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Self-Perceived Deviancy

*Children's Negotiation of Body and Sexuality in
Contemporary Counselling*



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Abstract

In this thesis I investigate children's negotiation of deviancy and normality in relations to body and sexuality through analysing children's magazine Kamratposten (KP, Pal Paper). Also, how children's letters to the editor are being responded to by the magazine's engaged counsellors of the section Kropp & Knopp (Body & Bud). By using sacred and profane, anomalies and gender theory, I investigate how children are perceiving their body and sexuality in the light of deviance or normality. The concepts of stigma and shame are used for understanding children's rejection of physical changes and how media consumption is a major contribution to that feeling. Through thematic analysis I examine anonymous letters from children where they feel safe to write about the most intimate questions and concerns to KP's counsellors. This thesis contributes to an understanding of children's feelings about physical changes, appearances, gender identity and how media that are dominant forces in children's lives can contribute to different risks and health problems. It also highlights the importance of social changes that are needed for children to feel safe and secure about talking to their parents about their body, sexuality, and gender identity.

Keywords: Kamratposten; Children's sexual development; Body; Sexuality in media; Gender; Deviance; Cultural Criminology

Popular Science Summary

In this thesis I will investigate the most intimate questions about children's thoughts on sexuality and body. Since children between the ages of 8 to 14 are not maturing simultaneously, but rather developing physical changes earlier or later than others, there are many concerns and questions that children feel embarrassed to talk about. Are children embracing the bodily changes? If not, is the media contributing to children's rejection of physical changes? By gaining an insight and increased understanding, not only of children's view on body and sexuality, but their view on gender and sexual diversities, I examine anonymous letters from children in a children's magazine Kamratposten (KP, Pal Paper). I will also analyse the counsellors' answers of how they are guiding children away from risks and negative feelings about themselves. What becomes clear when examining the letters is that children have in recent years more concerns about appearances. A lot of the negative feelings derive from the comparison of celebrities that they view on social media such as Instagram. It also becomes clear that children's sexual desires are perceived by them as deviant behaviours and that questions regarding body, sex and gender are avoided talking about to parents.

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1. Introduction

According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2021) one of the reasons why girls and women often are victims of violence is that they are repeatedly objectified, and their bodies hypersexualized. The media contributes also to harmful gender stereotypes that often trivialize violence against women (UNICEF, 2021). The gender stereotypes are not only harmful for girls, but for boys as well. A reason for that is because boys see how their bodies are portrayed in relation to girls and internalize the notion that success and attractiveness are tied to dominance, power, and aggression (ibid). It is common that children become more curious about sex as their own bodies are sexually maturing in early teens (Brown & Engle,2009:129). During this time adults have an important role in guiding children to develop a healthy life towards adulthood (Durham,2009:8). When adults do not reach the obligations to do so, there are risks that children who are exposed to sexual assault, develop a fear of talking about it. Also, the risks of believing that their bodies or sexual desires are deviant and causes them to be ashamed of something they should not be ashamed of.

Unfortunately, it is not common that children turn to their parents, teachers, or other adults to talk about sex. Instead, they turn to the media which is representing body as risks rather than pleasure. This is due to media's hypersexualised images and easy access to pornography that hampers children from a healthy view of sex. This could be seen as a social problem that is widespread in most societies because sexual objectification is harmful for both girls and boys. Children are separated from the adult world at the same time as trying to learn a big part of it, about sex and sexuality. Loseke (2003:4,6) depicts how social problems are about disagreements and conditions evaluated as wrong for the sake that it creates harm. Loseke states that a social problem can only be stated as one when the conditions are evaluated as widespread and hurt more than a few people (2003:6).

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP,2013:958), media has developed from television to new media which includes cell phones, iPads, and social media, that are dominant forces in children's lives (AAP,2013:958). The media has evidently shown that it can contribute to considerably different risks and health problems that children may be negatively influenced from (ibid). Media is however used by young people to obtain information that they will not get from caring adults such as parents or teachers (Brown &

Engle,2009:130). Hence, since the overwhelming infiltration of media into children's lives, there is now a need for an upgrade of obligation to changing the ways that adults such as parents, teachers, and society address the use of media to lessen potential risks and learn appropriate media use for children (AAP, 2013:958). Sex education in Sweden has since 2011 included topics such as sexuality, relationships, gender, gender equality and norms in many courses for compulsory and upper secondary school (Skolverket,2014:5). Even though Sweden is LBTGQ friendly with laws that aim for protection for anyone's right to be who they want to, children need more support to be able to talk about their own gender identities and sexual orientation with parents. The social norms are built on the notions of gendered expectations that are still affecting children today. Media that is specifically targeting children in purpose of informing and guiding them are beneficial regarding intimate questions of sex and body. The delimitation of this study is the lack of continuation of the asked questions that cannot be proceeded in a questions and answer section of a magazine.

1.1 The Research Aim

In this study, I will focus mainly on body and sexuality in aspects of the body's development from child to teenager, and body as in sexuality and gender. To get information directly from children about their perspective and concerns about body and sexuality, I will analyse Kamratposten (KP, meaning the Pal Paper in English), which is the children's magazine. This will be analysed before and after the development of the four mostly used social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, snapchat and YouTube) and the implementation of the Consent Act. The Consent Act that is a law against non-consensual sex, can be useful in comparing counsellors given answers about sexual harassment. The chosen years of analysing KP's numbers is 2007-2008 and recent numbers from 2020-2021, to see if there are differences in children's negotiation of body and how adults in modern counselling, help children to guide towards a healthy view of body and sexuality. Therefore, the thesis departs from following research questions:

How do children negotiate deviance and normality in relation to sexuality and their body in popular counselling?

How are children's' questions of risks and deviance in relation to sex and bodies understood and explained by counsellors?

1.2 Outline

This thesis is divided in five chapters starting with the introduction where I explain the issues of sexual objectification as a social problem and narrowing down to the research problem concerning children's view of body and sex. Chapter two, I show a variety of relevant research for a better understanding of the research problem. By firstly, introduce the connection between sexual objectification with shame, which has a significant role in the material being analysed. Then by presenting sexualisation on media and how risks of early sexuality outweigh the benefits, is to gain an understanding in the analysis of how the media affects children's views of body and sexuality. I will also in this chapter present literature that is aiming the work for guidance and counselling.

In chapter three I will present the theoretical framework for this study by starting with the concept of sacred and the profane linked with anomalies. The last part is the presentation of theorising gender. Followingly, in chapter four I will present my methodological choices of thematic content analysis. Here, I will discuss how I collected my material, the coding procedure, selection and delimitation and ethical consideration. In chapter five I demonstrate my findings in three subchapters. These subchapters are in relation with the themes to answer the first research questions about children's negotiations of; deviant bodies, deviant activities, and deviant feelings. Along with the contrary themes for answering the second research question about counsellor's negotiation of; normalising deviant bodies, normalising deviant activities, and normalising deviant feelings. Lastly, chapter five is the conclusion where I summarise the most important findings.

2. Relevant Research

In this first section there will be some relevant literatures that talk about sexual objectification, shame, stigma and sexualisation in media. The second part briefly touches upon the literature about counselling, media, and gender. Some of the literature about shame and sexual objectification touches on the psychological aspects as well as the sociological. Karin Schofield (2004) states that in cultural criminology it is important to be empirical sensitive and let our topic decide which methods and theories to use. The chosen literatures are reviewed because of the connections that will be drawn in the analysis between sexual objectification, shame, the sanctity and profanity, anomalies, media, gender, and the counsellor's part of discussions with children about body and sexuality.

2.1 Connection between sexual objectification and shame

The label sexual objectification or sexualization derive from the mainstream media which contain a high level of sexual content that features a characterization of women that focuses mainly on sexual appearance, physical beauty, and sexual appeal to others (Ward, 2016:560). Sexualization is however, not the same as sex or sexuality, but a form of sexism (Ward, 2016: 562). It is when women are seen as sexual body parts for others' please and a person's use for his own gratification without taking women's own pleasure and desires into consideration (ibid).

One of the individual psychological consequences of objectified treatment is described by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997:181) as the emotion of shame. However, according to Thomas Scheff the treatment of shame in psychoanalytic writings leaves out the social contexts and therefore it is difficult to understand the emotions placed in human behaviour only from psychological aspects (2000:96). Shame is a large collection of emotions including many cognates and variants such as embarrassment, humiliation and related feelings like shyness that involve reactions to rejection of feelings of failure or inadequacy (Scheff,2000:96). Furthermore, Scheff describes the sociological definition of shame as a threat to the bond, that is not just about embarrassment but feelings of rejection or failure and heightened self-consciousness (2000:96). There are two perspectives of shame, one is the sociological and the more common is psychological. Hence, this study focuses on the sociological aspects of shame because as Scheff depicts, "[...] shame is the emotion that

Durkheim should have named as the social emotion” (2000:97). This is due to the extremely sensitiveness humans feel toward deference and even slight discrepancies generate shame or embarrassment (ibid). In this case about body and sexuality, the emotion of shame can be a common feeling amongst children who either do not like the physical changes or approaching adult life and everything that comes with it.

The sociologist Karin Martin (cited in Abrams, 2002:489) explains that the differences between adolescent boys’ and girls’ sense of confidence in their sexuality, is that boys develop identification with and support from their fathers. Whilst for girls, fathers often deny the emerging sexuality of their adolescent daughters who at the same time, have conflicted identifications with their mothers. To understand the troubling confidence gap, Martin explains that in her observations, most boys welcome the physical and emotional change of puberty and sexual desire and first intercourse, whereas girls do not. The social norms teach men to be proud of emerging masculinity, and to make girls alienate from their physical change or even teach them to fear their bodies (cited in Abrams,2002:489).

Other empirical studies have shown that the emotion of shame is experienced more by women than men which helps to be explained by our objectifying culture (H. Lewis, Silberstein et al, Stapley & Haviland, cited in Fredrickson & Roberts 1997: 181). Women’s continuous effort to change the body is motivated by shame to the task of meeting societal standards of beauty to moral obligations. Women who have failed to live up to these obligations have then been seen as uncivilised, immoral but also from Goffman’s theory of Stigma, labels themselves as deviant (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997:181, De Ridder, 564). The mainstream media that children are exposed to could be a contributing factor to what is perceived as normal or deviant.

Bodies are constructed through sociocultural practices and discourses but also within social and cultural contexts. In a study of female sexualization on the social media platform Instagram, social media seems to contribute to women’s self-objectification when viewing sexualized media (Guizzo, Canale & Fasoli, 2021:62). However, Instagram do expose different types of female imagery such as thin ideals, photo edited pictures, fit inspirational, body positivism, which in turn affect women’s body image (Brown & Tiggemann, Cohen et al., kleemans et al., cited in Guizzo et al. 2021: 63). The emerging use of social media and digital media by youth makes them even more vulnerable to the hypersexualised images and unrealistic beauty standards that children are comparing themselves to. Goffman’s term of stigma derives from the notion of a disgraced identity. Plummer (1975) depicted that for a

stigma to occur there must be a 'norm violation' that will further be responded with stigmatising by either society or self-reaction in which the stigmatised persons feel ashamed and labels himself a deviant (De Ridder,2018:564). In a previous study conducted by focus group research, that was looking at sexting in context of early social constructionist work on sexual stigma, among adolescents in Belgium. The participants perceived this phenomenon of sending sexual messages as violating the norm of 'good' online conduct that could lead to a stigmatized response (Plummer cited in De Ridder,2018:567). The person sending (semi)-nudes or sexual texts were then linked to stigma. The sexters "[...] represent a danger to good conduct in the digital media context". In both the academic and public discussions on youth and sexting have become emerging in moral and ethical questions on how to deal with these issues since so many young people are living the intimate and sexual aspects of their lives through digital media (Crofts et al cited in De Ridder, 2018:564)

In this case, it is relevant to look upon the process of shame and stigma when analysing children's negotiations of their body as being deviant or normal. Also, to compare how bodies and sexuality are negotiated in earlier years before the Consent Act and the development of social media. The risks of children being overwhelmingly subject to media or having easy access to porn or other hypersexualised media, can contribute to feelings of shame and stigma due to unrealistic beauty standards. This can further develop into anxiety of being deviant or other health issues such as eating disorders or body dysmorphia.

2.2 Media and Sexualisation

To be able to understand how media is influencing children to their attitudes towards body and sexuality this section will address the risks of early exposure of sexualizing materials, that has increasingly been easier for children to access due to various forms of media. The anthropologist Margaret Mead (cited in Gigi Durham, 2009:40) revealed in the twenties, that cultures where adolescents and childhood sexual activities are accepted and seen as normal and where the community is involved in monitoring "appropriate sexual activity". Thus, Gigi Durham talks about the risks of early sexuality are greater than the benefits and that adolescence is not a time of trauma but a period to prepare for a successful adulthood (2009). Furthermore, apart from the societal and personal consequences of medical and economic problems of widespread STD and teen pregnancies, Durham explains that sex is linked with issues of personal power, emotional involvement, psychological development et cetera that

kids are not equipped to negotiate these following risks alone (2009:40). In this case, children should not be able to negotiate these risks alone. Yet it is tabu for adults to discuss these matters with children and most of children feel uncomfortable to talk about sex to adults as well.

Furthermore, Sexualization of girls appears everywhere in media that is driven by profit and ratings. The combination with the latter and the statement “sex sells” which refers to promotional advertising, could contribute to the constant exist of media’s sexualization of the female body. Durham depicts that media industries encourage consumers as early as possible, with adult content being aimed at young children, from dolls looking like the half-dressed girls in music videos and soft-core men’s magazines (2009:10).

In her book, Durham (2009) depicts in *The Lolita Effect* how children are sexual beings and need safe environments and a lot of room as to grow and learn about sex in ways that benefit them in long term. She also addresses that this is especially important for girls since girls’ sexuality has for so long been repressed, controlled, and punished in ways that Durham explains have curbed and subjugated girls in this crucial domain. Media is often seen as playing a destructive role in children’s view of sexuality. However, media also have a positive affect for youth such as being able to search for information about health topic that are hard to talk about (Mehraj, Bhat, Mehraj, 2014:61). In this aspect of sexuality and body, media can contribute to helping children and youth to get information about something that would otherwise be embarrassing to ask adults about. They could also learn from other people writing on social media what is considered to be right or wrong in sexual relationships.

The main goal of Durham’s book is to create awareness of how the mainstream corporate media construct sex and sexuality in a harmful way that limit and hamper girls’ healthy sexual development (2009:8). Moreover, *The Lolita Effect* is about giving tools to parents, educators, media audiences, and advocates to recognise and respond to the delusional myths about girls’ sexuality that circulates not only in our society, but throughout the world. Durham first addresses that sex and sexuality are normal, natural and one of the best aspects of being alive. However, it is of importance to acknowledge that caring adults have a responsibility to guide children toward healthy and fulfilled adult lives (ibid). The media fails to contribute to healthy sex life due to continuous mishandling and distorting girls’ sexuality (ibid). Children do not need to be rescued from sex. “Rather, they need our respect and attention as they explore what should be a healthy and natural part of their lives as they become adults” (Durham, 2009:10). Hence, this is of importance to analyse children’s own attitudes and view of their body during this stage of having their body in development. Are

the children embracing the bodily changes? If not, could the media contribute to the negative feelings about the body?

Durham explains the definition of Lolita as the inappropriately sexual little girl who is by legal definition not yet an adult and forbidden to do sexual activities (2009:16). The definition of Lolita and what it means, is problematic because it could pardon adults for having sexual relationships with young girls and making the adults victims of them as being “seductive” and luring. Since it is the Lolitas’ who provoke sexual thoughts of adults, as the term Lolita is defined as deliberate sexual provocateurs who turn adults’ thoughts to sex and luring them into wickedness (ibid).

According to Durham, children should be offered a thoughtful, open-minded, progressive, and ethical understandings about sexuality rather than letting the media and culture to produce a gathering of hypersexualised girls whose cultural presence has become a matter of heated public controversy, as called the Lolita Effect (2009:18). Moreover, education scholar and the feminist activist Jean Kilbourne depict how the access “[...] of graphic sexuality and pornography into American culture has had a ‘filtering down’ effect with the marketing of sex to younger and younger audiences”, and how “[...] our kids are growing up in a toxic cultural environment and it’s awfully difficult for parents to stem the tide” (Kilbourne, cited in Egan & Hawks, 2008: 295). Rush and La Nauze describe that the severe consequence of sexualizing children is that it could play a role in the grooming of children for paedophiles since it would send the message, regarding from laws and norms, that children are sexually available (cited in Egan and Hawks, 2008: 295).

2.3 Media Counselling

Looking in this body of literature review helps us to explore the research question of how children’s’ questions of risks and deviance in relation to sex, love, and bodies understood and explained by counsellors. This section will take us through the knowledge of media’s construction and, how counsellor can be able to help adults talk about risks to their youth about sex, and how gender in the matter of intersex persons have been ignored in therapy.

In an article by Ballam and Granello (2011:424), it is estimated that parents and adults should be more engaged in conversations with their children that questions media’s portrayal of sex and sexuality (2011:424). For example, what media is leaving out regarding

information about protection from pregnancy, how there are consequences to sex or sexually transmitted infections and how beauty is not defined by physical appearance (ibid). How to accomplish this discussion between parents and their youth is according to Ballam and Granello through counsellors educating the parents and teenagers on media literacy and about what and how messages are being conveyed to youth about sexuality and relationships (2011:424). This is of importance in ways of teaching youth about the risks of media's content. Additionally, in a study by Elizabeth Thoman (cited in Ballam & Granello,2011:424) she described how five educational constructions that also can be used by counsellors, to increase media literacy for children.

Thoman firstly states that media messages are constructed and that is, by few people that creates a reality for the rest of the people. We do not see what arrangement was rejected but only what was accepted (1999:51). In this case, children need to learn that there are other ways of thinking and viewing things and not just how the media is presenting. Secondly, Thoman (1999) depicts how media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules. Just as Ballam and Granello states, children will with this knowledge understand and be able to identify what they see or hear is not reality, but a manipulation of information (2011:425). The risks of children not learning media literacy, can therefore affect their worldview. In this case, the beauty standards and how sex is portrayed in pornography are examples that can affect children negatively.

The third educational construction is about media's messages being experienced differently among people and therefore, children must be conscious about the experiences and ask many questions for the purpose of deciding whether to accept or reject the message (Thoman,1999:51, Ballam & Granello,2011:425). The two last constructions are about media outlets being dominantly used for profits and do whatever they can to capture attention, and that these media messages are filled with values that are important for the producers of the media (Ballam & Granello,2011:425).

In their study from 2005, Zvi Bekerman and Moshe Tatar analysed personal narratives of school counselling students in order to "[...] understand how they perceive the influence of their own adolescence on their present views regarding adolescence and counselling" (2005: 311). The authors depict how studies have stressed the importance and relevance of personal life experiences for professional behaviours such as the life narratives of teachers in cultural contexts construct teacher's identities and practices (Ritchie & Wilson cited in Bekerman and Tatar,2005:311). For counselling professions, earlier research has shown the importance of

what the impact of life experiences has on the capability to show empathy on the development of attitudes in relation to confidentiality (Bekerman & Tatar,2005:311).

In earlier research from 2008 about counselling and queer theory, Lyndsey Moon depicts how the academic and applied world of counselling and therapy gone silent from the matter about the growing popularity of queer theory in sociology, lesbian, gay and bisexual studies, and the literary and cultural studies (2008:1). The therapy had not yet been ‘queered’ during that period. Yet, queer is an important “[...] approach that combines theoretical innovation with reactionary tendencies, especially in relation to sex, sexuality, and gender, it provides an ideal challenge to the conventions of therapeutic endeavours” (Moon,2008:1).

In her study, Moon aims to send a message to therapists who need to integrate a thoroughly psychosocial perspective into their approach (2008:6). The importance of counsellors and therapists being able to do that, is to help the ‘queer’ client who would be more troubling to therapy as the client presents and represents ‘otherness’, which Moon describes as a sort of sexed, sexualised, and gendered oddity. Shortly, the body that carries no fixed meaning to either sex, gender, or sexuality (Moon,2008:2). It is more common that an intersex person going to a therapist is rather searched for psychological condition of gender identity dysphoria and faced with ignorance (ibid). The counsellors have the possibility to guide children’s view of body and sex that media is leaving out. Media is working in ways of exaggerating and creating risks which the counsellors on the other hand can carry out and normalise for easing children’s concerns. Furthermore, through integration of psychosocial perspective to therapist work, it has helped intersex persons to not be treated as ‘otherness’.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1 The Concept of Sacred and Profane

In his work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim turned to the study of religion to explain the process of social integration (Smith & Riley,2009:10). Durkheim depicted how religions revolved around the distinction between the sacred and the profane (ibid). From the religious idea the sacred item is treated as clean and belongs to God and thought of as immune from violence and interference of all kinds (Bellous,2002:82). In similarity with the profanity that must be set apart from the sacred items, is the anomaly. In her study of *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas defines anomaly as “an element which does

not fit a given set or series” (2002:47). It is something that is out of place in a social order. In this case, the relations between children and sex are treated as anomalies. Children should neither talk about sex nor having sexual relations. Adults talking about sex with children is also seen as anomalies and it is mostly accepted for adults to talk about sex with children, when it is on a subtle aspect such as in school by teachers. Also, as I will demonstrate later in the analysis, when children feel like they are not meeting society’s standards of beauty or following the heterosexual norms and gender roles, children are perceiving themselves as anomalies.

Douglas asserts that anomalies can be treated negatively by either ignoring, not perceive them or condemn (2002:48). In this case, a conversation between adults and children about sex is often felt as discomfoting and parents would probably rather not have the conversation with the assumption that the child gets that information at school. As we later can see in the analysis, children tend to feel embarrassed to talk about their bodies or sexuality with their parents. Thus, how to positively treat anomalies Douglas depicts is through confronting the anomaly and “try to create a new pattern of reality in which it has a place” (Douglas,2002:48). Additionally, since children are separated from the adult world and the sanctity in this case would be the child being innocent and asexualized. If a child is the opposite, such as acting out sexually the child is viewed as an anomaly. Durham (2009: 8) depicts in previous research that even though sex and sexuality are normal and natural, children must be guided, given respect and attention when exploring by caring adults towards a healthy adult life. In this case, the anomaly of having discussion about sex with children, has improved in ways of for example the implementation of obligatory sexual education in Swedish public school since 1955. According to Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket), the long history of sex education in Sweden with the importance of teaching was getting stronger in the first half of the twentieth century (2014:5). And at any time, there was a problem linked to sexuality, people questioned the quality of sex education (skolverket,2014:5).

When sexuality is ambivalent in society it causes sex to be treated as pollution. Douglas (2002) made sacred and profane as a central focus of her work in purity and danger. Regarding Douglas analysis of the rules concerning purity and pollution there are similarities with Durkheim’s religious ideas about separation of hostile domain that implied a system of classification. Douglas depicts how she believes that pollution is used as analogies for expressing a view of social order and how the distinction of the sexes is the primary social distinction (2002:4,141). The social structure plays a major role in sex pollution because if the social structure were not as organised, both men and women would feel the freedom of

following their own fancies in choosing and rejecting sexual partners with no severe consequence from society (ibid,141). Douglas describes how “the sacred must be treated as contagious because relations with it are bound to be expressed by rituals of separation and demarcation and by beliefs in the danger of crossing forbidden boundaries” (Douglas,2002: 27). In this case, adults protect the children from sex pollution and anomalous events. Thus, sacredness involving the feeling of fear would be the everyday rituals adults do in order to not interfere a child’s natural cycle of sexual development. The sacred is set apart from the profane by specific taboos whereas its power is regulated by special rites such as rituals, prayers, and sacrifice (Smith & Riley:2009:10).

Hence, the rituals adults do in everyday life to protect children from sex pollution and the anomaly, involves certain actions such as not letting their child to watch movies with sexual content, or to curse using profanity. The sanctity of children can be understood as the saying that children are innocent and free from guilt or sin. Thus, the innocence and sanctity of a child is fading as a part of the development to become an adult. Because the older the child becomes the more knowledge she gains. From the religious perspective of the profane, the profane item is seen as deficient, unworthy, vulgar, not consecrated for any great purpose and polluted (Bellous,2002:82). Profanity in this case about children’s negotiation of their sexuality and body, is used to describe children’s beliefs about having a deviant body or mind. That their developing body or thoughts of sex is abnormal and felt as being anomalous. As we shall see this is a recurrent aspect in relation to the changing body through puberty. This has an explanation in the previous research where Martin (1996:488) describes how the social norms teach boys to be proud of emerging masculinity whilst it teaches girls to alienate from their physical change or even to fear their own bodies.

However, the definition of sacred is much more than a religious idea. Bellous describes the definition as implying inclusion and exclusion. Additionally, Bellous asserts that sex lost its sacredness because of modern sexuality turned sex into nothing more than science and the material reality with no spiritual significance (2002:82). However, in a sacred universe, sex could possibly become profane through misuse but there will always be a remedy provided through rituals that cleanse (ibid). As I will return to in the analysis, children who are either early or late in puberty feel abnormal and stressed about the body. The feeling of exclusion is there but if children were developing and reaching puberty at the same time maybe such concerns would not exist.

Douglas describes that pollution has much to do with morals, and that pollution rules only highlight a small aspect of morally disapproved behaviour (Douglas,2002:160). She also

emphasizes that “sex is likely to be pollution-free in a society where sexual roles are enforced directly. In such a case anyone who threatened to deviate would be promptly punished with physical force” (2002:174). Since children are sacred as immune from violence and interference such as sexual violence or sexual activities with adults, the adult would be directly punished. The sacred and profane are relevant in analysing children’s anonymous messages to public counselling in media, who have professions such as counsellors to answer children’s concerns and questions.

Children may express the difficulty understanding where their boundaries are in relations to sexual approaches by either other children or adults. However, children try to learn about sex and the developing body at the same time as being separated from the adulthood. Children do not easily talk to adults about it that is why they turn to other media which Durham (2009:8) depicts is failing in contributing to a healthy sex life especially to young girls. Therefore, it is important that the answers children receive from the counsellors are non-profane and correct in relation to the legal aspects and what is morally wrong. Sacred and profane in addition with the anomaly, are concepts that would be supportive in understanding children’s concerns and the given answers.

3.2 Social theory and Theorising gender

Connell’s social theory of gender is necessary for current sexual politics, that can be reached from a network of arguments generated by feminism, gay liberation, psychoanalysis, and branches of academic in sociology and psychology (Connell,1985; 261). Connell describes sexuality, child development, the family, sex role conventions and kinship as parts of a whole, the social structure. The whole is not biological but a structure of power, inequality, and oppression. The social theory of gender is not easily defined since there are many speculative abstractions that appear to define it (ibid). In her study, Barbara Risman describes how social science has improved from understanding gender basically as feminine and masculine personality characteristics to analysing how gender is something that we perform in our daily lives. Hence, since this study is about children’s sexuality and body, all genders need to take into consideration. Is there a time difference in terms of gender identities? Furthermore, children not following the gender norms as Douglas (2002) asserts, are treated as anomalies because they are a matter out of place in a social order.

Moreover, the development of analysing how gendered stereotypes have consequences in the distribution of opportunities and rewards, and how gender is embedded in the cultural logic of our organizations and worldviews (2018:19). Risman uses Burt's structural theory of action to explain how "actors compare themselves and their options to those in structurally similar positions [...] and are seeking to maximize their self-perceived well-being under social-structural constraints" (Risman,2004:431). The social theory of gender could be seen as a network of insights of arguments about connections such as the structure of the family to the production of femininity. Connell also depicts that the network has the following issues from the subordination of women, the politics of sexual object-choice, the role of the body in social relations, especially the politics of childbirth, and the nature and strategies of sexual liberation movements. The terms patriarchy or sexual politics could be used on the network to point out a sizeable part of it (Connell, 1985:261).

Risman's term of Gender structure theory argues "[...] that factors contributing to gender inequality include those at the individual, interactional and macro level of human society "(2018:19). The theory gives an understanding of gender as a social structure requires a focus on dynamism in the system such as a change at any given level of analysis that may resonate to others (ibid). Moreover, to make a change on an institutional level must result from actions made by individuals or groups. Risman (2004:435) describes that such change is difficult because institutions exist across time and space. However, when change does occur, a cycle of change has begun, and they are reverberating at the level of cultural expectations and sometimes on identities (ibid). People do sometimes reject the structure, and this is also how they change it (ibid). In this sense, as I will return to in the analysis, some children try to change the gender binarism by being confident within themselves about not following the gender binaries.

In social science gender has developed from only being feminine and masculine personality characteristics to analysing gender as something we perform in our daily lives. Also, how these typical gender stereotypes have consequences in the distribution of opportunities and rewards and how gender is embedded in cultural logic of worldviews (ibid). When people do not follow these gender stereotypes they are treated as anomalies and as Douglas states, they can be treated by ignorance or misconceive (1968:49). One example of that would be as Moon (2008:2) describes in the literature review, how common it has been that an intersex person would rather be searched for psychological condition of their gender identity dysphoria at therapy and faced with ignorance. However, from the positive aspect of treating the perceived anomalous gender, is the Douglas description of trying to create a new

pattern of reality in which the non-binaries have a place (1968:48). In this sense, Sweden has been able to create this new pattern of reality by having the most progressive LGBT rights in the entire world, also by the implementation of the gender-neutral pronouns ‘*hen*’ (they) in 2015.

Furthermore, Risman highlights Lopata and Thorne’s published an article from 1978 about their arguments towards other researchers who ignore the problematic use of the word “role” as in “sex and gender role” (2018:22). The author explains how the rhetoric of “role” implies symbiotic relationships that ignores questions of privilege and power (ibid). She questions the term by using a metaphor of a language about “race role” as to for example explain the inequality between whites and Blacks in American society. In addition, there is no universal “gender role” and definitely not that applies to women and men of different race, ethnicities and classes, but gendered expectations exist in every social role (Risman, 2018:23). West and Zimmerman (1987) argued that gender is something we do and not who we are. The authors also depict how women and men “doing” gender are members of society being hostage to its production (1987:126).

Laurel Westbrook and Kristen Schilt use “determining gender” as an umbrella term for diverse practices of placing a person in gender categories and explore these consequences of gender determination. The exploration that surpasses the questions of how gender is socially attributed, to an analysis of how gender attribution challenges or maintain the sex, gender, and sexuality system (2014:34). The authors “[...] argue that the collisions of biology-based and identity-based ideologies in the liberal moment have produced a sex/gender/sexuality system where the criteria for determining gender vary across social spaces “(Westbrook and Schilt, 2014:49). Theorising gender is important to implement for this thesis both from a social construction aspect, gender performance and determining gender. The given theories will offer an understanding to the presented questions in public counselling in media due to the many body complexes and question of the developing body from boys, girls, and non-binaries. The authors for determining gender suggest (2014:50) that sex/gender/sexuality system is slowly changing, plays a leading role for this thesis about analysing children’s ideas of their bodies and if there are differences in commentators answers to them from 2007 until now. One example would be that there are more questions about gender identity now than what it was in 2007.

Determining gender is the response to doing gender such as presenting information about the gender that occurs when people do gender in interactions. The information is then interpreted by others who place them in gender categories and determine their gender

(Westbrook and Schilt, 2014:33). “Cultural beliefs about the sanctity of gender binarism naturalize a sex/gender/sexuality system in which heterosexuality is positioned as the only natural and desirable sexual form” (Westbrook and Schilt,2014:37). As I will point out in the analysis, a child who is by birth a boy but prefers to wear dresses and long hair, is feeling upset about other people questioning if the child is a girl or a boy. The others interpret the child’s look and place the child to a gender category, but they become confused when the child wears swim-trunks. The cultural belief about gender binarism affects children’s doing gender when it does not correspond to gender binarism.

4. Method

4.1 Content Analysis

This research aims to explore how children are negotiating about their body in relations to sex in public counselling. As relevant literature about the connection between sexual objectification and shame, the label sexual objectification or sexualisation derive from the mainstream media with a high content of characterisation women sexual appearances and sexual appeal to others (Ward,2016:560). The new media of cell phones, iPads, and social media, that are dominant forces in children’s lives and therefore, they are highly exposed to sexualised media. Based on my purpose and research questions, I will explore how children are thinking and asking questions about body in relation to sex and the physical changes that every child must endure at a certain period in life. Due to the complexities of both reaching out and talk about these matters to children myself, and children not being tempted to talk to adults about sex, I wanted children to be on a safe ground where they feel comfortable to talk about difficult stuff in relation to sex, with adults.

To achieve this, I decided to analyse Kamratposten (KP, meaning the Pal Paper in English) which is the children’s magazine and was founded in 1892 by Stina Quint. The magazine targets children between 8 to 14 years old and talks about everything from friendship and love to sports, entertainment, news, animals, ideas and advice, fun stories, and crafts (KP, 2022). However, I am not intended to analyse the magazine entirely, but the section called Kropp & Knopp (Body and bud). In this section which most often only reaches up to two pages per magazine, there are the most intimate questions written from anonymous children and adolescents all around Sweden. The questions are answered by two counsellors,

a woman, and a man. Most of the time the female counsellor answers on girls' questions about intimate parts of the body, and the opposite for the male counsellor.

The method that is chosen to analyse KP is convenient as it involves analysing documents and texts that are either printed, handwritten, or in electronic form based on categories that have been designed in advance (Bryman:2011:281). Moreover, the most common studies at least in social science, are studies of the text's meaning aspect, what the text is saying (Boréus & Bergström:2018:51). In content analysis it is possible to investigate how the interpersonal aspect reads. How do different texts articulate to the receivers? Is it questioning, appealing, or commanding? This method is suitable for finding patterns in larger materials (Boréus & Bergström: 2018:51). This thesis aims to find patterns of how children negotiate bodies and sexuality, not only how they are asking, but how they are being responded to.

4.2 Thematic analysis

In qualitative research, the analysis calculates the meaning which would then take the symbolic form of a category, theme, concept, or assertion (Saldaña:2016:10). The material for this study has been analysed in different steps through thematic analysis. Firstly, by reading through each issue and finding bigger patterns of questions that would make sense to me. I started categorising the materials in different colours by writing down the citations on a new document in docs, for easier access to come back to them to highlight, copy, paste and compare them with each other. When I put similar citations in the same colours, I could also see how many of each matter they were and if the children's concerns of a particular matter were increasing or decreasing during the years that were analysed. What the professor Johnny Saldaña is initiating is that in vivo coding is relevant in research of youth because the voices of the children are often marginalised and by coding their actual words enhances and deepens my understanding of the children's culture and worldview (2016:106). The first categories I created for making a better sense for myself, were concerning questions about female body, male body, orgasm and sex, appearance of the body, sexual abuse, and questions of love.

Further on, I started to analyse the material during the second cycle coding to develop a sense of thematic, conceptual, and theoretical organisation from my first array of first cycle codes (Saldaña,2016:234). Using the theoretical framework, concepts, and relevant literature I found words and phrases from the children, in relation to them all, which also helped me in

the next step of coding the categories to themes. Moreover, I attuned myself to words and phrases that were of importance to highlight (Saldaña,2016:106). For the purpose of answering the first research question about children's negotiation of body and sex, the categories were turned in to the themes of deviant body, deviant activities, and deviant feelings. Contra the themes for the second research question about counsellors: normalising deviant body, normalising deviant activities, and normalising deviant feelings. This is explained by using Mary Douglas concept of sacred and profane and anomalies. Also, by using theory of gender to understand children's perception of body and sexuality.

These are the relevant themes that was mostly found in the section of Body and bud in KP. The category of deviant body is mostly focusing on the physical appearances as weight, beauty, and the change of physical body that were seen as deviant or shameful. The theme of deviant activities is chosen because of the vast feeling of disgust or shame children felt when they describe sexual activities of themselves or of others and when being in situations where they are exposed to pornography. The last theme about deviant feelings was picked because thoughts and feelings about other's bodies not fitting the norm, were expressed as deviant feelings. Likewise, the feeling of others being deviant when looking upon the child as not fitting the norm. The three last themes about normalising the deviance, were chosen due to the major encouraging guidance from the counsellors.

4.3 Selection and delimitation

The material for this thesis is built upon the answer and questions section of Body and Bud in KP. The magazines were retrieved from the archive at Lund's University due to difficulties in finding old numbers. I had four hours to browse through and take photos of the pages with my phone camera. I decided to analyse four years in total, with around fifteen numbers given out each year. However, the total number of KP in 2021 that I retrieved was only seven. I chose the years of 2007 and 2008 because the new media such as Instagram, Facebook, snapchat and YouTube were not as a big part in children's life then. The other years that were chosen, 2020 and 2021 are both after the enforcement of the consent Act and in the peaking times of new media. These two periods could be of importance when comparing how children are negotiating about body and sexuality and how counsellors are responding to children's concerns. The delimitations of this study are the absence of continuation that could have been

done in other methods such as interview. Further, other delimitations were the questions and answers that were not analysed from the years before 2007 and between 2008 and 2020.

For this study, no consent was required from the participants. This is something Pace and Livingston (cited in Bryman, 2011:142) describe when not needing to take ethical considerations from public sources, which they depict are when the information is archived in public and is easily accessible. Moreover, no things such as password is required to access the information, the material is not of a sensitive nature since the children in KP are anonymous. Also, there are no rules formulated in the magazine of KP that it would be forbidden to use the material.

5. Findings

In the process of analysing KP I will include previous research and the theories of sacred and profane and theorising gender. The following chapter is divided into three subchapters describing the identified main themes of: the deviant body, deviant activities of oneself and of others, and deviant feelings, followed by the themes of normalising the deviant body, normalising deviant activities of oneself, counsellors about deviant activities of others, and normalising deviant feelings. I will first start describing each theme, followed by accounting for the key emotions in the messages from children by using the literature review, theory of Gender and the concepts of anomalies and sacred and profane. The last section of each subchapter demonstrates the counsellor's reasoning, understandings, and expressions towards children's perceived deviance.

5.1 The deviant body

In this subchapter I will present the category about body which is overly broad in KP and mostly the letters are concerning questions about genital areas, menstruation, and body hair. These kinds of questions are common for children since they do not know what is considered to be normal or not. What was noteworthy in the children's discussions were the concerns from boys about the notion of small penis. Whilst for girls, the concerns about growing

breasts. I will not go further into the questions such as when the menstruation starts, why the penis looks a certain way etc. The relevant part of the category *body* for this study, is the part about the feelings and emotions that can be explained through normative, political, and cultural notions. Questions from girls regarding rejection of physical changes were many throughout the numbers of magazines that were analysed.

Hi Body and Bud! I am an eleven-year-old girl who hates her breasts! I think they are way too big, and it makes me feel bad. I dare not wear tank tops or t-shirts; I always wear thick college sweaters. All the boys in my class are, like, addicted to breasts and sex, that is really difficult [to deal with]. I am ashamed in the shower after PE, I am ashamed when I am dressed. Every time I put clothes on, I am always thinking 'are my breasts too big in this one?'. I use cotton tops and then it is supposed to feel quite good, but I actually, I probably want to use a bra, but I dare not tell my mom. (KP, 6/2007:21).

Here it is demonstrated how the emotion of shame and the feeling of deviance, can be materialised in children's thoughts during the time of bodily changes. The feeling of embarrassment is experienced by this girl after showering during gymnastics and when putting on clothes because of her awareness that the breast will show. Martin (cited in Abrams,2002:489) argues how social norms teach girls to alienate from their physical change and to even teach them to fear their bodies. Similarly, in the citation above, the girl's described dissatisfaction about having larger breasts and the inner compulsion of hiding them, is making her view herself as abnormal. Goffman's touches upon this in his discussion of disgraced identity that causes stigma. According to Goffman (cited in Plummer, 1975) for stigma to occur there must be a 'norm violation' that will then be stigmatising by either the society or as self-reaction. In this sense, the girl is stigmatising herself for being abnormal due to her larger breast at her young age. The connection to Martin's argument that social norms teach girls to fear their bodies, makes sense in many cases of children's self-stigmatisation of physical changes. Other concerns from children were the one of weights.

I am very stressed about my weights. I was at the public pool with my group of friends and there was a scale. Everyone weighed themselves, but I didn't want to! But I wasn't able to resist the group pressure. I weigh 38 kg and I am wondering if that is normal weighing that much at the age of 11? Everyone else weighed less. After this, I have started to eat less and exercise more. If I'm

offered a [cinnamon]bun, I dare not eat it! And I have asked to get a candy promise. Do you have any tips as to how to stop thinking about the weight? (KP,4/2020:18)

The above citation demonstrates how the girl is feeling stressed about her weight after being pressured by friends to weigh herself. The shame of not weighing as 'little' as her friends makes her also concerned if she is 'normal'. This is a typical situation of girls being caught up in the western cultural ideal of being thin. In this sense, following gender stereotypes of the feminine traits and ideals of being petite. West and Zimmerman point out how girls and boys "doing" gender are hostage to society's production (1987:126). This is something that Fredrickson and Roberts (1997:181) touch upon the matters of the inner compulsion of girls, to change the body due to the shame of not meeting the societal standards of beauty obligations. Additionally, as Durkheim asserts, shame is an emotion considered to be a social emotion due to the extremely sensitiveness humans feel toward deference and discrepancies. In this sense, the girl is fearing her body being deviant and not fitting in.

However, since the girl expresses that she has problems about thinking negatively about her weight, she could link her own body to the stigma in which her 'skinniness' represents danger to a 'healthy body'. Even though the BMI would clearly point out that she is not overweight, the girl feels abnormal and deviant for weighing more than the compared friends. She sees the number on the scale as a stigma that consequently makes the girl punish herself by not allowing herself to eat what she would prefer, and she has asked her parents for a candy promise, meaning that she will promise to not eat candy during a certain period. This is for the purpose of having less number on the scale that would in turn, what she believes, destigmatise her body. The concern about being a certain weight can also be linked to the previous issues about how children are affected by the social norms and being afraid of physical changes that could cause them the feeling of not fitting in.

Hence, other children wanted advice on how to stop thinking about the weight. They know that the weight is just a number and I think they just want to stop thinking about it and enjoy life. They are comparing themselves to others and stigmatises and looking upon their bodies as deviant from comparing to either celebrities or other children. At the same time, they express discretely that they are normal. It has not only turned out to be dissatisfaction about weight and growing (or not growing) busts in children's questions about bodies. Some children feel that they do not fit in because they either think they are too tall or ugly.

I'm a 12-year-old girl who is unhappy with my entire face. The only thing I like are my blue eyes. I know it is quite a normal problem, but I am ashamed of how I look when I'm among people or in school. It is not getting any better with all the pretty celebrities with makeup. I hate being in pictures because I feel so ugly. I feel even uglier on Snapchat because of all the filters. I would like some advice on how to accept my appearance (KP, 4,5/2021:69).

The twelve-year-old girl in 2021 is unhappy about her face that she claims makes her feel ashamed when going out in public. She is labelling herself as deviant and stigmatised due to her described 'ugliness' that affects her daily life. The girl's beliefs about herself also demonstrates a sense of profanity, that Douglas states is viewed as deficient and unworthy. Moreover, Fredrickson and Robert (1997:181) mentions how the effort of meeting the societal standards of beauty to moral obligations, can make especially women feel shame when not living up to these expectations. Therefore, the girl labels herself as anomalous because of a believed 'ugly' attribute that cannot meet societal standards.

Other children viewed themselves as deviant due to 'ugliness' that creates a feeling of stigma upon themselves. In one case a child sees himself as ugly because of other comments, where his self-image also changes due to these peoples' response to his perception.

The reason children perceive themselves as 'ugly' is due to comparison of others, especially celebrities and for example, for girls, sexualised images of women on Instagram. The comparison is something that Risman also highlights are the cause of maximising their self-perceived well-being under social-structural constraints (2004:431). Something Risman points to about gendered expectations, is that it exists in every social role (2018:23).

The data demonstrates that the body as deviant is recurrent both in newer and older data which includes the references of getting thinner, taller, shorter, more developing, or not developing physical changes. The data also shows how the concerns about the appearance in KP, were increasing in the later years and with more comparison of viewed images on media. Also, how the gendered expectations affect children negatively when they feel they do not meet up to the standard of what is beautiful or normal. Something they all have in common is the stress on the deviant body and emotion of shame.

5.2 Normalising the deviant body

Ballam and Granello (2011:424) touches upon the importance of children and youth learning about media literacy as to achieve knowledge about the reality of for example physical appearances. Since the counsellors in KP cannot put that effort to the children such as the counsellors at school or health centres do, the more it benefits the children when their concerns about the body is answered cautiously. The counsellors must take the aspects of risks and danger into consideration when answering the children. Hence, how are counsellors answering the children by normalising their perceived stigmatised and deviant bodies?

One cannot decide on the size of the breasts or when they will start to grow. Since you are 11 years old and think that your breasts are too big, I can imagine that you are among those who are early developed. Being first and last is often difficult. Try not to show the guys that you are bothered. But do not stop to defend yourself. Tell them as firmly as you can that you are not interested in their comments. If it feels difficult, you can tell your teacher or the school nurse.

Sometimes it can feel like the breasts are too big for one's age. You still feel like a child, but the body looks more and more like an adult. Then many do as you do, hide the body and hope that you look like before. These feelings are tricky to deal with, but it gets easier with time. I wish you could talk to your mother or someone you trust. This is absolutely nothing to be ashamed of (KP,6/2007:21).

Here is it demonstrated by contradicting the girl's negatively negotiation of the changes in body as something that is normal. This is done by pointing out that the body development is an irregular process and that everyone reaches puberty eventually. The boys' comments and harassment are thus seen as deviant and anomalous. The anomaly is in this case what Douglas (2002:47) asserts, actions or things that are out of place in the social order that needs to be reported. Also, what is pointed out is the importance of talking to an adult about these matters because the risk of the girl continuing hating her body and not be able to draw a line of sexual harassment, can be long lasting if she does not talk to anyone for navigating her thoughts.

The children with issues about their weight, even though they seem to be aware that there are no weight problems, the counsellors believe there is something else that causes them to think they must adjust the weight. One reason is the feeling of shame as Scheff (2000:96) states involve humiliation and related feelings that involves reactions to rejection of feelings

of failure. In this sense, the feeling of failing to achieve the society's ideal of beauty standards involves skinniness.

I agree with you. Everything would have been much better if we focused less on the body's appearance. But we live in a time now where this has such a significant impact that it's difficult to protect oneself. During puberty, it often occurs that girls gain a little weight. The development from child to adult requires a little more body fat. This is as it should be, and often long-awaited because most people do not want to keep a child's body shape. Your weight is completely normal. Do not let a stupid and demeaning comment make you doubt the value of your body. The worst thing you can do is to fool the body into thinking it is starving by not eating or eating a little. That will make you feel bad, both physically and mentally. Exercising properly makes the body feel good – but you also must eat. Talk to an adult if the problems continue. (KP, 7/2020:17).

The citation above demonstrates the normalisation of children's bodies by pointing out the natural process of especially girls gaining more weight during puberty. Further, by advising children to talk to adults about their thoughts which could help them from the risks of developing eating disorders and to build a better self-esteem. The counsellor also destigmatises the children's thoughts of obesity by stating that the weight is rather unimportant as long as they are healthy. Exercising and eating well are also key points in counsellors' approaches to children's weight concerns. Children are mostly answered with the notion of how we are all more or less affected by what we see around us, and that social media may show us that there is only one right kind of look. Just as Risman points out (2004:431), people compare themselves for the sake of maximising their self-perceived well-being under social-structural constraints. The social structure creates these ideas that also children are victims of.

The feeling of ugliness has much to do with sociocultural practices within social and cultural contexts. In this sense, as Guizzo, Canale and Fasoli (2021:62) describe about sexual objectification and shame, female sexualisation on the social media platform Instagram, can contribute to women's self-objectification. In this case, when not living up to the beauty standards that are shown on media such as Instagram, the sense of being deviant and ugly could then be a rational emotion for children. The counsellors' further states that in the case of media's portrayal of the same beauty standards it does not matter because people look differently, and no appearance is better than the other. In these comments the counsellor is

normalising and destigmatising the children's beliefs about their bodies, what is perceived as normal or deviant in aspects of developing body, weights, and ugliness.

5.3 Deviant activities of others

This subchapter is divided in two parts where I first describe children's perceived deviance on activities made by others, whilst the second part is perceived amongst themselves. The theme of others includes issues related to the feeling of someone else doing deviant activities. The deviant activity perceived by children of others would be the thoughts that occurs when others are consuming porn, or doing sexual activities etc. One of the most related feelings described by children regarding sexual activities of others, was disgust. The feelings mostly occurred when the child discovered parents kissing or having sex with a new founded partner. A girl described how she does not like her father's new girlfriend after she discovered them having sex and how the feeling of fear of having to discover that again is blatant. In one case pornographic films were sent to a child's Instagram account, and another child felt disgust after finding the father's pornographic magazines that is cited below:

Hi KP! I've found pornographic magazines among my dad's work documents. We were looking for binoculars I needed to bring with me to school for an outdoor-day. Then I saw something sticking out from his document. I went back when he was not at home to see if that was what I thought. And it was. I really feel very bad about this. It feels like he's going to do something every time we're alone in a room. I try to keep my distance from him, and I feel disgusted if he comes up to hug me good night. He and my mother have been divorced for a short time. I wonder if he might have the magazines because of that. I know it's normal and not illegal at all. But I think he could have had them a little more tucked away. (KP,1/2007:30)

The message above reveals the child's feeling of disgust and how the father turned out to be an anomaly. This is pointed out by Douglas (2002:47) as in similarity with profanity, the anomalous must be set apart from the sacred, in this case the child. Therefore, adults introducing children to sex is perceived as something that does not fit in a social order. If the child was looking at the father as something holy, the perception changed when finding out that the father is doing something the child sees as profaning. "It feels like he's going to do something every time we're alone in a room [...] and I feel disgusted if he comes up to hug

me good night” (KP,1/2007:30). Due to the fear the child now started to have towards the father, the concerns by not knowing if he/she/they are at risk of the father’s perversion evoked. In these cases, the children are negotiating the feeling of disgust toward ‘the other’ who either sent the films to the girl’s Instagram, or the father hid the magazines. The data demonstrates that children are materialising the risks by either avoiding the father; and the girl, to delete the account on the social media platform Instagram. This is due to the emotion of fear, the children are looking at people doing sexual activities as being anomalies, deviant, and profaning. Other letters about this theme, have the similarities of being sexually harassed by either an adult or friends and peers. Especially young girls who are reaching puberty earlier than her peers, expresses how others are commenting or grouping their bodies. One child describes an expression of fear and not knowing how to make the ‘predator’ stop.

I’m an 11-year-old girl who has a problem. A few days ago, I was having a sleep-over at the house of a boy in my class. We were alone there. Then he pulled my sweater off and touched my breasts. Then he pushed me to the bed and caressed me in a sexual way. He touched me on the inside of my thighs, and said he wants to have real sex with me next time! Now I’m really scared! What should I do (KP,7/2021:33)

The citation above demonstrates that the girl knows the boy was doing something wrong, profaning. This is pointed out by the expressed fear of risking of being forced to sex the next time they meet. Because of her young age and evidently expression of fear of what happened, and the thought of what might happen next time, it is regarding rape. The girl is negotiating with the boy as profane and herself as sacred. Douglas (2002:27) describes how sacred objects should be contagious and protected from violence or interference of all kinds. The girl has these emotions of fear because of patriarchal beliefs about what is expected from her as being a girl. Also, in worst case, letting the boy get away with sexual assault. As Connell (1985:261) asserts, the social structure is a structure of power such as subordination of women and the politics of sexual object choice. This is a form of oppression that Ward (2016:562) states when women, or as in this case, womanly body parts, are seen as something for others’ pleasure and the use for his own satisfaction without taking the girl’s desire into consideration. In this aspect, the connection between the social structure and how the described boy is using profanity, are his actions of taking advantage of the little girl’s body without the feeling of regret or that he is doing something wrong.

Children are fed with sexualisation from early years. Yet it is still the girls who are mostly sexual-objectified. With the sexual objectification also comes shame. The dividing line of being sexually objectified and as being a use for others pleasure, at the same time as the feeling of shame can be explained by the social norms embedded in Western culture. The sociologist Martin means that the social norms teach boys to be proud of emerging masculinity and have the sense of confidence in their sexuality, through support from their fathers. Whilst the social norms teach girls to have conflicted identifications with their mothers, at the same time as the fathers often deny their adolescents daughters to emerge sexuality (cited in Abrams,2002:489). These norms teach girls to alienate from physical change or even fearing their bodies (ibid). How the society is structured is also important in relations to sex pollution.

The anthropologist Mary Douglas (2002:141) addresses how sex could become profane in a sacred universe, through misuse and that pollution has much to do with morals (2002:82). In the last citation where the girl describes sexual assault, it has much to do with profanity and immorality from the boy's parts. What is noteworthy to mention about another case where boys as young as 10, are taking advantage of groping a girl, is the toxic cultural environment that is also mentioned in the literature review about media and sexualisation. Kilbourne (cited in Egan & Hawks, 2008:295) depicts how the graphic sexuality and pornography has had a filtering down effect with the marketing of sex to younger audience which causes this toxic culture of sexualisation. In one of the most extreme messages that I found in this topic of others deviant activities, is from a child describing the situation by lastly saying he/she/they cannot take it anymore.

Hello everyone at KP. My mum has just found a new boyfriend (like six months ago). He moved in quite quickly and has since the third month entered to my room in the evenings and said a lot of erotic "things". Lately he has started caressing me a little here and there and started jerking off in my room. I can't take it anymore (KP, 4/2007:30).

In this citation above it reveals the child knowing what the adult man is doing is anomalous and profaning on the child's private life that he/she/they should be sacred from. Douglas (2002:27) depicts how the sacred must be treated as contagious due to the danger that may be caused by crossing the forbidden boundaries. Just as in the citation before about the girl being abused by a male friend, this case also shows how Douglas (2002:82) notion of misusing sex can become profane in a sacred space. The sacredness are the child's room and his/her/their

body, and the profaning is the adult crossing the sacred line. In this sense, the child is materialising thoughts of danger about this adult who he sees as profaning and anomalous. The child is expressing the emotion of not being able to bear this anymore. Which could have much to do with fear and shame. The fear of repeatedly occurrences, or the reaction from the adult if the child would tell. The emotion of shame of being exposed to these perversions from a man who should be there as a caring adult.

5.4 Counsellors about deviant activities of others

When it comes to messages that children distress about experiences of sexual assault, the counsellors are explaining how that is morally wrong actions by the perpetrators. How their actions are anomalous, and their actions cannot be normalised. In sexual assaults being more severe, the counsellors were pushing the importance of reporting the incidence to the police. One of those cases were about the child being sexually abused by the stepfather:

What you are talking about is called sexual assault. All types of sexual acts that are forced on a child or adolescent by another person are a sexual assault. Assault entails that a child is exploited and violated by the needs of (in your case) adults. This is wrong in many different ways, but also punishable by law. It is very difficult to tell that you are exposed to sexual assault, especially if the abuse is within the family. Even though it is so difficult, you must find the courage to tell! Hold on to the feeling that your boundaries have been crossed and hold on to feelings of power from within. Who should you tell? Maybe someone you spontaneously think of. You should not be responsible for this on your own, but it is your responsibility to tell. Your mum must know eventually. If your father has guardianship, he also has the right to know what has happened to you. Parents must protect their children from experiences like yours and if you are exposed to sexual assault, then this must be reported to the social services. They need to know so that they can ensure that there is an immediate stop to the abuse. That's the most important thing right now.

You or an adult in your area can contact the social services where you live. Ask to speak to someone who works with young people and their families. You will be taken very seriously and get help with your difficult situation. No child should have to go through what you describe. (KP, 4/2007:30).

In this sense, the counsellor is pointing out how the perpetrator's actions are immoral and profaning. The adult man is an anomaly and the counsellor states that what is happening is not simply wrong in many ways, but punishable by law. Just as Douglas depicts when talking about anomalies, is that one can either treat them by ignoring or condemning. In this sense, condemning means punishment because of the adult's immoral acts that is also by law forbidden. It is thus the adult being accountable for his deviant actions towards this child. The counsellor's effort of trying to convince the child that it is important to tell an adult, could have much to do with the risks of the child being further abused. As Durham (2009:40) states about media and sexualisation, the risks of early sexuality, children are not equipped to negotiate those risks alone. This is something Durham also depicts in the literature review; caring adults have a responsibility to guide children toward healthy and fulfilled adult lives (2009:8). In this sense, the counsellors are putting the blame where it belongs and, in that way, make the children be aware that what has happened is not their fault.

You have reached puberty earlier than most others in your class. It's completely wrong to comment on other people's bodies when you don't ask for it. Commenting in the way that some of the guys in your class do, or touching your breasts is called sexual harassment and its illegal. They need to learn that you do not touch anyone without them being in on it, meaning without giving consent. According to the law, school staff must put an end to this immediately. Talk to an adult you trust!
(KP, 6/2021:10)

The citation above demonstrates how the counsellor explains that the boys must know what they do are morally wrong and profane and therefore the girl should talk to an adult about it for the purpose of getting help. In this sense, the counsellor is negotiating about risks of being further harassed if she does not talk to an adult. Even though there are similarities here to what I discussed in relation to deviant body, the focus is here on the affective aspects. The persons who are harassing are the ones being anomalous and profaning. This is pointed out by Douglas that the anomalous is something that is out of place in social order that needs to be reported (2002:47). Similar answers were given to a girl who was harassed on her Instagram account. The counsellor states that she has the right to be online without being exposed to such things. These things are in this case profaning the girl's sanctity.

The data demonstrates how media has increased the risks of sexual content that is easily to target children. Because just as Durham (2009:10) explains, the little girl on Instagram needs respect and attention as she explores what should be a healthy and natural part of

becoming an adult. Meaning, not being exposed to these matters of pornography against her will. Although, the risks and anomalies take different forms for example through social media, they are negotiated in the same way by the counsellors. Also, there were no noticeable difference in how counsellors were discussing sexual harassment with children before the Consent Act entered the force.

5.5 Deviant activities of oneself

The feeling of doing something wrong is described by children either from the curiosity of sex such as sex toys, condoms, masturbation or having the desire to watch pornographic films which were common traits in children's letters. The data showed a great concern of deviance when having sexual desires.

Hi Annica or Daniel! I have been masturbating for at least three years. It starts with me being alone. I start fiddling with the penis and finally I ejaculate. Then just wipe it off. But then it hurts and feels uncomfortable long afterwards. I can walk around having anxiety and hating myself for days. You could say that I create a short-term depression. I'm trying to quit, but it's impossible. Once, I have managed without for no more than three months. Then I start again. What should I do to stop masturbating? I cannot take it anymore! (KP, 2/2007:30)

The boy's hatred towards himself for masturbating and feeling lonely makes him not consider himself as normal but doing something that is deviant. This is due to the cultural view of children acting out sexually being anomalous. Such as the 'Lolita' that Durham describes is the inappropriately sexual girl who is not yet adult and forbidden to do sexual activities (2009:16). The confusion children have about sex and body when they are in borderline between childhood and adulthood. The anomalous feelings children experience can be explained by Douglas (2002:47) description of not fitting the set, in this sense, the society due to children reaching puberty, ambivalent notions of either being a child nor an adult. In other messages the children express either a fear towards the coming sexual education at school, or a desire towards sex that they consider to be wrong and therefore deviant.

I'm a 13-year-old guy who needs help to stop looking at weird things on the internet. It started recently when I searched around and found a site where people post movies of themselves naked and do things. I want to quit and have tried, but it has not worked. Do you have any advice? (KP, 12/2020:16).

The citation above demonstrates a child's dilemma of being curious and wrong about watching porn which consequently makes the child to look upon himself/herself/themselves as having deviant desire. In similarity with the citation above is about a ten-year-old girl who describes how she listens to sex podcasts. She states how she is thinking of sex a lot and cannot resist to listen to the podcasts. The feelings of great discomfort and anxiety are obvious. The profanity in these cases is the children's beliefs of having deviant bodies or minds. The sex is viewed as profanity of being in a hostile domain at the same time as it is also natural and a part of life. Since children reach the pre-teen years and become curious about sex it is difficult for children to stop exploring the easily accessible media of sex and porn, as it is a whole new thing to explore.

The easy access of pornography in recent years is also affecting children who are not searching or browsing for it by themselves. The data described above, gives us an understanding how these children navigate sex as something deviant and profaning. The two boys however, one with masturbation problems and the other with watching porn movies online, show a deviant desire in relation to sex. They believe it is something they must stop doing because of the emotions of doing something that is anomalous. In this sense, the gendered expectations are connected to children's feeling of deviancy and shame. Why boys tend to have an inner compulsion towards sex compared to girls can be explained by Risman's (2018:19) definition of gender structure theory, in which gender is something we perform in daily lives. This is something that Martin explains to be the social norms that are built on the notions of boys being confident in their sexuality, because it is seen as a masculine trait, and they should therefore have a sexual desire (cited in Abrams,2002:489). The girl listening to sex pods can therefore, compared to the boys, feel deviant and anomalous because it is not a cultural and gendered expectation that girls should be interested in sex. Gender norms teach girls to only be sexual beings for others and not act out sexually for pleasuring themselves. The gendered expectations are therefore connected to girls' feelings of deviancy and shame when having sexual desires or maturing sexually.

Boys being feminine or vice versa, are in many societies seen as being anomalous because they are not fitting the gender scrips that boys and girls live with. Moreover, many

young boys can feel anomalous when not meeting the society's expectations of boys liking sex, rather is something they feel an inner compulsion to do for not being perceived as feminine. But because they are still children, they feel anomalous for being on adult's domains. How to understand this can be through gendered expectations which Risman explains exist in every social role (2018:23). The boy's role of being a child, boy, a son at the same time as growing and maturing. He might not think it is normal to have sexual drives at that young age. As a child he therefore feels anomalous.

5.6 Normalising deviant activities of oneself

The counsellors are normalising children's feelings of doing something wrong when masturbating in the sense of pointing out that youth centres should do a check-up for medical conditions if there are other problems on the genital areas. In one aspect, the counsellor expresses in a way, to embrace a boy's constant masturbation by stating that he should seek help from not getting the negative feelings instead of giving him the advice **on** how to stop, which the boy asked for. This could be the reason for destigmatising and not making the children feel negative about the self-pleasuring. The children in these cases feel disgust or hatred towards themselves for the sexual things they are doing.

I'm not sure what you mean, but maybe it's porn films you have been watching. Porn often shows bodies and sex in a way that does not correspond to reality. It often shows degrading sex, especially for women, but also for men. Still, it's easy to think that sex should be like in the porn movie, especially if you have no experience of your own. It can feel both exciting and wrong to watch porn. Everyone is curious about sex, both children, adolescents, and adults. There is nothing you need to have a bad conscience about. So, it is not wrong with being curious, but at the same time it is good to learn about the risks that exist. You seem uncomfortable looking at these sites. Go with that feeling, be proud of yourself and leave it be. You have that opportunity. (KP, 12/2020:16).

The counsellor is negotiating about the risks the child is putting himself to. Due to the statement that it is easy especially for someone who is unexperienced, to think that sex should be as in porn films. By giving an answer that is normalising the boy's feeling of excitement and that something is wrong by watching porn, is highlighted from the notion that porn is profaning and negotiated as anomalous. The risk of watching porn is pointed out by stating

that it is good to learn about the risks that follows with it, and when it is uncomfortable to watch, it is time to stop. The data demonstrates that the counsellors are normalising the feeling of curiosity about watching pornographic films but insist that there are risks that comes with it since pornography often portrays degrading sex.

One aspect of the questions is related to pornography and there was a considerable differentiation how the counsellors were negotiating the questions about porn from 2007 to 2020. In 2007 the counsellors were given a child an answer that was normalising the existence of porn magazines and how adults browsing them are not bad or struggling people. Whilst in the later year of 2021 the counsellor made clear how porn is often portraying degrading sex. The differentiation can be explained by using the social theory of gender that highlights the following issues of structure from subordination of women, the sexual object-choice, and the sexual liberation movement and how society is slowly changing. Moreover, children negotiate their bodies in relation to sex as deviant and stigmatised that the counsellors in turn are normalising and destigmatising.

5.7 Deviant feelings

In this theme about feelings, I will include different aspects of children's emotions regarding deviancy and normality. This does not only regard children's thoughts and feelings of themselves as being deviant or normal, but what they believe others perceive them as. The most recurring questions in KP about feelings were the aspect of love. In a few cases it was about having crush on someone with the same sex, but the uncertainty of not knowing if the other has the same sexual orientation or not. The concern would be how to ask, the feeling of shame and as being weird was pointed out in a sense of fearing rejection. In similarity, questions about having a crush on a friend were expressed by feeling of being weird, or the fear of being seen as abnormal and then rejected by the friend. In this sense, as Douglas (2002:27) mentions that sacred items must be separated from the profane items due to the danger of them crossing forbidden boundaries. The child would in this case navigate the friendship as the sacred item, fearing that an interference of that would be a danger with the risk of losing her friend. Other children were concerned about having a crush on someone who is not meeting society's standards of beauty as shown in the citation below.

I'm an 11-year-old guy who has a problem. My crush is taller than me! I've seen a lot of movies where the guy is shorter than the girl, but it still feels weird that she's taller. Do you have any tips on how to get over this? (KP, 2/2021:39).

Here we can see that social norms of beauty cause this boy to feel strange towards a girl he is having a crush on. It is something that the boy perceives as not fitting even though media such as films gives the image of the girls being taller than boys are okay. The perceived bodily oddity can be explained by an anomalous feeling which does not fit the norms that the boy is used to. As Douglas (2002:47) describes is something that is out of place in a social order. Gender stereotypes are mostly characterised by masculinity and femininity where the man should be masculine in aspects of domination, strong, and brave. Whilst a woman should be feminine with the traits of petite, delicate and subordinate. The bodies are a construction of sociocultural practices and something that are deeply rooted in our cultural context. For this boy, a few films showing the opposite may not be the only cure for changing the thoughts of that. This is something Risman also points out about the comparison with others for the need of self-perceived well-being under social-structural constraints (2004:431).

The boy has feelings for this girl, but the social structure has taught him it is strange and odd for a boy to be shorter than the girl. He conflicts with himself about his feelings for his crush's height, and that he is not going to fit the norm of being the taller boyfriend. Here we can see the similarities is discussions of deviant body and deviant activities of oneself, that the fear is about feeling excluded from a norm. For example, in the discussions about body the children are fearing their bodies not fitting in. This is where Durkheim distinction of shame is noticeably since he describes how humans feel the fear towards deference and discrepancies. In the case of deviant desire, where boys describe an urge to masturbate or watch porn even though they do not want to. A reason to why they cannot stop, can be the feeling of being anomalous and not meeting the society's expectations of boys liking sex.

Furthermore, the knowledge of the boy wanting to change his way of thinking about his crush's height, makes him open up the challenge of stereotypical gender and wanting to change. The change that Risman explains is happening when people reject the structure (2003:435). What other children in KP are opening up the challenge of gender stereotypes and gender binaries, do so in the negotiation of their feelings toward bodies or sexuality as normal.

Hello everybody! I'm a 10-year-old guy who has a problem. I wear dresses and have long hair etc. I think it's nice, but I always get the question "Are you a boy or a girl?" and then I get weird looks at the beach and the pool because I have swimming trunks. I think it's annoying. What should I do? (KP, 4/2020:18).

The citation above demonstrates a ten-year-old boy's negotiation of his body as normal. Clearly, the boy has no concerns about his attribution, but is concerned about others glaring and questions. It is thus them, who are acting deviant towards him who are just a normal kid with a taste of style. In this sense, as Westbrook and Schilt (2014:49) describe, the others glaring is possibly the practices of trying to place the boy in gender categories and therefore "determining gender". Other children express a distressing feeling of either being homosexual, bisexual or wanting to be the opposite sex but do not know how to address that to parents. The data demonstrate that there have been an increased number of cases about these matters of gender identity and sexual orientation in the later years than 2007-2008. Children today are also feeling a distance from the parents. Because, even though Sweden has the most LGBT rights in the world, children feel uncomfortable in addressing these matters to their parents. In one case a child described how she is mostly open in school about her sexual orientation but does not dare to tell her parents. This could be explained by the fear of the parents viewing the child as an anomaly and therefore 'abnormal'. The data has also demonstrated that children are thinking against the norms, by challenging gender stereotypes and gender identities with discretely depictions, but the social structure is creating an uncertainty if that feeling is right.

5.8 Normalising deviant feelings

As we could see in the previous subchapter about children's deviant feelings, there is a distance between children and adults' discussion about sexuality, bodies, and mind. The children in KP, especially in recent years, seem more open towards the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identities. Yet, they do not feel comfortable about either discussions or to letting their parents know. Ballam and Granello (2014:424) touches upon the accomplishment of having adults talking more to their youth, is by counsellors educating parents and teenagers on and how sexuality and relationships in media are conveyed. In that way, parents who have a narrow outlook, could also learn more about the diversities of sexes

and sexual orientations that the children in these cases are more open to. However, the counsellors in KP do not have the capacity to teach adults about gender stereotypes and gender identity when working on a magazine from a distance. Instead, the counsellors negotiate the children's feelings about these matters with understanding and embracement.

First of all: How nice that you have found something important about yourself! At the same time, I can understand if it might feel lonely to carry this. Is there anyone else than your parents you could tell? Or do you think they would understand you if you are brave and dare to tell? It's also okay if you want to keep this to yourself for a while. At last: It is always you who decides who you are and who you want to be. You're awesome! (KP, 8,9/2020:86)

The citation above is the counsellor's negotiation with a boy who wants to change gender to a girl. The counsellor is opening up to the challenge of stereotypical genders that has for long been viewed as anomalies, not fitting the social norms. He does that by pointing out the good part of finding out something important of himself. Moreover, by highlighting the aspect of the child's own life choices of being who he wants to be the counsellor is normalising the child's feelings of wanting to change gender. The counsellor is opening the challenging of stereotypical gender norms by making the child understand that society cannot decide who people should or want to be. Here are Risman points about people having to reject the structure in order to change it (2004:435). In similarity, as I noted in discussing the counsellor negotiation of normalising deviant body and deviant activities, the anomalous feeling the child has, the counsellor is encouraging the child to talk to someone about the feelings. Because of the risks the child can trigger the negative and lonely feelings of carrying a heavy burden when not being able to share a big part of the child's identity. The anomaly is in this case what Douglas (2002:47) asserts, actions or things that are out of place in the social order that needs to be reported. Also, what is pointed out is the importance of talking to an adult about these matters because the risk of the girl continuing hating her body and not be able to draw a line of sexual harassment, can be long lasting if she does not talk to anyone for navigating her thoughts.

The social structure, or the structure of power which Connell explain is about oppression and inequality (1985:261) must therefore to be challenged. Transgender persons are one kind of anomalies that can through Douglas (2002:48) theorising be positively treated by confronting the structures that decides what are anomalies or not, to create a new pattern of reality where the transgender persons have a place. According to Moon (2008:6) therapy has

not been queered for the purpose of helping queer clients. However, Swedish society has been changing for the better on the LGBT parts, and that is also something the data is showing in KP. Both in the aspects of how children are open to talk about gender identity, and how they are being responded to by the counsellors. The counsellors have been normalising and destigmatising children's deviant notions in all three parts about body, activities of oneself and about feelings.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has shown how children negotiate deviance and normality in relation to sexuality and their body in Kamratposten. The body and sexuality are mostly seen in the lights of deviancy. In line with earlier studies, I have shown that social media has a contribution to girls' self-objectification when viewing sexualised media, and that sexual objectification contributes to shame (Guizzo, Canale & Fasoli, 2021:62). Especially when the body is not perceived as meeting the society's standard of beauty which causes mostly women to continuous making efforts to change the body. Children who are easily exposed to hypersexualised media through their phones and other mobile devices, are at higher risk of being subjected to negative thoughts about themselves, that their bodies do not meet the society's standards of beauty. This is something that the analysis portrays, especially about deviant bodies. In this theme, it is evident how children are concerned about weight, bodies developing too soon or too fast, and self-perceived ugliness which are all perceived as deviant attributes in comparison to others.

Also, in the section of relevant literature I mentioned how Martin (cited in Abrams, 2002:489) argues how girls learn through social norms to reject themselves from their physical change and to teach them to fear their bodies. Consequently, when children feel they are not meeting society's standard it can causes them to stigmatise themselves for being abnormal which also causes the feeling of shame. As I mentioned in relevant research, Goffman's definition of stigma occurs when there is a 'norm violation' that will further be stigmatised by either society or as self-reaction. Children negotiate about their body as being deviant for not fitting the norm, that consequently creates the emotion of shame. The data shows that there has been an increased number of questions about concerns about appearance and comparison of images on media. This has led to children featured in KP feeling deviant and shameful when not meeting society's standards of beauty.

When children performed deviant activities of themselves, they perceived the acts as deviant because of a cultural view that children acting out sexually is anomalous. To understand this matter, as I mentioned in relevant research, the social norms are built on the notion of boys being confident in their sexuality, whilst girls are taught not to be (Abrams,2002:489). How I interpreted the material, boys can feel an inner compulsion that they should have a desire towards sex because that is one of the masculine traits. Whilst girls

feel deviant and anomalous if they do have sexual desire because that is not in the gendered expectations of girls to have. Yet, girls are mostly sexually objectified but for the reasons of others pleasure and not for their own. Meaning, girls should not act out sexually for pleasuring themselves. The gendered expectations are therefore connected to girls' feelings of deviancy and shame when having sexual desires or when maturing.

I have in this thesis shed light on what a toxic culture of sexualisation can do to children. As I pointed out in the analysis of deviant activities of others, boys as young as 10 have the confidence to grope girls. This can be understood by what is pointed out by Kilbourne (see Egan & Hawks, 2008:295) that the graphic sexuality and pornography has had a filtering down effect with the marketing of sex to younger audience. Hence, it is important to know that media is not only negative for children. Media has the possibilities to provide information that children search for regarding sex and body, that they would otherwise feel embarrassed to ask adults about. Perhaps media has had a contribution to children's more open views towards gender and sexual diversity. In this study, it is also possible to see, in data from 2007 to 2021, an increase of children's open discussion about gender and sexual diversity. Mostly it is about how to tell parents about their gender identity or sexual orientation. Why children are more open today than in 2007-2008 also has the explanation of that society is slowly changing. Even though Sweden now has the most LGBT rights in the world, children feel uncomfortable in addressing these matters to their parents. In one case a child described how she is mostly open in school amongst other children, about her sexual orientation but does not dare to tell her parents. This could be explained by the fear of the parents viewing the child as an anomaly and therefore 'abnormal'.

In public counselling such as KP, the counsellors are guiding children away from the feeling of deviance. In this thesis we can see how children's questions of risks and deviance in relation to sex and bodies are understood and explained by counsellors in public counselling on media such as KP. This is through the notions of answered questions where counsellors are guiding children away from risks of for example further negative feelings of themselves and sexual harassment. There was no noticeable difference in how counsellors were discussing sexual harassment with children before the Consent Act entered the force.

In similarities with all cases of deviant bodies, deviant activities and deviant feelings, the counsellor advice the children to talk to adults or someone close. Moreover, when children are concerned about appearance or sexual desire, that contributes to the feeling of deviance, stigma, and shame. The counsellors are in subtle ways normalising and destigmatising children's thoughts with the explanation that it is normal to look and feel this way.

I have also shown in this thesis that children feel deviance of having desire towards sex. They are also at risk of getting a twisted idea about sex from the easily access of porn showing degrading sex. Which is an issue that the counsellors in KP try to guide children who have concerns about pornography. The risks are about the unrealistic view pornography portrays about sex. At the same time, the counsellors normalise the children's deviant feelings about being curious to watch it. The counsellors would rather help the boy with masturbation problem, to have a positive feeling rather than advising him to stop masturbate. It is a natural part of life and due to children growing more curious about sex when their own bodies sexually mature, I have pointed through Durham's depictions of the importance of adults' responsibility to guide children to a healthy and fulfilled adult life (2009:8).

I believe there is a great paradox in this matter because there is a fine line between how adults and children should have discussions about sex and body. Parents often believe that children learn about these things during sex education at school, which therefore seem to be more accepting when children are learnt from proper teachers. When parents or other adults talk to children about sex it is seen as crossing the sacred line. As I pointed in the analysis, it is proven that children in KP is viewing discussion about sex with parents or adults as anomalous. Even though Swedish society has been changing for the better on the LBGT parts, children draw themselves from talking to their parents and other adults about their own gender identity or sexual orientation.

When analysing the material of KP most of the major concerns besides body and sexuality was about children not being able to talk to their parents. I believe there is a need for social changes for making children feel secure and safe about talking about their bodies and sexuality with parents and other adults. Also, how important it is for young children to learn about media literacy and to have caring adults who can discuss about body and sexuality in encouraging ways that the counsellors of KP has done. This thesis has opened up for further research about children's view on sexuality and body. It would

have been interesting to do a study where it is possible to get raw material from children themselves or counsellors working with these issues about children's perceived body image. Will children be as affected by the media in the future? It would also be interesting to see if there will be even greater improvement on children's view of gender and sexual diversities, and if the social changes in the future will make children feel more secure about talking to parents about these matters.

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