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# **The Gender of *Kinder*-Chocolate**

## **A Visual Analysis of TV Commercials and the Representation of Gender and Children**

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### **Abstract**

This thesis examines the gender portrayal of gender in relation to children in TV commercials by the brand *Kinder*. Gender, Advertising and children are three topics that in relation to each other are a highly important study topic. While there currently are many studies on the analysis of the influence of advertising *on* children, less studies can be found on the influence of advertising *showing* children. Three commercials from 2012-2018 were chosen that showed human as well as non-human characters and how the commercials portrayed gender in relation to children were analyzed using visual analysis. Specifically, discourse analysis I and semiology helped analyzing the commercials and by the means of three themes, which were revealing to the portrayal of gender in the chosen commercials. Analysis of color, objects and appearance, behavior and relationship showed that characters in the commercial can grow in and out of gender and that different aspects are gender specific to age. Color was used in the portrayal of girl's/boy's rooms, the objects/clothes they encounter and use showed gender specifics, and behavior and relationship also showed characteristics towards gender.

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## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PRIOR RESEARCH .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Gender.....	3
Children and Advertising .....	4
Children and Gender .....	5
Gender and Advertising.....	5
Gender, Children and Advertising.....	6
<b>CHOICE OF MATERIAL - METHOD .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Material.....	8
Visual Discourse Analysis – Themes .....	8
Ethical Considerations.....	11
<b>ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>BACKGROUND: .....</b>	<b>11</b>
The Brand <i>Kinder</i> .....	11
COMMERCIAL 1: Kinderriegel (2012) .....	12
COMMERCIAL 2: Kinder – 50-Years .....	13
COMMERCIAL 3: Kinderschokolade (2012) .....	14
<b>THEMES:.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Theme 1: Color .....	16
Concluding the Theme Color: .....	21
Theme 2: Objects and Appearance .....	22
Concluding the Theme Objects and Appearance:.....	27
Theme 3: Behavior and Relationship .....	28
Concluding the Theme Behavior and Relationship: .....	35
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Literature:.....</b>	<b>38</b>

## INTRODUCTION

Advertisements are part of our everyday life and may influence us in ways that might not be obvious at first sight. Advertising cannot be ignored as we encounter them everywhere and always. We walk down a street and see billboards. We turn on the TV and are interrupted during a film with commercials on food, clothes and many more. We flip through the pages of a magazine and see the newest design of a car. How advertising portrays people whether children or adults, women or men, mirrors society and how the world is ruled. We are stigmatized into thinking how the world is supposed to function. Advertisements are part of our society and therefore we have an impact on how we understand the world we are living in. Images are both constructing and are constructed by norms and ideals of the society they are part of (Rose 2007, p. 2). Children are also part of the society and encounter both advertisements and the societal norms and ideas that these advertisements take part in shaping. One who raises awareness towards these issues is a project by Jonathan Hobin called “In the Playroom” where he shows that children are aware what is happening around them (‘Jonathanhobin’, 2011). This suggests that children just as adults are influenced by images around them. The adult world may be different from the children’s world in sense of how we see, perceive and process the world but it is vital to know that both worlds coexist. Hence, commercials are highly influential on children and can shape their sight, perception and process of how a world is (not) supposed to function. Commercials portray not only the products they are selling, but they are also communicating values around human relationships and ways of being such as what it means to be a boy or a girl. Therefore, it is highly important to have commercials that do not only show one side of the picture. This thesis will try to show how gender in relation to children and their age is portrayed in TV commercials that have been created for/by the brand *Kinder* by using visual analysis in three different themes. How is gender portrayed through human and non-human characters? How are color, objects, appearance, behavior and relationship used to portray gender and children in the commercials? How can the use of these themes be related to gender and the aspects of age?

## RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS

The aim of this thesis is to show how the brand *Kinder* is portraying gender in relation to children in three TV commercials. The thesis will focus on both human and non-human characters. Additionally, how gender is portrayed in relation to the age of the characters, how color, objects, appearance, behavior and relationship are used to construct gender portrayals of children in the three different commercials. The first research question is my general research question, while the sub-questions are more specific for the analysis of the content by the use of three themes.

### General research question:

- How is gender portrayed in relation to age in the commercials?

### Sub-questions:

- How can gender and age be understood in relation to the use of color, objects/appearance and behavior/relationship in the three commercials?
- How is gender portrayed similar/differently when using non-human characters?

### **Keywords:**

gender – children – commercials – Kinder – visual analysis

## PRIOR RESEARCH

The topic of gender, children and advertising gives rather large sums of studies that could be included in this thesis. However, most of the research that I have found up until now (2018) is either focusing on the influence advertising has *on* children i.e. how gender is portrayed in advertising that has children as its target group. This would for example be toys or food commercials that aim at children as consumers and how such commercials have an influence on the children watching the commercial. In this thesis that specific topic will be briefly discussed in the upcoming theory chapter. However, finding theory on how children are portrayed *in* commercials in relation to gender and age, is still rare. The Library Database of Linköping University lists 38 results when searching for “*children in advertising*” *gender*. This is why the prior research will focus on the main studies that have been done in the area of *gender, children and advertising* and those main topics in relation to each other. First, some background information and introduction to the topic of gender will be described. Secondly, the studies that have been found will be introduced in three subcategories *children and advertising, children and gender, gender and advertising* and *gender, children and advertising*.

## Gender

At birth, we are assigned a biological sex – male or female. While this is the biological categorization, there is also a social categorization of male and female, gender. These two concepts are usually for a society a fixed pair and it is difficult to separate the two concepts. “Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men” (WHO 2018). We are from the beginning of our life taught that we belong to a social group that entails different roles that tell an individual what criteria to meet in terms of what they wear, how they behave, how their relationships look like (Zarranz 2014, p. 2). Those influencers are in a broad term considered the society, and more specifically parents, friends, the environments and especially television as a medium shows children how to behave appropriately (Witt 1997, p. 254). How are those gender roles assigned and what are they? Gender roles are non-static and change over time and this then also applies for what masculinity is. “Manhood is not the manifestation of an inner essence; it is socially constructed... it is created in culture” (Kimmel 1994, p. 59). There is a certain understanding of what is the perfect man that Kimmel calls “hegemonic masculinity”. He describes it by the means of saying “A man *in* power, a man *with* power, and a man *of* power” (Kimmel 1994, p. 63). Gender roles shape and are shaped by society. How we perceive gender and how we portray gender is changing and dependent on the culture and society we grew up in. “Gender is constructed in individual, interactional, and structural ways to create environmental constraints and opportunities that usually benefit men more than women” (Humble 2003, p. 335). Gender roles are according to Blackstones that females are rather considered to be showing their femininity by nurturing her family, working full-time at home while male gender roles are ascribed to be leaders, head of the household, provide for the family and making important decisions (Blackstone 2003, p. 337) and gender roles may be based on stereotypes which also may exaggerated and false assumptions about what females and males really are (Blackstone 2003, p. 337). One of these assumptions is that women are more emotional than men. According to Fischer and LaFrance there is the necessity to look at these differences from a historical point of view. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century discussion on emotional standards started due to the changes in society and work situations. In the last 150 years, it was argued that norms that were tied to the emotional portrayal of female and male in Western society are less gender specific (Fischer & LaFrance 2015, p. 23). This was when media such as the television started to show not only women but also men who were showing emotions such as crying. Still, there is the power relation that rises when it is said that men are not allowed to cry. Fischer and LaFrance

capture two dimensions: communality/care and dominance/power (Fischer & LaFrance 2015, p. 23). Men should show emotions that are connected to power, dominance while women should show the opposite: being scared, sad and ashamed (Fischer & LaFrance 2015, p. 22-23). There are attributes that are assigned for “femininity” in advertising, such as “passive, submissive, deferential, unintelligent, shy, dreamy, gentle, likely to be manipulated and helpless” (Artz, Munger and Purdy, 1999; Browne, 1998 in Harker 2005, p. 254). Moreover, there are also those attributes for masculinity “constructive, powerful, dominant, autonomous and achieving (Harker 2005, p. 254).

### Children and Advertising

Advertisements are all about selling a specific product to a potential consumer. The target group is important as well as getting the consumer to buy a product of a certain brand. The message has to be clear and understandable and the consumer has to be able to relate to the message. “...advertisers are constantly in search of new ways to improve the strength and effectiveness of their advertisements. They are continuously competing for the limited attention resources of consumers” (Mann 2011, p. vii). There are many different ways to advertise for a product, however, the TV commercial has the possibility to use different channels to tell a story concerning their product. The target group comprises people of all ages, thus, also children. “Television advertisements affect children of different age and gender groups in term of consumption. Because of the ease to affect and lead children, advertisers consider them as the target audience” (Sener et al. 2011, p. 97). Children are influenced by what they see in advertisements and this can shape their understanding of how society is functioning as Mann summarizes “Confrontation with television advertisements for a long time can cause changes in children’s values, attitudes and behaviors” (Sener et al. 2011, p. 102). What Sener et al. describe as a positive influence, can also be seen rather critical in terms of the portrayal of healthy sweets such as the *Kinderriegel* where the “plus milk, minus chocolate” rather insinuates that this is a healthy snack.

Martínez (2016) analyzes in her article how producers of advertisements construct children as an advertising audience in Sweden. She argues that both children /childhood and audience is a social construction. One view is that children are considered to be more vulnerable, the need special attention as an audience group another view more prominent in the Northern countries have the image of “the competent child”. By interviewing 18 Swedish advertising agency practitioners and marketers in 2013, she found an ambivalent image of children. Both the vulnerable and the competent child were constructions in the media that were also mixed.

Culture and media have influence on how children/childhood are constructed by advertisements' producers.

### Children and Gender

Children are born into a society and are a part of it. As well as adults, they can shape a society but are also shaped by it. Änggård (2005) mentions in her research on "Narration as a way of doing gender" that "As children learn early on that the world is divided into men and women, and that they have to choose the 'right' gender to be accepted, it is not surprising that they use the most characteristic traits when they position themselves" (Änggård 2005, p. 551). Children are part of the adult world and are therefore part of how gender roles are constructed and re-constructed.

Color may be a way for advertising to ascribe children a certain gender.

Wong & Hines (2014) describe in the article "Preferences for Pink and Blue: The Development of Color Preference as a Distinct Gender-Typed Behavior in Toddlers" how toddlers color choice is made and whether or not this is something that is correlating to gender. Preferences for gender specific colors were compared to gender specific toys and activities in watching 126 toddlers on two occasions. The stable choice of a certain color developed later than a choice for gender specific toys. Their study shows that the decision to have gender specific toys in a certain color was part of why a certain gender specific color choice was made. Furthermore, they argue that there are different views on why there is the blue and pink color separation for boys and girls today and what might be the reason.

Whether or not the color is inborn to a certain gender, they suggest, still needs more research. However, what they conclude is that children need to form their gender identity and while the "finding" their gender identity, the color, toys, and behavior become quite gender specific in order for them to associate themselves with the gender role and identity that matches them.

They argue that "gender difference in color preference was larger in older than in younger toddlers but smaller in adults than in young children (...) color as a gender-typed attribute may carry less weight or importance for adults than for children for other reasons" (Wong & Hines 2014, p. 1252).

### Gender and Advertising

The following two studies were chosen due to their current publication date (2016 & 2017). They summarize the findings of gender role portrayal in television of the world and of this century.

Matthes et al. (2016) describe in their article “Gender-Role Portrayals in Television Advertising Across the Globe” the difference of gender role portrayal. They argue that their findings show not so much gender stereotyping in commercials from the UK, the US and some European countries. However, Germany, for example, was still using the traditional way of portraying gender. Even though some countries may have changed over the last years, gender stereotyping in advertising is still used. They conclude that gender “gender stereotypes in advertising can influence gender-role stereotypes in society, further perpetuating gender roles and gender inequality” (Matthes et al. 2016, p. 325).

Furnham and Lay (2017) describe in their article “The Universality of the Portrayal of Gender in Television Advertisements: A Review of the Studies This Century” how and how gender role portrayal in TV commercials have changed over the last 50 years. They found out that the stereotypical portrayal of gender is universal and has remained quite stable over time. Even though there have been changes in the legal system, and social as well as economic changes, how the sexes are portrayed in TV commercials have not changed significantly.

#### Gender, Children and Advertising

One thesis that was available on this topic, but analyzing *still* and not *moving* images, is Johanna Sjöberg’s *I Marknadens Öga – Barn och Visuell Konsumtion* published in 2013. She points towards different aspects of consumption in relation to children and advertising and also highlights that there is little research in this area of children *in* advertising (Sjöberg 2013, p. 21). The studies she had found argue that children as consumers and children *in* advertising are categorized according to age and sex but also a gender system upon which both adults and children identify themselves with (Sjöberg 2013, p. 22). This means that children that can be seen in commercials are shown with a particular gender category. This shown category, then, influences the viewer (children or adults) on how gender is portrayed. Also, in her analysis she found out that children that are shown in commercials cannot be seen under the general category “children and consumption” meaning that this category is a too broad term and that the children in relation to commercials and consumption are in fact seen not only from a consumer perspective but also from a gender specific. They are constructed through visual worlds where the content of the commercial and topic not often meet (Sjöberg 2013, p. 308).

Lemish (2010) discusses in her book “Screening Gender on Children’s Television” how children, gender and advertising are topics that are connected by many ways. She argues that

the characters in the commercials, whether they are human or non-human characters, they are gendered. As children are influenced by what they see in TV they consequently also see these gender portrayals and act upon them in order for them to be accepted in society. The portrayal of social values and structures as well as a certain gender portrayal are deeply interwoven in the advertising business and influence children on how to see the world. They learn which category is accepted or not as these categories are presented on a regular basis such as in TV commercials. In the concluding chapter of her book, she gives what she calls “working principles for change” (Lemish 2010, p. 124). Lemish offers detailed suggestions on how advertising should change. Those principles are: equality, diversity, complexity, similarity, unity, family, authenticity and voicing. All those principles are somewhat guidelines to how one could argue that the commercials show gender stereotypes or not. Due to the scope of this thesis, these principles cannot be applied to the actual analysis, but would be of high interest for further research i.e. how were those 8 principles applied in the chosen commercials.

## CHOICE OF MATERIAL - METHOD

### Material

In order to find suitable commercials, the Internet was used. Both YouTube and the homepage of *Kinder* provided with a wide variety of TV commercials. The videos were saved by recording the screen of the appliance used, as well as saving the links to the videos. Furthermore, the recorded videos were also saved on an external hard drive to not lose any material as the Internet is a fast-changing medium. When searching for commercials there were certain criteria that were important: Firstly, I was looking for current commercials, that had been on TV during the last few years as this would show the most current viewpoint of commercials. Secondly, the choice was made according to whether children were included in the commercial and if, how many. In order to analyze a wide variety of children and how gender is portrayed, I needed many different children that could show these gender portrayals. Thirdly, *Kinder* sells many different kinds of products and in order to get the most variability out of how *Kinder* sells its different products, it also may depict gender differently. And fourthly, I chose commercials that did not only include human characters but found it interesting to explore how gender is represented with non-human characters and if it differs from the other chosen commercials.

These are the three commercials that were chosen:

Commercial 1: *Kinderriegel* (2012) is an animated commercial that tells the story of two non-human characters, a chocolate bar and a milk glass, and their love story. This commercial is advertising for the *Kinderriegel* a chocolate bar that supposedly includes little chocolate and lots of milk (“Für die Extra-Portion Milch”).

Commercial 2: *Kinder* (2018) is a non-animated commercial that was produced to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the brand *Kinder*. The commercial advertises for four different products of *Kinder* and portrays different families and how they are living their everyday life together with products from *Kinder* and how everyone is celebrating together with the brand.

Commercial 3: *Kinderschokolade* (2012) is a non-animated commercial that is advertising for its product *Kinderschokolade* and portrays girls and boys and how they are enjoying different aspects of their childhood with *Kinderschokolade*. This commercial also uses voice-over throughout the commercial, spoken by children.

### Visual Discourse Analysis – Themes

The method of discourse analysis I and semiology will be used in this thesis to analyze the four chosen commercials (Rose 2007, p. 30). Also, the analysis will be split into three

different themes: color, objects and appearance, behavior and relationship. The method for the visual analysis will be based on the theory “Visual Methodologies” proposed by Gillian Rose. She structures the method of analysing pictures into three groups which are *site of image itself*, *site of audiencing* and *site of production*. *Site of image itself* is concerned with questions such as visual effects, composition and visual meanings. By using different methods it is possible to answer questions on aspects of the image in itself. The *site of production* can answer questions such as who, when, who for, why, how made, by using the method of what Rose calls discourse analysis II. The third, *site of audiencing*, covers the topics of questions such as, by whom, how interpreted, why and relation to other texts. The analysis in this thesis will be using discourse analysis I and semiology belong to the *site of the image itself* and to smaller parts on *site of audiencing*

Firstly, discourse analysis is a method that is concerned with the concept of power and knowledge. “As a method, discourse analysis pays careful attention to images, and to their social production and effect” (Rose 2007, p. 147). Moreover, discourse is a way of understanding the world and this way shapes how we understand the world and how certain things are done (Rose 2007, p. 142). Rose describes the steps when analyzing the commercials: First, try to be as unbiased as possible to the material you are working with. Second, after having familiarized oneself with the material, try to find key themes. Moreover, discourse analysis is about looking for and seeing what is not said or cannot be seen. Invisibility can be as powerful as the visibility (Rose 20017, p. 165).

There are certain strategies that Rose lists that I also have followed through when analyzing the material.

Rose (2007, p.165-166): Looking at the sources with fresh eyes (step 1), immersing yourself in your sources (step 2), identifying key themes in your sources (step 3), examining their effects of truth (step 4), paying attention to their complexity and contradictions (step 5), looking for the invisible as well as the visible (step 6), paying attention to details (step 7). Step 1 and 2 included me looking at the commercials over and over again, but also, looking at different aspects in the commercial, for example, looking for just objects that could be seen in the different scenes. Also, giving special attention to what is *shown* and what is *interpreted* by me when seeing the commercial. What cannot be seen when looking at the commercial once is that in some commercials certain signifiers cannot be spotted at the first time. Step 3 was therefore the next step where I identified first themes in each commercial individually and later found themes that were common to all three commercials. When I identified the three themes color, objects and appearance, behavior/relationship I tried to find how the

themes work in each commercial by trying to find out how, for example, color is used similar/differently in each commercial and what effect the use of a specific color has or has not (Step 4 and 5). Furthermore, step 6 is taken into consideration when I particularly pay attention to what actually can and cannot be seen in the three commercials. Step 7 is already part of the initial “scanning” of the commercials for certain criteria. Using this step, I found out that in commercial two, the *Kinder* eggs received a name-tag in pink, blue and yellow that showed how *Kinder* eggs were gendered by use of color. The strength is clearly “It pays careful attention to images themselves, and to the web of intertextuality in which any individual image is embedded” (Rose 2007, p. 169).

When using discourse analysis I, one has to “read” the images in detail, and as a part of the discourse analysis I have touched upon the method of semiology. While this thesis will not be using semiology and its specific terms as in detail as Rose describes it, its method as an idea of analyzing images and what we can see will be part of the analysis. However, it would be interesting to look at the commercials by using semiology in more detail in further future research.

Secondly, According to Rose (2007) semiology is concerned with the concept that images show social differences both in the ‘real’ world and in constructed world such as advertisements (Rose 2007, p. 77). Semiology is a methodological approach that engages with the idea that images are, as discussed before, both constructed by and constructing discourse. Rose argues that the sign is the most important part of semiology and is so important as it is about how images make meaning (Rose 2007, p. 74). A sign can be categorized into *signifier* and *signified*. While signified is an object or a concept, the signifier is a sound or image we connect with the signified. A signified would be a tree (the picture), signifier would be the actual word TREE (consisting of four letters and pronounced according to language rules). This concept by Saussure also makes sure that there is a connection between the signifier and the signified. Signifier and signified are very important in Semiology when analyzing images. The use of signifiers in an advertisement such as a ring could mean a myriad of things and these meanings are what the product is supposed to stand for (Rose 2007, p. 80). Rose (2007) gives a list from Dyer (1982) what signs in advertisements might take a meaning such as age, gender, race, expression, eye contact, body movement, props and setting. Images can create social difference such as gender and age which also can be constructed in images. Furthermore, *connotation* and *denotation* are also ways of describing signs. While denotation could be described as the textbook definition of a sign, connotation is the picture we see when a word such as “tree” is said. While one might

see a fir as a typical tree, others may see a palm tree. Signs may also have more than one meaning which semiologists call polysemic.

Semiology is, however, restricted in the way that the interpretation of the image lies within the interpreter. Between signifier and signified, denotation and connotation, lies the individual interpretation of the person analyzing the commercials. Hence, the descriptions of the commercials are to be objective and merely descriptive. However, the interpretation and analysis are influenced by the background of the analyst.

### **Ethical Considerations**

When looking for commercials I have considered the fact of access, portrayal and source. Therefore, it was important for me that the videos could be found online for free access. According to Bryman ‘ethics and the internet’ need special attention for data collection: The information needs to be available to all public and has no need of a password, contains non-sensitive issues and is not restricted in its use of the material (Bryman 2016, p. 129). The videos do not contain sensitive issues and are not restricted by any nature but by internet connection. Also, the videos chosen could be found online and free available on YouTube. I have carefully considered which commercials to choose for the analysis in this thesis in terms of who is shown, what are they doing, and whether or not this might be considered sensitive.

## **ANALYSIS**

For the analysis in this thesis three commercials have been chosen from the brand *Kinder*. In this chapter I am going to analyze these three commercials according to the following structure:

First, I am going to give some short background information to the brand *Kinder* and the three commercials. Then, I am going to analyze the commercials with the help of three themes that is introduced by a short description of the three individual commercials. While the most focus the analysis will be on children, the theme “behavior/relationship” will also include adults. Relationships may be between children, between children and adult and the relationship between adults (which will play a lesser part in this thesis).

### **BACKGROUND:**

#### **The Brand *Kinder***

*Kinder* is a brand from the company Ferrero that produces many different products that are considered sweets. The products that are advertised for and will be part of the analysis are

*Kinderüberraschung, Kinderschokolade, Kinderriegel, Kinderpingui, Kinder Schokobons.* However, there are many more products that is part of the *Kinder* family. According to their website, family, quality and innovation is the essence of *Kinder*. The company and the invention of *Kinder* started in Italy in 1968. The *Kinder Überraschungsei* was inspired by what they call “das spielerische Entdecken von allem Neuen” (Kinder.com 2018) which means “to fun-explore everything new”. Not all the products were developed for children. As children grow, they wanted the product to grow as well and developed “cool” products for another target group. Their message is that they want to bring small, but special moments into everyday life. Each product of *Kinder* has its own website on which more information can be found and special attention to a certain product is paid. The website of the *Kinderriegel* is especially interesting as they have focused on the non-human characters “Milky and Schoki” and treat them as humans. It is possible to follow them on social media such as Facebook. The biography of their love story is even described on the homepage and it is exactly this story they decided to make into a commercial which is the first commercial that will be analyzed.

### **COMMERCIAL 1: Kinderriegel (2012)**

The first commercial is for *Kinderriegel* from 2012. This commercial does not use real people, rather has the brand chosen to represent chocolate and milk with different attributes of a human person. *Kinderriegel* is a chocolate bar that the brand advertises for as having (unhealthy) chocolate and (healthy) milk. There are many sequels and prequels to this kind of commercial, where they use the chocolate bar and the milk glass as their protagonists to advert for the *Kinderriegel*, which in this analysis I will be referring to as Chocolate and Milk. Their love story has become very popular and many commercials have been released portraying their story. Every product of *Kinder* has its own homepage and particularly *Kinderriegel* also has its own Facebook page. On their Facebook page you can follow the story of the relationship between Chocolate and Milk, who in German also have their own name “Milky and Schoki”. Furthermore, there is a Spotify list that has been created in the name of the characters and claiming that these are their favorite love songs (Kinderriegel.de). On the homepage, important facts around their relationship and how their love story started can be found. In the commercial chosen for this analysis, the scenes change quite quickly and show us the growing up process of Chocolate and Milk, from small children, to school children, teenagers, young adults and supposedly married couple. It can be viewed as a process from sandbox love to living happily ever after.

Scene	Age ?	Content of the scene?
1	Small children	Milk and Chocolate playing in the sandbox
2	Kindergarten/school age	Milk kissing Chocolate
3	teenager	Chocolate calling Milk
4	Young adults	Milk moving
5	Adults (single)	Chocolate and Milk meet again
6	Adults (couple)	Chocolate and Milk reminiscing



Kinder Riegel (2012)

### **COMMERCIAL 2: Kinder – 50-Years**

The second commercial is a fairly recent one and is a celebration video for the brand *Kinder* in general. This commercial is not specific to chocolate or any of the products *Kinder* is selling but is rather the brand itself, its image and what the brand wants to stand for.

However, we can see the products in the celebration commercials, but they are not specifically mentioned. *Kinder* is turning 50 years in 2018 and they have therefore included and produced different kinds of celebration commercials. This particular commercial aired in early 2018 and is called “Made of Happy” and is one of the four videos belonging to the series of “Made of Happy”. All the four of the commercials include different kinds of products of *Kinder*. It is not clear where this commercial is set and if it should be country specific. All the families could be from different countries, showing that *Kinder* is something that is uniting. In this commercial there are four “families” shown consisting of at least one adult and one child in each individual scene.

Scene	Who? - children	Who? - adults	What?
1 – Family 1	One girl One boy	One man	Eating <i>Kindereggs</i>

2 – Family 2	One girl One boy	One woman	Kitchen scene – playing with <i>Kinderschokobons</i>
3 – Family 3	One girl One boy	One man One woman	Car scene – Singing with <i>Kinderschokolade</i>
4 – Family 4	One boy	One woman	Playing/eating - <i>Kinderpingui</i>
5 - Celebration	-	-	A crowd of people is celebrating the 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of <i>Kinder</i>

### **COMMERCIAL 3: Kinderschokolade (2012)**

The third commercial is from 2012 and is advertising for the product *Kinderschokolade*. It is different than the first two analyzed commercials as there is a voice-over throughout the commercial being narrated by children while there is background music playing. The children are showing their everyday life and what they are doing on their day-to-day basis. This commercial is trying to make the viewer see the world from the perspective of a child. However, how children actually were part of the development of the commercial and if they were at all, is unclear. The commercial uses 7 “arguments” about childhood “A time to...”. To every argument there is a scene with a child that matches the argument. Below, is a table that gives an overview of the scenes.

Scene	Who is speaking?	Who is seen?	What are they doing?	What is said? (German)	What is said? (English)
1 /first argument	boy	boy	Swimming in bathtub	Eine Zeit um Dingen auf den Grund zu gehen	A time to explore things

2/second argument	girl	girl	Managing chocolate	Um große Pläne zu schmieden	To make great plans
3/third argument	girl	girl	Sleeping on floor	Um sich völlig zu verausgaben	To extend oneself
4/fourth argument	girl	girl	Tree house/chocolate bargaining	Eine Zeit um die richtigen Argumente zu finden	A time to find the right arguments
5/fifth argument	girl	3 girls	Playground - swinging	Um die Perspektive zu wechseln	To change perspective
6/sixth argument	boy	Boy and girl	Holding hands – walking towards school	Um Mut zu beweisen	To be brave
7/seventh argument	boy	Three children	Lying in hammock	Eine Zeit um wunschlos glücklich zu sein	A time to be perfectly happy.

### **THEMES:**

In the commercials I could see three themes that were particularly interesting. These three themes are:

- 1) Color
- 2) Objects and appearance
- 3) Behavior and relationship

These three themes have been analyzed with the following questions in mind:

Who is shown?

How is gender portrayed when human characters are missing?

How is color used in terms of gender portrayal? Is there a color pattern for girls/boys?

What objects are connected to the protagonists involved? What are the characters wearing?

What are the characters doing?

## **Theme 1: Color**

Watching the three commercials, one can see different uses of color. Rooms, clothes, objects or the collective of all things displayed in the commercials have different colors. The use of a certain color can then be connected to gender and age in a way that the use of some colors are more often applied for girls/boys and at different age stages. However, sometimes there is no certain common color scheme when portraying girls/boys. This sometimes might be related to the age of the characters, sometimes there might be no reason for this decision. Now, how is color used in the scenes in the different commercials?

### **Commercial 1: Kinderriegel (2012)**

In commercial one, we can follow the story of a Chocolate bar and a Milk glass.

#### Scene 1 and 2:

They can be seen as little children in the sandbox, Chocolate has a red shovel and Milk is using a green bucket with a crab print. This scene shows no color conspicuities in relation to gender whether on the color of the room, of the appearance or of the objects.

This changes, when Milk and Chocolate are kindergarten/school children. While, they do not use any clothes throughout the commercial, it does use other items that are considered clothing such as shoes, accessories and jewelry. The character milk is first seen having a bag when she is seen at kindergarten/school age. She is wearing red slippers and has a yellow bag with a pink unicorn on it. Chocolate, as a school/kindergarten child is wearing a blue/yellow cap. Also, when the split view is introduced, we can see Milk starting to wear a pink bow. In the other two commercials we have human characters that are wearing clothes in different colors. Moreover, we can see that there are objects in the background. We can see a blue jacket and a blue schoolbag on the left part of the picture, where chocolate is standing. In the right part of the picture we see a pink jacket. However, there are also pink rainboots with flowers on, that are placed on the side where chocolate is standing. The blue/yellow in Chocolate's cap and the pink element in Milk's bag are both the first initial signs towards what later become more and visible: the color distribution of pink and blue. While Chocolate is wearing blue with yellow elements, Milk has a yellow bag with a pink unicorn print. These colors might point towards a first separation of colors in male and female. Male being portrayed with blue, female with pink color.

#### Scene 3:

Growing up and getting older, we can see Chocolate sitting in a room that is kept in blue/yellow, while Milk's room is pink/red. Chocolate's room also shows us his bed with blue bed sheets and the object in the room, such as the skateboard are kept in rather blue

colors. As in the previous scene, he is wearing a cap, which in this scene is in all-blue. The objects are kept in accordance with the room color: We can see a red/pink room with unidentifiable but pink objects. The bed sheets are kept in blue as well as the wall color. Then, a split view mode is introduced showing us Milk and Chocolate talking on the phone to each other. Milk is wearing a purple bow and is in a room, which is held in pink and red colors. While the yellow element we could see in the previous scene is still apparent in Chocolate's room, Milk's room has now become solely pink and red. As the characters have become older now, it seems as if it is more important to portray the characters in "their" specific color and again maybe supporting the difference of female/male characters.

Scene 4, 5 and 6:

In the next scene, Milk is seen moving away and this scene is also kept in blue colors, the truck Milk is moving with, is white. In the café scene, the room is again in blue/yellow and we can see that Chocolate is not wearing a cap any longer, neither is Milk wearing her purple bow. In the last scene we can see Milk and Chocolate sitting on a blue sofa and reading in a blue memory book. The room and object are again kept in blue and yellow. Throughout the commercial we see Chocolate and Milk going and growing through different stages. When they are small children, we cannot see any color specificities for girls/boys. As they grow older, both the room, the object and the appearance get pink or blue aspects. When they are grown up, and are a couple, the colors blue and yellow take over. We could therefore argue for this commercial that there is a certain age span, where the colors pink and blue have more meaning. In this commercial, this age span starts in Milk and Chocolate's kindergarten/school age and is most prominent in their early teenage years. This is what Wong & Hines (2014) write in their article on gender color preferences, where they claim that there is a certain age span when color is more important but due to the objects they use.

**Commercial 2: Kinder – 50-Years**

In commercial two, color distinctions can be seen in their appearance (clothes and accessories) and the objects that they use or surround them, but not in room color usage.

Scene 1 - Family 1:

We are introduced to four different families. The first family shows us a man and two children, a girl and a boy. Considering colors of objects, the first scene is the only scene in this commercial that uses color specificities for objects. We can see a blue bowl with three *Kinder* eggs and someone who is putting small post-its on the egg. Each egg gets a different colored post-it: pink, yellow and blue. In order to be able to read the names that have been

written on the post-its, one has to pause the videos at exactly the right second. What can be read on the pink post-it is “Lisa”, the blue post-it reads “Tim” and the yellow post- it reveals only the first 2 letters: “Da”. They chose to write the girl’s name on a pink paper and the boy’s name on the blue paper. The yellow paper cannot for sure be said to whom it was meant to belong to. However, as we in the scene can see a girl, a boy and an adult man, we may assume that the yellow egg is supposed to belong to the adult. When arguing that the yellow post it was meant for the man, why did they not choose to use a blue paper? Also, why did they not choose to use their pink and blue eggs they have in their assortment? This would have made the use of the colored post-its redundant. Furthermore, we can see the *Kindereggs* in a blue bowl. They could have chosen to use a neutral color and so this again points towards that the blue color becomes more apparent and prominent than any other color used in this scene. After we have seen a hand tagging the *Kindereggs* there is a cut and we can see a boy running towards the father first and the girl closely following. The girl and the boy are both wearing trousers, but the girl is wearing a pink T-Shirt with a white horse print and the boy is wearing a blue T-Shirt with an airplane print. Also, the father is wearing a light-blue shirt. In this scene, by using the blue bowl, the separation of the *Kindereggs* with colored name tags, the clothes color choice of the three characters shown, we can argue that , as in the commercial before, gender specifics in terms of color are used. The use of specific gender specific color choice for clothes can also be seen in the following scenes.

#### Scene 2 - Family 2:

The next family is again consisting of one adult and two children. The scene is opened with a view of two children playing with the *Schokobons*, and later one of them running towards a woman who is standing in the background working at the kitchen counter. We can see the mother wearing a pink blouse and the boy wearing a blue T-Shirt. However, this family also includes one child that is wearing something in green. Throughout the scene, we cannot for sure say that this child is a girl or a boy. However, when the child turns around and runs towards her mother, we can see that the child is wearing a dress, which then points towards the child being a girl. While the woman and the boy wear the colors pink/blue, the third character is wearing green. This is the first scene and one of the few choices of the commercial makers that show characters with clothes that do not include the color pink/blue when portraying children.

#### Scene 3 – Family 3:

The following family (two adults and two children) can be seen sitting in a car driving and singing by using a *Kinder* chocolate bar. This family also includes a girl wearing pink/red

and a boy wearing blue while the parents are wearing neutral colors. Here, we can see the use of neutral colors for the adults and the pink/blue color scheme for the children. It is interesting to see that there is a difference in choice of color for the children's and adult's choice.

The fourth family shows a woman and a child and the woman using her fist as a hand puppet eating a *Kinderringui* and are wearing opposite colors. While the boy is wearing a black T-Shirt but with a red jacket, the woman is wearing a blue blouse. Here we have a different choice of color. It is an interesting choice that the further the commercial develops the more differences in terms of color are shown. This scene even uses the opposite colors.

Throughout the commercial we can see that the characters in the commercial often use the color scheme pink/blue. This applies for the *Kinder* eggs or the clothes. An exception to this, is the child wearing a green dress and the boy wearing a red jacket. Also, from the beginning to the end of the commercial, we see more and more differences in portraying color appearing. While the first scene shows the typical blue/pink color differences for male and female, the following scenes become more neutral or even opposite in terms of color.

### **Commercial 3: Kinderschokolade (2012)**

In commercial three, color distinctions can be seen in the room of the characters, their appearance (clothes and accessories) and the objects that they use or surround them. We can see different children and the arguments they propose that childhood is about.

#### Scene 1:

The first room is all in white and on the verge of the bathtub we can see the objects in the background are kept in blue/yellow colors. The boy is wearing a diving mask, swim trunks, flippers and a snorkel in blue and yellow. All those elements make the scene using similar colors as the first commercial using the blue/yellow room and Chocolate's cap. Then, the boy is sitting in the filled bathtub and adjusting his diving mask to later dive his head under water. The bathroom, has some towels by the window and some stairs to get into the bathtub. Also, a football is lying under the bench on which the towels are placed, right under the window.

We could argue that the boy shown and the choice of color (blue and yellow) correlate.

The scene is cut into another room, where we can see a table where someone has placed a sheet of paper for everyday in the week and a child placing a *Kinderschokolade* on each day.

#### Scene 2 and 3:

We can see that a girl in a pink dress and a ponytail, sitting in her room standing at her table and evenly distributing one chocolate bar for each day. There are two pencil holders and

some pink hair accessories on the table. This room is kept in pink and red color through the displaying of the objects and even the girl's dress is kept in red/pink.

Now, there is another child's room with a girl lying on the floor and sleeping. She is wearing pink fairy wings and a skirt. Her room has a little tent, a pink-white-striped armchair and many other smaller items lying around the room. This room is mostly kept in pink, also the objects around her are pink.

This scene shows us the connection between the color pink and girls. While there are neutral colored elements in the scene, the color pink is the most prominent. This give the scene a nuance that can be connected to femininity as the color may rather be connected to girls than boys which we could also see in the previous scenes and commercials.

Scene 4 and 5:

Following, is an outdoor scene, where we see a garden or park and someone pulling up a rope ladder from the large tree that is in the left side of the image. A girl in a pink dress and red shoes is standing on the ground and looking up to supposedly a tree house and someone who is pulling up the ladder. The next scene is upside down and we can see a girl on a swing wearing blue jeans and a red long-sleeve with white dots. As they are hanging upside down on a horizontal bar, we cannot make any assumptions of if they are girls or boys. Two children are wearing red and one is wearing blue. There is cut that then reveals that we were having the perspective of two children who are hanging upsidedown on a horizontal bar. Here we can see both the color blue and red, but cannot by the choice of color know for sure is the shown children are boys or girls. In this scene therefore, the choice of color does not make it possible to decide whether the shown children are boys or girls.

Scene 6 and 7:

The next scene shows the viewer a boy with his schoolbag in a close-up. He is looking at something or someone, and when the camera pans, we can see he is looking at a girl. She is also wearing a school bag kept in pink and they are smiling at each other. The scene is cut, we see them holding hands and walking together towards, supposedly, a school building.

The last scene shows us a garden with a hammock. There are three children swinging in the hammock and one adult standing next to the children resting one hand on the hammock and giving something to a child who is lying in the hammock. While we assume that two of them are boys because of the blue T-Shirts they are wearing, we cannot say the same applied for the third child. The two boys are wearing blue T-Shirts and the third child cannot for certain be said to be a girl.

### **Concluding the Theme Color:**

What the commercials have in common in the theme color, is that they can be analyzed in terms of the colors of the rooms, clothes/accessories and objects. These three subthemes on color show that the colors pink/red and blue/yellow are the ones that are mostly used whether this is a room, an object or the clothes the characters are wearing. We can see that when they show the characters alone in a room the color separation is clearly blue or pink. This applies for the human characters as well as the non-human characters. What strikes me as most significant is that the human and non-human characters are mostly divided into the pink/blue scheme, when they are at a certain age. Chocolate and Milk are around kindergarten/school age and the children in the other commercials are about the same age when they start to use pink and blue colors. They can be argued to be around kindergarten/school age until their teenage years. In the commercials with Milk and Chocolate we can see that they do not have any color specifics to gender when both are quite small (in the sandbox) but rather use more pink and blue when they reach school age. This is done by using color for the rooms, objects and clothes. Also, when they are shown as adult couple, they are not shown in the pink/blue scheme but rather the blue has taken over the main color and now pink is not used at all. Milk is not wearing her purple bow any longer. We could argue that we are growing into a color scheme pink/blue when reaching about kindergarten/school age but grow out of the color separation when we get adults. This can be seen in the other two commercials where the children are shown in their pink/blue rooms or wearing pink/blue clothes. For example, the family that is sitting in the car, we can see the girls wearing a pink T-Shirt while the boy is wearing something in blue and the adults wearing neutral colors. Also, the girl in her room sorting her candy, the girl sleeping on the floor and the girl in the garden that is trying to bargain for letting her up in the tree house. They are all wearing pink clothes or elements. As described in the previous research Wong & Hines (2014) argued that children of a certain age are shown in specific colors as this is a age where the “finding” of a gender role is highly important. Also Änggård (2005) described this certain phase of “testing” which gender group one belongs to.

In general, the clothes’ color is divided into blue what boys wear and pink what girls wear. However, this does not apply for all the scenes and characters in the three commercials. I earlier described two children that could not for sure be identified being a girl or a boy. The girl wearing the green dress and the child lying in the hammock. These are scenes where the color scheme was not applied but are also where we could not see whether it was a girl or a boy from the choice of color of the clothes. Thereby we could ask us whether color may have

a different importance depending on the age of the person wearing a color? When we see adults wearing a pink or blue T-Shirt we do not need the color in order to sort people into women and men. The color of a T-Shirt for younger children could be seen as a signifier for what the child is, a boy or a girl. Thus, the color of the clothes become more meaningful in terms of gender when children are wearing them. We could therefore argue that as the children are younger, it is more important for the advertiser to use color distinction to separate who is a girl and who is a boy in order for people to be able to identify them by according to what we believe their biological sex is. Moreover, when a girl/boy is seen alone in a room, this room is kept in a respective color of pink or blue. Whenever, there is more than one character in the scene, we can see that the room never is in pink or red colors. Whenever we see more than one character, the room is kept in neutral colors or in blue/yellow. We cannot see one scene in the three commercials where a boy is shown in a pink room or environment. In terms of objects and their respective color we can also argue that the object in pink can rather be seen with girls while the object in blue or yellow, rather can be seen in connection to boys.

### **Theme 2: Objects and Appearance**

While the previous theme focused on the *color* of room, appearance and objects, now the focus will be on the objects and appearance per se i.e. how do objects and appearance such as clothes point towards gender and children in relation to age in the chosen commercials.

Additionally, what objects are the characters using or surrounded by, what are the characters wearing and is there a difference in what girls and boys are wearing.

#### **Commercial 1: Kinderriegel (2012)**

The first commercial was about Chocolate and Milk, portrayed with different kinds of human attributes, and the growing up process from small children to them being an adult couple.

During the commercial they are surrounded by a myriad of objects.

##### Scene 1:

When they are small children Milk and Chocolate are sitting in a sand box playing with a shovel and a bucket. Milk is the one building a sand castle with the bucket while Chocolate is playing with the shovel. The sandbox is situated on a playground. Both of them have one visible tooth, which we can only see in this scene. While Chocolate is wearing diapers, Milk cannot be seen wearing any clothes. Also, their bodies are different. While Chocolate looks like a *Kinderriegel* chocolate bar, Milk is a milk glass. The milk glass is actually transparent, it is the milk that makes it seem white. Both of them have legs, arms, eyes and a mouth but

neither nose nor ears. Chocolate's eyes are situated on the first indentation of the chocolate bar and the mouth on the second bulge of the chocolate bar. There are two legs and arms, both kept in brown. Milk's eyes are in this scene just dots, and she has arms and legs in white. Neither their appearance nor the objects in this scene point towards a specific gender relevance but rather that they are children spending their time on the playground and a specific age reference to them being younger children. However, the choice of making milk as a milk glass and a female character and a chocolate bar as a male character is an interesting choice. The chocolate bar in this case could be argued to be more male than milk. It would be interesting to know why they made this particular choice. It could be that brown and white are colors that are more specific for male female. However, it could also be that as the chocolate covers the milk that is inside, the aspect of the chocolate protecting the milke could be another interpretation.

### Scene 2:

When Chocolate and Milk are kindergarten/school children, we can see several objects and also clothes in the scene. Chocolate is wearing a cap and Milk is now wearing red slippers and has a bag. In the background, we can see two jackets hanging on a hook and a schoolbag and also some rainboots. Both Chocolate and Milk have in this scene a bit smaller eyes than in the first scene. The use of a cap for the boy and the shoes/bag for the girl is something that can be considered to give Chocolate and Milk more attributes that can connect them to being a boy or a girl. The objects in the background only can be referenced to gender when the color of the objects are taken into consideration, which has been done in theme one. Otherwise, the objects that surround Chocolate and Milk in this scene point again towards the age of the characters as they now are older than in the previous scene.

### Scene 3:

Chocolate continues wearing the cap in the next scene and this is also the point of the commercial where the most objects and appearance references can be analyzed. In Chocolate's room, we can see a football, a dartboard, a model airplane, some magazines, a robot and a skateboard. All those items could be interpreted as being more connected to boys rather than girls. Milk is wearing a purple bow and is in her room. She is now wearing red lipstick. Also, we can now clearly see her eyelashes, which is why we could assume that she has probably applied mascara as well as she has three golden stars on her left cheek. On the object level, there are many items that point to female or male characters: Chocolate is wearing a cap slightly tilted to one side, in his room where probably the objects belong to him, we can see a skateboard, a football that is lying on his bed. He has a dart board as well

as some items on the shelf that can be identified as a model airplane and a red robot. In the split mode it is far more difficult to identify any specific items as everything is kept in the same color and is blurred in the background. There are two pictures hanging on the wall, one with a red heart. She is wearing a purple bow and mascara and some stuffed animals are sitting on her bed. During the split view we can also see that they have different phones. While Chocolate uses a mobile phone, Milk has a fixed phone with a rotary dial. This could mean that as she has a steady phone, she is more connected to home, while the mobile phone, seems more sporty, independent from home. This scene, includes objects as well as appearance that may be specific for boys/girls. Whether this is how Chocolate and Milk look by adding a bow or a cap, or the objects that are displayed around them in their respective room.

Scene 4:

In the moving scene, Chocolate is not wearing his cap any longer, but rather can be seen listening to music with a Walkman and is also carrying some books. We can see Milk still wearing lipstick and mascara and now also, some bangles on her right wrist. Here, we can see that Milk has been developed into wearing jewelry and also her eye lashes have also become a bit longer. Chocolate has not grown a beard and we cannot even see a tendency as there are no beard stubbles. Chocolate listening to his Walkman can again be connected to the sporty, independent and laid-back appearance which can be connected to masculinity such as being the relaxed, self-dependent and self-sufficient man. Milk is in contrast wearing jewelry and make-up seems to become more aware of her outer appearance which might point towards aspects of femininity such as thinking about how she looks and focusing on the outside beauty and attraction.

Scene 5 and 6:

In the following scenes, we can see Milk and Chocolate meeting again in the café and reminiscing about their life so far in their living room looking at pictures. While the café scene almost uses no objects but a vase of flower on the table. Chocolate is seen without any object and Milk is still wearing make-up but no jewelry. It seems as though they have grown up and it is not necessary to display them as girl/boy as it is now clear that they have grown into being a man/woman. In the last scene we can see several objects that show us where they are situated. It is a living room and as we could see in the first scene, where the objects were used to display a certain age, the last scene uses this method as well. There is a bookshelf, displaying pictures, some books and decorations as well as lamps and a plant.

Discussion:

This commercial can be argued to use objects and appearance differently, depending on the age span of the character that is covered in the scene. While the early and later years (young children and adults) use objects to display about what age Chocolate and Milk are at, the scene that cover the school years, early teenager and young adults, use appearance and objects to portray them in terms of a girl and a boy, female/male.

### **Commercial 2: Kinder – 50-Years**

During the second commercial, we cannot see that many objects that point towards gender. We consider someone wearing a skirt or a dress and having a certain hairstyle to belong to either a female or male attribute. The appearance level includes clothes, hairstyles and more.

#### Scene 1 - Family 1:

The children in the first scene are both wearing trousers. The boy has short hair, while the girl has long hair. The environment is a kitchen and the adult man, presumably the father, can be seen wearing business-like clothes as he is wearing a shirt, suit pants and a tie. This points towards that although they are in the kitchen at that particular point it does not seem like he has been cooking there. As he is wearing formal clothing it seems more like he just came home from work outside the home. The only prominent objects in this scene are the three *Kinder* eggs in bowl. Those eggs were meant for a certain person, as the eggs are nametagged. The objects and appearances in the next scenes point partly towards gender and age.

#### Scene 2 - Family 2:

It is from the beginning unclear whether the child we see taking a Schokobon is actually a girl or a boy. The head is leaning on the table and we cannot see a particular hairstyle and also the green color of the top she is wearing is not gender specific. It is when we see the child running towards her mum, we assume that as she has long hair and is wearing a long dress, this child must be a girl. Why was this choice made? Why has the brand decided to show a child that is not “obviously” a girl, wearing pink and showing her long hair? Wearing green and drawing action figures on its fingers, would be associated with a boy rather than a girl. Commercial two has not that many elements on the object and appearance level that can be analyzed with a perspective towards gender. What is used throughout the commercial is to display girls with longer hair and boys with very short-cut hair. Exception from this is the girl that is wearing a green dress and can from the beginning not be categorized as girl or boy.

### **Commercial 3: Kinderschokolade (2012)**

During commercial three, there are seven arguments that the children use. In each scene we have different aspects of appearance and objects that can be analyzed.

#### Scene 1:

The boy that is sitting in the bathroom and is meant to be exploring can be seen wearing diving gear. He is wearing bathing trunks which strengthens the assumptions that this is a boy. In the background we can see a football. We do not know what has happened before, but we could argue that the boy put the football in the bathroom. A football as an object would rather be associated with male than female. Placing an object in this scene strengthens the argument that this is a boy that is exploring. It could also tie to the argument of a more adventurous character as both football and exploring could be considered rather rough or difficult as a sport. Also, this suggests that male characters are considered to be more adventurous and daring when choosing a particular sport. This object could also be seen in the first commercial when we could see Chocolate's room.

#### Scene 2 and 3:

In the following two scenes, there are two girls' room displayed. We can argue that that is the case because of the color but also the objects and appearance of the characters that are in the room at that particular scene. The first girl is sitting at her desk and is wearing a pink dress with a flower print and has a ponytail. The items on the desk include hairbands as well as pens and more. The girl that is lying on the floor is wearing fairy wings and a skirt. We can see objects lying around in her room that include a tent, a chair, and a doll house. While the tent and the chair only can be connected to girls when the color is considered, the doll house and the clothes she is wearing are independent from the color. I find it interesting that some objects are originally neutral in terms of gender, and when they receive a color they belong to either girls or boys. Other objects/appearances such as the dollhouse or the fairy wings are as objects alone applied to a certain gender.

#### Scene 4, 5 and 6:

Following, is an outdoor scene, where we see a garden or park and someone pulling up a rope ladder from the large tree that is in the left side of the image. The scene where the girl is trying to get access to the treehouse, does not include many objects but the appearance of the girl. She is wearing a dress and rainboots. The choice of clothes is interesting in terms of who is wearing what. While it could be considered rather normal that girls are wearing trousers and a clothes' style that would be connected to boys, this may be not the case for boys wearing girl's clothes. This suggests that there are clothes that belong to only girls'

appearance, but this cannot be applied for boys. The girl wearing a dress and bargaining for the ladder to get up to the tree house is wearing a dress as well as girl in the previous scene. The children in the next scene are wearing trousers and T-shirts and are on a playground. The objects around them (the playground) shape the view on where they are but not who they are. We can see that there are three children but not whether they are girls or boys. The next scene shows the viewer a boy with his schoolbag in a close-up. We can also see a girl who is wearing a school bag kept in pink and they are smiling at each other. The scene is cut, we see them holding hands and walking together towards, supposedly, a school building. We can now see that they are wearing trousers, he wears black and she wears grey jeans. While she has long hair he has a short-cut hairstyle. Here, the objects point towards the age of the children as they are wearing schoolbags that are typical for a certain age (6-ca. 10). However, only the hairstyle, again, gives us the perception of either a girl or a boy as the schoolbag and the clothes could be connected to both girls and boys.

Scene 7:

The next scene shows us a garden with a hammock. There are three children swinging in the hammock. There are two boys and, presumably, one girl who is lying in the middle. However, this is an assumption as the two boys are wearing short cut hair and the child in the middle has longer hair but cannot be said for sure that it is a girl. Whether the children in the hammock are three boys or two boys and one girl is an assumption as the two boys are wearing short hair and the child in the middle has longer hair but cannot be said for sure that it is a girl, the appearance is not that clear. We do not get a close up of what they are wearing and the color is not specific which makes it difficult to categorize.

**Concluding the Theme Objects and Appearance:**

The objects in the commercials can, but need not necessary shape or help portray a certain gender. In commercial one, I argued that the objects that were used throughout the commercials changed in its meaning depending on the age stage that Chocolate and Milk are in. While as young children and as adults the objects were rather neutral in terms of gender, during the age span of school/kindergarten age towards teenagers the objects become more gender specific using a football or a cap for Chocolate and shoes or bangles for Milk. This is also the age span in which the children in commercial three are at. There is a football in the scene with the boy who is exploring in the bathtub, the girl in her room with the doll house in the background. This can be connected to Wong & Hines (2014) who also mention the aspect of toys being gender specific at a certain age. Not only objects do shape an understanding of

a gender category but also appearance. We can see this in all three commercials. This entails the hairstyle, the type of clothes they are wearing, the make-up applied, the characters wearing jewelry. Depending on how specific the appearance or objects (but also the color) are, it is easier to categorize the characters in the commercials into female/male. The three themes I have chosen to analyze this commercial, do overlap. As discussed earlier, there are objects that may be gender specific because of the color. While some objects and appearance items may be neutral, others point as an object itself towards girl or boy. A dollhouse can be pink or blue, it would rather be connected to girls. However, an armchair as it was shown in commercial three would have a neutral meaning if they had not decided to give it a certain color, pink. This makes me realize that in fact not only the age is a factor to how many gender specificities are shown, but also the correlation of objects and color can result in a different analysis.

### **Theme 3: Behavior and Relationship**

This theme analysis is concerned with the character and their behavior as well as the relationship the characters have to each other. The portrayed behavior and relationship may point towards gender in some aspects or may just be a characteristic of that certain character. To begin the analysis of each commercial, there were a set of questions I asked myself before analyzing. These questions will be set before the analysis of each commercial and can be seen as guidelines.

#### **Commercial 1: Kinderriegel (2012)**

##### ***Questions:***

How is Chocolate/Milk behaving? Age/gender?

How does this behavior change?

How is their relationship built?

##### ***Scene 1:***

By now, the story of Milk and Chocolate should be quite familiar. We can see Milk and Chocolate sitting in the sandbox. Milk has built her own sand castle and her facial expression suggests that she is quite proud about it while Chocolate uses the shovel to destroy it.

Chocolate finds this quite funny until he realizes that the milk glass immediately starts to cry and soon after seeing Milk's reaction and starts crying as well. In this scene, Milk is crying

with tears visible, Chocolate is crying but no tears showing. They chose to let the Chocolate cry but not as much as Milk, which is shown quite clearly. Another interpretation, however, could be that Milk is actually sadder than Chocolate because he destroyed her sand castle while Chocolate is crying out of sympathy. Showing the more emotional part of Milk by using more visual tears can be tied to femininity by giving her more emotional aspects such as tears.

### Scene 2:

When they are school children we can see Chocolate observing his cap when Milk suddenly comes from the side to kiss him on his cheek and then runs off. While he seems quite shocked and overwhelmed by the kiss, she smiles. Also, before she kisses him, she is standing with a knee-together position. What can be read from her facial expressions are different emotions that can be analyzed. As explained in the first scene she is seen crying when Chocolate destroys her sand castle showing her emotional side. In this scene she kisses him first, entailing her making the first move and therefore giving one an impression of being brave. Her knee together position is something that could be analyzed as gender specifics to femininity. Chocolate could be seen to be kind of embarrassed and surprised by Milk's move as he is suddenly looking in her direction and is using his hands to touch his cheek and show surprise. This scene portrays Milk showing Chocolate how she feels about him while Chocolate seems as if he has not about feelings towards her.

### Scene 3:

When the split view opens up, we see Milk and Chocolate talking on the phone to each other. At the point where he is calling her his nervous facial expressions implies that that he has overcome his fears to call her and seems quite stressed about how she is going to react and if she is going to answer. He holds his hand towards his cheek and drums his fingers as if he is nervous and anxious about something to happen. Milk answers the phone. He hangs up quickly by looking at his phone and pressing the button to hang up. He seems like her is missing her already, which is indicated by his facial expression. His body posture changes and he gets smaller, looks down but smiles at the same time. Now, they that they have grown up a bit, he is making the first move by calling her. This could show that the male part is the one that is taking responsibility when it comes to building up a relationship and bringing it further.

### Scene 4:

In the moving scene, Chocolate is walking down the street and suddenly looks up and sees a car with the sign "Umzug", which means this car is used for when you are moving. We can

see the car driving away and Chocolate being left speechless which again can be interpreted through the facial expression. We can also see Milk, who seems to be sad about moving. Chocolate's expression and gestures signify that he wants to stop the car, but it is too late for that as the car has already driven off. He drops the books and it seems as if he is really sad about Milk leaving. Between this and the next scene we can read that 10 years have passed.

Scene 5:

The café scene, first shows us the back of Chocolate who is sitting in a café waiting for someone. There is a jump of focus to Chocolate's face who suddenly seems to be glad to see who is coming. This scene makes one think of two different scenarios. Either he has called her and is waiting for Milk to arrive and realizes that "Here she is" or he has been online dating and is not sure who the woman is going to be and how she is going to look like. The time lapse is probably to strengthen the fact that they have lost contact for 10 years after Milk moved. When now the focus is switched to milk, we can argue that she is at the first second not interested or looking forward to this meeting but when she sees Chocolate her facial expression changes and she is really happy that it is him. This makes the scenario of an online dating more likely. She also lights up and is portrayed in a lighter light when she sees him. There is another cut and we can see Chocolate and Milk approaching each other and kissing. Her hands are around, what is supposed to be Chocolates head and his hands are lower, around her waist or upper back. Here, we can also see that Chocolate as a man is taller than Milk and while he has a slim figure, she is a "larger" milk glass.

Scene 6:

Chocolate and Milk are sitting on a sofa in their living room and he side hugs her, holding her around the shoulder and Milk having her arm around his waist. They have closed their eyes and seem content how their life has gone so far according to their facial expression and the relaxed body expression. What has the behavior to do with the relation to brand *Kinder*? The chocolate is the unhealthy part and milk is supposed to be the healthy part of the combination. They show this on the package by giving the milk a "plus" and the chocolate a "minus", signifying that there is more of the healthy milk inside than the unhealthy chocolate. It is the perfect match, both in the story the brand tells as well for the protagonists Chocolate and Milk. It is interesting to see that it is possible to make non-human characters human and furthermore, also have them have human appearance and character traits. We can see the chocolate bar and the milk glass grow older and become adults.

**Commercial 2: Kinder – 50-Years**

***Questions:***

How is the relationship between children and children shown?

How is the relationship between children and adults shown?

What are children doing? Difference girl/boy

What are adults doing? Difference women/men?

***Scene 1 – Family 1:***

As I described in the previous theme analyses, we can follow different families and how they encounter *Kinder* products. The first scene was the father applying name tags on the *Kindereggs* and giving them to the boy and the girl. Now, what can be said on the relationship and behavior level? While we first saw a man standing in the kitchen sorting something, we can now see the man turning around and the focus of the camera switching to two children who come running towards the man. We now can assume that the man is their dad or at least relative, the children seem to know him which we can see as they are smiling when seeing him. The boy is running towards his dad and shortly before he reaches him, there is a cut and we can see the kitchen table where the dad has been labelling the surprise eggs and the children standing in front of him. The man is obviously kneeling in order to reach the eye level of the children. The girl stands close to the dad and the boy next to her. Now, it is obvious that the girl is older than the boy, which we can assume because she is much taller than the boy. The girl seems angry about something that has to do with chocolate eggs as she is gesticulating wildly, and the father is in defending mode, trying to show that he has nothing to do with it. There is another cut and we can see the boy sitting in his father's lap and eating the chocolate egg. The father has turned his attention to the girl probably sitting next to him. The girl and the boy in this scene are not seen interacting with each other but rather with the adult. While the boy is the first one running towards his father, the girl is the one interacts with him when "fighting" about something in the scene when they have received their surprise eggs. Also, the boy is sitting in his father's lap while the girl is sitting next to him. The father is standing in the kitchen but does not seem as if has been there for a long time. The father and the children seem to have a close relationship as the look really comfortable with another. In this family we only see one adult present. Also, the younger child is sitting in his father's lap and the girl next to him, which could be because she is the older one.

***Scene 2 – Family 2:***

The next scene was the woman in the kitchen and the two children playing with the *Schokobons*. We can again see a kitchen, this time there is a woman in the background who actually seems to be cooking something. This is in comparison to the scene before, where we could see a father in the kitchen but who did not seem to be there very often. In the front of the camera we see a table with a bowl of Kinder Schokobons and a child, wearing something in green, leaning its head on the table looking at the bowl. It uses its index and middle finger to pick a Kinder Schokobon and now shows the V-shaped fingers with a Schokobon into the camera. Furthermore, we can see that the child has drawn action figure faces on its two fingertips. The two drawn- action-figure faces are wearing masks and have each a drawn hand pointing to the Schokobon as if they were holding on to the Schokobon. The child is now trying to take this Schokobon and moves its fingers as if the actionfigures would be running away and the camera switches now to another child, a boy who is holding his index finger towards the first child. On this finger we can also see a drawn face on the tip that looks quite angry. The boy is shaking the finger to explain the “no” to taking the Schokobon. The children in this scene are letting their fingers become a person. Also, now that we know that the child in the green clothes is a girl, we can assume that showing her drawing action figures on her fingertips seems like this would rather be an interest of a boy. This is maybe also why the viewer from the beginning rather thinks of the child being a boy than a girl. She is running towards her mum and pulling her pink blouse as if she was looking for support from her. It is interesting that they chose one child that can first be interpreted to be a boy and later is portrayed by use of clothes and hairstyle that suggests it is a girl. Why do we actually need to know whether someone is a girl or a boy?

### Scene 3 – Family 3:

The following scene was the family sitting in a car. The dad is driving, and the mum is sitting next to him. The scene opens up with the mum turning on the music to a louder volume. The mum is using a Kinderschokolade as a microphone and she is singing to the song that is used throughout the commercial. Until now we have only seen the front- passengers and now the camera switches to the back-seat showing the viewer two children, a girl and a boy. The boy is sitting on the seat behind the father and the girl is sitting on the side of the mother. The two children are also using Kinderschokolade as substitute microphones and are singing. When the camera switched to a front position we can see the whole family sitting in the car, singing and moving to the music, having fun and being happy. Another shot is from the side of the car, where we see the actual car and its passengers. The sun is shining, and the windows are wind down. Interesting is the choice of having the father drive the car and

mother sitting next to him. Also, the girl is sitting behind the woman and the boy is sitting behind the boy. The father therefore is the person responsible for the safe drive to their destination. He is in charge of the family and can decide where to drive as he is sitting behind the wheel. This could be related to the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Kimmel 1994) as it is a kind of forced notion that the man is the one in charge and the one who has the responsibility.

Scene 4 and 5 – Family 4 and Celebration:

Following this scene is a woman who has drawn a face on her fist that has red lips and big blue eyes. Using her thumb, she can make the face seem like it is speaking. We can see a child from behind in the front looking at the “puppet show”. The focus is now on the woman looking at the child and smiling. She starts to let the “puppet” eat a Kinderpingui. We can then see the boy and the woman both having their Kinderpingui and taking a bite.

The closing scene is a garden party, where we see many different people gathered, having fun and celebrating. Both adults and children are present, there are balloons and a “50” piñata. The people are happy and having fun. One older man holding a child who is punching the piñata with a stick. This shows that the man is strong and responsible holding the child to help him punching the piñata. At the end of the commercial we see the logo of *Kinder*, which we saw in the beginning and balloons, confetti and blue background.

Discussion:

Throughout this commercial, we cannot see many behavioral patterns or specific relationships that point towards gender specificities in relation to children. Rather, we see adults that are shown in an environment or behaving according to a certain gender. The father standing in the kitchen, but actually appearing to be coming from work, the mother standing in kitchen and actually preparing some food. The father who is driving the car and thereby being responsible for getting his family safely to their destination. The only child that could be analyzed to be interesting for the gender portrayal is the child that from the beginning cannot be said to be a girl or a boy. We can therefore conclude, that this commercial does generally not use behavioral patterns or relationship to portray gender. However, adults are in this commercial being portrayed to be gender specific to some extent.

**Commercials 3: Kinderschokolade (2012)**

**Questions:**

What are the children doing? What are girls/boys shown doing?

How is the children's behavior portraying gender?

This commercial shows seven protagonists, children, that each claim an argument for what a childhood is by using the structure "A time to...". There are seven arguments that fit in three sentences and each of the sentences starting with "A time to...". From a linguistic perspective, the register seems quite high for a child uttering the used phrases. What can be said is that the producers of the commercial tried to give the viewer a child's perspective and therefore referencing to their product, *Kinder*. "Eine Zeit..." is translated to "A time to..." and is what the commercial is all about. The time of being a child and what this entails and a time of being part of the *Kinder* family. As the theme behavior and relationship does not give that much to analyze in this particular commercial, the scenes have not been split up separately. I interpret that there are three boys and four girls *saying* the argument, while we can *see* seven girls three boys and one child (whether girl or boy remains unsure). Hence, more girls than boys are included in the commercial. In this theme I will analyze what the children are doing in each individual scene. The following activities are shown: exploring, sorting, sleeping, bargaining, swinging (playground), taking one's hand and relaxing in the hammock. As mentioned before, the boy exploring could be connected to a more male activity, by doing something adventurous, something that needs courage to do. The two girls shown in their room are sorting their candy and sleeping. Sorting candy and keeping track of the things you have as well as having a plan is not something that would be connected to only girls. The girl sleeping on the floor could be an activity that also a boy is shown doing, but it could also be interpreted as a passive action. The girl is at that moment not doing anything particular and is in a passive state. The girl bargaining for the ladder to get up to the treehouse is actively trying by using *Kinder* chocolate to get what she wants. This is something that could be rather connected to boys as taking initiative and working towards a goal. The children that are swinging and spending their time on the playground cannot be seen doing anything that could point towards a certain gender. However, this is a scene where we for a short time can see more than one child and they are doing something together. Them playing, could be rather interpreted to them being children and not towards an activity or relationship that points towards a specific gender. The next scene is where the boy is taking the girl's hand; and as *he* is saying the argument we can assume that he is the one being brave and taking the girl's hand. It is a scene that is shown from the boy's perspective as he is the one speaking the argument "to be brave". This points again towards a male attribute where he

has to make the first step and is the person of action. He is not a character that is shown in passive but rather one that takes action.

### **Concluding the Theme Behavior and Relationship:**

This theme analysis has aimed to show that behavior and relationship may be used differently to portray gender and children. While the first commercial that uses non-human characters makes more use of both behavior and relationship in its portrayal of female and male and the relation, we cannot argue that they in general point towards a typical male or female pattern. Fischer & LaFrance (2015) and Harker (2005) argued that the portrayal of emotions is different for males and females. Male being active strong and dominant, and female being passive and emotional. While we can see some of that in this analysis, as pointed out before, the commercials do not apply that scheme throughout. In commercial two, behavior and relationship of children was not of great importance in the portrayal of gender. However, adults could be seen in an environment or behaving that could point towards a specific gender. In commercial three, we could see children using arguments. Depending on the argument, a girl or a boy was shown, but not necessarily was the argument pointing towards a certain gender. However, the boy that took the girl's hand and used the argument "to be brave" could be compared to the scene where Chocolate is calling Milk and somehow also tries to be brave by taking courage and calling her.

## **CONCLUSION**

The aim of this thesis was to explore how gender is portrayed in commercials by the brand *Kinder* with a special focus on children and age. I used visual analysis of the three chosen commercials to show and contrast how the brand portrays gender. Moreover, the analysis also wanted to explore in what way there is difference in portraying human and non-human characters. By the use of three different themes it could be analyzed in a clearer way what specific methods the commercial uses to portray gender in relation to children and their age. What was unexpected was the amount of material that could be analyzed as well as finding the right structure.

The three themes color, objects and appearance, behavior and relationship added more depth to the analysis. They helped organize the material and unveil connections within the commercials that otherwise could have been overlooked. The difference in portraying girls and boys can be seen by the use of color. While girls can rather be seen in pink and red color environments and also appearance, boys are rather connected to blue/yellow colors such as

the use of the blue/yellow cap of the chocolate bar in commercial one, also the room color in commercial one is gender specific pink and blue. By the use of objects and appearance, we could argue that objects may be gender specific. This could be seen in the scene where the girl is sleeping on the floor and we can see a dollhouse in the background, or the scene where Chocolate is on the phone with Milk, and we can see a football and a skateboard in his room. The objects could be said to be gender specific in itself but can also become gender specific through the color they have. The use of clothes is per se not always pointing towards gender, but can in combination with the color become gender specific. Also, the relationship and behavior between the characters showed that gender is portrayed differently for females/males. Depending on whether the focus of the scene was on the relationship, the objects or the color, some themes became more apparent. Focus on behavior and relationship could be seen when the father was driving the car in commercial two or the relationship between the chocolate bar and the milk glass.

The commercials show us a view on societal structures in terms of gender by color, objects and appearance, behavior and relationship. Commercial one gives us a basis for the interpretation that we grow in and out of gender. While we cannot know the age of the characters, we can assume a certain age span. When the characters are in the age span of approximately five to fifteen, the objects, color and behavior become highly gender specific for girls and boys. As mentioned both in the previous research and in the analysis, this can be connected to Wong & Hines (2014) and Änggård (2005) studies. While these three commercials may not in all aspects portray gender in a certain way for girls and boys, it definitely uses some aspects such as color to show and categorize children into girls and boys. Furthermore, the only relationships shown are seemingly heterosexual ones. The brand *Kinder* does not only want to sell us chocolate but also shows and tells us how relationships and families look like. How are the children shaped when only one side of family constellation is shown? What does it mean for children to grow up in a family that does not fit into the heteronormative? As Lemish (2010) wrote in her book on "Screening Gender on Children's Television", there are 8 principles she raises when claiming that there needs to be a change in the portrayal of boys and girls in television. This can also be applied to commercials. The 8 principles could in a future research may be analyzed in terms with the chosen commercials, to see whether they are applied or not. Important is that children should see a commercial but also be shown *in* a commercial in a way that gives them a wide span of possibilities. Society teaches, Media teaches, and it is therefore of utmost importance that commercials show not only heteronormativity but are inclusive in the way that they include

not only a variety of people. As Matthes et al. (2016) describe in their studies, gender stereotypes in advertising has influence on a society. Being inclusive in all terms, including *gender*, is important in order to show a society that is multifaceted. Heteronormativity is a concept that claims that people are (mostly) born with a certain sex and their gender is naturally applied to them. The correct form of a relationship is a heterosexual one. Adrienne Rich wrote in her article on Compulsory Heterosexuality on how we are forced into a thought of how a relationship is supposed to look like. (Rich 1980, p.659).

There is a need for a society that can show differences instead of categories. Furthermore, children should be able to choose color, object, clothes, behavior, relationship and many more not according to their biological sex and what a certain gender portrayal ascribes them to do, but rather be able to choose freely after who/what/how they want to be. "Difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can sparkle like a dialectic" (Lorde 1984, p. 111). How would children grow up differently if commercials would include more ambiguities such as the child in the hammock (girl or boy?). How much influence would that have on society if ambiguous portrayal of people's gender would become a rule? Is important to show difference and not just the average or a certain gender role that applies to its specifics. "Certainly there are very real differences between us of race, age and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions which result from our misnaming them and their effects upon human behaviour and expectation" (Lorde 1984, p. 115).

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