20
96.	‘Stuur geen LHBTI-asielzoekers terug naar Oeganda’	17-12-20
97.	‘Alternatief Kerstconcert ten bate van dakloze regenboogjongeren’	19-12-20
98.	‘Gelukkig Nieuwjaar!’	24-12-20
99.	‘Burgemeester Dales Prijs 2021 voor Lesbisch Archief Nijmegen’	04-01-21
100.	‘Presentatie arbeidsvoorwaarden regenbooggezinnen’	06-01-21
101.	‘COC gaat LHBTI-organisaties in 22 landen steunen’	08-01-21
102.	‘L’HOMO. STOPT’	12-01-21
103.	‘Eerste onderzoek gepubliceerd naar kennis en sociale opvattingen over intersekse’	01-02-21
104.	‘COC’s Verkiezingsdebat op vrijdagavond 5 februari’	03-02-21
105.	‘Kijk hier COC’s Regenboog Verkiezingsdebat’	05-02-21
106.	‘Senaat debatteert over verankering LHBTI-rechten in Grondwet’	08-02-21
107.	‘GROTE OVERWINNING VOOR LHBTI’s IN SENAAT: Grondwetswijziging aangenomen!’	09-02-21
108.	‘Onderzoek: transitieverlof is noodzakelijk en wenselijk’	11-02-21
109.	‘Oranje Fonds kent 100 duizend euro toe voor versterking biculturele LHBTI-gemeenschap’	12-02-21
110.	‘LHBTI-kieswijzer gelanceerd’	21-02-21
111.	‘SGP: opengestelde huwelijk moet worden afgeschaft’	22-02-21
112.	‘‘OUTtv Kiest’ peilt Queer stem’’	25-02-21
113.	‘Jongerenlijn ‘Genderpraatjes’ gelanceerd voor transgender, non-binaire en zoekende jongeren’	02-03-21
114.	‘COC demonstreert op zaterdag 6 maart in Krimpen aan den IJssel’	04-03-21
115.	‘Vijf politieke partijen op Curaçao voor openstelling huwelijk’	05-03-21
116.	‘Women’s March in Amsterdam groot succes’	08-03-21
117.	‘Check Rainbowvote, de kieswijzer voor de regenbooggemeenschap’	11-03-21
118.	‘COC gelukkig met einde aan discriminatie bij bloeddonatie’	11-03-21
119.	‘Lijsttrekkers tekenen stembusakkoord met het COC’	12-03-21
120.	‘OUTtv-peiling: GroenLinks blijft favoriet onder LHBT+’ers	16-03-21
121.	‘Golf van protest tegen de rechten van LHBTI-personen in Ghana’	16-03-21
122.	‘Goede kansen voor Regenboogakkoord in de nieuwe Kamer’	18-03-21
123.	‘Vlag uithangen: 20 jaar opengesteld huwelijk voor paren van gelijk geslacht’	23-03-21

## Phase 1: Open Coding

In the table below, the results of the first phase of the coding analysis are presented. They are organised from most occurrent to least occurrent. These codes are attached to sentences and paragraphs within the 123 news items and reflect the subjects of those sections. In the right column the results of the second phase of the coding process are reflected. Here, the code groups in which the codes have been placed are attached, to already present the line of thinking with regard to categorisation.

Code Name	X	Groups
1. Violence	32	Physical violence
2. Discrimination	28	Psychological violence
3. Acceptation	25	Strivings
4. COVID-19	21	COVID-19
5. LGBTQIA+ community	16	Community
6. Pride	14	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
7. Diversity	12	Strivings
8. Intersectionality	11	Strivings
9. LGBTQIA+ Marriage	11	Marriage
10. Homo as swear word	10	Psychological violence
11. Parliamentary elections	10	Politics
12. Conversion therapy	9	Psychological violence / Religion
13. Rainbow flag	9	Rainbow
14. Visibility	9	Strivings
15. HIV	8	Medical/Health
16. Inclusivity	8	Strivings
17. Anti-gay regulations in school	7	Education
18. Coming out	7	Coming out
19. More attention to discrimination on the police academy	7	Strivings
20. Threats	7	Psychological violence
21. Bullying	6	Psychological violence
22. Equality	6	Rights
23. Gender identity	6	Community / Gender/Sex
24. LGBTQIA+ rights abroad	6	Abroad / Rights
25. LGBTQIA+ seniors	6	Community
26. Multiple parenthood	6	Rights
27. AIDS	5	Medical/Health
28. Coming Out Day	5	Coming out / Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
29. Derogative speech	5	Psychological violence
30. Emancipation	5	Strivings
31. Enshrinement of LGBTQIA+ rights in the Constitution	5	Law / Rights
32. Higher penalties for discriminatory violence	5	Law / Politics / Rights
33. LGBTQIA+ laws	5	Law / Rights
34. LGBTQIA+ political agendas	5	Politics
35. LGBTQIA+ with a disability	5	Community
36. Safe environment	5	Strivings
37. Sexual orientation	5	Community
38. Be yourself	4	Coming out / Strivings
39. Gender expression	4	Community / Gender/Sex / Strivings
40. Homeless LGBTQIA+ youth	4	Community
41. Homosexuality punishable	4	Abroad
42. Intimidation	4	Psychological violence

43. LGBTQIA+ education in primary schools	4	Education
44. LGBTQIA+ refugees	4	Refugees / Migrants
45. Racism	4	Social problems
46. Registration of discrimination	4	Rights
47. Sexual diversity	4	Abroad / Gender/Sex
48. Transgender Netwerk Nederland (TNN)	4	Organisations
49. Transition leave	4	Rights
50. Unnecessary operations at intersex children	4	Medical/Health / Physical violence
51. Adoption	3	Rights
52. COC as the oldest LGBTQIA+ organisation in the world	3	COC / Organisations
53. COVID-19 policy	3	COVID-19
54. Demonstration	3	Activism
55. Exclusion	3	Psychological violence / Social problems
56. Gender diversity	3	Gender/Sex / Strivings
57. Homophobia	3	Psychological violence
58. Human rights	3	Human rights
59. Human rights violations	3	Human rights
60. ILGA	3	Organisations
61. International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT)	3	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
62. LGBTQIA+ free zones in Poland	3	Abroad / Rights
63. LGBTQIA+ rights	3	Rights
64. LGBTQIA+ rights in Poland	3	Abroad / Rights
65. Nashville Declaration	3	Organisations / Psychological violence
66. Nederlandse organisatie voor seksediversiteit (NNID)	3	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
67. Non-binary gender registration	3	Gender/Sex / Rights
68. Rutgers	3	Organisations
69. Sexual characteristics	3	Gender/Sex
70. Solidarity	3	Strivings
71. Suicide	3	Psychological violence
72. Surrogacy	3	Rights
73. The fight for marriage rights	3	Marriage / Rights
74. Tolerance	3	Strivings
75. Transgender Helpdesk	3	Organisations
76. Unsafety	3	Social problems
77. Violence against a trans woman	3	Physical violence
78. Voting advice application	3	Politics
79. Activism	3	Activism
80. Aggression	3	Social problems
81. Anti-transgender law in Hungary	2	Abroad / Law
82. Bicultural LGBTQIA+	2	Community
83. Blood donation	2	Strivings
84. Change of behaviour out of fear	2	Psychological violence / Social problems
85. Christmas concert	2	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations / Religion
86. Climate policy	2	Politics
87. COC support for LGBTQIA+ organisations abroad	2	Abroad / COC
88. Dating	2	Dating / Sex
89. Decriminalisation of homosexuality	2	Law / Rights
90. Depression	2	Medical/Health / Social problems
91. Drag queens	2	Community
92. Dutch initiative for LGBTQIA+ marriage	2	Marriage
93. Equal rights	2	Rights
94. Forced marriage	2	Marriage / Psychological violence
95. Freedom	2	Strivings
96. Gender registration	2	Gender/Sex / Rights

97. Guarantee for future LGBTQIA+ rights	2	Law / Rights
98. Homo monument	2	Organisations
99. ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index	2	Organisations / Rainbow
100. Intersex	2	Intersex
101. Intolerance	2	Psychological violence
102. Knowledge about intersex	2	Intersex
103. Leger des Heils	2	Organisations
104. Lesbian Visibility Day	2	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
105. LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers	2	Refugees / Migrants
106. LGBTQIA+ rights in Uganda	2	Abroad / Rights
107. Love	2	Dating / Sex
108. New transgender law	2	Law / Rights
109. Openness by LGBTQIA+	2	Coming out / Community / Strivings
110. Plasma donation	2	Social problems / Strivings
111. Prejudices	2	Psychological violence
112. Purple Friday	2	Education / Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
113. Rejection	2	Psychological violence / Social problems
114. Respect2Love	2	Organisations
115. Safe sex	2	Dating / Sex
116. Sex	2	Dating / Sex
117. Sex diversity	2	Gender / Sex
118. Stigmatisation	2	Psychological violence / Social problems
119. Suicidal tendencies	2	Psychological violence
120. Taboo	2	Social problems
121. The fight for equal rights	2	Rights
122. Together we are strong	2	Community
123. Transgender Day of Visibility	2	Gender/Sex / Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
124. Vulnerable LGBTQIA+	2	Community
125. Worries about safety	2	Social problems
126. #TotHier	1	Campaigns
127. #YallahHollandaya	1	Campaigns
128. A ban on conversion therapy for minors in Germany	1	Abroad / Law
129. Abuse	1	Physical violence / Psychological violence /
130. Acceptation of transgender people	1	Strivings
131. Addiction	1	Social problems
132. Adoption leave	1	Rights
133. Aids Memorial Day	1	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
134. American Declaration of Human Rights	1	Organisations
135. Anti LGBTQIA+ laws in Ghana	1	Abroad / Law
136. Anti LGBTQIA+ politics in Ghana	1	Abroad / Politics
137. Anti LGBTQIA+ sentiments in the Catholic church in Ghana	1	Abroad / Religion
138. Anti-racism demonstration	1	Activism
139. Anti-violence demonstration	1	Activism
140. Anticonception	1	Rights
141. Anxiety	1	Social problems
142. Asylum seekers	1	Refugees/Migrants
143. Autism	1	Medical/Health
144. Awareness	1	Strivings
145. Back in the closet	1	Coming out
146. Being together	1	Community / Strivings
147. Bicultural LGBTQIA+ community	1	Community
148. Birth leave	1	Rights
149. Buddy project for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers	1	Refugees/Migrants
150. Burgemeester Dales-prijs	1	Organisations
151. Call-to-action to criminalise discrimination of intersex people	1	Activism / Law

152. Call-to-action to politicians to speak out about LGBTQIA+ rights	1	Activism / Politics
153. Call-to-action to witnesses of violence	1	Activism / Strivings
154. Call-to-action to write a letter to the municipality of Krimpen aan den IJssel	1	Activism / Politics
155. Cancellation of an event	1	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
156. Care leave	1	Rights
157. Catholic church	1	Religion
158. Catholic LGBTQIA+	1	Community / Religion
159. CDA Pride	1	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations / Politics
160. Chemsex	1	Sex
161. Christian conversion therapy organisations	1	Psychological violence / Religion
162. Christian LGBTQIA+	1	Community / Religion
163. Church	1	Religion
164. Climate change	1	Social problems
165. COC staff change	1	COC
166. COC's advocacy with international organisations	1	Abroad / COC
167. COC's Shakespeare Club	1	COC / Organisations
168. COC's successes in accomplishing LGBTQIA+ rights abroad	1	Abroad / COC
169. COC's successes in law making	1	COC / Law / Politics
170. Commercial campaign	1	Campaigns
171. Community spirit	1	Community
172. Conservatism	1	Religion
173. Conversation with LGTBQ+ victims of violence	1	Physical Violence
174. Conversations with LGBTQIA+ activists from Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe	1	Abroad / Activism
175. Cooperation	1	Community
176. Countries where conversation therapy is	1	Abroad
177. COVID-19 in Africa	1	Abroad / COVID-19
178. Criminalisation of discrimination towards transgender and bisexual people	1	Rights
179. Crossdressing punishable	1	Abroad
180. Dating app for LGBTQIA+ youth	1	Community / Dating/Sex
181. Dating apps for homosexual in Morocco	1	Abroad / Dating/Sex
182. David Kato	1	Abroad / Activism
183. Death penalty	1	Abroad / Physical violence
184. Death threats	1	Psychological violence
185. Demonstration in Krimpen aan den IJssel	1	Activism
186. Development aid	1	Abroad
187. Development to the fullest	1	Abroad / Coming out
188. Discrimination in the ballroom scene	1	Psychological violence
189. Discrimination in the public sphere	1	Psychological violence
190. Disgust	1	Psychological violence
191. Double life	1	Psychological violence
192. Double loyalty	1	Psychological violence
193. Drugs and sex	1	Dating/Sex
194. Eating disorders	1	Medical/Health
195. Effects of COVID-19 for LGBTQIA+	1	Abroad / COVID-19
196. Emancipation of transgender people	1	Strivings
197. Emancipation paradox	1	Social problems
198. Emergency leave	1	Rights
199. Everyone has a place in society	1	Community
200. Expectation management for victims	1	Social problems
201. Exploitation	1	Psychological violence
202. Exploring LGBTQIA+ identity	1	Community



203. Expressing LGBTQIA+ identity	1	Community
204. Extra funds to the safety of LGBTQIA+	1	Politics / Rights
205. Family diversity	1	Strivings
206. Feminism	1	Activism
207. Financial compensation for victims of former transgender law	1	Politics / Rights
208. Financial situation	1	Social problems
209. Flirting	1	Dating/Sex
210. Food security	1	Strivings
211. Forced sex registration	1	Gender/Sex / Psychological violence
212. Forced sterilisation	1	Gender/Sex / Medical/Health / Physical violence
213. Free HIV tests for gay and bisexual men and transgender people	1	Medical/Health / Rights
214. Freedom of religion	1	Religion / Strivings
215. Funding of insemination	1	Rights
216. Gender	1	Community / Gender/Sex
217. Gender & Sexuality Alliance Network	1	Gender/Sex / Organisations
218. Gender diversity in Africa and Asia	1	Abroad / Gender/Sex
219. Gender equality	1	Gender/Sex / Strivings
220. Gender-diverse toilets	1	Gender/Sex / Rights
221. Gender-diverse work environment	1	Gender/Sex / Rights
222. Gender-neutral pronouns	1	Gender/Sex / Rights
223. Gender-neutral toilet	1	Gender/Sex / Rights
224. Genderpraatjes	1	Gender/Sex
225. Government apologies for former transgender law	1	Gender/Sex / Law / Politics / Rights
226. GSA Education norms	1	Education
227. Hân Honours	1	Organisations
228. Happy New Year wish	1	COC
229. Hate	1	Psychological violence
230. Hate crimes	1	Physical violence
231. Hate speech by a pastor	1	Religion
232. Hate speech prevention	1	Rights
233. Health problems	1	Medical/Health
234. Help desk	1	Organisations
235. Higher salaries for health personnel	1	Medical/Health / Rights
236. History of COC	1	COC
237. Homosexual acts in Botswana no longer punishable with support of COC	1	Rights
238. Homosexuality as a sickness	1	Medical/Health / Psychological violence
239. Hope	1	Strivings
240. Housing	1	Social problems
241. Human dignity	1	Strivings
242. Human rights for LGBTQIA+ people around the world	1	Human rights
243. Human Rights Watch	1	Human Rights
244. Humiliation	1	Psychological violence
245. ID sex registration that does not match with gender identity	1	Gender/Sex / Psychological violence
246. Increasing acceptance	1	Rights / Strivings
247. Increasing discrimination in schools	1	Education / Psychological violence
248. IND	1	Organisations / Refugees/Migrants
249. Indifference	1	Psychological violence
250. Influence of COVID-19 measures on LGBTQIA+	1	COVID-19
251. International Women's Day	1	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
252. Intersex emancipation	1	Intersex / Strivings
253. Intersex needs	1	Intersex

254. Intersex needs	1	Intersex
255. Intimacy	1	Dating/Sex
256. Jong & Out	1	Coming out / Community / Organisations
257. Joy	1	Strivings
258. Juridical help	1	Law
259. Kings Day	1	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
260. L'HOMO	1	Organisations
261. Labels	1	Gender/Sex
262. Lack of education in Africa	1	Abroad / Education
263. Lack of LGBTQIA+ Marriage in parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	1	Abroad / Marriage
264. Lack of medical care in Africa	1	Abroad / Medical/Health
265. Law suit	1	Law
266. Laws for registered partnership	1	Law / Rights
267. LGBTQIA+ problems in Indonesia	1	Abroad
268. Learning delay	1	Education
269. Lesbian Archive Nijmegen	1	Organisations
270. Lesbian Festival Nijmegen	1	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
271. LGBTQIA+ acceptance in the church	1	Religion / Strivings
272. LGBTQIA+ education in secondary schools	1	Education
273. LGBTQIA+ in danger in Morocco	1	Abroad
274. LGBTQIA+ laws in Africa and Asia	1	Law / Rights
275. LGBTQIA+ marriage in Costa Rica	1	Abroad / Marriage
276. LGBTQIA+ phobia	1	Psychological violence
277. LGBTQIA+ prosecution in World War II	1	Physical violence
278. LGBTQIA+ rights in Costa Rica	1	Abroad / Rights
279. LGBTQIA+ rights in Europe	1	Abroad / Rights
280. LGBTQIA+ rights in Ghana	1	Abroad / Rights
281. LGBTQIA+ rights in Indonesia	1	Abroad / Rights
282. LGBTQIA+ rights in South-Africa	1	Abroad / Rights
283. LGBTQIA+ suffering in the Church	1	Religion
284. LGBTQIA+ voting behaviour	1	Politics
285. Liberation Day	1	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
286. Limitation of freedom of movement	1	Psychological violence
287. Local agency	1	Abroad
288. Loneliness	1	Psychological violence
289. Lose sense of safety	1	Psychological violence
290. Love between parent and child	1	Rights
291. Love is love	1	Campaigns / Community / Rainbow
292. Marginalised groups within LGBTQIA+ communities	1	Community
293. Marie Ricardo	1	COC
294. Marriage officials cannot refuse to marry same-sex couples in South-Africa	1	Abroad / Marriage
295. Medicalisation of intersex people	1	Intersex / Medical/Health
296. Meer dan gewenst	1	Organisations / Rights
297. Meeting possibilities for bicultural LGBTQIA+	1	Community
298. Meeting possibilities for LGBTQIA+ youth	1	Community
299. Men who have sex with men	1	Dating/Sex
300. Mental health	1	Medical/Health
301. Migrant groups	1	Refugees/Migrants
302. Misuse of COVID-19 measures to limit LGBTQIA+ rights	1	COVID-19 / Rights
303. Murder	1	Physical violence
304. Murders on transgender and gender diverse people	1	Physical violence
305. Nationale Transgender Gedenkdag	1	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations

306. Negative image	1	Psychological violence
307. Neglecting asexuality	1	Psychological violence
308. Negligence	1	Psychological violence
309. No extra police measures to safeguard LGBTQIA+ and other marginalised groups	1	Social problems
310. No sex during COVID-19	1	COVID-19 / Dating/Sex
311. Non-binary people	1	Gender/Sex
312. Normalisation of discrimination	1	Psychological violence
313. Normalisation of process for 'different partnerships'	1	Strivings
314. Online abuse	1	Psychological violence
315. Online discrimination	1	Psychological violence
316. Online violence	1	Psychological violence
317. Oranje Fonds	1	Organisations
318. OUTtv	1	Coming out / Organisations
319. Parental leave	1	Rights
320. Partner leave	1	Rights
321. People who think the government has no business in knowing their sex or gender	1	Gender/Sex
322. Plans to cancel sex registration on ID's	1	Gender/Sex / Rights
323. Police actions	1	Abroad
324. Pope Franciscus	1	Religion
325. Pope Johannes Paulus II	1	Religion
326. Poverty	1	Social problems
327. Poverty in Africa	1	Abroad
328. Power of Pride	1	Organisations
329. PrEP	1	Dating/Sex / Medical/Health
330. Problems among LGBTQIA+ youth	1	Community / Social problems
331. Problems on the labour market	1	Social problems
332. Problems with health care	1	Medical/Health / Social problems
333. Progress for LGBTQIA+ in Europe	1	Abroad / Rights
334. Psychological damage	1	Medical/Health / Psychological Violence
335. Psychological help	1	Medical/Health / Psychological Violence
336. Psychological problems	1	Medical/Health / Psychological Violence
337. Race to the top	1	COC
338. Rage	1	Abroad
339. Rainbow cards to LGBTQIA+ seniors	1	Community / Rainbow
340. Rainbow crossing	1	Rainbow
341. Rainbow flag egged	1	Rainbow
342. Rainbow province	1	Rainbow
343. Religion	1	Religion
344. Reorganisation COC	1	COC
345. Resilience	1	Strivings
346. Safe crisis care	1	Rights
347. Safety	1	Strivings
348. Secondary education	1	Education
349. Self-acceptation	1	Strivings
350. Self-care	1	Strivings
351. Senior Pride	1	Community / Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
352. Sex during COVID-19	1	COVID-19 / Dating/Sex
353. Sex work	1	Dating/Sex
354. Sexual diversity in Africa and Asia	1	Gender/Sex
355. Sexual problems	1	Dating/Sex
356. Sexual violence	1	Physical violence
357. Shame	1	Psychological violence
358. Similarities between COVID-19 and HIV	1	COVID-19 / Medical/Health
359. Social norms in Africa and Asia	1	Abroad
360. Social views on intersex	1	Intersex

361. Solidarity with development countries	1	Abroad
362. Solidarity with victims of racism	1	Strivings
363. Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP)	1	Organisations / Politics / Religion
364. Structural discrimination	1	Psychological violence / Social problems
365. Student Pride NL	1	Organisations
366. Substance abuse	1	Social problems
367. Support for Indonesian LGBTQIA+	1	Abroad
368. Support for LGBTQIA+ in Ghana	1	Abroad
369. Survival	1	Strivings
370. Sustainable Development Goals	1	Organisations
371. Taboo on intersex	1	Intersex
372. Teen pregnancies	1	Social problems
373. Terms of employment for LGBTQIA+ families	1	Rights
374. The Bible	1	Religion
375. The influence of LGBTQIA+ themes on the LGBT+ votes	1	Politics
376. The municipality has an exemplary role	1	Politics
377. The murder of George Floyd	1	Physical violence
378. The position of LGBTQIA+ people in Africa and Asia	1	Abroad
379. The position of transgender people on the labour market	1	Gender/Sex / Social problems
380. The right to be who you are	1	Coming out / Community / Rainbow / Rights
381. The search for yourself	1	Coming out / Community
382. Transgender care	1	Gender/Sex / Medical/Health
383. Transgender collective	1	Community / Gender/Sex
384. Transgender community	1	Community / Gender/Sex
385. Transgender Infopunt NL	1	Organisations
386. Transgender students	1	Community / Gender/Sex
387. Transgender women can go to women's toilet	1	Gender/Sex / Rights
388. Transition	1	Gender/Sex
389. Transnational solidarity with queers in Central Asia	1	Abroad
390. Transphobia	1	Social problems
391. Turkish LGBTQIA+ rights	1	Abroad / Rights
392. Unvoluntary coming outs	1	Coming out / Psychological violence
393. Victims of hate crimes	1	Physical violence
394. Visit of King Willem Alexander to the COC	1	COC
395. Voedselbank	1	Organisation
396. Vulnerability	1	Psychological violence / Social problems
397. Walking hand-in-hand	1	Strivings
398. Women's March	1	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
399. World War II Commemoration	1	Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
400. Violence against a trans person	1	Physical violence

## Phase 2: Axial Coding

Below, the 26 code groups that have been constructed on the basis of the 400 codes that are listed in the table above, are shown. In that table, it is already shown which code groups are attached to which codes. It is important to note that if a code group has many codes attached to it, or has a large total occurrence (the sum of the occurrences of the codes underlying the code groups), it does not necessarily mean that this code group is of great importance for this

research project. Instead, the importance of the code groups depends on their relevance regarding the research questions. For that reason, the code groups are alphabetically ordered to stress the qualitative character of this research. Therefore, I have identified core code groups, that are written in bold letters and highlighted in yellow. In the codes, articles, paragraphs, sentences and words underlying these code groups, the construction of queer figurations is predominantly taking place.

Code Groups
<b>1. Abroad</b>
2. Activism
3. Campaigns
4. COC
<b>5. Coming out</b>
<b>6. Community</b>
7. COVID-19
8. Dating/Sex
9. Education
10. Gender/Sex
11. Holidays/Festivities/Commemorations
<b>12. Human Rights</b>
13. Intersex
14. Law
<b>15. Marriage</b>
16. Medical/Health
17. Organisations
<b>18. Physical violence</b>
19. Politics
<b>20. Psychological violence</b>
<b>21. Rainbow</b>
22. Refugees/Migrants
23. Religion
<b>24. Rights</b>
25. Social problems
26. Strivings

### Phase 3: Selective Coding

In the third phase of the coding process, the code groups and underlying codes and articles have been thoroughly reviewed to uncover overarching themes or discursive trends, that are called the core categories. Some code groups reflect a quite unitary body of news items, such as the code group ‘COC’, which consists of articles that are about the organisation of COC. Examples of items that fall in this category are an article in which is announced who is going to be the new president of COC. Although the rhetoric and word-use within these articles is definitely part of COC’s discourse and narrative, and is therefore also considered in the

overall research, the code groups in themselves are less important with regard to the construction of queer figurations. Other categories are quite broad, such as ‘Campaigns’ and ‘Politics’. Within this code group, articles are grouped with diverging topics or subjects. For this reason, it is impossible to construct a scheme in which is presented which core categories flow from which code groups. After a qualitative review and discourse analysis, the core categories that have emerged from all articles, codes and code groups are 1) Rights, 2) Violence, 3) Foreign affairs and 4) Community.

#### Phase 4: From Codes to Figurations

In this thesis, it was asked which queer figurations are constructed by COC and to what extent the Dutch state organises queer citizenship along the lines of these figurations. Although there were four core categories – Rights, Violence, Foreign Affairs and Community, three queer figurations have been identified. The reason for this is that the category ‘Foreign Affairs’ can be seen as a counterpart of the category ‘Rights’. The foreign affairs that are discussed in COC’s news items namely generally reflect foreign developments regarding rights.

In the figure below, I have listed the core code groups (highlighted in the table in the previous section) to show their relationships with the selectively chosen core categories. The uninterrupted lines show the most strong ties between the code group and the core category. The dotted lines show supporting relationships and indicate that there are definitelively ties between the code group and the core category, but that they are not as important as the other relationships in the construction of the figurations. The figurations logically flow out of the core categories and are presented in the right column.

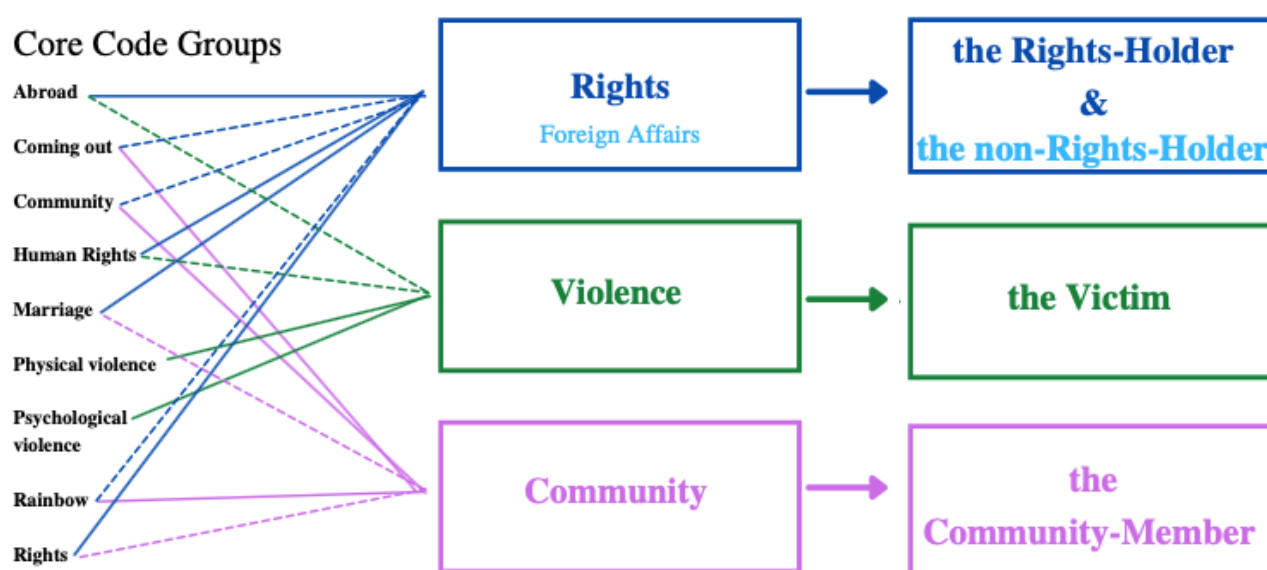


Figure 1: A visual representation of core code groups and figurations.